

Dancing Dialogues Project Research Information

Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance

Royal Holloway, University of London [RHUL]

Project Title: Dancing Dialogues: Networking research with traditional English and diasporic dance groups practising in South West, South East and Midlands England.

Research Team

Principal Investigator: Dr Libby Worth, Reader in Contemporary Performance Practices.
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Co-Investigator: Professor Jerri Daboo, Department of Communications, Drama and Film,
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Midlands Dance Consultant: Dr Rosemary Cisneros, Centre for Dance Research (C-DaRE),
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Partners

We are delighted to have two partner organisations engaged in this project:

Creative Lives [Creative Lives \(creative-lives.org\)](http://creative-lives.org)

English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) [English Folk Dance and Song Society - English Folk Dance and Song Society: The National Organisation for the Development of the Folk Arts \(efdss.org\)](http://EnglishFolkDanceandSongSociety.org)

We are a team of researchers who are keen to set up a network and discover more about traditional, national and folk dancing activities happening in three regions in England and we would like to invite you to take part.

Before you decide to consent to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is taking place and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Our aim is to develop a research network with traditional dance groups active within three selected areas of England (South East, Midlands and South West). There are many such groups operating in halls and community centres throughout these regions that are currently under researched. These include largely amateur companies based in England from a range of diasporic communities maintaining their cultural identities such as Polish, Ecuadorian, Irish, Spanish and South African groups, together with local regional dancers of, for instance, Cornish step, Morris, sword and clog dance.

These are some of the questions that we are interested in asking:

- What role do traditional and national dances play for communities in England today?
- How have groups adapted, created, and survived during and post the Covid 19 pandemic?
- How do traditional dance groups actively contribute to creativity and community?
- How do dance group participants experience regional and national identity through their dancing?
- How do the groups employ music, props and costume in their dances?

Why have I been invited to take part?

We are inviting dancers in traditional, folk or national groups within the three regions of the project to take part in the research. We need consent from each member of the groups involved and explain below what that might include. Researchers will bring consent forms to meetings with dancers for signing. We are working with a wide range of groups and dancers within each region. We will not be working with children.

Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether you wish to take part or not. You can withdraw from the study at any time, without any consequences and without needing to give a reason, and you can withdraw your data until end of June 2024 by contacting the primary researcher. After this date the research will be published in an online report and a published article and withdrawing your data will no longer be possible. If you decide that you wish to withdraw your data from the project the primary researcher will explain how this is to be done.

What will my participation involve?

You may take part in some or all the activities described briefly below.

Online dance map and website.

We will be sending round short online questionnaires to dance groups currently practicing in the three regions. These will be to invite you to add information about your group to our online map. For instance, you could add a photo of your group, details for contact, the dance forms you practice and a website.

The map will grow over the year, allowing groups to get in touch with each other and to make it easy for anyone to contact you.

The map will be part of our publicly accessible research project website that will keep all participants up to date with activities and news.

Meetings with individual researchers

Each of the project researchers will focus on one of the three regions (Libby SE, Jerri SW, Rosemary Midlands). If your group would like to get further involved with the project, then we will be happy to come to visit your rehearsals and performances. This will provide good opportunities to find out more about your dance steps and to hear your views on the value of the group for you etc.

On these visits we will be able to discuss future events in much more detail to see whether you would like to be involved. We might also ask to interview participants who would like to talk further about the dances being practiced/performed.

Online Symposium

In February 2024 we'll be running an online symposium that you might like to contribute to or come along and listen to others. We'll have invited speakers and open panels to talk about dance group experience and issues/challenges that have arisen and that dancers would like to share. We'll consider debates on terms used to describe traditional dance and how dances are changing as they are currently practiced. We'll discuss how dance contributes to feelings of national and/or local identity and consider how dance contributes to creative communities.

Final Workshop

In April 2024 we will be holding a final full day workshop hosted at Cecil Sharp House (home of EFDSS) in London. This will provide an opportunity for small groups (up to 3) of dancers representing their groups to come together to share steps, show live or recorded performance

sequences and to extend research discussions. Our project partners will contribute to the discussions, and we hope that trialling this first 'Dancing Dialogue' event will help develop further such gatherings.

Accessibility

We aim to make events as open and welcoming as possible. So please do let us know as early as possible if you have specific requirements to be able to attend/access an event.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks in taking part, and how might these be mitigated?

We will be following university protocols on data storage and management. This includes keeping consent forms separate from any data collection from visits and meetings. We will anonymise data that we keep from discussions and visits (using 'dancer A' 'dancer B' etc.) other than interviews/talks/panel contributions for which speakers/dancers have agreed to be named. We will store emails for direct communication about the project with agreement. Usually we will only need the agreed contact email for each group.

The contributions dance groups make to the website are in the public domain and each group will oversee what they submit to be included on the map.

At the symposium and final workshop day we will seek separate consent for recording the events and will avoid recording participants who do not wish to be included.

At the end of the project (after the final report and jointly written article has been completed) we will delete the data and shred paper consent forms etc.

Are there any benefits in taking part?

Our intention is that this research stimulate greater interest in and study of the creative and vibrant traditional/folk/national dance practices happening in the regions of the project. There will be opportunities for dance groups to share their experiences of participating in their specific dance form. Groups might also benefit from having an easy way of linking up with other groups both through the online map and through the research activities and meeting with researchers.

Payments

The project is funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. This funding will enable us to pay for travel/accommodation/refreshments for participants who are travelling to the workshop day in London from each region.

What information about me will be collected and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research objectives?

Much of the data we will be collecting is publicly available (dance group websites/contacts/meeting times etc.). This will be submitted by groups to the project website. The website will be active for one year and then inactive but accessible as an archive for a further five years. It is managed by the tech company IN2 with whom the research team will be working.

Personal data we will collect includes personal emails where needed (often a single dance group contact will be sufficient), notes on dance visits or recordings (dancers anonymised), interviews with participants named or anonymised dependent on consent given, video recordings of public performances. All will be stored in a dedicated segment of Libby Worth's OneDrive at Royal Holloway accessible to the three primary researchers named above only.

Consent forms will be hard copy and stored in locked cabinets in university premises (RHUL, Exeter or Coventry) in each region.

How will the results of my participation be used? Will the research be published? Could I be identified from any publications or other research outputs?

We will be making use of the research data to write a final report on the project that will be publicly available on our website and a co-authored article for publication in a dance journal (TBC). We will use anonymised quotations etc. apart from participants who agreed to be named and interviewed. Photographs will be credited and used with photographers' and participants permissions.

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