

ESCAPE 2025 Class Descriptions

Session 1 - 9:00-10:00 AM

Morning Contras: Ben Sachs-Hamilton with Aaron, Viveka, and Hollis (Hands Across)

Get your body and brain moving with some fun, accessible contra dances. We'll also explore some ways to become a more supportive partner and neighbor on the dance floor. All levels of experience welcome!

Scottish for All: Rachel Pusey with Dave and Peter (Pine Hollow)

Come and dance some fun Scottish dances. We'll look at figures you might not find in other dance styles and some neat ideas that illustrate the inventiveness of SCD over the last hundred years. Steps will be admired but not required, with just enough teaching to get you off the ground and give you a glimpse of what magic awaits when you put a skip in your step!

Session 2 - 10:15-11:15 AM

English for All: A Bouquet of Dances: Anna Rain with Paul, Hollis, and Joanne (Hands Across)

Zippy; stately; playful; transporting: each of these words could describe the wide variety of English Country Dance. We'll cover basic ECD figures while we revel in the assortment of tunes, meters, and sensibilities of the genre, from dances published in 1651 until now!

Scottish Challenge: Kat Dutton with Aaron, Viveka, and Peter (Pine Hollow)

This class is for those who already have experience with Scottish but would like some challenge. We will explore some of the more challenging figures and dances where your partner may be doing something different from you. This class will also look at how the use of the Scottish dance footwork influences the figures we do and how we do them.

Cotswold Morris: Becky Wright with Mo Brachfeld (Ampleforth)

In this class we'll learn a few dances in the Raglan tradition, with a focus on the joy of moving together as a set. All are welcome, with or without Morris dancing experience! Each day will build on the last, so attending consistently is helpful, especially for folks who are newer to Morris dancing. Bring your sneakers and get ready to hop and jump!

Session 3 - 1:15-2:15 PM

Scottish Basic Technique: Kat Dutton with Hollis and Viveka (Hands Across)

Scottish Basic Technique is for anyone who wants to make their footwork and figures look a little more polished during the S part of ESCAPE! We will not be focusing on completing full dances, instead devoting ourselves to breaking down the ways Scottish Country is different from English and Contra. While we will do a little bit of every step every day, the main focus will be quicktime steps on Tuesday, Strathspey (or slow-time) steps on Wednesday, and setting steps on Thursday. Come any day or all three --and if there's interest, we might even find time on Thursday for a quick rundown of The Pinewoods Reel!

Tai Chi: Jill Emery (Pine Hollow)

Classes will include a "follow the leader flow" mixture of qi gong and tai chi, followed by an 8-posture tai chi sequence. The class can be done seated or upright and includes meditation for relaxation & gratitude.

Session 3 - 1:15-2:15 PM (continued)

Song Swap: Chris Bracken with all of you! (Dining Hall Porch or under the Dining Hall Tent)

ESCAPE is alive with the sound of music! Chris invites everyone to sing together with a variety of song traditions. Bring a song to share, a voice to raise, or an ear to listen.

Session 4 - 2:30-3:30 PM

English with Joy, Focus, and Connection: Anna Rain with Dave, Paul, and Joanne (Hands Across)

For those familiar with standard ECD figures* and who relish collaboration with other dancers. We'll visit beloved pieces in the repertoire; we'll challenge ourselves with chewy reconstructions and with newer works.

*for example: double figure 8; heys for 3 and 4; chevron; poussette; Mad Robin; gate

Music Workshop: A Tune is More Than a Series of Notes: Peter (Ampleforth)

It's possible to play all of the notes of a tune accurately in terms of pitch and duration, and yet still not capture the essence of the tune. Breathing life into a tune requires an ability to imitate a practised exponent of the music and/or an understanding of what makes it compelling. This workshop will examine various forms of dance tune, and identify the rhythmical nuances and the details of emphasis which bring them to life. Sheet music will be available to help with learning the notes, but all of the more relevant nuances will be taught by ear. Teaching will be on the fiddle, but all traditional instruments are welcome. Each session will build on the previous one(s), so it will be best if campers commit to the series of three, rather than dropping in, say, only for the final one.

Session 5 - Tuesday/Wednesday 4:15-5:15 PM, Thursday 3:45-4:45 PM

Variety Hour: Ben Sachs-Hamilton with Aaron and Joanne (Hands Across)

We've got something a little different planned for each day!

Tuesday: Triplets (contra dances in three-couple sets)

Wednesday: Challenging contras

Thursday: Bal Folk (French couple and line dances)

Evening Dance Tutorial: Dan Blim with Dave and Paul (Pine Hollow)

Want a sneak peak for this evening's dance? We'll practice some of the more challenging dances and figures on the evening programs, so you can focus more on having fun and enjoying them a second time later!

Shape-Note Harmony Singing: Becky Wright (Ampleforth)

Come and explore the rich tradition of shape-note music! In this class, we'll learn the basics of reading shape notes and do plenty of singing in 3- and 4-part harmony, with a focus on shape-note songs that also appear elsewhere in the folk world — from pub-sing favorites to common fiddle tunes and beyond. Open to all —each day will build on the last, so folks who are newer to sight-singing may find it helpful to attend consistently each day.

Additional Sessions:

Nature Walk: Chris Jacobs (Tuesday, 11:15 AM - noon, meet at the PCI Office)

Join Pinewoods Executive Director Chris Jacobs for a tour of Pinewoods' flora and fauna! The walk will start at the PCI Office and end at the Dining Hall in time for lunch.

Camper-Led Sessions: You! (Wherever)

Want to lead a session about your specialty, like knitting or origami? Find an open spot in the schedule outside the dining hall and write it down. Then come tell a member of the ESCAPE Committee, and we'll find you a time during meal-time announcements to let people know it's happening. We can't wait to see what you come up with!