

PRINCETON COUNTRY DANCERS

THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS



May 22nd, 1999

PRINCETON COUNTRY DANCERS: THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS

In 1978, we got together to put on a contra dance. Twenty years later, we're still putting on a contra dance, but it's become so much more. We've changed locations, we've moved away (and, in some instances, come back), we've explored other interests and brought them back into the mix, we've formed numerous offshoots, groups and families, and, in the process, we've become something somewhat different than a group of people putting on a contra dance. We've become a community, evolving constantly, but always coming back to each other.

The following "history," like the one written for the 10th Anniversary Dance (May 20th, 1989), is not necessarily meant to be a cold, hard record of facts. Rather, it should be approached like an Impressionist painting, a combination of little dots of color that when viewed all together organize themselves into one, big, bright picture. Move in close to look at one spot, or stand back and take in the whole, or, better than anything ----

Keep dancing!

IN THE BEGINNING...

...caller David Chandler created the dance, in 1978, and it was good. However, we actually became Princeton Country Dancers somewhat later, after the dance had moved onto the Princeton campus. PCD has graced many floors since -- OR SO WE THOUGHT. Actually, our many different locations shifts have just as frequently been due to our being chased out by the complaints of a facility's owners as it has been due to our choosing. A line in "Cotton-Eyed Joe" says "Where'd you come from, where'd you go?" Here's where we've been; don't know where we're going.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1978	Old School, Franklin Park	Caller: David Chandler English and Contras Musicians: Louise McClure, Bob Mills, Margaret Martin
1979-1981	YMCA, Princeton Hall too expensive; we move to: Wilcox Hall, Princeton University Kicked out; room divided in half	Additional musicians: Jan Drechsler, David Herndon, Richard Carlin & other pick-up players. Our first special event: The Harvest Ball, held at the Graduate College. Music by Tripping Up Stairs, callers Sue Dupre & David Chandler
1982-1984	Trinity Church, Princeton Kicked out for renovations	Good location, but hard,hard floor
1984	St. Paul's basement	Cement floors, steel posts!
1985	Harlingen Church Minister retires -- church kicks us out	Wonderful floor, huge kitchen, a STAGE
1988-1996	Six Mile Run Church, Franklin Park	We end up a few buildings away from our original site
1996-????	Suzanne Patterson Center, Princeton	Good floor, great location -- hopefully our home for many years to come.

Who remembers: summers dancing outside by the fountain at the Woodrow Wilson School, or at 185 Nassau or at Sunset Hills in Princeton?

A special mention is in order here to all of the dedicated people who, throughout all these years, served on the PCD Executive Board and saw to it that the Wednesday night dances and the special events took place no matter what happened.

THE BANDS

There can be no dance without the musicians.

Our regular bands for many years were:

TRIPPING UP STAIRS, circa 1979, which formed from pick-up musicians and then played every Wednesday at PCD for a year with the following membership list: Jan Drechsler, Bob Mills, Richard Carlin, Whitney Collins and Michael Lemonick. Later members were David Herndon, John Pranio and Robert Mills. Jan, Bob and John were asked to make a recording, which was released, to the surprise of all, in 1985, and Bob went on to record "Whatever Happened?" in 1997.

HOLD THE MUSTARD, circa winter of 1980-81, was formed when Marge and Eric Scott approached Barbara Greenberg and David Herndon about forming a band. Paul Prestopino joined next and then Dan Beerbohm. Kathy Talvitie now plays piano with HTM, and they have released recordings in 1987 and 1991.

Bands who have played English music for us: NICK'S MAGGOTS: Nick and Beth Kuhn and Michael Bell; PLUM PUDDING: Tom Norton, Eric Scott, Robert LaRue and Michael Bell; PUT THE KETTLE ON which then became SHEPHERD'S HOLIDAY: Ted and Louise McClure, Eric Scott, Karen Kevra and Tom Norton; WILL FOOD BE SERVED?: Michael Bell, Jane McCarty, Janet and Robert Mills.

Bands who have played Contra dance music for us: WHITEWATER: originally Janet (Peters) Mills, Bob Pasquarello, Barbara Greenberg and Annie (Anderson) Moos. Currently it's Janet and Bob with their spouses Robert Mills and Kathy Talvitie; RAG AND TANGLE: David Laurance, Eric Scott, Wes Steenson & Carol Hendrick. Later with Pete Soloway and Louise (Topp) McClure; BAND NAMED BOB: Bob Pasquarello, Bob Stein and Barbara Greenberg; TEENAGE DINOSAURS: Scott Marshall, Richard D. Smith, David Laurance; THREE AMIGOS: Bob Mills, Bob Pasquarello, Barbara Greenberg; GUILT-FREE MUSIC: Debbie Goodkin, Jane McCarty, Janet Mills and sometimes Robert Mills; "NAME THAT BAND:" Susie Lorand, Roberta Truscello, Michael Lemonick, Tom Gibney; P2C2E HOUSE: Ben Bolker, Frank Ruck, Roberta Truscello; CROSSING THE MILLSTONE: Larry Koplik, Jane McCarty, Michael Bell and John McDonald.

Special mention should also be made of Richard Fisher, Lucille Reilly, Paula Entin, Lenora Kandiner and Tim Cresson for their hours of dedicated playing for dances.

And most particularly, we celebrate

THE PRINCETON PICK-UP BAND!

"PUB" has been a musician's training ground for many and an inspiration for all as both newer and experienced musicians play side by side. Over the years many musicians have stepped in to put together set lists for the evening and to lead the band, and we are eternally grateful for all this.

CALLERS

Jan Drechsler points out that in spite of her many years of playing with Tripping Up Stairs at dances all over the country that it wasn't until she began calling that people began coming up to her and saying, "Hey, weren't you the caller at that dance I went to?" It is the callers that are the front-people at every dance, and these have represented us throughout the country dance community for the last 20 years:

David Chandler, Sue Dupre, Nick Kuhn, Beth Kuhn, Trish Petzold, Janet Mills, Robert LaRue, Elisabeth (Romanov) Patterson, Herb Frank, Jan Drechsler, Beau Farmer, Ridge Kennedy

Without these folks, we would not dance. They guide the newcomers, work on dance style, set an enthusiastic and welcoming tone for each evening and keep our feet moving. Please remember to thank them for freely offering their time and energy to keep PCD a vital dance.

A Note On Dance Camps:

Many dancers, musicians and callers have sharpened their skills and made long term friendships at wonderful dance camps and weekends. CDSS at Pinewoods, MA; Buffalo Gap, WV; Ashokan, NY; and Brasstown, NC are all within summer vacation driving distance and are a great alternative to the standard vacation cruise or beach vacation. English and American dance, clogging, morris, sword, fiddle or other instrument workshops, singing, swimming, hiking and 100 new friendships at the end of a week are a hard-to-beat combo.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Every year, PCD sponsors numerous special dances and events. Three of these, however, are more or less perennial, and all have been a result of that dyed-in-the-wool PCD maxim, that once it's been done once, it's a ritual and MUST be maintained at all cost.

RUM AND ONIONS

To the dancers, R&O is the annual Halloween dance, and means fabulous music, nationally known callers, wacky costumes, a terrific potluck and a special day of dance.

To the musicians, R&O means over 24 hours of rehearsals, expanding the repertoire of tunes, pushing musical capabilities (and often boundaries!), and the heady excitement of a "big number" that has included show tunes, jazz, and classical standards as well as TV theme songs. Many of the Princeton Pick-Up Band tunes were learned at past R&Os.

Now in its 19th year, R&O (the band) has also performed at the April New England Folk Festival since 1984. Their performance is so popular that they are cheered and applauded as they walk into the hall in their Halloween costumes; most bands have to perform BEFORE they receive applause.

Some of the costume highlights from the past ten years of R&O: a 5-person accordion, the Morris team as Dr. Seuss's Sneetches, the Mermaid, Wedding Presents, McDonald's fries, John Glenn, two Zorros on stage, a shower stall, Calvin & Hobbes, Sonny & Cher, and a web server all come to mind. Not to mention the perennial Freudian Slip....

<u>YEARS</u>	<u>LEADER</u>
1981, April & Nov. (R&O becomes a Halloween dance)	David Herndon
1982-1985	Barbara Greenberg
1986-1988	Janet (Peters) Mills
1989-1994	Bob Pasquarello
1995-present	Barbara Greenberg

We remember: Tony Parkes in his lobster costume and the music to Mozart's "Rondo a la Turk"/"Frailich #6," Penn Fix & "Hungarian Dance" and the theme to Alfred Hitchcock, David Kaynor & Bizet's "Carmen" and the "Cherokee Shuffle," Mary DesRosiers & Oklahoma, Paul Rosenberg and the "1812" Overture (did anyone notice that all of the band jumped three feet when the gun blanks were fired into the garbage pail--and they KNEW it was coming! That was also the year of "Runaway" and "Baghdad Bully."), Steve Zakon-Anderson & "Putting on the Ritz" and "Hit the Road, Jack."

Erna-Lynne Bogue calling to "I Hold Your Hand in Mine" and "Dancing in the Streets," Susan Kevra singing squares to "Octopus's Garden" and "The Sheik of Squaraby," Mary Devlin and "Carmen," Robert Cromerty with "Swing R&O" performing "It Don't Mean a Thing," "Oh! Lady Be Good," and "I Got Rhythm."

A Story:

Barbara Greenberg remembers that Susan Elberger, after calling at R&O in 1985, asked if the band would play at NEFFA. Barbara asked, "Are we good enough?" "Hell, yes!" Susan replied. This year, as the band performed at NEFFA, Susan called out to Barbara from her seat on the bleachers, "You're good enough!"

THE WINTER COTILLION

Every year we welcome winter by taking our ball gowns and tuxedos out of moth balls and appearing in all our finery to the fancy dress Cotillion. Highlights are a candlelit potluck and performances by the aptly named Cotillion Singers (see subgroups), the various ritual teams (see also subgroups) and, frequently, a Mummings play, rubber chicken optional. Good food, good music, good dance.

HEAD FOR THE HILLS

Some of our most enduring (not to mention personally embarrassing) memories have been produced by this annual PCD-sponsored music and dance weekend event, initiated by Dan Post in 1984.

The idea behind Head for the Hills was for us to go away for the weekend with 100 or so of our closest friends and have the opportunity to dance and play music together, while taking advantage of PCD's huge arsenal of talent by not bringing in (or paying for) any outside groups, musicians, or callers, as other dance weekends usually do. It was held at Hudson Guild Farm in Sussex County until its closing in 1995 forced us into a search for another home and led us to Camp Harlam in the Poconos. Throughout the years, the pinnacle of the weekend has been the Ceilidh, or talent show, which dominates Saturday night and has given us Larry & the Streetwalkers, the Stumpy Jumpers, that great new product "Bond Away" to discourage excessive male bonding, and the Pincus Dancers (orthodox cousins of Morris dancers. Don't ask.).

Of course, the early years dissolve into a blur of dancing until the room whirls even when you're sitting still, staying up until 4:00 a.m. just to get up and start again, and listening to Ann Harwood recount strange night visions (I mean, really! A group of men in ball gowns? A large, um, unclothed jazz band playing "In the Nude," er, "In the Mood?"). But as we have evolved, so has Head for the Hills: it is no less a special weekend of bonding together, but 1997's record number of 22 children attending meant more family programming in 1998 and discussions of how we can grow and change in the future to accommodate not just who we were, but who we are.

A Quote:

After a year where she missed most of the HFTH festivities due to a series of medical tests, Trish Petzold stated that Head for the Hills was "better than a spinal tap!" We agree.

WHAT HAVE WE WROUGHT?

Any socio-anthropologist covering 20 years of a culture will observe matings, offspring, and subgroups. Why should we buck established evolutionary theory?

MARRIAGES

Linda Toole and David Gottschlich, Louise Broad and Michael Levine, Nadia Morano and Jeff Weeks, Patricia Sorenson and Neal Cox, Mary Cox and Gerry Kaplan, Laura Grotzinger and Charlie Thomford, Martin Harriss and Ellen Harrison, Larry Koplík and Sarah Roberts, Reggie Ware and Carolla Bosenberg, Trish Petzold and Garry Moore, Neil Lundberg and Gretchen Shankweiler, Jean Miller and Bill Groth, Debbie Goodkin and Mark Goldman, Cairn Williams and Charlie Kraft, Jane McCarty and Michael Bell, Louise Topp and Ted McClure, Janet Peters and Robert Mills, Joan Ogden and Kirk Alexander, Margie Ast and Lou Bass, Sue Daniels and Steve Taylor, Elisabeth Romanov and George Patterson, Marian Hepburn and David Beckhusen, Lynda Lee and Robert Lupton, Kathy O'Leary and Spence Wilcox, Mort Gasner and Debbi Kanter,

Barbara Greenberg and Daniel Beerbohm, Judy Klotz and Bill Mates, Ken Samoil and Rachel Leader, Annie Anderson and Micky Moos, Emeric Kurtz and Marie Tarar, John Pranio and Toki Oshima, Bob Pasquarello and Kathy Talvitie, Jeff and Judy Looney, Michael Lemonick and Eileen Hohmuth, Brian Schmultz and Barbara Goun, Nancy Alexander and Cosmo Pagano, Ned Stoffel and Carol Smith, Trude McLaughlin and John Krisko.

BABIES

The birth of the following children over the last 16 years is probably what has caused--and will continue to cause--the most change in our community. The responsibility of the next twenty years will hopefully be one they will choose to share with us.

Samuel and Callum Dupre, Hannah Lemonick, David Wasserman, Terrence Post, Sarah and Joseph Keifer, William Francis Chandler, Michael and Jeremy Kuhn, Eric Van Fleet, Jessica and Emily Bass, Ross Harriss, Willie Bender, Peter Laurance, Matthew Lundberg, Kevin and Ian Moore, Marina, Eric and David Druseikis, Stephen and Anna Koplik, Jacob Tayler, Jacob and Margaret Goldman, Jay and Terry Hodsdon-LaRue, Rowan Lupton, Abigail Farmer, Kate and Christine Alexander, Stephen Lefkowitz, AmiLin McClure, Imogen and Cecily Mills, Amanda and Robin Barbour, Sharon and James Looney

A Memory:

From Ellen Harrison: My only memory of the 10th Anniversary Dance is of Dianne Britton, very pregnant (with Marina) and overdue, dancing practically every dance. I think she figured, what the heck? What could it do, start labor? That was the idea.

THE RITUAL TEAMS

Despite many other events experienced individually throughout the year, all of the ritual teams join together to greet the dawn on May Day.

Millstone River Morris -- the original PCD offshoot! -- was started somewhere around 1980, and is still going strong today. Besides actively pursuing opportunities to "dance out" on any occasion, whether it be special or no, throughout the years Millstone has been a Presence at numerous Morris Ales both here and abroad.

Sue Dupre started Shandygaff Longsword in 1985, and a number of PCD members have danced with the team. This past October, Shandygaff became a "seasonal team" and accordingly dance only a sword dance for Winter Solstice and garland dances for May Day.

Griggstown Lock Rapper Team has been dancing in and around the Princeton area since it was formed by Jane McCarty and Michael Bell in order to dance at their wedding in 1989. Their name is a "double entendre" and refers to both the "lock" in the form of a star made by the intricate weaving done with flexible swords during their dance and the Griggstown Lock on the Delaware and Raritan Canal. Not only does the team perform their own particular kind of ritual dance, they also sing -- and half of them can fiddle!

The newest of the ritual teams, Handsome Molly, introduces an East Anglian dance custom to PCD. Dating from the 19th century, molly dancing was originally done by bands of men, some dressed as women (mollies), all dressed in working clothes and stout boots, with faces smudged with charcoal for disguise, who would stomp through the villages on Plough Monday, boisterously mocking the dances of the gentry. Eventually, these dances became so riotous that they were banned; so far, either due to PCD's higher level of tolerance or Handsome Molly keeping themselves in check, this has not happened here. Handsome Molly, formed in 1994, is the first American team to perform a strictly molly repertoire. Their highlights so far have included trips to Toronto and to England, where they were delighted to celebrate Plough Monday in East Anglia, the birthplace of molly dancing.

OTHER OFFSHOOTS

Cotillion Singers

With an ever-shifting repertoire of folk, rock and roll, seasonal and classic choral music, the Cotillion Singers are another example of the many and varied musical talents within PCD. The Singers debuted at the Cotillion of 1983, led by Annie (Anderson) Moos and since then has not only sung there but at several weddings, two memorial celebrations and even area coffeehouses. Now led by Robert and Janet Mills, the group has been known to have as many as 25 members!

Dancing Needles Quilt Guild

As friendships grew through the dance community, we have had the privilege of celebrating special occasions such as marriages, births, and anniversaries. Quilting seems a natural extension of these friendships and many community made quilts grace the walls and bedrooms of PCD members. We handquilt at various homes and find it a wonderful way to relax, talk with friends, and, of course...eat. All are welcome.

Ladies Who Lunch

In the winter of 1989, Janet Keifer invited everyone she knew of who was at home during the day to come and have lunch at her house one blustery day. She made a pot of soup, and everyone brought something to go along with it -- bread, cheese, beverage, salad, dessert. Although anyone who happened to be available was welcome, it evolved into a weekly gathering of parents with young children and babies. It was a place to share the concerns, milestones and headaches of those early years, and for many of us, it was a lifesaver. It was Ann Harwood who dubbed this group "The Ladies Who Lunch," with all irony intentional. The group, while growing and shrinking with each new birth or step onto the school bus, stayed more or less intact until the majority of that first group of children entered kindergarten. It was revived several years later when a new crop of babies made its resurrection inevitable.

From Sarah Roberts:

By the time my second child, Anna, came along, I was wistful that there was no Ladies Who Lunch to take her to, but the next year, Jacob Goldman was born, then Rowan Lupton, then Imogen Mills and AmiLin McClure, and we were back in business with a new group.

Academy of Princeton Country Dancers in the Hills

The Academy, made up of people who had informally gathered to play Renaissance and Baroque music, debuted at Head For the Hills (outside the dining room, when we were still at Hudson Guild) with Bach's 2nd Brandenburg Concerto. Every HFTH has seen a new program, featuring many of your favorite musicians.

A special mention goes to Foaming at the Feet, PCD's own clogging team. Although it has been just a memory for several years now, it is one that is bright and enduring for many of us.

IN MEMORIAM

We honor the memory of these people:

Eric Scott
Jean Peters
Dave Rewick
Emeric Kurtz
Bruce Wasserman

THE MEMORY PAGE

Impressions, thoughts, etc. of the past 20 years.

Stephen Lefkowitz's parents recall that he attended his first PCD dance on 1/8/92 -- at the age of 8 days.

From Rose Meyers:

My decision to remain in NJ rather than move elsewhere hinged on the point of my friends in the contra dance community. When I started thinking about leaving behind the individual friendships, the different ways in which I have been supported, encouraged, tolerated, loved and cared for and the challenges to explore and grow, I realized that I had something here which I was not so willing to part with. I have found particular pleasure in my associations with Millstone River Morris, Dancing Needles, and the Cotillion Singers.

From Annie (Anderson) Moos (originator of the Cotillion Singers):

My favorite Cotillion Singers memory is rehearsing and singing for Janet and Robert Mills' wedding, particularly performing "The Merry-Go-Round Broke Down" with Ann Harwood crashing pot-lid cymbals, Pete Soloway playing tuba and a variety of slide whistles.

From Fred Salzman:

Curtis Hoberman dragged me to my first PCD dance (with Wild Asparagus) in January 1992. I had no idea what I was doing and didn't find out until later that Curtis had solicited many "old-timers" to dance with me so that I was never without a partner. Most people were very gracious about steering me in the right direction, but by the end of the evening I felt like a sack of potatoes!

From Marian Hepburn:

When I found this community, it made this area of the world my home rather than just somewhere I was living.

Debbi Kanter:

...going to Marita's after dances in Princeton in the early days and eating Mexican food and drinking beer into the early hours of the morning, not wanting things to end...

After several months of wistfully watching all "those who know" dance the Levi Jackson Rag at every dance (it was a staple of the early days), I had a dream and woke up knowing it!

Debbie Goodkin:

I walked into my first dance and saw Garry Moore dancing with Bob Dupre. I thought "What an open, tolerant group! I'd like to be part of this!"

Ann Harwood:

A large group of ostensible jazz musicians burst into my room at Head for the Hills in the middle of the night singing "In the Nude." What would YOUR strongest memory of this group be?

Janet Keifer:

When I think of the dances, I think of being hot and sweaty and what a great feeling it was when they opened the windows and doors. I also have fond memories of having the births of many of our children announced at dances; I particularly remember Kevin Moore. But most of all, I think of PCD as a community that is always there for you, whether you need rototilling or help in a personal crisis.

Gillian Stern:

I felt especially welcomed and encouraged as a newcomer and have since found in the PCD community the sense of family and belonging I missed since leaving my native England 10 years ago.

Dave Beckhusen:

I'm grateful to have found a place where I've made so many friends, met my wife, been helpful to so many people in so many ways, and also been able to build up my carpentering business at the same time!

From Jan Drechsler:

Towards the end of our time at Six-Mile-Run, it became disheartening to play or call since the dance was attended by 12-15 people and it seemed to be dying. When the board found the opportunity to move to Princeton, we made up flyers and talked it up--it seemed important to have the first dance well attended so that folks would return.

I called the first dance at Suzanne Patterson and was absolutely euphoric that 40 people were there. The energy from the dancers and musicians was like the old days and I knew that PCD wouldn't die!

Dianne Britton

The "Ladies Who Lunch" were unbelievably important to me when I had twins, and Rum and Onions, which I joined in 1984 or 1985, changed my life. It was my first experience playing fiddle with other people, and as a direct result, I'm now teaching Suzuki violin and leading a band (in South Carolina).

Richard Smith:

I realized from my earliest encounters with the contra dance community that when we participate in a contry dance, we tap into something quite ancient, the senses of shared experience and consciousness touching deep into physical movement that go back to the 18th and 19th century barn dances, and from there all the way back to the dawn of human communities.

TO BE CONTINUED AT THE THIRTIETH.....