

2011 Reports

Christmas Ceilidh December 2011

This was our 4th Cumbrian Christmas Ceilidh and it was just about the best yet.

The pattern was the tried and tested, one that has worked so well for us for the first three but in Crook Morris we don't rest on our laurels. We decided to make a few significant tweaks. Did they work? Well all the feedback from our guests said a very definite 'Yes, absolutely they did' and it made for a thoroughly successful and enjoyable event.

Doors opened as usual at 7:30 and within 10 minutes about the first 100 people were in, coats on the rail, tables found, and people seated. How did that happen so quickly? Simple, wrist bands were sent out in advance and there was no need for anyone to be delayed at the door.

The hall looked stunning. A warm, welcoming, and glittering array of decorations was enhanced with subtle lighting and as our guests settled down their warm mince pies were delivered to them at their table. Previous years had seen a packed hall with distinct pressure on the dance area, so Crook had listened to the feedback and deliberately put a lower level on the available number of wrist bands. It meant that fewer chairs were needed and so the dance area was bigger. That was much appreciated as the minute the band announced the first dance the floor was full, and we were underway.

Tumbling Tom are always good but they surpassed themselves by taking such great care over the sound. The Parish Hall is acoustically a real challenge, no curtains! Their sound was clear and distinct, the callers easily heard. On a few occasions this time the callers joined the dancers down on the floor to show a particular dance, this made the night nicely intimate. They gave us a great selection of dances, belting tunes and a glorious brass section augmented the normal line up.

[The Band - Tumbling Tom](#)

The dancers do need a few well-earned short breaks, and these are filled with seasonal entertainment. The Kendal Revellers is a 20 strong group that mainly specialises in traditional English carols. Each year they give the audience some wonderful songs with glorious harmonies and a very full sound. This year there were new songs, a few solo verses and even a dance linked to a song. The reaction of the audience said it

all. Faces were enraptured and the applause was fulsome. This group has really come on and it's no surprise that it is now being asked to perform at other events.



Crook Morris itself enjoys the opportunity to showcase the styles of dance we do. Over the last year our Rapper dancers have developed hugely with several new figures, their order changed to improve the smooth transition from one figure to the next and it's now danced at a full on speed. That first dance set an amazingly high standard. The Welsh Border set performed 'John Smiths' with gusto and the figures were executed crisply. It's a great dance for this event as the music has a definite Christmas feel to it.

Finally came the world premiere of 'A String Of Pearls'. 2011 was Crook's 30th year and so we had worked on a completely new dance. It worked a treat. It is different from other Cotswold dances with an intimidating line that dances at the audience, a hey that works across the set and a large counter rounds. Yes, there was a slight mishap we did have one of our dancers not quite in the right place at one stage but his Usain Bolt dash to the correct position was brilliant and just added to the performance.

A memorable night. Good music, good entertainment, good dancing, and good friends.

2012.....oh yes we will be doing it all again on Saturday 1st December, see you there?

Martyn Harvey (Dance Foreman)