

# KENT GATHERING of TRADITIONAL MUSIC



Presenting the singing, music and dancing  
of Kent's traditional communities,  
Frittenden, 29<sup>th</sup> March 2008

Kent's famous for many things. In peacetime it's been the Garden of England, replete with hops and apples, and in war it has been brave in the front line in countless battles against a cruel invader.

It's well known, too, for its farming, mining, fishing and travelling communities, for hop-picking, for stories of treacle mines that have entertained generations of children, and, of course, for ghosts.

But Kent also deserves recognition for singing and dancing. I will leave the detail to the scholars, but I'd like to say that well within living memory Kent had many great singers who learned their songs from earlier generations, and it also had a reputation for step dancing.

In 2008, we no longer have so many of the old-fashioned singers left, and precious few step dancers. Still, the committee and I believe passionately that these things are well worth sharing, understanding and celebrating, and with your help, reviving.

Welcome to the Kent Gathering of Traditional Music.

**Gavin Atkin, Chairman**

**The committee:** George Frampton, artistic director and treasurer; Flirby Frampton, box office and tickets; Julie Arnott, secretary, and Paul Cowdell, committee member.

### **The events**

- An **informal get-together** on the evening of the 28<sup>th</sup> at The Bull public house, Linton from 9pm or so
- A **step dancing workshop** at 10.30am at the Frittenden Memorial Hall (£2 adults, £1 under-17s who are welcome with parents)
- A **FREE session of singing and playing** at the Bell & Jorrock's pub starting at mid-day until 2.30pm
- A **concert** at the Memorial Hall from 3.30pm (£4 adults, £2 under-17s)
- A **barn dance** or **ceilidh** at the Memorial Hall in the evening from 8pm (£6 adults, £4 under-17s)

### **Locations**

The Bell & Jorrock's is at the cross in the centre of the village, and the Memorial Hall can be found 500 yards or so up the hill along The Street - it's on the left after the church. Linton is eight miles by car from Frittenden, and can be found a few miles south of Maidstone on the A229.

## Step dancing workshop

**Kerry Fletcher** teaches many traditional dancing styles, but today her workshop will focus on helping adults and children to develop their own simple steps dancing to step-dance tunes. The dancers will be accompanied by fiddle music from **Tim Brooks**. (**Kerry** and **Tim** will also appear in the afternoon concert – see below.)

### The session

The session will be chaired by **Paul Cowdell** and **George Frampton**, and will feature both invited guests and whoever turns up on the day. George and Paul will regularly ask for performers to come forward and do a turn – if that's you, make sure they know who you are and what you do. We expect the session to be busy, so please help keep up the pace by avoiding long introductions and maintaining order when someone has been asked to sing.

### The concert

This will feature invited performers and the occasional unexpected treat. The master of ceremonies will be **Chris Pitt**, a regular visitor to the county, a very experienced MC, a member of Kent's Oyster Morris, and an old friend to many of the Kent Gathering's performers and organisers.

Heading the bill will be Kent's own **The Millen Family** - a Smarden-based farming family who have been singing old songs in harmony for generations, including folk songs, glees, parlour ballads and minstrel songs.

We've also got local singing and anglo concertina star **Andy Turner** lined up to perform for us. Andy is a well known folk scene personality who sings a range of repertoires with a number of groups of different kinds – but through it all has maintained a special interest in the songs of his home county. Andy has also organised a band for the concert including **Chris Taylor**, **Matt** and **Dan Quinn**, and **Dulcie** and **Tom Miller**.

**Den Giddens** is a real old-timer with a ready grin and a fund of comic songs, and stories, many of which he created himself, while others come from the Music Hall. Now 87, he's been well known and loved around the West Kent music scene for longer than any of the rest of us can remember, and we're delighted he's able to be with us today.

**Nigel Hobbins** will be singing some of the songs he learned from his grandfather, who in his time was a famous local singer around the village of Challock. Nigel instantly charmed a large bar-room crowd at a session we organised earlier in the year, and we're sure he'll be a big hit at the Kent Gathering concert.

The **St Nicholas at Wade Hoodeners** were formed in 1966 after a horse effigy found in an attic led to discussions with members of the Trice family, who owned and took round the horse until 1919, and also with Tom West, who in his youth took part in the role of 'The Boy'. Each year, the current team performs a specially written annual Christmas play at parties and local pubs on the Isle of Thanet. The play is always topical and full of entertaining rhyming couplets, and this will be a rare out-of-season performance.

Refreshments are provided by **Sue Clements** and **Annie Bull**, and moneys collected go towards Sue's daughter's Global Challenge Fund – she needs to find £3000, so please be generous!

### The dance

The barn dance features popular Kent dance band **Florida**, which plays many traditional tunes found in old manuscript collections, including the William Mittell collection from Romney Marsh. The caller will be **Chris Pitt**.

Florida is well known in Frittenden, so expect a party atmosphere!

### Thanks

The committee would like to thank:

- All the performers for giving up their time to make the event possible, and particularly Florida for helping to make it financially viable
- Eileen Bridges and Ivor Jauncey for helping us to hire the Memorial Hall, and for Eileen's sterling assistance in selling tickets
- Annie Bull for making sure our leaflets reached their target audience
- The Cricket Club for running the bar
- Rosie and Sean for making us welcome at the Bell & Jorrockes
- Howard Lilley for help with posters etc in the village
- The English Folk Dance & Song Society [www.efdss.org](http://www.efdss.org) – see the Society's site for more information on traditional music
- The audience for coming and making the event so very worthwhile

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