Stick Shift

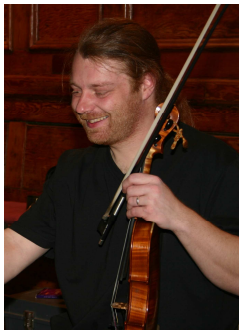
Driving Dance Music That's Geared To A Groove

Stick Shift is a new and exciting contradance band that, like all overnight sensations, has evolved over several years. Nigel and Robbie played together for a long time in various bands and in many a tunes session. Holly's arrival on fiddle and piano turned out to be the catalyst that fused with Nigel and Robbie's pyrotechnical fiddle, mandolin, banjo, guitar and bass playing of Scottish, Irish and American tunes to produce a driving, melodic sound underpinned by Holly's acclaimed, rock-solid piano.

Holly, Nigel and Robbie share not only a wide range of musical influences and experiences but also an obvious delight in playing together. With Stick Shift driving the dancing, the funky rhythms and infectious melodies of American contra music combine to give both dancers and listeners an exhilarating time -- you'll enjoy the drive!

Holly Norton (piano/fiddle) trained as a pianist and violinist in her native Texas, where she developed a love for American old-time and bluegrass fiddle music. Since moving to the UK, she has added Scottish, Irish and Swedish traditional music to her repertoire, and plays regularly around London. She is a founding member of the contradance bands Cruise Control and Stick Shift, and has pounded her keyboard at dances, workshops and festivals all over England. Holly also spent several years as an American line-dance caller, instructor and performer, appearing on television and at festivals throughout the UK and Europe. Professionally, she organises international conferences, primarily in the sports industry.

Robbie Thomas (guitar/mandolin/banjo) was a founding member of the seminal Scottish folk band Silly Wizard. For the past 15 years he has concentrated on playing for dancing, including spells with Bob Tracey and Pippa Sandford's Contraflow, Appalachian Cloggers Hot Taps and e-ceilidh rockers Stömp. Playing for contra dancing allows Robbie to indulge all his musical influences and instruments - including the banjo. A founding member of both Cruise Control and Stick Shift, Robbie is fond of old guitars, mandolins and banjos. When he isn't trawling the web looking for yet another banjo, Robbie spends his time as the Managing Director of a high-end UK mixing console manufacturer.



Nigel Walker (fiddle/bass) began playing fiddle for traditional dance around 1977 with Brackley Morris, then switched his talents to rock/funk bass playing between 1983 and 1991. He returned to fiddling in 1990, and has since played for dances and in pubs and clubs with Martin Furey, Pat Ludford, Contraflow and now Stick Shift. He enjoys playing all styles of dance music, as well as Bluegrass, Irish and Scottish traditional tunes. During the day he is a teacher, specialising in music technology, recording and DJing.

If you'd like to book us, invite us to a session or just chat about contradance music and contradancing you can reach us by E-mail: StickShiftContra@aol.com or by Telephone: 01525 217875