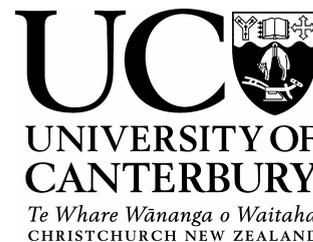


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News Release

12 May 2005

Dancing mathematicians coming to town

Hokitika, get ready for a hoedown – mathematics-style!

Mathematical entertainers from the University of Canterbury are coming to town with their dancing shoes on this month and they want the community to join them for a free barn dance with a live band.

The dance will run from 6:30pm to 9:30pm on Friday 27 May in the Westland High School Hall.

Bill Baritompamath, an experienced caller will teach and step you through them. *Celtic Fare*, a professional bush band will play jigs and reels and entertain with NZ songs.

"It will be great fun for the whole family. Everyone can do these barn dances. Bring along a supper plate to share, tea and coffee will be provided."

Bill, who is also senior lecturer in Mathematics and Statistics, has received a grant from the Royal Society of New Zealand Science and Technology Promotion Fund to create his "Dance of Mathematics" project (www.danceofmathematics.com). The Hokitika barn dance is the fourth of a series of maths dances he is running in rural towns in the coming months.

"Barn dancing is extremely mathematical, though most people don't realise it. Take for example the patterns of the dance – 'Join up hands and circle left; take four steps in and four steps back' are geometric, symmetric, repetitive cyclic movements. These ideas are the stuff of mathematics!"

The community barn dances are primarily a social event but will carry an educational bonus.

"There the community will meet mathematicians as real people doing interesting things and the following day we will give a mathematical performance with lots of demos and participation."

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"It's not a heavy maths trip, but a way to meet us socially. People at the previous events in Kaiapoi and Culverden really enjoyed themselves."

"On Saturday afternoon from 1:30 to 3:30, we will put on math entertainment in the Westland High School Hall. We'll start with a juggling show by 'the Great Burke.' After a refreshment break, Bill will get you involved with 'Puzzling Area Facts,' and Ben Martin will show you how to play with secret codes."

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