

## Interview – Pam and Ron Ross

### *Summary (Part 2)*

PR says that David Oliver called his tune books FolkWorks 1, 2, 3 and 4. They are a good reference. They cross over with Heather Bexon's Overblown and Highly Strung. PR talks about a tune that Oliver called "I-Tiddly-I-Tie", which she recognised as something they'd played with Bexon – was actually Leather Away the Wattle-O. PR says they got a lot from Oliver. He wrote down popular session tunes. They also got the tune *Road to the North* (Alistair Anderson) from Oliver. PR says she read in Tradition Magazine that Jo and Fi Fraser came across that tune and played it as a polka instead of its usual contemplative style as she had only read it from the music. PR says that when RR was new to melodeon playing and didn't know any other players, they went to an annual melodeon gathering at Mendlesham. The place was littered with melodeons! The Old Swan Band were playing, PR says she saw Suffolk step dancing for the first time there. She was surprised to see a very elderly lady and man dancing. She had never seen anything like it before. PR muses that it is weird to look back on the past, to think how they got "sucked into" it. Says they "dragged their poor children around". RR says the reason they got involved in Hoxne Hundred was to do with Steve Dickinson. PR interjects that it was by chance. RR says he bought an Anglo concertina because he could play the harmonica. Had been on sale in an antique shop in Diss for £75 for some time. There was then an antique fair in Botesdale, the owner of the concertina was there, ask if RR wanted to buy it. RR said he couldn't afford it, dealer offered it to him at trade price: £27.50. PR says RR rang Steve Dickinson who said he could take it to him. PR and RR then went for a walk in Thornham and got lost. Came across Dickinson by chance. RR asked him for directions over his garden gate, realised it was Dickinson. Ended up taking the concertina to him, found it was a Northern concertina band instrument. This concertina was in Bb/Eb although he hadn't realised. Dickinson changed it to D/G, most Anglos are in C/G. Still has it and insures it for £2000, original Laschenal. PR mentions the Mexburgh Concertina Band. Says she taught at Swinton Comprehensive and lived in Mexburgh. All villages round there had a brass band, this is why the concertinas were in flat keys so they could join in with the brass. They still have the LP of that band. PR says that, having met Dickinson, they took their daughter to a ballet class in Diss, as did Dickinson. He said they were starting a dance side with some members of Gypeswicke GAlrnad. Discovered that Mike Barclay, "Cotswold Guru" also lived in Thornham. This is how Hoxne Hundred ended up doing Northwest Clog, Garland and Cotswold. They held a workshop with Trefor Owen. They always had a 15 min tea break. Was a full-on evening. Mike Barclay also called with Hoxne Hundred ceilidh band, which RR started. Attempted country dancing as a side with limited success. Barclay has written books about Cotswold. Used to be with East Suffolk Morris. Good dancer. PR says they got swept along by people who knew what they were doing. Invited Ramrug from St Albans, good Northwest Side, to Suffolk a few times. Had an eccentric dancer with them who worked at a country house so they camped in the grounds. Played cricket on a Sunday morning. The prize was a pair of cricket boots with a section of tree trunk nailed to them that would allow you to "walk on water" (didn't work).

No amount of going to dance events encouraged PR and RR's children to be dancers, although their daughter tried clogging for a while. They were going to Whitby Folk Festival once, their daughter was working on a stall there. Their son asked if they could take an old guitar. Asked their daughter to get a guitar tutor book. This is how he started playing guitar. Would practice for hours at a time. Had many guitar magazines which included a tab every month of a well-known piece of music. He now plays for a band called Bow Weevil, Americana/Bluegrass. Also played with Acacia, met Adrian Lever, was inspired. Their daughter played with a band called Keds. Also a band at school, and another called Old Heads Young Shoulders. Also Xim, who play at FolkEast sometimes. Played flute and bass guitar. Plays with other bands now, Strom, Waswash.

PR says that they have influenced their children to play music. RR says they are brilliant musicians. Their son plays jazz/ragtime piano. Plays with a good band. Have played in a session in a waiting room with their son. Their children love music and play a lot, go to festivals. PR and RR tell stories of their children's musical experiences etc.

PR describes going to Towersey Folk Fest, says how they ended up encouraging various people to go. The last time they were there their son had a gig halfway across the country, which RR drove him to and back to the festival. Saw the Young Un's at a festival, bumped into some friends from Brockdish, and a friend of their son, having snuck in. Ended up filming their son who hadn't realised they were coming.