

Extent – Summer 2025

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>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/folkcampholidays/>

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Message From the Chairman

There was an interesting conversation at one recent weekend camp, where some people seemed to think that “summer camps are only for families” – which I think is not true at all. While it is accurate that Folk Camps does provide a fabulous summer holiday for families, with playmates, learning opportunities, where your meals are included – no need to cook every day – or go out and spend money at every mealtime, we also have many adults camping without children. Some are singles, some are couples, some young and others old. Actually, less than 25% of summer bookings for 2025 include children! The rest are adults who love what a Folk Camp provides: opportunities to play music with others, sing, dance and feel part of a community together. So, if you are talking to friends about Folk Camps, and encouraging them to attend, then please let them know that we welcome people of any age, and in any combination!

We have had a great start to the 2025 programme of Folk Camps. Our weekend camps so far have been successful socially and financially – with numbers similar or slightly up on last year. However, at the moment, our booking numbers for summer are a bit down, so if you haven't yet booked, then please do so soon! And if you have friends that you believe would love a Folk Camp, then please encourage them to try it. The summer camps provide a much more “immersive experience”, and it is much easier to get to know others when you are with them for more of the day together.

Patrick Self, Folk Camps Chair

Preparing For Summer Camps 2025

We hope that everyone booked onto a week-long marquee camp this summer is very excited to return to Rhayader for the first time in almost a decade! Preparations are in place and ready for a month of our usual whimsical, creative fare, but if you still haven't booked on it isn't too late! Bookings are still open on all four weeks this summer, so don't delay to book your place!



Oscar Roberts

A Note on Washing Up

This year, we aim to be more environmentally friendly at our marquee site. One of the initiatives is to introduce eco-friendly washing up liquid containing biodegradable ingredients for campers to use. We know that some people prefer to use traditional branded products because of the perception it'll make things cleaner so we're phasing it in and there will be a choice. At the end of the season we'll evaluate campers' responses.

An additional step for the team doing the duty is being introduced for cleaning up the pot washing area. Each day, after the final meal, all cleaning cloths and brushes will be heat sterilised by that team ensuring improved hygiene.

Claire Mycock – Folk Camps Company Secretary

Buzz Off! Can Faux Wasp Nests Keep the Real Ones Away?

There you are—enjoying the music and dance of Folk Camp, enjoying the wonderful food in the marquee, when a wasp buzzes in like it owns the place. And then another. And another. Suddenly, it feels like *you're* the guest at *their* folk camp.

Enter the latest oddball trend in wasp deterrence: the faux wasp nest. Yes, really. Some clever campers swear by these puffy decoys to keep the winged invaders at bay. So what's the buzz? Let's take a closer look.



What Is a Faux Wasp Nest?

A faux wasp nest is exactly what it sounds like—a fake wasp nest, usually made of paper or fabric and shaped to resemble the classic grey, football-sized hive of a paper wasp. You hang it up somewhere near your site and hope the real wasps take one look and go, “Nope, already taken.”

The logic? Wasps are territorial. They generally won't build a nest close to an existing one, especially if it belongs to another colony. So, by tricking them into thinking another squad's already set up shop, you're encouraging them to find friendlier skies.



Do They Actually Work?

The short answer: *Sometimes*. The long answer: *It depends*.

Anecdotally, many campers (especially in low-to-moderate wasp zones) report great results. One well-placed decoy on a tree branch or awning pole can drastically reduce wasp traffic into the kitchen area or the marquee.

That said, scientists aren't entirely sold. Some studies suggest that while territorial behaviour is real, it's not a guarantee—especially when food is involved. If you have food and sugary drinks in the open air, you are probably doing the same thing as ringing the dinner gong! Making wasp traps just brings more to the food!

Still, even if it's not foolproof, using a faux nest is a safe, chemical-free way to try to keep wasps away. And when you're camping, every little bit helps.

How to Use a Faux Nest Like a Pro

Here are a few tips to maximize your chances:

- **Hang it early.** Wasps tend to be more territorial during nesting season (spring to early summer), so it's best to get the decoy up as soon as you arrive.
 - **Place it strategically.** Hang it where a real nest might be—under eaves, near trees, or by the cooking area (but not *in* it).
 - **Use more than one.** For bigger sites or larger groups, a couple of nests spaced around the area can boost your odds.
 - **Pack it carefully.** Faux nests are lightweight but can crush easily. A small Tupperware or hard-sided container keeps it safe in your gear.
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DIY or Buy?

You can buy faux wasp nests online or at outdoor stores, often for less than the price of a fancy latte. Or, if you're the crafty type, you can DIY one from paper bags or grey felt. This could be a new project for craft at camp!

DIY Faux Wasp Nest: A Step-by-Step Guide

Materials You'll Need:

- **Brown paper bag** or **kraft paper** (for a natural look)
- **Twine** or **string** (for hanging)
- **Cotton balls** or **crumpled newspaper** (for shaping)
- **Tape** or **glue** (for securing)
- **Scissors** (for cutting)

- **Optional: Paint or markers** (for added realism)
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Step 1: Prepare the Base

Start with a brown paper bag or kraft paper. Crumple it to create a natural, irregular shape. Fill the inside with cotton balls or crumpled newspaper to add volume and mimic the hollow interior of a real wasp nest. Secure the opening with tape or glue.

Step 2: Shape and Secure

Manipulate the paper to form dips, hollows, and irregular contours, resembling the shape of a real wasp nest. Once satisfied with the shape, use tape or glue to secure any loose ends or sections of the paper that may come undone. Ensure that the nest maintains its form and does not unravel easily.

Step 3: Add Hanging Mechanism

Attach a length of twine or string to one side of the nest. You can staple or tape the string securely to the nest to ensure it is well-anchored.

Step 4: Paint for Realism (Optional)

For added realism, paint the nest with gray or brown tones to mimic the appearance of a natural wasp nest. Use a dry-brush technique to create a weathered look. Allow the paint to dry completely before proceeding.

Step 5: Hang and Deter

Find a suitable location to hang your fake nest. Choose an area where you want to deter wasps from nesting, such as near your campsite or around your tent. Hang the nest at eye level or slightly higher, ensuring it is visible to wasps.

By following these steps, you'll create an effective and natural-looking deterrent against wasps, allowing you to enjoy your camping experience without unwanted buzzing guests.

For more detailed instructions and visual examples, you can refer to the tutorial provided by Garden Guides: [Garden GuidesGarden Guides](#)

2. Crocheted Faux Wasp Nest

For a more artisanal approach, this crocheted faux wasp nest is made from acrylic yarn and stuffed with Poly-fil. It's about 9 inches tall and 15 inches around, offering a beginner-friendly pattern that works up quickly. This handmade decoy serves as a safer, chemical-free option for wasp and hornet control. [ravelry.com+1Amazon+1](#)

3. Duct Tape Wasp Nest Decoy

A budget-friendly DIY option involves wrapping a foam rubber football with duct tape to create a wasp nest decoy. This method is praised for its durability and effectiveness, with some users reporting that it has worked for over two years. It's a practical choice for campers looking for a quick and cost-effective solution. [ThriftyFun](#)

Liz Cooper

Rubbish and Recycling at the Rhayadar Summer Camp

There are very strict rules on rubbish and recycling in Wales. If the wrong thing is put into the wrong bin, then Folk Camps may be fined, and the waste may have to be manually re-sorted before it is collected. No one wants that to happen.

There will be clear instructions (laminated signs) explaining what can go into each bin. Please follow these carefully. Please ask the warden or the recycling team if you have any questions. If in doubt, please ask.

Please do not bring glitter to camp for any craft activities (or anything else!) We all want to do our part for the environment.

Thank you.

Patrick Self, Folk Camps Chair

Party Food

Late night party food caused considerable stress for at least 1 marquee week for the caterers. Council have decided that party food needs to be simplified so there is less work for the caterers, no hot food and less waste.

As tastes may be changing, Council suggests a poll at each week of Marquee camp so that the campers express their preferences from:

1. No party food
2. Crackers, cheese, grapes & apples
3. Cold pizza, crisps, cakes and more traditional party food.

All leftover food must be binned at the end of the party evening – preferably with additional tidy up help from campers and not all left to the caterers.

Liz Cooper

Folk Camps Conquer Tunesday Tuesdays

Like many ideas at Folk Camp, this one started with a conversation over the washing up. It can be a moment of peace for the musicians to wash up and reflect on how the workshops are going and what tunes we might play during the evening band. But alas, this was not the case for me on Sunday of week 3. This was due to Matt Green suggesting that we took part in Tunesday Tuesdays as a Folk Camps collective.

If you haven't heard by now, Tunesday Tuesday was (probably) one of the best things to come out of lockdown. Founded by Martin Clarke in March 2020, with the simple concept of recording yourself playing a selected tune every week, and sharing your video on the Facebook group on a... Tuesday. It is now run by Selam Adamu, who devotedly provides a link to written music and often an example video each week. It currently has over 3400 members and is a public group.

The task was simple enough, learn Walter Bulwers no. 1 by ear, record it and then post on the Facebook group. I had played this tune in various Faversham sessions circa 2014, so I dug it out of 'the vault', warily tossed my carefully planned out workshop music aside, and set about leading the Monday morning music workshop with Holly Sheldrake.

Learning by ear can bring many people out in a cold sweat. For others, it was a welcome relief to not have to find glasses and try to work out what each dot on the lines meant. I guess this is the bit where there is a plot twist in the story and it all goes terribly wrong. Sorry to disappoint, but it actually all turned out rather well! We took a few bars at a time, made some music and then ramped it up. Holly helpfully wrote the chords out on flipchart paper and hung it haphazardly behind us. Whether anyone played those chords or not is another matter beyond the lead musicians' control.

With some steady-handed videography from husband Harry, it was time for “action”. Sarah Malleson had all sorts of cinematic ideas around how to capture the moment. Harry enters the glorious off-white marquee to find Walter Buwler’s no. 1 in full swing. A sea of blue chairs, two musicians leading a variety of instruments in a jolly polka. Fiddles, guitars, whistles, mandolins, cellos, bassoon, accordions - a great spread. Three times through and one “hup!” later, it was done.

It did pose a small challenge of uploading it onto a Facebook group relying on available signal in the field. But Sarah persevered and hurrah - we were there on Tunesday Tuesday group! It’s now had 1300 plays and over 84 reactions. But we didn’t really care about how many ‘likes’ it got. It was a great way to capture the essence of an idea turning into a reality at the morning workshop, and share it with the folk community on Facebook. Feel free to join the group yourself and keep contributing all year round. Thanks to all those who were happy to ‘be a part of it’.

Steph Broodbank

Folk Camps Development Fund – Folky Family Ceilidh

Please see below an event run with the help of partial funding from the Folk Camps Development Fund. If you'd be interested in applying for our Development Fund, please see <https://folkcamp.co.uk/development-fund-grants/> for more details.



Bring your family and dance together!

Folky Family Ceilidh

Under 5s are FREE!

SATURDAY 21ST JUNE

AT UPPER NORWOOD LIBRARY HUB SE19 1TQ

DOORS OPEN 2:30PM, DANCING FROM 3PM TIL 5PM

Bring your **family** of **all ages** and **generations** to learn to ceilidh dance together! We will have a **caller** who tells you what to do. You can dance to the **live folk band**! If you play an **instrument**, you can bring it to **join the band**.

£6 per human. Under 5s FREE!
Scan the QR code for tickets.
Made possible by funding from:

 **Folk Camps**


 Scan me!

A Highlight from Loxwood

For those who come to Loxwood every year there's a certain magic – the first camp under canvas of the year, the unpredictability of whether we'll have frost or sunburn and the beautiful countryside; bluebells, owls and (this year) cricket. We were delighted this year to welcome a new family and whilst we all crossed our fingers hoping they were enjoying the camp, Paul's song on the final night seemed to confirm they'd felt the magic too.

Loxwood Hall, new tunes every day

Dancing, singing, ceilidh, there's so many ways to play

Loxwood Hall, you should run in fear

If you haven't left yet, you'll be back for years

We came to Loxwood Folk Camp as we'd heard it was the best

We heard they brought good music, much better than the rest

We came with no delusion, that this would be the scene,

But now we know exactly what they mean!

Loxwood Hall....

Steph has played the cello for 1 year and a day

She thought that here at Loxwood there would be a better way

She is the only cellist and it's really very clear

She wants someone to be with for next year

Loxwood Hall....

Aurora loves to ceilidh and is keen to join the dance

She loves to strip the willow if she only has the chance

She polkas round with purpose with ribbons in her hair
And promenades and spins without a care

Loxwood Hall....

Our fiddler's name is Jenny, and she pulls us all along
And if you coax her gently, she may even sing a song
Her fiddling is splendid, if you only take a look
But only when it's written in the book....

Loxwood Hall....

And this is my story that I came here for the ride
And now I find I'm swimming against the tide.
I've learned so much already and I'd love to learn some more,
So I'm not intending heading for the door.

Loxwood Hall....

Jane Wheeler, on behalf of Paul from Loxwood

Obituaries

We are very sad to bring the news of several loyal Folk Campers who helped make the Folk Camps Society what it is today.

A Tribute to Roger Conway



Roger was born on a wet Monday, 4 November 1946 and grew up near Epsom in Surrey where he attended Danetree School. As a teenager he first came into contact with folk music at Epsom Folk Song Club.

After qualifying as a teacher with Open University degrees, Roger moved to Exeter in 1968. He shared a house with Bill Rutter who introduced him to Sidmouth Folk Festival to work as a volunteer.

He moved back to the South East for a while but then returned to Taunton where, at the local song club, he was happy to join in the choruses. He also

started hosting some of the club's guest performers.

Roger played whistle, melodeon and concertina but always by ear rather than written manuscript music.

Once Roger had become a family man he was introduced to Folk Camps, again by Bill Rutter. This is when he learnt Morris dancing for the first time after which he joined the local side Taunton Dene. As well as dancing in the team Roger served as Bagman and Assistant Squire. He later moved on to other teams including Challice Morris Men and Exeter Morris Men then finally back to Taunton Dene and Exeter.

Roger continued to dance until 1993 when treatment for cancer in the shoulder made this impractical. He was, however, able to continue playing his instruments.

When Roger started going to Folk Camps with his family, Angus Purdie was chairman. Roger recognised that improvements could be made to the organisation and suggested these to the then organiser Tony Millington.

Roger became a trustee and in 1981 was co-opted onto the Council. In 1983 he became a full Council member and served as vice-chair to Angus Purdie and in 1984 as treasurer with Ray Taylor as chairman. Roger resigned from Council in 1986 to become the paid Administration Manager, initially on a two year contract, alongside Barry Moule as Equipment Manager.

During the early years, Folk Camps Society had reached a financial crisis. This was largely due to the cost of leasing office space in conjunction with Western Area EFDSS, Sidmouth Folk Festival, Halsway Manor Society and the RSPB. Roger and Barry negotiated a transfer of the lease to the RSPB. This enabled Folk Camps to clear its debts.

In order to regain financial stability, Roger and Barry continued their management roles but unpaid for two years. This effectively saved Folk Camps from ending completely and without their intervention and support there would be no Folk Camps Society today.

Roger continued as Administration Manager for 23 years until his retirement in 2006. He served under the chairmanships of Angus Purdie, Ray Taylor,

Alan Corkett, Jenny Walton, Pete Hendy, Alex McClure, Brian Pollard and Paul Weir.

After retirement as Folk Camps Administration Manager, Roger continued for a while teaching at the University of Plymouth, training adults in computer studies as well as freelancing as a building surveyor and consultant.

Roger was always willing to help and lend a hand to many local people and was involved in many projects with various walking groups including The Ramblers and The Open Access Group. He continued leading rambles, often with groups staying at Halsway Manor. Roger also took every opportunity to play music for various Morris sides.

Another of Roger's interests was cooking and he often used his skills to host special meals. Roger loved cats – any and every cat. His enthusiasms also extended to following cycle road racing, particularly the Tour de France, England, Italy, Spain etc.

Roger died on Sunday 24 November 2024. He would have approved of the howling gale and heavy rainfall happening at the time.

It should be recognised by modern Folk Campers that the contributions made by Roger Conway have enabled the Society to continue and flourish to this present day. As well as the sacrifices that he and Barry Moule made for the two years of working unpaid, the administration processes introduced by Roger still exist in updated and modernised forms.

**Compiled by Mic Spenceley with contributions from Linda Conway,
Barry Moule, Christine Corkett and Halsway Manor Society.
March 2025**

Obituary: Shirley Shoishana Finn “Shoi” 1931 – 2024



A word that many people associate with Shoi is “colourful”. She said herself that life became more colourful for her when her children arrived and they all started going to folk camp holidays together. The family first attended folk camp in 1965, when Ken was 6, Alan was 5, and Jacqueline only 11 months - and they fell in love with it.

How Shoi managed to persuade Charles to try out Folk Camp is a mystery to this day. But despite wild storms that collapsed Ken and Alan's tent on top of them, once Charles had experienced what it was like, and the whole family had enjoyed it so much, they went back again and again for the next 55 years!

Shoi herself became a camp caterer and every other voluntary role in Folk Camp has been filled at some point by some member of her increasingly extended family.

Shoi loved to sing and play music. She learned to play accordion, piano, guitar, mouth organ, and harp as an adult, and led spoon-playing workshops. She founded the Ceilidh band The Stovepipers, and played with them for 30 years. The band members changed over time, often including family members for the first few years. In addition to playing for the band, Shoi acted as the band's agent and booked all of their gigs.

She also loved to dance, becoming interested in many forms including ballet, Chantraine contemporary dance, Israeli, International, Old English, Ceilidh, Contra and even did lots of virtual dancing on zoom during the 2020/21 lockdowns.

Shoi was well known for her distinctive sense of style - she loved bright colours, and would always wear decorative scarves and jewellery. She also liked driving cars, particularly fast ones. Her first sports car was an orange MG Midget, which she soon upgraded to an orange MGB.

Shoi was immensely practical and was the one to lead the way with painting and decorating at home. She did, however, accept Charles' help with wallpapering. Those that knew them both can imagine for yourselves just how that went!

Shoi was passionate about learning and experiencing new things, even into her later years. She would often go away on training courses and studied things like yoga, reflexology, complementary therapies, Alexander technique and crystal healing. She was particularly interested in the many branches of yoga, incorporating what she thought best from each one into her own teaching practice which she started in 1970's. She kept teaching yoga up until 2017, when she was 86 years old.

Folk camper Cheryl said of Shoi: "Shoi was special through and through. She 'got' people. She cared deeply, understood and had joy at the very core of her being. Shoi and Charles were fixtures for me at camp. Shoi with her wise eyes, Shoi with her quiet smile, Shoi with her accordion strapped to her chest with such concentration, and contentment. Shoi with her stories, her funny songs, her circle dances, always called at exactly the 'right' time."

Family friend Georgia said: "On meeting Shoi I thought she was the coolest and loveliest woman ever. Then, as if she couldn't get any higher in my estimation, she taught me how to do a headstand between two chairs."

Thanks to Lou Tribus, and many other Folk Campers, we have this precious memory patchwork created for Shoi in 2006 following Charles's death the previous year.



John Kemp (1936 – 2025)



John was a builder by profession and prepared to turn his hand to anything. On introduction to Folk Camps it was inevitable that he would become an indispensable member of the wardening team. Romance was soon in the air and the perfect match of husband and caterer occurred when John married Faith, one of the founding members of Folk Camps Society. Faith and John celebrated their golden wedding in 2019. John had acquired his love of folk dancing as a young man in Stewkley and later in life he took up calling, becoming a popular MC in the local area. Faith and John, though they had long ceased camping, were always faithful attendees of the reunion and AGM. John leaves Faith and their four children, Jonathan, Elizabeth, Michael and Richard.

Roy Nicholls (1934-2024)



In November 2024 we as a family grieved the loss of Roy, a dad, grandad and great-grandad. Many lost a true friend. Folk Camps lost a lifelong supporter and real character of any camp he attended. Roy was an early member of Folk Camps, attending camps all around the country. From the founding years of the 1960's, to his last catered camp at Beddingham (2014). Once met, Roy was easily remembered.

Not known for his time keeping, Roy would often arrive late, with a canoe on the roof of his car, a trailer full of musical instruments and his 'prop box' for Party Night. Arriving in the middle of the first night, he would tour the camp site, calling out to his family, so that he could camp next to them. In the morning you could wake to a hastily erected tent close to yours. It was known for him to be asked to move his tent, because of his snoring!

His daughter Paula remembers the early camps, where Roy would help dig the pits. How embarrassed she felt, when he volunteered each year to be 'Bog Man', with the daily job of emptying the metal Elson toilets. Roy's

grandchildren remember watching him in the pits, recovering children's lost cutlery.

Roy enjoyed nothing more than camping in a field, with similar minded people, playing music and celebrating all things Folk. Roy lived his life around his love of Folk Music. Running his own successful and fully booked 'Jig and a Half' band. He was always a very active supporter and participant in the Essex Folk scene.

Roy was a self-taught musician who learnt 'by ear'. He was an accomplished concertina and accordion player but not so the violin! His musicianship and enthusiasm lead to a photo of him being on the cover of The Extent. It also made him an easy choice to be Camp Musician for some years, something he remembered and was proud of, all his life.

He would always find time to play music with anybody. He loved to play alongside children starting out. Every evening at camp, he would be found on the stage. Playing for the children before bedtime. Playing for the adults as they danced and then into the night. Then playing with the 'night owls'.

Roy was best known for his performances at 'Circle Time' and on 'Party Night'. His most memorable contributions being taken from those he admired most, such as Ken Dodd, Roy Hudd and Ronnie Barker (who he met in 1990 and tried to persuade to come to a Folk Camp)! Songs such as 'Shine Up Your Buttons With Brasso', 'Bold Sir John', 'Valerie Wilkins' and of course 'Hole in the Elephants Bottom', which he performed alongside recruited children from the camps. For the adults he would enjoy playing or performing the so called 'Gottadommerdongers'. Recruiting his male dance troupe from the men of the camp.

Roy always wanted people to eat well, play music, dance and always have a good time. He spent much of every day he was at a Folk Camp, doing his best to ensure everybody did just that and like the Folk Camp motto 'be a part of it'

He was a great ambassador for Folk Camps.



Judith Pierce, 1944-2024

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Judith Pierce on 16th October 2024 after a short illness.

Judy joined a local folk club and took to following the local Morris side - perhaps it was the straw hats that attracted her... It was whilst folk dancing that she met Bob. The folk dancing continued and they became regular folk campers in the seventies, travelling to various corners of the country every summer but a favourite will always be Studland. Her love of folk camps led to her being a member of folk camps council between 1998 and 2004, becoming Company Secretary. She made close friends with people from all around the country, especially the northeast clan. Whilst folk camping she took up rapper and enjoyed performing this for many years.

Although Judy was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2011, she still enjoyed and connected with her folk music - a music group visited mum at home and Bob taught them sea shanties, which were a particular favourite of hers. They also spent a lot of time attending musical sessions at the pub, in Miserden, often greeting visiting Folk Campers - Judy continued to join in with her feet tapping and her voice finding lyrics we didn't think she knew!

Judy was strong, determined, quick to speak her mind but always keen to help out and get stuck in. I remember seeing her with a big smile, an enthusiastic warm hug and a genuine interest in what you had been up to over the previous year.

Judy will be much missed by many people. Our thoughts are with Bob, Ann, Sharon and the rest of her family.