

Thirty Years of Princeton Country Dancers: Recalling 1979 - 2009 in Stories (and the Occasional Picture or Video Clip)

From Janet Mills and Spence Wilcox:

For the past few months, we have been collecting stories from members of the PCD community via email. Our goal was to create an electronic PCD oral history project, if you will, on the occasion of PCD's 30th anniversary.

As Janet observed at one point, we learned a lot about the origins and evolution of many familiar PCD activities that was previously unknown to us. We believe other current-day PCD dancers and musicians might also learn something new from PCD's storytellers.

Even if one doesn't learn something new, one should be prepared to be entertained. There is some fine storytelling going on here! Our thanks to all of you who contributed your recollections.

We have organized the stories we received into the following sections.

- Stories about Regularly Scheduled PCD Events
- Stories about The People Who Make It Happen
- Stories about Special Events
- Stories about Performance Teams
- Stories from Outside the Dance Hall
- In Memoriam: Gone but Not Forgotten

We hope you enjoy them as much as we have.

Regularly Scheduled PCD Events

This section describes:

- Contra Dances
- English Dances
- Community Dances

Contra Dances

From Elizabeth Hough:

Larry asked us to send memories of PCD over the past ten years.

I first danced with the Princeton Country Dancers in May, 2006, when I was considering whether to move back to New Jersey from Northern California. Before I had even applied for the job that I ultimately took, I visited a Wednesday night dance at the Suzanne Patterson Center to see if I could replace the contra dance community I'd been part of, in Sacramento.

I am generally rather timid about walking into a new environment by myself, but the group was very welcoming - the person running the evening even announced that a couple from England and I, from California, were visiting, that night - and I danced every dance. I left at the end of the night, confident that I would find a home, here.

From Barbara Simpson Vадnais and John Vадnais:

We met while contra dancing in both Chatham and Highland Park. We wanted to thank our dance and music friends for sharing so much with us, so we thought it would be fitting to sponsor a PCD Saturday evening contra dance to celebrate our first wedding anniversary. So we hired the fabulous Fish Family to play at PCD on March 25, 2006. Donna Hunt called and wrote a special dance for us to mark the occasion called "365 Kisses O'More". Bob Ludwig memorialized the evening for us with many beautiful photographs. Two tables covered with yellow table clothes were moved into the center of the hall during break and dancers milled around enjoying anniversary cake, special

cookies, meringues, fruits, and tamari almonds (John's favorite). Thank you PCD for so much joy and support and positive energy through the years!

From Eliane Geren:

I've written a book about an unusual experience I had about ten years ago, and in it I mention the role contra dancing has had in my life. Below is an excerpt. However, what I'd like to add here is that when I first tried contra dancing that one evening, I didn't continue, but went back to folk dancing. Then, a couple of months later, I met Jeff Looney, and he convinced me to come to the Harlingen church for contra dancing. I'm forever grateful to him.

Sunday afternoon, I drove down the long dirt road that led out of the dance camp. What fun I'd had dancing, singing, and schmoozing with people in the contra dance community for the past two days. For a few years after Larry's death, this group had filled an important need for me.

That part of my life started one Saturday evening eleven years ago when a friend and I had nothing special to do, and we'd decided to go to Princeton.

As we crossed the street and walked one block along the campus of the university, the faint sound of fiddle music touched my ears. We followed it and when we reached the stairs near the Woodrow Wilson School, I saw men and women dancing next to the pool and fountain below. In the glow of the lantern-lights the women's skirts flowed behind them as their partners swung them 'round and 'round. The dancers reminded me of a gathering of fairies dancing near a campfire in a meadow.

When the music stopped, one of the men came up a few steps toward me. "Would you like to dance?" he asked, offering his hand. "I don't know this kind of dancing," I said, but I was dying to try it. He must have seen the yearning in my eyes. "Come on. It's easy. A caller will talk us through the dance before it starts." I took his hand. Little did I realize I was stepping into a new life.

Finally, I'd found a group where I fit in, and only then did I realize how much I'd missed that in my life. I didn't have to explain myself anymore. Of course wearing make-up was unnecessary. Of course comfortable clothes were more important than fashionable ones.

Of course a person could have more fun dancing than going shopping. Of course a man could wear a skirt for dancing if he wanted to.

Over the years, like new love, the thrill had faded, but I still enjoyed getting together with the original gang.

From Melanie Hagen:

I am delighted to provide an ancient (greater than ten years ago) contra dancing story. In 1986 I moved to Princeton to live with my father while taking courses at Rutgers. I needed some social activity and had enjoyed contra dancing in the past in New Hampshire and New York City. I started going to the Harlingen dances and had a fabulous time. After a few weeks I met a wonderful young man named Steve who was a graduate student in physics. He had been encouraged to come dancing [by] his friend Dan. [Steve and I] quickly fell in love and were married in 1993.

We have several jokes related to how we met. Dan maintains that he told Steve that he needed to meet women. Steve apparently replied that he didn't want to meet women, he wanted to already know them! Shortly before we met at the dance, I later realized, I had seen Steve at the supermarket buying a single pork chop and some carrots. I told this to Steve's parents and they have chosen to believe that I picked him up in the supermarket when I saw him buying dinner for one!

We now live in Gainesville, Florida and have two boys ages 10 and 12. We considered naming one of them Harlingen. My only regret is that we stopped contra dancing when we were getting to know each other and have never returned. We will [still] occasionally spin around the kitchen.

2008 Contra Dance Photo Sets (courtesy of Stas W)

English Dances

From ECD caller Judi Rivkin's [web site](#):

[Judi's] latest endeavor has been a series of English Country Dance classes taught through the Princeton Adult School. She and Sue Dupré began the "English Country Dance: Jane Austen and Beyond" class in Fall of 2005; Judi continued in the spring term, and the Spring 2009 class is scheduled to run once a week, on eight Tuesday evenings in February and March. The class grew out of a series of workshops for newcomers to English Country Dancing, entitled "Jane Austen on the Dance Floor," co-led by Sue Dupré, which ran weekly in Princeton in the Autumn of 2004. That series ended with a gala evening, "The Austen-Tatious Assembly."

Nearly every Valentine's Day for the last several years, Judi has presented an evening of Romantic English Country Dances in Waltz & Triple Time, [most recently at PCD.]

Community Dances

From Margoleath Berman and Louise Senior:

And in the beginning, there were Wednesday night dances. And we were free and easy and stayed out late.

And then Sue and Bob begat Sam and Callum. And they slept on air mattresses below the tables. And it was good.

And Ellen and Martin begat Ross. And there were far fewer late nights.

And then the begetting began in earnest. And Janet and David begat Sarah and Joey. And Trish and Garry begat Kevin and Ian. And Sarah and Larry begat Stephen and Anna, although there are rumors that Stephen is a figment of Anna's imagination. Lise and David begat Peter. Neil and Gretchen begat Matthew. And the Ladies, they Lunched.

And Debbie and Mark brought forth a Jacob and a Margaret who were as Good as Gold. And Robert and Beth begat Jay and Terri, and we LaRued the day they traveled to the Southlands and stayed to spread the word of the dance. And Lynda and Robert brought forth Rowan, and he was a lumberjack, but that's okay. And Robert and Janet brought forth Imogen and Cecily, who wore Anna's clothing. And Louise and Ted brought forth AmiLin. And Barbara and Brian brought forth Anna and Leah. And they took their children and Headed for the Hills.

And there was Erin, who came as a foundling wrapped in exceedingly interesting swaddling clothing.

And PCD said that it was good. So good, in fact, that we should have a Community Dance for our progeny. And then there were the Barbours, Martin and Nancy who begat Amanda, Robin and Kathryn and created an entire Molly side on their own. And the Senior-Birnies, Louise and Dunbar, came from the West, with April leading the charge and Nick hiding in a book and a hat. And there came a May Day when they were too tired to say no, an PCD Executive Committee member brought forth Louise to Nancy and Margoleath and begat a Committee for the dance so that the burdens of Amilin's Mother and Cecily and Imogen's Mother would be eased. And with the children dancing came forth Tom and Dina Laresch, having begat Amy, Julia & Katie. And Tom said the Committee was good and there was sound. And from the North came Paula Entin who brought a grown Zachary into our midst, along with her keyboard. And to Margoleath and Dan's surprise, there was the Grandchild. And she was our Destiny.

And we danced Sasha. And it was good.

The People Who Make It Happen

This section describes:

- Bands and Musicians
- Callers
- The People behind the Scenes

The Bands and Musicians

From Paul Prestopino:

I dunno exactly what sort of story qualifies for this effort, but I do have this one: It was 1980, I think (might have been 1981; I'm sure someone knows the answer). Ron Orlando's rock band, Nightflyer, with whom I'd been sitting in whenever I could, had just come apart at the seams (as bands often do), and I was looking for some sort of musical situation I might get involved with. My daughter Peri (an avid contra dancer, and recorder player) had just been asked by David Herndon to participate in a band he was putting together for a special, one-time contra dance, to be held a month or two hence. So I asked the logical question: could I come and play? Peri checked with David, whose reaction, apparently was something like, "Well, he's a professional musician, and probably won't want to put in the rehearsal time." Little did he know what a rehearsal hound I am....

Anyway, the band was formed; eleven musicians from Princeton and surrounds (I've been racking my brain to come up with all the names, but I'm sure someone knows the answer to that, too). Tony Parkes came down from Boston to call, and the dance was a great success.

Out of this grew a number of things; first, this dance became an annual event, but held in October (that first one was in April). Second, it became the basis for a fine pool of musicians, out of which grew PUB, our great pickup band. And, third, a new band was formed, originally composed of Eric Scott, David Herndon, and Barbara Greenberg. I joined shortly thereafter, to be followed even more shortly by Daniel Beerbohm. Some time later, David moved away, and we became a foursome.

The once-a-year big band, as you might have guessed, is Rum & Onions, and our little four-piece group went by "The New Band From Princeton" before finally finding the name Hold The Mustard.

From Susie Lorand:

[You asked about the early bands.] I think Rag & Tangle included Pete Soloway and David Laurence; Plum Pudding included Michael Bell. Shepherd's Holiday included Louise McClure (and Ted?), Tom Norton, and sometimes Karen Kevra. Eric Scott was in all three bands. [You] could ask Marge Scott and the other still-local people I've mentioned about who else I've forgotten.

Here's a list of my bands from the '90s on and who else is (or was) in them, and a bit about some of the band names.

The Free Radicals (appeared as "Name This Band" till we chose the name) originally me, Tom Gibney, Mike Lemonick, and Roberta Truscello later we started including Paul Prestopino. We circulated a long list of possible names. I forget who suggested the Free Radicals, but it resonated with me because my father the chemist was studying free radicals in the 1960s, when there were a lot of radicals of another sort on the loose.

Rootcrop started when Roberta was unavailable for a Free Radicals date. Pete Soloway and Paul Prestopino became the rhythm section, on bass and guitar respectively. We've had Amy Zakar play with us more recently, and Brittany Haas has also sat in when we could get her. The name is partly a play on the "Radicals" of the other band's name.

Fire Hazard: Ross Harris, Robert Mills, Paul Prestopino, and me. I think I chose the name under pressure from Swingin' Tern to have something to put on their schedule flier. There's an a Capella group at Princeton called the Firehazards; I figured that making the name singular and two words would be different enough to prevent confusion.

Mostly Harmless: Roberta Truscello, Bob Stein, Wes Steenson, and me. We chose the name in honor of Douglas Adams shortly after his untimely death.

("Mostly Harmless" is part of the description of Earth in the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy entry about the planet.) Bob and Wes went to high school together and were in the same homeroom. Imagine what their teacher went through!

The Flying Buttresses: Not sure if this counts as a PCD band - it includes Kathy Talvitie, Bob Stein, me, and Paul Prestopino when we can get him. I think Kathy came up with the name.

Distant Star: everyone else in it is from Philadelphia so I don't know if this is a PCD band either. Kathy Talvitie, Bob Pasquarello, Judi Stellar, and me. Named for a tune that KT wrote; the name also echoes Judi's surname.

Kathy Talvitie, Bob Mills, and I played as a trio for a while. I can't remember if we ever came up with a name. Maybe one of them remembers.

Other bands you should make sure are documented:

Guilt-Free Music (Debbie Goodkin was in it; I forget exactly who else)

Will Food Be Served? (Janet & Robert Mills; Michael Bell & Jane McCarty)

P2C2E House (Ben Bolker and I forget who else)

Ask Ben if he had any other band names. I think I recall that he played as a trio with Jan Drechsler and Frank Ruck, but I might be confused.

Hope this helps.

From Rose Meyers:

A PCD band not mentioned so far is Teenage Dinosaurs, with Scott Marshal, David Laurence, and Richard D. Smith. What a great sound they had! I can't even guess at the dates.

From John Vadnais:

Many people remember when Head-For-The-Hills was at Hudson Guild Farm in the late 1980's, and when I think back to that time, I used to think, "was I there?" The confusion came from the New York City and Westchester Country Dance groups which ALSO had a weekend there AND they had Hold The Mustard as the "American" band with "Musical Cheers", with whom I played mandolin, as the "English" band. That is how I got to know Hold The Mustard: Barbara Greenberg Dan Beerbohm, Paul Prestopino, Eric Scott, and Marge Scott. That is also where all concerned encouraged me to organize the "midnight contra band" as I was just learning American style fiddle. I will always be grateful to that whole gang, especially Eric Scott who said one night about midnight, "John, I am too tired to call tune changes. You do it, and just let me know." That was a big step for me, and I think Eric knew that. I also will continue to be grateful to the English dance musicians and callers who welcomed me, including Leah Barkan, Christine Helweig, and Fried Hermann, as well as my fellow musicians who have gone on to other bands. And no, I was NOT at Head-For-The-Hills back then, but I was at Hudson Guild Farm.

From Louise McClure:

I had been at the Brasstown Folk School in the summer of 1975 or '6, taking wood carving. Several others in the campground had instruments, so we decided to go to a pavilion to jam. The folk school was on the way, and there was a community dance in there that night, so we slipped in to listen. The husband-wife piano-violin duo that typically played had come from the north, and to distinguish themselves from the local fiddlers, played a lot of tunes in flat keys. The violinist husband had a big tumor on his left collarbone; he saved up his pain pills all week so he could play the Sat. night dance. This night he was too sick to come, so his wife was covering everything on the piano. She spotted me slipping my violin under the bench in back and had the caller call me up to the front. "Can you read music?" "Can you read this?" Being classically trained, it was no problem. She was delighted, and they asked me back to play for the Fall Dance Weekend. Phil Merrill was down there playing that weekend, and I "fell in love" - he was the most amazing musician I'd ever heard in my life. He invited me to play with him at the Germantown Ball in December, when I would come to a dance I couldn't do.

That Dec. or Jan., a folkie friend who danced in NYC and knew David Chandler connected us when David, who'd been learning calling, decided to start a dance in the old elementary school on Rt. 27 in Franklin Park. I said I'd play, as long as there was music

and I could play with someone who could set the tempo and style, since I didn't know those. David asked Margaret Martin, a fine dance pianist and accordion player, to come down from north Jersey. She was solid as a rock and a wonderful person, lots of fun to play with. Dances were once a month(?). Gradually, dancers would come up and say, "I play a little <name of instrument>; it's out in the car. Would you mind if I sit in on a couple of dances?" (Bob Mills and Jan Drechsler were some of the first). Of course I said, "Please do join us;" soon, we had more musicians than dancers, and would have to shoo some musicians back onto the floor to have a dancing quorum.

It soon became apparent that the majority of the dancers came from the Princeton area. I believe it was the next fall that we moved into the YWCA building in Princeton, still on a monthly basis. Then by January or February, we'd moved into the Wilson College on the university campus, and gone to a weekly dance on Thursday nights. That turned out to be a huge time commitment. It was still functioning with a weekly pickup band. Various people took turns leading the band and proposing music, but it was largely the blind leading the blind. A physics graduate student named David Herndon started showing up with his fiddle; since he'd actually had some dancing and playing experience, he quickly became the go-to person for new music and for leading the band. He helped organize - was he the mastermind?- the first big dance party, which became Rum and Onions, in the spring of 1979 (or 1978?).

Within a few years, some musicians wanted to form a set band, which would rehearse regularly and set a higher musical standard. (Jan Drechsler, Bob Mills, Whitney Collins, Richard Carlin and Mike Lemonick- they became the band Tripping Upstairs.) There was an open meeting at Wilson College, at which they not only wanted to have most of the dances played by them, but also wanted to be paid (we didn't pay any local musicians at that point). For the first time in my life, I spoke willingly in public: the dancers had created an inclusive, welcoming, supportive community, and I thought the musicians should, as well. Apparently lots of others felt the same way; we ended up with the precursor of the present arrangement, with some dances or portions thereof reserved for set bands, and others reserved for pickup bands. That welcoming environment for musicians has helped create the rich and deep instrumental community that we have now, which apparently is the envy of nearly every other dance community.

From Pat Palmer in 2001, via the PCD pickup band web pages:

When I first played in the Princeton pick-up band, not only was I a beginning player, but I was also painfully shy. Robert LaRue, the father of the pick-up band who ran it and nurtured and shaped it in its early days, encouraged me constantly, and tricked me into playing my first solo so that I wouldn't have time to think about it and choke. This was back in the late 1980's.

The way I got there in the first place was due to Annie Anderson. I heard her playing mandolin one evening, back before I played mandolin at all, when I just danced, and it was a wonderful, pretty sound. So I asked her how long she had been playing, and she replied "2 years". That phrase rattled around in my head, so that I went out the next week and bought my first mandolin and began practicing it in secret. Then I arranged to take a few lessons from Richard Smith. A year passed and I showed up for a pick-up band. I took a seat in the back. It was many more months before I was ready to play out, but the die was cast.

The best thing I ever did was decide to memorize a tune. I learned one, then another. Then I set myself the goal of learning a favorite tune once a week. One thing led to another, to where today, I would rather not use music at all and rarely have to.

My mandolin has traveled all over the world with me. It can be played in a car or an airport. It changed my life for the better. To Robert, Annie, Richard and all the members of the pick-up band, who are very supportive of beginning players, I owe thanks for providing me a place in which to learn. and enjoy myself.

From Debbie Goodkin in 2001, via the PCD pickup band web pages:

At the fountain. . .

My strongest memory of pick up band was one summer ages ago when we were dancing outdoors at the fountain on Washington Road (say 1987ish). We had just set up our stands, mikes, and lights when it began to pour. We all moved into the small cathedral-ceilinged foyer of the building behind us (the Woodrow Wilson School?). The band set up on the balcony, and the dancers danced below. LOVELY!! I remember this every time I take out my copy of the medley "West Fork Gals/Cold Frosty Morning/Little Dutch Girl" - it's still pock-marked from the rain!!

From Bob Mills:

as it turns out the 30th Anniversary is Dawn Dance weekend, so i won't be able to participate! argh!

in any case, here's some stories.

although i bet most people date the dance from our first days in Wilcox Hall, in my mind the dance was started by david chandler, first at a church just a few hundred yards south of Six Mile Run Church which we used many years later in Franklin Park, where i played guitar with Margaret Ann Martin and Louise. and then 1-2x at a small back room in the Y at Princeton. i think that was 1978, but my calendar from that year is missing...

i remember it being from the start an English dance, possibly including some contra.

in wilcox hall, we danced in "The Red Room", which had red carpet, red couches, and brave Communist worker style paintings of the sort that must have been commissioned by the governments of Russia and China. we had a pickup band of up to 10-12 people. Tripping Up Stairs, PCD's first named band, congealed out of this, and was first composed of Michael Lemonick, Jan Drechsler and Bob Mills. around this time there was a movement towards more contra, less English, which eventually became all contra.

we were briefly at the Graduate College, at the time Kevin Moore was born; i remember Ann Harwood dramatically announcing his name at the dance the night he was born. around this time, Richard Carlin started playing with Tripping Up Stairs. and a little later, we were joined by John Pranio. The version with Jan, John, and me is the one that stuck the longest, and we got well enough known to play many dances in other places, including the Brattleboro Dawn Dance, and recorded a few years later.

we moved to Trinity Church in time for the 2nd Rum & Onions, which i nominally co-chaired with Barbara, although she did all the work.

in 1986 Tripping Up Stairs started recording, and then we heard that Hold the Mustard was scheduling recording sessions, and i thought "we'd better get this sucker done, we won't sell Any of them once an HTM record comes out!". my fears were apparently unfounded, as we later sold over a thousand of them, and i still get occasional requests for it since i remastered it for CD around 2002.

in the early 90's, John Pranio moved to Maine, and for a few years, Tripping included both Robert Mills and Bob Mills, a confusing situation for many, sometimes us included. someone once called Jan Drechsler on the phone and asked if "Bob" could play piano for an event; she responded "oh, you don't want Him on piano, he can't play to save his life".

From Larry Koplík:

I joined Pick-Up Band on the recorder very soon after I started contra dancing in 1984. Here's the story of how I came to play contra piano (from a letter I wrote for the Country Dance and Song Society newsletter, July/August 1991).

The Princeton area dance community recently held a memorial service and dance for Eric Scott whose reputation as a composer and as the pianist for Hold the Mustard, Rag and Tangle, Shepherd's Holiday, and other bands is well known. I want to share another aspect of Eric that is probably not as well known: his role as an excellent and generous teacher.

About six years ago I became enthralled with contra dancing, particularly as danced to the music of Hold the Mustard. I remember complimenting Eric on his playing and chatting with him about the trademark band aids he put on his fingers (to protect them from his vigorous playing!).

When he learned of my interest in moving from classical piano training to playing contra dance piano he offered to give me lessons. When I asked how much he would charge for the lessons, he told me that he would be delighted to give them for free. I

asked him if he was sure that I could not pay him something, but he insisted on taking nothing. He said that he wanted to do it as a service to the dance community.

So over the past four years, Eric and I met at his house for a lesson whenever we could get our schedules together. His wife, Marge, would always be there, occasionally offering her advice or a cup of tea.

I received a thorough training in contra dance piano, starting with the basic "boom chicks" and moving on to bass runs and complex chord progressions. This training has been invaluable to me; it has helped to increase my proficiency and confidence as one of the pianists for pick-up bands in our area.

I had lessons with Eric until about a month before he died. One of the last tunes we went over was Fiddlin' David. Now, when I play that, or almost any other tune, I will be reminded of him. Not only can I see the notations in his handwriting on much of my music, but my style of playing will always be influenced by his teaching. Maybe someday I can pass on to other beginning contra dance pianists some of what I learned from this wonderful and generous man.

Since I wrote that letter almost 18 years ago, I have given contra piano lessons to several of our musicians, including Dianne Britton and Roberta Truscello, continuing Eric's tradition of doing it for free as a service to the dance community. If anyone would like to learn more about playing contra dance piano, please let me know, and we'll set up some lessons!

From Louise McClure:

Here's one more story: One evening at the Wilcox Hall dance, a young, tall, skinny guy in his mid- to- late twenties came up during break and said, "I play a little clarinet. Would it be O.K. if I sit in on a few numbers?" "Sure," I replied. So he did, and he was pretty good - even transposing fast tunes at sight! I was pleased to have another good musician interested in participating, since some of the pickup band members were not strong players.

Later in the evening, I was raked over the coals by two of the longer-term players: "Clarinet is NOT a traditional contra dance instrument! It's the wrong sound! What were you thinking?!!" I stuck to my guns, thinking it was more important to have an open, welcoming community than to aim for a specific sound.

That clarinet player has by now totally transformed and redefined the "traditional" sound of contra dance music nationwide. Thank you, Daniel Beerbohm!

From Bob Pasquarello:

I can remember the first time that I played for PCD. I had been playing in the pickup band for the Yardley Dance run by Steve Schnur and had met a lot of Princeton musicians and dancers. When I arrived to setup for the dance at 187 Nassau, Bob Dupre came up to me and said, "Since this is your first time in Princeton, let me introduce you to some of the dancers." With that he led to a knot of about a dozen people and started with "This is Bob (Mills), and here's Robert (Mills!), and this is Bob and Robin (now Davis), you already know Barbara (Greenberg)" Every person in that group had a variation of the name Bob! This was a part of the inspiration behind naming A Band Named Bob—(there are other factors, ask me sometime when you've got a few minutes.)

The Callers

From Bob Isaacs:

Here's a story from the last 10 years:

In the fall of 2001, I was being considered to be included in the PCD caller rotation. In looking around for ways to increase being accepted, I noticed there was not yet a dance named after the Princeton community. So I took a chance; I named a new experimental-looking Petronella dance after the PCD, and the result was one of my best dances that continues to be used by callers all over:

Princeton Petronellas - Improper

A1. Neighbor balance, swing

A2. Balance, Petronella turn, partner allemande L 1/2, 1/2 hey (LR, NL, GR, -)

B1. Partner balance, swing

B2. Balance, Petronella turn, neighbor allemande L 1/2, 1/2 hey (LR, PL, GR, -)

Later on Lisa Greenleaf nicknamed this "The Clap Trap" [because] dancers may think they can do the claps, but that will make them late for the swings. I probably would have made the rotation without this, but it sure helped.

From Barbara Simpson Vadnais:

Early on in his calling career, I remember when Bob Isaacs called a square in my living room after Rum and Onions. Yes, we still had enough energy to dance the square at that late hour and I don't remember what we did for music but Bob completed the square like a pro!

The People behind the Scenes

From Spence Wilcox:

Speaking as someone who has regularly sat at the acoustically challenged end of the hall at Suzanne Patterson, managing dances, I'd like to give special thanks to PCD's sound managers, and their technical support staff, for their work. IMO, the quality of PCD's sound has improved dramatically the past few years. Here's my understanding of some of the reasons why:

a.) Pete Soloway rebuilt PCD's vintage EV loudspeakers. b.) Paul Prestopino repaired and maintained PCD's vintage mixing board, monitors, and a couple of suitcases full of microphones and cables. c.) Bob Mills guided the PCD Executive Committee towards acquisition of an additional pair of new, self-powered, Mackie loudspeakers to deal with the wacky acoustics at the bottom of the hall at Suzanne Patterson (“Ever been stuck in the back or side of the room at a great show, wishing the sound didn't suck? We have.” -- Mackie loudspeaker company web site.) d.) Paul Prestopino developed and presented workshops to train new sound managers, and to upgrade the skills of existing sound managers. And finally, e.) there are PCD's stalwart weekly sound managers, doing the setup, micing and mixing so effectively. Lisa Flemming and Marie Hendel immediately come to mind as the most active sound managers in recent years, but I am certain there are others who deserve a tip of the hat as well.

All of these people have kept PCD's performers sounding great, dance after dance.

From Barbara Simpson Vadnais:

SPC's [mercury arc vapor] overhead lights can pose a challenge! There was a moment of silence at the start of pick up band recently when someone inadvertently shut the lights down and we all had to wait for them to come back on. One night I was managing the dance and flipped the lights off and returned the keys to the police station only to find that the lights had come back on when I returned to the parking lot. So I went back to the police station, pushed the button to be let in and got the pink key back to reopen the hall to shut the lights off again. I hope that's the last time I make that mistake!

Special Events

This section describes:

- Head for the Hills
- Rum & Onions
- May Day Dawn Dance

Head for the Hills

From Ellen Harrison and the HFTH Committee (circa 2007)

The advent of autumn in the Northeast has that tinge of familiarity. We all greet the increasing nip in the air by donning sweaters – watching for the leaves to turn and fall, and then looking forward to them crunching beneath our feet – anticipating Halloween and Thanksgiving. For more than 20 years, however, in the Princeton Country Dancers' community, the approach of fall brings the anticipation of something else – the weekend that we all pack up our households and Head For the Hills. Almost always held the second weekend in November (half way between Rum and Onions, our notorious Halloween dance, and Thanksgiving), Head For the Hills is PCD's annual music and dance retreat. Features include four big dances, workshops in contra, English, couple dancing, singing (including a yearly Sunday morning "Sing"), ritual dancing, band workshops,, a Saturday afternoon cocktail party -- complete with bartenders and a swing band -- and a Saturday night ceilidh, or talent show – all staffed, run, and presented from within the community.

Head for the Hills was started in 1984 by Dan Post (now long departed to western pastures). Dan attended an English dance weekend at Hudson Guild Farm in north

Jersey, and was so taken with the facilities that he began musing on how PCD could make use of them. Dan's stated vision was to "go away for the weekend with 100 of your closest friends," offering workshops and dances staffed by leaders, callers and musicians mined from the abundant talent inherent in the community. This way, not only did we provide all of our own entertainment, but costs could be kept down by not having to hire expensive "outside" talent. Those who ran or played for the variety of programs were offered "shares," i.e. a discount off the price of the weekend.

The first year was a rousing success, jump-starting plans for it to become a yearly tradition. Now we welcome dancers from near and far, newcomers and those who return each year. They come from as close as Philadelphia, New York and Princeton, and from as far as Seattle, Virginia, and Vermont to join us. We remained at Hudson Guild until, sadly, the facility closed in 1995. After an extensive search, we were back up and running in 1997 at a new location, Camp Harlam in the Poconos. During the summers, Camp Harlam hosts a summer camp for children from Reformed Jewish congregations all over the northeast. The camp's winterized motel-style rooms, two gorgeous dance halls, and other common rooms are more than sufficient for our needs, especially as the HFTH community changes and grows.

And we have changed, and we have grown. One of our biggest changes is notable from last year's [2006] registration figures – 27 of our attendees were under 18. We've added more family and children's programming while always ensuring that our core of dance, music and song workshops remain vibrant and exciting. Additionally, every year more of the children who've grown up attending Head For the Hills become workshop leaders and musicians. Another sea change has been the growing interest in couple dancing, leading not only to couple dance workshops in every time slot (recent offerings have included Tango, Swing, Cajun, Scandinavian, and Waltz) but also more couple dancing included in the social dance portions of the weekend, often with large, acoustic pickup bands playing from the middle of the dance floor.

A typical Head For the Hills would include workshops in English and Contra dancing, ritual dancing (Cotswold Morris, Border Morris, Longsword, Rapper, Molly, Abbot's Bromley, to name a few possibilities), 3-4 couple dance workshops as aforementioned, the writing and rehearsing of an all-age mummies'-type play, to be performed in the Saturday night Ceilidh, the Sing, a more organized singing workshop, often culled from other singing traditions (Songs of the Sephardim, Quebecois tunes, Sacred Harp), group

instrumental instruction (piano for contra bands, fiddle, whistle, mandolin, and a current favorite, the all-age band workshop, where the younger generation and those just starting out learn tunes in order to join the amazing pick-up band on Saturday night and play for the dancers, many for their first time ever.). Sometime during the weekend, a workshop slot is often given up to relaxation, as someone teaches yoga, tai chi, or massage techniques. Just before the last dance on Sunday afternoon, there's a pause that refreshes as a group gives a brief chamber music concert. At any given moment, you might see little groups of two or more conspiring in corners, planning their secret Ceilidh act, or a motley group jamming in the living room under the main hall. Regular bands for the Contra and English dances include Raise the Roof, A Band Named Bob, Hold the Mustard and A Joyful Noise.

From Robert LaRue in 2000, via the PCD pickup band web pages:

Last year after HFTH, I promised several people I would publish on the PCD web page the lyrics I wrote (and that Bob Dupre and Annie Moos sang) to "Jump At The Sun."

What with one thing and another I never did. At the time, I also wanted to write down and publish a little story about last year's HFTH. Since it's a story that seems to have repeated itself for me again this year, I might as well tell it now.

I'd been asked to lead PUB at HFTH last year and "jumped at the chance." But since I hadn't been playing with that group for many years, I was wondering what I could bring to it that would be new, or different, or--more importantly--somewhat exciting.

I've always been amazed at both the breadth and depth of the musical talent of the PCD community, and always grateful for the sense of community that would let something like PUB flourish. Even more, I had always wanted to somehow get the wonderful voice talents of past and present musicians onto the contra-dance band bandstand.

So I invented some stuff, and resurrected some stuff, and asked Bob and Annie to sing. With no practice time scheduled, as the hour approached, I was filled with anxiety.

I wondered if I was nuts to try to wing unfamiliar arrangements and musty gimmicks with a group I hadn't worked with in years. But, of course, I needn't have worried. With aplomb, panache, and consummate musical ability, my rough and sketchy ideas were brought to musical reality by a group of people I can only call "awesome."

I was invited this year again to lead PUB. And this time I got off into even wilder territory, and faced an even greater sense of trepidation.

But yet again, my posterior was saved by PUB. My thanks to you all. I could point out many individual contributions from any of the people on the stage last Saturday, but I really should extend special thanks to Barbara for helpful advice both before and during the gig.

While I'm at it, I should also mention that John Winchester and Scott Marshall--both former PUB leaders who contributed greatly to PUB's range of happy musical styles--were important sources for me, and I "borrowed" (not to say outright stole) some of their ideas and tunes. John introduced the idea to me of using swing tunes as contra dance melodies, and first introduced "Goody Goody" (in Bb and noted without lyrics, or even chord suggestions!) many years ago. Scott did the original arrangement of last year's waltz, "I Only Have Eyes For You," and, with only some slight alterations, was what I used.

This year's waltz, "Waltz for Debby," was written by Bill Evans, with lyrics by Gene Lees. Some people have asked me for the lyrics. They are copyrighted, so I'd better not publish them here. I chose this particular waltz, not only for the tune, but for the lyrics--meaningful for all of us with grown or growing children.

The lyrics for "Jump at the Sun" are my own and are hereby bequeathed to "the folk."

Thanks again to PCD and PUB for many years of great music, good companionship, and fond memories.

Love, Robt

Jump At The Sun

*Jump at the sun, jump at the moon,
Jump at the dance and jump at the tune;
Jump at the laughter, jump at the fun,
Jump at the moon and jump at the sun.*

*Jump at the sun, jump at the moon,
Jump into May, jump into June;
Jumping for joy, jump up and run,
Jump at the moon and jump at the sun.
Jack be nimble, Jack be quick!
Jack jump over the candlestick!
Jump in the lake, jumping the gun,*

Jump at the moon and jump at the sun.

*The joint is jumping, jump at the chance--
Jump out onto that floor and dance!
Macbeth, he jumped the life to come;
Jump at the moon and jump at the sun.*

From Judy Klotz:

I think our November getaway weekend is one of PCD's most intense 'glues'. Bill and I moved to Princeton from Philadelphia in December 1985. We were already friends with Beth and Robert, and knew some other PCD folks through English dancing. We started going to Harlingen and to other PCD events, but I didn't know that I had indeed become a member of this wonderful community of people until the next November. I remember being particularly moved by the exuberance and warmth of everyone at the final dance in the Barn on Sunday afternoon. I've never missed a HFTH weekend since, and I've observed many other dancers experience at the weekend the realization that they are part of our unusual and precious PCD. And so many kids from near and far have become close friends there and look forward all year to spending that weekend together.

From Ann Harwood:

I have chaired and co-chaired Head for the Hills a good number of times since the weekend began in 1984. It was always a challenge, always a delight, and always a time for great fun, dancing, music, and renewing friendships...*except* for one peculiar problem.

Whenever I chaired the weekend during the 1980s, I became subject to the most odd and surprising dreams! As I dream in color, I wasn't surprised at the technicolor aspect of the dreams, it was just that they seemed so real! Then again, when you are woken up in the middle of the night, or think you are, everything seems acutely real.

The first of these dreams involved bearded men in pastel prom/bridesmaids dresses singing "Going to the Chapel." It was so real that to this day, I can almost name the men I saw in that dream.

The second had many more people winding through the bedroom doing a *very* late night, post *post* party version of “Abbots Bromley.” I could swear that there were people who looked like a number of my friends—oh so quiet—holding beer bottles to their heads in lieu of antlers. There were musicians too, of course...*very* spooky.

The third was the most amazing dream of all. Suddenly, my roommate and I were awakened around 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning by what seemed like a mob of naked, or near naked, friends—musicians and dancers—playing and Appalachian clogging to “In the Mood,” but calling it “In the Nude.” Isn’t that the most peculiar thing? Aside from my memory of a number of rather sheepish-looking friends, and some interesting clogging moves (shall we say), my clearest memory of this event is watching my roommate, Fern Bradley, laughing so hard that she was gasping for air. Strange that she and I had the exact same dream!

[2008 HFTH Photo Sets](#) (courtesy of Stas W)

[2007 HFTH Video Clip 1](#)

[2007 HFTH Video Clip 2](#)

Rum & Onions

From Bob Pasquarello:

My first encounter with Rum & Onions was the year of “The Stars and Stripes Forever,” The memory of Debbi Kanter dresses up as the Statue of Liberty still warms my heart. I remember an after R&O party at 27 Van Wyck when Steve Zakon whipped up delicious nachos in a remarkably short time just from rummaging in the kitchen. I may be mistaken but I think that was the night of the Lasagna challenge—Bob Stein and Barbara Greenberg were both going on about how they made the best lasagna until they set a date for a showdown.

The first year I took the baton, I was learning on the job. I was using my whole body as a metronome. By the end of each rehearsal my calves were sore from bouncing up and down so much. After doing it all afternoon and all evening the day of the big event, it took me days to recover enough to walk without any aches.

Some of the fun of Rum & Onions comes in the preparations. What a great excuse to think about dance music all day and all night. I truly enjoyed pouring through stacks of music and figuring out which tunes went together well and finding that special piece for the Big Number. They the hard work and great joy in presenting the music to the band and having everyone dig in and make it extra special.

My neck hairs still stand up when I just think about standing in front of all those wonderful musicians playing the Hoedown from Rodeo. Other favorites for me were Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band and Oklahoma. Kathy and I have framed pictures of us in R&O costumes scattered around the living room. They always make me smile.

From Jane McCarty:

George Miller played in R & O. His girlfriend brought his hat with flowers on it to R & O the year after he died. Michael wore it [while conducting the band] during the afternoon [dance].

2008 R&O Photo Set (courtesy of Stas W)

May Day Dawn Dance

From Bob Dupre and Curtis Hoberman:

Millstone River Morris first danced at dawn(!) on May 1, 198?. They have done so every May Day since. The festivities moved to the Mercer Oak at the Princeton Battlefield in 198?.

In the intervening years the activities have expanded to include garland and sword dancing by Shandygaff Longsword, rapper dancing by Griggstown Lock, and molly dancing by Handsome Molly. A May Pole dance and the singing of May carols were added under the direction of Janet Mills. In recent years a Padstow Hobby 'Os has joined in. The dawn stand has always ended with the dancing of Sellinger's Round led by Sue Dupre and a rendition of Hal 'n Tow lead by Mary Zikos.

For many years, the dawn activities have been followed by breakfast at the Princeton Friends School prepared by Marian Hepburn. The day then continues with dancing at

Princeton Friends, University League Nursery School, Princeton High School, and other local schools. After dancing around town, and at the University, the day often ends at “our adopted pub”, the Ship Inn in Milford, NJ.

Inspired by the Princeton activities, a May Day celebration was started at the Toll Gate School by Janet Mills. This celebration later moved to Hopewell Elementary and then to Bear Tavern School. Far beyond a simple visit of the local ritual teams, this celebration includes all students, and many faculty and parents, dancing, singing and playing music of the season.

A very special feature of the local May Day celebration is the addition of Stony Brook Morris. Composed of students from the Princeton Waldorf School, and led by Jamie Watson, they dance Cotswold Morris. The local ritual teams have always welcomed young dancers, but a full team of youthful dancers and musicians adds a great deal of energy to the event (as well as a lot of parents in the audience).

This year, dancing began at 5:45 AM in Princeton and ended at 8:30 PM in Doylestown, PA. There were eight “stands”. We expect to see you all at the Princeton Battlefield at 5:45 AM, May 1, 2010!

Performance Teams

This section describes:

- Abbots Bromley Horn Dancers
- Academy of PCD in the Hills
- Griggstown Lock Rapper
- Handsome Molly
- Millstone River Morris
- Shandygaff Longsword and Garland
- Cotillion Singers
- Foaming at the Feet

Abbots Bromley Horn Dancers

From Judy Klotz and Margoleath Berman:

The origin of the PCD Abbots Bromley kit may be as shadowy as the origin of the dance [itself] in England (<http://www.abbotsbromley.com>). [All we know is that] in 1994 or so, Millstone and Shandygaff people decided they wanted to dance it. And that Bob Dupre made the original bow and arrow. C.D.N.Y's Kit Campbell years later supplied the Fool's costume (replacing some tattered 1960's era clothing from Judy's closet which had been supplemented by very ugly neckties from thrift stores). Judy sewed a lace fringe on an ugly orange umbrella, to make the Betty's 'parasol'. The current white-tail deer horns, smaller and easier to carry than the ones used in Abbots Bromley village, or by CDSS, came from a supply house in Idaho called "Moscow Hide and Fur". Really. The previous set of large and small horns were supplied by Curtis... we're not sure we want to know where those came from. Margoleath has an extra set of "emergency" horns in her basement, scavenged from a road-kill pile the Great Swamp by a park ranger with folk tendencies.

We performed "AB" (Bob Dupre taught it the first time, and it was 'folk process' for the most part since then) at Cotillion, at Head for the Hills, on the streets and Public Library of Princeton, for special events (Dilip Soni's birthday), at Germantown Country Dancers' 12th Night. We lent the kit for people's weddings and to CD-New York's "True Brit".

A generation of kids have been the boy hunter, including Destiny Henderson at the tender age of 5. Some good –humored guys with beards have danced the “Betty”, including Bob Dupre, Robert Mills, and Robert Lupton. Janet Mills and many others with good coordination have balanced and danced the hobby horse.

Some particular memories: When because of a car mishap the horns didn’t arrive in Philadelphia in time for their Twelfth Night festivities we danced with “invisible horns” and John Krumm made appropriate wood-tapping sounds from the stage. As we pranced through Princeton’s Small World Coffee, diners said “I think they’re from Philadelphia Revels” . We also “herd [the following remark] on the street” as we processed on Nassau: ”You see, *this* is why I like Princeton so much!” [And then there was the time] Barbara Greenberg tiptoed, playing the fiddle, from her own backyard into Debbi Kanter’s for our rehearsal for Dilip’s surprise. [I also recall] we included extra deer at the Head for the Hills “AB” workshop so all who wanted could be part of the dance. Louise Senior and family currently house the costumes and horns. She, Curtis, and others have been organizing performances at Cotillion and elsewhere.

[2007 AB Video Clip 1](#)

[2007 AB Video Clip 2](#)

Academy of PCD in the Hills

From Judy Klotz and Barbara Greenberg:

The Academy provides chamber music mini-concerts at PCD's November HFTH weekends.

It all started in Richard Fischer’s living room in 1988 or 1989; he plays recorders and often assembled friends to play Bach and other Baroque and Renaissance music. One time a bunch of us had an exuberant time reading through the 2nd Brandenburg Concerto, and we said “let’s perform it at Head for the Hills”. The rest is history. The first of those performances was in the hallway at Hudson Guild, serenading people waiting to get food for Sunday lunch. Richard played the trumpet part on soprano recorder (he says there’s arcane scholarly evidence this might have been intended by Bach), Pete Soloway

played the oboe part on saxophone. They sounded terrific. We've made similar adaptations ever since. . We've had Renaissance Sackbut lines played by Eric Allender or Janet Mills on modern trombone. Daniel Beerbohm has played viola lines on the clarinet and I play tenor viola da gamba for viola lines. Pat Palmer played the mandolin as....a mandolin (Don Giovanni) and as a 2nd violin (Eine Kleine Nachtmusic).

Subsequent mini-concerts have had between 5 and 15 musicians, including singers. In later years we performed in the living room at Hudson Guild. In the Poconos, we've mostly played in the dining hall, just before Sunday lunch. We've played lots of Baroque (including Handel's Water Music and reprises of Brandenburg #2), lots of Renaissance. Ted McClure and I, and occasionally Susie Lorand, have coordinated during various years after Richard Fischer initiated this tradition.

I especially remember the Italian program, when we renamed ourselves "I Solisti di PCD alle Mantagne" (translation courtesy of Ann Harwood) and which was MC'd by "Barbara Monteverdi". And there was the first Purcell program: after a medley of theater dances that are familiar to us as tunes for English Country dances, a vocal quartet sprang up surprising the crowd with a hearty rendition of "Ye Sons of Art". And for the last two years, Mozart with Bob Dupre or Annie Anderson singing operatic favorites.

Our musicians have done heroic traveling: Ted once went home on Sunday morning from Hudson Guild for a church performance and then returned to the Hills to play in one of the reprises of the 2nd Brandenburg. Barbara once forgot to take her best violin to Hudson Guild, went home after the dance Friday night and returned with it on Saturday morning. Judy spent days at the Lincoln Center, Westminster, and Princeton music libraries retrieving original scores of Purcell, Handel, and Lully. Between Novembers, we've re-assembled a few times for the Cotillion, and for PCD anniversaries. For the PCD 30th we're playing more Purcell, reprising a favorite program that Ted organized about 3 years ago.

From Louise McClure:

I remember Pete [Soloway] inviting me to play with him and Richard Fischer in one of their living rooms, and my realizing that both of them were really good. We did it several times, slowly adding more people. That probably became the core group for the Academy.

Griggstown Lock Rapper

From Michael Bell and Jane McCarty:

Griggstown Lock Rapper Team was formed by Jane McCarty and Michael Bell to dance at their wedding in 1989. The name of the group refers to both the lock in the form of a star made by the intricate weaving done with flexible swords during the dance, and the Griggstown Lock on the Delaware and Raritan Canal not far from Jane and Michael's house. The original members were Mary Zikos, Sue and Bob Dupre, Debbie Goodkin, Jane McCarty and Michael Bell (on fiddle). Michael soon became bored with only playing the fiddle, so he started to dance with the group too. By 1993 the group also included Janet and Robert Mills, Trish Petzold, Ken and Rachel Samoil. For Jane's grandmother's 100th birthday celebration we expanded our repertoire to include singing in four parts, a morris jig (Robert), performances of English Country Dances and instrumental pieces (fiddles - Janet, Michael, Debbie, guitar - Robert, penny whistle - Jane). After this performance, we took our show on the road, making hour-long presentations to retirement communities and at the Philadelphia Art Museum. Over the years that Janet and Robert were members, singing became a large part of our act – we tackled songs old and new - the Lollipop song, O Occhi Manza Mia, Summer is cummin in, among others.

Some of the creative inspiration came from Trish Petzold who played the lead role of Michael Flatley of River Dance/Lord of the Dance in the Griggstown Lock spoof called Canal Dance, performed at HFTH. Robert Mills played the lead female dancer and the other members were the back-up dancers.

Other gigs have included street festivals such as Hopewell Harvest Days, Cranberry Days, Heritage Dance Festival and Troubadour Folk Club, Communiversity in Princeton, Princeton Shopping Center May Madness, Half Moon Sword Ale, Mixed Morris Ales, Plainsboro Traditions, PCD Winter Cotillion, and the Philadelphia Art Museum. For several years GL “did” a Wednesday night; Trish and Janet called the dances, Robert, Jane, Michael, Debbie, Ben and Trish or Janet were the band and at the break the team sang and danced a rapper dance.

The group is known for its changing kits – several over the first few years, then about a decade of the black and teal striped shirts before Ronnie Snader interviewed the team and helped us decide on style/colors for our new vests which are reversible!

GL names its dances for one of the figures in it and all are named after foods: Donuts, Popcorn, Jalapeno, Stir-fry, Hammentaschen. One night while we were practicing at Sue and Bob's house, we got to the donuts figure and called out "donuts" – when we heard small voices from Sam and Cal upstairs "Save some for us".

Other former members not mentioned earlier include Mark Goldman, Beth Hodsdon, Robert LaRue, Marian Hepburn, Ben Bolker, Ezra Fischer, Erin Schrayner, Sue Gola, Yana Malysheva. The current members are Jane McCarty, Michael Bell, Debbie Goodkin, Rachel Samoil, Barry Schnorr, Juliette Calvairn, Nathan Wozny and Chloe Calvairn.

Thank you all for 20 years of dancing and singing.

From Sue Gola:

I remember a gig at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. About ten of us carpoled in two vehicles with the promise of parking spaces being reserved near the entrance. When we arrived, the guard removed the traffic cones from our reserved spots, and the woman in the car behind ours pitched a fit that we'd stolen her parking space...this after seeing the ten of us pile out in our matching knickers and teal-and-black striped turtle necks! Maybe she thought we were there as part of a family reunion???

At the same gig, one of the audience members approached us after our performance to compliment our dancing. He also added that it was clear we were enjoying dancing with each other. That's what it's all about, isn't it?

Handsome Molly

From Sue Dupre:

One of the great things about the PCD community is that there are always people who'll say 'yes' to trying something new.

So, when Mary Zikos and I got all excited about The Seven Champions, who were the heroes of the molly dancing world in England, there were people who let us pester them into trying molly dancing here. That's how Handsome Molly came to be born in 1993, and sixteen years later we're still here. We dance molly dancing with just one molly, Bob Dupre, who dresses in a floral pinafore and a flowered hat. The rest of the team wears motley black, and we wear make-up to disguise our faces, because we're trying to look urban tough, after all (Handsome Molly has even been mentioned in a PhD. thesis titled "Molly Dancing and the Seven Champions: Postmodernism and the Re-invention of Tradition" in a discussion of our urban tough guise). We're aiming for a sense of street theater with inventive choreography and heavy rhythmic stepping, rather than going for the strict historic interpretation of molly dancing. Most of the time, we dance to Mary Zikos' singing, though once in a while Ross Harriss will make his sax sing for us.

Life as the first all-molly team in North America has been exciting. We've danced in San Francisco and Canada and dared to dance in England, which had us shaking in our boots. In 1998 we were starting to feel comfortable enough as a team that we wangled ourselves an invitation to the Straw Bear Festival in Whittlesea (a big-deal molly dancing event!) in East Anglia, UK.

We were going to be the first American molly team ever to appear there, and we were nervous but calm until Brian Kell, the Festival organizer talks to us on the phone and says "we're really looking forward to seeing what you Yanks have done with molly dancing." Not a way to calm us down! But we held our own and finally had the thrill of dancing one of The Seven Champions dances with the very Seven Champions themselves. Handsome Molly went back again to the Straw Bear Festival in 2004 as seasoned and pretty decent molly dancers. Highlight #1 of that trip was dancing as half-time entertainment at the big evening ceilidh dance in front of several hundred people, absolutely nailing our square dance, "Swing Your Molly," and listening to the crowd roar when we finished. Highlight #2 was visiting Cambridge on Plough Monday and meeting up with Gog Magog, the Cambridge molly dance team. There we were, in the very

Market Square where molly dancers in the late 19th century used to meet on Plough Monday to dance and fight with each other. It was the Holy Grail of molly dancing!

Handsome Molly has spun off other molly dance teams in the U.S. from California to Florida to Massachusetts, so our next big project is to produce a Molly Folly in October 2010. It'll be a festival of American molly dancing, and we hope to lure an English team or two over to celebrate with us. Mostly our entertainments are more modest. We dance for several hours at Terhune Orchards' Apple Tree Wassailing every year in late January or early February, and what a hoot it is to dance in the mud or snow and in the smoke from the bonfire with the dogs and the toddlers wandering through our set! In fact, it's our very favorite event. The 'high holy day' of molly dancing is Plough Monday, the first Monday after Twelfth Night, when molly teams from all over England are out celebrating and dancing. For our Plough Monday celebration, we bring our plough to be blessed at Trinity Episcopal Church in Princeton, stroll down to the Public Library to present a Plough Play and a performance, dance out in the streets, and then finally find our way to the home of our local gentry wannabes, Ellen Harrison, and Martin and Ross Harriss, where we yell and threaten to plough up their yard. Our rowdiness has never deterred them from inviting us into their warm house for hot cider.

Be sure to see our website at www.handsomemolly.com! And see the Wikipedia entry on molly dancing to find out more about this revival of a 19th century agricultural custom practiced originally in the fenny swampland of East Anglia.

Millstone River Morris

(New Jersey's finest Morris team.)

From Bob Dupre and Curtis Hoberman:

There was Morris dancing associated with PCD as early as 1979. Richard Carlin led classes for a time, and there was a group led by Marty Steerin that actually danced out in kit. What we now know as Millstone River Morris started in 1982. It was led by Martin Harriss and Andrea Osgood.

Squires	?	Tom Harrington	Curtis Hoberman
:			
Fores:	Andrea Osgood	Jim & Lindy Van Fleet	Robert LaRue
	Bob Dupre	Ben Bolker	Robert Mills

Millstone danced in the style of the village of Adderbury for several years. Inspired by a workshop led by Cammy Kaynor, they began dancing in the Bampton tradition. Somewhere in the 1990s, many morris teams began to develop their once styles. When Robert LaRue became foreman, he invented the team's current style which is best described as "Bampton meets Bledington, with galleys". The team just calls it "Princeton Under Construction". At least one Millstone dance has become part of the American Morris lexicon. Robert LaRue adapted Albemarle Morris Men's "Bean Setting" and renamed it "Steamfitters". It is now done by a number of teams across the U.S., many of whom do not know its origins.

For many years, Millstone appeared each Memorial Day weekend at the Mixed Morris Ale; first in Wood Hole, and later all around New England. When Curtis Hoberman (a son of VA) became "squire for life", the team began to look to the south. They appeared often in Baltimore, Virginia, and West Virginia. They even danced at the Smithsonian to celebrate the 75th anniversary of CDSS. They have also danced at three Midwest Morris Ales, two in Minneapolis, MN and one in Ann Arbor, MI. In 1992 they went to England and visited with many teams. They have also danced as far south as in Richmond, VA, and as far north as Toronto, ONT.

Millstone has hosted a number of English teams including, Kern Morris (Durham) Belchamp Morris (Belchamp-St. Pauls), Hurst Morris People (Hurst/Reading), the Cam Valley Morris Men (Co. Somerset), and Swindon Morris (Swindon).

2009 Millstone River Morris Video Clip

Shandygaff Longsword and Garland

From Sue Dupre:

I was almost new to dancing when Bob and I went to see the New York Revels for the very first time. That year the Revels were held in an old stone chapel in New York, dusky and mysterious. It was my very first sight of longsword dancing and the Abbots-Bromley Horn Dance, and I felt like I had seen heaven in these hypnotic dances that were old and spellbinding.

Beth Hodsdon was new to the community and understood why I wanted to bring longsword dancing to Princeton, so we worked together to bring David Chandler to Princeton to teach the Ampleforth sword (that same mysterious dance I had seen in the Revels) to a small group of curious people. A team of men and women called Shandygaff Longsword formed out of those series of workshops. We danced the longsword dances from the Yorkshire Villages of Ampleforth, North Skelton, Haxby, and Bellerby and later we added mummer's plays and garland dancing to our repertoire. Every one of us loved contra dancing and English country dancing, but, in practicing these ritual dances together week after week, we also discovered the extra pleasure of being part of a tightly knit group of people working together to make a performance that was beautiful or powerful or exciting to an audience.

Shandygaff Longsword traveled to England together to perform at a grand festival in Durham, and we danced at many Ales (gatherings of morris and sword and other ritual dancers). Although dozens of the dance community danced with Shandygaff over the years, by the mid to late 90s, when the team were more than 15 years old, we realized that we were each ready to move on to other things (by then our discussions often ran to talking about how the cummerbunds and knee breeches that looked so great 15 years before looked now on middle-aged women!). But we decided that we would dance in

honor of May Day and the winter solstice for as long as there are enough of us who remember the dances.

So like Brigadoon, you'll still see Shandygaff materialize every now and then with a garland dance for the spring and a sword dance for the winter. And because it really is wonderful to dance in honor of the seasons and to work with a group of people to create a performance, I'll occasionally lead workshops for the PCD community for a taste of sword dancing and garland dancing.

[2008 Shandygaff Photo Set](#) (courtesy of Stas W)

[2006 Shandygaff Video Clip](#)

Cotillion Singers

From Annie Anderson:

I started the Cotillion Singers without ever expecting to be reminiscing about it 25 years later! The first year there were five of us, singing from the Oxford Book of Carols. It was the first year we had the Cotillion in Harlingen Reform Church -- can't remember the exact year or the exact roster, but I'm pretty sure Pete Soloway, Marge Scott and Eric Scott sang that year.

Impossible to pick a favorite concert, out of all the Winter Cotillion concerts and subsequent concerts at the Troubador Folk Club, at Janet and Robert Mills' wedding reception, and other venues I can't remember. But my favorite moment was singing the Hallelujah Chorus a capella. It was the last Cotillion before Janet and Robert took on the direction. I usually conducted the group from the end, but for this one I decided to stand up front like a real conductor, and I'd had a black velvet ball gown altered so I could lift my arms up all the way.

I think we were all nervous and excited to sing this great work in such an unexpected way in such an unexpected setting. The Cotillions had knocked themselves out learning it -- so much more difficult and exacting than the folk music we usually sang. I stood up in front of almost 35 grinning Cotillion Singers, adjusted the music stand, and gave them the opening pitches. In the nerves of the moment, I couldn't figure out where to put my

pitch pipe -- velvet ball gowns don't have pockets, apparently. So I stuck it down my cleavage, raised my arms for the opening chord, and felt the pitch pipe drop down to the floor. The whole group gaped at the thing rolling away from under my skirt, then came in with a grand "HALLELUJAH!"

Foaming at the Feet

From Annie Anderson:

Foaming at the Feet started as an 8-week clogging workshop before the contra dance when we were at Princeton University in 1981. It included Bob Dupre, Trish Petzold, Garry Moore, Sue Dupre, Katy Ford, and me -- not sure if there were a couple others. The teacher was from Philadelphia and taught us a wonderful routine, which we performed for the first time at the contra dance, which had just moved to Trinity Church. We later found out, to our chagrin, that she had copied it step for step from the Fiddle Puppets, the premier Appalachian clogging team in the country. They got wind of it and apparently did a lot of soul searching about who "owns" a routine. In the end, it didn't matter because as soon as we found out, we dropped it from our repertoire and abased ourselves before them.

FATFeet danced from 1981 to about 1990 (?) and over the course of those years included:

Cindy Amaroso

Nick Amaroso

Annie Anderson

Bob Bender

Bob Dupre

Sue Dupre

Katy Ford

Ann Harwood

Robert Mills

Cindy _____?

Trish Petzold

The version of FATFeet that included Bob, Robert, Garry, Annie, Ann, and Trish went on tour to England in the summer of 1985. It was fun to be considered "international

dancers.” A memory that will make me smile even when I’m in the nursing home was the first night we performed at the Redcar Folk Festival in northern England. We were disappointed to find out that we’d been given a performance slot of 11:30 pm the first night of the festival. We figured we’d be dancing to the sweepers and the building manager at that hour. We waited backstage, tired from traveling and a little glum about the late slot. When we’d gone backstage, there had been only about 100 people in the hall, and some of them seemed already to be drifting toward the doors. What we didn’t know, as we sat back there, was that at 11pm all the pubs in town closed down, and the festival was the only place in town where you could buy a beer. So by the time we came out on the dance floor to perform we were met not by a handful of die-hards and the janitor, but easily 1,000 people packed into the place. They stood and sat at tables on the balcony surrounding the dance floor; there were people standing on chairs, people sitting on the balcony railings, women sitting on men’s shoulders, people shouldering their way through the crowd with pints held high over above their head. We launched into our best routine with even more adrenaline than usual. When the music ended, there was a beat of silence -- and then the entire place roared. I’d never heard a crowd actually roar, but now I have and I’ll delight in the memory forever.

Another FATFeet memory:

We came up with the name while sitting around the Dupre’s dining room table in Hopewell, talking and laughing late into the night after a dance. The women were saying that we often saw an odd look crossing a man’s face when we progressed and came at them for the next figure. “Yeah, that’s fear,” said Bob Dupre, “and what do you expect when you come at them, foaming at the... feet!?” We all immediately said, “wouldn’t that be a great name for our clogging team?”, and immediately followed that with, “whoa, that would be a hard name to live up to!” (... and I think we were all thinking, “wouldn’t it be great if we could pull it off?”) I think the name fit us from the start, but it also kept us to a high standard of energy and goofiness.

Outside the Dance Hall

This section describes:

- Pot Lucks and Other PCD Food Stories
- Quilting
- Friendships

Pot Lucks and Other PCD Food Stories

From Ann Harwood:

There were years when we regularly served 250 or more at R & O. When it was time to let people into the dining hall, I used to swing two flashlights with red tips over my head, the way airport runway guys do when they're guiding planes to the gate.

I know Paul Prestopino always loved my "meatless" labels from the 1980s pot lucks. He even stuck one or two on the old sound mixer!

And then there was the time [at HFTH] when I called the Hudson Guild staff on the carpet for serving chicken soup as a vegetarian lunch choice. "Chicken is NOT a plant," I howled. Later, Jan Drechsler saw fit to present me with a rubber chicken, gracefully planted in a terra cotta pot, as a memento.

Quilting

From Jan Drechsler:

Princeton Packet Headlines:

'Breaking and entering reported off Canal Road.'

'Woman cited in bloody [finger] stabbing Tuesday night in Hopewell.'

'Frame-up happens again in Skillman.'

Not news usually associated with quilters, but these could be actual news story lines.

Two Princeton travelers came home from abroad and discovered a newly finished quilt, in their locked home, placed lovingly on their bed. The perpetrators who broke in have

never been found. In fact, they may not even remember they did it. After all, thirty years is a long time to remember details. And after one hears a story enough, it becomes your own, So perhaps it was you that should be arrested for breaking and entering!

When I first read about women in earlier days, sitting around a quilt frame for an entire day, I could not understand the attraction. Why travel for miles, by foot, horse or car for that? Then, after laughing and consoling and talking over a quilt for an evening, I realized it was a gift to stop and just be with friends. The good desserts we shared helped too and made the evening extra special. Without a project, we probably wouldn't have gathered to sit and talk, but that connecting was a precious treat.

Friendships

From Sue Dupre:

Brookmead Farm:

Once upon a time, in 1980, after Sue Dupre and Bob Dupre and David Herndon had gotten hopelessly sucked into traditional dance and music, they decided to rent a house together, along with Ruth Anne Byers, hardanger fiddler and accordionist.

And what a house they found! They found Brookmead Farm, set back in the hills of Skillman. The Farm was a rambling pre-revolutionary farmhouse with a checkered past (vats of alcohol during Prohibition, raids with the alcohol running down the stairs, the naked hippies who painted their goats pink, the Pagan motorcycle gang and its gun battle with the cops right there at the house!) but peaceful by the time we got there, surrounded by fields and deer and pheasants and quail (this was before all the hills of Skillman became infested with developments).

There was a 16' X 32' living room, which demanded to be danced in, and so we all did. And because it was a very cold and very hard to heat house, we had to lure our friends in to dance and to heat the house up. Rum and Onions formed that year, and the first rehearsals were in that living room. The long arguments about whether the band should be called Rum & Onions or Jersey Lightning took place in that living room.

There were grand parties in the summer. One time we invited non-dancing friends we had known in graduate school to a wild, dancing, whooping, music-playing party in the

summer. When they left the party that night, they told us they felt like they were surrounded by moonies who were smiling all the time and trying to lure them in.

We only lived there for a year, because our friends couldn't dance every minute of every day, and we couldn't keep the budget-breaking cold away. But that year was a legendary time for us early PCD folks, as we cemented friendships and our love of the music and dance.

From Bob Pasquarello:

I was just thinking about what makes my connection with the Princeton Dance Community so special—it's the connections that I made to a wonderful collection of true friends.

I remember Pizza after Head for the Hills at Jan & Mills' house in Belle Mead. I remember hanging out for more pizza and beer after Longsword practice, dancing at the fountain in the summer (and ice cream from Thomas Sweets), 4th of July Parties at Michael and Jane's, music parties at Dan & Michal's, Trish & Garry's wedding, Robert & Janet's wedding, Daniel and Barbara's wedding and so many more special gatherings. I feel lucky and privileged to be included in so many hearts and so many memories.

In Memoriam: Gone but Not Forgotten

- Nancy Alexander
- Margaret Bendersky
- Tom Gibney
- Emeric Kurtz
- Elinor Lamont
- George Miller
- Jean Peters
- David Rewick
- Eric Scott
- Bruce Wasserman