

SWORD DANCE UNION

Minutes of the annual general meeting of the Sword Dance Union

Kelham Island Tavern, Sheffield

Sunday 22nd October 2006

In the Chair: Phil Heaton.

Present:

Aubrey O'Brien, Chris Cartridge, Kevin Hall, Jeff Lawson, Pat Malham, Stuart Bater, Trish Bater, Boris (Boz) Davison, Roger Thompson, Frank Lee, Andrew Kennedy, Alistair Bloomfield, Avis Davison, Brian Pearce, Mike Loftus, Geoff Harrison, Geoff Charlton, Jenny Everett, Malcolm Lewis, John Larwood, Nigel Metcalfe, Idwal Jones, Geoff Porte, Michael L Jackson, Linda Hewing, Steph West, Tom Besford, Chris Davison, Tom Sullivan, Jenny Day, Dave Mortin, Ron Day, Peter Killingback, Ben Green, Derek West, John Roberts, Brian Kell, Robert Crick, Richard Bojanowski, Sally Wearing.

Teams represented:

Redcar, Sullivan's, Stone Monkey, Handsworth, Grenoside, Barnsley, Southport, North British, Lamb and Flag, Whip the Cat, Carlisle, Seven Stars, Durham University, Kingsmen, Sproughton, Westrefelda, Maltby Phoenix, Smutt, Sallyport, Snark, Castleford, Maltby, Mabel Gubbins.

Representatives:

Mike Everett ~ Morris Federation; Ivor Allsop ~ Morris Ring.

Apologies: Martin Trewinnard, John Ledbury, Vince Rutland, Bob Hart, Andy Smith, John Asher, Sally Atkinson, Gary Stringfellow, Paul Davenport, Ian Davies, Keith Thompson, Sue Coe, Bryan Jackson, Kevin Theaker, Ray Ellison, Ynys Crowston Boaler, Angi Cole, John Portlock,

The meeting opened at 15.35.

Phil Heaton gave an introductory address, emphasising that the SDU encompassed both long and short sword traditions.

I Constitution

The meeting discussed the constitution, in particular the issues itemised below.

I.1 Aims & Objectives

The only issue raised concerning the aims and objectives was whether the SDU only included English sword dancing. It was pointed out that one of the aims was that the SDU supported the evolution of sword dancing and that there was nothing in the aims that restricted the SDU to just English traditions.

The aims and objectives were accepted as in the constitution.

1.2 Membership

Phil Heaton started the discussion on membership by explaining that there had been problems in organising the longsword tournament (which was held on the same day as this meeting) because of a lack of funds. He had attempted to book the Assembly Rooms in Derby but was unable to because of the cost. He pointed out that the SDU needed financing in order to exist, which meant that membership fees were required.

Subscriptions

It was decided to set the membership fees, as allowed for by the constitution.

It was suggested that the fees should be £10 for a team and £5 for an individual. The question arose as to what members would receive for their membership fees. It was made clear that the SDU was not offering insurance. Ivor Allsop asked whether we needed to get anything.

The SDU was described as a networking scheme for like minded people, and that it would be a central body who would communicate about events, the location of teams, etc.

It was suggested that £10 was not be enough to fund events like the tournament that had been held today and that there should be an extra fee of £5 in the first year to cover start up costs. It was then discussed whether £10 would be enough to cover the cost of a newsletter, which was felt to be necessary. Andrew Kennedy said that he thought it would be enough, especially if the newsletter could be sent by email. He also suggested that the extra fee in the first year should be a joining fee, so that it would be payable whenever anyone joined the SDU.

After further discussion, the following fee structure was proposed and accepted by the meeting:

- **Teams** - £10 per year and £5 joining fee.
- **Individuals** - £5 per year and £5 joining fee.
- **Organisations** - £10 per year and £10 joining fee.

The membership fees would run from November 1st to October 31st each year.

It was also agreed that the representation at general meetings would be:

- Teams – two votes.
- Individuals – one vote.

This agreed with what was already in the constitution.

The issue of what the balance was between longsword and rapper at the meeting was raised. A show of hand showed that about 10 people at the meeting only danced longsword and 2 only rapper. The rest all danced both rapper and longsword.

1.3 Committee

Phil Heaton pointed out that the present arrangements (co-opted committee communicating by email) had not been productive. He said that he would prefer to be secretary, not chair. He proposed that a proper committee should be elected.

Aubrey O'Brien was proposed as chair by Phil Heaton and seconded by Chris Cartridge. After brief discussion about the views of people who were not present, Aubrey was returned unopposed.

Phil Heaton was proposed as Secretary by Sally Wearing and returned unopposed.

Don Ratcliffe was proposed as Treasurer by Phil Heaton and returned unopposed.

Ivor Allsop was proposed as Longsword Technical Officer but declined the nomination as he felt that it should be held by someone younger. Kevin Hall was then elected as Longsword Technical Officer.

Chris Cartridge was elected as Rapper Technical Officer.

Before the election of an Archivist, the role was discussed. It was suggested that Ivor should hold this post as he already had an extensive archive. Ivor said that he had a large collection of longsword information but little rapper, and that it was important for people to send in information relating to rapper. Andrew Kennedy gave a plea for how important it is to notate dances as they are performed now, as they would not be remembered in the future. He encouraged everyone to send information to the archivist.

It was pointed out that the archivist should be the point of contact for archive materials and did not have to hold everything.

Ivor Allsop was then elected as the Archivist.

It was noted that John Asher, Andy Smith and Sally Atkinson (who had all been co-opted) did not wish to continue to be on the committee. A plea was made to still include John Asher as he had a rapper archive.

A question was raised about teams that did not want other teams to perform their dance. Ivor stressed that it was important to write it down, give it to the Archivist and ask that it should be embargoed. This meant that it would be held in the archive but would not be available to other people. Notation would only be available to other people if the originating team agreed. For example, notations for both Handsworth and Abingdon were held in archives but were not available to anyone.

2 Meetings

The date of the next annual general meeting will be October 13th 2007. It was proposed to hold the meeting in Derby.

3 Other business

Team contacts

At least two contacts were required for each team. Phil had had problems with contacting people by email. Forms were passed around to be filled in for all teams present, with at least two contacts.

SDU Discussion List

The issue of whether the list was working properly was raised. Don Ratcliffe had recently emailed people on the list and had had a good number of responses. He also pointed out that the SDU needed to be able to maintain the list when John was too busy.

Action: Chris Cartridge offered to talk to John Asher about the list and to find out what the problems were, including concerning the website.

Swords held by EFDSS

Phil Heaton informed the meeting that a large number of longswords had been found at Cecil Sharp House, where they had been stored on top of a water tank. They were in poor condition. They were wrapped in newspapers, the oldest of which was 1951. He wanted to get them cleaned and to keep them centrally (e.g. in Sheffield) so that they would be available for people to use them. He proposed that the SDU should adopt them and pay for them to be restored. Kevin Hall suggested that it may be possible to get them cleaned at a Technical College. A few old rapper swords with dolly pegs for handles had also been found at Cecil Sharp House and were now being kept by Phil. A photograph of these would be in the next edition of the Nut. Phil was also intending to photograph the longswords.

A general plea was made for swords to be held available for use at workshops, possibly at a number of different locations.

General discussion about SDU

Jeff Lawson questioned the purpose of the SDU. Phil Heaton pointed out that it was a good network of contacts and that the SDU should help improve communications for teams that were not currently part of the sword network. He also said that it would either take off and work or not.

A question about clashes with Morris Ring workshops was raised and it was agreed that better co-ordination and communications were needed.

It was stated that the SDU would not take over the organisation of DERT.

Aubrey O'Brien said that DERT and other sword events had been instrumental in improving contacts between sides and getting people involved. He was keen that the SDU should do the same for longsword as had happened for rapper. The SDU showed that people were keen to participate and to make things happen.

It was asked whether it was OK to pass on information about the SDU to other teams, which was answered with a definite yes.

The meeting closed at 16.31.