

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.folkcamp.co.uk> .

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

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

## **Contents**

Message from the Chairman.....	2
Folk Camps Summer Event Announcement .....	3
It Was Virtually a Craft Camp... ..	4
Folk Camps' 2021 AGM.....	5
Obituaries .....	6
Pete Hendy .....	6

## Message from the Chairman

It was with great sadness that Council decided to cancel the catered summer camps for the second year in succession. We had hoped that vaccination would allow for a return to normality by this summer, but the virus remains an ever-present threat that just cannot be ignored.

Your Council and contractors are already working hard on plans for the big come back in 2022. There is still a possibility that the August Bank Holiday camps can go ahead – look out for an announcement in early July.

As they say, 'every cloud has a silver lining' and this is even true for Folk Camps in the pandemic. The drastic restrictions that have made our camps impossible have also spurred our creativity into finding new ways of doing things.

We have found that Council can still run effectively online. Our meetings have been more frequent, shorter, more focused, and chosen to match the key decision dates. They also incur much fewer costs as no one has to travel, and the meeting can be arranged at short notice if required. I believe Zoom meetings will continue to be a part of the normal functioning of Council long after the pandemic is over.

November saw a great turnout for the first ever virtual AGM followed by a Zoom Reunion Ceilidh. We also embraced fully electronic voting for Council and Resolutions. A key advantage of a virtual AGM is that more people are able to attend so Council is investigating the possibility of incorporating a virtual element into the in-person AGM currently planned for this autumn – electronic voting, for instance, is almost certainly here to stay.

And we have found ways to continue to socialise and make music together through initiatives such as Lockerdawn.

I expect the return in popularity of the 'staycation', and the rediscovery of the joys of camping in particular, to herald a new golden age for Folk Camps unique form of holiday. I look forward to joining you all in a gilded field soon!

**Marcus de Frettes**

## Folk Camps Summer Event Announcement

***With reluctance, Folk Camps Council has decided that for reasons of safety and financial prudence, we cannot run the programme of summer catered week camps in July and August 2021.***

This decision was taken after looking at the safety risks, the costs, availability of staff and demand. The survey (sent to anyone who has camped with FCS since 2018) drew 196 responses from which we learned that 28% of campers had already decided not to attend a folk camp this year and/or had decided to book a different type of holiday. Equally we were very gratified to learn that 99% of you are planning to return in 2022!

***Many thanks to all those who took part in our survey, which was very helpful in helping Council to gain a fuller picture of campers' views.***

The other key reasons for Council's decision were:

- 57% of staff could not commit to staffing on a camp this summer.
- The mask, distancing, sanitation, Covid testing and food hygiene requirements that will apply in July or August remain unknown.
- Council and the majority of FCS members have been clear that we would only want to run a 'normal' Folk Camp, i.e. without facemasks or social distancing and with the freedom to sing, dance and play music without restriction.

We considered running a smaller programme, but we were mindful of the danger of it being 'exclusive' to those who are lucky enough to be vaccinated or able to book at the drop of a hat. This could exclude those who are too young to be fully vaccinated by August and those whose holiday dates are controlled by their employers.

From the health and safety point of view there are still too many uncertainties, and by the time the position is clearer it would be too late for us to carry out the necessary pre-event preparations.

### **August Bank Holiday - no decision yet**

We are keeping open the possibility of the August Bank holiday weekends because these will be later, incur much less financial risk and are self-catered, thereby removing one of the principal health issues. **Council will review the position in the first week of July and email you very soon after that.**

### **Plans for 2022**

In 2022, we very much hope that we will be able to resume our full programme, with many of the sites, people and events we all love. The broad programme will be similar to the one we had to cancel in 2020, but we may need to change some sites due to changes in availability. We hope you will have a good summer 2021 with whatever holidays we are able to have - with friends or family, self-catered camping or any other type of holiday.

### **Folk Camps Council**

## It Was Virtually a Craft Camp...

When we realised that this year's February Craft Camp couldn't go ahead, there was a clamour for something virtual. What an amazing week we had! There was so much activity to fit in that it lasted longer than seven days.

There was an abundance of crafts each day including the strangely named "chicken scratch" embroidery. We had a music session in the mornings at the really sensible time of 10.30am with different musicians each day and lots of folk campers tuned in. It was nice to be able to welcome some newcomers too.



There was too much going on to list it all here, but we enjoyed folk dancing, a special Playford session, 'sew and natter', a poetry workshop, a Scriblio game as well as a singaround and the usual 'show and tell' session at the end of the week. The men's cookery session still remains a mystery to me. Once the day's activities had started the Zoom session was left open. This meant that friends could remain online and have a chat, some staying on the call until the next session started - just like a real folk camp.

A big thank you goes to the many workshop leaders who made it all possible. We could not have done it without you. There's been a request for another similar week already and it may well be that we hold one again in the autumn.

**Sue Malleson**



## Folk Camps' 2021 AGM

2020 and 2021 have brought with them a lot of uncertainty. Thankfully, though, something that isn't uncertain is the fact that we will be holding an **in-person** AGM in autumn of 2021.

The AGM will be held on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> November, and the venue, too, will be the ever familiar Toddington Village Hall. It will be the perfect place to reunite with friends you've only seen through a screen for the last year or more!

In addition, there will be a space on Folk Camps Council that needs filling, so if you are interested in standing for council, check out the information on our website or speak to a current council member (<http://www.folkcamp.co.uk/council-members/>).

More information around the events and activities being held in addition to the AGM will be revealed soon, so watch this space, and we can't wait to see you all again soon.

### Folk Camps Council



## Obituaries

### **Pete Hendy**

Folk Camps lost one of its greats in April with the death of Pete Hendy. Pete and his wife Marj had been attending camps since the early 1980s and he became a governing member in 1989. He brought his skills as a teacher into leading camps, especially the family Folk Camps at Halsway Manor and the Dancers Weekends.

As well as a dancer, caller and player of the mighty tuba, Pete was an enthusiastic church bell ringer and, using hand bells, he taught change ringing at nearly all the annual Craft Breaks.

Pete joined Folk Camps Council of Management in 1994 and served as chair from 1998 to 2000 and from 2003 to 2004



Pete's style of calling was unique, and he had a special way of holding the attention of us "average size" dancers. He would start a shaggy dog story involving string or fish beginning with K. There was inevitably going to be a groan of a punch line. Pete was happy to set himself up as the joke, on one occasion dressing as a diva to sing Rule Britannia at a camp party night themed on The Last Night of the Proms. He had sat in the kitchen in the summer heat for most of the item, swathed in table cloths, before emerging to the applause of the camp.

Away from Folk Camps, Pete produced a dance book for teachers called "Teaching Children Country Dancing - when you're no expert yourself". This was accompanied by a CD recorded by The Downfielders band which had been started by Pete at the school where he taught. Some of its members progressed to become callers, musicians and dancers in their own right.

Pete was a regular caller at Folk Festivals including Eastbourne, Sidmouth, Broadstairs and Chippenham.

Pete, we salute you.

### **Mic Spenceley**