

# **Peggy Dixon**

BOOK OF CONDOLENCE

Firstly are remarks and signatures  
recorded on the day of Peggy's funeral

Junella McKay

Philippa Waite

Andrew Holdsworth xx

David Wilson

An Era closes. In Memorium. Michael Bukht

Sian Jones – gratitude for your inspiration

Anne Daye, also on behalf of D.H.D.S. and our colleagues on behalf of Early Dance

Penny Boff, with love

Liz Russell – many Capriol Dancers will miss Peggy

Matt. Lewis

Robin Benie

Gwen Garnham

Angus McKay

Peggy may you blast out the neighbours in heaven. Love Al

Jack (Edwards) Colchester Essex

In memory of Peggy, a lady who gave so much to so many. You knew each of us individually, in ways that perhaps only "we" shared. My thanks and go in God's Blessing.  
 Noël Butler. Born and Bred a Windsor Girl! Now West London

In loving memory of dear Peggy.

Your spirit will live on in all the people with whom you came in contact and who learned so much from you. With lots of love – Kathy, Walter, Caroline and Nick Wolff

Fun times. Friendly times. Memorable times. Helen Pearce

With many thanks for your kindness and generosity to Helen and later to me as well  
 Adam Pearce

Peg did you take the map ? Only other person who understood what it was for, Deb xxx

Peggy, We will never forget you – your wisdom and fun ! Will always remember spending time with you as children – all the puzzles, riddles and Simple, the amazing cat ! Will be thinking of you always  
Jo and Phil xxxx

Peggy. Thinking of you today and will always have happy memories of your 80<sup>th</sup> and my family and friends get together. I always had such a lovely time with all the Dixon family during my growing up years  
I know Trish, Helen and family all send their love. Love Phoebe Kaye

Many happy memories of the fun we had in the seventies, I went with you to view that 2<sup>nd</sup>-hand white VW and tried to persuade you not to buy it – said it was too expensive. But wisely you didn't heed my advice – and look what you've had out of it !  
An old friend, Margaret Baddiley

Dearest Peggy. Flights of angels sing thee to thy rest. All love Fay

Peg –enjoy meeting old friends, up there ! See you anon ! Much love, Diana C.

Greetings from Cathie and Steve Bowness

Love and thanks from Elizabeth. Still no sense of rhythm – but you opened my eyes to dance.

Peggy. You showed us the art world of London, all those theatre trips, circuses and musicals. Even improved our minds through endless puzzles and Christmas games. Always the fun one, and the one of our generation "an honorary member" as you seemed to be young spirited to the last.  
We will love you forever and you will be in our hearts always.  
A perfect role model ! Alexandra; x Tomislav; Branimir love you always xxxx

Angene Feves sends fondest thoughts – hoping you enjoy, with Ingrid Brainard, looking at archives and contacting the dancing masters in the heavenly ballrooms.

Nicolas Broadbridge – father of Aidan, Peggy's maddening but caring lodger c. 1994-97. Both of us will miss the dancing spirit Thank you, Nicolas

Dear Peggy. Love always, Jill

Peg – Here I stand in St. Johns Hall – just where you grabbed my hand to lead me on the floor at that first lesson ! I thought you were going to introduce me to everyone else sat around the room – but no ! you started leading me to the music, we gathered speed, we gathered people and we danced the farandole. From that moment on you had me hooked, in every way, and I will now never stop dancing with that feeling of great love, joy and above all fun. We will keep that spirit alive and pass it on for the next generations – always, Darren x

Dear Peggy, I think of you in your Elizabethan costume with that velvet bonnet patiently waiting for the shows to begin – or else watching how not to dance the Nonsuch steps quite so badly. Why doesn't that boy attend rehearsals !

Love always, Michael Reid x

Dear Peggy, you were the key that opened our lives into London, and a new life. I will always remember you being so full of life and energy. You'll be always in our hearts.

Love always, Marion

Dear Peg, you gave us a second home in a new country. Your door was always open, and your friends were also ours. We grew to admire your generosity, your independence and your warm heart.

We talked so many times to our friends and family about you, as an example and someone to look up to, that it will now be very difficult to forget it all.

We'll always remember, Carlos Cortes

### **People unable to attend the funeral or 14<sup>th</sup> May, but who would like their names recorded**

Jean and Bill Bonnor  
Veronica Hughes

Neçla Cikigil  
Joyce Hughes

Bridget Wood

### **Remarks recorded subsequently**

#### **Carlos Blanco, Spain**

First thing I learnt from Peggy when I met her was to be generous and respectful. Her generosity led me through historic dance, accepting different opinions. Her generosity, also, made me her pupil, colleague and friend.

After all these years teaching at Summer School, discussing with her, till early morning, some particular aspects of a dance in the original treatise, exchanging passionate opinions about that step or that arm, working very closely on the improvement of her volumes I and II, and also having had such great times together at London and Spain, I hope I have given her back a little bit of her generosity giving me her deep knowledge in early dance and her friendship.

Dearest Peggy, at last you'll be able to teach the angels how to dance properly a branle.

#### **Sian Jones, Canterbury**

I first met Peggy in 1978 with my initial introduction to Early Dance. She had me hooked at once. She was my teacher, my guide, my collaborator, but, above all, my friend. I loved her for her intellectual acuity, her creativity and her immense generosity. She has left a legacy of research and teaching which I hope we can maintain and continue. I shall miss her, she truly was my guru.

### **Michael Bukht, Canterbury**

Peggy Dixon was central to the development of early dance as we understand it in Britain. Her work was seminal in creating the practical understanding and instruction that went with deep scholarship. What is more her generosity was legendary and her lightness of foot even at the end of her long life a pleasure to behold.

### **Jill and Geoffrey Thompson, currently in USA**

..... We can't say enough about how much she meant to us. Suffice to say that we had enormous fun and pleasure in learning and then trying to put in place some of that knowledge when we had our own group in Ashby. The people and places we are privileged to know as a consequence of the start we had in Matlock are so important to us and we shall never forget Peggy's role in this.

The world will be a poorer place without Peggy and her calm, soothing presence; but it was a rich place she inhabited. We're convinced her influence in the Early Dance world will and cannot be overlooked – her kick-start to the academic fraternity to explore the recreation of the Dance from the wealth of written and painted material available will be her lasting contribution.

### **Cathy Greenhill, Manchester**

I am indebted to Peggy for the Nonsuch Instruction Books, a living legacy and a continuing source of reference. There are happy memories also of many Early Dance Festivals; her 80th birthday party and of her intrepid adventures in the Triumph. What a lady!

### **Helen Pearce (née Downs), Solihull**

I joined Nonsuch in 1968 and rented a room from Peggy in Brook Drive from the end of 1969 'til about 1971. Living there made me realize just how much work went on behind the scenes to get the shows together. At that time many of the members had keys to the flat and often Peggy and I would be sitting sewing, etc., and hear the door open and have no idea who would be coming up the stairs. Often shows took place in the country at fêtes and outdoor events, and we would drive in the open-topped Hillman Minx with classical music playing and everything was so much fun. We were lucky to have quite a young group at the time and certainly those years were some of the happiest of my life.

### **Jodie Robson, Berwick on Tweed**

..... she will be so much missed. I remember particularly a weekend school at Beamish, but other wonderful days of dance. Her teaching was inspirational.

### **Valerie Haberstick, Switzerland**

Dear Peggy, We are sad not to have you with us and miss you. I remember with great fondness all the times we met: at Nonsuch Summer School, several times in London and on your 80th birthday. It was wonderful knowing you and I treasure all you taught us. Dancing *Hole in the Wall* with you was a special treat.

**Chieko Ono, Italy** Sakura was a one-time lodger

Peggy's Style "Tea's ready Sakura." In 2003, while she was a university student, Sakura stayed with 'Auntie' Peggy and greatly enjoyed her life in London, where she received not only Peggy's precious warm tea but also felt her dynamic energy. She was amazed to see Peggy jumping up ladders to change light bulbs like a young girl.

This is how my daughter Sakura speaks of Peggy when she returns home to Italy where she was born.

It is however very different from my experience with Peggy which stretches back about 25 years.

I first saw her at her dance course in Matlock, and although I was confused and dazed by the wealth of dances she presented I was profoundly struck by the impression of her "natural beauty and grace".

Only she has conveyed this wonderful model of 15th century Italian court dance.

In fact, I now research, reconstruct and teach 15th and 16th century Italian court dance with my professional Renaissance dance company *Belreguardo* based in Assisi and we perform all over Europe spreading the joy of dance.

Having studied the theories of 15th century Italian masters, I have come to realize that Peggy's natural style embodied the spirit of the ancient Greek philosophers; "neither too much, nor too little", dancing master Domenico da Piacenza quoted from Aristotle in his treatise *De arte saltandi et choreas ducendi*. Indeed Domenico adds 'the dancer who exaggerates the gestures ruins the total effect' and 'without this, there is no beauty, no grace and no value'.

So now, when I dance and teach, the image of Peggy and the ancient concept of a natural and gracious style often creeps softly to mind.

**Penny Boff, Surrey**

I feel privileged to have been taught by Peggy and have some very happy memories of her classes.

**Grace Buckley, Scotland**

My lasting memory of Peggy is of a warm and generous person. She was immediately welcoming to everyone, particularly the newcomer. My contact with her was intermittent but every time we met, it was as though we had just parted the previous week. She will be sadly missed by all her friends.

**Dr. Katherine Darton, London**

I knew Peggy through the summer schools, having come for the first time relatively recently – I think in 2001. She was wonderfully welcoming and greeted me for the first time like an old friend. In Spain in 2004 she was up until the small hours playing charades with great verve. Last time I saw her was at the Drill Hall where they had messed up the room booking, but she carried on with classes in spite of the problems and we had a worthwhile day. Lovely memories of a wonderful person.

### **Donald Campbell, Hull**

I was sad to hear of Peggy's death. I have pleasant memories as a student of the Summer Schools run by Nonsuch at Matlock in the late 1900s. I always enjoyed her morning classes because of her ability to instruct as well as entertain. I remember the stamp of her personality she put on the school through charm, humour and efficiency.

With affectionate recollections

### **Remarks from Donald Campbell, Hull. Read for him by Deb Knight at "A Day to Honour Peggy"**

I have read Jack's and June's obituaries of Peggy with pleasure and admiration. They certainly revive memories, which have always stayed alive with me. In particular the early years at Matlock at that spectacular building at the top of the hill. I think it was the early 80's when I first arrived. 'A day of dance' organised by the P.E. people in Hull University in the new Sports Centre was the inducement. The introduction was by one of the Nonsuch team (I can't remember her name) and the dances she taught us appealed to me, as one who found great pleasure in movement but was not (I don't need to remind you) was not matched by grace or elegance or accompanied by a talent for memorising sequences.

I remember so well that first day and week at the Summer School, the hall decorated by Jack, the interludes of improvised drama and other events and the warmth of welcome engendered by Peggy. I remember the people I met at the dance sessions, the companionable meals and walks to and from the dance sessions. Also there come back to me numerous visits to Peggy's house with the unofficial committee to discuss plans for the next summer school.

So I should like to be recorded in the Commemorative Programme as unable to attend. Please remember me to anyone there who remembers me. I hope it all goes well on the day and the sun shines. With love and best wishes.

### **Dr. Anne Bloomfield, Nottinghamshire**

Peggy inspired all of us and kindled the warmth of Nonsuch conviviality and scholarship which will continue for years to come. Thank you, Peggy, for your gentle, thoughtful teaching in recreating past dances and guiding my own personal efforts in the joy and beauty of the dance.

### **Joan and Gordon Brown, Arundel**

I first met Peggy during the war when we were both in Cornwall working on radar. We became and remained good friends. She was bridesmaid at our wedding and became an unofficial godmother to our children. She was a frequent visitor and many were the interesting food experiments that were carried out in my kitchen. When we moved to Arundel 53 years ago she came with us, and thanks to her little Morris (with the accelerator in the middle !) was able to continue her visits. Through her we met many interesting people from various walks in life as she often brought an extra visitor. Some of the early group of Nonsuch may remember visiting Almond Cottage. She was an important part of our children's growing up and they all have fond memories of times with Peggy and we all feel we have lost one of the family.

**Victoria Brown, St. Albans** An ex-lodger

I knew Peggy for virtually all my life and my earliest memories include her as she was a frequent visitor to Sussex. She was very much a member of the family, and as teenagers my brother and I stayed with her in London when she showed us the sites, took us to the theatre, introduced us to interesting people. When I grew up, I moved to London, partly because of these visits, and joined Nonsuch, firstly behind the scenes and then later dancing. I got a job at the Central Office of Information, which I would never even have heard of if it hadn't been for Peggy, and met my husband through Nonsuch. Although I didn't see much of her after leaving London we kept in touch and she came to my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday party here in St Albans.

**Barbara Sparti, Rome**

Dear Peggy, I write to you because I was unable to attend your funeral or the Memorial Day for you. I would have wished to be there with you and your friends, students and colleagues. Peggy, you were very important for me. It was you who started me on my career in Italian Renaissance dance performance and research. I could not have translated Guglielmo Ebreo's treatise if, in 1976, you had not directed my attention to the Italian sources. Thank you, dear Peggy. After the 1976 Matlock course, I was unable to return to England for another year (though I visited you more than once in your home). I wrote to you from Urbino a year later saying how much I wished I could be with you again at Matlock. June told me you saved my letter. I am very moved.

**Urbino, July 1977**

"I am still reaping the harvest of last year's course. As a result I took the year off from teaching and devoted my time to researching Italian Renaissance dances. Your generosity of time and your personal sources--and your enthusiasm are still an inspiration. Also the emphasis on "presence", the social-historical background, the importance of the architecture, literature and costumes have been a constant influence on my research and work with my group. We owe you so much. Thanks for your friendship, your willingness to give and share, and good luck to you and Jack in your ventures. Much love, Barbara."

**Nicky Model, London**

Peggy and I were close friends since school days. We kept in touch during the war and met up frequently afterwards. I miss her constantly.

**Paula Dene, Oxfordshire**

I was very upset to hear of Peggy's death, and it is very sad to think she is no longer around. She was such an inspiration and I shall remember especially the early days in Durham when I first got to know you all. I loved learning all about the background of every dance and it was so wonderful to then take all I'd learnt back to the Guildford School of Acting where I was teaching at the time, and hand on that knowledge to all the students.

**Mary Thomas, Rickmansworth**

I only met Peggy four years ago while attending a Nonsuch Summer School, but was very touched by her kindness and patience towards an Early Dance beginner and inspired by her attention to historical detail.

**Philippa Waite, Cardiff. To be read during "A Day to Honour Peggy"**

Reading people's memories of and tributes to Peggy makes me aware that we should tell people just how much they are valued and appreciated whilst they are with us. However, this love and affection was, I feel, demonstrated to Peggy at her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday party where so many friends and family gathered to celebrate with her.

I first met Peggy in the late 1970s when she was invited by Molly Kenny, my Historical Dance teacher, to give a workshop to our class in Cardiff where I vividly remember learning *Parson's Farewell*. I attended the following Nonsuch Summer School in Matlock, and it was then that I knew I wanted a career in Historical Dance.

Many people have spoken of Peggy's wonderful qualities which made her such a beautiful person. Here are just a few of the many memories I have of her.

Her generosity to people: letting me and others stay with her so I could teach in London regularly.

Her immense knowledge and insight: into past periods that she so willingly shared with others, in class yes but at other times too: sitting in her kitchen playing Canasta relating the scores to dates, she'd say, "ahh yes! That was the time of ....."

Her openness to other people's opinions: on matters of dance style/execution which led her to question and re-define her own ideas: dancing through some steps – in the kitchen! – to clarify their properties.

Her vulnerability: being frustrated because she knew how she wanted the steps to look but ceased to have the balance to demonstrate it!

Her vitality, sense of humour and fun: giving the EDC annual lecture, and coming back to the flat with June and myself; washing all the glasses at midnight and deciding to have a game of canasta which went on until 5am (at which point I decided I must go to bed as I was teaching the next day) and then making breakfast before retiring to bed!

I really miss her company on so many levels: friend, colleague and mentor.

Peggy's love of dancing came across to all who knew her and we were all enriched by this. It's hard to think about Peggy in the past tense as she is still very much alive to me. It's only when I have a question pertaining to her instructions books (which are practically worn out – and that's the second or third copy I'm talking about!) that I realise that she is physically no longer with us. Spiritually, however, it's a different matter! Peggy is with me constantly. Often as I teach, her reconstructions, I hear her ideas on how she wanted the dances performed. I shall always remember her saying:

"Nonsuch doesn't teach dances but teaches people how to dance"

It's exactly my own philosophy on teaching, so I will keep the flag flying Peg, you know what is in my heart, I love you.

**Birte E. Lav Fauerby, Denmark**

It must be about 42 years ago that I first met Peggy who was a student in Wendy Hilton's class at Morley College. The class folded for a period and Peggy came to Wendy's class at Swiss Cottage instead, which was where I was a student. The first time we danced publicly together, in the class, must have been at the Hampstead Festival in the Fenton House Gardens.

At that time I was living at home, in Strood, Kent, commuting to Sidcup where I was training at the Doreen Bird School of Theatre Dance, and several times a week travelling on to London for singing lessons and historical dance classes, and ballet or theatre performances. The last train home was at 11.35 p.m. with an hour's journey home and a 15 minute walk from the station after the street lights were put out at midnight! My mother would be standing at the front door, anxiously looking out for me. Peggy offered to put me up after some occasion involving both of us, and I soon became a fairly regular guest. She had a guest room at the top of her maisonette that could always be booked. She was always still up when I got there around midnight, usually working in her little office/den. We would have a cosy chat there, or in her kitchen, over a mug of cocoa, before turning in.

As time went on Peggy became more and more interested in making historical dance a going concern and was able to concentrate her talents on this when she retired at an early age from her job as a civil servant. In 1974 I moved to Denmark, and the last time I met up with Peggy was a few years afterwards when we attended the ISTD Historical Dance Congress together. Since that time the rivers of water that have passed under the bridge have forked in very different directions for Peggy and me and for every year that passed I found it more difficult to keep up a correspondence with her. She, however, faithfully sent me brochures for her summer school every year which I couldn't attend because they took place in the English summer holiday which is a month after the Danish ditto! I have been looking forward to attending one when I retire in three years time! Peggy usually sent a little greeting with the brochures, the last one I received saying: "I'm well but my legs are playing me up – I can't understand why, I'm only 79"!

May her spirit rest in peace and her work be carried on to further heights as a memorial to her.

**Hilary White Nunn, Canada**

I feel very honoured to have known Peggy, albeit briefly. I have enormous respect for her work and found her to be such a lovely person.

**Irene Rankin, Scotland**

Peggy inspired a love of historical dance, particularly when actually participating in it. Good wishes for the day of honour.

**Elizabeth Russell. Capriol Society for Early Dance, Cambridge**

To dearest Peggy with loving thanks to a great inspirer of early dance and one of our Society's main foundation stones. The Capriol Mediaeval Dancers are still delighting audiences with the Mediaeval dances from volume 1 of Dances from the Courts of Europe 12th-19th Century

### **Alan Stark, Mexico**

In spite of spending so many years in far away Mexico, I tried to maintain contact with research in London, where I had first been introduced to Early Dance by a student of Melusine Wood's in 1954. An annual visit to Foyles or Dance Books led me to begin the collection of booklets prepared by Peggy Dixon and on one of my annual visits to England I decided to make an appointment to see her. Thus began a series of fascinating discussions.

Every year I hurried from Waterloo to Brook Drive eager to start the next conversation about what I had been turning over in my mind since the last visit. How generous Peggy was with documentation that was not available to me in Mexico ! How concise her analysis in our conversations, just as it was in her booklets! How exciting our discussions !

I had been more in contact with dance research in the United States and on certain occasions Peggy invited me to show some of the different material in her classes. Once I was proud to introduce her to my colleague and friend Ingrid Brainard while she was on a visit to London when there was a warm discussion of points of research. Most of all I was proud to be present at the celebration of her 80th birthday and to meet more of the members and friends of Nonsuch, whose performances I had never been able to enjoy.

In recent months I have been re-reading different sections of the booklets and remembering fondly my visits to hear Peggy comment on such ideas in person. May the work she began be continued for many years to come !

### **Nobuko Yuasa, Japan**

Dear Peggy, Thank you for all the help you gave me to learn Early Dance for ten years. As you said "This is a great step for you." When I first met you in Durham, my life had totally changed. It had been a longtime dream to learn Early Dance abroad, until I got to know of you by a lucky chance. You always tried to think together with me on my question, showing documents or steps. You opened my eyes to the vast field of Early Dance study. When I met you second time, I brought my own interpretation on a branle music, and we realized you'd got the same conclusion years ago. We were surprised and glad. In the first few years I read your books from cover to cover in detail which made you surprised. Although I would honestly tell I had to do so as to understand the dances in a foreign language, it made my base of dance study, and I still look into your books. In Japan I do lots of dances you have reconstructed. Also, you led me to Philippa Waite and helped me learn Baroque Dance from her in London. I will never forget your kindness. You and your dance study changed my life. With lots of Love

### **Nira Pullin, U.S.A.**

I will always cherish the memory of Peggy Dixon. Whether sitting on a throne portraying Queen Elizabeth or dancing so elegantly —your eyes were drawn to her — what a presence. She not only taught me to dance in many styles but to recreate dance in the theatre world. To me she was a teacher, a mentor, a scholar, a researcher, an artist and a friend. I miss her terribly already.

### **June McKay, Scotland (remarks to be read on May 14<sup>th</sup>)**

Peggy and I first met during the 1970s when, in response to one of her inimitable flyers, I came down from Scotland to Morley College and to a course in Early Dance that Peggy was running. What a wonderful atmosphere there was; what an eye-opener it all was; and how suddenly the direction of my life changed.

Peggy's passion for Early Dance invariably rubbed off onto those of us who, as students, came into close contact with her. Indeed, since her death at the end of July last year many have written expressing their appreciation for what she meant to them. And the words which are repeated many, many times in their letters are:

Generosity; Inspiration; Enthusiasm; Kindness, and a remarkable willingness to share her knowledge.

Someone said 'The world will be a poorer place without Peggy and her calm soothing presence, but it was a rich place she inhabited'.

And someone with very little English said "How a sadly and big missing"; and we all know just what she meant.

Despite being untrained in such matters as dance and drama, Peggy was a natural and talented mover and player. A few years ago while she was in Glasgow, probably for another intense session on one of the Nonsuch instruction books, I took her to a dance workshop with a difference. It was run by Wolfgang Stanger who works with mentally disabled and blind people. At one part of the course they were amazed to see this elderly white-haired lady out-jiving them all quite effortlessly and unselfconsciously.

Her gentle sense of humour was infectious; for instance, who can forget the story of the wide-mouthed frog! Her acting ability whether it was during the tutor's turns at summer school final evenings, or during the late-night charade sessions that were a feature of summer schools, was hilarious. And as I write the word 'hilarious' I know it isn't quite the right word. So having exhausted Roget's Thesaurus, my hand still goes instinctively to the telephone to ring Peggy and ask her advice in this as in so many other matters.

Over the years we worked companionably together on the various Nonsuch Dance Books. The new Book One was particularly rewarding and many hours were spent at Brook Drive just about engulfed by vast heaps of reference and history books as we searched for the right adjective, discussed which pieces of information were essential, or re-worded ideas to fit the page neatly. Peggy had the imaginative ideas; I did the dull but necessary bit, refining and ordering, as well as endless proof reading. But it was a good partnership, developed over many years and we both looked forward to the lengthy sessions at her computer.

Speaking of the computer, Peggy was completely self-taught quite late in life; and it was only when I came to the computer world myself that I realised how convoluted her methods were. The fact that she achieved such a professional layout is truly amazing. As a touch typist for many years she rarely used the mouse, preferring to use keystrokes which in her hands were very speedy. And her methods, although entirely idiosyncratic, resulted in an immaculate book layout.

Contd.

As colleague, friend and holiday companion Peggy came to Scotland frequently, twice to look after me when I came out of hospital. Over the years we holidayed and walked in various parts of the country, once taking the post boat to various of the inner Hebridean islands. She enjoyed listening to the birds and identifying the Scottish wildflowers which were so different from those in south east England. Over the years that I knew her, she also developed a great interest in trees. The Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park on the other side of Brook Drive was an area where she honed her knowledge; for the park, despite covering such a small area, is rich in its plant and tree diversity, especially with its examples of the first thirty-four tree species to colonise Britain since the last ice age. Peggy knew where they all were.

It was a one-time lodger of hers, Carlos Cortes, who suggested we plant a tree in her memory, and 'her' park is absolutely the right place to receive the Himalayan Birch that we are to plant this afternoon, just outside the Tibetan Peace Garden.

Two ceremonies have already taken place. In September a number of friends who had been unable to attend her funeral met at Brook Drive and went across to the park to scatter some of her ashes; and in January a Scottish contingent met in Paisley and went to scatter more of her ashes at a nearby hillside waterfall beloved by Peggy. On this occasion, one of Peggy's lodgers, Aidan Broadbridge, played an appropriate lament on his fiddle – The Duchess Tree - a very moving occasion.

Peggy really loved the great outdoors and just a few days before she died two of us wheeled her out onto the balcony and garden of the respite care home at the top of Brook Drive where she spent two days before going into Trinity Hospice. Revelling in the fresh air, she sat, peacefully, with her arms outstretched and face lifted to the sky as the rain pattered down.

And it's this image of Peggy that I like to remember.

### **Judith Appleby, N.Yorkshire**

I had never heard of 'Historical Dance' before I started going to 16<sup>th</sup> century dance classes in Oxford, and then to Oxford Historical Dance Society workshops. These workshops weren't in any historical order, and though I enjoyed them all enormously, and Baroque most of all, I had a very confused idea about how all the different periods connected with each other. This all changed when I went to the Nonsuch Summer School in 1991. The two weeks were filled, for me, with *ah!* moments of dawning comprehension as my body experienced a condensed 'Historical Dance Timeline', from Medieval to Baroque. I remember feeling a huge burst of gratitude to Peggy for creating order out of the chaos in my head. She and the Nonsuch team set me on the right track, and the excitement I felt during those two weeks never left me. Thank you Peggy.

### **Gill Plant, Staffordshire**

Peggy introduced me to historical dance when I attended my first Nonsuch summer school at Matlock in about 1978. I loved it from the start. She was a superb teacher and I loved the dances – especially [the Italian] *Rostibolly*, *Alexandresca*, *The Slow Courante* and *The Minuet*. I loved Peggy's calm gentleness and serenity. She was so friendly and approachable. It was a delight to watch her dancing. She will be very very much missed.

### **Simon Masterton-Smith**

I met Peggy in 1968 when I returned to London, and was introduced into the mysteries and glories of medieval and tudor dance. I joined Nonsuch and had four wonderful years with the group, going to beautiful places like Eltham Palace, Burwash House and St John's Smith Square. I was part of the group when we graduated from recorded to live music, which was such a boost to our performing potential. The parties in 16 Brook Drive, the costume fittings either at Peggy's or at Jack's when he lived down the road in Camberwell, were always such an integral part of Nonsuch social life.

The drives out to the venues in her open top cars, full of people and costumes, music tapes and the like, are memories we will always cherish. I learned so much from Peggy, not just about court dance through the centuries (I was never allowed near 17th C!) but about the wonderful music that was about at that time. The thing I remember most was Peggy's incredible patience when we couldn't pick up the steps immediately. She would threaten us with Belinda Quirey if we didn't get it right! Above all, I remember and love Peggy for her passion for the dance and that BLACK DRESS. Also I'm sure she died peacefully "like a ripe apple falling from a tree".

### **Ann Hamilton, Blind Dance, Scotland**

The poise of a grand lady. The grace of a lithe girl. I was fortunate to be taught by Peggy on a few occasions at dance workshops for the Blind Dance company in the early to mid 1990's. With little knowledge of Visual Impairment, Peggy could convey dance steps, posture and movement verbally. At June McKay's invitation, she took on a diverse group of dancers and gave us such confidence and inspiration. Her spirit of dance has been passed on to more than a few who will continue the joy of early and international dance. Like every good teacher, she would encourage but stretch your boundaries.

### **Jacqueline Spiers, Blind Dance, Scotland**

Peggy, thank you so much for the vibrant light you put into our darkness.

### **Margaret Wilson, Blind Dance, Scotland**

I shall always remember Peggy's kindness and patience, and her ability to convey to us, both in words and in hands-on practise, the movements necessary for each dance.

### **Joan MacGregor, Brighton**

I have belatedly realised that the event to commemorate Peggy is next weekend. I am unable to attend but I'm sure it will be well attended and I hope the sun shines on the tree-planting ceremony.

I enjoyed the two summer workshops that I attended, a few years ago now, and admired Peggy's knowledge, enthusiasm - and stamina! I hope I'm still as active in my 80s. I've been somewhat limited by arthritis in the last couple of years but now that I've had a new hip joint and am recovering well, I may well be back in years to come.

Keep up the good work!

### **Angus McKay, Scotland**

Peggy was the first person I met who had achieved inner peace. I was always tremendously impressed by this and her ability to maintain and exude calm in the face of failings - sometimes quite serious, of both circumstances and people.

I worked for her on many occasions, and I later realised that she had taught me a great deal about how to lead people and how to motivate them by being supportive and encouraging, and making sure that mistakes made were mistakes learned from, and avoided in future. Of course, the other side of that was that you always knew you would disappoint her if you didn't meet the standard that she and you knew you were capable of. Most people didn't really want to do that. They had fallen in love with the spell she cast with that inner peace, and ultimately with her.

Although she had an almost saintly aura about her sometimes, had the patience of one with people, and was wildly generous with her hospitality, she was not a saint. She was often a procrastinator and a dreamer; but frequently a hard labourer and more than occasionally a visionary. Some said that she sometimes accepted squalor, but I always felt that she was less interested in the mere physical circumstances than the act of creating or friendship and sharing.

I suppose people would expect me to talk about the dance and the music as a central part of my memories of Peggy, but mainly it is all those behind the scenes moments; the interstices between events which held a cup of tea (and the indulgence of slowly deciding that a biscuit might accompany this); the times after all the packing up was finished at Summer School when we might push the boat out and have a Chinese meal and enjoy the feeling of accomplishment and relive the best moments; times of just working away at things in a quiet hum, interspersed with batting ideas back and forth.

Peggy really knew how to enjoy those little moments. She absolutely understood the difference between frivolity and triviality. This she taught me. She had a great sense of humour, never cruel, but able to tease people affectionately on their foibles. She loved the absurdities of life and seemed to enjoy the ritual absurdities especially. You had to know her quite well before you could see it reliably - it was all in that serene faint smile and in the eyes.

In the end it is a dance memory which is the most powerful, again the look in those eyes: when they met mine and I knew it was time to play a young buccaneer to her Queen Elizabeth and join her to lead the pavane in the claustrophobic court atmosphere that could be generated at a really intense Summer School. It was a grand game.

Thank you Peggy for teaching me so much that was important, for giving me the opportunity to see and do so many things that I didn't appreciate at the time with so many wonderful people, and for being someone to respect when I badly needed to know that there was someone who understood a few of the things I thought important and took my point of view seriously.

### **Sue Warren, Herefordshire**

I met Peggy at the 1980 Nonsuch summer school. I had developed my interest in early dance after performing in an EFDSS Albert Hall extravaganza which Belinda Quirey choreographed. By 1980 I had enthused a small group of friends, dancers & musicians, in Herefordshire and needed to learn more to share with them.

On my return home, Passamezzo Early Dance was conceived one evening in The Nag's Head at Canon Pyon. Over the next few years members of the group came with me to Nonsuch, I served on the summer school planning committee and was at the inaugural meeting of the EDC.

I kept in touch with Peggy over the years and always valued her timely advice and quirky sense of humour. I can't imagine the London dance scene without her!

### **Cindy Campbell, Canada**

My thoughts of Peggy begin with her generosity. She so readily shared her knowledge, her sources, her time. She gave me a ride one day in her convertible with the top down, and it was relaxing and fun, as it was meant to be on a lovely sunny day.

I admired her dancing, its lightness and clarity, a joy to watch. She gave so many of us our first taste of early dance and introduced us to other interesting teachers and dancers. There was the music, the clothing, the visits to places of interest in the area ...

In so many ways, Peggy planted the seed that became *Il Pomo Verde*, our dance group in Montreal.

### **Kate Aird, Scotland**

Peggy came into my life at infrequent intervals - but all of them enjoyable - whether it was proof-reading, and discussing at length a difficult sentence or layout, or putting up with the frequent breakdowns of my inadequate camcorder, or travelling in Peg's incredible car with the roof open to look at Durham Cathedral in the moonlight, or the very different Peggy playing Scrabble, merciless and cut-throat, or gently knitting at June's house in Paisley, discussing the world in general and early dance in particular. Perhaps most unforgettable of all was the scattering of her ashes at her favourite spot in the Glennifer Braes, near Paisley, to the music of a Scots air played on the violin by Aidan Broadbridge.

I don't think she herself ever fully realised the pioneering and valuable nature of her work on early dance and we must continue and preserve her work, for we shall never see her like again.

### **Doris Sitek, Anni Hunziker, Christa Stoller, Inge Nötzli, Switzerland**

In 1990 a group from Basel visited a course of NONSUCH SUMMER SCHOOL which took place in Durham.

We enjoyed excellent lessons in early dance. The music and instruction books we took home still remind us of the very good time we had with Peggy Dixon. We are very grateful for her outstanding work in early dance.

**Molly Kenny, Wales**

Peggy and I go back a long way - Morley College in the sixties, with the late Wendy Hilton. Peggy always stood apart as a truly special person, compassionate and caring in so many ways. A real people's person. It was not surprising, then, that she became the fine teacher and leader in her field. Peggy was a great listener, and had the ability to make one feel truly special. Such empathy !

Oh, and I must not forget that jaunty hat from the 16th century, made by Peggy's hand. Saucy, we called it. She had such wit, and was such fun to be with.

When the south of Britain was devastated by a hurricane, in the eighties, I recall her consternation, as we walked through Hyde Park, with beautiful old trees, lying uprooted. It is so fitting that Peggy should be remembered by the planting of a tree. I salute you Peggy. My love and blessings to you.

**Amanda Williams, Norwich**

Peggy's was the first name from the early dance world with which I became familiar. It was in 1983 when Sheila Eagling started the classes which led to the formation of the Norwich Early Dance Group. The resources she used were the Nonsuch books and tapes. Without Peggy it is doubtful whether NEDG would have come into being. We continue to use the books and tapes and I am so very grateful for Peggy's knowledge, research and ability to communicate the results of that research so clearly, with an obvious delight in the joy of dancing.

**Sue Knight, Dumfries, for the D.H.D.G.**

Members of Dumfries Historical Dance Group remember Peggy Dixon for her patient and thoughtful teaching. We benefited greatly from her considered advice delivered in a gentle and cheerful manner. She was a very welcome visitor to the S.W. of Scotland, enjoying her walks along the Solway Coast and visits to the Wildfowl Trust - a much-missed very dear teacher and friend.

**Tony Sainsbury, London**

Many thanks for your letter about Peg. the date [May 14] is in my diary and I will most certainly hope to be there ... She was my oldest girlfriend, and I doubt whether she made any boyfriends before my arrival. There is a touching photo of us at about 12 and 8 years old that I'm trying to find - her slightly quizzical smile already there ...

**Sue Danby, Surrey**

I joined Nonsuch as a professional dancer in 1965/6, having read in the Dancing Times that a company was to be formed to reconstruct and perform early dance. I had followed a short study of 'historical dance' with Wendy Hilton and Belinda Quirey during my student days at the Royal Academy of Dance's Teacher Training College in the early 60's. I was much taken with it and 'signed up' with Nonsuch. Some of my happiest experiences were with Peggy and Jack et al, travelling round the country giving demonstrations. Eventually work prevailed and I withdrew. I am looking forward to meeting old friends and thank Nonsuch for contacting me about this event for Peggy.

**Brian Collins, East Sussex (remarks to be read on May 14<sup>th</sup>)**

It must have been sometime in 1966 that Jack Edwards, whom I had known for some years, both of us being "up from Cornwall", asked me if I would be interested in doing some readings for an historical dance group. This immediately conjured up images of some W.I. mutation with lots of lavender water and lace. Despite this, because it was Jack who had asked, I agreed. What followed was an almost damascene experience when, Peggy in her black dress with Margaret Grange, Madeleine Inglehearne and Ann Vaughan and Jack performed a small programme of Elizabethan dances at the Chanticleer, a small theatre in London.

It was whilst I was in this "enchanted" state that Peggy asked me if I would be prepared to do a couple of dances for a show that Nonsuch were doing at the South London Theatre Club, and uttered those never-to-be-forgotten words "It's only walking". The rest is, as they say, history. I learnt over the next five years or so about sixty variations on how to walk !

On looking at Jack's remembrances, No. 16 [Brook Drive] and the car, open-topped most of the time, loom large in memories. It's strange, wherever we went we always seemed to go via Purley Way with someone, often Jack, in the back smothered in costumes because, as you can see even now, I was bigger and therefore sat in the front. Also the many dances on village greens "Church hall if wet"; the weekend performances at Syon House where the dances couldn't be more than two minutes long otherwise they would have been drowned out by the aircraft coming in and out of Heathrow; the dances at Lympne Castle for the top American insurance salesmen who had won a trip with their wives and who loved history "because it was so old" but couldn't quite bring themselves to eat the sucking pig that had been so triumphantly presented to them, and the puff hose that were a bit too puffed.

Then Smith Square in 1971 with Ars Nova. Amazing ! And the lasting memory of Peggy and the tambourine dance !! Smith Square, though I think none of us except perhaps Peggy and Jack realised it then, set Nonsuch on the path to where it is today.

In talking with Marian Fletcher about Peggy and Nonsuch, as the two are inextricably linked, the overriding feeling that flowed through it all was, despite all the hard work, what fun it was. The times at number sixteen when we would be falling about laughing over the silliest things, especially Marian who is the biggest giggler I have ever known, because, even though we may have been tired from a performance or practice, we were so happy.

We have to look to Peggy who had the vision, as the inspiration in those days that achieved all this in us, and which has obviously carried on into the present generations of Nonsuch.

It was a pleasure and a privilege to have known Peggy.

Even though it should be read by a woman, I would like to finish by reading a poem attributed to Elizabeth I which Peggy read at Smith Square in 1971 [and on many many subsequent occasions. Ed.] and which I will always associate with Peggy:

*When I was young and fair, and fancy favoured me,  
Of many was I sought, their mistress for to be;  
But I did scorn them all, and answered them therefore,  
"Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere !  
Importune me no more !"*

*How many weeping eyes I made to pine with woe,  
How many sighing hearts, I have no skill to show;  
Yet I the prouder grew, and answered them therefore,  
"Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere !  
Importune me no more !"*

*Then spake fair Venus' son, that proud victorious boy,  
And said: "Fine Dame, since that you be-en so coy,  
I will so pluck your plumes that you shall say no more,  
"Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere !  
Importune me no more !"*

*When he had spake these words, such change grew in my breast  
That neither night nor day since that, I could take any rest.  
Then lo ! I did repent that I had said before,  
"Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere !  
Importune me no more !"*

---oOo---

### **Sandria Reese, East Sussex**

This is a tribute to Peggy from all the people who have come to my classes and workshops over the years with Stratford Renaissance and those who have footed it at numerous country fairs in Warwickshire and lately in Sussex. There has been so much joy and interest in early dance. It has been a privilege to spread the happiness around. I could not even have begun, were it not for Peggy's inspired teaching and the books she and June published for our use. Thank you Peggy for the ideas, thank you for the music, thank you for the scholarship, for answering so many questions and, most of all, thank you for making it all possible.

### **Jill Waller, West Sussex**

Write about Peggy, June said. Mm – I've known Peggy since 1984 – my first Summer School, and could doubtless fill much space praising all her many qualities. Instead I just want to say what she and Nonsuch have meant to me.

Firstly, the pleasure it gave to combine my two favourite subjects, History and Dance. Then the almost magic feeling of being taken back in time, watching the costumed demonstrations given by June and Peggy in the early days, the fun and laughter we've all had at the summer schools, and all the lovely people I've met. So "Thank you Peggy" is mainly what I want to say.

**Deb Knight, Wiltshire**

I met Peggy when I attended the first ever Nonsuch Summer School in Matlock. Peggy and Jack had misjudged the time people would arrive and were seriously wondering if anyone would turn up!

I continued to turn up and over the years began to drive Peggy out into the countryside to find some "headspace". We went left and right as the mood took her. One day, as we were leaving, we were looking for a map. Someone, I don't know who, said "I thought you didn't use a map to go out!" Peggy and I turned and said in unison "Oh no, the map is to find the way back!"..... I hope you've got the map with you kid !

**Margaret Schofield-Palmer, London**

Peggy, who lit a pioneering flame for Early Dance which will not, for want of effort, be extinguished.

**Celia Hewerdine, East Sussex**

I first came into contact with Peggy Dixon when I was looking for historical dancers to perform at the tercentenary celebrations of the Royal Greenwich Observatory (1975). This led me to attend *Come Dancing Ladies, Dancing Knights* at the Friends House, Euston on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1974. I met up with Peggy after the show, having phoned her previously, and subsequently booked Nonsuch to perform at Herstmonceux Castle on 30<sup>th</sup> August 1975.

I shall always remember the impact the company made on their entry into the ballroom – or Long Gallery – on the occasion of a country dance party. Music was by Musica Antiqua of Worthing and it was their director, Michael Uridge, who first told me about Nonsuch. After that Peggy told me her plans for Nonsuch and asked if I would like to join the company as Company Secretary – and here I still am !

I left the Observatory in October 1976 and went to the University of Sussex to complete a degree course. While "temping" in London during a vacation I remember staying at Peggy's flat to "cat-sit" for Simple ! Like many others who came into contact with Peggy, we became good friends, and there was always an informal welcome at 16 Brook Drive. For some while, [my sister] Anita stayed at Peggy's when she started working in London, having a bed in the "costume" room !

**Lena Johnson, Sweden** An ex-lodger

Thank you so much for writing me and telling me about Peggy. I always used to worry about not getting to know if something happened to her but that proved to be an unnecessary concern !

I miss my "Brook Drive family" very much and although I've been terrible at keeping in touch over the years you are always in my mind ...

**Paula Delany, Oxfordshire**

Thank you so much for ringing and letting me know about Peggy. I was very upset to hear of her death and it is very sad to think she is no longer around. She was such an inspiration and I shall remember especially the early days in Durham when I first got to know you all. I loved learning all about the background of every dance and it was wonderful to then take all I'd learnt back to the Guildford School of Acting where I was teaching at the time, and hand on that knowledge to all the students.

I do hope the summer course went ahead and that it continues in years to come

**Giorgio de Martino, Paris**

I have read only a few days ago, when in Milan Italy (at the moment I am in Paris where I am living much more during the last five years) the letter concerning "A Day to Honour Peggy Dixon", 14<sup>th</sup> May 2006. As I have been in Canada, Quebec, from December 2005 until now, I have discovered your invitation only when back in Milan. I am so sorry I couldn't be in England for the 14<sup>th</sup> of May and I have loved Peggy a lot (better: I still love and admire Peggy a lot ...) I hope on that day there were a lot of people and I am happy a tree has been planted for her. My last image of Peggy is wonderful; she gets her convertible car, after the end of the dance course and, with all her books and luggages in the rear seats; smiling and saying "bye", she went her way.

**Cynthia Horan, East Sussex**

I only met Peggy for the first time at the Summer School held in Spain in 2004. She was a most remarkable lady and I did so much enjoy her teaching, enthusiasm, good humour and grace.

**Kathleen Bates, Manchester**

I was shocked to hear of Peggy's death last summer as I hadn't known of her illness. I'm so glad I had seen her at the Historic Dance Festival in Rochdale in the autumn of 2004 ... I can never hear a selection from *Die Fledermaus* without being transported back to the summer school in Matlock when that large, boisterous group of young people from Sweden were there and we danced the quadrille to those tunes and all went galloping off the floor to the last bit. What fun it was !

**Anna-Karin Ståhle, of I Saltarelli, Sweden**

Yes we knew that Peggy had passed away last year. Jack Edwards wrote to us to let us know. It was sad news. She was such a lovely and generous person and meant a lot for I Saltarelli.

**Still to come:**

**Nicolas Broadbridge**

**Aidan Broadbridge**

**Additions from Jodie Robson**