



SQUIRE: PETER HALFPENNEY
35 - 37 MAIN STREET, NORTH ANSTON, SHEFFIELD, S25 4BD
TEL: 01909 560059 E-mail: HPAServices@aol.com

BAGMAN: CHARLIE CORCORAN
70, GREENGATE LANE, BIRSTALL, LEICESTER, LEICS LE4 3DL
TEL: 01162 675654 E-mail: Bagman@TheMorrisRing.org
CharlieCorcoran7@ntlworld.com

TREASURER: EDDIE WORRALL
8 BANKSIDE AVENUE, UPPERMILL, SADDLEWORTH, OL3 6JU
TEL: 01457 829349 E-mail: edworrall@googlemail.com

Newsletter No.73

March 2011

Draft Minutes of 2011 ARM

18th - 20th February

Hosted by Mendip Morris Men

Apologies for the delay in producing these minutes but it has been a mammoth task.

I am indebted to the Mendip MM especially to Roger Waddington and his team of cameramen, mike-carriers and recording technicians. The BBC don't know what they are missing!

I have attempted to transcribe rather than simply minute much of the discussion surrounding the motions to change the Constitution because I felt it important that those who were not at the meeting would thereby get a better flavour of what went on.

Please check:

- Attendance / Apologies lists. Despite many requests some people did not sign the attendance sheets and some who did wrote in a language and or script strange to me.
- For obvious errors in spelling, grammar, etc..
- Names of speakers - several were not known to me and I may have misinterpreted what they said in their introduction.
- For issues of accuracy of my interpretation of what was said. Some speakers were indistinct on the recordings - if it was you let me know what you think you said.

1. Guests welcomed:

- Open Morris: John Clifford & Phil Watson
- Morris Federation: Barry Goodman; Jenny Everett & Mike Everett
- EFDSS: Mike Wilson-Jones
- Insurance Guru: Michael Stimpson
- Legal Guru: Chris Metherell

Andy Padmore Archives - Keeper of the Sound Archive
 Mike Wilkinson New Dance Collator

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Bert Cleaver | Past Sq 1970 | Mike Garland | Past Sq 1988 |
| Ivor Allsop | Past Sq 1978 | Richard Hankinson | Past Sq 1994 |
| Ray King | Past Sq 1984 | Gerald Willey | Past Sq 2000 |
| Mike Garland | Past Bag 1977 | | |

d. Sides Represented:

| | | |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Adlington Morris Men [& Mummers] | Icknield Way Morris Men | Saddleworth Morris Men |
| Anker Morris Men | Isca Morris Men | Silurian Border Morris Men |
| Bedford Morris Men | Jockey Morris Men | South Shropshire Morris Men |
| Bourne River Morris Men | King John's Morris Men | St Albans Morris Men |
| Cambridge Morris Men [aka Travelling Morrice] | Kinnerton Morris Men | Stafford Morris Men |
| Castleford Sword Dancers | Leeds Morris Men | Standon Morris Men |
| Chalice Morris Men | Leicester Morris Men | Taunton Deane Morris Men |
| Chester City Morris Men | Letchworth Morris Men | Thaxted Morris Men |
| Dartington Morris Men | Long Man Morris Men | Thelwall Morris Men |
| Devil's Dyke Morris Men | Manchester Morris Men | Trigg Morris Men |
| Durham Rams | Martlet Sword & Morris Men | Het Utrecht Morris Team |
| East Surrey Morris Men | Men of Wight Morris Men | Uttoxeter Heart of Oak Morris Men |
| Etcetera Morris Men | Mendip Morris Men | Victory Morris Men |
| Exeter Morris Men | Mersey Morris Men | Wadard Morris Men |
| Gloucestershire Morris Men | Moulton Morris Men | Wantsum Morris Men |
| Great Yorkshire Morris | Northampton Morris Men | Wessex Morris Men |
| Green Man's Morris and Sword Club | Offley Morris Men | West Somerset Morris Men |
| Greensleeves Morris Men | Peterborough Morris | Westminster Morris Men |
| Harthill Morris Men | Ripley Morris Men | Whitchurch Morris Men |
| Hartley Morris Men | Rumford Morris | Winchester Morris Men |
| Headington Quarry Morris Dancers | Rutland Morris Men | Winstler Morris Dancers |

e. Officers / Past Officers in attendance:

Peter J Halfpenney Squire
 Charlie Corcoran Bagman
 Edward Worrall Treasurer
 Brian Tasker Chair: Advisory Council

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Mike Stevens | Area Rep.: East | Pete Simpson | Area Rep.: West Midlands |
| Alistair Hutchinson | Area Rep.: North | David Thompson | Area Rep.: North Midlands |
| David Loughlin | Area Rep.: North West | Roger Comley | Area Rep.: South Midlands |
| Robin Springett | Area Rep.: South West & Wales | Fred Hands | Area Rep.: South East |

Chris Metherell Archive Group Chairman
 Duncan Broomhead Archives - Keeper of the Ring Photograph Archive

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------|---|---------------------|
| Steve Adamson BFB | | Morris Shop Keeper | |
| John Maher | | Overseas Bagman & Morris Ring Webmaster | |
| Harry Stevenson | | Publications – Editor Morris Circular | |
| Keith Francis | | Scrapbook Keeper & Recorder | |
| Barry Care MBE | Past Sq 1982 | Cliff Marchant | Past Sq 2002 |
| Geoff Jerram | Past Sq 1986 | Bob Cross | Past Sq 2004 |
| Mike Chandler | Past Sq 1990 | Paul Reece | Past Sq 2006 |
| Tim Sercombe | Past Sq 1996 | Brian Tasker | Past Sq 2008 |
| Daniel Fox | Past Sq 1998 | | |
| Keith Francis | Past Bag 1984 | John Frearson | Past Bag 1998 |
| Barry Care MBE | Past Tres 1979 | Steve Adamson | Past Treasurer 1994 |
| Richard Sinclair | Past Tres 1990 | | |

2. Minutes of the last ARM (Previously distributed)

Correction: Harry Stevenson was there - omitted from list of attendees.

Accepted as an accurate and True record: Proposed: John Colbert (StaffordMM)

Seconded: Dave Casewell (Rutland Morris)

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

a. Report on the Youth Fund (*Brian Tasker: Chair of Advisory Council*)

Brief resume of what it was for; £739 in the fund - can be used for set-up costs for new youth sides: the purchase of kit, etc. To date nobody has made a claim. Needs to be used or there is no point. If you want to start a youth group approach the officers.

b. Up-date on the Olympics (Squire)

Disappointed that every approach has been rejected - all fobbed off by authorities. John Clifford (Open) and Paul Reece have put a vast amount of work. Opening ceremony no hope; torch route - planning seems chaotic; closing celebration - not organised yet no hope! Involvement must be at local level.

Barry Care - Dover Games /Chipping Campdon Ring Meeting must be widely publicised.

Tim Sercombe - disappointed that this will be the first Modern Olympics where the folk tradition of the host country not featured.

c. Recruitment leaflet / PowerPoint (Bagman)

Plea to all to use read and use distributed paperwork and feedback / share results and ideas. This is very much a joint venture - the public do not see differences between the three orgs. Standards must be the key. (Also See Recruitment in Squire's Report)

d. Performance Standards (Squire)

Work on this has been sidelined by other pressures but still an immensely important part of the role of the Morris Ring.

4. Squire's Report: Peter J Halfpenney

Peter added nothing to his pre-published report and no questions were raised.

There are many and varied reasons why an individual might stand for office in an organisation to which he belongs. Some of these might be altruistic, some self-aggrandizement, sometimes a desire to influence and change and sometimes a determination to consolidate and preserve. In my case it was a sense that the Morris Ring had lost its way somewhat and was wandering aimlessly with no clear focus or objective. As an organisation we had become introspective, looking more over our shoulders at the past than ahead to our future. I considered that it was time for change and I wanted to be active in promulgating the realisation that we live in a new age and no matter ones heritage, the Morris Ring needs to adapt or be swamped by the urgency and modernity of the 21st century.

We are all aware that there are three umbrella organisations overseeing the promotion of Morris dancing and it is no secret that of the three, the only one shrinking in size is the Morris Ring. I believe there to have been complacency in the past; a sense that the Morris Ring is **THE** organisation and the others don't really count. Well it is time to wake up and smell the coffee. It is no accident that we are fast becoming the third horse in a race, in which we should be galloping along with the front-runners.

So, let us look at our present strengths and failings, and see if we can better enhance the things we are doing right and eradicate some of the things we are doing wrong.

Attitude. In certain quarters we have been referred to as 'dinosaurs' and that label has not attached itself to us without some justification. It is all well and good to fly the 'protection of our ancient heritage' flag and that we do often, however 'heritage' and being 'old-fashioned' are not synonymous. It is possible to demonstrate pride in our history in a manner more appealing to present-day audiences without appearing to be old men desperately clinging on to a dying ritual. Pride and enthusiasm is the key here. Engage with your audiences, tell them what you do, where Morris has taken you in the past, describe the fun you have had and the significance you feel in continuing a dancing rite that has been performed in an unbroken chain going back to the court of Queen Elizabeth the First and beyond.

Rivalry. Thankfully the misogynistic or scornful attitude towards the other two Morris organisations has greatly abated. Most of us realise that women have danced Morris since the middle ages and it is a certain fact that the continued existence of Morris dancing today is in no small part due to women continuing the tradition at times when men were unable, particularly times of war and conflict. The Open Morris and the Morris Federation are the homes for women dancers and mixed sides and they are working as hard as we to showcase Morris dancing to their audiences in a manner that has flair and appeal. Never forget that the general public don't distinguish between our organisations; they simply enjoy what they see. Any promotion of quality Morris dancing and positive exposure of our art is welcome. The

Morris Ring stands to gain as much as the Open Morris and Morris Federation from good publicity so applaud them, don't denigrate them. We should work with them, not against them.

Standards. Neither Morris dancers themselves nor our audiences wish to see lacklustre performance and shoddy showmanship. "When he is dancing, the true Morris-man is serious of countenance, yet gay of heart; vigorous yet restrained; a strong man rejoicing in his strength, yet graceful, controlled, and perfectly dignified withal." It is by adhering to this tenet that we best display our skills. To this end the Officers are considering a number of measures that will encourage better performance. There is no better way of improving individual technique than by learning and practicing jig dances. The Morris Ring wholeheartedly supports the jigs instructional weekend in January, and financial enticement for newcomers that we have introduced has already impacted on the popularity and diversity of the weekend. If you have not yet attended the jigs weekend, you are strongly encouraged to do so. I would further remind club Squires and Foremen to use jigs as a teaching tool within their own club practices. Providing financial support or underpinning, particularly for Morris Ring Meetings has always been a bone of contention. Of course the Morris Ring wants to give encouragement and confidence to sides wanting to run a Ring Meeting but has to temper that by declining to provide a blank cheque and carte blanche to run amuck with the budget. I am working closely with the Morris Ring Treasurer to explore financial underpinning of Ring Meetings only if there is a tutorial element during the event. Keeping the balance sheet in the black is still paramount but at least the Treasury will be able to justify subsidy with some practical reward. All sides should be encouraged to tap into resources that could lead them to improve their own standards and to make it an enjoyable experience so to do. A simple way to achieve this is to invite neighbouring sides, or individuals with recognised skills, to join you in a home-grown day of instruction. Complacency is a sure route to boredom and malpractice. Proactively is a stimulant that will ultimately reward both your club and your public.

Support. Sadly there is an element in our midst that seems determined at every opportunity to undermine, belittle, criticize, and personally abuse those who are trying to fulfil a role within the Morris Ring, be that a major office or a supporting department. Our strength and our future are dependent on unity. We need willing volunteers to fill the roles of office and for such people to come forward and undertake these roles the expectation has to be that the experience will be pleasurable and rewarding. Whilst constructive criticism out in the open leading to meaningful discussion and debate is expected, scattergun politics and clandestine hacking at our foundations is despicable and unacceptable. Those perpetrators unable to contribute to our development in an ordered, polite, and meaningful manner will henceforth be heavily censured and rebuked. In particular I remind you that our Google Groups are established for the exchange of ideas and information and not for personal rants nor public displays of disaffection. Those abusing them henceforth will be debarred from further

postings. The correct way to deal with disgruntlement is to report concerns to the Officers not to broadcast it to the membership.

Image & Recruitment. There is no doubt that the public perception of Morris has a huge influence on the willingness of new blood to join us. To be seen as elitist, sexist, loutish, self-adulating, foppish, or separatist is simply not acceptable and will do nothing to endear us to our public. We are all aware that Mr Media is king and the way we are reported exerts great sway over our public image. Thankfully our relationship with the press has improved immeasurably in recent years but there is still much work to do. Part of the problem is that newspapers have their own archives, which they consult whenever a new article is to be published. So often delving into past stories unearths the 'Incest & Morris Dancing', 'Beer-swilling Louts' or 'Grown Men with Bells on' adages, which we are heartily sick of hearing. Part of the blame lies within our own camp. We simply have not provided the press with better content for them to publish. Whilst the Morris Ring Officers are working together, and with the other JMOs discussing ways that our national image can be improved, I strongly urge all sides to build up a relationship with local TV, press and radio so that it becomes habit to issue them with press releases whenever you are doing something newsworthy. Never miss an opportunity to advertise in the content that you are actively encouraging new members to join and highlight some of the attractions of being a member of a Morris side. The key to stimulating sufficient interest is to empathise with the media and to remember that their principal objective is to sell their product. Dull does not sell; quirky and interesting does so always be on the lookout for a 'hook' or point of interest that will attract readership.

The recruitment package that has been assembled from the questionnaire feedback last year should go a long way towards stimulating interest in Morris dancing and attracting new members to your club. The cornerstone of this endeavour is appointing a Recruitment Officer for your own club. If you have not yet done so I would encourage you to take this step without delay. We shall do what we can on the national stage to generate interest but local endeavour is what will ultimately pay dividends. *(Recruitment papers referred to were distributed via email to all Bagmen following the ARM)*

I would like to close on a very positive note. It is only by being close to the epicentre of the Morris Ring that you come to realise what a leviathan of an organisation we are. Our responsibilities at the forefront of Morris worldwide require a massive machine to maintain its history, ensure its present-day good health, and to pave the way for its future prosperity. I cannot be over-effusive in the praise and admiration I have for my fellow Officers. They have been staunch and unrelenting in their support for me and in executing the requirements of their own offices. In addition there is an enormous army of editors, publishers, archivists, collectors, teachers, shopkeepers, and organisers all beavering away in the background to ensure that their areas of responsibility run efficiently and serve the purpose for which they are intended. Some members may not appreciate just how dedicated are these contributors to

our well-being but be advised that their input is vital. To all of them I say, we know that you are out there and although much of what you do is achieved quietly and without fuss in the background, the significance of what you do is greatly appreciated.

This is a time of change and change is an entity always viewed with suspicion. I would urge all our members to be positive about our future and not to be afraid to consider steering our ship into new waters. We have to adapt to a world of changing values and attitudes. We should do so in measured fashion, balancing our historical traditions with the requirements of a modern age. It is time to shake off the dinosaur image for after all history itself records the ultimate fate of the dinosaur!

5. **Bagman's Report.** Charlie Corcoran

Charlie added nothing to his pre-published report and no questions were raised.

In the five years since I took over from John Frearson as Bagman I have enjoyed having the honour, and I do consider it to be an honour, of being the Bagman of the Morris Ring. Due to the nature of my day job I do not have the opportunity to travel and visit as much as John used to but I have made and renewed many friendships.

The growth of computer access has dramatically changed the job of the Bagman - especially with regard to the Morris Ring Directory - which many of you will remember as a thick tome of tiny print that was out of date before it left the photocopier. Eddie, God bless him, now maintains what is a simple excel spread sheet. Easy to update when, and if, sides think to pass on details of changes in Bagman etc.

When I started we also used to produce a Handbook that contained the Constitution; lists of Past Officers; maps showing vaguely where sides were located; details of where hats, trousers, tankards and the like could be obtained. Now all of this information is available from the Morris Ring website. The Morris Ring website (thanks to John Maher here); the Google Groups, and now Google Site: <https://sites.google.com/site/morrisring/> for storing files etc (thanks to Geoff Jerram for setting this up); Google Maps and now the Morris Ring Facebook site all have dramatically increased the opportunities for individual members of each side, as well as their Officers, to communicate.

Sadly this does seem to have a downside. Historically if someone had a problem with me or something that I had done, or failed to do, then a letter (remember them?) or a phone call usually solved the issue. The past few months have been fairly tiresome. I have always considered my role, along with that of the Treasurer, to be the Civil Service to the Squire. Like genuine, Civil Servants our role is largely non-political but like them we have recently been subjected to unfortunate levels of indirect personal criticism and abuse.

My role as editor, or in reality largely author, of the Newsletter, remains for a small but vociferous minority oddly controversial. As I said in my report to last year's last year ARM my interpretation as to what I should include covers reporting up-coming events and any recent

Morris-related items of information that might be considered newsworthy. Like my fellow editors (or the Circular and the Morris Dancer) I am really dependent upon the wider membership of the Morris Ring, and in my case frequently the wider Morris community, for content. I do not charge to publicise your events or to report your successes but I need to know of them. As to failures or bereavements I will report on these as appropriate whilst Harry in the Circular will consider the publication of longer obituaries or celebrations of the life and contribution to the Morris of significant figures.

It is with regret that we have had to accept David Thompson's resignation, due largely to ill health, as editor of *The Morris Dancer*. As the principle mouthpiece of the Archive Group the *Morris Dancer* is the academic arm of our publications: the means by which the general membership and the wider Morris world are informed and inspired by the invaluable work of this dedicated group of individuals and work they commission. David's first edition showed great promise and we look forward to the edition that he is currently compiling but will then be looking for a successor.

Now, my usual catalogue of thanks:

- Foremost of which must, as usual, be to my fellow Bagmen. The administrators who keep the sides running smoothly. I appreciate how hard it is to get men to read notices, or emails, much less commit themselves to an event or booking.
- To my fellow Civil Servant, Eddie, I offer both thanks and commiserations. He has such a low profile that people still send the cheques for their subs to me, and in one case to his predecessor.
- Speaking of Steve (BfB) I must thank him both personally and on behalf of the wider membership for his unstinting efforts in maintaining the Morris Shop, offering an unparalleled service to performers of the Morris not just in the UK but across the world.
- The Squire. Peter took office in "interesting times" and is extending his previous business experience to include diplomacy; refereeing and side-stepping - none of which appear to be Olympic disciplines.
- I have already mentioned the many supportive and encouraging friends that I have made within the Morris but I must highlight my own sides: Leicester Morris Men and Man Friday. Their support and encouragement continues to be invaluable. I enjoy dancing the Morris with them.
- Finally I mention my family. They have borne the brunt of my irritation over the past months, when I have resisted the temptation to respond to some of the more infantile 'discussions' on the Google Group. Jane in particular has reminded me that my obsession, the Morris, is in fact only a hobby. I thank them.

6. Treasurer's Report Eddie Worrall

Accounts were distributed immediately prior to the meeting (attached as Appendix 1). The Treasurer explained that they were not available earlier due to the ARM being held so early this year and the demise of the ability to place files on the Google Group.

- *Morris Ring Accounts for year ended 31st December 2010*
- *Morris Ring Accounts for year ended 31st December 2009*
- *Officers Expenses for year ended 31st December 2010*
- *Officers Expenses for year ended 31st December 2009*
- *Other expenses, incl. Advisory Council Meeting expenses 2010*
- *Other Expenses for year ended 31st December 2009*

In addition to his pre-published report Eddie made these points:

- a) *Income and expenditure are in balance but smaller surplus this year due to increased expenditure, notably the new display boards, and increased publication costs, including The Circular now being on glossy paper.*
- b) *Income down mainly due to lower collections at Ring Meetings but also the subsidy offered to first time attendees at the Jigs Instructional appearing of the accounts for the first time.*
- c) *The transfer of £5,000 to the Reserve Fund is to separate capital from day to day running funds. £25,011 looks like a large sum but in relation to our income we clearly need to be careful how and on what we spend very finite resources.*
- d) *There is no request for an increase in subscription rates this year.*

Questions: (i) Ian Candlin (Kinnerton MM) asked about the £22,000 worth of stock; the £9,225 spent on stock and queried how realistic the stock valuation was. Eddie pointed out that Richard Sinclair, our Auditor, was present and that much of the money had been spent on bells to avoid the VAT increase. History shows that bells sell. Richard explained that over the past couple of years all dead stock had been written off - so all stock is now current - this includes the CD replacements of the Letchworth tapes. All current stock does turn-over. Stephen Adamson (Great Yorkshire Morris & Shopkeeper) interjected to explain that due to bulk buying we have not had to increase prices to membership for more than 5 years and now guaranteed for a further 3 years.

(ii) Ian Anderson (Thaxted) asked what the 75th Anniversary Fund was and was reminded that it was the Youth Fund.

Well, I thought my first year as Treasurer was busy.....

Before looking at some of the detail in the accounts for 2010, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Brian Tasker for his work during his term of office as Squire and his continued involvement as Chair of the Advisory Council. Unless you've been in the hot seat or seen it close at hand, it's hard to imagine the demands it can bring, or I guess, how rewarding it can be. As part of the Morris Ring 'Civil Service' the demands on me are somewhat different and I'd like to pay tribute to Brian's frankness and dignity in how he served our member clubs as Squire.

I would also like to pay tribute to Pete Halfpenney as our new Squire in how quickly he has hit the ground running on a number of issues since dancing in, some well publicised and to be debated at the ARM. He, myself and Charlie as Bagman have had a very busy end to 2010 addressing the items that make up the majority of our Agenda at the ARM and I hope, in bringing these into focus for debate at the meeting.

OK, protocol out of the way, how has 2010 shaped up for the Morris Ring's finances?

Accounts for the year will be circulated in advance of the ARM, once the audit has taken place, unfortunately this has not been possible by the copy deadline for the Newsletter.

However, the accounts show that income and expenditure on the General account are broadly in balance. Some of the main themes from this year are as follows:-

Jigs weekend.

As reported last year, the initiative to subsidise first time attendees through their clubs, proved very popular, and Geoff Jerram and his team of instructors had a clutch of new recruits to put through their paces.

It was quickly decided to repeat this offer of subsidy again for 2011, with a further incentive for returning first timers of £5 off the weekend. Full details are given on the Jigs application form. Demand has again been strong and promises to be even more popular this year.

75th Anniversary Youth Fund.

The rate of donations to the fund has slowed in 2010, although is keeping pace with those being made to the Archive fund. To date however, no applications for assistance have been made to the Officers and this is of long term concern. The purpose of the fund was to promote the running of youth sides via our member clubs and this of course may well happen without the need for assistance by the 75th Fund.

However, if it becomes clear that the fund has no viable future as it is not fulfilling a need, we will have to review its future and how the funds should be used. That said, now is not the time for this as it is still in its early days.

The challenge to make use of the funds donated for the purpose proposed is open to you as our member clubs to take up and the Officers are open to proposals on this.

Reserve Account

As set out in last year's account, the sum of £20,000.00 was transferred into the newly set up Reserve account and has not been required in 2010. A further £5,000.00 has been transferred into the account at the end of 2010, representing my estimate of the balance being retained in the General account that was not required for day to day expenditure.

The Reserve account is intended purely as a mechanism to help identify funds which are available for investment according to the Morris Ring's objectives, outside of regular costs and expenses. Much of this has been accumulated over a long number of years from various sources of income (Shop sales, subs, publications, Ring Meeting surplus etc) and is not easily or quickly replaced. Care should be taken over how it is spent.

It is also a source of potential capital investment, should it be decided that it is appropriate.

My recommendation to the ARM, is that the reserve is held as it is at this time, as the future activities and expenditure of the Morris Ring is unclear, given the items for discussion and set before the meeting for vote. Only once these are resolved and the outcome fully developed will financial plans be able to be set.

I am however pleased to note that we are in a relatively strong capital position to help move the Morris Ring forward in its objectives.

Subscription rates

As mentioned, income and expenditure are broadly in balance and I recommend that no change is made to the rates of subscription for 2011/12.

Morris Shop

The Morris Shop has been very active again this year and has appeared at an ever wider range of events and occasions throughout the year. In addition the unseen side of the Shop is the steady stream of postal sales and internet enquiries that keep Steve busy during the weekdays!

Recent ventures such as Facebook and Ebay are helping to spread the reach of the Shop and to connect the Morris World with the service the Shop provides, in gathering an unbeatable collection of Morris related products at a reasonable price.

The recent VAT hike to 20% in January, has prompted a larger than usual re-stocking at the end of 2010, to help keep prices as low as possible. This is particularly the case again this year with bells and is reflected in the accounts.

and finally...

It remains for me to wish all a good 2011, whatever it may bring, and to thank the many Treasurers, Bagmen and Squires in our member clubs who have helped me in carrying out the tasks of a Morris Ring Treasurer, in particular the clubs who have hosted Ring Meetings during 2010, or are going to be in 2011.

Without exception, all I have met (in person or via telephone/e-mail) have been generous in their help and support and shown the fellowship and friendship that help make the Morris Ring the organisation it is.

On a very final note, I must also thank Charlie Corcoran as Morris Ring Bagman (and my fellow Civil Servant!) without whom, much would not happen as smoothly or as well as it does.

Peter Halfpenney thanked Eddie for all his hard work as Treasurer, Richard Sinclair for auditing the accounts and Stephen Adamson for his tireless work with the shop - which has raised a great deal of money for the Morris Ring over the years.

That the Accounts be accepted: Proposed by: John Frearson (Bedford MM)
Seconded by: Ian Anderson (Thaxted MM)

Michael Stimpson: Insurance Guru

There is still some confusion over and between the two insurance policies available, both of which offer incredible value for money due to the economies of scale possible as they are joint with the other two Morris organisations. The Public Liability, which protects each side and individual members thereof whilst performing and practicing, included in subscription. This covers the side for the whole of the world except the USA and Canada. The other is the voluntary Personal Accident policy. Two thirds of MR sides still do not use this policy but they have up to 17th March to so do. It is £1.67 per man and details of cover are included with the application documents.

7. Constitutional Motions:

Peter Halfpenney explained to the meeting the process to be followed to ensure that all understood and that debate would not be stifled, He explained that currently through no fault of our own we were operating outside of the law - due to the changes introduced by the Equalities Act (October 2010). This meant that we needed to reach a decision at the meeting. Each proposal and amendments where applicable, were to be considered in turn, with the proposers briefly outlining their case followed by an opportunity for discussion. He also explained that whilst the proposed Thaxted amendment to the Rumford Motion would normally be ruled out of order as totally alters the purpose of the original motion it had been decided that it should stand to ensure that full debate was possible.

He also explained that as and when votes need to be counted we would progress through the rest of the agenda as appropriate. [This happened but for simplicity these minutes follow the order of the Agenda as published.]

- i. **Women Musicians:** Additions in *italics* / ~~Deletions~~ struck through
"to amend Clauses 2 and 10 to read:

2. The Morris Ring shall be an association of Men's Morris, Sword and Mummers Clubs and Teams. Any established Men's Club or Team which meets regularly for Morris or Sword Dancing or Mumming, *which restricts its dancing or acting members to men*, and endeavours to uphold the standards and dignity of the Morris, shall be eligible for Membership of the Morris Ring.

10. There shall be at least one gathering of ~~Morris Men~~ *Morris Ring Clubs* in each year, to be sponsored or arranged by the Morris Ring.

Proposed by Rumford Morris

Paul Campbell (Rumford Morris): The side was formed in 1960 and are proud members of Morris Ring. In recent years only able to practice and perform out with the help of female musicians - within, as they understood it, Morris Ring rules. These musicians are full members of the side. The wording of the motion is designed to be within the requirements of the Equalities Act and uphold the Morris Ring's stated aim of promoting male Morris dancing. It is designed to open any Morris Ring event to any member of a Morris Ring side and that includes female musicians.

Amendment 1: proposed by Thaxted MM Not accepted by Rumford

Insert / add the words in *italics* and delete the words ~~struck through~~

2. The Morris Ring shall be an association of Men's Morris, Sword and Mummers Clubs and Teams. Any established Men's Club or Team which meets regularly for Morris or Sword Dancing or Mumming, which restricts its dancing, *musicians and all other performers or acting members* to men, and endeavours to uphold the standards and dignity of the Morris, shall be eligible for Membership of the Morris Ring.

Paul Reece (Thaxted & Past Squire: 2006-8) & Daniel Fox (Thaxted & Past Squire: 1998-2000) spoke in explanation / support. Paul admitted that their amendment adopted an ultra-orthodox stance and that it had the potential to be divisive. Daniel admitted that he was a layman when it came to the law but quoted Harriet Harman who had stated that the Equality Act did not stop men or women only clubs and that Thaxted saw their amendment as not being diametrically opposed to the Rumford motion but strengthen it. If a club is male only that is not a problem but if a side is mixed then all members of the side must have equal opportunity of participation in all activities of the club - be it dancer, musician, beast, collector, etc.. In addition, any member of a MR side must be eligible to stand as Squire or Bagman of both own side and the MR. Thaxted's interpretation of the Act is that if you try to make musicians a different class of membership then you are discriminating. The fact that past Squires of the MR, including himself, had turned a blind eye to female musicians is an irrelevance. The EA allows the continued existence of all men clubs and our decision is whether we want the Morris Ring to continue as an all male organisation or not.

Amendment 2: proposed by Moulton MM Not accepted by Rumford

Insert / add the words in *italics*:

"The Morris Ring shall be an association of Men's Morris, Sword and Mummers Clubs and Teams. Any established Men's Club or Team which meets regularly for Morris or Sword Dancing or Mumming, which restricts its dancing or acting members to men *only*, and endeavours to uphold the standards and dignity of the Morris, shall be eligible for Membership of the Morris Ring. *Such Clubs and Teams retain Membership as long as they*

restrict dancing and acting members to men only and provide annual confirmation of this status by renewing subscriptions."

Barry Care (Moulton MM & Past Squire: 1982-4) spoke in explanation / support, stressing that he was reading from a script written by his side. The MR has always respected the independence of member clubs and perhaps with hindsight we have been too understanding of teams with women musician members. This did not matter until the EA except for the attendance at Ring meetings and we were even moving towards solution for that but now discrimination is outlawed. We are all equal in all things and women members of Ring clubs could dance if they insisted on doing so. The Morris Ring has always been all-male Morris in spirit if not in reality. Times change and we all know that there are female and mixed teams and we all from time to time join in and dance with them - no problems but the Equalities Act could be pointing towards a future of all mixed Morris. Moulton believe that from an artistic point of view that needs to be taken into account, and some women's' teams also don't want to be mixed. If we are to retain this heritage of male Morris dancing with its special artistic characteristics this amendment is necessary. Compliance needs to be built into the motion, hence the proposed amendment. Many sides are content with the existing constitution but much of the recent discussion would suggest that there needs to be a mechanism to ensure that sides comply with the constitution - and the proposed amendment to the Rumford Motion would ensure that payment of Morris Ring subs indicated an acceptance of the Morris Ring constitution - that they are clubs with only male dancers.. Sides with female musicians might still present a problem with regards to the *Legitimate Aim* 'loophole' (Barry explained he uses this term as a simple shorthand label) but the Moulton suggestion puts the legal responsibility onto the individual club and not the Morris Ring.

Rumford were asked whether they could not accept either or both amendment but confirmed that they could not.

Steve Parker (Headington Quarry) asked whether the two sections of the Rumford Motion could be considered separately but it was ruled to be impossible.

Alistair Hutchinson (Leeds) referred to the two options status quo or allowing female musicians, and asked about a third option - to open the Morris Ring to anybody regardless of gender. Leeds would support this and he asked whether this might be proposed as an amendment at the meeting? The Squire said that this was an option that could be considered by the meeting if speakers wished but pointed out that throughout the months of discussion that had taken place prior to the meeting this had not been raised as an option as this would simply make us the equivalent to the Open Morris or the Morris Federation. He referred to a long letter from Oxford University Morris which explains that within the

university environment it is impossible to advertise and bar women from dancing so they are against the Rumford proposal. Peter stated that there were two other noble organisations who would welcome them with open arms.

Bob Pearce (Gloucester MM) Pointed out that whilst Gloucester MM are a strong male only side, and part of the MR since 1937, but if the situation arose when they needed to use female musicians to allow their distinctive performance style (of Cotswold) to continue then they would and sadly leave the Morris Ring. The Morris Ring must not ignore the plight of sides like Rumford. The Squire reminded the meeting that this only affected sides when attending meetings of the Morris Ring and made little difference at individual club level. Sides can remain all-male.

Velson Horie (Manchester MM) Pointed out that on the new Display boards Manchester MM are featured - with a female musician. They were glad to have her as she has enabled them to continue. Manchester will be supporting the main motion and see it as a step along the road to sanity.

Peter Halfpenney recounted the fate of Goathland Ploughstots whose survival as a very 'in-village' traditional side has only been assured by their accepting young female dancers from their village. They had no choice if their tradition was to continue. We appreciate their dilemma and have accepted their resignation from the MR and wish them every success in the future.

John Colbert (Woodside MM) recalled the tradition of Morris within the Woodside folk - where it was 'coeducational' but said that it was his preference to dance in an all-male dancing side but then read from the minutes of the 1974 ARM

"...speaking of women's Morris the Squire (Morris Sunderland) says that women's Morris was in being, that it would be well danced and would attract audiences. It was essential to see the women concerned, and to explain what the Morris is: a fertility dance and that it could not be properly done by women and that if they were to continue to dance it in public then the Morris as we know it today would die. There was evidence that if women danced the Morris then men would cease to do it. "

John explained that was the commonly held view 37 years ago but very few people at the 2011 ARM would agree with it. Times change and tradition is not cast in stone and as that changes and we have to recognise that we (the Morris Ring) have to change as well. He sees a future when everybody and anybody will be able to dance and enjoy the Morris together - and that is the important thing.

Chris Malvey (Silurian): This is not about whether men or women are better or worse musicians or dancers than each other. Gob-smacking to discover that so many MR sides have female musicians and that the sides have to rely upon them. Silurian have always thought that they were members of an organisation that was all male and believe that the Thaxted amendment will ensure that we remain so - even though it will mean that some sides will have to resign and join

another organisation. The fudge cannot continue. Silurian (& other sides) might consider resigning if the Rumford Motion is carried.

Peter Halfpenney explained about the word 'fudge'. In the past we fudged women in, frequently to enable sides to survive. Only the EA forced us to confront this. If we 'allow' women musicians this does not mean that every side has to accept women musicians into their side nor does it mean that all sides hosting an event under the auspices of the Morris Ring have to accept women musicians at their event. This is not a fudge or a loophole in law.

Les Chittleburgh (Isca MM) Isca founded in the 1970s and for many years have had two categories of membership, dancers and musicians, and Father Ken Loveless (Squire 1980-82) knew and witnessed them dancing to women musicians when he assessed their suitability for MR membership. It is a nonsense to assert that the MR has always been an all-male organisation.

Tim Sercombe (Dartington & Past Squire: 1996-98) quoted his Czech wife to raise the importance of our all-male tradition which marks it out as special - and would be cherished anywhere else in Europe. He accepted responsibility along with fellow past-squires for turning a blind eye. An Act of Parliament is now forcing us to implement our Constitution as we should have and that sides who either do not like this or cannot comply will have to leave us and join another organisation. Sorry but that is a fact of life.

Mike Harnett (Rutland MM) Referred back to times pre- Equalities Act. The MR has existed happily until this act so why are we changing things. He appealed for a vote for the status quo.

Chris Benson (Greensleeves) We are fortunate with musicians at this stage do not need female musicians but this has not always been the case - before the war having had to rely on Mrs Mathews to play for practices so we recognise the human dilemma that can be involved - including those married couples who want to dance & play.

Joe Oldaker (Anker). Anker have a woman musician and when the MR Constitution was written there were four of the founder sides we are told also had female musicians. Our founding fathers wrote the Constitution with that in mind and did not see it as a fudge. This shows that the MR has never been 100% male. Nothing has changed over the past 77 years except the new legal requirement that everything has to be spelt out.

John Jenner (Cambridge) We are 100% in favour but requested clarification of our legal situation should the Thaxted amendment be passed. Whilst Thaxted will still be able to run a meeting (as they did before 1934) but will they be able to call it a Ring meeting? **Chris**

Metherell confirmed that the simple short answer was "no". All members of all clubs have to be able to attend all MR events so should we become a mixed organisation we would not be able to prevent any member of any MR side from attending - regardless of gender. **Eddie Worrall** added that in future the way that the MR organised / supports meetings might change. One way forward might be to recognise that all events were the 'responsibility' of the host side- and that the MR would develop different ways of recognising / financially supporting / numbering meetings. What might actually be involved - feasts, etc. was open to debate. **Peter Halfpenney** pointed out that part of the problem was that there is no agreed definition of what a Morris

Ring Meeting is anyway. The Morris Ring does not organise the meetings - that is done by the host sides. All the MR does is publicise it, facilitate applications, and give it a number. If we're to call these events what they are - events organised by the host side then we no longer have a problem in law - whether they are all male or mixed. All of this can be discussed and decided when the votes are in.

Tim Sercombe (Dartington & Past Squire: 1996-98) queried how this might impact upon our constitutional requirement to hold one meeting of the MR each year and he was reassured that simply by holding the ARM this requirement was fulfilled.

Ian Candlin (Kinnerton MM) explained that if they had to exclude their female musician they would almost certainly lose her husband - their male musician as well. They support the integrity of male dancing but recognise the role of female musicians in making that possible - even Thaxted during the war if the photos are to be believed.

Bob Cross (Chalice & Past Squire: 2004-6) Fudge is an 86 letter word. He was concerned that many sides in the room were feeling bullied by a few and that the legal opinions made no difference as it was recognised that only Barristers had 'opinions' and not solicitors. He went on to express his concerns over some of the recent exchanges on the Google Group - they were 'bullsh*t'. None of us want to break the law - because that is the sort of people we are. This law must not change what we stand for and believe in. He quotes Bob Davies (currently gravely ill) who had said when Bob Cross was Squire that if the MR was reduced to 35 clubs it would still be the Morris Ring. We need to use conscience and be honest with ourselves - we must not be bullied. Peter acknowledged this but pointed out that there were financial economies of scale that would make our survival in anything like our current form extremely unlikely.

Robin Springett (Dartington & SouthWest & Wales Area Rep) bothered that he saw the same people at all the meetings of the Morris Ring that he attended - and there were a lot of sides that never considered attending or running these meetings because they had women musicians. We need to be inclusive - let's enter the 21st Century.

Mac McCoig (Uttoxeter Heart of Oak MM) pointed out that when the Open Morris & Morris Fed were formed the pressure on the Morris Ring to reform was removed. If we decline in numbers too far then we will become irrelevant and that would be dangerous as we need to remain as a centre of male Morris excellence. The question of female musicians is a challenge to that very idea and we will all be better off if the existing sense of male fraternity at MR meetings was removed through female musicians attending.

Nigel Cox (Whitchurch MM) asked that Rumford, Thaxted, and Moulton be given a chance to respond to the debate. Peter agreed.

Paul Campbell (Rumford Morris): thanked everyone for their contribution but asked that the two amendments be rejected.

Daniel Fox (Thaxted & Past Squire: 1998-2000) thanked Peter for the adroit chairing of the debate and commented that the question as to why is a dancer different to a musician had not been answered. He also said that even though his side were celebrating their centenary

tradition did not matter - as 100 years ago they did not have an Equality Act. Finally, he pointed out that neither the Thaxted amendment nor the original Rumford proposal would have enabled Goathland to remain in MR membership.

Geoff Jerram (acting as Teller) explained the voting process/ procedures. Put simply, a voting slip would be required per side voting - including proxy votes. All authorised proxies had previously been verified by John Frearson. Geoff explained that each vote would be on a different coloured ballot paper and as there was an 'abstain' option on the ballot papers he clarified the difference between an abstention and a vote withheld. The former is counted as a vote cast whilst a vote withheld is not - important in constitutional motions and amendments when the % of votes cast is important.

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Thaxted Amendment: | Lost |
| Votes Cast | 105 |
| Number required to succeed | 70 |
| Number of Votes For | 21 |
| Number of Votes Against | 78 |
| Number of recorded abstentions | 4 |
| Number of Spoilt papers | 2 |

Barry Care (Moulton MM & Past Squire: 1982-4) spoke to commend their amendment. He believed that they were simply adding a compliance statement.

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Moulton Amendment: | Lost |
| Votes Cast | 91 |
| Number required to succeed | 61 |
| Number of Votes For | 31 |
| Number of Votes Against | 51 |
| Number of recorded abstentions | 8 |
| Number of Spoilt papers | 1 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Rumford Motion (un-amended) | Carried |
| Votes Cast | 104 |
| Required to succeed | 70 |
| Number of Votes For | 80 |
| Number of Votes Against | 18 |
| Number of recorded abstentions | 5 |
| Number of Spoilt papers | 1 |

Peter commented that he was delighted for the MR that following what had been a prickly debate at times that we had finally found a workable solution. Vital that we had had the debate and that we have reached a democratic decision.

Mike Stevens (Peterborough & Eastern Area Rep) proposed a Vote of Thanks to the Squire and fellow officers for taking everybody through the process. Clearly approved by the meeting. Peter asked to extend that to include Chris Metherell for his legal advice.



ii. **Composition of the Advisory Council** Additions in *italics*

"to amend Clause 6 to read:

6. "The three officers, officers elect and all past officers of the Morris Ring for *a maximum of six years following the conclusion of their term of office, together* with the nine elected members shall constitute the Advisory Council of the Morris Ring. The duty of the Advisory Council shall be to *advise and assist the Squire and the other elected officers* to further the objects of the Morris Ring and to take action in an emergency. The Advisory Council shall meet at least one a year. In such cases where it is entrusted with executive powers, a quorum shall consist of five members, including three elected members."

Proposed Horwich Prize Medal Morris Men

Bob Bradley: Horwich Prize Medal Morris Men

Motion prompted by responses on Questionnaire - the number of sides who wanted a change in the Constitution so that Advisory Council more closely reflects the wider membership. This motion will produce a better balance of those who have been elected to represent the areas and the experience of long-past officers.

Mike Austin (Winchester MM) saw this amendment as throwing the baby out with the bathwater. The AC advises the Squire, who is our only executive officer, and it is entirely up to him whether he accepts or rejects their advice. The people who have been there and done it have more relevant knowledge than the Area Reps. It is not that the Area Reps are bad, as a dynamic Area Rep is worth his weight in gold, but at the end of the day why do we want to throw away a great body of advice who can help the Squire through many minefields.

Mike Wilson Jones (Westminster MM) supported the motion simply on the grounds of practicality. Any council or committee with more than about 12 members is simply not effective. Even allowing for those members of the AC who have retired themselves the number is still too large. Thus to time limit membership to six years is a start. In the future he would like all membership to be limited to six years to allow for regeneration.

Steve (BfB) Adamson (Great Yorkshire Morris; Shopkeeper & Past Treasurer): Stated that the badge of 'Past Officer' has been brought into disrepute over recent months thanks to some of the contributions ("rude and offensive") on the Google Group where people write things on that they would not say face to face. At heart this is about accountability. He pointed out that under the current constitution he could serve on the AC for life and be as helpful or offensive to the Squire as he chose - and some of the recent advice had indeed

been offensive. (Examples were provided.) In contrast the Area Rep who might be sitting next to him in a meeting was accountable to the sides in his area and up for election or removal every three years. The Area Rep is not untouchable. It is out of respect for the AC and its original purpose that he strongly supported the motion. The Squire will still be able to seek advice from anyone he chooses.

Geoff Jerram (Winchester & Past Squire: 1986-88) Responding to Steve Adamson's reference to abuse on the Google Groups Geoff pointed out that this had unfortunately occurred on both Groups and not just the AC group so that was a red herring. He went on to talk of numbers and confirmed that the current membership was 39 but this is irrelevant as the most he had ever know to attend was 19 commented that at the last meeting , held in Packington where there had been no problems and no abuse - one of the benefits of face to face meetings. Everybody on the AC has been elected to a post if not directly to the AC. Whilst this is not democratic the AC was never intended to be democratic as its function is advice, not executive. Moves in that direction are likely to prove the downfall of the MR! This motion is negative rather than a positive contribution towards the future of the MR.

Bob Cross (Chalice & Past Squire: 2004-06) quoted Freddie Mercury "*Doing a sentence having committed no crime*". The AC has not committed a crime that requires it to be dismantled. On a personal level perhaps my crime has been to care. If I cannot get to a meeting I send my thoughts to the Chairman. The AC was responsible for the Black Book - something that would have been impossible at an ARM. It is self regulating as many members resign themselves from attendance at meetings but are happy to talk things through with the incumbent Squire on the phone or via email. The AC is a force for good.

Mark Carter (Stafford MM) Uncomfortable that some members of the AC have been there since before he was born: It sends a message that the Morris Ring is living in the past rather than looking towards the future.

Cliff Marchant (Chanctonbury Ring & Past Squire 2002-4) Asked the Squire to listen to the youngsters, the 18-30s group - and that six years was enough.

Nigel Cox (Whitchurch) referred to the accounts and the cost maintaining a large Advisory Council.

Bob Bradley (Horwich) We must not be frightened of democracy and linking more closely to the Area Reps this will bring our organisation closer to the membership and strengthen the Morris Ring.

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Horwich Motion (un-amended) | Carried |
| Votes Cast | 100 |
| Required to succeed | 67 |
| Number of Votes For | 76 |
| Number of Votes Against | 20 |
| Number of recorded abstentions | 4 |

Number of Spoilt papers 0



iii. **Standards of Performance** Additions in *italics*

"to amend Clause 9 to read:

9. Clubs whose standards fall below those generally accepted by the Member Clubs, *or who do not conform to this constitution*, may, following the advice of the Officers, be suspended from Membership of the Morris Ring if at least two thirds of the votes cast at the Annual Meeting of Club Representatives are in favour of such suspension.

Proposed Moulton MM

Barry Care (Moulton & Past Squire: 1982-4) Moulton believes that the addition of this short phrase is a fair and reasonable addition.

Robin Springett (Dartington & SW&W Area Rep) asked why it was necessary. We already have the right to suspend anyone if we want to.

Sam Addison (Thelwall Morris Men) Any set of rules is useless unless it has teeth. This says if you don't like our constitution we can kick you out.

Simon ? (Isca MM) Enquired how we measure standards? Who comes around and says that one side is good and another is not? **Peter Halfpenney** responded by pointing out that this was one of the roles of the Squire. Before a side is accepted into the MR the Squire, or the local Area Rep, will see them perform to ensure that their standard of dance is good enough. Subsequently the Squire has the responsibility to ensure that standards are maintained. **Barry Care** pointed out that the issue of standards is already covered by the Constitution. And that the proposed extra phrase was to provide a mechanism to ensure that member sides adhered to our Constitution.

Neil Bayliss (Etecetra MM) reminded the meeting that this motion was not about standards anyway.

Velson Horie (Manchester MM) stated that Manchester MM believed that the proposed additional clause was artificial and out of place in this section of the Constitution.

Barry Care in his reply to the debate dismissed this suggestion and asked that the motion be supported.

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Moulton Motion (un-amended) | Lost |
| Votes Cast | 91 |
| Required to succeed | 61 |
| Number of Votes For | 31 |
| Number of Votes Against | 51 |
| Number of recorded abstentions | 8 |
| Number of Spoilt papers | 1 |

8. Chair of Advisory Council's Report Brian Tasker

The Advisory Council has met twice during the year. Many issues were discussed but I will report here only on new matters of on-going interest to the membership.

The first meeting was on 27th March 2010 at the ARM in Abbots Bromley. It was attended by all nine area reps, eight ex officers and all the current officers.

- The most important issues raised in the questionnaire will be brought to the 2011 ARM for decisions to be made.
- The role of the AC as a body, whose role is to advise the Squire and not to make decisions, needs to be emphasised to the membership.
- Recruitment is the key issue facing the Morris Ring and is a priority of the Squire Elect, Peter Halfpenney.
- Good PR is essential for the Morris Ring, even if it has to be paid for.

The second meeting took place on 3rd October 2010 at Packington during the 18/30s weekend. It was attended by seven area reps, nine ex officers and all the current officers.

- The possibility of appointing an independent chairman for the meeting rather than the immediate past Squire was discussed. After some discussion it was decided to follow previous practice and Brian Tasker took the chair.
- The next JMO event will be hosted by the Morris Ring in Sheffield on 14 May.
- PR was again discussed. It seems that the Morris Federation may be interested in joint PR to promote the Morris.
- The resolution submitted by Rumford Morris regarding the attendance of female musicians at Ring meetings was discussed. At the time the AC had no knowledge of the Equality Act 2010. It was noted that female musicians had been present at the recent Trigg Ring Meeting and that the Rutland Morris Men had announced that female musicians would be welcome at their meeting in 2011. While some reservations and doubts were expressed there was a general feeling that the Morris Ring should accept that an increasing number of sides had female musicians and that provision should be made for them by permitting their attendance at Ring meetings where the host side was agreeable.
- It was suggested that candidates for Squire of the Ring should announce their candidature a full year before the election so that they could become better known to the clubs.
- Morris will not play any part in the opening ceremony at the Olympics but it is planned that the 2012 JMO event will be in London, though venues will be difficult to find.
- Several young dancers joined the meeting to discuss how the Morris Ring can attract more young men into its clubs. Various suggestions were made which will be incorporated into Peter's forthcoming paper on recruitment.

- The role of the area reps must be more clearly defined and this will be included in the agenda for the 2011 ARM.
- The resolution changing the composition of the AC, which has been proposed by the Horwich Prize Medal Morris Men for discussion at the 2011 ARM, was discussed. The key issues were the need to understand the needs of clubs at grass roots level and the experience of the long serving members of the AC.
- Artwork for the new Morris Ring roller banner displays was shown and approved. Three sets of displays will be ordered and a set shown at the ARM. A decision will then be made on further orders.

Since this meeting the Ring has been hit by the Equality Act 2010. The AC has not met to discuss the implications for the Morris Ring of this piece of legislation but there has been much discussion on the AC Google Group. It is hoped that the various views expressed were helpful to the officers in framing the revised proposal known as "KISS".

9. Archival Reports:

a. Chair of Archive Committee: *Chris Metherell*

I was able to report to the ARM in March last year that the Ring Archive had finally secured a long-term home for its collection at the Essex Record Office, in no small part due to the hard work put in by Paul Reece. I am delighted to be able to report that the paper and film archive has now been delivered to the ERO and is safely stored. Work has begun on the lengthy process of reorganising the collection to fit with the ERO's cataloguing strategy, and weeding the collection of duplicates and library items which are unsuitable for storage within an archive office.

Where "library" items are concerned, such as books, journals and so forth, a two part strategy has been adopted. Where possible extracts are being scanned in order that electronic copies can be made available to researchers at the ERO. For items where scanning is impractical, the close co-operation which has developed with the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library over the years has resulted in an agreement to give them first refusal of items which they do not hold (folk festival programmes are a good example), to ensure that nothing of value is lost during this process. This process is on-going, however much has already been digitised.

The same process has been followed where the Ring Archive holds photocopies of manuscripts which are held elsewhere. The Russell Wortley collection has already been digitised through the good offices and hard work of Ron Shuttleworth, and Andy Padmore has been working through the Maud Karpeles papers. Again the process is on-going.

Because of the distances involved, it was clearly impractical for me to continue as the Ring Archivist and I am pleased to report that Geoff Douglas, who lives close to the ERO has agreed to take over the task and indeed has already begun. I wish him well.

And so this is my last report to you as Archivist, although I hope to carry on as Archive Committee Chair for as long as I can be useful.

It only remains for me to thank all those who have generously given me their time, support and indeed paperwork over the years. It has been a delightful experience and a privilege to work with you all.

b. Paper: *Geoff Douglas* Apologies offered - in Australia

c. Photographic: *Duncan Broomhead*

The Photographic Archive continues to grow in size and more rewardingly; it continues to be used as a resource by a wide range of people & organisations. It is these enquiries that make the lonely hours of scanning and cataloguing, worthwhile.

If I was to list all the enquiries and deposits in this report, it would be far too long; they range from supplying photographs for the new Ring display boards, to individuals researching for books or articles and liaising with TV researchers

There was a spread across all styles of Morris in both the new material and enquiries; interestingly the majority of them were not related to 'Cotswold' Morris.

At best, the archive is a two way process material in and material out, a particularly rewarding example of this was when a lady in Cheshire sent me some photographs of her grandfather who had danced with the Over Peover Morris in the 1930's in his Morris kit, in return, I was able to send her a copy of some film footage of her grandfather dancing. The archive is there to be used it is not deposit to be guarded jealously and not shared.

The other members of the Ring Archive Group have been particularly helpful with both identification of individuals and events in photographs already held in the archive but also in their generous donation of photographs to the archive.

I would also like to thank the Leominster Morris Men, I got involved with them in trying to track down some 'lost' photographs, for my part this involved dozens of letters, e-mails and phone calls following up possible leads. In the end it was the Leominster men who tracked the photographs down, and kindly sent copies to the Ring Archive. Since then they have continued to send in new material for the archive.

Send in your queries, if I can answer them I will, and please continue to send in your photographs, whatever their format. It is your archive, use it, and add to it.

d. Mumming: *Ron Shuttleworth*

Ron had sent his apologies due to ill health and Peter Halfpenney, on behalf of the meeting, asked that our best wishes be passed on the Ron for a speedy recovery.

I have completed the digitising of my audio cassettes and discs and gone a long way towards including video material on disc. This year I hope to borrow a machine which will allow me to digitise my VHS cassettes.

I have over a hundred 'booklets', soft-cased, one section items usually bound with two wires. To scan all these one spread at a time on the flat-bed would be very tedious, and I thought it worth the expense to get most of them photocopied so that I could do it using the automatic feed. Once this was done the photocopies were superfluous and I passed them all on to Duncan Broomhead who kindly reimbursed me half the cost.

I have continued to service any queries that came in and the greatest user this year was a Canadian from the University of Alberta studying for both his M.A. and PhD. on aspects of Mumming. He contacted me asking if I could suggest a Mummings' team that he could film and interview over the Christmas period. Guess which Side he ended up with. He stayed with me for three weeks, during which he spent many hours reading in your archive. I expect to receive, a copy of the finished project.

All the material digitised to date fills 20.68 GigaBytes and comprises 4,467 files in 340 folders. I would like to thank those who have sent me material and especially Chris Little of the Traditional Drama Research Group for his invaluable help in expanding and refining the databases.

e. Sword: *Ivor Allsop*

Little has changed since my last report in 2010. Cataloguing new stuff (I try to do this as it comes in, but fail sadly), transferring the existing index in to the Ring Archive, this takes time as I have to physically handle each piece of paper, each video or DVD. This is caused by an unfortunate aspect of the transfer programme which doesn't allow for the transfer of the author or the keyword(s) or one or two of the other fields that are used in the catalogue; we have over the years tried to eradicate this but have been unsuccessful so it is easier to just carry on. Transfer of the Sword Dance Archive to the next archivist has begun and Phil Heaton now has the majority of the Rapper part of the SDA.

One aspect of the SDA Index that I have continued since its inception is to catalogue all the Ring publications that are produced as paper; the question now is 'What happens to Ring publications which only appear as electronic mail?' I only get what every other past Squire gets as I am no longer on the Advisory Council(1) or the Morris Ring Google Group (2) . This is something that you, the ARM, must decide! Do we want a complete record of Ring publications or not. If you answer yes then the next question is 'Who is going to do it?' If I continue then I

1 Ivor decided to retire from the AC last year.

2 Ivor's choice.

am going to need someone to send me the stuff. If the answer is no then you need take no further action. **But** you must make a decision one way or the other.

Help has been given to various people and organisations over the past year. Two things stand out, one is helping Duncan to fill in some of the gaps in the photograph collection with names, dates and locations; the other was to help Grenoside Traditional Sword Team with a project to celebrate the centenary of Sharp's visit to Grenoside in 1910 to check that the Pall Mall Gazette (January 8th 1895) article *Twelfth Night on the Moors - Morris Dancers in Yorkshire* was correct. Grenoside found out that the actual location used by the team on August 27th 1910 was still extant and they re-enacted this auspicious occasion with the present team performing the Grenoside Sword Dance in front of and invited audience of local dignitaries, past members of the team and representatives from other sword dance teams both local and from further afield. This was followed in October by an enactment of *The Sword Dances of Northern England* Part 1 1912 during the Sword Dance Union's Longsword Tournament.

In 2002 I was approached to see if I knew anything about why we handed out staves of office to new member clubs. This I looked up and during the research into this I came across several other interesting facts about Ring regalia which is/was not generally known. I pulled all these together and edited them, wrote about what I knew of other facts and in particular about the Ring Logo and the Ring Archive. I put these into booklet form with the title *Information for Squires & Members of the Advisory Council: Regalia, Gifts & Doles* together with notes on the Advisory Council, the Morris Ring Logo and the Morris Ring Archive. In 2003 this was distributed to the Advisory Council and all those men standing for Squire in 2004. It has been issued to all those standing for Squire ever since. At the last meeting of the Archive it was suggested that I revise it and that we should issue a copy of it to every member club in the Morris Ring, with copies given to the Morris Federation, the Open Morris and the EFDSS. This I have now done under the title *The Morris Ring: Information etc.* and it will be available at the ARM.*

* This was distributed at the meeting. It is intended to increase the knowledge of wider membership about the various odds and ends that the MR owns. When the changes to the Constitution agreed at the ARM have been made it will be re-produced and distributed to all MR sides as requested by the Archive Group.

f. Sound: Andy Padmore

Not much to report except that I continue when time permits to transfer audio cassette recordings to digital. This is an on-going process and there are many left to do to get up to date. Only one cassette tape has so far been unplayable due to deterioration and that in itself is quite remarkable. I expect others to be in the same state, but so far so good.

I am always willing to receive contributions of recordings to the Archive and these can be on any subject matter you feel needs to be included. Recordings of old dancers reminiscing, or musical items from past and even present musicians are welcomed as are sung items and even recordings of talks and lectures on related matters. I can be contacted at andy.padmored@ntlworld.com if you want to discuss anything with me.

In time I would like to actually record new material from those dancers and musicians who it is felt have something to say about any aspect of our hobby, but so far I have not made any move to do this nor yet do I feel confident enough to take the first step; But it is on my things to do list. Suggestions are welcomed for suitable candidates together with reasons and brief details and of course their location.

Most of what we have in the sound archive is not good quality as it was, generally, not recorded with posterity in mind but I hope to make what we have, available at some stage in the future.

g. New Dance Collator: Mike Wilkinson

At the 2010 ARM, it was mentioned that the post of New Dance Collator had been unfilled for several years, and there was a suggestion that perhaps the time had come to drop the idea altogether. As I have some experience of describing and notating dances, I put myself forward immediately after the meeting.

The position is "New Dance Collator" rather than "Collector" which suggests to me that the job is to maintain a central record of new dances that are submitted to me, rather than going out into the field and actively collecting dances. However, I took some initial steps to attract attention to my role. This included a short piece in the Circular, and some experimental emails to a few sides beginning with "A". I also started to write down one or two of the new dances that my own side, Dolphin, has developed. Finally, in a small number of cases, I wrote to sides I know fairly well, asking for details of some of the non-standard dances that I had seen them perform.

A few people responded, and now my PC has a folder full of notes and descriptions. There is not yet enough here for it to be a useful resource, and it is readily apparent that a lot of what has been sent to me was already written down and available somewhere before I asked for it. I cannot honestly say that my first year's activities in the role have achieved anything of great value to the Ring, other than to lay the groundwork for the next year of collating.

Unfortunately, from the collating point of view - although very fortunately for myself - events in my personal life have put the Morris further down my list of priorities than has been the case for many years. I have not made time to try to convert the various notes and descriptions that I have into a standard format for publication or circulation. With a house move and a wedding imminent in 2011, this is likely to continue to be the case for another year, although

that does not mean that I will be ignoring the New Dance Collator's role entirely. I am equally willing to carry on in the post, or to hand over to someone else who has more time to offer. If I am asked to carry on, I expect to be able to devote time in the later part of 2011 to putting what I have into a standard format suitable for circulation, and I hope to become more active in chasing people to supply details of more dances to me. Once the Ring membership becomes more widely aware of the existence of a New Dance Collator, I hope that it will start to take on a life of its own.

What Does the New Dance Collator Want?

I believe passionately in the need for gradual evolution of the Morris. Choruses that "don't quite work" get "improved"; new figures get invented; sides try to fit an existing dance to a new tune, then change the dance to make it fit better; dances are composed for special occasions. All of this healthy activity is what keeps the Morris fresh. Most of the new ideas sink into obscurity after a season or so, but every now and again, a new dance, figure, or chorus really catches on. These are the ones of most interest to me.

I **am** interested in:

- A genuinely new figure or substantially changed common figure introduced into an established tradition.
- A genuinely new chorus (distinctive figure) in an established tradition.
- An interesting combination of an existing dance with a different tune. (For example, *Young Collins*, Bledington fits nicely to *Idbury Hill*.)
- A brand new dance which is broadly in the style of an established tradition.
- A "stand alone" new dance that is not in the style of any particular tradition, but is clearly Morris as we understand it.
- A "new tradition" - which I would loosely define as two or more new dances in a novel but consistent style.

In each case, as Collator I am only interested in dances that have made it into your side's repertoire. I don't want to get too hung up on definitions and criteria, but I would suggest that a dance that is performed more than once in the first season, and carried over into the repertoire in the second season would be "collectable".

I am **not** interested in:

- Minor variations in side style such as substituting a mirror hey for a parallel hey, or *vice versa*, or substituting galleys for hook-legs.
- One off dances specially composed for a special occasion, never to be danced again.
- "Good ideas" that were tried in practice but never danced out, or were made up on the spot and danced out once, badly, under the influence of beer.
- Pipe dreams: dances that you have talked about or written down, and which might work in principle, but have never been tried.

- Standard choruses and tunes simply translated without alteration from one tradition to another. (e.g. *Balance the Straw*, Bledington.)
- Innovation for innovation's sake. Anything that would make me think, *C'es magnifique mais ce n'est pas le Morris*, such as dances for exactly 17 men; dances in 5/4 time; social dances; fusion with other non-Morris styles.

As soon as I try to define what is or isn't acceptable, someone will set out to find an exception. With this in mind, the two overriding principles should be: "Is it recognisably Morris dancing? Is it substantially new?"

My own background is in Cotswold Morris, and I have no more than an interested observer's knowledge of Border, Long Sword, Molly, North West, Rapper, Step Clog, or anything I've missed from this list. This does not mean that I am not interested in collating dances from these traditions; only that I am not well qualified to say what is new, distinctive, or "within the style". With these traditions, I am happy to receive and archive any notes that you send to me, but I am not in a position to write the notes myself.

"Copyright":

Some sides guard their dances jealously; some are keen to see their dances being adopted or adapted by other sides; and some have no strong feelings about whether their dances are copied or not.

The New Dance Collator's role is not to promote new dances, but to maintain a record of them, and to make that record available to interested parties within the Ring - and perhaps to sides from other Morris organisations if the "originating side" does not object.

If you specify that a dance should not be copied by other sides, I will include this clearly in the notes. If it is very important to ensure that your dance is not copied (for example, a dance composed in memory of a deceased member of your side) then please make this clear. If you do so, I will simply maintain a record of the dance and not circulate it at all.

Otherwise, by default, I will be willing to release notes to member sides of the Ring on request.

And Finally:

Thanks to all the various people who have sent me notes of their own dances, contact details for individuals and sides, and copies of previous publications.

h. Keeper of the Morris Ring Scrapbook: Keith Francis (Final Report!)

Logbooks. Logbooks are up-to-date and the latest Logbook will be handed over to Charlie Corcoran at ARM. Charlie has agreed to take on role of Logbook Keeper. Logbooks contain accounts of Morris Ring events i.e. Ring Meetings, ARM (but not Business Meeting which is recorded in Minute Books), Instructionals, obituaries of Past Officers.

Scrapbooks. I shall continue as Scrapbook Keeper for the immediate future. Scrapbooks will be available at ARM. Archive group will be discussing where the scrapbooks should be kept: at present they are at my house, but they ought to be more readily available. Also more of the Scrapbooks need to be copied in some format so that there are duplicates.

Peter Halfpenney thanked Keith for his hard work over the years and repeated the appeal for someone to take over the Scrapbooks from next year.

10. Publication Officers Reports:

i. Editor Morris Circular: *Harry Stevenson*

Three Editions of the Morris Ring Circular MRC were published, including the 60th 'colour' edition. The MRC is now accessible in full colour via the Morris Ring Web site.

All articles welcome

ii. Editor Morris Dancer: *David Thomson*

The Morris Dancer it appeared with a North West theme and will appear this year with a Cotswold theme. As a consequence of my recent troubles, and the lack of suitable articles, it is my intention that the next volume will be the last that I edit.

David told the meeting that he was delaying the pending publication awaiting and interview with the son of one of the very early Thaxted dancers - to gain an insight into how their style developed. He hoped that this would be ready to coincide with the 2011 Thaxted meeting.

Peter thanked him for his efforts and hoped that his health improved. He also appealed for a successor to take David's place.

iii. Webmaster's Report John Maher

The Web Site. The main task throughout each year is to keep the site up-to-date, and to correct any errors. Conversion of the MR Bagman's newsletters into an html format is the other main task, and I've been looking for an easier method for these newsletters, you can see a result with the latest, NL70, together with a note about what I have done, it is now coded with html5. See <http://www.themorrisring.org/Bagman/MRNL70/index.html#html5> During 2011 I hope to apply html5 to other parts of the site.

Our site has **Google Analytics** installed on nearly all pages (700+ of them), this enables us to see, in great detail, who is using the site, where they come from, and many other details. Below is a graph, a spread sheet and a map to show some of the information for the year 2010.

The **Dashboard** is the overall view of our visitors. The top graph shows visits on a daily basis, from 44,000 visits we had 100,000 individual page views. Thus we get around 120 visits per day,

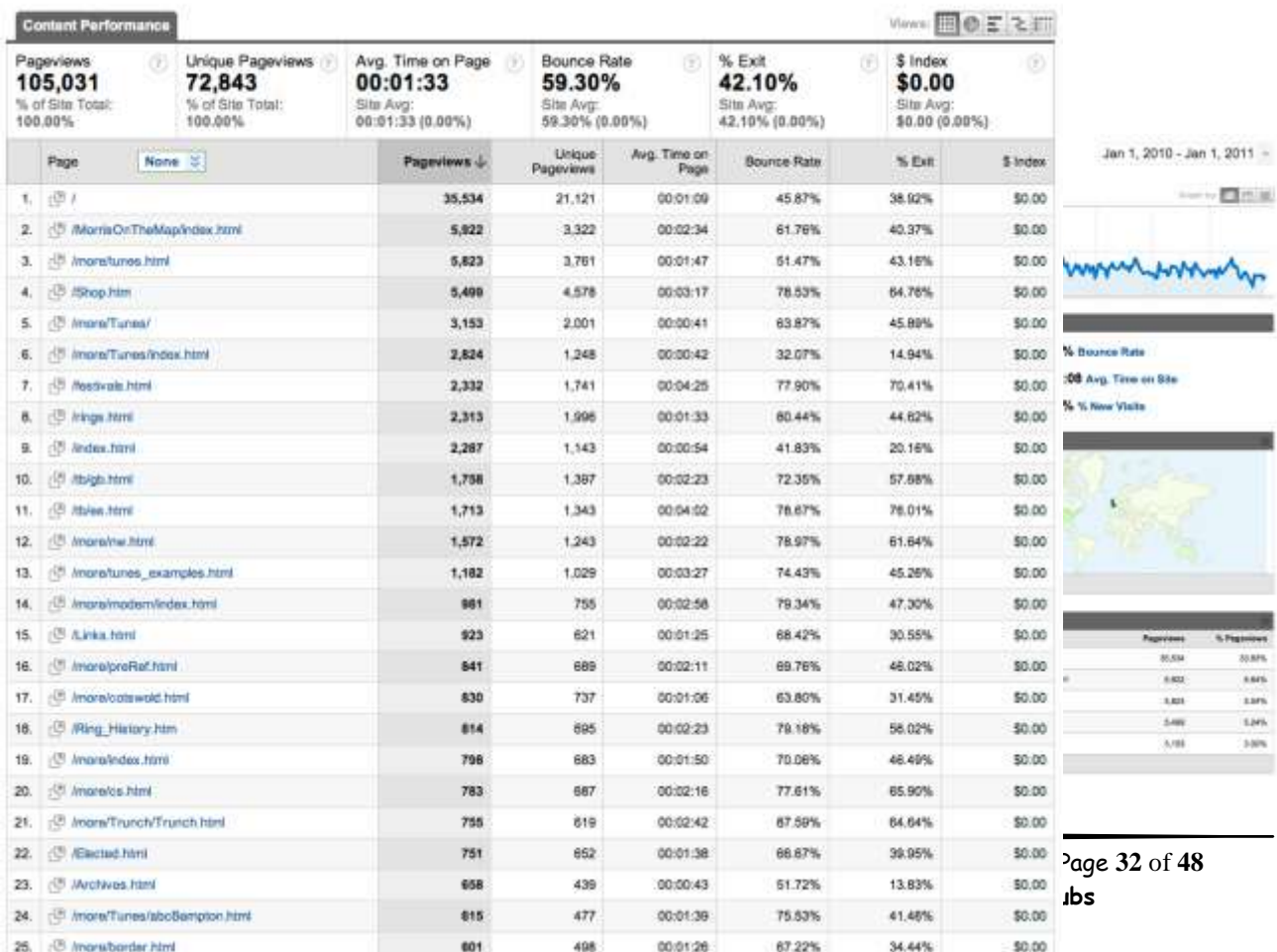
the two peaks on the top graph are for the ARM last year and then May Day. Most people find us *via* search engines, thus 66% of visits are new ones. The **Bounce Rate** - Google's jargon - "Bounce rate is the percentage of single-page visits or visits in which the person left your site from the entrance (landing) page." i.e a quickie, in and out!

The **Pages** visited are shown next; 25 pages of the 700+ total are detailed. I'm pleased to see that *MorrisOnTheMap*, my Google Map system gets a lot of use, Steve Adamson can rejoice in the popularity of *Shop*, and Vaughan Hully of Shakespeare MM should get renewed plaudits for providing us with the *abc* versions for the tunes in Lionel Bacon's Black Book. *Trunch* is popular! Apart from these, links to *Festivals*, *Ring Meeting* information, the *Tradition* booklet (English and Spanish versions), and *NW Morris* all had over 1000 visits in 2010. Not to miss the fact that the Home page gets more visits than any other.

The **Map**. Our visitors come from 154 countries! Apart from the UK (32836) The largest group are from the USA (2740), then, Australia (644), the Netherlands (575), Germany (560), Canada (480), Mexico (462), Spain (390) (hence the interest in the Spanish version of our Tradition Booklet), France (442), Ireland (269), New Zealand (158). We had 60 visits each from China and Japan. Suffice it to say that we get about 16% Of visitors from outside the UK. Within the UK most visits come from England, Northern Ireland was only 28 visits. London sent 10,000 visits, Bradford 1600 visits (thanks Steve!).

NB: I no longer have anything to do with the **Google Groups**, I only run the Morris Ring Web site.

705 pages were viewed a total of 105,031 times



In

Morris Ri

response to a question asking about HTML5 John stressed the need to everybody to keep their computer operating systems etc. up to date - as a guard against virus etc...



44,344 visits came from 154 countries/territories

Detail Level: [City](#) | [Country/Territory](#) | [Sub Continent Region](#) | [Continent](#) Dimension: [None](#)

| Site Usage | | Goal Set 1 | | Views: [Grid] [Refresh] [List] [Filter] | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|--------------|-------------|
| Visits | Pages/Visit | Avg. Time on Site | % New Visits | Bounce Rate | | |
| 44,344 % of Site Total: 100.00% | 2.38 Site Avg: 2.38 (0.00%) | 00:02:08 Site Avg: 00:02:08 (0.00%) | 66.30% Site Avg: 66.24% (0.09%) | 59.30% Site Avg: 59.30% (0.00%) | | |
| Detail Level: Country/Territory | | Visits ↓ | Pages/Visit | Avg. Time on Site | % New Visits | Bounce Rate |
| 1. | United Kingdom | 32,836 | 2.55 | 00:02:17 | 59.57% | 55.78% |
| 2. | United States | 2,740 | 2.02 | 00:01:44 | 86.50% | 65.66% |
| 3. | Australia | 644 | 2.94 | 00:02:57 | 73.45% | 56.52% |
| 4. | Netherlands | 575 | 2.25 | 00:01:55 | 78.61% | 62.09% |
| 5. | Germany | 560 | 2.06 | 00:01:34 | 90.36% | 68.39% |
| 6. | Canada | 480 | 2.16 | 00:02:06 | 84.38% | 62.50% |
| 7. | Mexico | 462 | 1.35 | 00:01:26 | 87.88% | 77.27% |
| 8. | France | 442 | 2.12 | 00:01:27 | 88.46% | 66.29% |
| 9. | Spain | 390 | 2.07 | 00:01:54 | 83.08% | 67.95% |
| 10. | Ireland | 269 | 1.44 | 00:00:52 | 86.25% | 86.25% |

iv. **Others**, incl. Google Groups; Google Site;; Facebook, etc.

"I suggest that a second Google Group be set up, and be titled "Morris Ring Discussion", or similar, and that the existing Morris Ring Group be set to broadcast only. This would be for Morris Ring officers, or other designated persons, to disseminate information that is of interest or relevance to the membership of the Morris Ring at large (e.g. Newsletter, Events, Fees, and so on). If others want to promote something via that Group they can do so via the Officers or other designated persons.

The "discussion" or "chat" list can then be an open-posting forum, designed to facilitate general discussion such as periodically breaks out on the group at present."

Jason B. Standing (Westminster Morris Men)

Charlie Corcoran (MR Bagman) agreed to set up an alternative site and restrict the original Google Group to Bagmen only. He also reminded the meeting that all files will now be available on the Google Site since the restrictions were introduced by Google - preventing the posting of files to their Groups.

v. Overseas Bagman's Report John Maher

I continue to field questions about overseas visits where these occur, from individuals and from sides. Note that, with web access, most members can find festivals and other Morris or folk dance groups by a bit of 'Googling'. I maintain a festivals link at [http:// www.themorrisring.org/festivals.html](http://www.themorrisring.org/festivals.html) this gets quite a lot of use.

11. Election / Ratification of Area Representatives As no other nominations received these were re-elected:

- West Midlands - Pete Simpson;
- North West - Dave Loughlin and
- South West & Wales - Robin Springett.

Tim Sercombe (Dartington & Past Squire) reminded the meeting that they were not elected by the ARM but by their areas.

Following the resignation of Stuart Bater for personal reasons Alistair Hutchinson has been appointed by the Squire to replace him as Northern Area rep. until the calendared election date (ARM 2012). The meeting approved the appointment.

Election / Ratification of MR Bagman. Due to an error this was omitted from the agenda. The meeting confirmed by a show of hands that it was content for Charlie Corcoran to remain in post.

12. Area Representatives Reports.

a. North West David Loughlin

It has been another tough year for some Morris Sides regarding membership and it is starting to show as some of the small sides are talking of winding up again.

Royal Preston Morris Dancers are one side that is very concerned for the Preston Guild Merchant Celebrations in September 2012. The Royal Preston Morris Dancers was formed from two teams amalgamating, Preston Royal Morris Dancers and Royal Lancashire Morris Dancers in the year 2000. They are trying to recall former members to maintain the Traditions at the "Once in every Preston Guild" Event. Anyone who is interested, Royal Preston would like to hear from them. They are looking at suitable kit for the occasion, dances, practices and a Day or Weekend of Dance with invited teams to perform in Preston on a given date before the main Guild Celebrations.

Horwich Prize Medal have been on a regeneration exercise locally and had a moment of celebrity on North West Tonight, just for a few seconds, but they have had the misfortune of two well-known members, Steve Hanson and John Shield, passing away during last year, both with very long service with the side and both near to their working life retirement age.

Another to be remembered is Jim Jones from Mersey Morris Men at the ripe age of 86 who danced with the reincarnated Liverpool Morris Men and was one who instigated the amalgamation of Liverpool and Wirral Morris Men in the 50s to become Mersey Morris Men as it is today. They all are sorely missed by everyone who knew them.

Getting back to recruitment, those whose sides are getting new dancers tell me you have to be seen, regularly dancing out, and talking to people to encourage young or not so young to come along and try it at your practice nights. You have to be positive with no negative thoughts and get out and dance. Britannia Coco-nut Dancers of Bacup have been very lucky recruiting a few new members since their appearance on the old TV box last autumn, so it does work.

Now for those who attended Saddleworth Rushcart in August this year, it is with great pleasure to report that the Jockey of the Rushcart for 2011 is no-other than Ed Worrall the Morris Ring Treasurer, congratulation and we wish him well on the top of the Rushcart when seen sober and along with his banner.

As I have for the past three years expressed nothing but thanks to those women musicians who play for the North West Area Morris Sides and without them most of the sides would not be able to maintain their dancing performances. The ladies themselves support the traditions of men only dancing Morris and Sword. I personally thank them for their willing support and appreciation of our constitution and do believe that the majority of the Morris Ring Clubs will see common sense and understanding when they cast their vote at the ARM it will be in support of them and the men only dancing traditions.

- b. **Northern** Stuart Bater Apologies for lack of report due to ill health
- c. **North East** Brian Pollard Nothing to report (Apologies received)
- d. **West Midlands** Pete Simpson

Only 5 clubs have filed reports this year. Whilst this may not seem many it is 5 more than last year and something to improve on next year.

Jockey Morris Men

Well, my club have been to Cyprus, where they performed at a Wine Festival with no wine. Have gained a Grassroots funding and are using it to organise some Free Morris Tasting sessions (not workshops, as power tools aren't necessary) Have been tempted by lashings of beer, chips and chocolate into accepting an invitation to attend a major festival in Flanders next Easter, Are firming up the logistics of introducing a horse drawn plough into Birmingham city centre And had our first book on the club history published So, just the usual really. *Gary Chilvers and others*

GREEN MANS MORRIS AND SWORD CLUB 2010.

Green Man performed 25 times during 2010. Most of these were at our usual pubs, but in addition, there were a number of 'highlights'

We took part in the Birmingham Opera's production of Verdi's Othello. This involved members of Green Man devising a 6 minute dance performance which followed the original music of the score but also used traditional Morris movements and steps. We performed nightly for a week, and we also performed the Morris in our official kit before each performance as the audience entered the venue, which was an old disused factory in the Digbeth area. We also performed at the NEC for the BBC TV Gardeners World Live.

We led the Lichfield Bower procession on the late May Bank Holiday. Also in Lichfield, we performed in the St. George's Day Celebrations, The Folk Festival. We were also invited to take part in the MAC reopening in Cannon Hill Park.

Shakespeare Morris Men

After seeing what Greenman MM have been up to this year we must be rather boring as we danced out on Monday nights will invited friends Jockey being one open the Mop Fair in Stratford in the parade for the switch on of Stratford Christmas lights danced at Bidford lights went to a couple of festivals Philip our musician gave a lecture on Bidford Morris to the history society and danced some Bidford for the audience and had now the mummers are doing the rounds before Christmas then a rousing bash on new years day at Binton rather boring really
Geoff (SMM Bagman)

1st Sedgley Morris Men

During the year we danced out at our usual annual events namely:

- Jockey Plough Saturday;

- St George's Day Parade for Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council in Halesowen
- Dancing at dawn on Sedgley Beacon on the 1st of May.
- Arranging Annual Maypole Festival (now in its 30th year) for local primary schools in Sedgley. Schools dance with a maypole supplied by Dudley MBC or their own maypoles which we purchased in 2001 with the assistance of a grant from the Millennium Lottery Fund.
- Harborne Carnival
- Bromyard Folk Festival
- Annual pre-Christmas World Tour of the Court House Pub and Dudley

We also danced at two National Trust properties - Dudmaston Hall and, with Ewell St Mary Morris Men, at Chastleton House on a memorable day in June when we also visited Hook Norton Brewery and an excellent selection of Cotswold Pubs. There were also a variety of other events and we turned down a number of bookings - more than we fulfilled.

During summer months we danced out on Thursday practice night, sometimes with other sides, at various Black Country pubs but predominantly the Britannia in Sedgley.

We gained one new member during the year who was in fact a returning member who had left side couple of years ago, we lost one member to a mixed clog side. The average age of the side is now approaching 60 with about 17 active dancers and musicians. During the year we have actively sought new members through:

- Contacts with local media particularly the Express and Star Newspaper who have featured us on a number of occasions during the year.
- Printed leaflets that are distributed whenever we dance out
- Dancing at the Lighthouse Cinema in Wolverhampton for the film "Morris a Life With Bells On"
- Dancing and training others to Dance at local Primary Schools and for the Spice singles group.

We belong to the EFDSS, West Midlands Folk Federation, and Bromyard Folk Festival Ltd in addition to membership of the Ring.

50% of our income from dancing out is shared with 1st Sedgley Scouts in return for the use of the Jubilee Scout Hall in Sedgley for practices and for indoor camping when the need arises. We have also raised money this year for Help for Heroes and other Charities.

Stafford Morris Men

The successful running of the ARM at Abbots Bromley including two showings of 'Morris a life with Bells'. Despite the grip of snow and frost 36 brave souls turned out for the SMM feast, with 4 dancing in. 13 SMM attend Thaxted Morris Ring meeting. A great time was had by all. The highlight of the year was Jack Brown being awarded a Gold Badge from EFDSS with 120 people attending the ceremony including Lady Bagot. The club had a strong showing at the Abbots Bromley horn dance once again.

SMM younger members are doing well often enabling the club to fulfil commitments. At the ARM we were proud to have a team with an average age of 11 performing a show dance

e. **North Midlands** David Thompson

As you may know during the early hours of Thursday 28th October 2010 I had quite a serious heart attack so much so that I was lucky that it took place in hospital. Such an experience requires quite a life change and you are told to take stress out of your life. Fortunately if I am sensible there is no reason why I should not be able to dance as in the past.

Thanks to the support of other Morris Ring clubs I am happy to report that that Derbyshire's only Morris tradition, Winster, was able to happen despite my illness, as it should.

f. **Eastern** Mike Stevens

During the year I have tried to generate exchanges of information through email, most recently sharing our experiences of recruitment. This is an issue of concern to all, so I am sure that men in all areas will recognise much of what follows:

1. "Open days" and introductory workshops have been tried with varying results, from "no-one turning up" to "well-attended". Even then, actually getting people to take the next step and join is another hurdle and Rutland did well to hang on to two new members recruited this way.
2. East Suffolk recruited 6 in a campaign associated with their 50th anniversary year in 2009. Two of these remain as members. The side is large, having about 30 members, is very active locally and includes strong family representation.
3. Standon has done well developing young dancers but is beginning to lose them as they move on to University, etc. Other sides in the area have teenage dancers who will doubtless also move on. (I suppose that one side's loss is another's gain.)
4. Thaxted maintains a "constant presence" in the town, encouraging recruits - 2 new juniors, 2 novices, and 2 transferees from other sides within the last 2 years.
5. Kings Men have benefited from recent transfers from a non-Ring side.
6. Peterborough and Rutland cooperated in attending the local showing of "A life with Bells on" in September 2009, dancing outside, giving out leaflets, and inviting new members. Two men were recruited who continue to dance.
7. Crendon Morris (associate member) has identified an individual to be responsible for recruitment. He intends to update their literature to be more inviting and to produce a poster for schools, libraries and other places where people meet, to create greater awareness.

8. Peterborough has appointed a Publicity Officer to establish links with local press and radio and to provide them with the kind of material they want to publish. This was very effective in advance of both the Day of Dance and Boxing Day, followed by photos of the events in the Evening Telegraph afterwards. Colourful posters have also been placed in a number of primary schools.

Other sides also contributed their experiences but I hope that I will be forgiven for not listing all respondents in this document.

And now some more news - Cambridge Morris Men has a new Squire, Ollie King. Just 16 at his appointment in October, he was interviewed on BBC Radio Cambridge. He's already a good dancer and musician, familiar to a number of sides in the East, and a good organiser. He and fellow teen, Matt, planned and led the 2009 Travelling Morris tour of north Norfolk. Both lads are excellent company and I know they'll be valued men in the future of Morris.

g. South West and Wales Robin Springett

Been a bit of a mixed year for sides in the South West, but every one of them is still with us. I wonder if we shall be able to say that next year. Although we may not be quite as bad as some other areas of the country, the age profile of existing sides and recruiting new members is the perennial discussion point when sides meet up. Gaining new members is patchy, and most seem to come from existing dancers moving to the area. Two sides, Chalice and Dartington have put a lot of effort into recruiting juniors, with some success, and some of these youngsters are moving into the senior side. It was, therefore with great sadness that the region was unable to put a youth team into the Open Morris organized Day of Dance at Weymouth in September; participation being cancelled at the last minute due to sickness. There is no doubt that a lot of work and dedication goes into interesting young people in the Morris, but if it produces one new dancer a year into the senior side, it is worth it. Plymouth and some others have started campaigns, and I can only wish them well.

Trigg organized the regions only Ring Meeting, thoughtfully just 200 yards from the St Austell Brewery. I had an enjoyable time; the quality and quantity of the food was quite amazing; the tours were good and we were not too long on the bus; the showers were hot, and finally, the feast was good. Sadly, the Sunday coincided with the Totnes Day of Dance, hosted by Dartington, and I was one of the guys who left early. But as I made a complete report of Trigg Ring Meeting in an earlier Newsletter, I shall leave it at that.

I have received several invites from sides, and strangely, not just from Ring sides. I do attend whenever I can. An unusual request was from Bathampton, who were holding a party to honour their oldest member Bill Holt, on his 90th birthday. The weather was very kind for October, and outdoor dancing spots were well supported. Lunch was in an Italian restaurant

and Bill regaled us with his amazing life story. Truly a day not to be forgotten, so take a peek on their website for a selection of photos of the fun.

Mendip Ale on the 17th December happened despite the weather, which was very wintery. I think Dartington travelled the furthest, and by midnight it was snowing hard. I had taken the precaution of a B&B locally; some of the Dartington men had a bad drive home, but they did make it eventually.

Those that have seen the new Ring display boards and have spoken to me have been very impressed. I am happy to take a set, but I think the Ring should consider how they are to be moved around. It will not be acceptable to assume that they can be passed around from side to side in an area as big as the South West, and I suggest that they are couriered with the Ring paying the cost.

Dartington are running a Jigs instructional on 26th March and have invited Plymouth and Exeter to gauge interest. As we can't offer accommodation, participants will need to make their own arrangements, or be in travelling distance. This is an annual event for Dartington, but the first time we have invited other sides.

Of course, the discussion over the proposed amendments to the Ring Constitution has taken up a lot of time, and there is no consensus possible I think. My region has both ends of the spectrum and all shades in the middle. This was one can of worms I wish we had never opened! I do look forward to my visits with sides and will be out there all year, but after the ARM, I hope that we can go back to talking about Morris, beer and sport when we get together!

h. South Midlands Roger Comley

Thanks to the good response of the South Midlands Morris Ring sides our Squire, Peter Halfpenney has achieved keeping us happy, now we can keep Peter happy by supporting him and the Officers at the great occasions when they come to our Ales; Feasts; Days of Dance and Morris Ring Meetings. It is good to see Officers being appreciated by inviting them and adding prestige to these occasions. Even his Fool has complimented some events by getting his scallops out when requested. Enough grovelling! Individuals in our sides are not always seen and appreciated and because we are all special it is good to congratulate those who try and achieve success.

Paul 'Monty' Montaque of Adderbury and Yateley helped to make the *Fools and Beasts Weekend "Unconvention"* a success, with a tour of his new work place - the Hook Norton Brewery.

Chris Strong will also make us welcome, with Whitchurch MM, at the Chiltern Brewery, as a good place to dance and enjoy hospitality.

Mendip still keep up this tradition at Thatcher's Cider Farm and Butcombe Brewery by supporting each other; sponsorship is valuable to us all and thanks to all who achieve a good representation of respect to the tradition of our fine drinks and food. How about a visit to a Pork Scratchings Factory? Not many in the South Midlands but we do know of some small butchers who do their own, where we can also get bladders.

The Kennett Pickled Brussels are another fine example of good taste at their Ale.

Thank you all for the fun and camaraderie of fine gentlemen getting together to dance, sing and be merry. The Scallop Dance research is still underway, unearthing more evidence. Wassail.

i. **South East** Fred Hands

During the last year the clubs in the south east area have continued to function much as they have for several years, very much business as usual continuing to attend the events that they regularly attend, and to host the round of feasts days of dance and regular evening dancing tours that form their annual programme. **Men of Wight** inform me that the folk tradition is alive and well and thriving on the isle of Wight, the folk festival has been revived but they now have to compete with seven or eight other clubs on the island.

Recruitment is still a problem for the majority of sides although there are a few who are having some success. Most are losing more older dancers than they can recruit so if they are very lucky if they can maintain the status quo. **Victory MM** have managed to recruit another couple of new younger dancers for the 3rd year running and now have a large nucleus of younger men. **Wadard** managed to recruit 2 new members through the squires Scouting contacts, one of his assistant leaders joined, and after some persuasion brought along his young son who danced out on Boxing day. **Buckland Shag** inform me that they have 2 thirteen year old boys dancing with them but are otherwise still struggling. **Spring Grove** who were struggling for a number of years are again thriving, with healthy numbers and are planning another midsummer evening of dance this year.

Several sides in the South East are able to provide instructors for dance instructionals. **Winchester** have been asked to teach Bledington at the 50th Chippenham festival and the newest side in the South East, **Cinque Ports** have asked **Hartley MM** to run an instructional for them for the 2nd year running.

South East sides again attended Broadstairs folk week dancing as Hartley and friends and comprised members of **Hartley Victory Broadwood Ravensbourne & Wadard** with **Wantsum** also dancing and running the festival shop. **Wantsum MM** are particularly keen to expand their annual Hop Hoodening festival in September so if any one would like a days dancing in Canterbury please contact Wantsum MM

Finally **Long Man MM** appeared on the BBC4 programme Still Folk dancing after all these years dancing on May Day.

Peter Halfpenney thanked all the Area Reps for the help that they had provided both to him and to the sides in their patch - esp. with regards to the Equalities Act and the Recruitment Questionnaire. He commented that we are demonstratively more successful in areas with active Reps.*

** Materials had been discussed in Area Meetings and would be distributed to all sides later.*

Report on the Morris Ring "Whitchurch" Musicians' Weekend Clive Du'Mont

Another splendid event was held in November 2010, by all reports enjoyed by all 18 participants, including four lady players, who were attracted from 12 Ring and two Federation clubs. Via an approach that took account of broad skill and experience differences, the tutor team successfully covered the entire programme as planned, providing information, guidance, example and practice that explored the basics of playing for Morris dance and recognition of the differing needs of the various traditions, through an examination of some particularly troublesome music-v-dance anomalies, to "poly-playing" (getting the most out of multiple musicians) and the special needs of massed-dance demands, and more.

Whitchurch MM once again provided us with superb hospitality, led as ably as ever by chief cook and furrowed-brow-massager, Nigel Cox.

After 10 years as organiser, I've decided to hand that batten to others, which announcement I shall look to formalise at the 2011 ARM. In the meantime, I would like to register here my personal gratitude and great debt to the late Jim Catterall, Mike Chandler and Allan Jarvis in particular, without whose generosity, influence and encouragement neither I nor any of the several hundred other Morris musicians who have benefited from these events would have had such a splendid opportunity to develop our understanding and skills and so, hopefully, have been able to add constructively to the standard of our own and our club's performances.

In recent years, Mike Howley, Hugh Crabtree and Malcolm Frier have also added their personal contributions to the mix, to excellent effect, and it's anticipated that future Weekends will be arranged by Malcolm with support from Tim Barber, both of whom have returned to "face the music" as participants several times since the "Musicians' Instructionals" were initiated in the early 1980's and will, I have no doubt, ensure that the high standards of tuition and guidance that have been promoted thus far will be continued.

Most of all, though I would like to say "thank you" to the many individual players who have attended over the years and through whose interest, enthusiasm and willingness to be individually challenged and tested have provided the impetus for these Weekends to have been arranged ...and to have been so enjoyable.

14. Future Programme.

JMO Sheffield National Morris Spectacular

Sat 14th May.

Venue: Sheffield

Hosted by the Morris Ring.

The Squire ran through some of the expected highlights: Massed dance displays in Tudor Square in front of the world famous Crucible & Lyceum Theatres with up to 1,000 performers. A showcase performances by the cream of English Folk Art. He invited sides interested in attending to apply asap - as the MR has an allocation of only 25 sides.

b. 2011 Meetings under the auspices of the Morris Ring

*Reminder: the Massed dances for 2011 Morris Ring Meetings will be: **Adderbury:** Lads a-Bunchum; **Bampton:** Rose Tree (Banbury Bill to alt. tune) & Maid of the Mill; **Bledington:** Bonnets so Blue (William & Nancy to alt. tune) & Young Collins; **Brackley:** Jockey to the Fair; **Fieldtown:** The Valentine; **Headington:** Constant Billy and Laudnum Bunches and **Lichfield:** Vandals of Hammerwich (Chorus: show first & strike second, unless No 1 indicates otherwise).*

- **326th Meeting 20th - 22nd May** Hosted by Moulton Morris, marking the 40th Anniversary of the revived Moulton Festival. Sides attending are King John's; Richmond on Swale and Yateley
- **327th Meeting 3rd June ~ 5th June** hosted by Thaxted Morris marking the Centenary of Thaxted Morrismen. Sides attending include Dolphin; Moulton; Helmond; Westminster; Ravensbourne; Leicester; Cambridge; Dartington; St Albans; Chanctonbury Ring; Saddleworth; Mayflower; Greensleeves; Monkseaton; Stafford; Letchworth; Shakespeare; Standon; Jockey; Whitchurch; Harthill; Chalice; Hageneth MM; East Suffolk; Offley; East Surrey; Het Utrect and Bedford.
- **328th Meeting 24th - 26th June** Hosted by Wath-on-Dearne Morris. Now running as a Family Day of Dance, with a feast, this is still a meeting of the Morris Ring.
- **329th Meeting 8th - 10th July** Hosted by Greensleeves Morris Men marking their 85th Anniversary and the 50th Anniversary of their Chipperfield weekend. Sides attending include Dolphin; Martlett; Long Man; Ripley; Greenman and Winchester.
- **330th Meeting 22nd -24th July** Hosted in Rutland by the Rutland Morrismen. Sides attending include Devil's Dyke; Thelwall; Foresters; Northwood; Colchester; Hartley; Thaxted; St Albans; Peterborough; Men of Wight; Traditional Illmington; Horwich Prize Medal; Redcar Sword and Lincoln & Micklebarrow

c. **Morris 18-30 Weekend** 7th - 9th October 2011 **Venue:** Oxford **Hosts:** Icknield Way MM

d. **Instructionals**

☺ **Morris Ring Musicians' 2 Instructional Day** Hosts: Moulton MM
Date: Saturday 12th March 2011 9.30am - 6pm. Venue: Moulton Village Hall


☺ **Jigs Instructional** 20th -22nd January 2012 Sutton Bonington

e. **Meetings under the auspices of the Morris Ring 2012 and beyond**

2012

- 3rd ~ 5th March (?) ARM Hosted by Harthill (TBC)
- 25th - 27th May Chipping Campden Cotswold 'Dover Games' Olympic MR Meeting
- 8th - 10th June Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting
- TBC *Letchworth Centenary Morris Ring Meeting*
- 31st Aug-2nd Sept Hartley 60th Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting

2013

- ? March ARM Hosted by Whitchurch (TBC)
- 31st May - 02nd June Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting
- 21st - 23rd June Dolphin Morris Men 
- 5th - 7th July Martlet Sword & Morris Men (60th Anniv) NEW

2014

- March ARM Hosted by TBA
- TBC Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting

2015

- March ARM Hosted by TBA
- TBC Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting

15. Date and Venue of Next Meeting.

16. A.O.B.

- a. Peter Halfpenney enquired as to whether any of our Guests wished to say anything to the meeting and when they declined he explained just how closely the three orgs were working these days - we have all out-grown earlier rivalries and suspicion.

- b. **Morris Ring Display Boards** Brian Tasker: Reminded everyone about the new displays, one of three sets, and that they need to be used. Contact MR Bagman if you want to borrow a set. We will buy more sets if there is a proven demand.

Currently one set with Harry Stevenson; One with Eddie Worrall and one with Charlie Corcoran

Cliff Marchant (Past Squire: 2002-4) asked whether we could get smaller displays along the same lines. Peter Halfpenney replied that we are considering using the same artwork for posters. Further information will follow. **John Colbert** (Woodside) asked how much they cost per set (*Ed said approx £300*) - so that he could attempt to get a grant (*did not say from where or who*) for his side to get their own set.

- c. **John Drake** (Wadard) asked that sides planning future meetings under the auspices of the MR should consider allowing more time for the post-lunch sing and socialise rather than rush on simply to fit in an extra frequently graveyard spot.
- d. **Robert Chisman** (Trigg & Illustrious Order of Fools and Beast) announced the date for the next unconvention: 28th Oct - 1st Nov 2011 hosted by Kennet MM. He also advertised the new 'Order' badges.
- e. **Ollie King** (Cambridge MM) invited all and sundry to join a 'flash mob' Morris that might take place in the middle of Cambridge on St George's Day.

Peter Halfpenney publicly thanked Mendip MM for all their hard work and superb organisation in organising the weekend - endorsed by a hearty round of applause for all present. He also thanked all attendees both for making the effort to attend but for making his job of chairing the meeting relatively easy.



☺ On-line Links:

<http://www.themorrisring.org/> The main MR website with millions of pages stuffed to the gunnels with all you need to know about the MR. No registration required to access - the site is open for the world to visit. j.p.maher@gmail.com

<http://groups.google.com/group/the-morris-ring?hl=en&pli=1> The Morris Ring Google Group (MRGG). Still open for messages but files section is now closed. Forum for debate or announcements. Private site; Contact Morris Ring Bagman to register to use.

<https://sites.google.com/site/morrisring/?pli=1> Morris Ring Clubs Website. Private site, register to use. (Likely to replace the MRGG in time.) Files can be posted here so you can access Newsletters, circulars etc. as well as current affairs, events calendar & *What's On* news.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Morris-Ring/158759257502840> Morris Ring Facebook site: Managed by Ollie King. oliver.king11@btinternet.com

Charline

Bagman of the Morris Ring

Founded ~ the MORRIS RING ~ 1934 ~