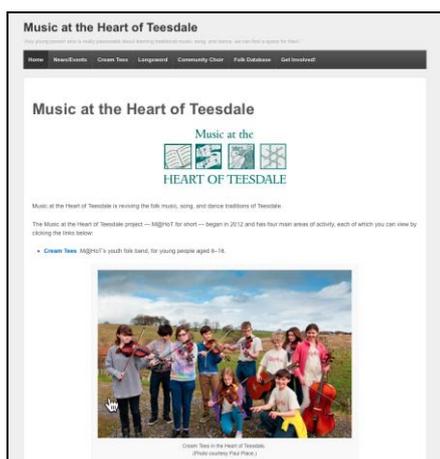


## M@HoT launches new website: www.musicattheheartofteesdale.com

**M@HoT announced the launch of its new website on May 1<sup>st</sup> after several months' work by Friends of M@HoT's Guy Hart-Davis, who put it all together.**



The home page, pictured, will take you to series of sections including News and events, Cream Tees, Longsword, plans for our new Community Choir and how to get involved.

One of the key areas - and perhaps in the long run the one that may prove most valuable - will be a fully accessible and searchable database containing the Teesdale folk archive that lead researcher **Mike Bettison** has pulled together over the first three years of the project.

"What's really good about the

site," said Cream Tees band member **Teddy Hart-Davis**, who worked on the website content with his Dad, "is that it is simple both to manage and to navigate. You can listen to our 'Rooted' suite, and even order a copy if you wish. You can learn more about the history of Longsword dancing in the area and view lots of photos of our past activities. And if you want to join you can find out how to do that too!"

You can even catch up on or download back issues of **M@HoT News!**

## 'Pride of Teesdale': M@HoT Scoops Awards!

**The M@HoT project was very excited to receive local and national awards earlier this year for its work and achievements during its first three years.**



Cream Tees pictured at The Hub receiving their 'Young Achievers' award.

First, we learnt that Cream Tees had been awarded the Teesdale Mercury's 'Pride of Teesdale' 'Young Achievers' award for 2014.

Then, at a very snazzy Oscars-style Teesdale Business Awards ceremony at The Witham in February, we were delighted to pick up a 'Best Community Engagement Project' award.

Thirdly, our 'Rooted - A Teesdale Suite' composition was a winning finalist in the 'New Roots' national youth music competition in April. One of the judges, **Alistair Anderson**, especially liked the 'very effective arrangements' in the piece.



### Inside this issue:

Pages 2-3: Longsword Dance Revival – celebrating our achievements!  
Page 4: 'Meet the Folk' and those all-important Diary Dates.

# Longsword Dance Revival

"I doubt very much if there's more youth Longsword activity in any other area of the country." So said M@HoT's Mike Bettison when we reviewed our work in a recent project meeting. Here we look back over and celebrate some of the achievements and highlights of bringing about a Longsword Dance Revival in Teesdale during the first four years of the **Music at the Heart of Teesdale** project...

## An auspicious beginning

Although Mike had established that there had been Longsword dancing in Teesdale, it was a significant day for the M@HoT project in 2012 when we received a note from **Kim Harding**, the wife of the vicar of St Mary's Church in Barnard Castle, to say that she had come across a reference to a Longsword dance and an accompanying play in Gainford in the writings of the then vicar's daughter, **Alice Edleston**, from that village.

In November 1893, Alice had sent Thomas Ordish, the expert in the field in those late-Victorian times, descriptions of costumes, tunes and transcripts of the plays. Though much has since been lost, this gave us the opportunity to think about reintroducing the dance into the dale.



A Gainford sword dancer's hat from 1894.

Copies of Alice's original letters and part of the tune - and even a photograph of a Longsword dancer's hat and coat (though sadly not in colour!) can be viewed online in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (part of the amazing 'The Full English' digital archive) at: [www.vwml.org](http://www.vwml.org) A transcript of the play can be found at: [www.folkplay.info/Texts/86nz11ce.htm](http://www.folkplay.info/Texts/86nz11ce.htm)

## Stirrings at Teesdale School

Over the past three years, M@HoT has offered a day of Longsword dance workshops to all the new Year 7s in their first term at Teesdale School. With the full support of the school, we feel it is important that every child gets the opportunity to learn this traditional dance from the dale.

In 2012 the first workshops were led by **Alex Cumming**. Since last year the sessions have been led 'in-house' by M@HoT's own team that have included Gainford-based tutor **Patrick Langdon** and musicians **Mike Bettison**, **Neil Diment** and **Helen Bishop** (who managed to combine her role as school librarian with being our 'Longsword Dance Champion' within the school).



Tom Redman, from the English Folk Dance and Song Society, lead the Year 7's workshop sessions in 2013.

## Situation Vacant! : Editor's Corner

M@HoT project co-ordinator **Neil Diment** has not only been busy putting this issue of M@HoT News together, but also helping Guy Hart-Davis by providing content for the new website and establishing the new M@HoT Facebook page too. I hope you will 'Like' us. If you fancy lending a hand with keeping any of these up to date in the future - and gaining some valuable 'social media' experience in the process - please do get in touch!



## Teesdale Longsword Dance team

The team is now well established in Teesdale School and has gone from strength to strength. It has performed both near and far under Patrick's guidance - from the Ovington Maypole celebrations to national traditional 'Days of Dances', where in both Keswick in 2014 and Cockermouth last May (seen right) we have been the only youth Longsword dance team invited to take part.



Teesdale Longsword Dance tutor Patrick Langdon presents the John Browell trophy to the winning Goodall House team.

Last autumn for the first time, and in order to generate further interest in school, we ran our first 'Interhouse Longsword Dance Competition'. Teams from the school's three houses competed - 'Strictly' style! - in a dance-off organised as part of the school's end of term 'WinterFest' production.

The winners were presented with medals and a specially engraved '**John Browell**' trophy. John used to perform with Patrick down in the Spen Valley in West Yorkshire in their own dancing days, and donated a complete set of steel swords to the team - previously we'd had to make do with a set of wooden ones hand made by Patrick.

## Primary Schools Programme

Having successfully established a Longsword dance team at Teesdale School which performs regularly in the area, we are also now starting to introduce the tradition in the feeder primary schools. Last year we ran a pilot programme in Bowes Hutchinson primary school that culminated in a performance from two teams at the village's Christmas Fayre.

Building on the success of that project, this summer we have been working in three primary schools - in Gainford, Green Lane in Barnard Castle and Bowes again. And, drawing on the letters of **Alice Edleston** now in 'The Full English' archive, the Gainford performance even included a version of the 'Sword play' performed by the pupils and musicians too!



Pupils from Gainford primary school gave the first public performance of a longsword dance in the village for over 150 years, as part of the 'Big Weekend' in June.

## Looking to the future...

*When Mike Bettison and I first met there was no longsword dance activity in Teesdale. Now youngsters are dancing longsword in four schools and at the Hub. Teesdale Longsword exists in its own right, with its own set of metal swords and a good reputation. A sword-play has been performed in Gainford. That is more progress than I would have ever dreamed possible just three years ago.*

*As to the next steps? The youngsters themselves will decide how they want the dance to be. They are already changing and adding to the moves we have taught them. And why not? It is important that they don't think it's a fossilized tradition. It's theirs and they must do with it as they will. And then... an adult team, perhaps? **Patrick Langdon***

## Diary Dates

### July

**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>**

*Cream Tees & Teesdale Longsword Dance team performances at Teesdale School's 'SummerFest'.*

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>**

*'Ropes Course' at Kingsway Centre, Middleton, 10-12pm, followed by Cream Tees 'Acoustic cafe' at Bowlees visitor centre, 1pm*

### August

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> - Monday 31<sup>st</sup>**

*Cream Tees to perform at Towersey Festival? (Tbc)*

### October

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup>**

*First Cream Tees Jamming session with our 'Folk Degree' tutors of the new school year at The Hub, 4.15-5.45pm.*

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>**

*Sword Dance Union (SDU) Longsword Tournament Goathland, North Yorkshire.*

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup>**

*Cream Tees & Teesdale Longsword dancers perform at the Gainford Folk Festival.*

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>**

*Regular '3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month' Cream Tees 'Acoustic cafe' gigs at The Witham resume.*

### December

**Friday 4<sup>th</sup>**

*Workshop, concert and ceilidh at The Witham with Ian Stephenson.*

**For all other dates of Cream Tees jamming & Teesdale Longsword practice sessions, see the 'Members Calendar' on the M@HoT website.**

# Meet the Folk: Our Tutors

**Our Longsword Dance tutor, Patrick Langdon, moved to Gainford 12 years ago from West Yorkshire where he was the foreman (or 'dancing master') of Spen Valley Longsword for many years.**

"When I moved into this beautiful dale one of my dreams was to find a sword team I could dance with," he said. But to his disappointment, there wasn't one. At the time he thought that his sword dancing days were over. Then he heard that M@HoT had been researching folk traditions in Teesdale and had found reference to a sword dance not just in Teesdale, but in Gainford! Patrick got in touch and, with Mike Bettison and Neil Diment, he helped formulate a plan to make longsword live again in Teesdale.

"I think I am incredibly fortunate to be involved with young people who take pride and pleasure in their traditional music and dance," he said. "Their enthusiasm is obvious and infectious, their pleasure and pride simply clear to see. How often do we have a dream to aspire to, and then find that reality is more than the dream?"

**Musician Helen Bishop plays the English Concertina with both the Teesdale Longsword Dance team and Barnard Castle's 'Black Sheep' Border Morris dance team.**

"I have had an interest in folk music and singing since I was a teenager and started dancing Rapper in the 1980s," she told us. "When we moved to Barnard Castle, I joined the local Border Morris side with my husband. 25 years on we still meet to practise every Wednesday evening in The Witham!"

"It is lovely to see our young students continuing the traditions with such enjoyment and growing as dancers and musicians. I am delighted to have influenced just one of them to take up my own instrument and, so far, she is relishing the challenge as much as I do."



Patrick in action with the Teesdale Longsword team at the Morris Federation AGM and national 'Day of Dance' in Keswick in Sept, 2014.



Helen in full Border Morris garb at the Georgian Fair in Cockermouth in May, 2015.

For more information about the M@HoT project, contact: Neil Diment, M@HoT project co-ordinator, 22 Wilson Street, Barnard Castle, DL12 8JU tel: 01833 638263 email: neil@ndiment.co.uk facebook: Music at the Heart of Teesdale web: www.musicattheheartofteesdale.com