

A Playford Correspondence....

My dear cousin M,

Your holiday greetings brought delight to my heart, and I wish to convey my sincere good wishes to you and your family for the New Year.

It was especially gratifying to hear of your plans to join us at the most convivial gathering of the spring, the Playford Ball, on March 27. Our dear friend Brad Foster is pausing from his duties as CDSS Executive Director in Haydenville, Mass. to cross the continent and serve as Dance Master. You may recall how tirelessly he worked in the early days of BACDS to create the first of the Playford Balls! The quaintly-named “Raggedy Annes,” along with master James Oakden, will provide music to lighten our feet. And I know Uncle G is anticipating the sumptuous repast that can be expected during the intermissions. It is always so amusing to see the dishes cleverly named after dances, such as “Barbarini’s Tangerines!”

We are so excited about The Ball’s move to a new location this year. It is the San Jose Woman’s Club, which you may recall has been noted as San Jose Historic Landmark #32. A lovely Spanish Revival edifice, it was designed by Wolfe & Higgens and completed in 1929. The interior is graced with the designs of Albert Solon of Stoke-on-Trent in Staffordshire, England, who also designed the tiles for the Hearst Mansion! I do hope you have already responded to the invitation, to be sure of reserving your place. The Landmark Ballroom is such an elegant, intimate space that it is likely to fill up most quickly, and I fear any delay in your response might cost you the opportunity!

Have you heard that our friend and most talented musician Chuck Ward has been honored with the CDSS Lifetime Contribution Award? We know him well from the BACDS English Week, and you may remember that he is also a cofounder of BACDS. The award ceremony will be held at St. Clement’s Church, in Berkeley, on Sunday, March 28, 2010, the day after the Ball.

The Playford Committee is very busy making arrangements to make the 2010 ball a most Elegant Affair, and my dear M, if you or your traveling companions should need accommodations, be sure to inform the Registrar, who will put you in touch with people who have offered space in their homes for out-of-town guests.

It's more than two months away, but I know the time will fly!

Affectionately,

Your cousin P

M'Dear P,

Oh goodness, how the time passes. It seems only yesterday that we were little girls playing dress up with mummy's gowns and imagining ourselves at a dance. You remember how much trouble we got into after that adventure. And now here we are again, doing much the same for a Playford Ball. I have always enjoyed the treat of seeing people in their finery, whether contemporary or period dress. It does so add to the magic of such an event.

I thank you for your goodly advice on early registration for this year's Playford. The venue sounds most special and we are all looking forward to it. I hear from my friends of their anticipation of learning the dances at the BACDS' local dance series. I opine that we shall comport ourselves well by such preparations, so as to even enjoy the "For Those Who Know" dances. I am told those will be "Nonesuch" and "Step Stately". What fun!

Perhaps you can help explain something I found most perplexing. While taking in the news about town, I have heard mention of some device called a "website". It's a puzzlement to me, but it seems to be a purveyor of all details about BACDS activities, including the Ball. Does <http://bacds.org/playford> mean anything to you?

Fondly,

Your cousin M

Dearest M,

Everyone is talking about the website for the Ball. At <http://bacds.org/playford> they can read all the details about the Ball, and the workshops where people will be able to practice the Ball dances ahead of time, and how to volunteer to help, and even find the form with which to register to attend!

I shall be going to the workshop in Roseville, March 7. Will you attend the one in Berkeley on March 6, or in Palo Alto on March 14? Some of the very best callers and musicians of the Bay Area have been engaged for these events! And of course we will go together to the Rehearsal Dance at the charming Hill and Valley Club in Hayward the evening before the Ball.

In excited anticipation,

Your P.