



Welcome to the Folk Camps newsletter!

This issue 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 the website: <http://www.folkcamps.co.uk> .

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/folkcampsholidays>.

Twitter: @FolkCamps <https://twitter.com/FolkCamps>.

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Office Matters

Firstly, thank you everyone for welcoming me to the job as Admin & Events Manager. Mic's boots are pretty big ones to fill, but he's taught me a lot, and I'm gradually getting to grips with the ins and outs of running the Folk Camps office. Your tolerance of a newbie is much appreciated, and I hope you like the photo of your last three Admin managers.

The 2016 season bookings opened at the 2015 Reunion, and it was lovely to be so popular at my first AGM in post. We have a strong programme this year, one brand new hall site at Roch on the Pembrokeshire coast, several old favourites, and a return to the lovely marquee site near Rhayader by the Elan Valley Reservoir that we last visited in 2010.

Craft Break 2016 was another success, the quirky charm of the Paddocks Hotel hard by the River Wye delivered its usual wide range of February workshops, music and dance, covered ably elsewhere in this newsletter. Bookings are open for 2017 season if you fancy a Folky February break.

This year we opened the camping weekend season at Loxwood in Sussex with May Bank Holiday weekend, followed by Spring Bank Holiday weekends at Chedworth in Gloucestershire (last year's hall camp location) and our old favourite Dalton in Yorkshire. Dancers has returned to Blockley in the Cotswolds, and then there is a chance to spend up to 10 days at Miserden with Session music weekend, a light touch self-cater week and then Singers weekend. Miserden became famous earlier this year as the place with the slowest internet connection in the country, so it has to be just perfect for getting away from the hustle and bustle! We also have the Musicians weekend at Beckford in late June, and Singers' North at Bampton in Cumbria to round off the Workshop Weekends. Don't forget to wrap up your summer's camping with the August Bank Holiday weekends at either Kington Langley or Bampton.

Three of the summer weeks are now full, both weeks at Roch hall camp and the first marquee week, but there are still spaces at Rhayader for weeks 2-4 so please book your summer folk camp soon whilst you still can!

I've just read last year's spring Office Matters from Mic, and I will just reiterate his comments here: "Try to get your balance payments completed in plenty of time. I don't like nagging people but I also don't like imposing the increased price if you pay the balance less than a month before the camp. Paying via your online banking is easy, especially if you have already paid your deposit by BACS. The details will already be set up with your surname and initial as reference, you just need to choose Folk Camps as the recipient. Don't forget to email the office with confirmation of your payment."

Looking forward to a lovely summer of folk camping admin...

Sarah Richardson – New Administration Manager



A Farewell to Mic Spenceley as Admin Manager

My first introduction to Folk Camps was Easter 1981. With a group from Ramsgate Folk Dance Club, we turned up at the Easter camp in Hartley Mauditt, Hampshire in the early hours of the morning. I don't remember being booked in, I think we just arrived. Barry Moule was the camp leader and I think we gave him hell for the weekend. However, I was hooked and started going to camps from then on with just the odd year off.

It wasn't long before the call came to lead camps. I particularly enjoyed the Halsway Manor summer weeks which were never complete without a trip to the cider farm.

In 2004 I had retired from my previous work and was starting to get itchy feet when in 2006 Folk Camps advertised the position of Administration Manager. The work seemed to require all the skills I already possessed and I was pleased to be offered the position. My first job was to take a look at Roger Conway's system and create a new one which retained the best of the previous and integrated more modern processes. This was achieved to a certain extent for the 2006 season but the big changes came in 2007 with the introduction of on line booking and a new database designed by Richard Jones.

Over the next eight years the systems have evolved with BACS payments and card payments being introduced. The inclusion of the post of Events Manager in 2013 resulted in a greater amount of work for me but I particularly enjoyed talking to and negotiating with the various suppliers for the best deal for Folk Camps. I will always hold the memories of achieving deals for the supply of toilets and skips!

With my contract working on a three-year cycle, I decided that it was time to hand on the baton at the end of 2015, so I began that year knowing that it was my last with Folk Camps. Sarah Richardson was appointed that summer to replace me and so the cycle begins again. As I did in 2006, Sarah has inherited my system and I'm sure that going forward Folk Campers will see more innovations in the way Folk Camps works.

I often compare Folk Camps to the proverbial swan, gliding elegantly across the water while below the surface the legs are churning away like mad. I hope that Folk Campers will continue to appreciate that the churning legs is what makes their annual holidays so brilliant and run so smoothly.

I hope to see you at a camp somewhere this year and beyond.

Mic Spenceley

If you have never had the pleasure of meeting them, a picture (left to right) of Mic Spenceley, Sarah Richardson and Roger Conway, Mic's Predecessor, can be seen below. Picture taken by Caroline Page at the Craft Camp in February.





Folk Camps Council News

In October there were 3 places available on Council. Liz Cooper (who is deputy chair) stood again, and was re-elected unopposed. But unfortunately no one else from the membership stood for election. Therefore, we had 2 places unfilled on Council.

As a result, the remaining 7 Council members discussed our options and co-opted Marcus deFrettes. Marcus is now Company Secretary, bringing experience of running his own company, and he also brings his Folk Camps experience of being "an initially reluctant partner of a keen Folk Camper" which is an interesting point of view for us - and one that is very different to mine, having been on Folk Camps holidays since my childhood, and not realising for many years that any other type of holiday existed!

We are also grateful for Tony Mealings offering himself to Council, and we co-opted him in March. Tony has experience of running Education Music Services, and has been a Folk Camper for many years.

We look forward to the contributions that both Marcus and Tony will offer to running our organisation.

In this coming November there will again be at least 3 places available on Council. Both Anne Kenyon and Patrick Self have to stand down, having been on Council for the maximum period of 6 years as given by our rules.

Please consider whether you should stand. You do not need particular skills, just a belief in Folk Camps and a willingness to learn. I never expected to become chair, I just wanted to make a small contribution to an organisation that has provided me with a lifetime of holidays, and my family with great musical opportunities. But I have learnt and developed skills that I never knew I was capable of. It could be a great experience for you too.

Patrick Self – Folk Camps Chair

Extent Editor Update - Opportunity

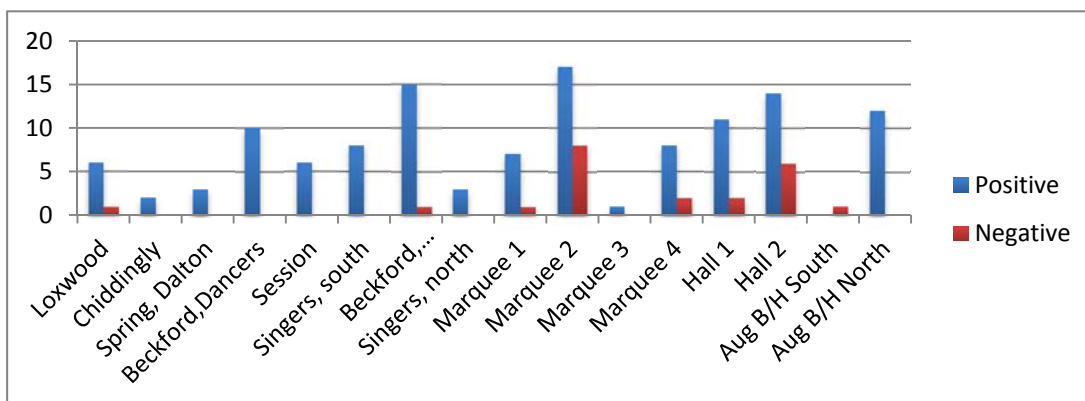
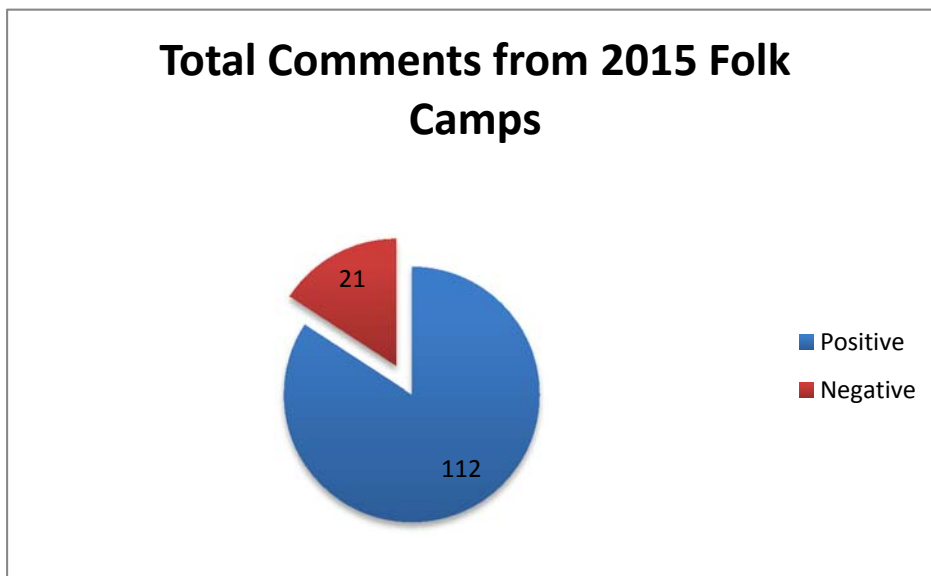
The last two editions of Extent have been edited with panache by Anthony Keen, who has produced a stylish and content rich newsletter. Unfortunately for us, Anthony is unable to continue due to work pressures, so we are looking for a new editor. Extent comes out twice a year, in Spring and Autumn, with input from Council and members of the Folk Camps community. If you think you would enjoy the challenge, please email me at the office: sarahrichardson@folkcamps.co.uk, and we can have a chat about what is involved. Thanks Anthony for your hard work, and good luck with your future career.

Sarah Richardson – Admin Manager

Camper Feedback from the 2015 season

At the end of the 2015 Folk Camp season, Council had a total of 133 camper comment forms from 16 camps to read and evaluate.

Overwhelmingly, camper comments have been positive. The graphs below show how we felt about the 2015 Folk Camps.



Camper complaints are always dealt with initially on camp by members of staff, usually the warden. At council meetings we discuss camper concerns - specific and general - and how they have been handled. We also consider the many useful suggestions for improvements at camp that we get from campers.



This year, in response to camper feedback, we have done the following:

- To requests for a decision about e-smoking and about smoking policy in general, we have decided that there should be no smoking within 10 metres of the marquee or hall and that the smoking policy also refers to e-cigarettes ("vaping").
- The new worktables in the kitchen tent have been very well received by campers. However, some campers have found it difficult to stand for long periods while working in the kitchen and the marquee chairs are too low for the new worktables. In response to these comments, we have purchased tall stools, specifically for use in the kitchen.
- In response to the comments that this year's marquee chairs were particularly uncomfortable and camper requests that we hire the more comfortable, blue chairs that we've had in previous years, we have specifically asked for these chairs for the 2016 Marquee camps.

All suggestions specifically for leaders, caterers, musicians or wardens have also been passed on to the relevant staff members.

Please continue writing your comments, concerns and suggestions for Folk Camps on the comments forms and leave them in the comments box at each camp. Council members and staff do read and act on them. If you have immediate concerns at a camp, please see a member of staff, even if you have also filled in a comment.

Have a great 2016 camping season!

Lou Tribus

New Council Member: Tony Mealings

My first introduction to Folk Camps was a very wet but enjoyable week in Wales in the mid 80's with the company of a large group of young people, some of whom were accomplished musicians.



I continued to bring youngsters to camps (mainly Dalton) throughout the 1990s and also enjoyed my own holidays at Camps ranging from Northumberland to Brittany, including acting as a staff member on several occasions. I have made lifelong friendships, and benefitted from help and support from fellow campers in all aspects of Folk. When there was a call for volunteers to offer to serve on Council, this therefore seemed like a good moment to try to give something back. My own interests are really in song and instrumental music, although I do also enjoy dancing from time to time. Regarding my background, I qualified as a secondary music teacher in the late 1970's, and held various posts over the next 28 years, including headship of a secondary school.

More recently, I have been involved in leading Music Services, and developing a Music Education Hub. In doing this I have developed particular skills in marketing, fund raising and income-stream development, together with various other aspects of large-organisation leadership. I have also served as a director and trustee of various national and local organisations, and was a founder trustee of the U.K. Association for Music Education (Music Mark). Recently retired, I now volunteer as a manager at my local Arts Centre, serve as a school governor and pursue my interest in choral and Folk singing whenever possible! I hope that my various skills and experience will be useful to Folk Camps Council, and I am looking forward to contributing wherever I can.

Tony Mealings



Symonds Yat Craft Camp

Sometimes our smaller camps don't get much love in Extent, but Hillary and Bill Durant are here to change that with their recounting of the Symonds Yat Craft Camp.

We have returned home for a rest! Why you ask? We have just had a wonderful craft & music break being spoilt with comfy beds and scrumptious food in Paddocks Hotel at Symonds Yat, not to mention being guided by the talented folk who freely impart their knowledge on such a wide variety of crafts. We have returned home with our attempts at crafting bracelets, cards, fans and having thoroughly enjoyed the company of other folk campers.

The tuition of Moira and Peter Gutteridge in the Music gatherings each day might not actually mean we could all now pass the top music Grade, but to be able to experience playing among such a variety of instruments and talent including lots of laughter and happy faces was a true privilege. Christine Corkett again led the week with a smile and great fortitude and we have already booked to ensure our week in 2017 under the chirpy hand of Jenny Walton. Why are we tired ...there was too little time to try so many new things, fit in walks in wonderful scenery, finishing each day after dancing with a song or two.

Perhaps next year the second round in the Scrabble contest might be the objective for us!

Hillary & Bill Durant

It was with some trepidation that I arrived at my first ever craft camp at the Paddocks Hotel in a beautiful setting overlooking the water meadows of the River Wye.

I need not have worried, as I was made to feel very welcome, greeted with tea and biscuits and was soon tracked down by my roommate Jenny.

Dinner each evening was a three-course meal with several choices and plenty of beautifully cooked vegetables. There was a convivial meetup in the top bar before dinner and I soon spotted a few familiar faces and met new people too.

After dinner the tutors explained their crafts and showed examples. I signed up to try several things. As is usual at folk camps there was plenty of dancing after dinner with an excellent band and callers.

The following morning after an ample breakfast, again with plenty of choices, I set out to try my fist craft. I had never attempted to make anything with polymer clay before but with Jenny's patient



guidance we were all rapidly selecting our colours and squidding our clay while all the time chatting away. It was utterly addictive and by the end of the week I had produced a pendant and necklace with matching earrings and a whole host of buttons and other bits and bobs.

I had intended to try some of the many other things on offer such as card making, nuno felting and fan painting but in the end my enjoyment of the clay won out.

I was amazed at the equipment the tutors brought enabling woodworking projects such as bug boxes, patio planters and spice boxes to be made and I enjoyed sampling the shortbread made by the men in a men-only baking session.

We were provided with a packed lunch each day, and on both the days that the weather was good walks were lead which were excellent. The route of the first walk had to be amended when we discovered that the chain ferry over the river was not yet running, but we explored some caves and still enjoyed ourselves. On the second walk we headed up a hill to a national trust monument with wonderful views of the Brecon beacons and across the Wye Valley.

One day we were provided with dance cards at breakfast and we ladies were asked to choose 5 men to dance with in the evening. I felt a little like someone from a Jane Austen novel and we were soon all scuttling round the breakfast tables finding our partners. It was a really enjoyable evening and I think even Darcy may have enjoyed it had he popped in.

Although I had gone by myself I was always made welcome and there was a mixture of couples, singles and a few families as well.

On our final day there was an exhibition of all the wonderful things that had been made, and performances by the music groups and singers before everyone headed home.

I could see why so many of the people return year after year.

Susan James

Return to Rhayader – a Return to Paradise!

I am delighted that Folk Camps is returning to Rhayader this year. It is one of my favourite sites in the 11 years that my family and I have been coming to Folk Camps.

Inn mid-Wales, about an hour inland from Aberystwyth, it sits on the bank of the River Wye, at the base of the Elan Valley reservoirs. From the Folk Camp site, it is possible to walk into the picturesque town or to the Elan Valley Visitor Information centre. I have many lovely memories of that camp – of time with friends, of camp activities and the beautiful scenery of the location.

It was at Rhayader that I got to know my Folk Camp “twin”, Jenny Hopper. In fact, I made several new friendships that summer.

My best memory is the day a group of Folk Campers got a lift to the top of the reservoirs with our bicycles to cycle down to the Visitor Centre. The views were stunning, the ride downhill was glorious and the tea and cake at the Visitor Centre café at the end of the ride was delicious. I hope I can find someone with a van this summer who will take me with my bike up to the top of the reservoir so I can repeat the experience!

Hope to see you at Rhayader this summer!

Lou Tribus



Roch – a Quiet Town by the Coast

Roch village grew around a Norman watch tower, now called Roch Castle, which stands on a volcanic outcrop overlooking the deep Brandybrook valley.

The village includes a post office, shop, school, pub, church and chapel. The coastline is spectacular and boasts three major beaches at Druidstone Haven, Nolton Haven and Newgale. Visitors receive a warm welcome and are spoilt by the range of activities on offer, whether it's surfing, kite surfing, land yachting, kayaking, coastering, pony trekking, walking or simply enjoying the good food and drink available in the local hostelries. The country's smallest cathedral city of St David's is just 9 miles away.

Roch camp is now sold out, so if you still haven't booked your summer Folk Camp trip yet, go for Rhayader!

Anthony Keen



“Is Folk Camps Still Going?”

The Chester Folk Festival has been a fixed point on my calendar for a number of years now. It's a small event with many local performers and my first proper opportunity to meet with Folk Camps friends.

Susan James and I had just joined Council and were chatting about ideas to promote Folk Camps. We hit on the idea of taking the message to the Chester festival. Susan arranged for T shirts with our logo and 'Ask me about Folk Camps' and we borrowed the Folk Camp pull up banner and gathered postcards and business cards to give out. The festival organisers were happy for me to promote Folk Camps.



I stationed myself next to the queue for the main stage for an afternoon.

What a great time I had. The friendly festival goers were more than happy to talk about Folk Camps. A number of people came up and asked 'Is Folk Camps still going?'... and then out came the stories. I had the chance to say 'Yes, Folk Camps are very much still going', and told them about where the camps were this year and update them on the changes since they last camps. The conversations carried on in the lines of people coming in.

Younger people came up to ask 'So what is Folk Camps then?' and I got the chance to tell them about us and how much there is for young musicians, dancers and those who love being in the outdoors.

Ben 19, who had just come off stage was really interested to hear about the numbers of younger musicians at camp. We agreed the folk community was getting younger. Most of us older campers realise its Folk Camp that helps keep us young at heart!



I do think we raised awareness of Folk Camps, but we have reflected on how we could make these contacts count. Gathering names and contacts of potential campers would enable us to send them camp and booking information and start a proper conversation about how they can join in.

I'm sure between all us campers we probably cover all the festivals in the UK and many abroad.

Contact the Folk Camp office if you would can contribute to folk camps in this way. I guarantee you will have fun doing it.

Judith Jenkins

Roll up for the National Youth Folk Ensemble!

EFDSS is looking for talented young musicians to be part of the new National Youth Folk Ensemble. Natalya Catton Wilson talks to Programme Manager, Sarah Jones, and the Ensemble's Artistic Director, Sam Sweeney, about the project - and what the recruitment process entails...

Sampler Days

Sunday 8 May:
Birmingham
Conservatoire

Saturday 28 May:
Sage Gateshead

Sunday 29 May:
Leeds College of Music

Monday 30 May:
Royal Northern College
of Music, Manchester

Tuesday 31 May:
Derby LIVE, Guildhall
Theatre, Derby

Thursday 2 June:
Exeter Phoenix

Friday 3 June:
Cecil Sharp House,
London

Saturday 11 June:
West Road Concert Hall,
Cambridge

Sunday 12 June:
Cornerstone, Didcot

Places on the Sampler Days are free but limited and booking is essential. For further information and to book your place, visit www.efdss.org/nationalyouthfolkensemble.

To contact Sarah, please email ensemble@efdss.org or call 020 7485 2206 extension 235.

Photo Credit
Get Your Folk On!
participants at Cecil Sharp House © English Folk Dance and Song Society; photographer Roswitha Cheshier

Illustrations and logo:
Luke Drozd

Many genres of music offer prestigious youth music groups and orchestras, from the classical world of the National Youth Orchestra, to the National Youth Jazz Orchestra. This year folk music is also being represented when EFDSS launches the National Youth Folk Ensemble, which is funded by Arts Council England.

In May 2015, Sarah Jones was appointed by EFDSS to oversee the project, working closely with Rachel Elliott, EFDSS' Education Director. Having undertaken research into youth folk music activity around England, Sarah has organised a series of recruitment days - called 'Sampler Days' - for the Ensemble across the country during May and June.

"We are looking to recruit around 25 excellent folk musicians between the ages of 14 and 18 from across the whole of England," explained Sarah.

"We are holding Sampler Days in arts venues and conservatoires. They are free and there are 30 places at each session - all you need to do is sign up to come along."

Folk artist-educators Rob Harbron and Miranda Rutter will be involved in auditioning the young musicians, along with Sarah and the Ensemble's Artistic Director, multi-instrumentalist Sam Sweeney, perhaps best known for his work playing with Bellowhead and Leveret. He will be leading on the Ensemble's creative process.



"The job description could have been designed for me," laughed Sam.

"It's an incredible opportunity and a great position, to be at the helm of this exciting project."

The focus of the repertoire will be English folk music but other influences from the British Isles and further afield will also be touched upon.

“

I see my role as encouraging young people in the Ensemble to develop their own individual styles, which will hopefully sound different from anything else. I'll be bringing along some of my friends, who are brilliant musicians, to work with them and hopefully inspire them to be the best they can be. I'm really looking forward to it.

Sam Sweeney

© Photo taken by Ely Lucas

"My passion is playing traditional English tunes," said Sam.

"Teaching traditional music is such a big thing in Europe and the United States, which is sadly lacking in this country. For instance, in Shetland they still teach the fiddle in schools. So I'm passionate about instilling a love of playing traditional music in young people who will take the tradition forward."

"I'm really looking forward to meeting young musicians at the Sampler Days. We're not necessarily looking for kids with an encyclopedic knowledge of folk music, and they don't need to be steeped in the folk tradition - they could come from a classical background, for example - but what we are looking for is high quality players with plenty of enthusiasm."

Sam explains that the Sampler Days will involve creative workshops and a short solo audition.

The second round of auditions will take place in July and from there, the final number of young people will be chosen for the Ensemble.

Once the final line-up has been decided, four weeks of residential courses will be held across the year, starting in October at Halsway Manor in Somerset, leading, eventually, to performances around the country.

As a 15-year-old fiddle player at Folkworks Summer School, Sam caught the ears of John Spiers and Jon Boden, leading to his joining Bellowhead on leaving school two years later. Understandably, he is passionate about mentoring and inspiring the young musicians in the Ensemble.





Folk Camps to be 50 Soon!

In 2018, Folk Camps Society will reach our 50th Anniversary! Obviously with this being such a great achievement, so we need your help! How should we celebrate?

We would like our members to make suggestions as to what we should do to mark this important anniversary.

Do you have any ideas? Should we run a particular type of event?

Can you suggest a venue?

And what about special guests?

This is obviously a lot to organise, and so we're trying to get the ball rolling early.

We would like you to play a part in making our 50th anniversary something special.

Please contact either Sarah in the office, or me, with your thoughts. Or even discuss it on Facebook, to draw out ideas from others.

info@folkcamps.co.uk

patrickself@folkcamps.co.uk



50 Years of Folk Campers

As just mentioned, Folk Camp has now been running for almost 50 years. As a result, there are some that still have fond memories of camping, but can no longer participate. Since the last issue of Extent, we have had a few messages from reader who would like to reach out and quite simply say 'I'm still here!'

Derek Hammond here. I still dream of being at folk-camps but I fear it must remain a dream. Jill and I had so much fun at camps up and down the country (Most of which we have recorded in our scrap books) that I so regret not being able to participate any more. Fifty years, more than half my lifetime there have been folk-camps. If any prospective customer has doubts about becoming involved, put them in touch with me! From the early days with Bill Rutter we were dedicated converts.

When you doing your magazine just let people know I'm still alive and think of them constantly. Much love

Derek Hammond

Rather belatedly, thank you for sending Extent to me. I enjoy reading every word. I am sorry that people I knew have died. It's all part of being 87. Walt Tingle must have been a great age.

Many years ago, Billericay Folk Dance Club got off to a great start. It is still in existence although in a minor form. I thought I would do the same in Basildon so set up a dance. No-one came! Walt Tingle was the caller and refused to take a fee. That's my main memory of him.

As I say, I am 87 and walk out most mornings to get a cappuccino - various venues - with a 4 wheeled walker. Carers come twice a day & I have a shopper, cleaner and a gardening nephew and meals on wheels so I am well cared for with my cat. No dancing though! Keep up the good work. Folk Camps were the best holidays ever. I knew Bill Rutter.

*Thank you, **Dorothy***

If you are reading this and would like to reach out to old Folk Camp friends, let us know and get in touch! It is great to see how Folk Camp affected so many generations of people.

Bonus – Artwork!

Anne Heagney painted this watercolour of rapper at Chedworth in 2015, and we thought it would be lovely to include. Can anyone recognise any of the dancers?

Do you have any artwork of Folk Camp, or artwork done whilst on camp that you would like to share? Send it in!



Obituary

It is with great sadness that we report the death on 10th April 2016 of Cecil French, a folk camp veteran since 1969.

Cecil was a notable figure at so many camps over the years, in the early days as a widower with his daughters Alison and Hilary, and later joined by wife Shirley and then their children Elizabeth and Matthew, and on to the next generation with his grandchildren.

He loved Folk Camps, continuing for another 46 years, camping with Shirley in 2015 at Knockerdown, and had planned to be at Roch in summer 2016, where no doubt he would have treated fellow campers to his inimitable style of calling.

Many people will have fond memories of Cecil over many years, including party night exploits and in recent times the production of many a fine cup of cocoa.

He was also a keen member of his local folk dance club from the early 1950s and only stopped calling and dancing with them in January this year.

He will be much missed.

Sarah Richardson



THE GENTLEMAN CALLER

Cecil was in some ways synonymous with Folk Camps – he was always there, playing his concertina, teaching longsword, solemnly dressing up for party night, and, of course, calling: when Cecil took the microphone you could be sure you were in for a great set of dances. He was very fond of contras, and nearly always called longways dances: so I have written one in his memory. We did it at Loxwood this year.

George Middleton

For Cecil French

Longways, duple minor, first couples improper

32-bar steady American reels.

A1. In fours, circle left three-quarters.

Half ladies' chain across the set

A2. Circle right three-quarters

Half ladies' chain up and down the set

B1. The two ladies do-si-do

The two men do-si-do

B2. Take hands in long lines and go forward and back

Swing neighbour, finishing in each other's places.



Contact Us

To find out more about Folk Camps or how to book please call us on:

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History of Folk Camps

Folk Camps activity holidays started out in the early 60s when a group of folk enthusiasts decided it would be fun to go on holiday together, eat together and make their own entertainment without spending a fortune.

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