

CDR NEWS

IS004

JUNE 2016 EDITION



Jane Austen Ball, April 24, 2016. Photo by Ashley Phillipps.

1976 - 2016

Honoring the Past & Looking Ahead

By Kate Baron

As we approach the date of Country Dancers of Rochester's 40th Anniversary, we're taking a moment to look back at our history. Why has CDR been so successful over the last 40 years? And what can we do to make it better yet?

Of course, part of our success must be attributed to the enduring power of dance. Contra dancing and English Country Dancing are fun to do, great social activities, and good exercise. But any organization that survives the trials of several generations requires a solid foundation of teamwork and planning, so ultimately the credit should go to the people involved: the planners, the performers, and the dancers. Through countless acts of dedication, both small and large, we've made this a community that is positive, uplifting and strong.

This year we will celebrate CDR's 40 years of community dancing with new featured updates, improvements, and events. Check this issue for details of the 40th Anniversary Contra Dance, and stay tuned for details of a Free Contra/English dance later this summer. Also later this year will be a new logo, updated website, new membership benefits, and an annual dance pass. So keep dancing and watch our website for more details!

Save the Date!

Mark your calendars! Here are some upcoming events you won't want to miss:

- CDR's 40th Anniversary Contra Dance
Blackthorn Ceilidh, & Eric Rounds.
Thursday, June 23, 2016
- Colin Hume & Caliope.
Contra: Thursday, July 7, 2016
English: Sunday, July 10, 2016
- Netherfield Ball
August 29, 2016

English Demo Team Performances:

- Saturday, June 18 at 2:30 pm on the village green at GCV&M
- Sunday, June 19 at 2:30 pm on the village green at GCV&M

Please Note:

- The Thursday Night Contra on July 21 will be held at First Baptist Church.

Featured Performer: Colin Hume

By Richard Sauvain

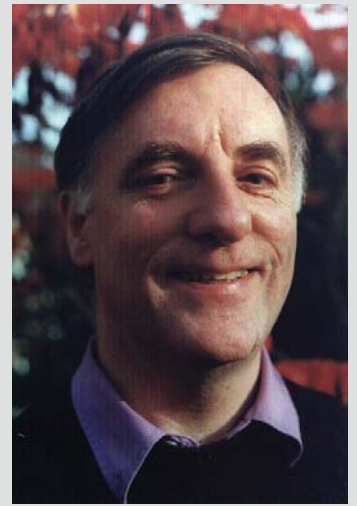
The Rochester country dance scene is honored to welcome British dance caller, composer, and dance historian Colin Hume as caller at our contra dance on July 7 and our English dance on July 10.

Over the last thirty years he has built up a reputation as a caller of American Squares and contras, Playford-type dances (English Country Dances in 17th century style), and his own "Dances with a Difference", many of which contain unusual combinations of figures to baffle and/or delight the dancers.

He has published five volumes of "Dances with a Difference", three with corresponding recordings, two volumes of the American-style "Squares with a Difference" and one "New Dances for Old" of Playford-style dances to existing recorded tunes. His book "Playford with a Difference" contains his own interpretations of a number of country dances published in the 17th and 18th century by John Playford and others. In addition, he often composes tunes to go with his own dances. An example is his English dance Elizabeth, which has been our ECD group's very most favorite dance for several years running. His web site, www.colinhume.com, is an amazing resource for dance callers.

Colin has called at countless dance weeks and weekends on both sides of the pond, and in fact will be the sharing the dance teaching with Brad Foster (former artistic director of CDSS) at the Amherst Early Music Festival's dance program July 17 - 24. Colin will be traveling with Calliope, a band led by Amy Cann from the Vermont area.

Don't miss this opportunity to experience excellent teaching with British flair from one of the great callers of our generation.



Colin Hume.

New London Assembly program at the Amherst Early Music summer workshop (New London, CT)

By Pat Hanley



New London Assembly 2015.
Photo by Paul R. Johnson.

For the past two years I have participated in the week-long New London Assembly program at the Amherst Early Music workshop held in New London, CT, in the middle of July. The program includes doing old and new dances, trying to figure out what the original instructions mean and how closely (or not) some of the modern interpretations follow those instructions, and learning the history of the publishers and publications.

This is not for the new dancer; you are expected to know the basics and to be able to, relatively quickly, learn new figures and new dances. There are four sessions during the day with some sessions having more than one choice. You don't have to do all the sessions and you can also participate in classes in other areas of the whole Amherst program. Doing the full day of dance can be quite rigorous and many do not do all the sessions because they want to have enough energy left to participate in the nightly dances. The dancing is to live music by well known English and contra musicians. There is also time for those who want to try their hand at playing for the dance. Brad Foster is the director of the program and, in 2014 and 2015, Andrew Shaw was the featured caller/historian/reconstructor. The presence and participation of Graham Christian (The Playford Assembly published by CDSS and released this year) made the program complete. This summer Colin Hume will be in Andrew's "slot" and I am looking forward to learning much from him.

For those who are interested in the history of English country dance, the interpretation/construction of dances old and new, and the joy of dancing with some of the best callers, musicians and dancers this is the best week of intensive study that I have experienced. ***Want to learn more? Go to www.amherstearlymusic.org***

Stay in Touch...

- www.cd-rochester.org
- www.facebook.com/CountryDancersofRochester
- www.meetup.com/Rochester-Community-Dances
- Questions? Comments? Write to us at newsletter@cd-rochester.org



Demo-licious!

by Ruth Hyde and Leslie Phillips

The Country Dancers of Rochester English Country Dance demonstration team began informally around ten years ago when Genesee Country Village & Museum asked for a dance demonstration. In those early years, we'd casually take invitations for occasional demonstrations as they came, one or two each year, gathering a core of people who had the time and desire to perform and help bring the joy of English country dancing to others. Richard Sauvain would develop a program and patiently coach us in our dancing in preparation for the big day. After a while Leslie Phillips began to help. It was Lisa Brown, current Captain of the demo team, who saw the potential of the group and developed it into the form it takes today.

We have an official name now – The Meryton Assembly Dancers. We chose this name from among several candidates for its pleasing sound and connection to Jane Austen: Meryton is the name of the village near the Bennet residence in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

The goal of our demo team is to generate publicity and recruit new dancers for English country dance. Lisa works hard to find places for us to perform and teach the dances we love. Venues have included libraries, colleges, and historic sites.

The team holds regular practices and rehearsals to keep us in shape. We are fortunate that we are able to practice to live music by fiddler Molly Jaynes at most of our practices and performances. We try for eight demonstrations a year; all that practicing and performing keeps us on our toes. The goal of performing without calling seemed difficult at first, but we quickly became accustomed to it and are now completely comfortable.

We have a repertoire of core dances that change each year. They are carefully chosen to represent a variety of forms, figures, and feeling. We have three-couple set dances as well as longways duple minors. Over the years demo team members have varied, but the numbers hold steady at about twelve to fifteen dancers. The current team is Jon and Jeanne Gehret, Tim Kelley, Kathy Zager, Sharon and Chris Cassidy, Mary Haverfield, Pat Hanley, Padraic Neville, Ruth Hyde, Leslie Phillips, Eric Borresen and Lisa Brown. We tend to concentrate on dances from the Regency period or before, due to the Jane Austen connection, but include modern choreographies in our repertoire as well. Typically we perform a selection of four or five dances for the audience, complete with introductions by Lisa and an elegant entrance procession. The performance part of the demonstration is followed by audience participation dances.

No one can deny the camaraderie of being on a team. As Chris Cassidy says, it's great "being with a group of people who are really fanatical about doing this!" One of our favorite "demos" was actually a spontaneous event. A bunch of us were out enjoying one of the historic meal events that GCV&M puts on when the conversation naturally turned to dance. Given a table full of fanatical dancers, an upstairs ballroom, and a smart phone, we couldn't help but figuratively roll up the carpet for a memorable and impromptu performance of "Kelsterne Gardens." We did have an audience, though truthfully it wouldn't have mattered.

The only requirements for becoming a member of the team are a desire to dance and willingness to perform and practice. We all came to ECD with a passion for the dance itself. Being on the demo team builds on that, giving us more chances to do what we love with really great people. If you haven't tried ECD, come on out some Sunday night and see what it's like. Who knows, someday you may find yourself part of the Meryton Assembly Dancers!



The Meryton Assembly Dancers - www.dancelikejaneauusten.com
Photo by Lisa Brown.

What Motivates the Team?

• Sharing the Joy of Dance:

Ruth Hyde says, *"I do this because it is important to me to share my love for dance in any way that I can. The demo team gives me two ways to do this: I love to perform, and even more, to dance with members of the audience after the performance. It brings me joy to see members of the audience smile, tap their feet, and clap for us, but when they dance with us and discover that they too can enjoy dancing, my satisfaction is complete."*

• Engaging the Audience:

Eric Borresen comments, *"Demonstrations of dances are not as interesting as it is when you see people and their eyes light up - when they discover that they can actually do ECD and they have a really good time."*

• A Hands-On Sense of History

Kathy Zager says, *"Thinking of the demonstrations we have done, I particularly enjoy the demos done in historic settings – it almost feels like time travel when we dance in places where others danced over a century ago..."*

• Working as a Team to Improve

Mary notes, *"When you're dancing for fun you watch your partner. When performing you need to focus often on the person who is above or behind you doing the same thing so that you are moving doing the same thing at the same time and it looks coordinated and looks good."*

A Glimpse into Time: Part 1

An Early History of Country Dancers of Rochester

By Peggy Dempsey

In 1976 the Country Dancers of Rochester formed with this article in the Golden Link Newsletter:

"Golden Linkers Kelly Beller, Tod Whittemore, Joyce Desmarais & Ceidlen Skidmore have formed the Country Dancers of Rochester. They will meet every Wednesday evening starting June 23rd <1976> at St Thomas Episcopal Church, corner of Winton & Highland. The first meeting will feature Tod calling with the Blackthorn Ceilidh Band. June 30 will feature Bob Henrie (squares) and Tod Whittemore (contras) and music by the Henry David Thoreau Memorial String Band. July 7 – Ed Butenhof, caller and music by Jubertown Stringband (formerly Swamproot). No experience is necessary and dress is casual. Admission is \$1.50."

Thus began our weekly dance series which is still going strong after 40 years. Back then, dances were primarily contra dances with an occasional English Country Dance themed evening. Tom Bannister recalls a delightful mix of contra, English, squares, triplets and triple minors.

Early on, according to newsletters archived by Richard Sauvain, weekly dances alternated between live music and recorded music with a \$.50 increase in admission fees on live-music nights. By mid-1980, the club was able to completely abandon recorded music for live music every week.

Early bands weren't identified by band names, but by late 1979 band names began to appear: Blackthorn Ceilidh Band, Geneseo String Band, Mitzie Collins Dance Band, Golden Link Country Dance Orchestra, Sam Patch Memorial Country Dance Band, and Overacker Corners. Early callers were Roger Knox, Ed Butenhof, Rich Castner, Tom Bohrer, David Valentine, Skip Evans, with Ceidlin Beller and Eric Rounds appearing around 1980.



The original members of Blackthorn Ceilidh Band who played for the very first contra dance at St. Thomas Episcopal. Mike Leach, Ted McGraw, Marie Brate, Skip Evans, Joyce Desmarais and Norm Goldblatt.



Blackthorn Ceilidh Band and caller Rich Castner. Band: back row Ted McGraw, Skip Evans, Marie Brate, Norm Goldblatt, Mike Leach. Front row: Rich Castner (caller) and Joyce Desmarais.

The dances switched to Thursday nights by 1978 but continued to be held at St. Thomas. In the summer of 1981, however, the club was no longer able to dance at St. Thomas and bounced around from site to site for about two months.

We settled into the New Life Community Church at Monroe and Rosedale. New Life was our home for two years until we moved into our current venue, Covenant United Presbyterian Church at the corner of Culver and Parsells in 1983. In that year, the Country Dancers of Rochester officially joined the Country Dance and Song Society and wrote bylaws for the club.

English Country Dancing grew in popularity and a group of organizers scheduled dances twice a month in 1985. They danced in a variety of venues on a variety of days of the week. In the late 1980's special events were planned for English Country Dancers including Playford workshops and balls.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the club continued to
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thrive. There were, of course, the weekly dances, but also scheduled were an annual picnic and dance (usually held at Brighton Town Park), an annual Open House free dance in September, performances with Dance-o-rama on the SUNY Brockport campus, performances at the Lilac Festival on Ethnic Heritage Day (1983), and various special events. Our first Thanksgiving Dance weekend was held in 1984 at Harmony House. A monthly Saturday night contra series was on the schedule for a year or two in the late 1980s.

Prices for admission inched up, always with the intention of paying the performers more. On evenings when an out-of-town band performed, the admission price was raised by \$.50. In 1988, our annual expenses for callers was \$2,465, for bands \$5,560, rent \$2,405, and for cups and ice \$105. Our average attendance at contra dances in that year was 54.

Newsletters were printed at first by ditto machine, then mimeograph, then Xerox copies. We produced our first web page in 1996 with an easy-to-remember 68-character url printed in the newsletter.

Throughout the archives, there is evidence of enthusiasm and joy in sharing our love for traditional dance. There was always encouragement to make new dancers feel welcome, to dance safely, and to volunteer to the organization of the club. All of the work necessary for "puttin' on the dance" has been done by volunteers. These folks took on the jobs of booking the bands and callers, the venues, writing and printing the newsletters, publicizing the dances, setting up and taking down, bringing ice and snacks, and planning special events. These activities are still going on after forty years, thanks to our current body of volunteers.

To be continued next issue.

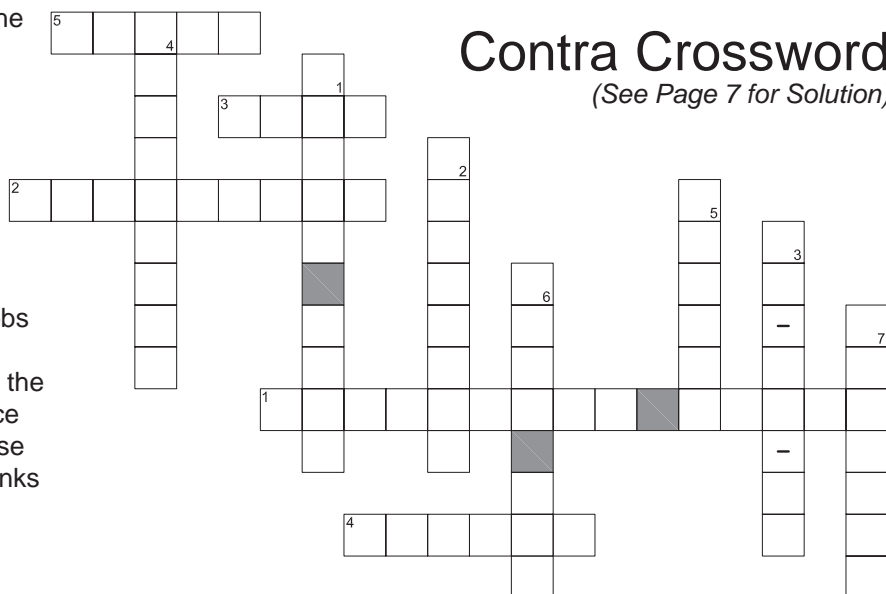
CDR's 40th Anniversary Contra

40 years ago, on Wednesday, June 23, 1976, a group of intrepid dancers held the first Official Rochester Contradance. The band was Blackthorn Ceilidh.

This year, on Thursday June 23, 2016 we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Country Dancers of Rochester with a Thursday Night Contra played by some of the original Blackthorn Ceilidh Band. Dick Bolt, Marie Brate, and Mike Leach will be providing the music from "Back in the day." They will be augmented by Mark Henry on keyboard and Brian Williams on bass. Eric Rounds will be calling to their music for the first half of the evening. If you've heard the phrase "As in Petronella" but have never danced the eponymous dance, this is your chance! Expect to see a mix of dance styles, with a particular emphasis on dances that remember and honor callers, musicians, and dancers who guided the early development of CDR.

After the break, Eric will switch to Fiddle joining Mark and Brian in playing great contra music as the Rochester Caller's Collective will be calling for us. In the spirit of melding Old with New, we will be dancing Chorus Jig in this half, among some other "modern classics."

Join us in celebrating the continuity of our dance community. Oh, and there will be cake!



Across

1. Side by side, the gent and lady turn around quickly together, each while keeping hold of their partner's waist. Commonly follows an allemande.
2. Join designated hands and rotate once around each other.
3. Put designated hand on the wrist of the dancer in front of you and circle four places.
4. A variation of the basic contra formation. After taking hands four with Number Ones crossed over, rotate the set one place to the left, clockwise.
5. Two dancers walk around each other closely, while maintaining eye contact.

Down

1. Typical starting formation.
2. #1 couples cross over.
3. Step forward, pass right shoulders with your opposite till you are back-to-back then return passing left shoulders.
4. Partners join right hands in back and left hands in front, while the gent escorts the lady across the set.
5. A dancer other than your partner, who you meet at regular intervals throughout a particular dance.
6. Partial version of a common figure for four dancers, this move will result in each dancer weaving their way across the set.
7. Move commonly proceeding a swing.

A Most Elegant Evening at the Jane Austen Ball

By Chris Cassidy

Jane Austen would have loved it. Elizabeth and Darcy would have loved it. Of course, neither Jane Austen nor any of her fictional characters could attend this year's Jane Austen Ball, but 80 lively dancers attended and had a ball. Sponsored by Country Dancers of Rochester and The Central and Western New York Region of the Jane Austen Society of North America, the Ball drew dancers from Toronto, New York City, Syracuse, Buffalo, Ithaca, and, of course, the local Rochester dance community.

The dancers first gathered on Saturday afternoon to practice the Ball dances. Under the expert tutelage of Beverly Francis, our Dance Mistress, we practiced until we could glide effortlessly through the most challenging dances. The practice was followed by a potluck supper. Our luck was good and all the dishes were plentiful and delicious. After supper, about 50 dancers remained for an experienced dance. With minimal instruction and walk-throughs we danced our way through an evening of both new dances and old favorites.

Finally Sunday, the day of the ball, dawned. Since this was the tenth annual Jane Austen Ball, the event was held at the Memorial Art Gallery, the site of the First Jane Austen Ball. About 50 dancers attended the first ball. This year's 80 dancers just about filled the ballroom to capacity, demonstrating the successful growth of English Country dancing in our area.

Early in the morning, the Special Events Committee arrived to decorate tables, set up the auction and raffle, help the musicians, and check on the final arrangements. At 9:30 dancers began arriving for the morning practice. The atmosphere was festive as new dancers were made welcome and old friends gathered to catch up.

Finally, Beverly Francis called us into lines and we once again practiced our art in order to put that final touch of perfection on the dances. As on Saturday, the music was provided by Childgrove from Ann Arbor, Michigan. With Debbie Jackson on piano, Anne Ogren on violin and viola, and Martha Stokely on oboe, pennywhistle & recorder, Childgrove filled the weekend with music that was lively, elegant, moving and perfectly performed for the occasion.

With our dance form perfected and our ears filled with music, we enjoyed a lunch catered by Max of Rochester. A wide range of delicious salads and deli sandwiches prepared us for the afternoon ahead. Then it was time to change and step back into the Regency Period.

Promptly at 2 pm Beverly started us on the Grand March, and we were immediately swept back to Jane Austen's time as the ball began. This year the March was lead by Sir Christopher Cassidy and Lady Sharon Cassidy, who were honored to lead a most elegantly and beautifully attired community of dancers. Jane Austen would have felt very much at home.

And then the dancing started in earnest. We danced to such tunes as Carnefon Castle, the Free Mason and the Physical Snob. Dancers did heys, figure eights, turns and stars across the floor. We did chasses and casts up and down the hall. We danced the liveliness of Shrewsbury Lasses and the elegance of Lovely Nancy. Along the way, Beverly Francis shared details about the dances and Jane Austen's life. Midway through the ball we took a break for sumptuous refreshments made according to Regency recipes. Finally, it was time for the last dance, the Duke of Kent's Waltz, one of the Regency's most elegant and charming dances.

Then it was time to return to the 21st century. We were happy, fulfilled, rewarded and, yes, a little bit tired. About 35 dancers finished off the day with dinner at the Brown Hound Downtown restaurant right there in the Memorial Art Gallery.

It was a glorious weekend, but don't take my word for it. Here are some comments from the dancers:

"It was the best ball I have attended so far (this was my 6th year). The luncheon and supper were excellent."

"The thing I like best about this event is the wonderful community feeling and the fact that it feels like a nice social occasion."

"I thought the entire Ball was beautifully run and a complete delight! The Ball Committee handled and presented the whole event beautifully! Bravo to all of you! I will be back next year!"

Bravo indeed, and a very special thank you to the folks who made it happen, the members of the Special Events Committee: Kathy Zager, Richard Sauvain, Leslie Phillips, Pat Hanley, Celia Easton, Sharon Cassidy, Chris Cassidy and Lisa Brown. We know that they are already busy planning next year's ball!

In the meantime, if you want to learn English Country Dance, put August 29 on your calendar. Country Dancers of Rochester will be sponsoring a Netherfield Ball for beginning dancers and experienced dancers to mingle and learn. This event will feature easy dances, complete instruction, plenty of walk-throughs and, as always, sumptuous refreshments. See the website at cdrochester.org for details.

C L A S S I F I E D S

VOLUNTEERS WANTED:

GREETER

Volunteer to buzz people in at the door and answer questions from new dancers during the first half of the dance. Rotating position.

SET-UP COORDINATOR

Volunteer to arrive early (6:45 to 7:00PM) to coordinate volunteers in setting up admission table, water, flyers table, and chairs. Rotating position.

CLOSING CAPTAIN

Volunteer to coordinate cleanup & closing the hall after the weekly dance. Rotating position.

SOUND CREW

Volunteer to run the sound equipment, do sound checks, and monitor throughout the dance. Rotating position.

PUBLICITY COORDINATOR and/or SOCIAL MEDIA CZAR

Volunteer to manage weekly publicity efforts through social media (currently facebook & meetup) and email.

SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR

Volunteer to coordinate special events at weekly dances, including theme nights and holidays.

THANKSGIVING COMMITTEE

Volunteer on planning committee for the annual Thanksgiving Dance Festival. Meets occasionally throughout year.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Volunteer on planning committee overseeing the Contra or English Country dance series. Meets monthly.

CALENDAR EDITOR

Volunteer to produce/edit the monthly printed calendar of upcoming events.

Interested in helping out?

Contact us at newsletter@cdrochester.org to discuss volunteer opportunities.

Want to purchase photos from the ball?

The event was photographed by Ashley Phillipps, with more than 700 shots from start to finish. We think she did a marvelous job! To view the album or to purchase prints go to her website at 17photography.pixieset.com, and use access code 042416. CDR members can use the coupon code 15OFF35 to get 15% off any order over \$35.

Contra Crossword Solution

Across: 1. BUTTERFLY WHIRL; 2. ALLEMANDE; 3. STAR; 4. BECKET; 5. GYPSY

Down: 1. HANDS FOUR; 2. IMPROPER; 3. DO-SI-DO; 4. PROMENADE; 5. SHADOW; 6. HALF HEY; 7. BALANCE



Jane Austen Ball.
Photos above by Ashley Phillipps.



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Stamp



www.cd-rochester.org