



## Music at the Heart of Teesdale (M@HoT) Progress report

HoT Ref B5: Claim 6: 01 January to 30 June 2014

### Research

- Mike has been looking for suitable places to host the archive of the body of work which has been collected as part of the M@HoT project. He is holding conversations with the County Durham Record Office to explore whether this will be an appropriate place.
- Mike and Neil have also made contact with octogenarian musician, Septimus Fawcett. [See "Plans for the Future" for more detail.]
- Rosie and Mike gave 2 community performances of "Notes from Teesdale" in Barnard Castle in February 2014.

### Commissioned piece

The detailed work plan was written and agreed with Sophy Ball and Ian Stephenson. The contract was signed, first payments made and the work begun [see below].



Both snow and sun during the trip around the Heart of Teesdale

### Workshops (linked to the Commissioned piece.)

- The 10<sup>th</sup> workshop weekend was held on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> & Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March. On the Friday, musicians Ian and Sophy led the session at The Hub in Barnard Castle. Initial ideas, tunes and themes were collected to inform the process for creating the commissioned piece. On the Saturday, the group had a trip around the Teesdale landscape, visiting The Bowes Museum, Egglestone Abbey, The Morrill Arms, Bowes Castle, Dotheboys Hall and The Meeting of the Waters, to gather further inspiration; and then they returned to The Hub for more musical inventiveness. Fiddler Teddy Hart-Davies observed (re Meeting of the Waters): *"The Rocks in the river look like Stonehenge has been pushed over by a bulldozer. The river must have had a lot of force to do that"*



Back in the Hub to start working on some of the musical ideas

- The 11<sup>th</sup> workshop was held on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May at the Hub, Barnard Castle. The main focus of this workshop was to prepare for the performances at Hexham Gathering on the following day [see public appearances].

- The 12<sup>th</sup> workshop (another weekend event) was held on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June at The Langdon Beck Youth Hostel in Upper Teesdale. Here Ian and Sophy presented the group with arrangements based on the musical ideas which had been borne out of the March workshop weekend. The 'first draft' of the piece was performed to an informal audience of parents and families

### Informal Jamming Sessions

The informal sessions continued to be a regular feature of this Spring and Summer period. NB: these are funded with additional money granted by Teesdale Action Partnership. The group said farewell to session leaders Izzy Burns and Alex Cumming. They will be succeeded by Grace Smith and Sam Darling in the Autumn term. Grace and Sam are final year students at the Folk & Traditional Music Degree course at Newcastle University.

### Concerts & public appearances



Cream Tees at The Dispensary café in The Witham in February 2014

- Cream Tees still continues to receive more requests than it can meet to perform at community events.
- The group performed a curtain raiser for the Jez Lowe concert at The Witham on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2014.
- Cream Tees has been providing a Saturday afternoon session once a month at the Dispensary café in the Witham.
- The group visited Hexham Gathering and gave five performances around the forum, led by Izzy and Alex.
- Cream Tees performed at the Ovington Maypole dance event



## Longsword dance

- The Longsword group continues to meet at Teesdale School; and has consolidated a good core 'membership'. The group is led by volunteer Patrick Langdon; with music provided by Mike Bettison and Helen Bishop (School Librarian), assisted by Neil Diement. Helen also carries out the role of Sword dance "champion" at school. They gave a performance at The Bowes Museum as part of the Black Sheep Morris team's Day of Dance event on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> May and at the Ovington May Day event on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> May, accompanied by Cream Tees.
- A group has been set up at Bowes Primary School. Whilst this is financed separately, it provides continuity, as it is hoped that the Year 6 pupils will carry on dancing with the M@HoT group when they get to Teesdale Secondary school.



## Trips to professional performances

Cream Tees visited Hexham Gathering on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May. This was funded mainly by individual contributions, (no longer by M@HoT funds). The purpose is now two-fold, as the young people get to see professional performances, and they also have a chance to perform themselves.

## Plans for the future

- A bid and budget to support 18 months' more activity and work up a lasting legacy for the work already achieved was carefully prepared and submitted to the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership. M@HoT is delighted to have been awarded this extension to its funding. Plans to form a 'Friends of M@HoT' group are being consolidated, as this is one of the ways to make the activities sustainable. The Friends group will also hopefully be a suitable organisation to carry out future fundraising.
- An exploratory meeting was held in April 2014; and the first formal 'Friends' meeting is to be held on Wednesday 24 September, when decisions will be made regarding how the group will be constituted; what its aims and targets should be and how often it should meet etc.
- Cream Tees will be rehearsing and recording the new composition and preparing for the premiere in November.
- One of the activities outlined in the plan for the extension of the project is to collect songs, tunes and recollections of those who have stories within living memory of playing, singing or dancing traditional songs, tunes or dances from the Heart of Teesdale. Now living in Weardale, Septimus (the seventh child) is a former game keeper and musician who used to live in Baldersdale and who learned most of the tunes that he plays on concertina, from his father, Sam, a well-known Teesdale musician. Sam was recorded in the 1950s by the various academics who travelled round collecting local traditional tunes, songs and customs. Neil and Mike have made contact, made some music together and put plans in place for the future.



## Press & Publicity

- Regular publicity and photos have been published in the local press. *[Copies are available upon request.]*
- Claire Jacques, M@HoT's volunteer press & publicity worker compiled M@HoT's third newsletter. It was published in January; and was available as a hard copy and also distributed electronically. Claire also prepared the fourth issue, which was available in early July (outside the dates of this report).
- Claire Jacques has now moved on to study for a Master's degree in London. M@HoT is currently looking to recruit a new publicity worker.
- Evidence of use of HoT and HLF logos (along with others) on posters, programmes and newsletter etc is enclosed.