

From Facebook:

We really enjoyed yet another Easter Meet and wish we'd done this years ago! Anyway, we think that, even if we hadn't had such good activities, it would have been worth going to just to meet up with such a lovely and friendly bunch of people! We felt completely at home and didn't even lock our motorhome, most of the time! I wish I was as talented as most of the people who attended and will keep practising the skills they taught me! Next time I need to divide myself in 2 so I can attend more workshops! We can't praise the people who organised/lead the work team and the race course workers enough for their efforts over and above their normal duties! We weren't sure whether one of the staff had a twin because he kept appearing in the Bistro, bar and on the tractor! Jane

From forms (front page):

Dance – wonderful tutors and bands to accompany during workshop & night dances

Singaround room was a good size this year

Concerts had a great variety of acts & performers were able to showcase their talents with longer slots. We are lucky to have such talent.

Craft – a nice opportunity for people to try something new.

It would be nice if the two workshops I wanted to attend were not scheduled at the same time.

On site catering – should be available in the evenings.

We were subject to a minimum spend of £200 per opening. They aggregated breakfast and lunch, but the more times we opened the more we would be expected to spend. We thought lunchtimes were probably going to be more popular than evenings. If we had done both perhaps only the same number of people would have partaken, and we wouldn't be able to guarantee minimum spend. If we do this again we may well opt for lunch and dinner, rather than breakfast.

Loved Unison in Harmony workshop & all the opportunities to play ukulele with like minded people.

Thoroughly enjoyed encaustic wax & patchwork.

Breakfast too expensive – full £6.00 & £2.00 tea

Food was good but lukewarm had to send back.

Particularly liked the fact that there was a singing workshop for the inexperienced.

Could there be a note indicating which workshops would benefit from staying for more than one session, and which were good as 'one-offs'.

This has been a regular comment so needs thinking about. We can only do what our volunteer workshop leaders are happy to do.

Talent in the Folk Group never ceases to amaze me.

Only went to one craft workshop but the help was great for an absolute novice.

Tutors extremely good, not all rooms suitable size of workshop. Tai chi needs a hard floor.

Regrettably hard floors are in very short supply at this venue

Music – tutors excellent. Some rooms good, others cramped/disturbed by other music workshops.

Showcase – good – PA, variety, organisation. Bad – not enough seats, same as previous years.

There were enough chairs when we took into account the number of people in the other dance and the singer's room. Unfortunately there were free chairs but in odd places around the room which you probably couldn't get to.

Too many dance workshops, some did not get enough support.

Concerts – comfortable venue, good variety of artistes.

Sadly unable to dance but loved watching.

All music brilliant. Loved it.

Mainly did dancing and ukulele

Excellent preparation & tutoring in box making, bargello, hardanger & felting

It might be necessary to reduce the number of dance workshops to potentially increase the number of dancers attending each workshop.

Went to evening dance once – no spare people to dance with me. Afternoon heys and reels very good.

Not sure how we can address this but I am sure someone can come up with a solution.

Concerts – great acts & supports

All craft workshops attended great. Glass painting, archery, key rings, tai-chi, peg weaving, encaustic wax.

Wow! You were very busy

Really enjoyed beginners dance with Sarah & Ian

Really enjoyed skiffle, and sounds like the 60s

Really enjoyed beaded jewellery.

Many thanks for all the hard work put in to making this event such a success.

Sounds like 60s needed a larger room

If we do this venue again we will make sure we swap with the larger room

Always impressed with what is available

Attended music workshops and as always very impressed. Not enough hours in the day to join in the craft sessions

Please can you organise better weather? Big thank you to everyone for yet another wonderful Easter Meet. You all deserve a rest.

Obviously, the guy upstairs was too busy with something else to sort this one out

Music workshops were really good.

First time and proved better than expected

Craft – good variety, thanks to all leaders

Craft not so many and times clash

Morris please?

We did have Cotswold scheduled but leader was injured

What we saw of the concerts was excellent standard. Lighting better in concert 2. Sound in 1907 was excellent. Much better than previous concerts.

1907 chairs uncomfortable

Song – lack of etiquette in singarounds – people coming in and out during performances. Lovely friendly meet.

Craft – lovely to learn something new & useful (sox)

Concert 1 poorly lit, difficult to see the performers. **This was noted and sorted for concert 2.**

This was our first Folk Group Meet and we were astonished at the range of activities, the friendliness and enthusiasm of everyone involved. Thank you all for organising the event.

Additional comments:

Very enjoyable, wide range of activities, friendly atmosphere. We like to be amongst families – all generations. Good site venue, handy for town & surrounding countryside.

Just an idea to encourage the next generation, would it be possible to invite scouts, venture scouts etc. to camp with the Youth Section.

Unfortunately, as a members only meet, and the rules for Exempted Camping needing to be followed this is not possible.

Workshop program is excellent, but future organisers shouldn't feel under pressure to provide as much. In my view, a little less choice would not be a problem.

Likewise, whilst lots of biscuits, cake, Easter eggs for kids etc is all lovely it is not an essential part of the weekend. If volunteers are in short supply, buttering buns and slicing cake is maybe something that could be dropped?

I wouldn't like to be the person who took this formally to the Group!!!!!!

For the crafts it would be really useful to say in the programme which can be done on a 'drop in' basis (i.e. can produce something in one session), and which need regular attendance. That might encourage people to give things a try.

Thank you everyone for a super weekend, despite the weather.

Easter meet suggestion – 'First Timers Forum', maybe arrival day early evening. General information & Q&A. e.g. update programme, do you need to attend all four sessions? If in doubt ASK.

Let first timers know about 'bring your cup' for teabreaks.

A big thank you to all the organisers for a very well run Easter Meet. Really enjoyed everything about it (except the weather of course). Look forward to 2019.

A great varied programme, well done.

Have craft session x 1 for a taster, rather than having to attend all 4 days.

As a single tent person – many thanks to Graham & Fiona for filling my flasks every evening as it made my life so much easier. (At Evesham they refused to fill my flasks).

??????

Put the feedback form in with the programme sent in the post if possible.

We also really value the 'other' elements of Easter such as archery – which was excellent.

Workshop leaders should be given priority parking, as do the working party. I feel if you don't, from overhearing comments, your offers for workshops will be diminished.

No space for comments on music workshops.

Apologies, that was my fault, it happened last time and as things got a bit hectic leading up to the meet I just lifted last years and forgot to amend it. Sorry.

Noel's workshop was excellent, nowhere to say it.

See above

Great meet considering the awful weather.

Special thank you to Bernie & Maria for the fleece to fibre, spinning & weaving, and sock knitting.

I am a single 'first-timer' and I have had a great time. I wondered if there had ever been a meet/session/coffee met up for first timers who could meet others? If never tried could it be considered perhaps? Newcomers could meet each other and perhaps be given a little bit of basic information e.g. 'don't try to do it all', 'check reception for room changes etc'

Don't know what facilities are available but Stratford upon Avon Racecourse has a camp site.

Will definitely pass on comments (several) about meet & great. Really pleased that so many 'first timers' have had a great time.

- Sound man (Joe) was extremely helpful & pleasant
- I enjoyed the whole weekend, met some lovely people and had a lot of fun
- Volunteers should get price reductions to compensate for their time (might need to raise the fee to cover this) See later comment
- Weather! Appalling! Maybe move meet to a fixed date at the beginning of May? Tried it once and meet cancelled due to rain.
- Very strong accent on English Folk music and dance, this is to be expected, but more variety would be appreciated – Scottish/Irish/Welsh dancing
- Would be good if a local milkman or similar could drive round site each morning selling milk, bread, newspapers etc. We had this at another Folk Festival – very useful facility.
- Need to publicise the Folk Group and the Meet more.

Venue – easy access by road

Someone to sell newspapers on Sunday?

Advertise in Club Magazine?

Onsite catering poor for vegetarians.

Agreed. Did ask for vegetarian options, but they were limited.

If there are too many volunteers to run the normal folk dance workshops maybe they could share with 2 days each, e.g. an experienced caller with a newer caller.

Young children & parents were unhappy about older (young youth) children going to the workshops aimed at children. The programme should make it clear what age is catered for.

Think this may refer to Maypole, which has always been multi-generational. For some reason the write up for Maypole didn't make it to print this year.

Another very successful Easter Meet. Organisation was excellent. Provision made to assist and attend to problems or emergencies was reassuring.

Excellent value for money!! Maybe consider raising fees?

First time I have been

- A first timers meet & greet would be useful especially to point out bring a mug for tea. Also, other tips like some craft sessions will require attendance at each session.
- Hot food of some sort available in the evenings
- Explanation somewhere of what e.g. mummers & sing around are.

Hoops Bar was an excellent help but to help them and secure a meal, as they nearly ran out, would pre-paid tickets help?

Please look/listen for dogs left in tents etc during evening whilst some people at dances etc. Dogs keep barking.

Also during evening engines & generators left running is noisy.

Programme write ups missing for some activities.

This may have been due to late programme additions

Suggestions, we were camping on a lake and it got worse. This weather was forecasted so better use should have been made of any hard standing to move units throughout the weekend.

At the end of the meet it will take a long time to tow all the vans off the grass. When you have a long journey ahead this stress is not helpful. This is what people will remember and possibly put them off booking again.

Information on where to dispose of waste water.

All units were towed off the field before the mid-day cut off. It was amazing watching the tractors.

Event very good – campsite very bad. Water & mud everywhere. We are camped in a puddle and this is unacceptable. We have a large dog and it is extremely difficult. Last time we also camped in a large puddle. If this area is used in future we will not attend. We may need to be towed off site. How do I earn brownie points to get a hard standing pitch? Hard standing was under utilised.

There is a box on the booking form for you to tick if you want hard standing. Unfortunately, most venues have nowhere near as much hard standing as the racecourse, and if you had been camped on grass just about anywhere in the country this weekend you would have got just as wet. Also you need to consider that you can't use an awning on hard standing.

Pitching – There is room for about 21 units on the area in front of the grandstands – space left for more units this year. If not all spaces needed for easy access/disabled can more people be sent here. Not all of the area of car parking with roads was filled up. It is a better area for egress in case of very inclement weather.

The car parking with roads was largely unavailable to us due to it being already waterlogged. The groundsman showed us which areas we could and couldn't use, and these pitches were out of bounds.

These two are a bit lengthy but raise important points:

We have to ensure that the Folk Dance & Song Group does not lose its musicians at section level. I hear that lots of music is played off i-pads etc. Nothing is happening to attract musicians and therefore if it continues the whole thing will be lost, and just dance groups continuing for a little while until that era of people die, then it is completely finished.

Money that is sat earning zilt in DA's/sections bank accounts should be put to good use to help fund Easter Meets costs and expenses to benefit future generation who are not frightened of what the future holds than doing the same – therefore nothing changes and everything folds up.

Most sections members have retired and have very expensive units – put the fees up and cover losses. You can't keep expecting cheap breaks and workshops. Use the money wisely YES.

Better investing in Easter or other large rallies in which everyone unites, than having large bank accounts and no members.

Some interesting points raised in this one

Another great Easter Meet and so well organised and run from arriving on site to packing up & leaving. A special thank you to the outdoor stewards who had some appalling conditions to contend with

- Concerts – really enjoyed the format this year and quality of performers was excellent. Good to give people the opportunity to show the variety of their talent with a longer slot. In previous years it has been difficult to distinguish between 1 & 2, as there was repetition, but it was quite distinct this year.
- Would have liked to see a basic beginners dance. There were quite a few DA members attending for the first time on the back of NFOL, and they would have liked a basic workshop. It can be a bit intimidating sometimes.

First session every day in Centre Course was beginners dance. It was in the programme. Maybe we need to emphasise it more

- Would like to suggest a session is set aside for meetings such as FICC, NFOL & future of the Folk Group Easter Meet. Difficult to attend and contribute to lunchtime meetings if you are running workshops before and after lunch.
- Mention was made of payment (?) reduced fees etc for volunteer workers. We personally are opposed to this idea, but some people felt that this was happening when workshop leaders were presented with thank you cards in envelopes. Sad as this is a lovely gesture having a handmade card but that is life!

Didn't realise people were thinking there was payment in the envelopes!

It is highly unlikely we will ever pay people, and giving reduced camping fees to volunteers brings its own problems, as you don't know where to stop, if you do it for outside stewards, you have to do it for indoor stewards, band leaders, callers, workshop leaders etc. Perhaps outsourcing the outdoor stewarding by paying an events company to do it after the first day would be the answer, and it takes the responsibility off our own people.

- We had a great time and lots of fun.

We had a very long comment about how we run the raffle. The gist of it was that we should run 4 separate raffles for four different days as our current way of drawing the raffle off line is unfair. The gentleman suggested we draw live for people to pick their own prizes. In our opinion, if we did this we would need to set aside around ¾ hour (plus folding time) per day if we had the number of prizes we did this time. Would suggest we leave things as they are, but if anyone feels they want to give it a try feel free.

Over-heard comment: The concerts were very enjoyable but too professional.

The performers in the concerts were mainly the same people that perform every year, but were given only one spot each to avoid repetition. There were a few that have never attended Easter before, and they were refreshing and in one case brilliant. They are all members and gave us two full evenings worth of great entertainment. It is up to future organisers how they take this forward. The decision to run the concerts this way was based on the feedback received two years ago.

50 forms received

*Music workshops – Picked up from comments as no space (my fault)

**Children's room – most N/A

Age profile of people who filled in forms

65+ 32
51-64 12
36-50 4
18-35 1
Under 18 1

Feedback tick boxes				
	Excellent	Good	Adequate	Poor
Dance w/s	21	12		
Evening Dance	28	8		
Song w/s	16	7		
Singarounds	16	7		
Concert 1	19	7		
Concert 2	17	8		
Music w/s	9*			
showcase			1	
Craft	17	6		
Children's act.	3**	2		
Tea breaks	38	11		
On site catering	8	15	1	2