

2013 Reports

Rapper tour Kirkby Lonsdale - Saturday 7th September

Well, it could have been a disaster. After deciding to turn up at Kirkby Lonsdale and "busk it", as we have done previously, Freddie happened to pick up the Gazette on Friday to discover that Kirkby Lonsdale was holding its annual "Big Weekend", with stalls, events, entertainers, attendance "by invitation only". We were afraid that it would be totally inappropriate to turn up and basically gate-crash their event, but Dan came up trumps by contacting the organiser, who was more than happy for us to join in. She suggested some places where she would like us to dance, and we also danced in a couple of pubs, outside Booth's and at the Fire Station.

We were joined by Suzanne, doing some flat footing, and by Jackie Mason doing some Westmorland clogging. We owe big thanks to Freddie for playing for rapper and for Suzanne, and to Dan for accompanying his Mum. Our audiences were very enthusiastic and generous. One of the local charities being collected for was the local Trauma Relief Fund, and we decided that we would like to give a large part of our collection to this charity. We collected £75 and some pence, and Dan and Sam could not resist digging into their own pockets to make the sum up to a round £76. We intend to give £50 of this to the local charity.

After dancing, some of us returned to Anjie's house, where we ate crisps, curry, cakes and chocolate, drank a variety of alcoholic beverages, and ended up at 4am watching YouTube videos of cats dressed as sharks riding robotic vacuum cleaners (as you do). Breakfast and chat were also provided by Anjie, she is such a good host that we will have to visit her again.

Flash Tour - Monday 16th September

The idea of a 'Flash Tour' was a new one. The concept being to visit pubs and perform one or two dances and move on. People on the tour would either be Rapper Dancers, or Morris Dancers.

The original plan was for us to have 8 border and 5 rapper so 13 dancers.

No need for any kit changes in a pub before we danced.

That didn't work, we were always short of this ideal and when Liz sadly had to drop out with her damaged hand, we needed a few of the rapper dances to effect quick changes and do both dances.

I need and want to say a massive thank you to all the dancers who were involved in this and did it quietly, willingly, and pretty quickly.

It helped the smoothness of what we offered.

My thanks also go to Dan who had worked which rapper dancer was doing which dance and then had the need for an extra person to do the change dropped on him at the last minute. No fuss he just got on with it and it worked as well as it could.

Our musicians managed to find space where the staff and audience could still see the dances, and when not required they melted away with no hiatus for our performance so thank you.

The Brewery Arts Centre was welcoming, and the audience enjoyed both types of dances and were generous but all the pubs were very very quiet. Why?

Kendal had been very busy during the day with The Tour Of Britain and some had even sold out of beer.

Then the weather was not good!

Did it work?

I felt that all the venues were fine for the rapper.

The space was tight for the border but just about manageable.

All the pub staff were pleased to see us, enjoyed what we did, and I think would agree to future similar ventures. How was it for us?

I felt that initially the rapper dancers were clearly more at ease, it's an approach they are used to and is tried and tested.

Understandably the border dancers were a little tentative to start with but did settle, perform well and hold their own with the rapper.

My original aim was for this night to try and help maintain the closeness of the side and to see if this sort of tour for the winter may be a way where the side can occasionally offer a broader approach.

I thought this did work and that we should consider repeating this once or twice.

Martyn

Rapper Tour - Monday 23rd September

Crook Rapper did another flash tour of Kendal last night, joined by Suzanne and her flat-footing friends. Although we spent some time walking around



Kendal, and were turned away by a couple of pubs, we had a great evening and were extremely well received at the pubs we did dance in.

We met at the Brewery for a pre-tour drink and chat, and then went on to The Shakespeare, where we did our first spot. The punters were friendly and welcoming, and 2 of the chaps watching us here turned up at our last spot as well!

Second spot of the evening was Dickie Doodles, where Chris was welcomed like a long-lost son. There was a good audience who were extremely appreciative, and we did 2 spots each to a good reception. We were then asked to repeat a dance, and managed to include a "groupie" who had seen us when we danced at Last Orders in July (I think he might have had a drink or 2) and who managed a very creditable spin.

We finished up at the Ring O' Bells, where we met up with our other 2 groupies, and were again welcomed with great enthusiasm. We did another 2 spots each, and then finished with a bit of chilling out and chat regarding practice for the winter.

Pauline could not be prevented from taking the hat around. The first pub we visited were supporting the Macmillan Cancer charity, and Pauline collected £65.93 on their behalf from the 3 pubs we visited.

Rapper Tour Lancaster – Saturday 19th October

Crook Rapper had a grand day out in Lancaster City Centre on Saturday 19th October. Our guests were Suzanne Ambrose (flatfooting and Appalachian), four clog dancers and 2 musicians from Westmorland Step and Garland, and the newly formed Lancaster University Sword Dance Team (LURST). We had only made firm arrangements for morning coffee, lunch and afternoon tea, as we were hoping that the weather gods would smile on us and allow us to do most of our dancing outdoors!

Initially the weather looked dire, with heavy rain and strong winds early in the morning. However, by the time we all met at our first spot, The Music Room café on Sun Street, the rain had stopped, and it was drying out nicely. After the essential injection of high-quality Atkinson's coffee to get us going, we braved the slippery paving slabs to dance to a small, select audience at the lovely square outside the café.

Moving on, we set up in the market square, where the many different stalls were attracting people out despite the weather. We gathered a good audience who were very appreciative of our variety of dance styles, and we stayed there for about an hour.

We then attempted to dance inside the St Nic's arcade, but after only 2 dances a large security man in a hi-viz tabard moved us on. Their loss was Penny Street's gain, as we swiftly decamped to Horseshoe Corner and completed our set to another large and appreciative audience. We finished the morning by dancing in front of Queen Victoria (the statue, not the person) in Dalton Square, before visiting The Sir Richard Owen pub for lunch.

The afternoon saw us dancing at the top of Penny Street, and then moving back to the Market Square, where we gained a fresh large audience. We repeated our repertoire, ending with an "audience participation" rapper dance for the children who were enjoying the show. It was then off to The Priory Hall café, where Ian gave us a warm welcome and allowed us to dance on his stunning maple-wood floor. Finally, we relaxed with some more Atkinson's tea and coffee, and a selection of their marvellous cakes.

We had a great day and would like to thank our guests for joining us and making the entertainment varied and exciting. It was LURST's first tour off of the University campus, and we hoped we showed them what fun it is getting out and performing in public after all the hard work practising. We would also like to thank Ian at Atkinson's for making us so welcome in his cafés. We hope to return to tour Lancaster again before too long.