

tasc

ANNUAL REPORT 2007

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

We have seen another year of exciting, innovative activities within the broadest scope of what might be described as the traditional arts. Some have followed tried and tested formats and some have emerged as totally original ideas.

Perhaps the highlight of the year was the commission awarded to John Kirkpatrick and Karen Tweed to produce the 'Severn Suite' - new dances and new tunes inspired by the river Severn and its enduring influence on Llandinam. Expectations of this project were high and the result lived up to every aspiration. The suite was performed at the SEED weekend in June to a capacity audience whose enjoyment was probably only exceeded by those musicians and dancers who contributed alongside John and Karen. These were enthusiastic amateurs, some reluctant conscripts, but their sense of achievement and enjoyment throughout that weekend will remain with me for a long time to come. This original repertoire was so instantly memorable that we shall surely see these dances and tunes adopted alongside traditional standards at ceilidhs in the months and years to come. The whole weekend was a memorable one with a great contribution from the John Dipper Band and other illustrious guests.

Our usual dance events, both Welsh and French, continued and we are now seeing increasing collaborative working with friends from west Wales and south Wales who contribute to TASC events, as some of those at TASC support their events outside the area. I am particularly keen to see a development of networking of disparate groups across Wales so that local efforts can reap the benefits of a wider audience uptake.

The year finished off (strictly speaking, the new year commenced) with another old favourite with a twist which turned it into a surprise package, the Twelfth Night Ceilidh. By engaging the local community, in this case Llandinam's playgroup, we brought what seemed like the whole village into the Hall. Many of these would never have been to a 'folk' event before but what a great time they had. We saw another permutation of the a capella group which has developed its work through TASC, the community choir Wild Angels, a new band performing - the Klezmonauts, and the resurgence of the Llandinam Village Band to play for the dances, after the best part of the year in retirement.

More work has been done within the community, Philip recording some Christmas Concert items for the Llandinam Presbyterian Church and producing a CD for them, as well as recording and encouraging Tunewrights, a band of young musicians from Hereford, which provided them with their very first CD.

I need to thank many people for their contributions to TASC's ventures, Philip Freeman continues to

organisation of many dance events and other folk activities, as well as making a great contribution to the Community Arts at CARAD in Rhayader. We look forward to her contribution.

Apart from the trustees, I must thank all the organisations who have sponsored our events and made grants towards our activities. A word of warning needs to be set down at this point. There is no doubt that funding is increasingly difficult to secure and I know that Powys County Council, who have been one of our main sources of income over the past couple of years, are going through particularly difficult times at the moment and probably for some time to come. It may well be that the extent of TASC's activities may be influenced by a downturn in external funding, but we will secure what we can and make best use of whatever that might be. Whatever happens innovation and quality will continue to be our drivers, and I am confident that we are resourceful enough to continue making a significant contribution to the folk arts in Wales and the borders.

The future? The main event planned for 2007 will be to bring the legendary Blowzabella to mid Wales in the autumn. Don't miss!



Pete Damsell
CHAIR

Trustees during 2006

Pete Damsell (chair)

boz Boswell (vice chair)

Kathleen Freeman

Linda Ward

Peter Timmins

Philip Freeman (administrator)

TASC is a Registered Charity No 1042144 established in 1994

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TRADITIONAL ARTS SUPPORT IN THE COMMUNITY (TASC)

AIMS

TASC's aims are to support and further develop traditional folk music, song and dance in forms appropriate for the 21st century. It works on the four key ingredients:

- Performers
- Audiences
- Content
- Context¹

REVIEW OF 2006

This is how the above aims were developed during 2006.

- Performers - support was given through:-
 - Llandinam Village band's ongoing practices
 - Llandinam Presbyterian Chapel recording a sample CD on location in the Chapel
 - Ongoing advice to Sirens, an a capella singing group who meet in Llanidloes
 - Providing a platform for Klezmonauts (Jewish Festival Music) band and Wild Angels Community Choir (both from Llanidloes) at the Twelfth Night celebrations
 - Teaching new folk dances (the Severn Suite) to a team of 14 volunteer dancers.
 - Recording a CD for Tunewrights - a group of Herefordshire based young musicians (14-18) (see below)
 - Workshops in music, dance and song as part of Le Petit Bal, Vive La Dance, Day of Welsh Dances, and the Second Seed ²
 - Continued availability of a library of specialist publications, on-line shop, and TASC's own publications (which will shortly include the Severn Suite)
- Audience
 - By teaching Social Dance (French, English, Scottish, Breton & Welsh)
 - By devising new simple dances for beginners
 - By informative talks: Llio Rhydderch on the places that inspired her harp music, Patsy Seddon on Gaelic singing, themes from Llandinam in the Severn Suite, stories from Guto Dafis
 - By involving community groups in ancillary roles ³
 - Llandinam Village Band meets at the school to help raise awareness of traditional music among the young.
 - Karen Tweed visited many schools in Powys during the preparation for the Severn Suite.
- Content
 - The Severn Suite is thirteen brand new tunes and ten original dances written for Llandinam Village, drawing on its incidents and history for inspiration.
 - The members of the Llandinam Village band have written, adapted and arranged tunes for the band
 - Preliminary research into the Montgomeryshire legends is under way with storyteller Guto Dafis.
- Context
 - SOUND RECORDING. The portable recording equipment allows TASC to record on location, which gives a focus for work and allows people to



improve performance through feedback.

- CD recorded, mixed and edited for Tunewrights, a young band which specifically encourages learning how to play for the dance. This has given a huge boost to the young people's confidence to have made a 'proper' CD.
 - CD recorded for Llandinam Presbyterian Chapel as a preliminary to developing material for a Christmas CD in 2007
 - A sample CD of a play text for Llandinam Drama Group with a view to making a 'talking book' or similar
 - A small group who meet for social music-making were recorded to develop volunteer recording techniques
 - A similar project recorded some of the Wild Angels repertoire at Llandinam Presbyterian Chapel, again to learn about microphone placing and how best to record on location.
- VIDEO RECORDING. The Severn Suite and the Second Seed weekend were recorded by Powys Video Project and is an area that might be explored in the future. TASC administrator Philip Freeman has been invited to join the management committee of PVP which will enable links to be developed in the future. This aspect of TASC's work will, we believe, also generate additional content in future, possibly through storytelling, resource packs or additional commissions.
- Two small sample pieces have been edited and will probably be placed on the PVP website at some point.
 - The raw footage is useful as a teaching aid but needs extensive editing before it can be publicly released.
 - Philip Freeman has also assisted Powys Agency for Mental Health in the editing of their promotional video (of the Arts in Mental Health Conference Feast) which has helped to develop his skills in that direction.
 - TASC have also placed the Miss Anita Taylor (1900-2004) video on DVD, as it is a valuable source of information about Newtown's history.

NEW VENUES. TASC has successfully staged concerts in St Llonio's Church which culminated in its use for the Twelfth Night celebrations in January 2007. Eighty people attended the short concert before the torchlight procession led down into the Village hall. Informal music-making (sessions) have taken place in the Lion, and the school, village hall, Broneirion and Presbyterian Chapel have all been used for workshops in dance, music and song.

¹ Where, when and in what form the content is experienced.

² Vocal harmony, instrumental workshops, ensemble playing, improvisation, step dance etc.

³ Twelfth Night was run by the Llandinam Playgroup who provided food, decorated the hall and stewarded the event



PROGRAMME OF WORK 2007

The creation of the Severn Suite together with the Second Seed Weekend has been very successful, but has also demanded a lot of effort from the trustees and volunteers.

Accordingly 2007 is being seen as a period of consolidation and research rather than expansion. It will see the creation of new publications, experiments with sound and video recordings and consideration of how best the website might develop.

Partnerships will continue to be built and strengthened, in the village, in the arts world, in the county. New trustees will be added to reduce the workload on existing ones, and new skills will be acquired.

The research and experiments should lead to developing new projects that add to the solid foundation of the Severn Suite and to the ensembles that have emerged.

Figure 1 is a table of the events and projects during 2007 and Figure 2 is a summary of TASC's recent achievements with an outline of future direction.

Figure 1 - Activity during 2006

| | | | |
|----------------|--------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| January | Twelfth Night | Village band & Sirens singers perform traditional material ALLANDINAM | The event developed and celebrated |
| March | Day of Welsh Dance | Workshops in Welsh dance followed by a Twmpath in the evening RHAYADER | Evening with CA |
| May | Le Petit Bal | Series of French dance workshops culminating in evening dance | This project began |
| June | Second Seed | Weekend of workshops and performances | In conjunction with develop network |
| Oct | Vive La Dance | French & Breton workshop day with instrument & ensemble workshops | The day Powys / links with |
| Ongoing | Village Band | Ensemble skills developed | Band plan and other |
| Ongoing | DVD/CD production | Three teaching CDs are now on offer and the One Life video is now available on DVD | Providing work on existing |
| Ongoing | Severn Suite | A commissioned work which will be published in book form | Provide develop |

Figure I - Activity during 2006

January Twelfth Night Village band & Sirens singers perform traditional material
LLANDINAM The event formed the basis for developing a strong seasonal celebration

March Day of Welsh Dance Workshops in Welsh dance followed by a Twmpath in the evening
RHAYADER Evening event in conjunction with CARAD

May Le Petit Bal Series of French dance workshops culminating in evening dance This
programme aimed at beginners

June Second Seed Weekend of workshops and performances In conjunction with Seed to
develop participants and build networks

Oct Vive La Dance French & Breton workshop day with instrument & ensemble workshops
The day also hosted the AGM of Powys Arts Forum, building links with the arts community

Ongoing Village Band Ensemble skills developed Band played for Twelfth Night and other
events

Ongoing DVD/CD production Three teaching CDs are now on offer and the One Life video is
now available on DVD Providing resources for new work and involvement in existing projects

Ongoing Severn Suite A commissioned work which will be published in book form Provide
basis for future developments