



## **Welcome to the Folk Camps Spring 2014 Extent Newsletter**

This issue of Extent has news from Folk Camps and information about this year's holidays. Find out more about our holidays including prices, staffing, dates, venues and booking at [www.folkcamps.co.uk](http://www.folkcamps.co.uk).

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## **Office Matters**

The 2014 summer season is about to begin and at present it looks a bit like the curate's egg – good in parts. With three of the four marquee catered weeks fully booked and the first one almost full, there is now a waiting list for the full weeks.

Here's a thought. If you are on the waiting list, why not try something new and book for a camp with spaces? "Because I want to go where my Folk Camp friends will be" I hear you cry. Well we pride ourselves on being the "Folk Camps family", so what about meeting up with Auntie Hall Camp who we haven't seen for years? Try getting acquainted with Cousin Week One who we have never met?

The new payment methods are popular with the majority opting for BACS payments. The time is approaching fast when balances will need to be paid, so please remember to email the office if you make a BACS payment so that it can be allocated correctly.

Don't forget the Bonus Points Scheme. If you qualify for a free place at one of the workshop weekends, then you will have received an email. Just do a normal booking and add a note that you have Bonus Points to use.

There is a new trend for the workshop weekends of dance, song and music: we are starting to have people attending who don't camp. Shock Horror! Yes, they are so keen to attend the weekends that they are staying in bed & breakfast accommodation close by. And why not? These are billed as self-catering weekends, so where you sleep is your business. These days, at most of our weekends many people opt for pub lunches, there is often a "bring and share supper" on one of the evenings, so sleeping in a soft bed with breakfast provided is not such a bad idea. It also gives non-campers an opportunity to experience the Folk Camps Family and you never know they may decide to start camping / caravanning / motorhoming in order to attend more camps. If you've got friends who dance, sing or play but don't camp, then please pass the suggestion on.

**Mic Spenceley – Administration Manager**

## **Price Freeze**

Remember that we've frozen 2014 prices for summer and weekend Folk Camps, so that you can enjoy them for the same price as last year. We hope this helps you to join us for as many Folk Camps as possible.



## **Summer 2014 Camps – Latest Bookings News**

The bookings for Summer 2014 Folk Camps were the fastest we have seen in memory – with the marquee camps almost selling out before the start of the year!

If you missed the race, don't panic as we still have spaces at the summer catered Folk Camps in the stunning Wye Valley at the village hall in Breinton, Herefordshire (2-9 August, 9-16 August).

This was the venue of a successful camp in 2009. Great for walkers, with both hills and valleys, it also offers many places to visit, as reference to the National Trust and English Heritage handbooks will show. Hereford is just down the road, and in its Cathedral is the famous 13C Mappa Mundi. Croft Castle and Berrington Hall are well worth the trip. There's the Black and White Village Trail and so many other possibilities within 25 miles.

Breinton Village Hall is in a wholly rural setting. An attractive and secluded building, it lies outside the village on a very quiet road with no near neighbours. The river Wye is but a short walk away. The camping field is level and has lovely aspects and the whole site is secure and very safe for small children. With highly experienced camp staff and excellent facilities at the hall, we are expecting two smashing weeks of holiday with great music and dancing – and a friendly welcome to anyone new to Folk Camps.

## **Reunion Ceilidh – almost Buy One Get One Free!**

It's not often that things get cheaper, but we are pleased to announce that tickets for the reunion ceilidh this year have been reduced to the extraordinarily low price of just £5 (Accompanied under 16s are free as usual). So, if you fancy meeting up with some camping friends and having a great bop around, come and dance to the fabulous music of Jenny Newman and Andy Glass on Saturday 15 November at Toddington Village Hall. Tickets are now on sale at [www.folkcamps.co.uk/members.asp](http://www.folkcamps.co.uk/members.asp).

## **Get More from a Weekend**

Some of our weekend camps are longer than just a weekend!

The Singers Workshop Weekends (Miserden 12-15 June, and Bampton 17-20 July), start on Thursday evenings. Even if you can't arrive until the Friday morning or evening, due to other commitments, it still offers a great value weekend filled with singing, plus the usual music workshops and evening ceilidhs.

Our bank holiday weekends start on Friday late afternoons (or early evening), and continue until either the Bank Holiday Monday afternoons, or for 3 of the weekends, they continue through to the Tuesday morning. For more camp details, including staffing and outline programmes for workshop weekends and to discover how much Folk Camps plan to fit into your weekend, visit [www.folkcamps.co.uk/booksummary.asp](http://www.folkcamps.co.uk/booksummary.asp).



## **Introduce a Friend**

Most of us discovered Folk Camps thanks to an existing Folk Camper sharing their experience. So, don't keep folk camps a secret! Many of us have friends that regularly enjoy making music, or singing, or dancing, and would enjoy a weekend or week on holiday with us, so please tell them all about Folk Camps.

If you introduce a friend to Folk Camps, you can earn a discount on future holidays. But just as importantly: you get the pleasure of sharing a unique holiday experience with them, full of participation and community-spirit.

## **Loyalty Scheme**

Our "Bonus Points" loyalty scheme continues this year. The more Folk Camp holidays you attend, the more points you earn. These can be traded in for a free place at a Workshop Weekend camp. If you already have enough points, you will have received an email inviting you to use them this year. The loyalty scheme is a way to thank our existing holiday-makers, and to encourage more of you to try out the Workshop Weekends, and tell your friends about these events. We believe these weekends are a great way to get a taste of Folk Camps, especially for people already active in the folk scene who haven't discovered us yet. So we urge you to try one and spread the word.

## **Please Book Promptly**

Folk Camps is a small organisation, run by its members, for its members. We know that a small number of you like to have flexibility in your holiday arrangements, and sometimes book at the last minute. However, if too many people do not book in sufficient time, it can make the logistics of organising your holidays much more difficult. It is not fair to our volunteer staff to not know how many people are attending their camp. It makes the responsibilities and workload of the un-paid council of management much harder. It makes planning the programme of your holidays difficult. It adds to the workload of our contractors. We all want Folk Camps to be successful and to provide our holidays for years to come.

So – please make your booking as soon as you are able to, for the benefit of all our members, including you!

## **Site Finding Bounty**

Did you know that if you find a site for a future Folk Camp then you get a £100 discount towards your holidays? We would particularly welcome suggestions for weekend hall locations. A hall with a field next to it for camping, without many neighbouring houses, in a beautiful location is what we are after. If you know of one, please just email us as much or as little information as you know about it. We will do the rest.



## Folk Camps Bursaries

Did you know that Folk Camps now have a bursary scheme, open to any adult under 30? It offers a Folk Camps holiday for the price of the deposit only (just £20), with the bursary paying the balance.

The main aim of the bursary is to spread the word about Folk Camps to people who are active in the folk arts - musicians, singers, dancers and storytellers. We are also keen to encourage any existing Folk-Campers who have good ideas about raising the profile of Folk Camps on social media. We want to promote our wonderful holidays to a wider audience, to fulfil the purpose of Folk Camps, which is the promotion and sharing of traditional music, song and dance.

If you think you know someone who could benefit from the scheme, or if you think you could revolutionise our online presence with your blog (or YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Flickr, Pinterest, Twitter, Google+ or whatever), you can find out more and download the application form at <http://www.folkcamps.co.uk/bursary.asp>

If you have any questions, email me: [bursary@folkcamps.co.uk](mailto:bursary@folkcamps.co.uk). There are a couple of places reserved for the scheme on each of the 2014 camps.

The bursary scheme is funded by the generous legacy to Folk Camps from Yvonne Hunt.

**Sally Clayden - Bursary Co-ordinator**

## Fancy Playing for the Reunion Ceilidh?

We are lucky to have a wealth of fantastic musicians to call on to play for the reunion ceilidh, but we would also like to encourage new musicians / bands to play at future ones. So, if you think you've got what it takes, get in touch and tell us about your band, including any links to sound files or website. We will pay generous expenses. You will need to have a good repertoire of tunes covering the main ceilidh dance types, and be flexible to work with a variety of callers during the evening.

## Non-camping Folk Camps

For those that simply do not enjoy camping, you are still welcome to join a Folk Camps holiday. As well offering winter breaks in a hotel, some members find a B&B near so they can join our weekend event. We don't list recommended accommodation nearby, but internet and local tourist offices have helped our members successfully find alternative places to stay nearby. So if you don't own a tent, caravan or motor home (or just don't fancy camping!) you can enjoy your home comforts plus the warmth of a Folk Camps holiday.



## **Comments Box**

We are introducing a new way for you to give feedback to our volunteer staff during your holiday.

We are introducing a new Comments / Suggestions box for 2014 camps. Campers can give their feedback anonymously, with comments read by staff on a daily basis and acted upon promptly where necessary.

We feel this is a more professional approach to obtaining feedback, rather than the previous "open-book" method which could have disadvantages for our volunteer staff.

After camp, we plan to offer online surveys to standardise feedback to Council, to ensure that your important opinions and comments are heard and help us to plan future Folk Camps.

## **Try Something New**

Do you enjoy your week or two of summer Folk Camp, but wish we ran more events? Well we do! There are many weekend camps run from May through to August, where you can meet up with some of your existing friends from summer camps, or make new friends. The bank holiday weekends have a similar programme to the summer week camps, except no meals provided. They include a morning music workshop, other workshops depending on who is there, and what the campers want, plus the usual evening dancing and singing. There are also the Workshop Weekends, which concentrate more on music, or dance, or singing, though still including other Folk Camp activities. There are details of all holidays on the website, and new this year, many of the weekend camps have an example programme, showing the likely timetable of workshops. If you have friends that may enjoy a Folk Camp, why not let them know?

## **Derek and Jill Hammond – Retiring from Folk Camps after nearly half a century**

Derek and Jill Hammond wrote a lovely letter to Folk Camps in October to let us know that after nearly 50 years they feel that old age has got the better of them and that they are unlikely to come to Folk Camps anymore. They expressed their gratitude to Folk Camps for the shared pleasures, music, dancing, fun and friendship that it brought them over the years, including their marriage. They feel that Folk Camps will be with them forever.

They also gave an open invitation to any Folk Camps friends to pop in and see them if they are near Wootton-under-Edge. (Contact details available from the Folk Camps office).

We were touched to receive their letter, and wish them well in their retirement, and hope that they visit us at a weekend Folk Camp if they get the chance.



## **Providing Help to Folk Camps**

Folk Camps is a small organisation, mostly run by volunteers, with additional work carried out by paid contractors. In order to keep the prices down, and to ensure that our wonderful holidays continue for years to come, we rely on support from our members. This can be as little as an email query providing advice, to as much as becoming a staff member on a Folk Camp, or joining council and making the decisions about your future holidays.

We maintain a "skills list" of our members, and sometimes ask for specialist help which can be any of the small things that a business needs assistance with occasionally. So if you have any skill or knowledge that could be helpful to Folk Camps, please email Mic at the office so that he can add it to our list.

Some less obvious examples that may be useful to us include legal knowledge, marketing, training, IT, H&S, writing press releases, etc.

If you are interested in helping Folk Camps in any way, please get in touch with us, either via the office: [info@folkcamps.co.uk](mailto:info@folkcamps.co.uk), or to the Chair: [patrickself@folkcamps.co.uk](mailto:patrickself@folkcamps.co.uk)

## **Equipment Manager**

After many years of sterling service to Folk Camps, Barry Moule is retiring from his role as Equipment Manager. We are very grateful for all that he has done for us, storing and maintaining equipment, and setting up the summer catered camps. Many years ago, Barry started this role in a purely voluntary capacity. If it wasn't for this self-sacrificing work, we probably would not have Folk Camps as it is today. Eventually Folk Camps was able to pay him for the essential services that he provided, but he has been doing this for a very long time, and his retirement is well deserved.

We are pleased to announce that the team of Graham Clements and Steve Porritt will take over from Barry this summer. There will be an overlap this year, while the "new boys" learn the ropes, and are initiated into the dark arts of site setup and breakdown. Then next year, they will be completely responsible for everything that Barry used to do. We wish them well in their new roles, and they will still be volunteering as Folk Camp wardens too!

## **IT Specialist Wanted**

Interested in database development, web development or computer programming?

Want to improve your IT experience and enhance your CV?

Want to provide volunteer help in the running of Folk Camps?

### ***Folk Camps IT systems***

The society's administrative functions and its website are supported by a bespoke database system. The system was developed and is maintained by council member Richard Jones. In order to ensure continuity into the future, we would like to find one or more people who can learn how the system works and provide specialist backup if the need arises.

### ***Technical Stuff***

The database is developed in Microsoft Access so a good understanding of relational databases is required. The database application is written in VBA (Visual Basic for Applications) embedded in Access forms and reports. The functionality of the web application is written in VB script and the database connectivity is supplied through ASP pages.

As a first step, you would probably be required to assist in the writing of a technical manual in support of a business processes manual in order to thoroughly understand the present system.

The level of skills and knowledge required would suit a good final year computer science undergraduate, or above.

### ***How to Apply***

If you are interested, or think you can help in some way, please write to Mic Spenceley, the Administration Manager with a covering letter outlining your skills and experience in this area. Thank you.

## **A Friendly Face on facebook**

In case you've not yet discovered it, please like our public facebook page at:

[www.facebook.co.uk/folkcampsholidays](http://www.facebook.co.uk/folkcampsholidays).

It's a great place to find the latest news, updates and offers from Folk Camps – plus somewhere you can share your Folk Camps holiday news and other folk related events and updates with us too. Thanks to everyone that has already shared our posts with their friends.

We would also like to use the page to hear more of your thoughts on Folk Camps holidays.