

WOLF FOLK CLUB NEWSLETTER



August 2007



The Wolf Mummers playing their ancient drama in Wisbech Market Place at last year's Wisbech Folk Fayre. We see in the picture Saint George (Dave Cooper) about to have a fight with The Turkish Knight (Nick Irving) and Old Father Christmas (Robert Walden) looking on. The play was performed three or four times during the festivities much to everyone's enjoyment. The Wolf Mummers have been invited back to Wisbech again for a "Day of Dance" celebration on September 15th. We need a stand-in to play Saint George as Dave can't make it that day, he's double booked. If you feel you would like to play the part please let us know as soon as possible. In fact we could do with doubling up on other parts too so anyone with the slightest ambitions to "tread the boards" please put your name forward. There's only a few words to learn and it is a lot of fun getting out and about and meeting other folk. Why not give it a go?

Progress so far

The Wolf Folk Club seems to be going from strength to strength which is a very satisfying situation. We now have a solid core of regulars who come to each meeting without fail and we are most grateful for their steady support.

There are faces that we haven't seen for some time but we all know that people have lives to live and other pressures and demands mean that people can not always get to the club even if they want to. We have missed Sue and Dick George but Sue joined a choir which meets on Thursdays and so they can only get during holiday times. We look forward to seeing them soon. Linton Brown has contacted us recently to say that his shifts change again in September after which he will be able to come again so it will be nice to welcome him back when the time comes.

The most exciting thing is that we continue to see new faces and new talent. We have recently been enjoying contributions by performers from further afield than our own locality. We have had some excellent visitors from over Norwich way and also further south towards Suffolk.

New Folk Clubs forming

Maybe another sign of our success is that we seem to have provided the stimulus and impetus for the formation of some new folk clubs. We do know that Jane Knights, one of our core regulars was motivated by what she enjoyed at The Wolf Club to start up a new folk club at Massingham Social Club. It is now well established and follows a similar format to ours with a singaround in the bar area. They meet once a month on the third Tuesday at 8.30pm. The Massingham Social Club is a well appointed modern building with plenty of parking and it is quite easy to find being on the main road through Massingham. Like us they encourage a wide range of music types. Performers and audience are welcome to enjoy a pleasant evening in nice surroundings.

Another of our stalwart supporters, Peter Kitchen, has been similarly galvanised to start a folk club which meets in the Tudor Rose Hotel in the centre of King's Lynn. This club which Pete calls "Acoustic Kitchen" meets on the third Sunday of every month at 8.00pm. Parking should be no problem at all as it's right beside two huge public car parks. The format is "open mic". All are welcome. All in all this is great news. The demand for our kind of home-made acoustic music as a community activity seems to be gathering momentum. Perhaps this goes some way towards supporting the notion that folk music is enjoying a revival in popularity. There are certainly other signs suggesting that this is

true. Maybe it is just a reaction to the fact that television is so boring these days and it's driving people to find ways to entertain themselves.

Case stickers and promotional posters

When we started The Wolf Folk Club back in October 2005 we went round and placed A4 posters in as many places as we could find to stick one up. That simple method was pretty successful. It was certainly seen by plenty of players and singers who came to visit and then kept on coming but of course it took some time for numbers to build up to present levels. We need to keep up the promotional pressure though to ensure we keep our numbers at a steady high level. So some of the money we have raised through the raffles will shortly be spent on a couple of promotions.

The first is a "Case Sticker" promotion. This is for instrumentalists to stick on their guitar cases etc. It means it will be seen in other folk clubs and wherever they go it will promote and remind about the existence of The Wolf Folk Club. Of course, it can be stuck elsewhere. In the USA they call them "Bumper Stickers" because they stick them on their cars or their suitcases to show where they have been visiting. We are having a quantity of 500 printed on special sticky back vinyl which will cost about £300. They should be back from the printers and available about now. They are free on request and although intended as a bit of a thank you to those who come to the club anyone can have one. If you would like one, just ask.

In the next few weeks we will be designing a new A4 promotional poster and having it printed. The purpose is to spread the word about the club and to ensure that we keep the numbers up, especially the all important numbers of audience members. We hope that everyone who comes to the club will take some and be able to find places to put them where they will get good visibility and attract more visitors to the club. Places such as public noticeboards can be good if there are any near you. Shops and libraries or surgery waiting rooms will often accept such posters. Have a think and let us know if you can place some when we have them printed.

Wolferton Club Committee

Nick and Roger were kindly invited to attend a recent meeting of the Wolferton Social Club Committee and took the opportunity to outline some of the directions the Wolf Folk Club would like to pursue in the future. The committee were very supportive and appreciative of the folk club and agreed to help wherever possible. The Chairman explained that use of the club premises had dwindled in the recent past somewhat and that the folk club had provided a very welcome boost to the all important finances.

There were some fairly minor sticking points. The folk club wants to organise a programme of guest nights with top quality folk performers thereby further building the reputation and popularity of the club. Such performers do not come cheap and are likely to demand fees of several hundred pounds. Add to this that the fire regulations limit the number who can be present in the room and the need for ticket sales to recoup the fees and control numbers can be understood. The Club is a club and it was explained to us that members expect to be admitted whether there is a function on or not.

Clearly, guest nights are not possible under those circumstances and the club must either abandon its planned programme or find an alternative venue for the Guest Nights. On the other hand, Wolferton Social Club might amend its rules.

The Committee has suggested that it might be a way forward to encourage more of the people who come to the Folk Club to actually become members of Wolferton Social Club and that way their voice will be heard and their influence felt at meetings.

Membership is not expensive, at £3 per year. If you would like to become a member, fill in the application form included with this newsletter and hand it to Rennie Gifford. If it is missing, ask for one at the bar. The forms are reviewed by the committee who normally accept the application. When it is accepted the membership fee becomes due.

Several of the Folk Club members are already members of Wolferton Social Club and Rennie Gifford is on the committee. As a folk club we enjoy our harmonious relationship with the committee of the club and feel just as supportive of them as they feel towards us. That seems like a good basis on which to work together in the future.

Starting times change

At the last meeting we had there was over 40 players and singers present in the room and all eagerly awaiting a chance to do their bit. It took us until ten minutes past midnight to get round the circle twice and there were a few performers besides Patsy and Roger who missed a turn.

We do try to start promptly and to keep the "beer-break" as short as possible so that the evening runs smoothly. There tends to be a bit of an exodus around 11.00pm as hard working folk head home to their beds which then leaves a relatively small group of enthusiasts to finish the evening.

We want to give everyone who comes the chance to perform at least a couple of times and we want to avoid the situation where people feel that they are being overlooked or deliberately missed out. That just makes people unhappy. So! What can be done to fit more singers in without running too late.

The only thing we can think of which will make a real difference is to start earlier. As of September 13th onwards we plan to start future evenings promptly at Eight O' Clock. We will let that run for a while and if necessary we will change again to start at 7.30pm. This will give us good slabs of extra time to work with and should mean that everyone gets a good chance to perform.

As a consequence of the earlier start we plan to finish the evening at a definite time, probably 11.00pm or maybe 11.30pm.

Who's who?

Hello I am Nick Irving. I have been playing guitar now for nearly 35 years. I have played rock, jazz, blues, folk and ballady stuff and am interested in how we can take simple forms rhythmically or melodically and incorporate jazz harmonies without getting too 'out there'.

I play electric guitar quite a bit as well as acoustic stuff. I took up the violin about 2 years ago and have been gradually learning Norfolk tunes and other obscure but interesting melodies. It is surprising how 'music hall' some of them sound in a vaguely familiar sort of way

Combining the fingering of a violin with the pick skills of a guitarist I have also taken up the mandolin. I like the chime it can add to tracks. I play bass and hear it like a brass player. When I was a young boy I joined in the Salvation Army band in by area and the melodies and harmonies from those days still stick.

I love harmony singing because of this and I am always delighted to sing with others who can sing nice harmonies whilst playing a straightforward tune.



Part of my passion (obsession) for all forms of music has led me to learn recording techniques. I have a multi track set up and this allows me to produce high quality audio that I also use as backing tracks in my business life. I produce training materials for enhancing life and business skills and having royalty free music is a great benefit.

Since the beginning of the year I have been ‘baby sitting’ the Wolf Folk club for Roger during his recovery and I am now delighted to be able to welcome him back to his rightful place at the helm. He has given a real gift to music in this area by setting up one of East Anglia’s premier acoustic music venues that has visitors from wide and far. So I will get back to playing and recording and hope to meet you all soon. I am available for semi acoustic duo gigs with various guest partners. I cover a number of different styles of acoustic sounds from traditional to modern. I never want to get ‘pigeon holed’ but I will guarantee you get a wide eclectic and entertaining evening!

As you know Julia and I are running in the Sandringham 10k in September. We are after sponsorship for cancer research and I enclose the link as follows:
<http://www.10ksponsorme.org/JuliaandNick>

What they say

A number of people have remarked on the special atmosphere which prevails at The Wolf Folk Club. It has been described variously as warm, supportive and encouraging. This is just the kind of atmosphere we need. There has to be a first time out in public for every performer and we will all remember what a nerve wracking thing it can be the very first time you put yourself in the hot seat. And the "nerves" thing remains with performers for most of their lives. Although there are not usually any visible clues, every performance is a little act of courage. The most advanced and experienced player will still get the old familiar flutter of butterflies when they try out something new or some really difficult piece.

But if nobody was able to overcome their apprehensions then we would never have any performers. We need performers, especially new ones and even more especially, young ones, to make sure that our kind of music and music-making survives and is carried on down the generations. The gift of music we received from those who went before us has to be passed by us to those who come after.

The commercial worlds of broadcasting and recording would much rather we didn't waste our time making our own amateur and fault ridden music. In their ideal and superhuman dream world we just pay them lots of money to do it all for us at a standard we can never reach.

Such a view would not be popular in our world, where music making is valued as a personal activity. We would not want a club full of superhuman virtuosos. It's much more interesting and rewarding to see the courage and determination that people show in overcoming their difficulties or to see the beginner's pride in achievement. They never show that on the radio or TV. Real life is much more richly coloured.

So, a word of thanks to all and everyone who come to the club. It is you who create this special atmosphere. The performers are appreciative of your gentle support.

Visitor's Book

A few meetings ago we started a Visitor's Book so that we could create some kind of record of who was coming to the club from outside our area.. We have already collected quite a few entries mostly from other parts of the UK but we have one from the USA. If any one would like to have a look at their comments please ask. We will be delighted to show it off.

Other Clubs

Castle Acre Folk Club meets at "the Ostrich" pub, Castle Acre, last Wednesday of the month. Format is a singaround \Kick off 8.30pm. Contact Chris Gutteridge 01760 755993

Great Massingham Folk Club at Great Massingham Village Hall third Tuesday of the month. The format is a singaround, Kick off at 8.30pm. Licensed bar and ample parking. Contact Jane Knights 07780 977301.

The Acoustic Kitchen Folk Club meets at The Tudor Rose Hotel in central King's Lynn on the third Sunday of the month. Kick off 8.00pm. Format is a singaround. Contact Pete Kitchen 07814 838341

Parson's Drove Folk Club. Meets fourth Tuesday of the month at The Swan Inn. 8.30pm. Format is singaround. Contact Dick & Sue George 01945 430308

Wisbech Light Blues Club meet at the Rose Tavern on North Brink on the second and third Tuesdays of the month at 8.30 p.m. All types of music and levels of playing ability are welcome to either session, although they do try to focus on folk for the second Tuesday and blues for the third. These sessions are fairly informal, with a focus on enjoying each others' music and company. More details from Alan Timms - alan@the-timms.co.uk 01945 474595

Guitarists Concert

Colin Britt is promoting another concert featuring ace guitarists

Jacques Stotzem and Phil Hare

The concert will take place at The Angles Theatre, Wisbech on 29th September. Tickets available from The Angles box office 01945 474447

The Morris Men of King's Lynn invite you to come along to a

Morris Dancing Taster Session

Are you interested to join the team and learn the traditional dances of England? Come to this free session and try the dances at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Social Club, Gayton Road, 10.30am, Sunday 16th September. For further details telephone David Jackson 01553 768930
