

PROCEEDINGS FROM ORGANISERS CONSULT Thursday 18 July 2019

VENUE: Beyond Q Café Weston Creek

TIME: 6.10 pm

WELCOME by Geoff and introduction of attendees

Attendees: Christine Gifford, Mark Simmons, Dave Wardle, Colin Towns, Ray Mulligan, Eileen Newmarch, Julie Szabo, Robert Hayes, Chris Briton, Geoff Kell, Ian Bull, David Ball, Nelly Rogers, Anne Mathas.

Apologies: Rob Mahony, John Hewat

MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

PREVIOUS ORGANISERS' CONSULT

The minutes and action list from previous consult (July 2018) are available on the Organisers website section and Organisers are encouraged to read them.

DANCE ETIQUETTE

Christine Gifford expressed a concern that some dancers feel that dance protocols need to be addressed by group organisers.

Matters of concern:

- 1) Some dancers report physical damage by other dancers resulting from poor technique. Attention should be drawn to dance etiquette by organisers/callers at all events to ensure safety of all. If dancers don't wish to be swung so fast etc, they should be able to say so and heeded.
- 2) Some older experienced dancers try to instruct younger dancers (who may actually have more knowledge) how to do things. It is important to encourage our young people and not offend them.

Geoff advised the 'Dance Etiquette' sheet deals with Bush dance and it can be found on the website as a pdf document: group organisers should revise this Dance Etiquette sheet if their protocols are different, and can contact Geoff for an editable copy of the pdf document.

Dance organisers should also make the document available at dances and make a strong point of encouraging their attendees to read and note them.

BUDGETS and ANNUAL REPORTS

Budgets should be submitted at the beginning of each financial year.

There is a Budget Exemplar for Organisers to look at on the Website: it can be accessed through 'Where Is It' (a spreadsheet containing all kinds of links to other spreadsheets and documents of interest to Committee members and Organisers). A link to this is on the Organisers' site.

Reports need to include record of door figures for past attendances at their events: without these the Committee has no information on which to base decisions and may not agree to the proposed budget. In some cases, this has not happened and the matter needs to be redressed.

WEBSITE

NEW ADDITIONS

Geoff has posted a few new items to the website.

Organisers' Section: 'Where Is It'; 'Idiot's' Guide to the Google Calendar'.

Members' Section: there is now a page for Newsletters and Links to Other Societies'. This is a guide for travelling members as to what activities of interest may be happening in places they may be visiting.

Geoff will also ask other Societies to include a link to our Society on their websites.

UPDATING OF INFORMATION

Word Press has implemented changes which makes editing more complicated than before. WordPress response to Editing changes is also now very slow. Geoff will discuss this with Neil, webmaster, to see if there is a tutorial that might help. 'Idiots' Guide to the Website' may also need to be updated to reflect WordPress changes to editing process. Geoff stressed that all organisers update their activities on the website as soon as an activity has happened so the website reflects current information and not old events that are finished. Please also rearrange events so they're kept in chronological order.

WEBSITE MANAGEMENT

At a committee meeting the question was asked about who did what on the website. Geoff advised that the webmaster is paid a very low rate to do the technical stuff for us and the hope was that the system would be simple so that each organiser could take care of their own pages. Geoff ends up doing more than he should and said he spends as much time as he can transferring information from the old Wiki onto the new website. Geoff would welcome help and Dave has offered to assist.

PROMOTION

Julie said she's had new members from the website. Geoff asked if Julie could ask how they got to the website in the first place the next time she has a call like this.

Julie was asked if the TNMG does any promotion other than for Kids' Dances. Julie said she'd tried but no other promotion had been successful.

Colin advised he had picked up 2 gigs earlier this year from enquirers who'd looked for someone to call a bush dance and had found Scottish Dancing on Google. The Scottish dance group had directed them to Colin. Apparently, the outside organisation had typed in 'folk dance Canberra' and come up with Scottish dance.

Geoff asked if there is any benefit of pursuing further contact with the Scottish dance groups. Mark said that there is a loose connection already as some dancers attend both MFS functions and Scottish functions as well - he is often asked if we have anything scheduled for a certain date, before they plan an event. For example, to avoid a clash between their annual ball and our Colonial Ball. Chris B said similar applies in ISD as some dancers are also Scottish dancers, and ISD talks to the Scottish group to avoid a clash between the Scottish Ball and the ISD annual October dance weekend.

Colin suggested putting up posters for MFS in the hall in Turner. Mark said this wouldn't work as it's a church notice board not a general board.

U3A was suggested by Nelly as another venue for promoting Bush Dance.

Ian will check what is involved in having our website included in the magazine Trad & Now.

Colin asked if anyone had a feeling for any online community boards in Canberra for advertising. He said there used to be about 6 but they seem to have disappeared.

Both Eileen and Geoff said they have tried to access such online boards, but often MFS is registered with them, but as passwords have been forgotten/lost they do not allow us to sign up again.

After discussion about online lists, it was concluded that we need to establish an online list including any passwords which can be passed on in future.

PROMOTIONS OFFICER

The Society used to have a Promotions Officer who looked after this but now it seems that each group does its own promotion. Trying to get an overall Promotions Officer is like trying to get a Treasurer – no one wants the job.

Geoff asked what thoughts the meeting had re finding someone. After much discussion, it was suggested an ad for a promotions officer should be placed in the next Musings. Colin stated that if we don't advertise, we'll get no one. Previous ads have not been successful. We need to find a method that is more effective.

David Ball said he would be happy to compile options for publicity, getting input from the organisers of the different groups, but would not take on a more time-consuming role.

Geoff suggested it may be more useful and effective to look at putting together a group of 3 or 4 people, rather than look for one person. They could then delegate tasks with less scope – people are often happy to take on small, defined tasks. If the work load is spread a lot further, it would be easier to get people to assist, and promotional planning and execution would have a more social feel.

PRINTED MATERIAL

Geoff asked if we are happy with current printed material. Everyone agreed the trifold is very useful and covers our range of activities in one handout.

BANNERS

There are now 4 pull up banners – TNMG, ISD, Contra, Bush Dance each have one.

At NFF Geoff asked performing groups to display them any time they were in action.

MFS also has 2 new hanging banners – one is 6' by 3' with MFS logo and by-line (Antonella wanted something like that rather than a pull up for display at End of Month dances).

The other is a new banner for the Merry Muse to replace worn-out old one. Eileen asked if she can have that to use when appropriate. Geoff will get it to her.

NFF

John and Rita managed the Marquee which had a twofold purpose – one to show a presence of the MFS, the other to provide a base for members during the Festival.

Eileen and Pierre carried the Evening Muse, which was a success.

There was a wash up meeting after NFF between John, Rita, Anne and Geoff.

In answer to Mark's question about if these efforts resulted in any new members, Eileen said: "at least two, and those two have signed up to do the sound at the Merry Muse".

Geoff pointed out that the NFF is our biggest opportunity for promotion during the year – over 10,000 of those attending are from the ACT and are our precise target audience. We need to find effective ways of reaching them, and it would be appreciated if organisers would have more involvement. It was agreed that we need to give out something tangible there, e.g. free passes for an MFS activity, so we can measure the success of our efforts.

CAP EXPO

This is an opportunity where we need to continue having a presence. We run an information stand and a demonstration bush dance. Redeemable vouchers for 2nd Saturday BDG dance were tried here and proved to be a success with 5 new people attending.

The argument that we don't get anyone from undertaking such activities is spurious. We need to have a presence in the community to raise our public profile and so need to take part in such gatherings, however redeemables should be tried in other locations as they seem to work, and also give us some measure of results.

Colin said that the annual National Trust Heritage Day, for which he organises a group, also provides such an opportunity.

Geoff informed that BDG is organising a new Bush Dance Join In group. This group will be different from Barbara's former Display group in that it will demonstrate how bush dances operate: it will not be colonial costumed; dances will be walked through quickly then called, the main object being to encourage audience participation.

Anne Mathas and Bessie Sammut will organise dancers and John Hewat will organise a ready to go promotional package which will include freebies for 2nd Saturday dances, banners and printed materials.

Perhaps ISD could do something similar when Set in their Ways does a display. Chris B says they do hand out flyers at these displays.

EVALUATION OF PROMOTION

Geoff has been trying to encourage door persons to run a sheet asking dancers how they heard about the event. This is available for organisers to use.

Colin said new dancers at times are bombarded with info about all the activities they can participate in. He suggests this can be intimidating and thinks the trifold handout should be enough to inform of available MFS options.

As mentioned above, redeemables are a practical part of evaluation.

VOLUME OF BANDS

Mark is concerned at the volume of bands at some of our dances. Dancers have heard the volume and walked out: others have stopped attending.

Dave replied to this. He also suggested we place a box of earplugs on the front desk that dancers can take if they feel the need. This shows Duty of Care.

DIRECTION OF SOCIETY

Colin advised that there will be a special fund raiser for Special Olympics involving Juliette on Saturday 14 September. Colin is coordinator and leader of the initiative.

Colin suggests starting an hour earlier, perhaps preselling tickets to relieve the burden on door persons. Band and room hire will be the only costs. All else goes to charity.

We must consider special needs dancers that night. Colin is trying to ascertain the range of disabilities we may need to cater for. He will contact the church about wheelchair access.

Geoff mentioned an email regarding disability grants which he had distributed recently, however nobody seemed to see any application for such funds in MFS activities.

MEMBERSHIP

Christine G advised 109 out of 207 members have currently renewed for the coming year. A reminder email is to be sent out shortly.

Christine enquired how long before people who have not renewed stop getting their newsletter.

Geoff said that other groups seem to regard the end of July as the cut-off date and suggests we follow the same practice.

Colin said it can be difficult for door keepers to know when members are not current - Geoff said there is a list of current members available to organisers and this should be passed on to doorkeepers.

Eileen said she had difficulty finding the cost of membership on the website. It is only on the Membership Application sheet. Geoff will rectify this oversight.

Christine would like the door person to double check handwritten membership forms to make sure all details are legible. There have been several forms that were a challenge to decipher. She would particularly like clear name, email, phone number, address.

There have been a couple of membership forms submitted without payment, Christine G has contacted the members and drawn this to their attention; so far, to no avail.

AGM 2019

To be set up same as last year.

Date – Thursday 19 September 2019

Venue – Beyond Q Books

EQUIPMENT

Geoff informed that the Equipment register is on a cloud – individual tabs for each group's equipment. He has discussed with Dave W the possibility of also having a photo record of items to be linked from the register. He suggested that the best time to do this would be when equipment is set up already rather than pull it all out specially.

Dave notified that tagging is up to date and can now also be done by Ian.

Geoff also suggested any old gear, no longer in use, be offered to other groups such as Numeralla so that we can divest ourselves of it and it no longer needs to take up unnecessary storage.

MFS 50TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2020

Shearers' Ball will be in the Woolshed. Colonial Ball will be at Albert Hall.

There will ALSO be a BDG organised ball at the Albert Hall on 7 March 2020, which is Roni and Adrian's 20th wedding anniversary. BCB will provide music. There will be New Vogue dancing during the day and a music session in the afternoon.

It has been mooted that we have a celebration in the Woolshed on the day of the Shearers' Ball, like the one for the 45th anniversary. We need to start looking at this now.

Eileen suggested an updating of "A Score and a Half of Folk" to cover the last 20 years of the Society. Ray said that the earlier edition had been fairly expensive.

EXTRA ITEMS

Colin would like cost of workshops across the Society to be equal. Chris B disagrees as different groups have different expenses, and this is reflected in door charges. Discussion followed. Geoff suggested if Colin is concerned about the discrepancy, he may like to approach the Committee and suggest that if he bring the cost of your workshop into line with other workshops, it will make a difference of \$10 per week or \$200 per year. Would this make workshop more attractive to dancers?

Geoff advised there is an advertising cost of \$500 in the Canberra Times each year, paid by MFS, for the New Year's Eve dance. The argument states this is a successful event which brings many attendees, and it is the advertising which attracts dancers. Geoff would like to see a feedback door sheet to justify the outlay. The argument also states that several years ago, certain promotional costs would be carried by the Society and not the individual organising group, because it benefits the whole Society.

Invoices – reminder that they be sent to MFS payments email address to facilitate processing; Linda, our bookkeeper, can then sets up payments for countersigning.

MEETING CLOSE 7.48pm