

Welcome to the Folk Camps newsletter!

This issue has news from Folk Camps and information about this year's holidays.



Contents

..... 2

Office Matters..... 3

Folk Camps Council News..... 3

Publicity 4

Camper Feedback from the 2016 season..... 5

New Sites for 2017 5

Crafting beyond 2018..... 6

Folk Camps to be 50 Soon!..... 6

Development Grant..... 7

Missives from the Marsh..... 7

50 Years of Folk Campers 9

Obituaries 10

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>



Folk Camps

be a part of it!

'Folk Camps be a part of it' sums up our message to the campers and friends we haven't yet met. The new graphic style and strap line have been developed by the Council Marketing team.

Do you sometimes feel a tension between wanting to tell everyone about our great camping-music-dancing-craft-fun-welcoming holiday experience and keeping it one of your most precious secrets?

For an experience so dependent on the participation and contribution of individuals, new people, unknown people, can unsettle us at camp. Then again we all have memories of finding a new friend. The friend whose musicianship inspires us and freshens our repertoire; the dance partner who can match weight and ambition stripping the willow; a knitter to quietly sit beside; someone up for a pub session or the Batman to your Robin on party night. New campers are new musicians, dancers, crafters, leaders, caterers, wardens and friends.

Possibly you don't see it as your role to spread the word about folk camps. Surely there's a well-oiled publicity machine for all that?

The truth is, that there is no publicity machine. Like folk camps, our promotion is home made. Your enthusiasm for folk camps is our main publicity tool, your encouragement of new campers is what lights the blue touch paper.

Some of our larger friendship groups have the gravity of small stars and influence the shape of the holiday booking across the summer. Their distinct culture or style can be wonderfully comfortable allowing campers to feel 'on holiday' as soon as they roll through the camp gates. That is great, and for many these friendship groups are what makes their camp. Weeks less favoured by large groups, have different group dynamics, the upside of which is that smaller camps result in new exciting creative combinations and new traditions, which strengthen the organisation as a whole.

Why not consider booking on a quieter week as well this year? We have a half price offer for anyone booking Orcop week 2 as well as another summer week.

Judith Jenkins (Extent Editor)



Office Matters

The 2017 season bookings opened at the 2016 Reunion, as we saw the handover of leadership from Patrick Self to Liz Cooper. Once again we have a strong programme this year, three brand new sites: hall camp at tranquil Orcop in Herefordshire on the English / Welsh border, marquee camp in beautiful Dorset, another brand new site in Hampshire for August Bank holiday south and the return of several old favourites.

Craft Break 2017 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 2018 season if you fancy a Folky February break.

This year we open the camping weekend season at Loxwood in Sussex with May Bank Holiday weekend, followed by Spring Bank Holiday weekends at Chedworth in Gloucestershire and our old favourite Dalton in Yorkshire. Dancers and Musicians are back at Beckford in the Cotswolds, and then there is the return of the chance to spend up to 10 days at Miserden with Session music weekend, a light touch self-cater week and then Singers weekend.

The summer marquee week camps have been very popular this year, just week 4 has spaces available, but there are still spots at the hall weeks so please book your summer folk camp soon whilst you still can!

As before, a gentle reminder, try to get your balance payments completed in plenty of time. There's a change to booking terms this year for summer weeks, balances not paid by the deadline of two months before the start date of the camp mean that places are not secure, and will be offered to those on the waiting list. Payment threshold dates appear on your invoice, and I will reissue invoices on request if you have mislaid yours. 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 – (no longer that new) Administration Manager

Folk Camps Council News

In November Council had a big change around. Patrick Self and Anne Kenyon had come to the end of their terms on Council and had to stand down. Patrick and Anne worked very hard during their terms on Council, with Patrick stepping into the top job after quite a short period, and Anne leading on catering matters. When I started as the new Admin Manager in January 2016, after a period of shadowing my predecessor Mic Spenceley, Patrick was very supportive and influential, and I am extremely grateful to him for his encouragement, leadership, and ready willingness to help on a huge range of questions.

Liz Cooper took over from Patrick, stepping into the Chair role. Standing Council members Judith Jenkins and Sharon Hopwood joined Liz in holding the fort as the re-elected, former co-opted, and new Council members took their places.

Lou Tribus stood for another three-year term, and has taken over the Company Secretary role. Marcus de Frettes and Tony Mealings, who were co-opted in 2015, were elected in November 2016 as serving Council members, and Marcus has taken the Vice-Chair role. Council were also pleased to welcome three new members, Barry Pollard, Emma Daniel, and Val Coleman-Porritt, who have joined up for several committees. Barry has taken on the mantle of Staffing Co-ordinator, a key role for which he is admirably suited, and Emma and Val are working on projects including the forthcoming 50th anniversary year plans.

So for the first time in a little while we have a fully populated Council team, and already a lot of work has been done, particularly on a major Marketing project, and a big review of Health and Safety with more to follow in the coming weeks.

Sarah Richardson – Folk Camps Admin Manager

Publicity

Council is modernising our approach to electronic communications. The website is under review, we are aiming to refresh connections across the board to get our name and purpose known and understood.

Folk Camps joins Music Mark



Folk Camps has become a member of The UK Association for Music Education, known as 'Music Mark'. This means that we will have the ability to publicise our activities and opportunities to a wide audience via the network of over 130 Music Education Hubs in England, via the monthly newsletter which is sent electronically to all members.

We have a great 'offer' for aspiring young musicians who wish to develop their skills in the Folk Music arena, and this membership will help us to develop our educational aims, as stated in our Articles of Association. We have also had a positive response from Snape Maltings and The Sage (Gateshead) in terms of displaying our materials and 'signposting' opportunities for young people.

Camper Feedback from the 2016 season

The Camper comments boxes were well used at all camps. There had been concern that having the boxes rather than the comment books would encourage more negative comments and complaints, but this does not appear to be the case.

There was a very high level of satisfaction from campers generally. Appreciation for camp staff has been passed on to the teams. It's encouraging to hear when leaders get it right and that so many felt they had a good holiday. A number of 'good ideas' have been considered by Council. Some have been adopted, such as equipping catering staff with a mobile phone for keeping in touch with suppliers. Suggestions for the folk camp weekly menus have been considered. The vegetarian menus have been revamped.

Although we can't act on every suggestion, they are all considered.

Lou Tribus

New Sites for 2017

Gaunts Estate near Wimborne, Dorset

Our new marquee site this year is at Gaunt's estate in Dorset. The estate house is the location of a spiritual charity organisation which holds its own festival, but our site is well away from the main house on the wider estate farm. Due north of Poole, the site is close to Wimborne Minster, and not far from Blandford Forum and the Dorset



Orcop Hall Camp

Between Hereford to the north and Monmouth to the south, Ross on Wye to the east, our hall site is deep in the peaceful countryside of the Welsh borders, but not too far from civilisation. The area abounds with historic interest, and Herefordshire is known for its apples and cider, as well as the SAS training camp. Ross is famous for bookshops, and the Wye valley offers outdoor activities in plenty, from white-water rafting, fishing, pony trekking. If you get over to Symonds Yat West, why not visit the Paddocks hotel, with its views over the river, where we have our February Craft Break.

Crafting beyond 2018

As well as traditional music and dancing, the support of traditional craft is central to the aims of the organisation and should be represented in our holiday offerings.

The winter craft camp held at Simmonds Yat is very well attended. The usual music and dancing of a folk Camp holiday has been combined with a wide variety of craft activities over the years. The hotel has been a wonderful venue, but is now under new management. We are facing the prospect of change. In addition, the popularity of the holiday means many rebook year on year. There is a tight friendship group attending year on year, and it's not so easy for new campers to join in and find out what's on offer.

Campers love to craft at summer holiday events too. We are asking 'Is there an appetite for a new craft offering?' If so, what do you fancy doing? What could you offer?

Please can you drop Extent a quick message and we will pass it on to Council. [email Extent Craft suggestions](#)

Folk Camps to be 50 Soon!

In 2018, Folk Camps Society will reach our 50th Anniversary! Obviously with this being such a great achievement. We would like you to play a part in making our 50th anniversary something special.

We would like our members to make suggestions as to what we should do to mark this important anniversary. Council have agreed to organise a Grand National Ceilidh in a central location at the start of the Summer, so all members can come together. More details will be announced over this summer. Other ideas include bringing together a showcase festival 50th Celebration Band, and for a specially written dance to dance at camps throughout the year.

Do you have any ideas for music, dance or craft to mark the event?

And what about special guests? Who would you like to see?

The better the preparations, the better the fun for everyone, and so we're trying to get the ball rolling early.

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@folkcamp.co.uk

Development Grant

Since 1996, the development grant scheme has been funding projects relating to folk. We have already helped our members broaden their knowledge, record for use and for posterity, as well as introduce our music, dance and song to a wider audience.

Recently Folk Camp council decided to increase the maximum grant from £500 to £1000 to help the good work continue.

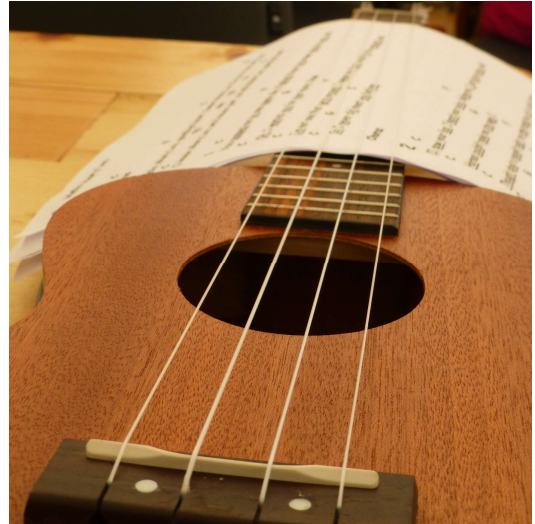
The types of project that have been successful include grants to help a camper attend a singing workshop; and for a collaborative work resulting in the composition of original tunes for dances and performance.

The fund will also enable staff to be trained in food hygiene and health and safety ensuring we comply with regulations.

If you are a governing member and you have a good idea, maybe we could help to make it happen. All we need is for you to ask for it!

Get in touch to find out how you could be a part of it

Barry Pollard.



Missives from the Marsh

Extent readers may not have travelled down the path least travelled to Cold Bogmarsh. A kind of 'folk reserve' located in rural Facebook, where folk campers wait out the long camp-free months. Never too hot and always promising the possibility of rain, Cold Bogmarsh has the perfect climate for nurturing recovering campers. Cold Bogmarsh is like any camp. It has a virtual marquee or hall where campers come together to play, to share ideas for workshops, news of cutting edge camping equipment and pleas for the caterers. Over recent months we have been treated to a number of performances: for example, rare footage of a 'spoons percussion' performance from the Craft Camp was shown; Campers enjoyed a Hose Pipe dance, discovered by our chairman Liz, (danced in full waterproofs, broom in hand, to an unaccompanied hose lashing back and forth on full tap); and a rather arty, but intriguing, al fresco public knitting spectacle - for men. If you would like an invitation to join this private group, contact Extent.

Cold Bogmarsh was named by the initial founders of the community, to evoke fond memories of summers past: those distant shores we can only visit in memory. Even so, the community is ever hopeful, that with the cycle of the year, they will emerge again from winter, to frolic in the fresh green field of future Folk camps. For many, Cold Bogmarsh is a lifeline, a blessed tonic, a utopia for which they hanker and pray to be real.

Now, it is a well-known fact, that when a group of the faithful come together, powerful forces can align. Extent can exclusively reveal, news (not fake news) of a remarkable turn of events.

This spring, an ever wondering group of Folk Camps site-researchers, Barry, Graham and Emma, were out and about in the Marches. Early one morning, they hesitantly rolled out from the hedge under which they had been sleeping, to a see, in the hazy dawn, a pointing arm. Gathering closer, they were able to see the pointing arm was in fact a sign. After a short climb, all three were able to read: B.o.g.m.a.r.s.h.



(Thanks to Emma and Barry for the picture. Not sure who took it, and who was shouldering Graham)

Bogmarsh! Could they believe it? The road was clear, and after some discussion on whether it was left or right, they set off. In short order, they rounded the bend to their destination. Feet on the bottom rung of the wooden fence they topped the brambles and took it all in. There, in the fecund landscape, beautiful, and it seemed to them, beckoning, they beheld Bogmarsh: and it was good.

A relatively flat, large grassy field lay before them. Certainly large enough for a Marquee, 2 dozen family tents (all with a share of the generous hedge line), the Jewett caravan, a mushroom village, wide games, a pit, a toilet block- even several pairs of tardis loos. A midnight-walk sized patch of woodland fringed the furthest boundary. Their trained site-assessor ears picked up a distant wood pigeon's cooed greeting.

They calculated that the field lay just far enough from the main road, that the noise of the world of man could not pollute the song of even the smallest song circle singer. There were no near neighbours with no musical taste, yet even the oldest of the retired wardens could amble to the village pub, concertina in hand. Blossoms framed the view of where Folk Camp virgins would walk, arm in arm, in summer moonlight. Young saplings swayed in the spring breeze, reminding Emma of the young men, arms arching aloft at the heart of a sweaty Traffic Lights dance. Not too hot they noticed, and with the promise of rain.



It was true. All the earnest yearning that Cold Bogmarsh could be more than a warm thought in the ether had come true. They had seen it, touched it even. In silence they turned for home, (but not before they took photos and a GIS positioning reference. No one wanted a repeat the embarrassing 'Shangri La' business), each privately pondering the power of positive thinking and participation: the spirit of Folk Camps. Next year is the 50th anniversary they remembered, newly excited by the prospect.

50 Years of Folk Campers

As a result of the great age of Folk Camps, our oldest members find that they can no longer come camping, but still have fond memories and want to keep in touch.

If you are reading this and would like to reach out to old Folk Camp friends, let us know and get in touch! We owe you a debt, it's on your shoulders we dance and play

Obituaries

Jonathan Holtom

Some sad news, Jonathan Holtom has recently died after a short illness. Jonathan was active in Folk Camps in the seventies & eighties along with his wife Pat who served as chair of FCS at that time.

Older folk campers will remember camping on his farm in Norfolk, where we held the very first vegetarian craft camp.

Recently, Jonathan & Pat helped smooth the way for our camp on Bruce's farm in Bedingham South Norfolk and secured the site for us.

He will be sadly missed.

Barry Moule

Sheila Ashley

It is with great sadness that we report the untimely death on 21st October 2016 of Sheila Ashley, wife of Tony, after a short battle with ovarian cancer.

Sheila and Tony had been folk camping since 1988, enjoying spending time at summer camps, especially the French camps, with the many friends they made over the years. Sheila entered into the whole ethos of Folk Camps with enthusiasm, even starting to do craft activities herself so that she could bring these to camp for the children. Together with Karen Dell she enjoyed nothing more than making costumes for party nights!

In her life outside Folk Camps, since 1978 Sheila had been a keen member of the ladies north-west Morris team in Nuneaton (along with daughter Karen), the Ladies of Green Willow, while husband Tony danced with Anker Morris Men (and still does) and this is where I first got to know the family. Unfortunately, Sheila had to give up dancing a few years ago due to arthritis but they both carried on coming to Folk Camps until about three years ago when arthritis made putting up the trailer tent very difficult for both of them.

Sheila was a committed member of her local church in Hinckley where they are now wondering how they are going to manage without her. Both at church and Folk Camps Sheila just took on jobs to make sure they were done. And she loved nothing more than sitting outside someone's tent or caravan at 5pm for 'Happy Hour', with a glass of wine in hand, enjoying conversation and laughter with a group of friends.

Sheila will be very much missed by so many people. Our thoughts are with Tony, son and daughter Stephen and Karen and her much-loved grandchildren.



Elaine Meechan

Ivan MacKenzie

Ivan 'The Porridge' MacKenzie passed away on 14th December 2016. He had become frail and the last few weeks was confined to bed at home where Edna and carers looked after him magnificently. He would have been 100yrs of age next May but at Dalton last year, we remembered his 99th birthday and everybody signed a card which gave him much pleasure.

Hilary Vare

I first met Ivan at Cecil Sharp House in the 1970's where I have memories of him teaching the Playford Dance 'Whirligig'. "There is a correct way of dancing with the right deportment" he would say.

He was, after all, for many years a doyen of The Watford Folk Dance Club. This he carried on when he attended Folk Camps and tried to teach us good Playford practice.

Ivan would come up with inventions for Folk Camp equipment that would put Heath Robinson to shame!

Who could fail to remember the old potato peeler that he tried to work with water power. Or the hot shower made from a large square board with a curled black water pipe within, facing the sun to heat up- it actually worked! Other inventions were to make the boilers automatically fill and heat with gas without having to turn them on and off.

Ivan was a great help to me personally in setting up camps and the many cups of tea in his little van were greatly appreciated.

I and many others will miss his companionship on camp.

Barry Moule