# Tower Ravens are heading to DART!

Since our formation in 2012, Tower Ravens Rapper have spread our wings far across England, flying as far north as Newcastle, and soaring south to sunny Sidmouth. You may have recently spotted our distinctive black and blue sparkles at festivals and events all around the country - Whitby, Warwick, Cambridge, Oxford , Bath, and of course our home town of London.

After 8 years of competing at DERT and taking home the stepping trophy in 2019, this year we are flying across the pond to try our hands (and feet) at DART 2020 in Minneapolis. We can’t wait to meet new friends and build links between UK and North American sword dancers, not just for us but the rapper community as a whole – hopefully we can even inspire other teams to visit each other for future DARTs, DERTs and other events!

As well as the competition itself it will be a great opportunity to share traditional UK figures in our workshop, and hopefully learn some new American figures too. We currently incorporate an American figure (taught to us by a former Candyrapper member) called Popcorn into our competition dance, Piccadilly. Popcorn is one of our favourite figures as pairs of ravens fly two-by-two over the swords in one smooth continuous motion - when it all goes perfectly it's a beautifully graceful figure and encouraged us to write the rest of the dance in a similar style to many American teams, with plenty of flow and flair.

Our biggest challenge in getting to DART is of course the cost. We aim to be as fair as possible to all members of the team so are fundraising as much as we can so that everyone who wants to has the opportunity to take part. Tower Ravens have a bit of a reputation for being excellent fundraisers – our Sidmouth Folk Week debut saw us take home the trophy for highest amount collected by a dance team, and our Christmas 2019 crawl raised over £700 for our chosen charity!

So far we have had several generous donors who have given proceeds from their folk/ceilidh events, and our next big endeavour is to hold our own ceilidh in April. It will be at Cecil Sharp House on April 23rd and tickets are still available (at the time of writing!) – see the Cecil Sharp website or our social media pages for links to buy them.

We have also set up a GoFundMe page for any kind souls who would like to help us out but can’t make it to the ceilidh, links to this can also be found on our social media pages. Thank you in advance, and keep looking out for us at a festival or event near you (probably)!