



Some dancers and observers have commented recently about a lack of Sheffield traditional dance teams appearing at the revived Dancing England 2017.

Sheffield people are quite rightly proud of their city, its heritage and culture, and its vibrant young and inclusive folk and traditional dance scene. Dancing England organisers have got deep-running connections with Sheffield and have had excellent days and nights out watching local teams perform there, as well as across the wider dance world at festivals, Days of Dance and the like.

The People's Republic of Sheffield, we feel, is the perfect place to host such an iconic event's rebirth because of its own history, traditions, culture, warmth, pubs, music and locality. However, it seems clear that we may have not explained Dancing England's philosophy. So with our 'Organisers' hats on, we'd like to say...

Firstly whether hosted by Derby in the past, Sheffield in 2017, or anywhere else in the future, Dancing England is exactly about that – the Dancing Traditions of England. So no team has been guaranteed a place simply because of where the Event is being held. In the ten years of Dancing England, Black Cap Rapper never performed and they were the organisers.

Secondly we've worked hard to develop a show bringing together a smorgasbord of interesting and excellent teams with a Traditional base, from all over the country including teams not often seen outside their own immediate locality.

Thirdly not every team we wanted to invite could get a team together. And fourthly, although there are two longsword teams in Sheffield, we agonised about inviting one and not the other for Dancing England's first revival as we didn't want to show a preference.

As organisers, we had a very clear idea about what Dancing England was - and crucially was not - and how we would put it together today, which is a show recognisable to DE veterans as having its feet firmly in the original Traditional format, but with its nose facing and embracing the future of traditional dance across the whole of England.

We're lucky to have so many traditional teams left in the country, and we fully intend to invite them all eventually, but we can't have them all at the first Event! We have only a few hours available for the show. The support for reviving Dancing England from teams such as Goathland Plough Stots and Grenoside has been invaluable. They've both contributed financially to the resurrected event, having been performers at Dancing England in the past.

In time, all the six Traditional Cotswold Morris teams and the six Traditional Longsword teams will feature alongside the many other markers of our diverse and unique customs. Look out for Straw Bears, Dragons, Hosses, Mollys, Borderers and the new teams who are pushing it all along so that there will still be a Tradition in centuries to come.

What we have got in 2017 are things you might not have seen before: The Newcastle Kingsmen dancing longsword (how many people have seen them in action not using a bendy sword or processing with Royton?) Carnival morris experts, Platt Bridge Fluffy Morris, are coming across the Pennines to demonstrate their tiptoe precision stepping - come and be amazed at their strength and fitness while you spot the links to North West Morris. Competition winners from across dance disciplines are coming to Sheffield to show off the skills and attitudes that won them prizes and accolades - but you can see them all in the one showcase on the 18th.

We know we can't please everyone with our choice of dance teams for the rebooted event. But we have stuck our heads above the parapet to show how the Traditional teams are getting on and how the whole tribal dance movement is gaining strength and quality. With these choices we're aiming to do what DE always used to do, which is to bring a stunning and eclectic mix of high quality traditional and revival English dance teams all together in one place, with a really good ceilidh band afterwards (and other stuff) to boot.

There's plenty of good stuff for Saturday 18th February. We're starting small, compared to the past events, but we're planning on Dancing England 2017 being the start of a new series. Maybe future events will be able to accommodate both Grenoside and Handsworth, as well as some of many other brilliant Sheffield teams, AND some you've heard rumours of from far-off foreign parts like 'The South', brought together under one roof.

Edwin, Phil, and Arwen

PS - the ticket page link is [JUST HERE](#) if you would like to come along