



SOLENT WAVES



Newsletter of the Folk Association of South Hants

No. 428

June 2020

FASH Chat – The Missing Months

It is only comparatively recently that the ‘FASH Chat’ in each issue of ‘Solent Waves’ has been written by a guest contributor; before that it was usually written by one of the committee, although curiously, rarely the editor. In these present strange times, this ‘Chat’ has been written jointly by several members of the committee.

Even through two world wars, folk song and folk dance continued; now with the whole world fighting a single invisible enemy, our individual isolation has led to the abandonment for a substantial period of time of most folk events and activities.

The government’s announcement of ‘lock-down’ came unfortunately too late to cancel the printing of the April issue of ‘Solent Waves’; the entire diaries and most of the advertisements were rendered meaningless, and all our distribution points – the clubs and libraries – were closed. With no sign of how things were going to change we saw no point in publishing a May issue, but at our last committee meeting, held using the ‘Zoom’ computer/tablet/’phone application, we decided to put out some sort of news e-mail, and I felt that it would look best as a ‘Solent Waves’ ‘FASH Chat’.

Early on there was no knowing how the present situation was going to develop but it became clear that clubs were not going to reopen in May as some had hoped. We watched with dismay as Folk Festivals and other events were progressively cancelled or postponed, and as I

write, The Wallingford Bunkfest has now been postponed to early September next year; also the organisers of The Southdowns Festival, later in September, have at last decided they are unable to go ahead with the ‘distancing’ restrictions they believe will still be in place.

The organisers of Wickham Festival are still looking at how they might be able to run the festival but realise that they must make a final decision by the end of this month, whether the Festival will take place this year or not. Both Wickham Festival and the New Forest Folk Festival have the benefit of being able to make many arrangements at relatively short notice, and NFFF has been postponed to the bank holiday week-end of August, with the proviso that if government restrictions are still too severe to make it practicable, they will postpone again to July next year. I use the term ‘postpone’ as many of the festivals are hoping that people already holding tickets will ‘roll them over’ to next year, with the promise that they will still be valid with no additional charges.

But enough gloom and doom; there are still folk activities accessible to anyone who has a connection to the world wide web. Locally, The Focsle now meets virtually, via ‘Zoom’. If you would like to participate, all the necessary details are on their website <https://www.focsle.org/>; note that they have international music friends joining them – each Wednesday at 8 pm.

Woolston and Bursledon Folk Club are also

CONTACTABAND

For your barn dance bands and callers
UNA BOULTON 023 9263 2770
Email: contactaband@aol.com
www.contactaband.org.uk

*The articles, club lists and
six months event diaries can
be found on the web at
www.fash.org.uk*



making use of technology and meeting via 'Zoom' every Sunday from 7 pm – general natter first then music from around 7.30. Go to their website <http://woolstonandbursledonfc.co.uk/> for details of how to join in.

Forest Folk have taken a different approach and are inviting their singaround regulars to record videos of themselves singing or playing and then send them in. There are three videos on the website and several more on the club's Facebook page. For more information and a link to the Facebook page, go to <https://sites.google.com/site/forestfolkden>

Our membership secretary, Jacqui Longhurst, has looked a little further afield and added Halsway Folk Club and Soundpost. Both are Facebook pages and the links are included in her summary of what is on available on-line, below. The Soundpost page is particularly interesting as it includes several 'Zoom' singarounds and shows what can be achieved with this application.

Jacqui's section of this 'Chat' contains active links to the websites within the titles of the clubs/organisations. I am assuming you are reading this on-line, as they will not be active or visible if you print it off.

She writes:

"As members of the Folk Community and/or just enjoyers of the Arts, we are experiencing new challenges during this Covid-19 pandemic, whether as Social Dancers, Display Dancers, Session Players, members of a professional Folk Band, Folk Festival Organiser or indeed FASH! Below are some of my suggestions of ways to immerse yourself in the fabulous world of Folk Online.

Online Dances (virtual meetups via Zoom)

To start off, here is a quote from FolkActive, which succinctly describes this type of activity: *"We have seen it work successfully for several ceilidhs over the past few weeks and whilst it can never take the place of dancing together in person, we think it's a great opportunity for us to meet up, see our dancing friends and move around to some live music."*

[OxFolk Ceilidh YouTube Promo](#) This is a link to a Promo Video which OxFolk felt they really did need to do, to help describe what the overall experience may look like. Cath Watkins and Nic Bradford are playing, with Ian Nichols calling. Steve [Jacqui's husband - *ed.*] and I certainly needed a shower, a good stretch, and a

pint of water afterwards!

[Sheffield Playford](#) (admin: Daisy Black) This page hosts the event "Playford in the Ether: Cyber Playford" each month.

[London Barndance Contra Monthly](#), on a Saturday, Andrew Curry and Jane Findlay run this virtual Contradance meet-up which is a mix of chat, quiz, contradance with internationally renowned callers, live and recorded music and reminiscing.

[Alcester Contra: the Officially Unofficial Fan Club Monthly](#), on a Friday. Members of Chilworth Contra used to attend these dances, and now you can too, from your home in Hampshire (and beyond).

Please note that the callers, bands and organisers involved readily accept that this type of interaction is not for everyone and that we all miss our social Folk interactions. Also that the opportunities that the latest model of computer, audio equipment and up-to-date software afford to some, are not available to all. Space and floor coverings can be an issue and smaller devices ('phones and tablets) may deliver a somewhat limited audio/visual experience. If sitting and watching a screen, you may experience a delay between the music and the dancing, although there are tech-folkies feverishly fiddling to fix these crazily complicated technical issues!

We do hope that a live experience returns as soon as possible, but only when it is safe to do so!

Folk Festivals

[Folks At Home](#) The 'world's first online folk festival' featuring exclusive video footage of 25 of Britain's top folk acts plus workshops, tutorials, interviews, merchandise and market stalls with headliners Steeleye Span, Fotheringay, Ashley Hutchings Morris On and Feast of Fiddles.

[Chippenham Folk Festival](#) Click here to find an abundance of online content from this year's 49th Chippenham Folk Festival online.

[I have just been sent a link to a set of videos from [Lichfield Folk Festival](#), including a mini workshop of solo dances by Louise Siddons. – *ed*]

Facebook Groups (a collection of like-minded people posting individually or as a co-operative).

There is a plethora of Facebook groups out there to choose from, depending on your taste in music, discussion topic, or preferred level of

interaction. The etiquette is that you search for the Group's title on Facebook, then request to join the Group. The admin team or moderators of that Group will then make a decision as to whether to let you in – basically are you a real person intent on not creating havoc, not a 'bot', and not trying to advertise anything not relevant to the Group. For most people the request will usually be dealt with almost instantly. Listed in order of least to most interactivity:

1) **Storytelling**

[A Modern Decameron Online Story Festival: Ten Days, a Hundred Stories](#) Featuring 'ex' FASH Members Adam and Jane Warren, and organised by Daisy Black

2) **The Arts in general**

[VirtuAl](#) (Arts & Culture) (admin: Doug Schwab) Experience museums, art galleries, and theatre performances virtually.

[Quaranstream](#) (admin: Doug Schwab) Live-streamed professional folk concerts, classical music and theatre performances. If you watch a whole performance, consider donating a little or a lot, via the links provided in the posts, to support the venues, artists and organisers, and hope that they are still there when we come out of all this.

3) **Folk Tunes**

Watch others post Folk Tunes, provide supportive comments, and maybe post something yourself or even collaborate with others around the UK, and beyond!

[Quarantunes](#) (admin: Doug Schwab) The biggest group, by far, at 3,000 or so members worldwide; this is a great place to hear some original and traditional folk tunes.

[Viral Tune Swap](#) (admin: Jim Besser, Virginia, USA)

[Tunesday Tuesdays](#) (admin: Martin Clarke of Brown Boots)

4) **Folk Clubs**

[Halsway Folk Club](#) (admin: Halsway Manor) Traditional tunes in a 'Folk Club'-minded group (on-line)

[Soundpost](#) (admin: Fay Hield) An example of how a Folk Club can and does run on-line sing-alongs in real time, search for '#Covidsingings' on this FB page.

5) **Folk Dance**

[Dancing Solo in Quarantine.](#) (admin: Doug Schwab) Mainly Stepping, Morris, and a wide range of International Dance

[virtuBal](#) Enjoy Eurobal & European music

and dance here

[virtuScandi](#) Scandinavian music and dance - expect the unexpected!

[How many Morris Dancers are on Facebook?](#) Of course, if you have not seen this Group, with just under 6,000 members worldwide, started way before 'lockdown', where have you been?

6) **Teaching/Learning**

[Virtualteaching](#) Find teaching resources, a tutor or students here ”

For some of these you will need a Facebook account; not all, by any means, and you can listen to some great music just by visiting the pages and following links. You can probably find many more if you are practised at using a web browser and you will also find a couple of hours of classic folk music on the [EFDSS website](#).

“What about the future?” you ask. As a Morris dancer I have looked on sadly as we have had to cancel, progressively through the months, events and pub danceouts that we had planned to attend. We can see a little light at the end of the tunnel, with a few pubs with outside seating starting open before too long, but events where many people crowd the streets and pubs are still a long way off, and it seems likely that the classic “Morris Season” will end before ‘social distancing’ does.

Similarly, gatherings of folk dancers – the clubs and week-end dances – seem unlikely to take place for quite a while. My personal opinion, and I do not even include the FASH committee in this, is that we shall not really be doing any dancing in groups until October. By then, hopefully, the halls and rooms where we meet will once again be ‘open for business’ and we can once more take each others’ hands in circles, stars and lines.

The folk clubs are all watching for the lifting of restrictions on gathering in groups, but they are all inevitably aware of the concerns of some of their older members about meeting in small halls all seated close together. Watch their websites closely; links to nearly all of them can be found on the FASH website [Folk clubs](#) page.

With few, if any, folk events taking place other than on-line, we do not anticipate publishing issues of ‘Solent Waves’ for July, August or September. The next ‘real’ issue, with paper copies being distributed as well as on-line and e-mail copies, we presently anticipate being

late in September for October. I hope that by our deadline for copy, in September, we shall have a much clearer idea of what is happening in our world of folk music and folk dance and that I shall again have events to populate the diaries.

However, in the meantime, I shall send out a copy of an earlier edition of 'Solent Waves' each month, with the hope that you will enjoy reading what happened a good few years ago, and perhaps reminisce about the people and events of the time.

At the moment we are keeping our fingers crossed that the FASH workshop planned for the 11th October will be able to go ahead, although I should point out that Ivan Aitken, who is leading it, is presently in hospital (nothing to do with the present pandemic, thankfully). We wish him a speedy recovery.

Of course, with everything shut down in May, we were unable to hold our AGM and dance. We are moving further away from when it should have been and we are now canvassing the membership to see whether there is sufficient interest in holding an AGM using the 'Zoom' application, possibly in September. Our committee meeting is scheduled for late August, when we hope to be able to confirm our workshops for the coming season.

On a sadder note we have to mention the death of Prof. Howard Allen, who died in April at the age of 88. He had coronavirus Covid-19 but seemed to have recovered and came home, only then to succumb to pneumonia. Lin Rayner writes:

“Professor Howard Godfrey Allen

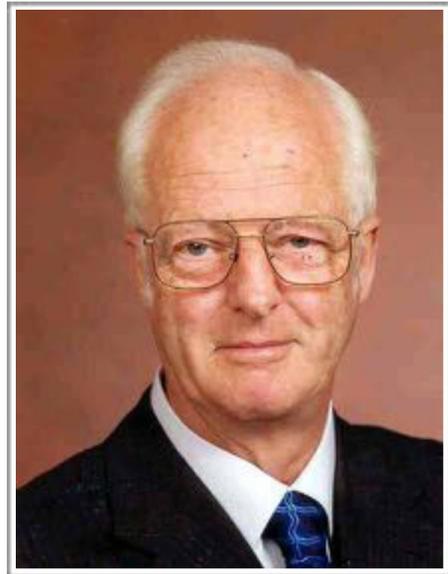
We are very sorry to announce that Howard Allen died in April 2020.

Howard and his wife Margaret, who died some years ago, were keen international dancers at the Glen Eyre group in Southampton for many years, until the club closed in the 1980s. They were members of the Glen Eyre International Dance display team which performed at events such as the Winchester Folk Festival, but they also enjoyed English folk dancing.

Amongst his other folk activities Howard played descant recorder for Hampshire Garland and at Eastleigh Folk Dance Club, and was also a committed and regular member of the Southampton Folk Orchestra. He was enthusiastic and knowledgeable about all his activities, researching everything thoroughly and committing himself fully to everything he did.

Howard had a great sense of humour and people enjoyed being with him for his humour and knowledge, and they enjoyed his creative skills at manufacturing weird and wonderful gadgets and inventive ways of solving the problems of transporting equipment and instruments.

Howard will be greatly missed by all his friends in the folk world.”



*Professor Howard Allen 17/10/1931 –
16/04/2020*



*Howard with John Turner, waiting to play for
Hampshire Garland's next dance*

*Jacqui Longhurst, Lin Rayner
Dave Sutton (editor)*