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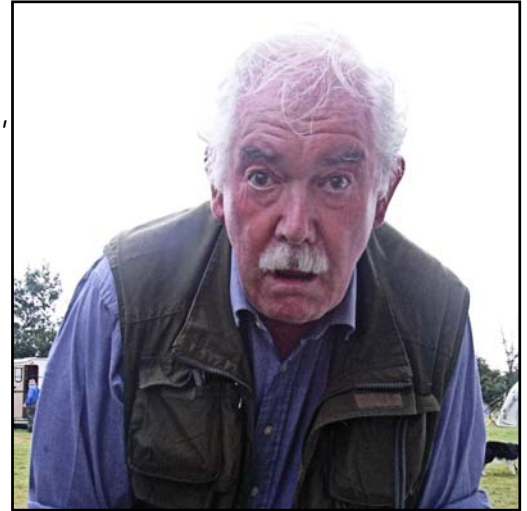


SPRING 2009

A few words from your editor

I rather like this picture of me taken by Will Riding - I think I was packing up to go home - very hot and bothered - definitely not looking at my best! However, the value of a good picture is that it tells the truth as it really is!

This picture is just one of some 1,500 taken by Folk Campers in 2008 and compiled into a DVD and available to anyone wants one - just contact me.



Well, Spring is just about here, the snow has vanished from this part of the world, the clocks are about to go forward (Spring forward, fall back) and everything is starting to shape up for another Camping Season. I was very careful last year and made a note of where all the camping equipment was stowed away in the McNamara Mansions - trouble is I've lost the note - I put it in a "safe place" . Just hope I can find the trailer tent before the Summer camp!

In the meantime, the emphasis of this issue is on the weekend camps - mini breaks away from the insanity of the daily routine. A quick sortie to the Member only web site (www.members-only.org.uk) indicates that apart from the Marquee camp and the Spring Bank Holiday event at Loxwood - there are still spaces available on the weekend camps and the Hall camp at Bedstone. The buzz is that if you are hoping to go to one of these events - sign up quickly and make sure it's other people who are disappointed! If times are hard then things will look so much better after a week at Folk Camp!

As many people know, my wife Hilary, was diagnosed with Breast Cancer late last year - after two operations she is now undergoing (enduring!) five weeks of radiotherapy and, apart from feeling weary is coping magnificently. We hope that all the treatment will be complete by the end of April and will only be an unpleasant memory when we set off for Summer camp in July. So, Ladies, if you are invited to go for a scan - please take it - the sooner these things are spotted the better the chance of a complete cure.

I see on the web site that Mic has made a plea for anyone who has changed - or is changing their email address to inform the office. I am constantly surprised just how many people complain bitterly that they "never get any publicity sent them" (in all the organisations I'm involved in) and when you investigate the cause is simple - they changed their email address and forgot to tell anyone! Address changes are also of interest to the Society.

One of my small regrets is that I discovered Folk Camping late in life and, having retired, I have no wish to take on the responsibilities of trying to lead or warden a folk camp - however, I know from conversations at the AGM that there is a great need for new Leaders and Wardens - not just to take the Society into the future - but to maintain the viability of the current situation. More camp Staff would mean possibly more camps, overseas camps, special events - and a chance for the current overworked staff to have a holiday! Save your staff from having that hot and bothered look ... Think about the possibility, have a look at the staff manuals (on the web site) chat to the staff on the camp you are on and possibly to Council - don't be shy - you wouldn't have chosen to go to folk camp if you were shy!

Office Update

No, this isn't another one of those annoying Microsoft updates that wants to restart your computer just when you're in the middle of an important document. Mind you, the Folk Camps office seems just as busy as Microsoft on occasions, but unfortunately not quite as lucrative. Still we are a registered charity, and so have to walk the fine line between breaking even and making a loss by the end of each season.

So how is Folk Camps doing in these days of recession? Well it's still too early to tell at this point in the year. Council believe that we will weather the storm but may come out of it with depleted reserves. It's really up to you. If you come to camps, the Society has no problem. If you don't come to camps the year will make a loss.

Fortunately the four marquee camps are sold out with waiting lists. There are, however, still a few places available for the two hall camps at Bedstone in Shropshire so it's not too late to get booked in. I know this part of the country extremely well as I have lived close to Bedstone in the past. It is one of my favourite areas - peaceful quiet countryside with lots of walking and cycling potential. Trips west into Wales and north to the Long Mynd hills will be a joy.



The weekend self-cater camps play a large part in sharing the running costs of the Society. They are extremely good value. Many new-comers express their amazement at how little we charge for them to come along and enjoy themselves for a weekend. Unlike most charities, the society doesn't need you to donate money. It just needs you to book for camps.

Talking of money (do we talk of much else these days?) the on-line booking service now accounts for 60% of our bookings. This system has been working extremely well up to the present. We have, however received an unwelcome notice from Google Checkout informing us that they are changing to a tiered charging system for their service. Yes, you guessed it, the charge will be higher - a lot higher! In fact the percentage they charge for each transaction is going up by 126% (no that's not a misprint) and the additional flat fee per transaction is going up by 25%. Up till now the society has absorbed the cost, but the new rate will mean that this will no longer be possible and some of the increase will have to be passed on to you. The good news is that the change will not take place till the beginning of May, so if you want to be certain of avoiding any extra charges when you pay with your card, then book or pay your balance by the end of April. If you want to pay your balance by card, then email the office on info@folkcamps.co.uk and request a balance invoice.

The one month deadline for paying balances will be strictly adhered to, so if you are late paying then the higher amount shown on the camp prices will come in to force. Don't get caught out!

The 2009 Winter Warmer was its usual social success, but this year the numbers were down. Council decided to stay loyal to this weekend's followers, but Halsway Manor has turned down our booking for 2010 and set up its own rival event. Council has written to Halsway expressing our disappointment at this action. Winter Warmer regulars will have to book directly with Halsway. In contrast, the Craft Camp at Symonds Yat was a sell-out this year and is already more than half way there for 2010. If you want to enjoy a winter get together with Folk Camp friends both old and new, then book for the 2010 craft camp now before it's too late. Comfortable surroundings, good food and lots of activities make this a must in the Folk Camps calendar.

Mic Spenceley, administration manager.

The weekend self-cater camps

...are important parts of the Folk Camps calendar. There are long weekend family camps for each of the summer bank holidays from Hampshire to Yorkshire and specialist activity weekends during June and July. The singers weekend is a long weekend starting on the Thursday evening whilst all of the others start on Friday evening.

If you have friends who are unsure that they will enjoy Folk Camps, then the weekend self-cater camps are an excellent introduction into the Folk Camps family. If you're a regular Folk Camper but haven't tried a weekend camp, then book now and enjoy a great weekend. They are excellent value with daily rates of £16 per adult, £12 for 18 to 21s, £8 for 12 to 17s, £4 for 5 to 11s and of course the under 5s come free.

You can either book on line or download a paper booking form at www.folkcamps.co.uk

May Bank Holiday weekend 1-4 May, Wildhern, Hampshire

Leader: Karl Stevens; Musician: Andy Johnson; Warden: Paul Harrington

We will be back at Wildhern, in the Hampshire countryside not far from Andover, for the first long weekend camp of the season. We are planning all the usual entertainments for 2009.

Music will be led by the inimitable Andy Johnson, with the capable hands of Mr Paul Harrington on logistics, and Karl Stevens at the reins for the first time. Expect great music workshops, with a selection of other entertainment and education provided by campers for your enjoyment. We usually manage a bit of Maypole dancing. Traditional, inclusive, fun, and great for all family, so I'm hoping that will be on the agenda too. This year we'll be continuing the tradition of the American supper, on the Saturday evening, so we can enjoy a focal meal together. This has worked well in the past and has become a bit of a



Wildhern tradition, so far be it from me to change that. Just remember to bring, or buy on the Saturday, something to share at the meal.

Of course, the Folk Camps nightly barn dances will be happening and I'll be encouraging anyone who has a desire to call a dance to take the opportunity to do so in a non-threatening environment. We should be able to call on the advice of experienced callers on camp to help out, so a good time for all you budding callers to come to the fore.

Spring Bank Holiday weekend 22-25 May, Dalton, Yorkshire

Leader: Brian Pollard; Musicians: John New and Hilary Vare; Warden: Dave Richardson

Dalton - A week of Folk Camp in a weekend!

In an area of moors, valleys and rivers, exciting walking country and beautiful scenery, the camp is not far from Richmond, with its Abbey & Castle and from Barnard Castle & Raby Abbey. The stream through the site is an excellent point of activity for all the camp.

On Friday join in a light hearted evening of ceillidh dancing, or chill out in the local after your long journey and tent pitching.

On Saturday there will be our usual musicians session followed by song and dance workshops, usually culminating in a lunchtime session in the Travellers' Rest in the village! In the evening there will be more dancing plus a vibrant sing around in the hall.



Sunday sees the music, song and dance workshops continue, and afterwards you may join us in a wonderful walk in the stunning Yorkshire Dales countryside and, in the evening, yes, more super dancing!

Monday sees the climax of the weekend with lunch and busking at the Bay Horse, Ravensworth followed by the Dalton Duck Race and Regatta (superb prizes to be won). Then on into the night with our party ceilidh, special entertainment and shared supper!

Tuesday morning sees us all take a reluctant "Goodbye!" and trundle back to reality!

Spring Bank Holiday weekend 22-25 May, Loxwood, Sussex

Leader: Brian Bull; Musicians: Jenny Newman and Andy Glass; Warden: Doug Jewitt

This is the most popular family weekend of the year and consequently has been sold out for a few months now with a waiting list for those who still hope to come along. Loxwood is in a part of North Sussex well known for country walks, attractive villages and pubs with real character and characters. This will be leader Brian's first visit to Loxwood but there will be plenty of experienced Loxwooders to show him the ropes. He is reliably informed of a good pub in the area which we've not visited before, so it may be an opportunity for a good session in pastures new. There will be plenty going on at site too, so expect song and tune sessions, lots of dancing and a 'pot luck supper' if everyone is in agreement. If you didn't get in to the camp this year, make sure that you book the weekend early for 2010 when a new venue will host us.



Musicians weekend 5-7 June, Beckford, Worcestershire

Leader: Mic Spenceley; Musician: Pete Mac; Warden: Jenny Walton

This weekend of folk dance music is based on Beckford Village Hall. Bring your tent or caravan, pitch in the field around the hall and self cater. The campsite is easy to access just off the M5, J9 at Tewkesbury. Loo and village hall facilities available over the weekend, i.e. lockable storage for musical instruments.

The weekend starts with a 4pm welcoming cup of tea, after which there will be time to set up your tent or caravan and prepare a meal. Friday evening begins **with playing tunes** and camp meeting to explain the programme. On Saturday morning we will have **music workshops** in the hall and then at or after lunchtime those who wish will go to a local pub **for a music session**. The afternoon is free with a cup of tea at 4pm in the hall. The evening dance is from 8pm. - 11pm. with opportunities to play in the band, call a dance or perhaps sing a song.

The music workshops continue on Sunday morning with a break for coffee, then lunch and a pub session. The event finishes in the hall with a final playing of favourites and requests, followed by a free **cream tea** at 4pm!

As in previous years with Pete Mac we will use his tune book '**Band Swing**' and Barry Moule's '**Play in the Band**' so bring your copies if you have them. In the workshops Pete will bring photocopies of other music, and he will introduce his new book '**Band Time**'. Both '**Band Swing**' and '**Band Time**' will be available to purchase at the camp at £11.95. The repertoire will be mainly folk dance tunes with the emphasis on playing for dancing in various rhythms - jigs, reels, hornpipes, waltzes. Pete's main instrument is the piano accordion and he loves playing his melodeon too. For music related questions about the weekend call Pete on 01395 266553.

Pete's workshops will include easy and not so easy tunes. This weekend give the chance for musicians to develop their skills on their main instrument or to play another instrument that they don't usually have chance to play. Often Pete will have an easier version available for a difficult tune so that everyone can feel involved and can play along with the musicians who come regularly to the weekend.



The location should be enjoyable for **non-musicians** too. Evesham is a nice little town just down the road. There are attractive Cotswold villages around and Bredon Hill – famed for Houseman's poem, & Tewksbury, Cheltenham, and Winchcombe are all within range of a drive out. And hopefully you will join in the folk dancing on Saturday evening!

Session Music weekend 19-21 June, Miserden, Gloucestershire

Leader: Karl Stevens; Musician: Doug Brown; Warden: Barry Moule

Set in beautiful wooded hills and valleys between Stroud and Cheltenham, the village of Miserden is in a walker's paradise.

Historic Cheltenham is just 9 miles away and Cirencester and the Cotswold Water Parks are well worth a visit if you have time in between making music with Folk Camp friends old and new in the warm and encouraging atmosphere we hope to provide on this new addition to the Folk Camps calendar.



The Session Musician's camp will be aimed at those who would like to learn and perform tunes and songs in an informal, session-like setting. Music will be learned "by-ear" rather than using dots and there will be opportunities to form and / or join groups of other musicians to share, learn and play both around the camp and in the local village pub.

Of course there will still be the traditional evening dances, with all musicians encouraged to take turns at trying their hand at playing in or leading the dance bands, along with any other workshops campers can offer, and find time to fit in.

This promises to be a relaxed and relaxing weekend, with lots of music, and great opportunities to share music and learn from each other.

Karl Stevens (leader)

Dancers weekend 26-28 June, Beckford, Worcestershire

Leader: Mic Spenceley; Musicians: Moira and Pete Gutteridge; Warden: Jenny Walton

This is an opportunity for Folk Campers to get to grips with a more intensive level of social dancing. This long-established weekend welcomes all levels of dance ability as it



is an opportunity for the less experienced to get to grips with the intricacies of the dance as well as for the more experienced to enjoy their favourite activity.

Workshops on dances from traditional to contemporary, English to American, Playford to Herbert will all be there.

Callers will also be invited to contribute and there will be a workshop especially for experienced and aspiring callers.

Musicians whose feet have grown tired will be welcomed to join Pete and Moira to play for the dancing, so bring your instruments as well.

The weekend will dive straight in with a dance workshop early on Friday evening and end on Sunday afternoon with a cream tea organised by Jenny. Campers pool their resources on the Saturday evening for a collective American supper, so come prepared.

Beckford is in the picturesque fruit growing area of the Vale of Evesham and there may be a plentiful supply of soft fruits available in the area.

Singers weekend 9-12 July, Miserden, Gloucestershire

Leaders: Jay Parrack and Karen Dietz; Musician: Bob Shatwell; Warden: Steve Porritt

This weekend has been established in the Folk Camps calendar for some time now and grows each year. Originally a short weekend, it has been extended to a long weekend for the last three years by starting on Thursday evening and finishing on Sunday afternoon.

Set in the beautiful wooded hills and valleys between Stroud and Cheltenham, Miserden is in a walker's paradise. Historic Cheltenham is just 9 miles away and Cirencester and the Cotswold Water Parks are well worth a visit.



Workshops in solo and choral singing will be led by Jay and Karen and the local traditional pub The Carpenter's Arms is happy to host sessions for the early part of the evenings with a normal Folk Camps ceilidh following at the hall. If you think you're not yet a singer, this is the weekend for you. You'll go home filled with new self-confidence.

August Bank Holiday weekend 28-31 August, Whixley, Yorkshire

Leader: Brian Bull; Musicians: John New and Hilary Vare; Warden: Richard Kenyon

Like the spring bank holiday northern camp, this August bank holiday weekend is able to extend to the end of the Monday evening and campers can stay overnight to leave first thing on the Tuesday morning.



Whixley is just 15 miles from historic York, with its Minster, City Walls, Jorvik exhibition and so much more. Knaresborough is only 5 miles away, the site of "Old Mother Skipton's Cave". Victorian Harrogate is within reach for afternoon tea. It's great walking country and a warm welcome from the village is assured.

Leader Brian Bull says "*Whixley is a camp I've partaken of several times so if the usual suspects are there I know there will be plenty of dancing. A late morning songs and tunes session is in my mind, not to mention a 'pot luck supper' one evening. There are some interesting walks and places to visit nearby, which might tempt some, and of course, the obligatory pub session. Don't miss it.*"

This will be another sell-out weekend, so if you've not experienced the warmth of the northern hospitality, it's well worth the journey. In fact many campers make it the follow on to a stay at Whitby Folk Week which ends the day that this camp starts. Book early to be assured of your place!

August Bank Holiday weekend 28-31 August, Kington Langley, Wiltshire

Leader: Jay Parrack; Musician: Doug Brown; Warden: Paul Harrington

This popular end-of-season camp in the south returns to a favourite site. The small village of Kington Langley lies between the M4 to the north and Chippenham to the south. Nearby are the historic National Trust village of Lacock and the Regency city of Bath. Other attractions in the area include Malmesbury, the Cotswold Water Park, Westonbirt Arboretum, the Cotswold hills and more royal residences per square mile than any other part of the UK!

The usual mix of workshops, ceilidhs, sessions and pub visits rounds off the season nicely for all the family.



Bookings come in thick and fast towards the end of the summer for this weekend and it's usually a sell-out. To make sure of this opportunity to meet up with your camp friends, old and new, before the autumn chills return, book early!

Trailer Tent for "sale"

Faith and John Kemp of Leighton Buzzard, Beds (phone 01525 240400) asked me at the AGM, if I could advertise their redundant trailer tent saying that "essentially we want to get rid of the tent (pictured) a.s.a.p. For a small price - ie "offers invited" - or even "for nothing" if someone from Folk Camps can use it. The tent in question has two double bunks/bedrooms + a child's under bunk sleeping tent (excellent for storage if you don't have the child!) in the trailer part. There is an extensive awning for comfortable family living. It comes complete with a kitchen range containing cooker and sink (almost unused), a curtained wardrobe, bedroom inner tents and curtains - all in good condition. The canvas has never been re-proofed but is still watertight under normal conditions! Faith and John have offered to erect it (on a good day) for viewing by anyone who might be interested in acquiring this highly desirable camping home.



I can personally attest to their comfort - and while they do take a bit of effort to erect - they are much easier to put up and transport than the good old standard "family frame tent!"

Ceilidh Project supported by FCS Development Fund

The organisation known as 'Oxford' runs a series of ceilidh dances from October to May, in a little village in South Oxfordshire. They had run under various management committees very successfully for around 2 decades, up until a couple of years ago when the series had started to decline, struggling for numbers and operating at a loss financially. The committee were fed up and ready to throw in the towel, and the dances were under serious threat of stopping altogether. At the time I'd just had Faye so was at home on maternity leave with a bit of time on my hands, so I thought I'd see what I could do to help. To cut a long story short, I suddenly found myself in charge of the organisation and with my new committee in place set about working out how to increase our numbers. After conversations with many ceilidh organisers, including the wonderful Penny and AJ from the South East Folk Arts Network and Meltdown Ceilidhs we decided that amongst other things we'd like to try and tap in to the youth and student population. We started looking in to funding opportunities and, in association with SEFAN, came up with a bid for some lottery money.

In the meantime, Oxford had teamed up with the Oxford Folk Festival and we had volunteered to run two ceilidhs for them over the festival weekend. Whilst contacting local music teachers for the festival choirs project I was planning (that's a whole other story!) I stumbled across an email from a local secondary school. It said that they had a folk band who had been mentored for a while by John Spiers and Jon Boden (of Bellowhead), which all culminated in the children playing for a school ceilidh a couple of years ago.

I had a sudden flash of inspiration - why not use some of the lottery bid to pay for some more mentoring sessions and the children could play at the Folk Festival ceilidh! As I started to plan how this was all going to work I soon realised that if we were going to be ready for the ceilidh there wasn't time to wait for the lottery money. The I remembered the Folk Camp AGM, and the plea for more applications to the Development Fund - the perfect solution. FCS very generously gave us £300 towards the project, and Oxford were able to provide the rest - we were on! Time was getting tight for the festival performance so everything had to move very fast from there - John Spiers was roped in again, and I replaced Jon Boden as the second tutor; as he'd recently moved to Sheffield it seemed a bit much to ask him to come down to Oxford once a week for rehearsals...! I turned up to the first rehearsal not really knowing what to expect. I walked in to find John standing in the middle of an enormous group of kids: 4 penny whistles, a melodica, 3 fiddles, french horn, trombone, saxophone, cahan, double bass and bass guitar, AND four teachers on the melodeon, recorder, trumpet and guitar. Wow!! The Head of Music, Rachel, had really pulled out all the stops and she'd gathered together every tune the band had played over the last two years, which just about made up enough sets for the three hour ceilidh. Now we just had to practice them!

I left the first rehearsal (and every subsequent one!) on a complete high. The kids were incredible - full of energy and fun and they soaked up everything you said to them. If I wanted them to do something, or play something in a certain way I just had to tell them once and off they went! They were scribbling down bits of arrangements as we went along and usually remembered them better than I did. The enjoyment they got from playing was infectious and they were up for anything - we even had them doing a hop step at the same time as playing one, to help them understand the rhythm!

Three frantic weeks later we'd played through *almost* every tune on our set list, worked out arrangements for some and decided to wing the rest. We were ready for the ceilidh. Our tunes were quite diverse - some Join the Band classics like Kafoozalum and Cock O the North, some more adventurous sets like Jump at the Sun and the Plane Tree, and some straight up English foot stompers like the Bonny Breast Knot and Old Tom of Oxford.

Setting up for the ceilidh was eventful to say the least. One of my Oxford committee members had organised the venue - Marston Ferry Rugby Club - which was a lovely little converted barn with lots of old wooden beams... and very little working lighting...! We cobbled together whatever we could find - the bar staff managed to rig up a load of fairy lights and the caller nipped home to get the standard lamp from her front room. Eventually we were all set up (taking up about a third of the dance floor!) and the audience started to arrive.

The ceilidh itself went better than I could ever have hoped for. The hall was absolutely packed - people were actually turned away because we could not squeeze one more person in! Most of the dancers were school children who were friends of the band, and they threw themselves in to the dancing with the type of youthful enthusiasm that is a distant memory to most of us! The band played amazingly well, especially seeing as they hadn't played a full length ceilidh before - apparently they all fell asleep as soon as they got on the minibus home!

Oxford has now managed to secure £1500 in funding from the Oxfordshire Community Foundation Grassroots Grants to continue with another year of mentoring... and we've booked the school band for our ceilidh in February!

Cat Moore (Kelly)

Obituaries

RAY TAYLOR

Ray Taylor was one of those larger than life characters who spread warmth and humour wherever he went. I was privileged and lucky enough to spend hundreds of Saturday nights with him at Barn Dances, ceilidhs and EFDSS club events, as well as folk song clubs and musicianing for him at countless Folk Camps – particularly at Chiddingfold. As he told me only a few weeks ago – we had a ball!



Ray dancing rapper in Le Faou (he's the one in the blue shirt).

Ray was an all round entertainer. In my opinion he was the best caller for the traditional village Barn Dance, and was able to generate a wonderful atmosphere with a huge amount of fun and enjoyment for the people that came. However, for the last 10 years, he had been more in demand for experienced dancers – an entirely different skill - calling for EFDSS club dances around the South of England. Even in that environment, he was still quite happy to do his jokes – some of which I am still using to this day!

He was a wonderful singer, with a huge repertoire of songs. His strong vibrant voice rarely needed any PA, but if he did use it, it was always a struggle to find a volume setting low enough!

Ray led his first folk camp in 1981 at Nutwell Court. It was also his first Folk Camp and he took to it like a duck to water. I will never forget how a few years later, by the end of the 1st evening at a camp at Loxwood, he had not only made all the newcomers feel they had known him for years, but had remembered all their names as well! He never looked back, and went on to lead numerous camps and became Chairman of Folk Camps in 1984 leading the society for 5 years with a strong pair of hands through a difficult time. I think Folk Camps owe him a great deal of thanks.

In his real life he worked for the tax office in Customs and Excise and was quite happy to put up with the flak that that created. In music, his other true love was jazz, and he had the biggest collection of records and CD's you could ever imagine. With his wife Bridget, they named their son Miles after Miles Davis.

I have had the pleasure to have known Ray for 35 years. In that time, if all the time was added up and put together, I reckon I have spent a whole 24 hours of my life playing the tune Blackberry Quadrille for him to call The Northern Lights. It was never my favourite dance, but when Ray called it, it took on a new life and he made it his own, and even in my 24th hour, I still enjoyed playing it for him. He was a great man and I will miss him and everything he was.

I'm sure we would all like to send our condolences to Bridget, Miles, Andrew and Laura. And next time it is a clear night, go outside and look up at the sky and remember Ray. Perhaps Ray is up there somewhere! ***Look at the moon, look at the stars, and look at the Northern Lights!***

Chris Jewell

"ROCKY" NORRIS

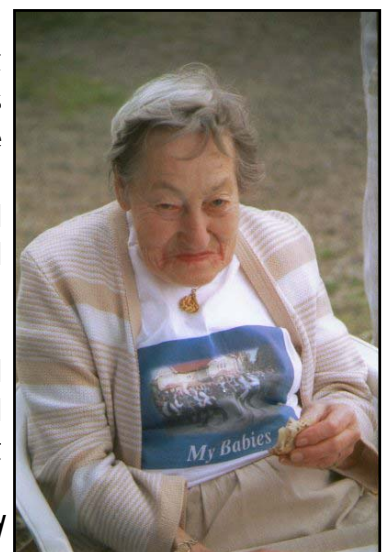
Nodge Norris put out the following message to the 18-80 email group on March 25th : I am writing this to let you know that Rocky died last week. She was nearly 88 years old. This shouldn't be a cause of great sorrow. Her body and mind were both worn out.

She fell and broke her hip between Christmas and New Year and had been fading ever since. For the most part she remained cheerful and gregarious in spite of senile dementia. Her final mantras were 'I've been lucky' and 'I've had a happy life'.

I think it may be worth a mail out to the 18-80 list. Rocky did after all conform to the ethos of the group in that she packed up Folk Camping in her 80th year - mind you she didn't start 'til she was 70!

I Must have met Rocky at her last camp (at Cromer 2000) and remember her as an outstanding character - fiercely proud of

her children - in particular Nodge. I also seem to recall that she still had the ambition of riding off into the sunset on a powerful motor bike! Amazing character - our thoughts and best wishes go out to Nodge and his family.



NELSON JENKINS

I'm not even going to try to express my profound sorrow we all felt at the news of the death of Nelson Jenkins from meningitis. I will, however, include here Chris Gash's very moving tribute to Nelson for anyone who doesn't have Internet access or hasn't seen it on the web site : www.members-only.org.uk

I first met Nelson aged 6. Our son Robin and Nelson were 1 year apart at primary school and Nelson had toothache one evening. I drove him into work to sort it out. All the way there Nelson looked at the mountains with his near permanent grin and said things like 'See that rock, it looks just like a fairy castle'. Years later Nelson still looked at the world as if he could see parts of it that the rest of us couldn't. He never lost that childlike look of wonder, and now he never will.



Nelson was never the easiest child for teachers. Very bright, he started awkwardly by beating all the native Welsh speakers in the Welsh recitation at the school Eisteddfod. He combined great imagination and a superb ability to ask questions with a similar inability to focus on exams. When the school fire alarm was set off Nelson confessed immediately. The teachers laughed; they knew as we all did that Nelson just had to find out what happened if you pressed that button. Nelson found out that what happens is that some fire engines turn up outside school, and your mum gets a bill.

A talented chemist, he had been offered a place at Bristol University to study chemistry. He was a born scientist, and would have gone very far.

Nelson first went to folk camp with his family at Amroth in 2003. We had persuaded them that they might enjoy it. The kids liked it so much that they persuaded Judith to cancel their camping holiday the following week and stay on. Other campers had mixed feelings. The lads were quite challenging and creative. Murray (thereafter dubbed "boglocker" by Paul Weir) locked people out of the loos, and Nelson got over exuberant at times.

They missed the following year. When Nelson found that they weren't going, he sat and cried.

At Forestside, Nelson came into his own, always helpful and ready to volunteer, he spent hours helping smaller children make plastic flutes and beaming his Nelson smile when he was praised for it. I took him around HMS Victory, his recently broken arm out of its sling days before. I got some funny looks shouting 'Come here Nelson, mind your arm!'

After the holiday Nelson said 'I've been a folkie all my life. I just didn't know until now'

From there it was onwards and upwards with Nelson helping with anything from midnight walks to mummers plays to Morris.

Nelson joined the local Morris team and never missed a practice or dance out. He was a fan of Bellowhead and was learning to play the melodeon. He had stewarded at IVFDF. He thought that half dressed morris dancers looked like Mormons, so being Nelson he ordered a copy of The Book of Mormon from which he would occasionally regale surprised dancers in pubs.

Nelson died peacefully at home, in his sleep from meningitis. His morris kit strewn around his bed, he had expected to dance in Conwy that afternoon.

The whole community has a huge hole in it. In Llanfairfechan Nelson was part of everybody's lives and hundreds came to see him off. For most of us 26th October was the worst day of our lives. We still keep seeing him around the village in so many places. He's always smiling, and when we've dried our tears, we have to smile back.

Please pass on my thanks to the folk campers who came to the celebration of Nelson. They made the event very special. I doubt that any funeral has ever had limbo, a lollycraze and the bereaved brothers calling and persuading all the other kids to do the bear dance. Nelson went as he lived, with style.

Chris Gash

On Folk Camps Lore, The Real Law, and Exemption Certificates

In 2004 I stood for Council on the single issue that the marquee camp had to survive. Once that aim had been achieved, I looked around at the other jobs that were going on Council. I decided that I would like to have a go at improving the quality of the sites that we use.

There was no manual on how to go about looking for sites, no set of rules, no-one to offer advice on the best approach. I just had to dive in, relying on common sense and my experience of what made a good folk camp. It wasn't long before a farmer said to me "But what about the planners?"

Now, over the years, I had more than once heard mutterings about the laws which governed our activities. Notions like "only on private land", "28 days", "no more than three caravans" etc. were bandied about. Certainly, in the early days, there weren't nearly so many caravans at camp. General opinion seemed to be that three caravans was the legal limit but nobody seemed to quite know why. Council had, I think, once instituted this limit but it was poorly observed, if at all. Twenty-eight days was also, people believed, some sort of limit. Go beyond that and you might be in trouble with the law. This rule we stuck to; no camp ever lasted longer than 28 days. There were also some curmudgeonly mumbblings about an alleged legal immunity enjoyed by caravan clubs and by scouts and guides when it came to such matters. They had, it seemed, "been written into the Act" and been granted certain privileges. Anyway, I'd bought all this Folk Camps lore and told my farmer quite categorically that he needn't worry about the planners since we would not be there a day more than the legal limit of 28 days.



Mick Green

For the next three years, I continued glibly to reassure landowners that our activities were completely above the law. And they all believed me. Then, towards the end of 2008, whilst looking for guidance on pitch sizes, I stumbled on The Truth. We had, in fact, been acting illegally for over 40 years! Or rather, whilst we ourselves had not been acting illegally, we had been encouraging landowners to do so. And, indeed, all those snippets of Folk Camp lore did feature in the relevant Acts of Parliament but never in quite the way it was believed.

Tents are basically no problem. A "tents only" camp is permitted on a field of any size for up to 28 days without involving the authorities. It is only when "the caravan" comes into the equation that the law really gets involved. In brief, without first obtaining planning permission, it is illegal to allow any caravans at all to be sited on an area of land of less than 5 acres and no more than three may be sited on an area of land of 5 acres or greater (Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960). Incidentally, as far as the Act is concerned, trailer caravans, motorhomes and campervans are all "caravans".

Delving further into the matter, I discovered how other organisations, such as caravan clubs, were able to operate legally without recourse to the dreaded planning process. It wasn't that they'd been granted some privileged legal status; they were merely making use of a feature of the Act which allows recreational organisations to be exempted from the planning consent provisions under certain circumstances. They had been granted "Exemption Certificates". It seemed to me that this was exactly what we needed.

But I had still not wholly escaped Folk Camp lore. Memories were dredged and I was told that the Society had indeed once tried to get such a certificate but had been turned down. This endeavour had even involved, it appears, a high level Folk Camps delegation meeting with a minister in Whitehall, only to be shown out empty-handed. I like to think that there was also a supportive demonstration of Morris Men, clog-dancers and melodeon players in the street outside, the jingle of bells and the strains of the music wafting through the minister's open window.

Undaunted, I applied for an Exemption Certificate on behalf of the Society. It was not completely plain sailing but then, whenever one has to deal with Bureaucracy, it never is. But, I am pleased to say, we are now the proud possessors of an Exemption Certificate. Well, actually, five exemption certificates. Well, to be totally precise, three at this moment. Well, you see, if you want to mix caravans and tents on the same site, you also need a camping exemption certificate under section 269 of the Public Health Act 1936. And there's a separate one for Scotland only you don't need the camping exemption certificate as the Public Health Act 1936 doesn't apply in Scotland. There are separate ones for Wales too and these are the ones we haven't actually quite got yet. Why not, you may well ask. The thing is, although we agreed to be bound by the Guidance for Applicants when we applied, we didn't explicitly agree to be bound by the Welsh Assembly Government's Guidance for Applicants. That's because we didn't know it existed. As it happens, the Welsh Guidance is exactly the same as the English Guidance but ... Ah well, we've done it now and written to tell them. And so, some day very soon, we'll have all five on the mantelpiece. And neither will we forget to renew them in five years' time. Except for Scotland that is, because, as all Folk Campers know, there's no expiry date on a Scottish exemption certificate.

Mick Green

The 2008 Camp Quilt

Many Folkcampers will remember the plea for camp made squares to be included in the 2008 Camp Quilt - the result was a magnificent contribution of nearly 90 squares all of which were lovingly incorporated into a quilt (see right) by and under the direction of Lou Tribus (also pictured). The resulting quilt was raffled at the AGM raising £180 which was donated to the Meningitis Trust in memory of Nelson Jenkins. To our surprise the quilt was won by Robin Gash a lifelong friend of Nelsons. On reflection it couldn't have gone to a better winner.



I got the impression, when talking to Lou at the AGM, that she didn't think she wanted to take on another quilt this year - so do we have any crafty volunteers to maybe head up the project. Even if there isn't a quilt this year there is no reason why people shouldn't create "patches" since I'm sure the time will come when another quilt will be put together

Would you like to see the return of French Folk Camps in 2010?

Folk Camps Council is aware that a number of Folk Campers are keen to return to foreign shores for their 2010 summer camp. This will only be possible if sufficient numbers of campers express a positive interest in having such a camp organised. For Council to activate the organisation of a French camp we NEED your interest and support!

Please email france2010@folkcampers.co.uk to register your interest and potential party numbers. If you have already emailed me, thank you and please ignore this.

Caroline Tracey (Council member)

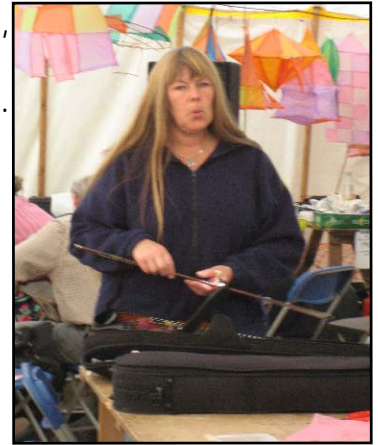
What I intend to do on my holidays – Week 2 Bedstone

We were nearing the end of a lengthy agenda when Extent was raised at the Council's March meeting. "Let's ask the leaders to tell everyone what they intend to do at the camp they're leading," said someone. "Jolly Good Idea," I replied. It was only when I reached home that I began to think about the challenge of anticipating the fun we're going to have. Well, I know it's going to be a fantastic week, but I would say that wouldn't I? So, let's think, although there are no guarantees, what might we get up to?

Starting at the end and going backwards, before you ask, no I haven't thought of a theme for the last night party yet but whatever it is, it'll be sure to involve lots of black plastic as usual. If you want to invite friends to taste folk camping for themselves, then Thursday will be invitation night when we invite neighbours and friends to join us. I love going out to the local community to do some busking but in recent years the weather has conspired against my plans. Let's hope the sun shines this year in which case, remember to pack something colourful for busking in the middle of the week. It would be my dearest dream if we could raise a morris side in kit I think I might have to dream on, but who knows?

Last year Open Tents at Bedingham (a bit like open gardens, only very different) proved popular. So I'm thinking along the lines of a Camping And Mobile Properties Exhibition this year ... but more on that nearer the event. I expect they'll be some football matches, and what was the name of that ball game which proved so popular last year – something Scandinavian I seem to recall?

It would be unfair to list the various craft activities that could potentially occur, or the dance, music or song workshops that are likely to happen because so much depends upon you, dear campers, and what expertise you wish to share. But don't let your generosity stop at folk-related activities. Yoga, Thai Chi, massage – we've experienced them all at folk camps and I'm sure the coming year will bring lots more lovely surprises.



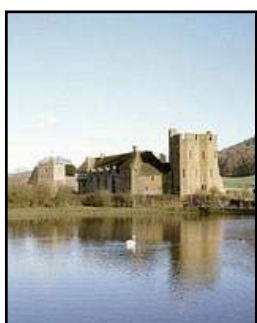
Music for the week is in the hands of the highly-acclaimed Mike-his-fingers-never-left-his-hand- McDaid and he will be taking the early morning workshop as well as some break-neck-speed tune sessions at some point I expect. We've dragged him into folk camping after a 35 year courtship. I wonder if that's a record? So anything musical might happen - and probably will.

As for the rest of the week, I'll be going on a bear hunt early evening and hoping to dance with some of the younger campers a bit later on. In fact I'll be singing and dancing the nights away and, if stamina permits, into the early hours of some mornings; I invite you to join me. If you're still teetering on the brink of booking, be warned, there are just a few spaces left now as I write – and by the time you read this it might be too late.

Sue Malleson

Bedstone, South Shropshire : 1 - 8 August and 8 - 15 August

For our village hall site this year we will be at Bedstone (population 85), in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It offers us a modern village hall with gentle parkland to camp on. The Welsh Marches is an area of great and varied natural beauty with tempting hills, majestic forests, historic castles and hill forts, fast flowing rivers and attractive towns and villages. Mediaeval Ludlow, "the loveliest town in England" according to Betjeman, is 12 miles away to the east. Knighton, the centre of the Offa's Dyke long distance footpath, is 7½ miles to the west. Bucknell station, 1½ miles, south, is on the scenic Heart of Wales line while the bookshops of Hay, the industrial heritage of Ironbridge and rugged grandeur of the Long Mynd and the Elan Valley lakes are all about an hour by road.



Stokesay Castle (7 miles)

Web: www.english-heritage.org.uk/stokesaycastle

Nestling in a green valley in the heart of the Shropshire countryside is Stokesay Castle. This is one of England's best preserved fortified manor houses. Stokesay's Great Hall is unchanged since the days of baronial feasts, and the house has hardly altered since 1291. There is

Acton Scott Historic Working Farm (11 miles)

Church Stretton,
Shropshire

Tel: +44 (0)1694 781 306

Email: acton.scott.museum@shropshire-cc.gov.uk

Experience daily life on an upland farm at the turn of the last century. The wagoner and his team of heavy horses work the land with vintage farm machines. Each day in the cottage the farmer's wife goes about her chores.



Children will love the cows, pigs, poultry and sheep in the farmyard and fields. There are Longhorn cattle, Tamworth pigs and Shropshire sheep, amongst the rarer breeds.

Every day you can see milking by hand and butter-making in the dairy. There are weekly visits from the farrier and woodland craftsman together with the blacksmith, wheelwright and resident team members, all of whom are needed to keep the farm working. These demonstrations of rural crafts complete the picture of estate-life a hundred years ago.

General Information:

Café # Shop # Groups welcome - please ring

No dogs except guide dogs and helping dogs

Hergest Croft Gardens (12 miles)

Kington, Herefordshire

Tel: +44 (0)1544 230 160

Email: gardens@hergest.co.uk

Web: www.hergest.co.uk

Hergest Croft Gardens lie in the heart of the Welsh Marches with stunning views towards the Black Mountains. Created over 100 years by three generations of the Banks family, there are hidden valleys, woodland glades, open parkland, gorgeous flower borders and striking autumn colour. The beauty and peace make Hergest Croft a garden to visit at all seasons and for all ages. There are four distinct gardens which extend over 50 acres, with over 4000 rare shrubs and trees.

The Kitchen Garden contains an avenue of ancient apple trees over a riot of bulbs in the spring. There are magnificent 120 foot double herbaceous border, an old fashioned rose garden and traditional fruit and vegetable garden.

The Edwardian House is surrounded by many special plants, including magnolias, cherries and hydrangeas. The old rockery and the croquet lawn are enclosed by tall yew hedges containing vases of sweetly scented lilies.

Park Wood lies in a secluded valley hidden deep within an ancient oak wood. There are many giant rhododendrons and exotic trees, creating a Himalayan scene that will surprise and amaze you.

The Azalea Garden is dominated by a massive avenue of cedars, with spectacular azaleas shaded by many of the magnificent birches and maples that form part of the National Collections held at Hergest Croft.

General Information: Tea Rooms # Gift Shop

Plant sales area # Free car parking

Picnics permitted in the Car Park Area and in the Orchard

Dogs on lead

Opening Times (2007 times - so do check) Daily 12.00pm - 5.30pm.

Hints, tips and other bits ...

I was told to make the number of pages in this offering a multiple of 4 (it's makes printing easier!) so here are a few small offerings. Please remember that Extent is really YOUR magazine - it should reflect your interests - all I should have to do as editor is sort out your contributions into a publishable form - SO - come good people - why not put pen to paper, finger to keyboard and make a contribution - your Folk-Camp stories, the hows and whys you joined - stayed! Your gripes and grumbles, your hope and aspirations - the things you'd like to see changed - the things you wish hadn't been changed ... Contribute to everyones camping experience!

Aunt B's Handy Folk Camping Tips (4)

An old polyester shower curtain is always useful when you're camping. It's light to carry, full of eyelets for fixing it to something and more or less waterproof, so you can use it for deflecting internal drips should you have the misfortune to suffer a leaking tent. I often use one outside attached to the porch in Heath Robinson fashion when there's driving rain, just to keep water away from the entrance and provide a little more shelter when entering and leaving the tent.

Camp Lights

Over the years I have been looking for good tent lights - and I have noticed that recently the combination of the LED (Light Emitting Diode) and the "wind up power source" has started to produce lanterns that don't have to be filled with those "D" size batteries (heavy and costly)- at nearly £2 each - some of our old lanterns cost £10 - £12 to power up for a two week camp!. There is a local store in Bishops Stortford "Coopers" with an internet catalogue (www.coopersofstortford.co.uk) who sell wind -up lanterns - two for £20 - that, according to the blurb give 20 minutes light for 60 seconds of gentle winding! With no batteries the saving is enormous, good for the planet - and something to keep the kids occupied in the early evening!

In general I dislike these sort of catalogue stores for selling cheap, gimmicky stuff - but I quite like Coopers.

Some words from Karl Stevens

"Jon McNamara has put together a fantastic resource for dance band players and leaders in the form of a great many tunes organized into their form i.e. Jigs, Reels, Polkas, and also organized into sets to make choices easier. These sheets are a real boon to anyone putting together a scratch dance band as they can be copied and handed out to all the members so all are "playing from the same sheet". They are (I believe) available for download from the Folk Camps Members Only website and, having used them for early evening dance bands on Summer Camp, and now browsing through them to use for other dances coming up at home, I can recommend them as being extremely useful. Many thanks Jon"

Take care all of you. The "season" is almost upon us again. Looking forward to seeing you all later in the year.

(on the web site - look under "noticeboard" and you should find the link to 15 pdf sheets of music - enjoy)

Free Music:

Just the last few days there have been a couple of requests on the 18-80 email list asking for particular tunes ... It seems to me that a few words about the amazing resources of free music that you can find on the internet might be of value to some members.

Will Riding makes the following suggestion : Another thing that's worked for me is typing in a tune name into Google Images, it will in most cases throw up a musical score. I must admit I didn't have a great deal of success doing this - but I did find myself exploring some very interesting music websites I never knew existed.

When I'm looking for a tune I normally start with "JCs ABC tune finder" <http://trillian.mit.edu/~jc/cgi/abc/tunefind> (a Google search will take you there) - where you can type in a tune name - and, in seconds, you will be faced with a list of sources for the tune. Quite often there is a pdf version - or gif picture of the dots, The main driving force of the site is the ABC music format - a language for notating music using the ASCII character set. It was originally developed by Chris Walshaw - who has strong connections with the folk camp society! (<http://abcnotation.org.uk>).

There are any number of pieces of free software that will translate ABC into a playable score -including Melody Assistant and Harmony Assistant (www.myriad-online.com/en/index.htm) - I've used these programs as a means of converting between different music formats for some years. I quite like them both (Melody is simpler than Harmony) - the only thing I really don't like very much is the printouts. For a quick look at an ABC source I tend to use ABACUS (www.abacusicmusic.co.uk) and for lists of ABC formatted tunes ABC Explorer (<http://stalikez.info/abc/abcex.php>). There are many other pieces of software - many free. There are also collections of ABC source material - such as the livetunebook (<http://livetunebook.qualmograph.org.uk>). The indication is that there are in excess of 30,000 tunes in ABC available on the web try <http://abcnotation.org.uk> as a starting point. General resource are available at <http://abc.sourceforge.net/resources.html>.

Some years ago - I sat down and learnt to write out music in ABC as a means of quickly entering the "dots" into a music program "Mozart". I found it wasn't very difficult and it whiled away the time while waiting for things - busses, trains, girlfriends! Even more amazing was the concertina player I met who carried dozens - even hundreds of tunes around in ABC format, printed out on business cards and carried in one of those multi-pocket business card wallets. He could not only write the dots into ABC - but could read it back onto his instrument at full playing speed - a formidable talent!

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MEET YOUR FRIENDS AT THE 2009 FOLK CAMPS REUNION!

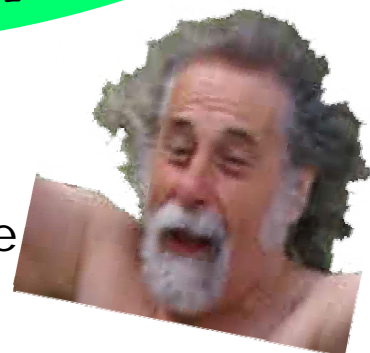
Saturday 21 November at Wing Village Hall
Leighton Road, Wing LU7 0NN

**NO BAR
BYO DRINKS**

**7:30 to 11 pm
a Folk Camps Ceilidh
music led by Doug Brown
MC Brian Pollard**



tickets in advance £7
send cheque or book on line
on the door £8
accompanied under 16s free



11:30 am meet your friends,
watch the slide show, swap your photos
tea, coffee and snacks available all day
courtesy of world-famous Kemp's Kitchen

12:30 pm informal music session at "The Cock Inn"

2:30 pm presentation and AGM
come along and have your say!
crêche available

Full details on the members website
www.members-only.org.uk