

Nomination for Honorary Membership of Open Morris for Frank Lee

Frank Lee is known to most as a maker of rapper swords, but very few people have made such significant contributions to the traditional dance world.

Joining Carlisle Morris Men in 1975, Frank joined a select band of men from around the Carlisle area, and brought careful attention to detail and a great love for the traditions to the fore. A number of traditional sides – Carlisle Morris Men, Feet First Appalachian Dancers, Hexham Morris, Flag & Bone Gang, Carlisle Clog & Sword and Black Gate Morris have benefited hugely from his superb playing and dancing.

He is a superb dance musician, recently releasing an album of 'the tunes that came out when he sat down to play', to great critical acclaim. Many jig competition entrants have benefitted from his musicianship at festival competitions nationwide, including Conor Smith, the winner of the Cliff Barstow competition in Whitby in 2023.

Rapper swords first came into Frank's care as a repair job, but he then made a set for Carlisle and the rest is history. Down the years he's made over 2,500 swords, all carefully numbered and catalogued, for teams located all over the world. He has gone to great detailed length to document his processes, ensuring that future generations will benefit from his knowledge and work. Frank has also danced, played and latterly judged at DERT (Dancing England Rapper Tournament) since being instrumental in the revival of the competition, and it's fair to say that the rapper world we all know today probably wouldn't exist without his swords, music and knowledge.

We therefore recommend to Open Morris that Frank Lee be presented with Honorary Membership of Open Morris for Worldwide Services to the traditional dance world.

Malcolm Hills
on behalf of Wharfedale Wayzgoose Border Morris