

# INFORMATION ABOUT FOSBROOK FOLK EDUCATION TRUST

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Fosbrook Folk Education Trust is a voluntary organisation dedicated to providing high quality dance, music and song classes for young folk enthusiasts in Stockport. Established in 1980, it began as a small performance group linked with the country dance club, and has since expanded to include tuition for a wide range of folk arts, a community programme and an instrumental music service. The graded activities provided by the education programme cater for top infants, juniors, senior school students and young adults at colleges and universities. The social programme provides supper parties and outings to folk/cultural events, as well as ceilidhs and concerts for the members and their families. The mission of the group is to use the medium of folk arts to raise the aspirations and performance skills of the members, and to provide them with opportunities to participate in community events, concerts and festivals within the locality, as well as national and international events.

The group is directed by Banks Lane teacher Liza Austin Strange, who has an MBE for Services to Folk Arts in the Community. She is assisted by other volunteers, a staff of music teachers and the oldest students who pass on the repertoire of the group via a 'cascade' method. Although she is kept busy by her commitment to the Music and RE teaching at Banks Lane Junior School, she does occasional lectures and presentations about her work for educational institutes, festivals and folk arts groups.

A close partnership with Banks Lane Junior School enables the pupils there to benefit from the specialist music teaching on offer, to access the instrument bank and to attend classes in country dance, clog step and sword dance. The benefits to the organisation lies in the 'in kind' support they receive from the school in terms of accommodation and goodwill.

Fosbrooks have a national reputation and over the years they have appeared at all the major folk festivals and concert halls in the UK. They have made radio broadcasts, recordings and TV appearances too.



Fosbrooks at the Cugand International Folk Festival.

The Fosbrook members grow up in an extended family of friends. Because membership involves discipline and good organisational skills, they end up with a good work ethos and a desire to be good role models to younger members. They also embrace the philosophy of open mindedness which makes them interested in the wider world and its cultures - and, on the whole, they grow up as excellent citizens.

The motto of the organisation is 'commitment and opportunity' because any student showing commitment is rewarded with opportunities to perform both at home in the UK and at festivals abroad.



Fosbrook Juniors performing in the market place for St. George's Day.

