

Theresa Buckland

Gold Badge presentation. Citation by Mike Heaney.

Theresa has broad interests and a wide international reputation, especially in the International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance. I think I've counted 13 different countries in which she has given papers!

Some of Theresa's work has been more concerned with theory – for example her work on 'The Politics of Embodiment'. And she has always been alert to the fact that dancing has a cultural and social context. The latter, in particular, has informed her work on the much-neglected topic of social dance, especially in the Victorian era, and her marvellous book, *Society Dancing*.

It is a mark of her achievement that Theresa was recently awarded the ultimate accolade of fellowship of the British Academy – the first time that the Academy has recognised a dance scholar. It reflects Theresa's pre-eminence in the field, and her influence in the academic world and beyond. I say the ultimate accolade, but it's not, of course – that is surely today, in the award of the EFDSS Gold Badge! I say this because, for all her wide-ranging expertise and international recognition, I think that if you look for where Theresa's heart lies, you'll find it in English folk dance.

A passionate dancer throughout her childhood, Theresa sought ways to pursue this at university. She went to Leeds to study English, as the only place offering a folklore option, in which Theresa recognised an opportunity to study folk dance. She began to study the Abbot's Bromley Horn Dance. This led to her first published work, in 1980, on the dating of the Abbot's Bromley horns to the 11th century – a splendidly original approach which flagged up that here was a significant new scholar on the scene. That piece of research is still heavily quoted today.

This was followed by Theresa's first professional post at Crewe and Alsager College, where between 1981 and 1986 she organised a series of conferences on Traditional Dance. This again was an enormously significant achievement. It brought together all those who were beginning to take a serious look at the subject, and to turn more rigorous historical and analytical eyes towards topics previously wrapped in myth-making and ill-informed speculation.

Theresa's doctorate on 'Ceremonial dance traditions in the South-west Pennines and Rossendale', was awarded in 1984.

I have concentrated in large measure on Theresa's enormous contributions to and influence on folk dance scholarship, but there is a practical side too – as a Sidmouth jig competition judge and through her involvement with several morris sides, currently with Chanctonbury Ring.

So it gives me ineffable pleasure to say to Theresa, here is your Gold Badge, coming with the enormous affection and regard of the EFDSS, and the applause of everyone here today!