

Oxfordshire Folk Dance Association

FOLK NEWS

Summer 2026

Chairman Bruce Laurie chair@oxonfolk.co.uk
Treasurer Ian Cummins treasurer@oxonfolk.co.uk
Minutes Secretary Sally Hersom
Events Secretary – Vacant. Please get in touch with the Chair if you feel able to help arranging events.
Folk News Editor coling@oxonfolk.co.uk.
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Dance related items for inclusion in Folk News always welcome. Send to the editor – coling@oxonfolk.co.uk .

Copy date for Autumn/Winter is Saturday 22nd August.
(That edition will cover Christmas, New Year, and into Spring 2027.)

For details of club meetings see back page and the Events Diary page in the website www.oxonfolk.co.uk where you will also find locations, club venues and useful information.

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Up coming OFDA Events.
Saturday April 25th. Memorial dance for Julie Tatham.
Saturday May 30th - Musicians workshop, followed by early evening dance.
Friday June 5th. - Our Annual General Meeting; during Wantage FDC. Friday dance in Steventon village hall.
Sunday October 4th. Annual Playford Ball See page 3.

This Folk News can be printed in black/white as a booklet for you to keep and share with friends.

Some printed copies should be available at your club.

NEW this time. It is also on our website in colour with pictures. www.oxonfolk.co.uk. Click the link in the menu on the left of the Home page.

Chairman’s Letter

We look forward to the 2026 Music Day on 30th May at Cumnor VH. It is still not too late to sign up if you are (or know of) a musician and we welcome dancers from 5.45pm (details and form on the website). We are grateful for the work put in by Stella Wentworth who has taken on the lead role from John Dawson. Rod Stradling will lead the musicians and Malcom Bright will lead the dancing. Donations of cakes to Joyce Dawson, Norma Stallard, Linda Sandford or myself for the afternoon tea for the musicians would be most welcome.

Following the success of last year's Playford Ball, we look forward to this year's Ball at Yarnton VH on 4th October and the Oxfordshire Folk Dance Association Committee have agreed to stage a Ball in 2027 at Yarnton on 3rd October with Ivan Aitken and Pete and Sue Hall. After some years of declining numbers, the recent upturn in attendance is encouraging.

I reported last time that we had set aside £2000 for dance development and that we had approached the EFDSS for guidance. I have had a fruitful meeting with Jen Cox, Director of dance development for the EFDSS and she has given us a key contact for the Schools Music Service for Oxfordshire, who is keen on dance. We will be following that up in the coming weeks. We are also exploring the possibility of a "Jane Austen Ball" as part of the Oxford Folk Festival in 2027. We also got some useful tips on publicity using social media.

After the closure of some Clubs after Covid and quite a few members not returning, it is encouraging that club attendances seem to be on the turn. Despite the trend for new media for publicity it is good to hear that Headington have gained several new members through the old-fashioned way of sticking posters on trees in the park.

The Committee have also agreed to publish Folk News twice a year rather than three times, to make some printed copies available, but the primary publication will be electronic. We have also agree to publish Folk News on the OFDA website including some pictures.

Whether you are going to any Summer festivals, or just dancing locally, may I wish you happy dancing and may your encourage others to enjoy it too.

Bruce Laurie

Oxfordshire Folk Dance Association

Playford Ball

Sunday, 4th October 2026

2.0 – 5.30 pm

Yarnton Village Hall OX5 1TE

Madeleine Smith

with

Pete & Sue Hall

- Tickets: £12

- *Please bring a plate of food to share – no dips. (We respect those wishing to bring food for their own consumption.)*

REMINDER :-

May Hay Days; the Folk Dance Festival in the Vale.
Friday 2nd – Monday 5th May.

Weekend and day tickets from www.mayheydays.org.uk
Extensive programme of workshops dances and balls.
At The DeMontfort School, Evesham. WR11 1DQ.

2026 Oxford Folk Festival Friday 10th. to Sunday 12th April.
www.oxfordfolkfest.org.uk



Memorial Dance
for
JULIE TATHAM

Caller
Ivan Aitken

with splendid music from
Shane & Julia

Saturday 25th April 2026

2pm

Yarnton Village Hall
The Paddocks
Yarnton, Oxon
OX5 1TE

£10

Please bring a plate of finger food

Further information from:
Joyce Dawson 01865 246458
Keith Sollis 01993 898132

REMEMBER - Friends of English Dance

(www.friendsofenglishdance.org.uk)

Have a directory listing dance clubs throughout the country, and a calendar of events/dances; do take a look.

For Georgian and Regency dancing in Oxford, and beyond, see
www.georgettesofoxford.com

There is a calendar listing dances country-wide on the EFDSS website

Club Reports and other articles follow in the order they were submitted. Read on to discover what others have said.

Memorial Dance for Peter Bareham

On Sunday February 1st 2026, a dance was held in Stonesfield village hall to celebrate the life of Pete Bareham. Pete had lived and danced in Stonesfield for many years, and a large number of relations, friends and dancers came together to celebrate his wide range of interests and accomplishments. Friends from his favourite dance clubs at Stonesfield and Tadmarton danced some of his favourite English country dances to music provided by the Donkey House Band, and friends from Charlbury Morris gave a display of morris and rapper dances, and the Masons Apron team* from Long Hanborough displayed their morris dancing skills. Tea and cakes were provided, but Pete's own delicious cakes, which he regularly and generously made for the different groups, were much missed!

Carolinne White

*Masons Apron Morris is a women's North-West Clog side, practising on Monday nights at 8pm, from September to April, at [Long Hanborough Recreation Hall](#) (OX29 8BJ)Oxfordshire.

Masons Apron Morris is a sociable, fun loving side and new dancers - experienced or not - as well as musicians are always welcome. From May onwards, we dance out at villages, fetes, and folk festivals.

For more information, please email [Charlotte](#) or come and watch or join in any term time Monday 8pm

MUSICIANS WORKSHOP & Dance

On Saturday 30th May (2026) at 09:30 musicians with instruments of all shapes and sizes will be gathering at Cumnor Village Hall for a workshop led by the exceptionally talented Rod Stradling on the arts and mysteries of playing successfully for folk dancing.

Whether you play accordion, cello, clarinet, concertina, folk harp, guitar, keyboard, recorder, violin or an instrument not yet on our list, if you enjoy the wonderful repertoire of folk dance music, do consider booking to join us on May 30th. The music will be sent out ahead of the event to give everyone a chance to “note-bash” beforehand, leaving us free to concentrate on absorbing tips, techniques and pearls of wisdom on the day. MIDI files can be provided for anyone who learns by ear.

Rod’s website is at <https://www.rodstradling.co.uk> and includes sample recordings from the Stradivarious cds if you’d like to get a “feel” for the range of folk dance music styles which might feature in the day’s programme.

The workshop will be followed by an evening dance (17:30 to 20:30) with OFDA’s very own Malcom Bright calling and live music from the musicians who will have been rehearsing all day for the dancers’ delight as well as for our own.

If you know someone who would enjoy this event and wouldn’t necessarily see Folk News, do let them know it is happening and encourage them to come along. The booking form is on the 30th May entry on Events Diary page of the oxonfolk website -

<https://www.oxonfolk.co.uk/diary.php> .

Looking forward to seeing as many as will, for the workshop, the evening dance or both, at Cumnor Village Hall on Saturday 30th May.

Stella Wentworth (stella@wrgbitm.org.uk)

Brian and Ann Wooby. Norma writes :-

I spent a pleasant afternoon in February in Brian's care home in Chipping Norton. Sadly Brian has dementia so I am not sure if he was aware of all the things Ann and I were talking about. She and I reminisced on all the people from the folk world no longer with us, and the fun we had with them, and on all the other happy occasions we had had at Sidmouth and the different clubs.

I hope Brian was able to take in some of what we talked about.

Ann also asked about everyone she knew in the Oxfordshire Folk world, and said that she missed them, and sent everyone her best wishes.

She and Brian do play folk music together, which she thinks helps him, and he joins in the events organised by the home and seems very happy there.

If you are in the area and have a few moments to spare they would love to see you as Ann spends most of her days with Brian.

Barchester Southerdown Care Home, Worcester Road, Chipping Norton OX7 5YE
Phone 01608 433844. Ann's home phone no. is 01608 643892

Looking for a Folk Dance holiday adventure in the UK this year ?

Here are some of the dance Festivals you can go to.

(If you go to any of them share the experience with us. Write a few lines for Folk News – approx 100 words.)

Evesham	1 st - 5 th . May
Chippenham	22 nd - 25 th . May
Litchfield	19 th - 21 st . June
Sidmouth	31 st . July - 7 th . August
Broadstairs	7 th - 14 th August
Whitby	22 nd - 28 th . August

Southam Gathering is an annual August Bank Holiday folk dance weekend for about 120 experienced dancers.

In 2026 it will be on the 28th-31st August. There are new organizers: Brian Stanton and Victoria and Dave Yeomans, a new name: Grand Union of Dance and a new venue based on Barford near Stratford-on-Avon: <https://www.granduniondance.org/>

The aim is to be open to all competent dancers and not by invitation as before.

CLUB REPORTS

There is no news from **Tadmarton FDC** other than the fact we still keep going and have a reasonable attendance of 15 - 20 including a new musician who also gets involved with the dancing.

David Morgan

St. Andrews Assembly.

We meet monthly usually on second Saturdays, but our Summer Tea Dance will be on Saturday, 20th June (£8 + a plate of food).

Our annual Jane Austen Ball will be held on Saturday, 15th August (Cumnor Village Hall, 7-10 p.m., £10 + a plate). Brian Stanton will be calling for us when we hope to see "as many as will" as they said in those days!

Diana

Sunday Playford

We meet monthly at Cumnor Village Hall (2.30-4.30 p.m). Thank you to Chris for helping out with the calling when Carolinne was away.

Future dates are 19th April, 24th May, 28th June and 26th July. Everyone is very welcome to join us.

Keith & Diana.

Wantage F.D.C. (Friday Folk at Steventon)

We normally meet on the first Friday of each month, but in April and May it will be the second Friday, i.e. 10th April and 8th May. Everyone is welcome to come and join us.

Before that - on Sunday, 29th March - we will be holding our Spring Dance with Rosemary Hunt & Orion's Ring - Steventon Village Hall at 2 p.m., £12 + a plate of food. All are welcome.

Diana

HEADINGTON QUARRY FDC

We have been without Bev and Keith since before Christmas as Bev was told not to drive until she had had a cataract operation. This has been successful but she is now waiting for a date for the other eye. We are looking forward to welcoming them back soon.

We have welcomed two new members over the last few weeks and I received a phone call from another lady today asking about the club and saying she would like try it this week.

We will be closed for two weeks over the Easter holidays and also for the May elections on 7th May.

Don't forget Headington's Memorial dance for Julie Tatham on Saturday 25th April where we will be celebrating her short but full life. It will be at Yarnton Village Hall and the caller will be Ivan Aitken with Shane and Julia supplying the music. It will start at 2.00 pm and the cost is £10. Please bring a plate of finger food.

THATCHAM FOLK DANCE CLUB

Spring is now making a welcome appearance and we are already enjoying the lighter evenings. We are grateful for all the support from our members, and continue to enjoy our sessions on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month (and 5th, when there is one!) from 8pm to 10pm at Shaw-cum-Donnington Village Hall in Newbury. Please note that there will be no sessions on 6th April (Easter Monday) or 4th May (Bank Holiday). We are always happy to welcome anyone who would like to join us – no previous experience necessary! Our Summer Term will end on Monday 20th July, when we will have an End of Term party evening (please bring a plate of food to share – drinks will be provided). The Autumn Term will commence on Monday 7th September.

Robyn Anami

DANCING IN THE EAST

Take the 2hr journey along the M40, the M25 and then the A127 and you will end up in the city with the longest pleasure pier in the world (1.25 miles). This is Southend-on-Sea which is also home to the Grand Ceilidh Club, a folk dance club which Diane and David have

been attending regularly since renting a flat there for the last 3 years to be near their daughter who has been dancing almost since she was born.

Despite its name, GCC is not a Ceilidh Club like Oxford but is much closer in character to the Folk Dance clubs in Oxfordshire though different enough to be worth writing about.

Starting in 1978 and meeting in the Grand Hotel, Leigh on Sea (hence the name) the Grand Ceilidh Club now meets in The Royal Naval Association club (RNA) in Southend. There is a large dance floor in the main clubroom just big enough for 4 square sets and comfortable seating with tables round the outside. And there is a bar! The shallow stage is big enough for a band and caller.

Music is always 'live' with a different band each week. There are 11 bands and 9 callers (including us). Most callers choose a programme which relies heavily on traditional dance such as those found in the Community Dance Manuals and this also suits most of the bands which consist mainly of session musicians who play for local barn dances. This means that their repertoire is mainly polkas with some jigs and waltzes. If the caller asks for a reel (say for a contra) most bands will play a polka which means the dancing is slow and heavy going. Rob Sibthorpe (Sibby) is a nationally known caller often seen at festivals and Cecil Sharp House lives locally and will include Playford style dances in his programme.

Dancing at the Grand Ceilidh Club does not come cheap compared with most Folk Dance clubs. There is an entrance fee of £7 (reduced to £6 if you pay an annual membership of £10) and there is a raffle. In addition to paying for the venue, each band gets paid £80 per night irrespective of the number of players. Out of this the band has to pay the caller.

Attendance varies between 15 and 25 or more with an average of 20+. There are a few younger folk but the age spread and ability is very similar to that of the Oxfordshire folk dance clubs. As you would expect there is a substantial core of folk who turn up every week but there are also a number of people who come to see what it's like and the club members are very good at helping them feel at home. We have certainly enjoyed attending the club every Wednesday and are hoping to continue with them for a few more years.

Diana and David Morgan

Winter Folk Dancing in the Sun

It's January, Christmas is over, the days are short and the weather dreary. How depressing but wait there are 10 days folk dancing in Spain to look forward to. Fiona and I first went in 2020 and then covid cancelled the next two years. It restarted with a modest number of dancers in 2023 and has grown each year since.

Let me take you through the 2026 event to give a feeling of how it works.

First you get the dates and a booking form from Ivan Aitken or direct from Gerry Flynn. Gerry and Ivan will have found a large hotel with two dance areas for us to use. They have used hotels in Spain and Portugal depending on what is available. Gerry arranges the hotel and facilities while Ivan arranges the dancing.

Generally you book your own flights to Malaga for Spain or Faro for Portugal although I believe Gerry can arrange these as well. Once the flights are booked you give the flight information to Gerry and he arranges transfer to and from the hotel.

The holiday lasts 10 days but you can book for 7 or 10 nights depending on how long you can stay and flight availability. It is normally possible to add extra days at the start or end if required as well.

On arrival at the Airport a taxi or coach drives you to the hotel. The hotel provides breakfast and evening meals each day.

The first evening we have a welcome dance. Every other day there is a workshop in the morning and a dance in the evening. You leave after breakfast on your last day.

For each dance session there is a choice of either the American or British dance hall. You can choose to stay in either or wander between them.

Apart from the dancing there is free time from about 11:00 until the evening meal. You can plan your own day or book one of the trips that Gerry or the Hotel have on offer. In addition Meg normally arranges a bird watching trip but you generally need to book this before the holiday starts.

Top tips:

Take some cash, the trips are normally paid for in cash. However there are cash machines available.

Take a travel kettle and a cup. The hotels generally do not provide these in the rooms.

Check the forecast, you may need a jumper or waterproof.

Check with Meg if you are interested in bird watching.

Ian Cummins

Frenchay Folk Dance Club Annual Weekend Torquay

The 28th Annual Dance Weekend of Frenchay Folk dance Club, Bristol was held at the Victoria Hotel Torquay from 13th to 15th March with over 100 people attending (with a waiting list). We have been to about 23 of the 28 weekends, and this year Linda and David Sandford came with us and Mike and Rita Courthold also were there. In previous years, several members of Thatcham and Upper Basildon Clubs have been and dancers from far and wide become Frenchay club members for the occasion.

Superb music was provided throughout the weekend by The Falconers with a magical blend of flute and accordion and the caller was Hilary Herbert. Hilary is quite frail and had to sit on the stage to call. In her inimitable style put us through out paces in the workshops, predominantly of the Playford Style

Hilary is known for leading quite complex dances which we eventually got through. It was therefore good to have a "come all ye" session on Sunday evening where 12 different callers, predominantly from the South West, gave us dances to relax and enjoy.

It was lovely to meet old friends and to dance with a full hall, the only downside was that the M5 was closed near Cullompton for much of the Friday afternoon-perhaps we should have expected it on the 13th!

Bruce and Eileen Laurie

CLUB MEETINGS AND CONTACTS

- *CHINNOR* Thursdays 8.00 pm Contact Madeleine Smith 07974 720473 smith.madeleine@gmail.com
- *DUNSDEN GREEN* 1ST, 3RD, & 5TH Wednesdays. Contact Howard & Anne Ballard 0118 948 1195
howard.ballard@outlook.com
- *HAGBOURNE* Friday 8.00 pm Contact Malcom Bright 01235 818585
malcom.bright53@gmail.com
- *HEADINGTON* Thursdays 8.00 pm Contact Keith 01993 898132 or Joyce 01865 246458 j.a.dawson26@btinternet.com
- *St. ANDREWS* Saturdays monthly - usually 2nd. Contact Ruth Howard 01325 831409
k.howard935@btinternet.com
- *STONESFIELD* Wednesdays 8.00 pm Contact Carolinne White 01869 347889 carolinnewhite2@gmail.com
- *SUNDAY PLAYFORD* Sundays monthly 2.30 pm Contact Diana Tripfow 01235 933309 kdtrip01@gmail.com
- *TADMARTON* Tuesdays 7.45 pm Contact David Morgan 01295 811404
dndmorgan@gmail.com
- *THATCHAM* 1st, 3rd, & 5th. Mondays Contact Robyn Ananin 01488 638700
robynananin@yahoo.co.uk
- *UPPER BASILDON* Wednesdays 8.00 pm Contact Ian Cummins 07718 050 005
i.cummins.@outlook.com
- *WANTAGE* (Friday Folk at Steventon)
1st. Friday monthly. Contact Linda & David 01235 831482
david.sandford294@btinternet.com

- Details of all our clubs – venues, locations, and useful information, including the Events Diary , can be found on the website – www.oxonfolk.co.uk