

# WE CHAT TO A2 JIVE



**Y**ou can't beat a good old 40s style bop - there's nothing more exciting than seeing Jivers in action! For the more energetic and co-ordinated amongst us, a spin around the dancefloor is an evening well spent - but even if you think you have two left feet, A2 Jive are the people to get you out of your seat and joining in the fun.

Having spent many years on the '40s dance scene, Neil and Martine Goddard were encouraged by like-minded friends to set up their own group. A2 Jive was born in 2002, with the 10 founding members enjoying the opportunity to practice, share moves and techniques ... and socialize!

From its humble beginnings, A2 Jive has been such a hit that they now run three evening classes in the Colchester area each week, and a core group which performs at many 40s events in Essex and around the country. Martine tells us, "We teach Swing Jive with East Coast Swing as our basic step, adding in a mix of Lindy Hop and Rock 'n' Roll moves. When we started the group we could never have imagined that our hobby would be so popular - I think people enjoy the opportunity to learn how to dance with a partner."

This style of Jive came to Britain in the early '40s with the arrival of 1.5million American GIs, who brought new and exciting dances such as the Jitterbug with them - making the waltz and the foxtrot of the British dancehalls suddenly seem very pedestrian. Whilst the GIs were famously popular with British ladies, their charms didn't affect everyone; the proprietors of the traditional British dance halls were particularly horrified at the sight of the wild and exotic Jitterbug. Thankfully their 'No Jitterbugging' signs proved ineffectual, and the Jive provided a welcome release from the troubles taking place away from the dance hall. Today, the popularity of the Jive amongst the general

public, seems to stem from the sight of the Jive on Strictly Come Dancing - although the version taught by A2 Jive at their classes is more rooted in the '40s dancehall, where fun and socializing are the key requisites and anyone is welcome to give it a go! There are no snooty judges at A2!

Combining A2 Jive with full time jobs, attending shows requires careful logistical planning, but as Neil says, "Dancing and the '40s play such an important part in our lives that we even arrange our holidays around events: The Hep Cats' Holiday, Pickering War Weekend, The Glenn Miller Festival at Twinwood, Chatham '40s Weekend to name a few."

Speaking of their love of the '40s Martine tells us, "We are keen collectors of 1940s' memorabilia, including uniforms, civilian clothing, shoes, handbags, hats and accessories and we always dress in original vintage outfits when possible. While there are some excellent reproductions available there's nothing quite like the feeling of wearing an original! When not dancing, the girls in the group are busy researching 1940s hairstyling and fashions, swapping ideas and uncovering new sources of information to make sure that they are as authentic as possible."

Neil continues, "The men's attire plays an equally important role in our preparations; we are constantly studying to ensure that all of our Allied uniforms are correct and adding to our civilian clothing collection."

The A2 Jive team regularly performs at '40s events, birthday parties, weddings, outdoor weekends and charity fundraisers - bringing their extensive selection of '40s music with them to set the mood, and teaching audiences some of the basic steps. They also work closely with many other '40s themed services such as the Hair Raid Shelter, A Vintage Life, All The Tea In China, various vintage DJs, and wartime vehicle owners, to create a one-stop '40s party service.

They are already booked to perform at next year's "Military and Flying Machines" Show at Damyns Hall, where they have performed to rave reviews for the past two years. Rather than dancing in an arena, A2 Jive perform their set in the vehicle display area giving the crowds a chance to join them for a 'Lambeth Walk' or Jive or two. An experience not to be missed!

More information about A2 Jive's classes, forthcoming events and how to hire them for your event can be found on their website [www.a2jive.com](http://www.a2jive.com)

