



NYFTE News

An Occasional Newsletter from the
National Youth Folklore Troupe of England

NYFTE in 2023

Upton Folk Festival

A new (to us) festival which we thoroughly enjoyed, mixing with many other teams, dancing in a ceilidh spot and performing a full concert.

Chippenham Folk Festival

It was great to be back. We had a very full timetable which included: 2 showcase spots; a ceilidh at the Buttercross; the usual busking & workshops; an interval spot for the Out of Hand ceilidh. It was an absolute joy to dance to a ceilidh band comprising ex-NYFTEs, and particularly special when band members joined the team leaders to play for Crown & Sausage at the end of our spot. We would like to thank both the tech crew who fixed the disintegrating dance floor in the middle of our Island Park show, and the team members who managed to avoid breaking their ankles! Finally, congratulations to ex-NYFTE Rhianwen Davies in her new role as Ceilidh Dance Manager for Chippenham 2024.

St Albans Folk Festival Another new event for us. A lovely Day of Dance on the Saturday was followed by a Maypole workshop and concert on the Sunday in collaboration with the wonderful youth group Young Miscellany. Many thanks to the festival for their donation to our funds, and to Kim Woodward for the loan of the maypole. The Mulberry Bush Farm, Sarratt (where we camped during the weekend) was incredibly welcoming and we'd

highly recommend it.

Buxton Day of Dance

A lovely friendly event and we had a good time despite the weather. Thanks to the Maids of Clifton whose video of some of our members doing a jig in the rain has been viewed by over 3000 people to date!

Bakewell Family Ceilidh

This was hosted by NYFTE in the Bakewell Town Hall as part of the Buxton Fringe Festival. Rather than a traditional ceilidh played for by a single band, had numerous NYFTE bands playing for dances called by NYFTE callers, interspersed by NYFTE dance spots. A lovely time was had by all, not least because it was a great relief to be out of the rain!

Bromyard Folk Festival

An eagerly awaited return trip (we last visited in 2018). The weather was a bit extreme - scorching on Saturday, very wet on Sunday. There was plenty of dancing with some fab teams, a great longsword workshop, a welcoming church service performance, and our season finale in the beer tent where we waved a fond farewell to this year's leavers.



Spring Concert 2024

In 2024, we are moving locations for our Spring Training Week (see over). Consequently our first performance of the year will now be at Denstone College, Staffordshire on **Saturday 6th April at 2pm**. We are aware that a lot of our supporters live in the Bristol area, and that the annual Spring Concert will be sorely missed. However, please watch the website as there are plans for an alternative event later in the year.



Waiting List

NYFTE has grown in size over the last few years and is now at capacity (we expect to have 40 members) for the 2024 season. It is currently not practical to increase the size of the team, and so our waiting list is stretching long into the future. We are currently full up to 2030, and are having to turn down expressions of interest from anybody who is older than 8 or 9 as they'd be too old for the team by the time there's space for them. A somewhat awkward position to be in but a nice problem to have!

If any of our supporters have younger children who might be interested in joining when the time comes, we'd encourage you to get them on the waiting list now even if they're only toddlers at the moment, otherwise they may not be able to join later on.

2024 Events Confirmed So Far

- April 6th** Spring Concert
- May 24th -27th** Chippenham Folk Festival
- June 21st - 23rd** English Country Music Weekend, Masham
- August 2nd - 5th** Sidmouth Folk Festival

New Venue

Our Spring training week is the time when the team devise, create and rehearse that years repertoire. It is also often the first time in the year when the entire team is together and the first event for new team members.

Until now, we have been rehearsing at Tockington Manor School, near Bristol. However, this year it became apparent that the team had outgrown the facilities offered by the school. Consequently, we have been

searching for a new venue that would allow us to work in a way that enables the team to be the best it can be.

Our 2024 Spring Training Week, and Spring Concert will be held at Denstone College in Staffordshire. We are looking forward to getting to know the new venue and having a bit more space to spread out.

We are aware that we have many loyal supporters in the Bristol area, and do not want them to feel forgotten or unappreciated. We're currently working on plans for an event in the South West and will publish details as soon as we have them.



Congratulations

2023 has been a year of competitions for NYFTE. In March, one team entered DERT, and two additional teams entered DERTy. The DERT team came 3rd in the Open Competition, a considerable achievement considering the competition, whilst the DERTy teams were much applauded for their dancing.

The second competition NYFTE was involved in this year was the SDU Longsword competition, based in Sheffield. The NYFTE team were entered into two additional classes as well as the open, and came second in both!

Congratulations to all involved.

Donations of Equipment

NYFTE is unique as it offers team members the opportunity to try many different English dance styles. To facilitate this, and to ensure that no one member is excluded due to the cost of purchasing all the specialised equipment required, NYFTE is committed to providing anything that is required from clogs to swords. This year we have had several generous donations for our collection. The donation of larger sized clogs enables older team members to continue dancing without buying their own footwear, whilst the donation of swords increases the numbers of individuals who can participate or perform at any one time. We would like to say a very big **THANK YOU** to our donors.

Family Support Fund

We are very conscious that an individual's membership of NYFTE can place a heavy financial burden on their family, especially if a family has more than one member to support. Costs associated with NYFTE membership can include (but are not limited to) membership fees, the residential training costs, travel expenses, purchase and insurance of instruments and specialised equipment costs.

A generous bequest in memory of Mike and Mary Isaacs, has enabled us to create the NYFTE Family Support Fund. Mike and Mary were folk enthusiasts, dancing with many

groups: they were also founder members of the Thatcham Folk Dance Club. A folk dance to celebrate the lives of Mike & Mary was held in May 2022, at Mike's bequest. The funds raised at the dance have been used to set up the Family Support Fund.

This fund is intended to help members and their families who may otherwise struggle to afford the costs associated with NYFTE membership.

Further contributions to the Family Support Fund or general NYFTE running costs are very welcome. Please visit the fundraising page on our website for further details.

Thank you

to Gail Shephard for the use of her photos.

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