

Introducing fasc

TRADITIONAL ARTS SUPPORT IN THE COMMUNITY (TASC)
REGISTERED CHARITY 1042144

History & Aims

TASC was founded in 1994 as an outreach arm of the Mid Wales May Festival (1989-1998) an annual event attracting 10,000 visitors and showcasing traditional music, song and dance (but including other attractions e.g. Tony Benn, Jeremy Hardy, No Fit State Circus) from around the world (e.g. Punjabi Bhangra Dance, Chinese Lion Dance, Madagascar music) as well as the four corners of the UK.



Tony Benn at 1992 May Festival

With the closure of the Festival TASC became severely limited in resources, but put much of its effort into leading the establishment of a national folk development organisation for Folk Music in Wales which became fully realised in 2002.

From 2003 on TASC turned back to grass roots work, exploring how concentrating most of its resources into projects in one small village – Llandinam – could create a hotbed of activity is inspirational but also provides an opportunity for others to showcase their work

TASC stands for Traditional Arts in the Community. Its Welsh title Traddodiau a Syniadau Celf (lit. traditions and art ideas) indicates our belief in continuity, meaning and innovation.

The Vision

TASC sets out to support the creation of folk music for the 21st century: song, dance & music that both acknowledges the past and welcomes the future. It has three key approaches:-

- Contact with excellence through working with outstanding performers
- Acknowledging the importance of the regional and local nature of folk music
- Understanding the different demands

made by function (dance, session & concert) and place (village hall, pub, street)



Severn Suite Workshop – June 2006

Recent Projects

How TASC carries out its vision can perhaps be best seen at work in some recent projects.

- Llandinam Village Band has been operating since 2003 with an open door policy. It is a teaching band that typically works towards a particular project rather than being available for bookings. It has played for a number of ceilidhs as well as in informal situations such



Llandinam Village Band 2005

as the Flower Festival at Llandinam Presbyterian Church.

- Tunes People Play (2005) – professional recording equipment was acquired to record three local pub sessions (in Llandinam, Llanidloes & Howey). Extracts were then provided on a CD together with aids to learning the tunes (music notation, slow learning-speed versions on the CD). The material was also used in visits by Karen Tweed (an internationally-renowned accordionist) to schools in Knighton, Llandrindod, Newtown, Welshpool, Llanfair Caereinion, Presteigne and Llanidloes.



Suitcase Studio in action – Tunes People Play

- Vive la Dance 2005 & 6 – a day of workshops in European dance and music which culminate in a supper before participants (plus others) have a chance to try out what they have learnt during the day.



Vive La Dance

- Day of Welsh Dances 2004-6 – similar approach has been tried with traditional Welsh dance with workshops in stepping/clog and in social dances and an evening dance. The event has taken place at the Elan Valley Hotel and at CARAD in Rhayader.

- Severn Suite was a suite of dance tunes commissioned from leading folk musicians John Kirkpatrick & Karen Tweed but with the difference that new folk dances were created at the same time. To present the final work a team of 16 volunteer dancers learned them over several months in 2006.



Severn Suite, dancers & musicians

- Twelfth Night 2007 & 8 – TASC has been experimenting with how a strong community event can be created by bringing together a number of different groups to share their work. The Twelfth Night was the culmination of that work. It is in effect a promenade event with the evening starting in St Llonio's Church and then moving down the hill to the Hall.



- Seed Time & Second Seed - Two full weekends of intensive workshops and performance in Llandinam (2005 & 2006) with leading traditional music tutors (e.g. Alistair Anderson, Director of Folk Music of the British Isles Course (BMus), University of Newcastle Upon Tyne). All TASC events have had significant workshop elements in them but the aim has always been to return the artistic control to the participants. This we believe is a key element in safeguarding ownership and has contributed to TASC's success.

APPENDIX I –AN EXAMPLE OF TASC AT WORK: 2008 TWELFTH NIGHT PERFORMANCE

- Candles lit in the Church of St Llonio and a small performance space cleared at the transept
- Initial instrumental music in the church on violins and concertinas from **Llandinam Village Band**
- Welcome from the vicar and bible texts read in both Welsh & English
- Seasonal songs from **Wild Angels Community Choir**, led by Sue Harris
- Reading of the *Journey of the Magi* (TS Eliot) by a member of Wild Angels (Rick)
- Performance of a shortened version of *Herod & the Massacre of the Innocents* by **Montgomeryshire Youth Theatre** with contributions from the musicians and the choir to heighten dramatic effect
- After the final dramatic tableau – a mime of the killing of the babies to the singing of the Coventry Carol the musicians break in with Nos Galan (Deck the Halls) and lead the procession down the hill to the hall.
- At the Hall, decorated by the **Llandinam Lilliputs Playgroup** with holly and evergreen, a Wassail Cup is passed round to Wassail songs from the Wild Angels.
- Traditional dances are performed with the Llandinam Village Band
- Food is handed round the tables.
- The Youth Theatre perform a mummers play with much gusto
- A capella songs, this time from **Sirens** with audience joining in (pictured).
- A New Year cake gift is handed round to everyone.
- More up tempo music from the **Klezmonauts**, playing traditional Jewish music
- Final country dances with the Village Band and the Klezmonauts combining forces.



Appendix II - TASC Projects to Date

Projects in 2007 BLOWZABELLA AUTUMN DANCE & DANCE WORKSHOP/ CLAUDINE ARCAND QUEBECOIS FIDDLE WORKSHOP/ SOUND FOOTING CEILIDH/ SEVERN SUITE BOOK/ STRATEGY REVIEW/ TWELFTH NIGHT/

Projects in 2006 VIVE LA DANCE/ ONE LIFE DVD/ SECOND SEED/ SEVERN SUITE/ DAY OF WELSH DANCES/ MENTORING/ KAREN TWEED RESIDENCY II/

Projects in 2005 TUNES PEOPLE PLAY/ SWAP/ VIVE LA DANCE/ RADNOR VALLEY BAND/ JOHN KIRKPATRICK WORKSHOPS/ MAY TWMPATH/ KAREN TWEED RESIDENCY I/ SUE HARRIS SONG WORKSHOPS/

Projects in 2004 ITALIAN EVENING/ RISING GENERATION/ FLOWER FESTIVAL/ DAY OF WELSH DANCES/ RHAYADER DANCE CLUB/ CARNIVAL CEILIDH/ BAND ON SUNDAY/ CHRISTMAS CAROL CEILIDH/ HANDFUL OF TUNES/ AN EVENING WITH CHRIS & ANDY (WOOD & CUTTING)/

Projects in 2003 INTERNATIONAL FOLKEVENING/ CONCERT & TWMPATH WITH CERI (MATTHEWS) & JULIE MURPHY)/ LLANDINAM VILLAGE BAND/ DANNY KILBRIDE GUITAR MASTERCLASS/ CAROLING/

Projects in 2000-2 GROUNDWORK REVIEW

Projects in 1994-2000 ONE LIFE/ PANEL PROJECT/ CARNIVAL DANCE/ FINDING YOUR VOICE/ CAJUN DAY/ WELSH FIDDLE CONVENTIONS:- 1996(Newtown) 1997 (Builth Wells)