

SWORD DANCE UNION

Minutes of the annual general meeting of the Sword Dance Union

Guildhall Theatre, Derby

Saturday 4th October 2008

In the Chair: Aubrey O'Brien

Teams represented: Stone Monkey; Handsworth; Grenoside; Redcar; Sallyport; Kingsmen; Sir Harrys; Lord Conyers; Wype Doles; Triskele; Barnsley; Castleford; Sullivan's; Goathland; Whip the Cat; Maltby; Essex Girls; Black Swan; Black Adder; Mabel Gubbins; Lamb and Flag; North British; Snark; Hoxon Hundreds; Ryburn; Southport; Stone Monkey

Committee; Rapper ~Linda Hewing; Longsword ~Richard Bojanowski; Technical Rapper ~Chris Cartridge; Treasurer ~Jenny Day; Outside World Liaison ~Sally Wearing; Archive ~Ivor Allsop; Web site ~Paul Davenport; Phil Heaton ~Secretary

Apologies: Redcar, High Spen, Pete Coe, Southport, Don Ratcliffe.

The meeting opened at 18.00.

1 Minutes of 2007 Annual General Meeting

These were accepted by the meeting.

2 Reports from Officers

Reports were given by the Secretary and Treasurer.

2.1 Secretary – Phil Heaton

Newsletters: Chris Cartridge had produced two newsletters, nos 4 and 5. He had been trying to stick to one page, but next one may be bigger. He issued them when there was enough information to warrant one. The deadline for the next one was the end of October 2008. Phil asked for people to provide information to Chris about when they were dancing out in the winter. Both he and Aubrey stressed the importance of good communications between sword dancers. Aubrey asked for feedback from teams, saying that there was no point in moaning if they didn't do this.

EFDSS Trophy: This had been competed for this afternoon and won by St Henry's. The SDU was very pleased to see Diana Jowett there today, representing the Society and judging for the competition.

Sword Spectacular: One of the major sword activities of the year was the Sword Spectacular in York, which had gone really well. The SDU was happy to support the organisers and had provided the public exhibition which was on display in the Guild Hall and seen by a few hundred visitors over the weekend. Aubrey made some great connections

with Durham County Council who loaned us the display boards and who were keen to promote local traditions. Many thanks to the contributors ~ John Asher, George Wallace, and Ron and Jenny Day, and to Linda Hewing for helping with the mounting.

Brian Tasker: Congratulations to Brian Tasker of White Star Sword who has been elected as Squire of the Morris Ring. He was involved with the SDU via Sallyport and he has been elected on the strength of his sword connections.

Hire swords: thanks to Frank Lee, there were now 20 rappers available for hire. Fixed handles. They will only be available to SDU members for short term loan, e.g. for festivals. Hirer will pay for transport/carriage and any breakages or losses. Will be formal contract for hiring swords, which is being drawn up by Amy O'Brien. SDU was keen not to lose any swords, as had been known to happen in the past when EFDSS used to hire swords. Will be based in Draycott.

Cecil Sharp House swords: Intending to re-handle, clean and oil (which users will need to wipe off), then making sets of 6 or 8 (or 7 & 9, if there are enough, to allow for character). Still working on them – may take some time.

Joe (Grenoside) asked about swords that were presented to Kennedy in 1933, when some of Grenoside's swords went to EFDSS. They had tried to retrieve them several times. Phil said that the swords that had been found at the house were wrapped in newspaper from the 50s & 60s, so were later. Ivor Allsop pointed out that Grenoside's swords may have been lost when the House was bombed in the war.

Junior Rapper Tournament in Loughborough: This had been organised by Damien Barber in June, and was excellent. SDU and some of its officers had been involved. 12 teams took part, and the winners came from Pontefract, Barnsley and Loughborough.

Durham Miners' Gala: In July the Sword Dance Union was represented at the Durham Miners Gala. Thanks to the Chairman, Sallyport and the Kingsmen had been invited to dance into the City with the Wingate Banner. A rare honour. There will be an even bigger presence next year. The connection with the Durham and Northumberland Coalfield has will be extended when a new Sword Dance Banner will be unveiled at next year's DERT in Newcastle, funding permitting.

Whitby: Three of the SDU committee (Phil, Aubrey and Ivor) had been active at Whitby Folk Week. The SDU were happy to endorse a Dance Spectacular on the Sunday of the first weekend, held in the Spa. Thanks to Richard Bojanowski and Kate Atkinson who organised it. The Archivist (Ivor) was interrogated by two other Gold Badgists (Phil & Aubs) from the SDU and stood up to some intensive and sober questioning. Tapes and videos are available under duress. The same two interrogators were asked to explain the workings of the SDU to a different gathering trying to eat their dinner in peace.

Longsword Competition: Many thanks to Alistair Bloomfield and Sullivan's who organised today's events and this evening's rapper tours (despite a lot of interference and meddling from the Secretary).

Support: Help had been provided to people with insurance issues and about CRB checks. Risk assessments had been given to various other bodies and festivals.

Insurance: There were ongoing issues with this. The SDU were organising a rapper tour at the Joint Morris Organisation's Day of Dance in Nottingham. The JMO had said that some of the SDU's teams were not insured, which was bollocks. This would be discussed later.

DART 2010: This may go ahead in Boston, USA, and would be discussed later.

Grenoside: Were organising an event in 2010, which would incorporate the Longsword competition.

2.2 Treasurer – Jenny Day

Jenny presented copies of the accounts, the membership list and her report, which is included here.

“This time last year when I took over the accounts, we had £720.17 in the bank account. Over the year, we have received £627.67 in memberships, mainly renewals. We need to spread the word and encourage more sword teams to join.

We paid £34.57 on business cards for the committee members. We supported Damien's excellent junior sword dance competition in Loughborough by supplying all entrants with a rosette. Cost £25.00. £95 has been paid as deposit for the hire of the Guildhall for today's event, and I have now paid the balance of £280.00.

This leaves us with £913.27 in the bank. We will be paying out for swords when Frank has supplied them, so we need to increase our funds.

Membership runs from October to November, so renewals are now due. Will email round but am willing to accept cash or cheques now.”

Accounts:

These were accepted by the meeting. Proposed by Aubrey, seconded by Alistair.

3 Election of Officers

All the officers were willing to stand again and were returned unopposed.

4 Other business

4.1 Longsword competition

Alistair said that some teams had not come because they were not keen on competing. Chris Cartridge pointed out that they could adopt the same policy as DERT and have an exhibition class. This was very popular in the late 1990s, but had reduced and now only an occasional team exhibited.

Aubrey said that teams could ask the judges just to give constructive comments but not marks.

Alistair said that the teams competing today had been keen to find out their marks. He volunteered to distribute them.

4.2 Insurance

Phil reported that he had had a quote for people doing workshops/teaching of £1300 for 40 people. This was £30 per person and was the cheapest he had found. He reported that Michael Stimpson (who organises the insurance for the JMO) said that if the teacher was acting on behalf of a team who is a member of the JMO, then they would be insured. Would need to make sure the team was invited to do the workshop, and document that the team had said yes and the fee had been processed through the team's accounts. There was no need to fear documenting things, but to just process as usual.

He wasn't sure about the position of individuals who were not members of a team. People could join EFDSS who provided insurance. Ron Day asked for this to be mentioned in the next newsletter. Chris Cartridge said he would advise that this was the best course and inform members.

4.3 DERT & SDU's involvement

2010: Derby

2011: Oxford

2012: Bristol

Phil said that one of the problems at DERT was the judging. SDU had been asked to organise the judges. If anyone wanted to be a judge, they should tell him.

4.4 Awards

This was one of the reasons for the SDU – to reward the people who have put a lot into sword dancing over the years. We need a method of commemorating effort similar to EFDSS's gold badges. The SDU were seeking ideas of how this could be done and who should receive one. Everyone was asked to tell the SDU by email about anyone who should have an award.

John Asher asked whether they could be posthumous. Some names were suggested. Aubrey said that they were not barred and would be considered.

Chris Cartridge said that the constitution (which includes how awards could be made) had been voted on as a general meeting, so there may need to be an EGM if there was an issue about this. But it was why the SDU was created and he asked for suggestions.

4.5 Workshops

Anyone who considered themselves able to teach rapper or longsword should contact Richard to register. Chris had done a workshop for a team, and included their existing dance. Workshops were not just about dance notation. 250 Club - it was suggested that there could be a 250 club, for rapper dancers who have taught more than 250 people between them.

4.6 Joint Morris Organisation (JMO)

There had been closer links with the morris organisations. The JMO held a joint day of dance every two years. This would be in Nottingham in 2009. SDU had approached the JMO about encouraging sword teams to take part. Longsword teams could apply through the organisation they belonged to (MF, Ring, OM).

Linda Hewing was going to organise a rapper tour and wanted to find out who wanted to take part. It would be from about 10.30 am to the afternoon, including the massed stand. There was a sign up sheet today. She would publish more information about it when available.

4.7 DART 2010

Great Meadows and Tom K wanted to organise an event in 2010 in the USA. It had been suggested he did it at Easter (April 4th), but had not yet replied. It would be open to USA teams and anyone in the UK who wanted to go. It was suggested that it should include both rapper and longsword. It may be possible to organise flights on Monarch together.

The SDU was happy to support it but not to organise it. It was difficult enough to get teams to Derby for today's events.

4.8 Other issues

JMO: Aubrey had volunteered to become more involved with the JMO at the last SDU AGM. He said that there were more connections now. And Brian Tasker, the Squire of the Ring, was sympathetic to sword dancers.

Sword survey: Richard said that this had been sent out and encouraged people to pass it on to other people to fill in. The form was on the SDU website.

Website: Paul Davenport was happy to put information on the website. He needed input from teams. Aubrey said that Paul was not sure what to put on. Chris volunteered to tell Paul what needs to go on, so asked people to send information to him, to send onto Paul. He also asked teams to add links on their websites to the SDU website.

Sword law: The law banning certain swords was discussed. It did not affect rapper and longsword dancers, but had got us some publicity.

Communications in SDU: John Asher said that the SDU group was no longer in operation.

Archive: Ivor gave a plea for people to provide material for the archive. And if anyone wanted any information from the sword archive to contact him.

5 Date of longsword competition and SDU annual general meeting

Some possibilities were being discussed for the 2009 longsword competition. It was not as difficult to organise as DERT. The SDU was trying to encourage Handsworth to come. Phil asked everyone to be positive and to encourage teams to come along. It was up to the members of the SDU to spread the word. The competition was open to everyone.

The meeting closed at 18.58.

Postscript

Stuart Higson said that anyone who wanted documents from the Sword Spectacular (e.g. risk assessments, manual) to contact him. He was happy to provide them by email. The Sword Spec committee was also happy to pass on what they had learnt, so everyone was welcome to pick their brains.

Sword Dance Union AGM
Saturday October 17
HANDSWORTH PARISH CENTRE
(After Competition)

1. Welcome ~ Chair
2. Apologies
3. Minutes from 2008
4. Matters arising
5. Reports from Officers
 - 1.1 Chair
 - 1.2 Secretary
 - 1.3 Treasurer
6. Election of Officers

The SDU Constitution allows for ANNUAL elections
Any SDU member is eligible to stand.
The Committee comprises;
Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
Technical Officers
 1. Longsword
 2. Rapper, currently two postsOther Organisations Representative
Website organiser
Archivist
7. A.O.B
 - *Awards in the light of recent deaths
 - *Future direction
 - *Archive news
 - *Umbrella organisation

MEMBERS LIST as at October 2009

Individuals

- 1.Redcar Sword
- 2.Barnsley Sword
- 3.Triskele Sword
- 4.Southport Sword
- 5.Stone Monkey
- 6.Grenoside Sword
- 7.High Spen Blue
- 8.Sir Harry's Sword (Junior team)
- 9.Ryburn Sword
- 10.Sproughton Long Blades
- 11.Wype Doles
- 12.Sullivan's Sword
- 13.Ryknild Rabble
- 14.Bishop Gundulfs
- 15.Sallyport Sword
- 16.Newcastle Kingsmen
- 17.Black Swan Rapper
- 18.North British Sword
- 19.Whip the Cat
- 20.Unfortunate Rapperettes
- 21.Black Rigg Rapper
- 22.Rockingham
Rapper & Sword
- 24.Handsworth Sword
- 25.Lord Conyers Morris & Sword
- 26.Hexham Morris & Sword
27. Great Meadows

Organisation

Morris Federation

Individuals

Stuart Bater

Trish Bater

Ivor Allsop

Pat Malham

Sally Wearing

Sue Coe

Pete Coe

Steve Corrsin

Brian Kell

Don Ratcliffe

Aubrey O'Brien

Chris Cartridge

Tony Foxworthy

Kate Atkinson

John Asher

Stuart Higson

Andy Smith

Stella Roddis

Jenny Day

Ron Day