1. How long have TR been going

Five years, we formed in the wake of DERT 2012.

1. Why and who started the team.

The team started because there were no other female teams in South East, other than Mabel Gubbins in Oxford, which was a bit too far for Londoners to travel. When Thrales held workshops here in London women would attend but there was nothing for them to join in with out of this. DERT 2012 was in London and was used as an opportunity to recruit – headed by Simon Vaughan, of Thrales, and Kat Macaulay they created a mailing list and ultimately got a group of London women together. Thrales lent us some swords to get us started and the rest is history! We have many of the original members in the team still and it is really down to them that we have survived and developed as well as we have.

1. TR seem to be on the up – what do you think has led to that?

We work hard! When we started most of us had done little to no rapper, learning was slow but steady and each new move or step was a real challenge. We’ve had a variety of very hard working leaders to continue the teaching but it is really down to the commitment of each team member that we have progressed from total novices to a team striving towards the premiership.

1. Who do the team look to as mentors or inspiring teams?

Thrales are very much our big brother team, I’m not sure if we would have ever left off the ground without their input. They lent us our first swords and took us on our first crawl, later they taught us to tumble and in turn how to teach our own new recruits to tumble. Our dance styles are very different and I think always will be, from that point of view we’ve always loved watching Sheffield Steel and Silver Flame, other female teams that have been on the up!

1. What is the team view of traditional dances?

This will be the third year we’ve entered the DERT Trad competition; generally our dance style is much more modern and as a team I’d say our focus is on continuing to develop new and exciting ways of presenting rapper, but we appreciate the continuation of the traditional dances. In particular, it’s a very different process learning a traditional dance via notation than composing your own and putting it into practice, which is always interesting.

1. How are your dances developing – are you writing new figures/dances and how?

It’s been a couple of years since we wrote a new dance – it’s far more challenging than our standard team dance and has taken a lot of work! We spent a long time focussing on being able to achieve the new moves and have since then continued to change it to make it much more continuous and include things such as a double tumble, which we couldn’t do at the time of writing. Our focus has landed on finding new and smoother ways to transition between figures, rather than writing new figures themselves, this is generally an experimental team process but headed by a couple of people who can really envision how the swords work together.

1. How do the pubs view TR now?

We’re so lucky to have the entire of London to crawl around, we can easily dance out for over a year before contemplating going back to the same area. Different pubs have different views of us but we generally go down a storm! People love our Tommy (that cheeky beefeater) and always want to pet our raven, George. I think due to London pubs not having regulars in the same way as smaller towns and cities we continue to appear as a total surprise, with people chatting to us afterwards saying they’ve never seen anything like it!