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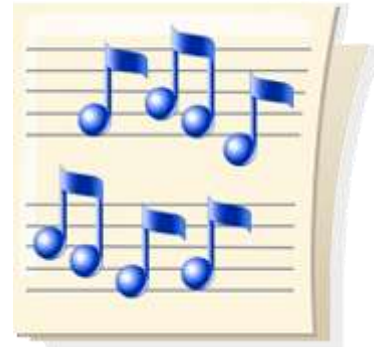
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## The Newsletter No.59 December 2008

The highlights of this Newsletter are:	Page
Massed Dances and their music	2
Annual Representatives' Meeting	3
Information about Chris Harris' "Kemps Jig"	4
ARM Agenda ( <i>and advance request for Reports</i> )	6
Joint Morris Organisations: Nottingham Revels 28 <sup>th</sup> March 2009	8
EFDSS News	8
Francis Shergold (1919-2008) A Tribute by Paul Reece	10
Cultural Olympiad	11
2009 Meetings of Morris Ring	11
Treasurer's ramblings	11
Who's going to which meeting?	12
Saddleworth Rushcart 2009	12
Jigs Instructional 2009	13
2009 Rapper and Longsword Tournaments	13
Redcar Sword Dancers triumphant again	14
Morris in the Media - Marks for trying?	14
Future Dates	16
Application Forms:	
• Jigs Instructional	19
• Morris Ring Meetings	20

**Music for Massed Dancing.** Following the article in Newsletter No. 58 Harry Winstone, of Kemp's Men, contacted Brian Tasker, Squire of the Morris Ring, and suggested that we need to provide some indication of the tunes to be used. His comment was "50 musicians all playing their own versions. Wow". Brian consulted Mike Chandler and here is a paraphrase of Mike's thoughts:

**Consistency in the dances?** Sides have their own way of doing things and we cannot expect them to change habits of a lifetime for the one-off annual Morris Ring Meeting. As to **the music** - this is something Jim Catterall and myself (Mike) pursued at Musicians instructionals for years. We must remember that many musicians are self-taught and a large proportion can't read music so publishing the dots won't help. One hope for non-readers is our transference of the Letchworth tapes to CD but then again the "ear player" will only play what he thinks he hears. Playing the correct version of any tune for massed playing, without embellishment, is covered at Musicians Weekends in the hope of reducing the "mush" quite often heard. It is a pity that we had to cancel the gathering this year through lack of support. Jockey Brackley is a classic example when you can have six versions played together.



**What are we to do?** By all means publish in the Newsletter the Bacon page numbers and the tune version to be used: it will help some. Also in the future, track numbers on the Letchworth Morris Men CD, which the non-readers can go to. However in the main you are trying to turn into a band a group of side musicians who have their own quirks and don't really take to a bit of discipline for that occasion. Like a committee a solo musician is the best massed band!

Some years ago on the Friday evening of Morris Ring Meetings musicians who wished to be in the massed band were invited to a band rehearsal at about 9.00pm for an hour. The **leader** introduced himself, ran through the tunes, starting, stopping, etc. and only those attending were in the band for that weekend.

Primarily it comes down to having a leader who is known and respected by the other musicians and has an idea of what he is doing.

### **Mike's Guidelines for massed musicians for massed dances**

1. Know the tune and the key. A massed band is no place to learn or improve. You put everybody else off.
2. Know the leader. Don't go into a leaderless band - it can turn into a musical rabble.

3. Playing. Watch and follow the leader not the dancers - that is the leader's job. Play staccato, play very lightly on the bass side, percussion also. Don't drown the leader and don't push him along.
4. Tempo etc. Ignore your own side. You are playing to an average which may be slower or faster than your usual tempo. Do not embellish the tune with fancy notes and trills.
5. Starting / Stopping Suggest the leader plays OTY solo. Band joins in on foot up altogether. Finish on the last note. Cut dead. No country dance finish / honour your partners - we don't do this in Morris.

**Massed Dances:** Selected by Brian Tasker, Squire of the Morris Ring

**Fieldtown:**

- The Valentine
- Banks of the Dee

**Adderbury:**

- Shepherds Hey
- Lads a Bunchum

**Bledington:**

- William and Nancy

**Bampton:**

- Banbury Bill
- Bobbing Around

**Headington:**

- Constant Billy
- Laudnum Bunches

**Bucknell:**

- Queens Delight



**Bacon Black Book** page numbers and **Letchworth CD** track numbers will be included in Newsletter No 60.

## Annual Representatives' Meeting Plus

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Longslade Community College, Wanlip Lane, Birstall LE4 4GH

In an attempt to attract a wider participation in this central plank of our organisation the Advisory Council suggested that we combine the important business element of the weekend with some instructionals. Not with the intention of showing how things ought to be done but to give participants the opportunity to see and learn one interpretation. We unashamedly want to lure more people to attend the event to both introduce them to our democratic processes and to help keep the costs down as economies of scale work with this as with any other meeting. As previously explained men can attend only for the instructional elements and attend the ARM if they so wish, or attend only the ARM joining the instructional element if they so wish. All in all we hope that the combined event will remain the pleasant sociable weekend surrounding the ARM as has become the recent tradition.

We hope there will be a strong representation for the weekend by the various specialist **Morris Ring Archivists** with examples of their collections on display. Their individual reports will have been circulated prior to the weekend so there will be ample opportunity to informally as well as formally ask questions, make suggestions and offer help in this important area.

### **Programme for the Weekend**

**Friday evening:** In addition to the usual mixture of informal conversation, with opportunities for dancing, singing and drinking, we have arranged the added attraction of a special performance by Chris Harris of his highly acclaimed, multi-award winning one-man show *Kemp's Jig*. *This is being opened to any and all of the local sides, partners, etc. by prior booking.*



**Kemp's Jig** tells of one man's Morris Dance from London to Norwich. A true story worthy of the Guinness Book of Records.



Will Kemp, a purveyor of "mad jests and merry jigs", was a famous Elizabethan actor and a shareholder with Shakespeare in the Company of the Lord Chamberlain's Men. It is probable that many of the Bard's comic roles were written with Kemp in mind. Touchstone, Dogberry and Launcelot Gobbo were brought to life for the first time in Kemp's person. Besides his fame as Shakespeare's clown, he achieved renown for his Morris Dancing. He performed the remarkable feat of dancing from London to Norwich, a distance of 125 miles, in nine days. He later recorded this journey in his book, *Kemp's Nine Daies Wonder*, on which the show is based.

**Kemp's Jig** has been seen at the Royal National Theatre, the Royal National Shakespeare Company, on television, heard on the radio and seen in 50 countries throughout the world thanks to the many international festivals visited and the British Council.

#### **Press Reviews:**

**"Brilliant in conception and execution, I reckon that 'Kemp's Jig' can run as long as Harris can keep up the energy level needed. A masterpiece of comic acting."**

Allen Sadler, *The Guardian*

**"A wonderfully sustained piece of clowning and story-telling."**

Ned Chaillet, *The Times*

**"A comic genius ... funniest show of the week."** Margaret Forwood, *The Sun*

## Saturday

7.30 - 8.30 Breakfast

9.00 - 10.30 Instructionals Session 1

The Longsword and Ilmington Instructionals are planned to be cumulative: participants will be expected to attend all three sessions.

*Longsword* Tutor: Barry Evans of Castleford

*Ilmington* Tutor: Paul Bryan of Ilmington MM

*Musicians* Discussion & Practical (Leader to be confirmed).

Theme: Massed music for the Morris.

10.30 - 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 - 12.00 Instructional Session 2

12.15 - 1.00 Buffet lunch

13.15 - 16.30 Annual Reps. Meeting

16.30 - 17.00 Tea break

17.00 - 18.15 Instructional Session 3 / Advisory Council Meeting.

19.00 - FEAST (followed by informal dancing/singing)

With invited guests from the Morris Federation; the Open Morris and the EFDSS

## Sunday

8.00 - 9.00 Breakfast & departure

**To apply** Please complete the form at the end of this Newsletter and return it to Ian Hubbard with full payment, payable to **Leicester Morrismen**, by 7<sup>th</sup> February 2009. Confirmation and directions will be sent to the contact named unless otherwise specified.

## ARM AGENDA

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2009 at 1.15pm

1. **Apologies for Absence.**
2. **Minutes of the last Meeting** - held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2008
3. **Matters arising from the Minutes.**
4. **Squire's Report\***.
5. **Bagman's Report\***.
6. **Treasurer's Report\*** - including proposed subscriptions for next year
7. **Comments and Questions relating to Archival Reports\***
  - a. Chair of Archive Committee Dick Shilton
  - b. Paper. Chris Metherell
  - c. Photographic Duncan Broomhead

- d. Mumming. Ron Shuttleworth
- e. Sword Ivor Allsop
- ~~f. New Dance Collator Vacant~~
- g. Keeper of the Ring Scrapbook Keith Francis

*Keith indicated at the last ARM that he would like to step-down as Logbook Keeper. In the absence of any firm expression of interest he has thankfully agreed to carry on for another year while a successor is sought for 2010. He is willing to carry on as Scrapbook Keeper for a while longer.*

**8. Publication Officers Reports\*.**

- Publications - Editor Morris Circular Harry Stevenson
- Publications - Editor Morris Dancer Dave Thompson

**9. a. Overseas Bagman's Report\* John Maher**

**b. Webmaster's Reports Report\* John Maher**

**10. Election / Ratification of Area Representatives.**

Those due for three yearly re-election

- Area Rep.: North Stuart Bater
- Area Rep.: North Midlands David Thompson
- Area Rep.: South Midlands Roger Comley

**11. Area Representatives' Reports\*.**

- a. North West
- b. Northern.
- c. North East.
- d. West Midlands.
- e. North Midlands.
- f. Eastern.
- g. South West & Wales.
- h. South Midlands.
- i. South East.

**12. Elections for Morris Ring Officers:** No nominations have been received

- a. **Bagman** Current incumbent is willing to stand again
- b. **Treasurer** Current incumbent is willing to stand again.

*The election of Bagman is due this year on our biannual cycle. Elections for the post of Treasurer should have been held last year (ARM 2008) but due to an oversight this did not happen - hence the election this year. To get the 'Civil service' elections back in kilter it is suggested that election for Treasurer be, on this occasion only, for one year only.*

**13. Future Programme.**

- a. Morris Ring Meetings - 2009 and beyond.
- b. Instructionals.

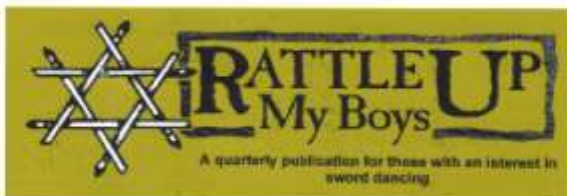
See list at the back of this Newsletter - we are looking for Host sides for both Morris Ring Meetings and Instructionals - might your side volunteer?

**14. Date and Venue of Next Meeting.**

**15. A.O.B.**

The Meeting of the Morris Ring Advisory Council will follow the ARM.

**\* Note. It is planned that All reports will be circulated prior to the meeting and those delivering them will NOT read them to you but simply comment on or highlight particular points as they see appropriate and answer questions.**



Issue 5, Series 17, 2008

### Sword Dancer Becomes the New Squire of the Morris Ring

By Brian Tasker

Right: North Bristol Sword Dancers, with some real swords!

Just right of centre is the new Squire of the Morris Ring, Brian Tasker, complete with chain and staff of office.

Photograph: Roger Blaine



Full story on page 2.

**Brian Tasker**, Squire of the Morris Ring, continues to make the headlines. Pictured here, in the company of, amongst others, Pete Milne of Stevenage Sword Dancers (on the left); Colin Messer of Westminster Morris Men and foreman of Spring Grove Morris Men (second from left); Graeme Taylor of Jockey Morris Men and White Hart Morris Men (fifth from left) and John Roberts of Southport Sword Dancers (third from right).

In the illustrated edition of *Rattle Up My Boys* Brian describes his journey from Cotswold into Sword dancing and draws parallels with his sword dancing predecessors as Squire of the Morris Ring Bill Cassie, Nibs Matthews, Alan Brown

and Ivor Allsop. Brian writes "One of my missions as Squire (of the Morris Ring) is to promote sword dancing in the Morris Ring so that we can give displays with a greater variety of dances. Castleford are attending the Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting in 2009 and are hosting a Morris Ring meeting in 2010. This is a start, but there is a long way to go!"

Note: There are plans for approximately a dozen Rapper teams to take part in the JMO Nottingham Revels event in March - if you are a Rapper or Longsword team and would like to get involved talk to Brian Tasker. (See below.)

**Joint Morris Organisations: 28<sup>th</sup> March Nottingham Revels - JMO event Hosted by the Open Morris.**

These events are organised in rotation by each of the three Morris Organisations. Originally bi-annually they are now going to an annual event in the run-up to the London Olympics in 2012. They are planned to raise the profile of the Morris both to the local schools and wider community, and the local and national media. The Nottingham event is building upon successful events in London, Newcastle and last year in Birmingham.

If your side is interested in being one of our fifteen sides flying the flag for the Morris Ring please contact the Squire of the Morris Ring: Brian Tasker. (*Contact details on page 1 of this newsletter.*) Remember - we are looking for sides to represent the whole spectrum of the Morris.



## EFDSS News

**New President and Vice President:** The English Folk Dance and Song Society is delighted to announce that following ratification at their AGM on 8th November, **Shirley Collins MBE** and **Eliza Carthy** have been elected as the Society's President and Vice President respectively.

**Shirley Collins** is a pivotal figure in the English folk song revival of the last forty years. While maintaining her love of traditional song, she has also been an influential innovator: folk-jazz collaborations with Davy Graham, combining early music and folk music on the 'Anthems in Eden' album, and using electric instruments with the Albion Dance Band. Her contribution has been recognised with the EFDSS Gold Badge in 2004, an MBE in 2007 and, in February this year, the 'Good Tradition Award' at the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards.

**Eliza Carthy** is the foremost interpreter of English folk music among the current 'younger' generation of performers. She is a passionate advocate for traditional music, but is also an accomplished interpreter of that music for the twenty-first century. She performs with her band, The Ratcatchers, as well as with her parents, Martin Carthy and Norma Waterson as Waterson/Carthy. She was recently featured in Channel 5's 'My Music' programme and her new album, 'Dreams of Breathing



'Underwater' was released in June. She has also played for the Goathland Ploughstots since she was a child.

**Gold Badges:** The EFDSS' prestigious Gold Badge Awards for 2009 have been made to four outstanding individuals.

- **Ray Fisher** for her contribution to traditional song;
- **Colin Ross** for his work with the Northumbrian pipes;
- **John Heydon** for his work with the national Folk Festival and Haddenham Celilidhs;
- **Louis Killen** for his contribution to traditional song.

### **Vaughan Williams presenting the Squire's badge to Donald Cassels**



*This photograph is reproduced with the permission of and acknowledgements to the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library at Cecil Sharp House, the headquarters of the EFDSS. This is just one example of the fascinating store of historic as well as contemporary 'folk' material available for research and reference.*

In the year which sees the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the death of Ralph Vaughan Williams, during which the EFDSS have been celebrating his folk music legacy, and as we approach our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary it seems appropriate to print this photograph from the library at Cecil Sharp House of Vaughan Williams presenting the Morris Ring's Squire's badge to Donald Cassels at CSH on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1955 during the Ale at the London Morris Ring Meeting. This was presented to the Morris Ring by RVW on behalf of EFDSS to mark the 21st anniversary of the Morris Ring.

**MARY NEAL DAY** Sat 7th Feb. 2009 Cecil Sharp House NW1

2-11pm Info/tickets [www.efdss.org](http://www.efdss.org) 020 7485 2206

A real pioneer of the Morris revival Mary Neal demonstrated Sharp's researches from 1905 and whose Esperance Movement taught many early sides, including Thaxted in 1911.

### **Francis Shergold (1919-2008) A Tribute**

Francis was made Honorary President of Bampton Traditional Morris, after resigning as Squire after 45 years and 60 as a dancer, in November 1995. He was subsequently awarded the EFDSS Gold Badge for his services to Morris dancing.

Francis was invited to join the side by 'Jingy' Wells in 1935 when it had just six active dancers and he kept the side going as its leader after 'Jingy' died, even when it was down to four dancers in 1959. During active service as a soldier in France and Germany Francis was only once unable to get home for Whit Monday, assisted by his commanding officer, who was the son of a Witney blanket factory owner. Francis worked with horses on leaving school and then became a gardener and eventually a head gardener in Bampton.

Francis was a truly much loved character, dancer, singer, musician and conversationalist. He was always active, cheerful and had a great sense of fun even when his sight failed. He took great interest in people, his community and explaining how he got into the Morris dancing at Bampton.

Living nearby, I was brought to Bampton in 1972 to see my first Morris dancing. Since then the annual pilgrimage to Bampton has for me and for many of us been a touchstone to remind ourselves of what it is really all about. This special quality at Bampton that has inspired and sustained us is largely down to what Francis has created and sustained over all these years to the point where it now thrives with three sides. This is Francis's real testimony and living legacy appreciated not just in Bampton, but across the whole country. A packed St Mary's Church endorsed his importance as a man who achieved a powerfully and much appreciated reputation as the embodiment of the tradition in this country.

For those who wish to know more about the man I would recommend Keith Chandler's tribute at [www.mustrad.org.uk/obits.htm](http://www.mustrad.org.uk/obits.htm) and his article at [www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/shergold.htm](http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/shergold.htm)

Paul Reece

**Cultural Olympiad** Regional Creative Programmers are in post and this four year event has been launched - NOW is the time to get in touch with these programmers in terms of projects and what you have to offer.

I have set up the *Traditional Dance Initiative - East* to act as a forum and have successfully invited our Creative Programmer to attend and answer our questions. If we could do the same in all the regions, especially where they have their own distinctive style of traditional dance, music, drama and legends etc. we could have the makings of something big. If we can link this to projects involving youngsters so much the better. The initiative has already begun in the South East Region and, hopefully, in the North West to be followed by Yorkshire and Humber, the North East and East Midlands.



At the various regional centres where the launch incorporated some Morris and Molly there seems to be the demand for an annual regional event. Get involved. Remember regional involvement is the first and, at the moment, the only means in getting your presence felt for the possible inclusion of traditional dance in the Olympics. Contact me (Paul Reece) and your area rep if you are interested, or need information and advice as to how to proceed. Traditional Dance is a useful inroad term to avoid any prejudice that may still be present amongst those that have an influence on deciding what aspects of our culture is included.

As a reminder: the regional Cultural Olympiad Creative Programmers are:

North West: Debbi Lander [debbi.lander@northwestcultureobservatory.co.uk](mailto:debbi.lander@northwestcultureobservatory.co.uk)

North East: Lorna Fulton [lorna.fulton@gone.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:lorna.fulton@gone.gsi.gov.uk)

Yorkshire: [tgordziejko@yorkshire-culture.co.uk](mailto:tgordziejko@yorkshire-culture.co.uk)

East Midlands: Paul Brookes [paulbrookes@emd.org.uk](mailto:paulbrookes@emd.org.uk)

West Midlands: Paul Kaynes [p.kaynes@emd.org.uk](mailto:p.kaynes@emd.org.uk)

East: Liz Hughes [liz.hughes@goeast.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:liz.hughes@goeast.gsi.gov.uk)

South East: [c.loriggio@culturesoutheast.org.uk](mailto:c.loriggio@culturesoutheast.org.uk)

South West: [richard.crowe@culturesouthwest.org.uk](mailto:richard.crowe@culturesouthwest.org.uk)

General information on applying can be found at: [www.vaireland.org/uploaded/maps6991.pdf](http://www.vaireland.org/uploaded/maps6991.pdf)

Paul Reece Chair of the Morris Ring Advisory Council

**Morris - Experience, Engagement, Exposure** For the millions of tourists and business visitors each year from this country and abroad it is often that accidental stumbling on the local colour of a Morris event, be it at a pub, in the street, park or arena, that makes the visit and remains in their memory as something special to remind them of this country or your region or locality. Sightseeing, which used to be the main draw, is now giving way to more active experiences and engagement with events.



*Visit Britain* and *Enjoy England*, distributed through our local regional tourist boards, are crying out for listings of your events

and Summer programmes of the pubs and locations where you will be performing. These will then be directed to their Newsletter and the media in Britain and overseas. So as well as setting up your websites and flyers to advertise where you are going to be send the details to your **regional** tourist office so that literally anybody in the world who is planning a visit and is interested in our local traditions and living culture can plan ahead and have your event on their map of things to do.



As an alternative, and antidote to, castles and stately homes they can see you on show performing in all your finery and flying your flag.

Look at [www.enjoyengland.com](http://www.enjoyengland.com) [www.visitbritain.com/](http://www.visitbritain.com/) [www.enjoyengland.com](http://www.enjoyengland.com)

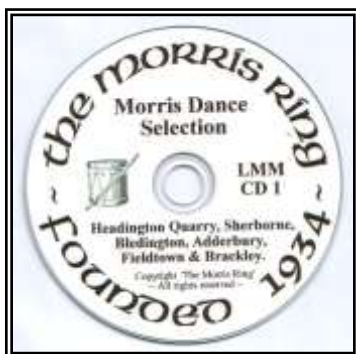
Paul Reece Chair of the Morris Ring Advisory Council

**Meetings of the Morris Ring 2009** On the closing date (6th December 2008) for applications to attend meetings of the Morris Ring in our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year take-up outstripped all expectations - with 65 sides representing 800+ men wanting to attend one or other of the five planned meetings. Bathampton was the most popular choice - with 205 men applying for the 100 places. Having negotiated with the host sides all but four sides are accommodated and these have been invited to attend one or other of the only two meetings where there are still a few spaces: Meeting No. 317 Thaxted and No. 320 Men of Wight.

Sides have already been informed and asked to pay a deposit of £25 per man to the host club by the end of February. (Day men a deposit of £5 please.)

**Treasurer's Ramblings:** With the paper copy of this Newsletter your Bagman will receive your side's *Confirmation of Public Liability Insurance* certificate. If this is missing please contact me (Steve Adamson BfB) as a matter of urgency.

In addition there is the **JMO Personal Accident Cover Application Form**. Please do not confuse *Personal Accident* with *Public Liability* which is included as part of your subscription to the Morris Ring.



Please look carefully at the Morris Shop flyer - publicising the latest **MUST HAVE** Christmas gift for Morris enthusiasts: **The Letchworth Morris Men CDs**. Only available from the Morris Shop.

Steve Adamson BfB Treasurer of the Morris Ring

## Sides accepted for each meeting:

317	318	319	320	321
Thaxted	Hartley	Exeter	Men of Wight	Bathamton
Abingdon	Broadwood	Aldbury	Bristol	Chanctonbury Ring
Britannia Coconut Dancers	Etcetera.	Cambridge	Dartington	Gloucestershire
Cambridge	Kennet	Chalice	King Johns	Helmond
Castleford Longsword	Lincoln & Micklebarrow	Harthill	Standon	Mersey
Chalice	Long Man	Ilmington	West Somerset	Ravensbourne
Coventry Mummers	Mayflower	Mendip	Westminster	Trigg
Dolphin	Victory	North Wood		Uttoxter Heart of Oak
East Suffolk	Winchester	Plymouth		Wath-upon-Dearne
East Surrey	Yateley	Ripley		
Foresters		Shakespeare		
Great Yorkshire		Stafford		
Greenman		St Albans		
Greensleeves		Taunton Deane		
Hartley		Thames Valley		
Leicester		Thaxted		
Letchworth		Wessex		
Monkseaton				
Moulton				
North Wood				
Saddleworth				
St Albans				
Standon				
Victory				
Westminster				
Whitchurch				
Winster				

**Saddleworth Rushcart** The 35th Annual Saddleworth Rushcart will be held on the weekend before the August Bank Holiday, Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> - Sun 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2009. To help celebrate the Morris Ring's 75th Anniversary we are looking to host as big a celebration of Morris, and particularly North West Morris, as we can. If your side dances North West and wants to dance in the heartland of North West Morris, or

you simply fancy celebrating the Ring's 75th in the NORTH this is where to do it!. Indoor and outdoor camping is available at a minimal cost per man for the weekend, we do not charge you anything else! Contact Ed Worrall, Saddleworth Rushcart Secretary [rush.cart@hotmail.com](mailto:rush.cart@hotmail.com) or phone 01457 829349 for more details

**Jigs Instructional 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> January 2009.** Sutton Bonington Village Hall  
Following the success and obvious demand for a dual-sessioned approach covering beginners and experienced dancers this will form the basis of this intensive, but highly enjoyable weekend where you get a chance to be an individual and get to know fellow dancers from as far afield as Banchory and Bodmin.

Whether you are a relatively new dancer needing to work on your stepping and hand movements, or a more experienced dancer with bad habits in need of an MOT, retune and a chance to work again on your stepping and hand movements, the jigs instructional provides the ideal opportunity to improve as an individual dancer and to enrich your teams dance repertoire with the most concentrated and individually expressive form of the Morris, the jig.

Give the rest of your team a bit of a rest and your audiences a bit more variety. One and two man jigs and jigs for multiple dancers may well be the answer. The main morris traditions will be covered plus several others. Every side should give it a go and every new recruit should be sent to the weekend to learn what the Morris is really about.

Application form included at the end of this Newsletter but for more information please contact Geoff Jerram: [Geoff@Jerram.org.uk](mailto:Geoff@Jerram.org.uk)

**DETR 2009 Rapper Sword Tournament** The annual Dancing England Rapper Tournament will take place in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne over the weekend of 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> March 2009. The hosts will be the Newcastle Kingsmen and Sallyport Sword Dancers. They are celebrating a combined total of 100 years of dancing Rapper.

Sides from the Morris Ring have entered in previous years but they have been few and far between. Dert is a showcase event for Rapper Sword dancing and I would like to encourage more Morris Ring clubs to take part. There are categories for all abilities, including an exhibition class for any side which does not wish to compete. The organisers are keen to encourage clubs who dance rapper as a second tradition to go up to Newcastle and show what they can do!

There is a web site for the event at: [www.dert2009.co.uk](http://www.dert2009.co.uk) If you dance rapper, please give serious thought to the possibility of entering. The event is going to be popular so get your entry in now!

**4<sup>th</sup> Annual Longsword Competition** The fourth Longsword competition, organised by the Sword Dance Union, will take place in Sheffield on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2009 hosted by the Handsworth Traditional Sword dancers. As you will see below Redcar Sword Dancers have won this competition on each of the three previous occasions. If your side dances Longsword, please consider entering. There will be more details next year.

Brian Tasker, Squire of the Morris Ring

**Redcar Sword Dancers triumphant again** The group were in great form as we maintained a three year unbeaten record at the Sword Dance Union Tournament in Derby in October 2008. Having won the trophy last year for the Best 'Traditional' Dance, we pulled off a double this year winning the Best 'Own Dance' trophy with our dance 'Eston and California' against strong competition, including last year's winners.

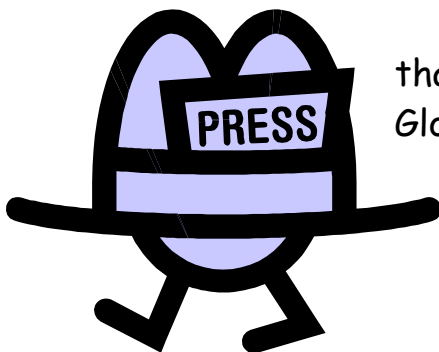
For the second year running, our musician, Moira Clarke also took the prize for Best Musician and the team again took the prize for Best Overall Performance.

Redcar Sword Dancers were formed in 1967 to revive the traditional longsword dance from Greatham, near Hartlepool, but over the years have incorporated different dances into our repertoire, including one of our own invention in the East Cleveland style which we named 'Eston and California' after a local ironstone mining district.

Brian Pearce Redcar Sword Dancers



**Morris in the Media: Marks for trying?** In a response to requests for information and in an attempt to maintain the positive media coverage that we received following the reports inspired by Gloucestershire Morris Men (See Newsletter No 58) we issued this Press Release. It seems to have sunk without trace - but we tried!



## Press Release

### **MORRIS DANCERS IN LAST-DITCH RECRUITMENT DRIVE**

MORRIS DANCERS around the country are making an urgent, last-ditch appeal for new members to ensure the centuries-old tradition doesn't die out.

The Morris Ring - which represents over 200 morris teams throughout Britain - believes that unless younger blood is recruited during the coming winter months, when dancers are practising for the Spring, the folk dance will not survive for many more years.

The average age of most morris dancing teams is in their mid-fifties, while the unfair portrayal of morris dancing is putting off young people from taking part - which could have dire consequences for one of Britain's oldest folk traditions.

Charlie Corcoran, Bagman of the Morris Ring, says: "There's a distinct possibility that 20 years time there will be nobody left.

"It worries me a great deal. Young people are just too embarrassed to take part.

"I've been morris dancing for more than 40 years. I've got a sense of humour and I've heard all the jokes, but it's really hard for youngsters to come in and be made fun of by their friends.

"This is a serious situation. The average age of morris dancing sides is getting older and older. Once we've lost this part of our culture it will be almost impossible to revive it."

Paul Reece, chairman of the Advisory Council of the Morris Ring - which celebrates its 75th anniversary next year - says that Winter is an important time for morris dancing teams as they practise for the Spring.

Paul says: "There is still time for new blood to get ready for the Spring fertility offensive, and you'll still see traditional dancers performing around the country in Boxing Day events.

"Such customs and activities were once a common sight around the country. Today they are carried out by an ever-dwindling stalwart band of enthusiasts who are determined to keep them alive.

"But there is a serious danger that, in less than a few decades, morris dancing will be confined to the history books."

#### NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. Founded in 1934, the Morris Ring is the UK national and international association of over 200 men's morris and sword dance clubs.
2. Our mission is to encourage the performance of morris dancing, to maintain its traditions and to preserve its history.
3. There are over 14,000 morris dancers in Britain, dancing in more than 800 morris sides.
4. Morris dancing dates back hundreds of years, and is mentioned in the writings of Chaucer and Shakespeare. In 1494 King Henry VII even paid £2 for the 'playing of the Mourice Daunce' at the English court.
5. Although little is known about its origins, one theory is that it came from the "Moorish dance" of Spain, which celebrated the Moors dynasty being driven out of the country in 1492. Others believe it is an ancient seasonal pagan ritual male custom, associated with the bringing of luck, the fertility and regeneration of the soil and the promotion of the cycle of the seasons.



**The Caption competition:** Newsletter No.58 In response to my question: What title would you give picture? The response was nothing! Thus I will simply leave them "Waiting at the Church!"



Finally, on behalf of my fellow Officers of the Morris Ring may I wish you a Happy Christmas and a peaceful 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Morris Ring 2009.

*Charlie*

**Bagman of the Morris Ring**

**Future Dates:**

**2009 THE MORRIS RING'S 75<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

6<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> March **ARM** Hosted By Leicester Morrismen (See above)

28<sup>th</sup> March **Nottingham Revels** - See Page 8.

29<sup>th</sup> May- 31<sup>st</sup> May **317 Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting**

Thaxted is the home of the Morris Ring and its founding, so for its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary we are planning a special Thaxted meeting with invited traditional sides, our founder clubs and those sides that we feel have made a significant contribution to the great success of our meeting over the years. This we are told is still the 'classic' and most magical of all the Morris Ring meetings with its processions down into the Town Street arena for the massed dancing and the haunting climax of the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance.

Cost for the 75<sup>th</sup> Morris Ring Anniversary Meeting is expected to be around £75 for the whole weekend with scaled reductions for day men and children.

12<sup>th</sup> -14 June **318 Hartley Morris Ring Meeting** **Full**

24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> July **319 Exeter Morris Ring Meeting** **Full**

## 21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> Aug. **320 Men of Wight's 5th Morris Ring Meeting**

The Men of Wight are proud to invite you to our 5<sup>th</sup> Ring Meeting, one day we will get the hang of it. However we try to give everyone a great time, and with three breweries on the Island that makes a great start. Goddards Brewery in Ryde, Yates Brewery now just outside of Whitwell and Ventnor Brewery, which is the latest incarnation of Burt's Brewery, established in 1840. Ventnor Brewery has its own supply of spring water emanating from the Downs, at the vast cost of six old pence per year.

This time we will be based in Cowes, famous for yacht racing with an annual international regatta, and starting point for one of the worlds largest yacht races - The Round the Island event.

You can get here by train, on foot or by car or even fly as one Side did a few years ago. We can provide lots of advice on travel options, and will arrange pick-ups from the ferry terminals if required. Located as we are South of the UK North Island, we have a milder sub-climate than most other areas, so expect sun and an equally warm greeting. Number of Men: 120 Cost: £70 per man

## 4<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>Sept 321 Bathampton MM Morris Ring Meeting **Full**

### 2010

5 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> March (?)	ARM Hosted by TBA .....
30 <sup>th</sup> April - 2 <sup>nd</sup> May	Helmond MM's 75 anniversary Morris Ring Meeting
4 <sup>th</sup> June ~ 6 <sup>th</sup> June	Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting
TBA	Croydon (Northwood) Morris Ring Meeting
10 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Castleford Longsword Morris Ring Meeting

### 2011

4 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> March (?)	ARM Hosted By TBA
3 <sup>rd</sup> June ~ 5 <sup>th</sup> June	Thaxted "Centenary" Morris Ring Meeting
TBA.....	Bristol 60 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting

### 2012

3 <sup>rd</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> March (?)	ARM Hosted by TBA
25 <sup>th</sup> -27 <sup>th</sup> May	Chipping Campden Cotswold Olympic Morris Ring Meeting
1 <sup>st</sup> June -3 <sup>rd</sup> June	Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting
27 <sup>th</sup> - 29 <sup>th</sup> July	Hartley 60 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting

### 2013

? March	ARM Hosted by TBA
31 <sup>st</sup> May - 02 <sup>nd</sup> June	Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting
TBA	Dolphin Morris Men

**THE MORRIS RING - JIGS INSTRUCTIONAL 2009**

<b>Location</b>	Sutton Bonington, Nottinghamshire
<b>Dates</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> - 18 <sup>th</sup> January 2009
<b>Traditions</b>	We aim to cover most of the jigs of the major traditions, plus a few lesser known ones.
<b>Hosts</b>	
<b>Accommodation</b>	Indoor camping (Village Hall).
<b>Numbers</b>	30 maximum
<b>Cost</b>	£45 per head (Approx)

Please return the attached slip with a cheque for the full amount  
**NOT LATER THAN 15<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2008.**

If you have any queries, please telephone Geoff Jerram on 01380-860280, or  
 Email [Geoff@Jerram.org.uk](mailto:Geoff@Jerram.org.uk)

**THE MORRIS RING JIGS INSTRUCTIONAL      16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> January 2009**

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS THROUGHOUT

CLUB NAME \_\_\_\_\_

BAGMAN/CORRESPONDENT \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ POST CODE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ TEL \_\_\_\_\_

<b>NAMES OF DELEGATES @ £43</b>	<b>DIETARY NEEDS</b>	<b>PLEASE INDICATE STATUS: NOVICE / EXPERIENCED/ MUSICIAN</b>

Please return this slip with a cheque for the full amount, payable to **G Jerram**, to  
 GEOFF JERRAM, "Haydown", Little Horton, Wiltshire, SN10 3LJ **BY 15<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2008**

BOOKING FORM - ARM 2009



Name of Side: .....

Contact Name: .....

Email: ..... Tel No: .....

Address: .....

..... Postcode: .....

• **Full Weekend** - finish Sunday morning      No of men.....@ £45.00 = £.....  
*Whatever 'package' you select please indicate which, if any, of the instructionals you plan to take part.*

• **Instructionals:**

Please indicate numbers for each

- Longsword (3 sessions)      No of men .....
- Illmington (3 sessions)      No of men .....
- Musicians (2 sessions)      No of men .....

• **Kemp's Jig** -Ticket for performance      No of tickets @ £3.00 = £.....  
*(Numbers not required if booked for Full-weekend)*

• **Saturday ARM** - finish Sunday morning      No of men.....@ £35.50 = £.....  
*(Sat night accommodation)*

• **Saturday ARM** - including feast      No of men.....@ £26.00 = £.....  
*(No accommodation)*

• **Saturday ARM\*** - excluding feast      No of men.....@ £9.00 = £.....  
*(Morning Coffee / Lunch / Afternoon Tea)*

• **Feast only**      No of men.....@ £17.00 = £.....

• **\*ARM only - no meals**      No of men.....@ Free = £ NIL .

TOTAL £ \_\_\_\_\_.

Please specify number of non alcohol drinkers .....

Please specify how many require vegetarian meals.....

Return form to Ian Hubbard with full payment, payable to **Leicester Morrismen**, by 7<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

**BAGMAN FOR THE WEEKEND: Ian Hubbard - Leicester Morrismen**

**Email:** ian.e.hubbard@btinternet.com      **Tel:** 0116 2209133

All correspondence regarding ARM accommodation and meals please to

**Ian Hubbard, 44 Denegate Avenue, Birstall, Leicestershire, LE4 3GG**