



Folk Camps

be a part of it!

Autumn 2018 “Extent” Newsletter

Welcome to the Folk Camps newsletter. This issue has news from Folk Camps and information about next year’s holidays.

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Editorial

Happy Autumn everyone! As the heat finally leaves the UK and we wrap up for the Winter months, there's still lots going on in our little Folk Camp community. In a few weeks, the AGM reunion will be commencing at Toddington Village Hall. If you're a governing member, you can have your say at the council meeting, and contribute to how Folk Camps is run in future years. There's a number of spaces on council this year as some councilmembers have finished their second term - if you're interested in standing for council, just email Sarah Richardson or any council member for more details. The AGM is, of course, followed by a Ceilidh, and some great opportunities to catch up with friends you may not have seen since Summer.

This issue of Extent also looks at the big year we've had in 2018, with the beginnings of the Folk Camps Party Band and our 50th birthday celebrations. As well as looking back at our year, there's still so much to come. Once the reunion is all said and done, the bookings for 2019's season open! Next year's summer camps are taking place at Knockerdown and Staple, and you'll be able to read more about the camp locations in this issue.

See you all at the reunion!

Anthony Keen
Extent Editor

Office Matters

At the end of the 2018 season, and our celebration 50th year since incorporation, I would like once again to thank all our volunteer staff, Council members, and members who have attended one or more of our camps.

Weather has, as always, been a prominent feature of the season. The hot spring and early summer period was great for camping and the outdoors, but somewhat exhausting when there was work to be done. Just as the schools finished, so did the good weather, so our summer catered camps had an at times blustery feel.

Our February residential and all our weekend sites were old favourites this year, apart from the new addition of Fowlmere in Cambridgeshire, for the bumper August Bank Holiday joint weekend. An excellent site, with flat field screened by trees, play area, and spacious hall with ancillary rooms. It proved very popular, and campers expressed appreciation of this site. We may return, if we can agree an acceptable hire rate for a conventional size camp.

The Gower site was very popular, and enjoyed by those who attended. With some modifications to the marquee layout, we experimented with a larger camp size. Views on the layout were positive, but on the size of the camp were mixed, so the results of the experiment have been reviewed by Council, who will take this into consideration with maximum sizes for future camps.

Sadly, the hall camp at Chiddingly was not so popular, and the decision was taken to coalesce two weeks into just one. A small camp was run, which was enjoyed by those who attended. The social aspects of a small week camp contrast with those of a larger than usual camp. We continue to strive towards a happy medium of camp size, which supports both use of space, social aspects, and financial viability.

As well as the modified marquee layout, there has been more new kit purchased for the summer weeks. The LED fairy lights in and around the toilets were popular for improving night time visibility, and the USB charger points also worked well. We have more signboards, first aid equipment, and powered kitchen kit for the hall. We also had to buy a new generator at short notice, due to the theft of our main and backup generators.

Health and Safety has also been under review in 2018 and this will continue. Updated health and safety and dogs on site policies have been issued and made available to campers during the season.

The Sites, Equipment and Provisions Mangers work closely with me to provide the best support and facilities we can for your Folk Camps holidays. I look forward to another excellent season in 2019.

Sarah Richardson
Administration Manager

A Brief Look at Our Summer Sites

Knockerdown

Our Knockerdown site is situated equidistant between Birmingham and Manchester. The site itself is a big one, with fantastic views of the countryside. Within walking distance is Carsington Water, which is equipped with a sports and leisure centre offering a variety of water sports, fishing and even cycle hire if you want to see a little more of the nearby countryside.

Just north of the site are the towns of Cromford and Matlock, and are full of great activities to enjoy - from exploring the remnants of an old lead mining facility and experiencing an escape room, to seeing the surroundings by cable car at the Heights of Abraham - there's even rapids for the more adrenalin-fuelled camper (you'd be surprised who fits into that category!).

Derby is a short 25-minute drive south of the site, too, where campers can enjoy tours around stately Victorian homes and museums (and, for the younger campers, there's a trampoline park too!).

Staple

Located on the Kentish coast, Staple is a great site that is within driving distance of both Margate, Ramsgate, and Deal. With great days out like the Great Maize Maze, Margate Dreamland and the Shell Grotto (not to mention the town around them), and the Walmer Castle and Gardens in Deal, there's much more than a week's worth of activities in the surrounding areas.

As well as that, there's plenty of beaches to choose from to enjoy the Summer sun. It's a region of the country that is as rich in its history and heritage as its daytime attractions.

Anthony Keen

Fowlmere - a memory-filled reunion

Celebrating 50 years since Folk Camps became a registered charity and a company

It's always exciting turning up to a new site, and we weren't disappointed with Fowlmere, with its beautiful and very large sports field complete with play equipment in one corner. It proved to be a camp full of wonderful memories and reunions with people we hadn't seen for years. People just kept on arriving during the weekend and on the Saturday even more attended for a delicious meal, cooked and served for us. This was followed by our very own Folk Camps Party Band, with their distinctive dress and brass section playing for some spirited dancing.



The committee room was full of photos which people had brought along to share. They covered the 50 years and even beyond. Our leaders had planned outings and at each camper appeared in morris and rapper kit and danced. I was reminded of the time we used to bring dance kit or 'festival dress' to folk camps, and we rehearsed dances for busking to ensure that the performance was of a suitably high standard. Yes, we really used to do that.

The village next to Fowlmere had a lovely green complete with an old forge building; pretty as a picture. Sadly, the performance there was cut short by a shower of rain for after months of warm and sunny days, the weather broke over the bank holiday weekend. But it didn't dampen the enthusiasm of the campers gathered at Fowlmere. Here's to the next 50 years!

Sue Malleson



Party Band Update - An Extraordinary First Year

“They shouldn’t be this good (yet)!” Gordon Potts

The concept of the Party Band initially came from three ideas.

The first was a sound that I had in my head. It was a big exciting carnival type sound but with traditional and newly written tunes that I love to play and dance to.

The second was the unique feeling of running a morning workshop where families are playing music together – where musicians of all stages of life and levels of technical competence fit together in a way that is rewarding and fun for everyone in the marquee, including those dancing at the back! For me that is something so unique and special to Folk Camps that I wanted to bottle that feeling and share it somehow.

The third thread was the knowledge that in order for Folk Camps to retain its magic we need to attract musicians, dancers, families and young people who are excited by the idea of sharing their skills.

From these things the Party Band was born. I have a very clear vision of how the band should sound and look. The aim is to create fabulous exciting music that is great to dance and listen to, together with a fun and memorable stage presence. I also have a strong belief in the importance of developing the band as an educational project as well as a promotional tool. I hope that in time we can expand this side of the band’s exposure at festivals through workshops.

I am thrilled that already, after only one year, we have managed to achieve so much:

- A unique sound and image
- Great arrangements of 2 hours of dance music.
- Excellent promotional material – film/photos/Facebook and Instagram presence.
- Enthusiasm and commitment from all band members.
- Support and enthusiasm from Folk Camps Council and Members.
- Recognition and excitement from respected musicians, callers and organisers on the Festival Scene.
- Bookings for next year and beyond at major festivals (Chippenham 2019 & 2021 / Towersey Opening Ceilidh / Bromyard)



Mindful that this is a huge investment from Folk Camps, I intend to continue to work as hard as I can with members and with Council to ensure the band reaches its full potential.

It is our mission and our privilege to put Folk Camps on the map of the wider folk community and to turn heads (and feet!) in our direction.



On the strength of a couple of demos together with a description of the ethos of the Band (and after only 2 weekends of rehearsal) the **Folk Camps Party Band** had its first outing at **Chippenham Festival** in May - an achievement that many professional bands aspire to for years. To call this a success would be an understatement. The reception from festival organisers, dancers, fellow musicians, sound crew and the general public was positively overwhelming.



Here are a few comments about that first appearance:

“I heard the amazing sound in the street before seeing the band, checked out the

performers and was surprised to see the young age range of such quality musicians. The dynamic band made me want to investigate further into booking them for our Festival at Bromyard. They were colourful and exciting to see and hear, they performed with an experienced caller who was equally impressed with their ability. I am wanting to book the band for the 2019 festival where we have a very lively Ceilidh scene where they will provide a young wow factor.”

Lynne Barker Bromyard Festival organiser



“Having got to the end of another festival season, looking back working with the Folk Camps Party Band was certainly one of the real highlights. Certainly, the best new thing all year! I play in a comparatively big band and know only too well how hard it is to arrange and rehearse a big line up. That Jenny & her gang managed to get to such a ridiculously high level so quickly bodes well for the future...I have mentioned them to every festival I've played at, and really hope to work with them again...”

Gordon Potts (one of the most loved and respected Festival Callers - called for our first appearance at Chippenham festival 2017)

“I first came across the Folk Camps Party Band when I was putting together the Ceilidh programme for Chippenham Folk Festival 2018. After Talking over Email to Jenny (& Andy) I realised that the band ticked many boxes for me, and from the links sent sounded good. The Band incorporates young musicians and established musicians who would not normally be seen performing, alongside some capable musicians who preform regularly and have a wealth of experience behind them. It fulfills many of our aims as a festival and me personally.

The gig I booked them for is one of our lunchtime ceilidhs it is a showpiece event for our festival. The event is a free public event where the fun of ceilidh dancing can be seen by many, townsfolk are encouraged to join in. In 2018 we reached the dizzy heights of the PCSOs walking the streets also joining in with the dancing.

So the Band - I can only say they performed brilliantly and anyone taking part in the band should be proud of their contribution. The music was well played and appropriate to the dances.I have asked them to repeat the event in 2019 and assuming the project is still running as successfully I am seriously considering placing the band in our more demanding evening ceilidh series in 2021. From my perspective whilst I cannot book FCPB every year, long may it continue.”

Andy Stafford Ceilidh Manager
Chippenham Folk Festival



“This project represents a unique opportunity to raise the profile of Folk Camps within the folk world and demonstrate our commitment to quality, diversity and youth development, not to mention fun. With its multi-generational feel it is very likely to attract many new families as well as ensuring a supply of excellent musician leaders into the future.

From our Chair, Marcus de Frettes

There is no question in my mind that the Party Band project represents value for money and that the cost is fully justified as a major investment in our core mission and the long-term sustainability of the Society.

Jenny Newman

Birthdays, Bunting and Boards: Catching the Waves in our 50th Year

When I heard that we would go back to the Gower Peninsula this year I was delighted. I thought about ...

- Fantastic views
- Evenings in the castle
- Salt marsh lamb, and...
- THE BEACH!!

I still have great memories of an afternoon on Whiteford Sands the last time we held a Folk Camp at the Gower: cold water, warm sand, sweet ice cream and good company.

This summer we also had the attraction of surfing lessons at Caswell Bay with *Surfability*, a charity which make is possible for anyone to go surfing, even those with disabilities. I didn't take it up, but some of our young campers had several lessons and made progress. I have heard that one of the highlights of week 3 was Tom Hopwood's surfboard ride. I wish I could have seen it!

It was a beautiful Welsh summer day at Caswell Bay when I took these photos of week 4 Folk Campers trying to catch the waves.

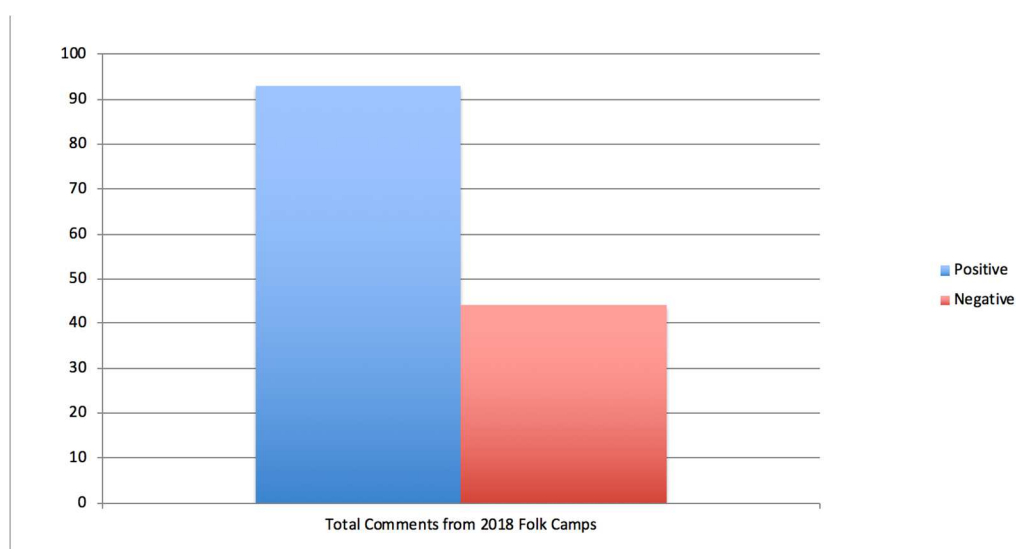
To show our gratitude for the wonderful experience they gave us and support for their work with people of all abilities, we raised £25 by selling the bunting that had been made by campers especially for the 50th birthday. Special thanks go to Marita Murphy who organised the bunting-making workshops at the marquee camps in 2017.



Lou Tribus

Camper's Comments

Since 2014, our red comments box has been a visible fixture at every camp. At the end of each day on camp, the warden looks at all of the comments slips and urgent issues are always dealt with on site. All of the comment slips are sent on to council at the end of a camp. At the end of the 2018 Folk Camp season, Council had a total of 137 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 2018 Folk Camps.



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.

Here are some of the actions we are taking for 2019 Folk Camps, in direct response to camper feedback:

- There were many comments praising the new storage annex connected to the marquee. It proved very successful and will become a regular feature at future marquees.
- A camper suggested that we have multi-port USB charging stations at the charging table. Now we have several.
- There will be a full review by the catering team of camp menus and health and safety procedures in the kitchen.

Some campers' comments can be very enjoyable to read, such as this one from new camper Caroline Grootes, who was on Gower week 3:

Dear Sarah, Marcus and Chris,

Because it was my first Folk Camp experience I would like to let you know how well I enjoyed it and to share the little speech I gave. The speech I wrote was of course also to amuse people at the last evening festivities but in the last bit you will read a more observational part.



To start with the UNEXPECTED:

I was not expecting that I:

- *would have to sign a form stating I would not food-poison anyone*
- *that I would have to wash my hands a million times but have only one shower a week - in combination with all the sweating from dancing - but I did get a hairnet to compensate*
- *that the most unexpected workshop was water bucket-carrying*
- *not that the singing workshop was unexpected but the fact that the main song was about Teddybears was*
- *and last but not least I learned that lemons are for jousting (not for lemonade)*

I am very happy to tell you that I learned quite a few new TERMS, mainly in the dancing/Playford workshop. First there was the usual problem: finding a partner....when successful I was immediately told that we were "improper pairs" , followed by the order to "turn my back to my partner" (dosido), to swing my partner, and to move to the next/new partner. I have never been so unfaithful in my life!!! But I loved it, the dancing I mean. And sorry Partners, thank you for being so patient and helpful.

FOLK CAMP is for all generations, for all levels and is also about meeting, sharing and caring for each other. I have seen so much of that, and I have had many nice meetings over wash-up and carrot peeling. Everyone was very kind and interested. Last but not least, if you are a true fiddle player you can play the song by heart before you have even heard it! Thank you for a wonderful experience, hope to join you again sometime.

Caroline Grootes, Holland

Lou Tribus

As a small addendum to Lou's comments, we felt there was something important that needed mentioning. In recent camps, it seems that first aid kit supplies have been used for fancy dress - anything from plasters and bandages to painkillers and salves. Whilst it's great that people can have some fun on party night, it's also important to ensure that everyone on camp is safe, and, if someone is hurt, we have the supplies to treat that person. This may be something that leaders will bring up in future, but some felt it was important to mention here.

Anthony

The Joy of a Skilled Dance

When I first attended Folk Camps in the mid 1980's dance seemed dauntingly dominant for people like me, whose engagement with Folk had been a 'singing-club' background! The standard required to really engage with, and enjoy what was on offer in the evenings, especially in the later evening, was high ('club level') and to be honest, tolerance of those who did not have much skill (e.g. me) was rather low.

However, there was clearly a 'common language' (which I did not really understand) and, as I could see that people were really enjoying their dancing I sought to unravel its mysteries. In doing so I discovered that there was considerable joy in the 'patterns' and the sense of collective achievement of a dance well rendered, and, with patient help from kind fellow-campers and workshops, I gradually started to have some idea of how to follow more complicated calls. Subsequently I taught several generations of young people, at various schools, how to follow increasingly complex calls, and they also took great joy in acquiring and demonstrating their new skills (not least at the Folk Camps to which I frequently brought them). I don't think I have, or ever will, attain the dance standards of some of those earlier campers, but I do enjoy it more now!

Fashions change, of course, and now we are able to enjoy some new Folk manifestations, not least the popular 'Folk Orchestra' genre which has emerged over the last few years. This, and the roll-out, nationally, of the National Plan for Music Education with its provision for 'whole Class' instrumental learning has helped to make participation in instrumental forms of Folk Music increasingly popular. There has even been a resurgence of interest in folk-style singer song-writing with young people: a very positive trend!

Unfortunately, there does not appear to have been a similar development of interest in dance; many dance clubs are closing, and sometimes the standard of dance at the full-week camps never seems to get beyond 'barn-dance' levels.

As a society our charitable aims require us to promote all aspects of Folk Music, and I suggest that it is now time that we address the issue of dance skills so that we do not lose the 'common language' and so that we can spread the enjoyment of dances really well executed

This will need some collective 'thinking through' from all aspect: music, calling and dance-workshops. Perhaps this article will generate some debate and lead to some solutions?

Tony Mealings

Foul Weather Dance

A simple dance written at the hall camp this year to combat the titular weather...

This is the dance created on Monday night, by a committee of three couples who wanted to dance!

*3 couples longways.
Middle couple active*

- A1. Star right with top couple, left with bottom couple.
- A2. Reel of 3 on the sides.
- B1. Contra corners.
- B2. Pousette to progress.

The tune was “Foul weather call” from the Sussex tune book, played at a spritely pace.

Bob Shatwell

Folk Camp Fairy Tail

At week four of 2018's Gower camp, the party night theme was 'Fairy Tails'. The Riding party devised quite a performance and poem for party night...

Little Red Riding Hood's been told near to death,
But it's been found a story to give it new breath,
Not the false copy made by Brothers Grimm,
So sit back, relax and let the original begin.

It starts in a hall camp where poor little Red,
Is packing to go to where Hall Campers dread.
For her Granny's set up around a marquee in
the Gower,
And needs buckets of water if she wishes to
shower.

Her hands are all dirty and her toilet runs
dry,
So Red filled a bucket and knew what to try.
She knew what was needed to pass through
the wood,
She'd been scarred by Woolsey so donned
wellies and hood.

She skipped along the beaches excited to see
Gran,
And traipsed through salt marshes where she
fed on Welsh lamb.
Each long day turned to long nights,
When she'd dance under the stars and look at
the Northern Lights (oi).

She stopped where the rain and the wind
intersected,
And there in the woods a tent she erected.
The wind it did blow, the rain it did pour,
Why did her Granny stay for week 4?

The tent blew away, Red was alone in the
cold...
But was she REALLY alone as I have just told?
A smile emerged, but this smile wasn't kind,
And not long after a wolf followed behind.

"This is no place for you, with red coat and
fancy trousers,
So give me that bucket so I can fill up me
browsers!"

She cried "poor wolf, I would if I can,
But this here bucket is saved for dear Gran."

The wolf howled aloud "I'll eat you for tea!"
But before he attacked, Red had managed to
flee.

It's here I first met her, coat red as blood,
For I was out in the forest collecting
firewood.

She started rambling about a wolf she had
seen,
Her panicked voice harder to understand than
devil's dream.

It was then she first noticed I carried an axe,
At the same time, I noticed what she had on
her back.

"You can have this axe for defence if the
wolf's threats are real,
But first I implore that we strike a deal.
You don't need that violin, there's nowt wrong
with singing,
And the fiddle you carry would make for
great kindling!"

All things considered, she preferred the viola,
So she swapped it round for the axe as I told
her.

Having do-si-do'd our most valuable goods,
I watched as she hastily exited the woods.

Back at the camp, skies were grey rather than
blue,

140 folk campers were waiting to poo.
Passing the showers, his face in a scowl,
Warden Wolf came across Granny in a towel.

"Have you seen my Red?" She asked with what strength she could've mustered.

"Yeah, she tasted great, but could've used chocolate custard!"

Granny, she fainted, as she fell for his lies,
So the wolf locked her in a TARDIS and took her clothes as disguise.

Red saw the marquee across marshes of salt,
Water pressure so bad even the rivers came to a halt.

As soon as she arrived, she knew something was wrong,

No workshop was running, not tune, dance nor song.

The genny started up and a voice croaked from the amps,

"Alright campers, now it's time for a dance!"

Red found a partner and got up on the floor,
The caller looked like Gran but Red wasn't sure...

"My, what an obnoxious instrument you have!"

"It's a banjo m'dear, all the better for appreciating melodeons."

"My, what big hands you have!"

"All the better for SSSSHHHHHUSHING people with!"

"My, what a big pile of unwashed cooks pots you have!"

"All the better for COOKING YOU WITH!
(providing people actually clean them)"

The band started up as if set to a timer,
And played Levi Jackson in the key B flat minor.

Just as it started, the clouds let it rain,
But as she swung her axe, she got caught in a lady's chain.

The wolf lunged forwards, but didn't get far,
As he himself got roped into a right-hand star.

After a do-si-do, a balance and swing,
Both parties forgot they were even fight...ing.

She threw down her axe, he brought up a smile:

Neither has had this much fun in a while!

The band finished up, they honoured as partners and friends,
But wolf knew what must be done to make amends.

He rushed outside and let Gran out the port-a-loo,
And as they danced into the night, their love for each other grew.

But this isn't the end,
What message would that send?
This IS a folk tale so let it be said,
They honoured their partners then all dropped down dead.

Will Riding