



SQUIRE: Pete Simpson, 69 Norfolk Road, Erdington, Birmingham, West Midlands B23 6ND Tel: 0121 3734654
Email: simpsonfam1984@gmail.com

BAGMAN: Jon Melville, 57 Shakespeare Drive, Nuneaton Warwickshire CV11 6NW Tel: 02476 345543
Email: bagman@themorrisring.org

TREASURER: Clayton Francis, 25 Aultone Way, Sutton, Surrey SM1 3LD.
Tel: 0208 3957821
Email: RingTreasurer@themorrisring.org

Minutes of the Morris Ring 2019 Annual Reps' Meeting Saturday 2nd March

1) Attendees and Apologies

I. Elected Officers		Signature
Squire	Pete Simpson	√
Bagman	Jon Melville	√
Treasurer	Clayton Francis	√
Chair: Advisory Council	Edward Worrall	√
II. Elected Area Representatives		
Area Rep.: East	Nigel Strudwick	√
Area Rep.: North	Jono Millward	√
Area Rep.: North West	David Loughlin	√
Area Rep.: South West & Wales	Paul Reece	√
Area Rep.: West Midlands	Mark Carter	√
Area Rep.: North East	Brian Pollard	√
Area Rep.: North Midlands	Charlie Corcoran	√
Area Rep.: South Midlands	Roger Comley	√
Area Rep.: South East	Fred Hands	√
III. Appointed Ring Officers: Archives		
Archive Group Chairman	Chris Wildridge	√
Archive - Morris Ring Archivist & Keeper of Paper Archive	Geoff Douglas	
Archives - Keeper of the Mumming Archive	Ron Shuttleworth	
Archives - Keeper of the Photograph Archive	Duncan Broomhead	

Archives - Keeper of the Sound Archive	Andy Padmore	
Archives - New Dance Collator	Lester Bailey	
Archives - Scrapbook Keeper	Cliff Marchant	
Archives - Logbook Keeper	Charlie Corcoran	N/A
IV. Appointed Ring Officers: Communications & Services		
Publications – Editor Morris Circular	Tony Foard	
Publications - Editor Morris Dancer	Mac McCoig	
Social Network Coordinator	Peter de Courcy	√
MR Web Site Editor	Peter de Courcy	N/A
Overseas Bagman	Nigel Strudwick	N/A
Morris (Ring) Shop Keeper	Shaun Lambley	√
Auditor Current	Tony Tomlin	√
Auditor Past (HMRC)	Richard Sinclair	
V. Past Officers: Squires		
Past Sq 1970	Bert Cleaver	
Past Sq 1976	David Welti	
Past Sq 1982	Barry Care MBE	√
Past Sq 1984	Ray King	Apologies
Past Sq 1986	Geoff Jerram	Apologies
Past Sq 1988	Mike Garland	√
Past Sq 1990	Mike Chandler	
Past Sq 1994	Richard Hankinson	Apologies
Past Sq 1996	Tim Sercombe	
Past Sq 1998	Daniel Fox	√
Past Sq 2000	Gerald Willey	
Past Sq 2002	Cliff Marchant	
Past Sq 2004	Bob Cross	√
Past Sq 2006	Paul Reece	N/A
Past Sq 2008	Brian Tasker	Apologies
Past Sq 2012	Robin Springett	Apologies
Past Sq 2014	Adam Garland	Apologies
Past Sq 2016	Edward Worrall	N/A
VI. Retired Bagmen		
Past Bag 1977	Mike Garland	N/A

Past Bag 1984	Keith Francis	
Past Bag 1991	Chas Arnold	
Past Bag 1995	Tony Parsons	
Past Bag 1998	John Frearson	
Past Bag 2005	Charlie Corcoran	N/A
VII. Retired Treasurers		
Past Tres 1979	Barry Care MBE	N/A
Past Tres 1982	Roger Baker	
Past Tres 1990	Richard Sinclair	N/A
Past Tres 2009	Edward Worrall	N/A
Past Tres 2012	Steven Archer	√
Side	Rep 1 print name	Rep 2 print name
Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers		
Adderbury Village Morris Men		
Adelaide Morris Men		
Adlington Morris Men		
Aldbury Morris Men		
Anker Morris Men	Joe Oldaker	Emma Melville
Anstey Morris Men		
Ashdown Forest Morris Men		
Traditional Bampton Morris Dancers	B R Care	
Banchory-Ternan Morris Men		
Barnsley Longsword Dancers		
Bathampton Morris Men		
Bedford Morris Men		
Belchamp Morris		
Benfieldside Morris and Sword Dancers	Brian Pollard	
Bourne River Morris Men		
Brackley Morris Men		
Bristol Morris Men		
Britannia Coconut Dancers of Bacup		
Broadwood Morris Men	Apologies	
Bury Pace-Eggers	Apologies	
Cam Valley Morris Men		
Cambridge Morris Men	John Jenner	
Castleford Sword Dancers		

Chalice Morris Men	Harlan C-G	Bob Cross
Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men		
Chapel-en-le-Frith Morris	Apologies	
Chester City Morris Men	Dave Loughlin	
Chipping Campden Morris Men		
Claro Sword & Morris Men		
Colchester Morris Men		
Coventry Morris Men		
Coventry Mummers		
Darlington Mummers		
Dartington Morris Men	Apologies	
Datchet Border Morris Men		
Devil's Dyke Morris Men	Randall Scott	Nigel Strudwick
Dolphin Morris Men	Emma Melville	
Durham Rams Sword and Morris Men		
Earlsdon Morris Men	Simon Newman	
East Suffolk Morris Men	Mike Garland	
East Surrey Morris Men	Ray (Illegible)	
Etcetera Morris Men		
Ewell St Mary's Morris Men		
Exeter Morris Men	Colin Andrews	
Faithful City Morris Men		
1st Sedgley Morris Men		
Foresters Morris & Sword Dance Club		
Gloucestershire Morris Men & Mummers		
Grand Union Morris		
Great Yorkshire Morris		
Green Man's Morris and Sword Club	Pete Simpson	
Green Oak Morris Men		
Greensleeves Morris Men	Apologies	
Grimsby Morris Men		
Hageneth Morris Men		
Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers		
Harry Taylor's Morris		
Harthill Morris	Jono Millward	Darren Nugent
Hartley Morris Men	Tony Tomlin	Geoff Wells
Headington Quarry Morris Dancers		

Helier Morris Men		
Helmond Morris Men		
Icknield Way Morris Men		
The Traditional Ilmington Morris Men	Peter Austin	
Jockey Morris Men	Steve Holder	Fraser Simpson
John O'Gaunt Morris and Sword Dancers		
Kemp's Men of Norwich		
Kenet Morris Men	Peter De Courcy	
King John's Morris Men	Apologies	
Kinnerton Morris Men		
Side	Rep 1 print name	Rep 2 print name
Lassington Oak Morris Men		
Leicester Morris Men	Charlie Corcoran	
Leominster Morris	Mark Carter	
Letchworth Morris Men	Geoff Pitt	Steve Westwood
Leyland Morris Men	Apologies	
Lichfield Morris Men		
Lincoln & Micklebarrow Morris Men		
London Pride Morris Men		
Long Man Morris Men	Apologies	
Lord Conyers Morris Men	Jono Millward	
Malvern Swordsmen		
Manchester Morris Men		
Martlet Sword & Morris Men		
Mayflower Morris Men		
Men of Wight Morris Men		
Mendip Morris Men	Clive Du'Mont	
Mersey Morris Men	Dave Loughlin	
Monkseaton Morris Men		
Mossley Morris Men		
Moulton Morris Men	Shaun Lambley	
North British Sword Dancers		
North Wood Morris Men		
Northampton Morris Men		
Oakworth Village Morris Men		
Offley Morris Men		
Packington Morris Men		

Perth Morris Men		
Peterborough Morris	Mike Stevens	
Pinewoods Morris Men		
Plymouth Morris Men	Paul Reece	
Ravensbourne Morris Men		
Redcar Sword Dancers		
Richmond on Swale Morris Men		
Ripley Morris		
Royal Preston Morris Dancers	Apologies	
Rumford Morris Men		
Rutland Morris Men	Apologies	
Saddleworth Morris Men	Ron Yates	Tim Edge
Shakespeare Morris	Matthew Turvey	Mick Dunn
Silkeborg Morris Men		
Silurian Border Morris Men		
Southport Swords		
Spring Grove Morris Men	David Seager	
St Albans Morris Men		
Stafford Morris Men	Andy Chell	Peter Copley
Sweyn's Ey (The Men of)	Apologies	
Taunton Deane Morris Men		
Thames Valley Morris Men	Apologies	
Thaxted Morris Men	Daniel Fox	
Thelwall Morris Men	Sam Addison	
Towersey Morris	Paul Dolman	
Trigg Morris Men	Paul Reece	(Illegible)
Het Utrecht Morris Team		
Uttoxeter Heart of Oak Morris Men		
Vancouver Morris Men		
Victory Morris		
Wadard Morris Men	Fred Hands	
Wantsum Morris Men		
Wath-on-Deerne Morris Men		
Wessex Morris Men		
West Somerset Morris	Apologies	
Westminster Morris Men	Steven Archer	
Whitchurch Morris Men	Nigel Cox	

White Hart Morris Men		
White Rose Morris Men		
Winchester Morris Men	Apologies	
Woodside Morris Men		
Wyvern Jubilee Morris Men		
Yateley Morris Men	Apologies	
Associate Members - Side	Rep 1 print name	Rep 2 print name
Alvechurch Morris Men		
Big Jigs		
Blackheath Morris Men		
Blackmore Morris Men		
Bovey Tracey Mummers		
Buckland Shag Morris Men		
Chameleonic Morris Men		
Chewit Well Mummers,		
Crendon Morris Men		
First Class Stamp	Emma Melville	
Golden Star Morris	Apologies	
Good Easter Molly Dancers		
Greenwich Morris Men		
Herga Mummers		
Hinckley Bullockers	Joe Oldaker	
Knightlow Morris Men	Peter Austin	
Morris 18 - 30	Apologies	
North Curry Mummers		
Original Welsh Border Morris Men		
Plymouth Reunion Morris Men		
Rapper Sword Group (Lancaster)		
Redding Moreys		
Rose & Castle Morris		
Saint Bees (Cumberland) Mummers		
St Nicholas-at-Wade with Sarre Hoodeners		
Spenn Valley Longsword Dancers		
Stourvale Mummers		
Thameside Mummers		
The (Insert Name Here) Mummers		
Uplyme Morris Men		

Wantage Mummers		
The Witchmen		
Woodchurch Morris Men		
World Famous Ashdown Mummers'		
Wrigley Head Morris Men		
Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts	Rob Chisman	
Phoenix Morris	Apologies	
Wakefield Morris Dancers		
Representatives (guests)	Rep 1 print name	Rep 2 print name
The Morris Federation	Fee Lock (Sec)	
The Open Morris	Nicki Pickering (Chair)	Jen Cox (Secretary)
JMO Insurance Broker M Stimpson	Apologies	

2) Minutes from ARM 2018

Minutes of the 2018 ARM were circulated as an Appendix to Newsletter No 110 in June 2018. Copies will NOT be available for perusal at the Meeting.

Proposer Bob Cross, Past Squire, Chalice MM

Seconder Charlie Corcoran, Past Bagman, Leicester Morris

3) Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

4) Squire's Report – Pete Simpson

Twelve months ago, when I became Squire elect, little did I suspect just quite how soon I would hit the ground running. My predecessor Ed Worrall set up an Advisory Council Working Group to look into the Morris Ring and make sure all aspects are fit for purpose after its constitutional changes last March. He asked if I would Chair the Group and Clayton to be the Vice Chair. It was quickly named the Squire's Remit, though we did find a few things of our own to look at.

The next 3 months were somewhat of whirlwind and a lot of people have done a lot of work quietly in the background to make sure everything was suitable for future use. I shall not try and name them all in case I miss someone, but you know who you are and thank you. The one person I will name is Peter de Courcy, who I think read the whole of the Morris Ring website to make sure it was okay. No mean feat that.

May brought a gloriously warm summer, ideal for Morris dancing, and for me a taste of what was to come. Between the end of April and the start of July I attended 11 events not only up and down the country, but across it and even a quick trip over the channel to Flanders.

Finally, August arrived and the Saddleworth Rushcart. Naturally, Ed had chosen to dance out at this event. As a regular attender for many years and having a lot of friends both taking part in and attending for the spectacle, I was more than happy with this. Saturday was a beautifully sunny day without a cloud in the sky. Sunday more than made up for that. Down came the rain like it only can in Saddleworth and all the planning for the hand over of the office of Squire of the Morris Ring looked like it would be a damp squib. The vicar came to the rescue and offered us the use of the church. My first decision as Squire was whether to accept. I hope all decisions are that easy and I can make them that quickly. It was the thought of a moment to say yes, and what a fine back drop to the dancing it made. A truly memorable day. However, it would be remiss of me not to mention Saddleworth MM, The Britannia Coconut Dancers and Earlsdon Morris for not being put off by the rain and still performing outside.

My first outing as SotMR was my 3rd trip to Peterborough last year followed by Bromyard Folk festival, another regular outing for me, and Jockey's day of dance. Since then I seem to have been busy attending feasts, ales and meetings. All a great chance to catch up with friends old and new. Christmas and the New Year brought their usual round of dance outs in December and the feast season really getting into its swing in January. At the time of writing I am just recovering from Jockey's annual Plough Tour and Stafford MM feast, looking forward to Ripley Morris feast next weekend followed by Uttoxeter's the weekend after that. I can feel the pounds piling on already!

We saw great changes last March. Many clubs have taken the chance to embrace these changes and I have been able to welcome 5 teams to the Morris Ring, some returning after some years away and some joining because they have chosen to. For whatever reason you have chosen to join the Morris Ring, welcome to you and I hope it is the start of a long and fruitful partnership. While this is great news, it has not distracted us from the recruiting problems many of our clubs are facing. I have spent some time over the new year in communication with 2 clubs in this situation.

So as the ARM approaches, we have some exciting new opportunities offered to us with the change to the constitution last year, but some of the old challenges face us still and I am looking forward to a busy year, hopefully meeting many of you on your home ground. Onward and upward.

Keep on Capering, Pete Simpson, Squire of the Morris Ring.

Pete thanked his Bagman, Treasurer and Chair of the AC for their support.

5) Bagman's Report – Jon Melville

I should like to offer my thanks to all those hosts who have invited me to their Ales, Feasts and events in my capacity as Bagman, to Pete de Courcy and Martin Jones who keep the technology functioning and the Spam at bay, and to Ed Worrall, Pete Simpson and Clayton Francis for all the hard work they have put in during their tenure in office and the support they have given the Ring and its Bagman.

Might I remind Bagmen to circulate the Newsletter to club members when it arrives, and ask everyone to read it, before requesting information which is contained therein?

Last year marked significant change within the Ring and its membership. Most sides have remained as they were, but many have taken the opportunity to consider their position and have forged stronger links with their local female and mixed-gender Morris teams, which can only be good for the Morris.

This has been a year characterised by non-participation – many events across the Morris spectrum have been generally more poorly attended, with both the foreman's discussion day and the Ring Jigs Instructional being cancelled through lack of numbers. A lot of sides are telling me that members are struggling with commitment both internally and to Ring events. Numbers are falling, older members find they have less agility, stamina and endurance, and younger members are struggling to commit around work which is increasingly becoming 24/7 for everyone.

The Ring appears to be facing challenging times, with falling membership in many member clubs; in particular their ability to commit to, and put on, quality performances, is proving increasingly difficult. Financial challenges mean that there are fewer lucrative bookings to go around. Some clubs are already arranging joint performances with other local teams to share numbers and workload, and reducing the number of outings they do.

The Morris Ring has, however, gained considerable social capital and status in the last few years; many bridges have been built with other Organisations and we are now held in higher regard in the wider Morris community, leading to an increased number of invitations to participate in events, discussions and media opportunities. We now need to capitalise on that and ensure the Ring is fit to be the representative organisation for our younger members and generations to come.

Events update:

Jockey/Shakespeare Ring Meeting – capacity reached (with accommodation), still a few places for day attendees or those prepared to source their own accommodation.

Utrecht Ring Meeting – capacity of 100 not yet reached, with five sides in the process of confirming, arranging accommodation and travel etc.

Jon Melville, Bagman of the Morris Ring

Jon thanked his fellow officers, past and present, for their support.

6) Treasurer's Report – Clayton Francis

1 Introduction

This is my first Treasurers Report since having been ratified at last year's ARM. Apart from learning the ropes which has been an eye opener, (I will comment on that later in the report), we have had a mixed bag of transactions over the year which still produced a surplus. Our underlying finances are very sound and for another year I have no intention of changing the current subscription structure.

2 Membership

Update on the changes in membership this renewal: -

Following last year's ARM vote to change the constitution and include full female membership we have been approached by a number of sides to join the MR, although this is not the only reason that new sides have chosen to join.

Big Jigs

First Class Stamp

Golden Star Morris

Witchmen

Phoenix Morris

Illustrious Order of the Fools and Beasts

Perth Morris men have changes from full to joint members during a current hiatus so they stay within the MR.

Currently there are 6 outstanding renewals that are either tardy in their application or have decided to go elsewhere or disband. I am in the process of clearing this up and expect to do so by the end of January.

Also noted that there were more than 10 sides that missed the November discount deadline, had to be chased and ended up paying £10 more than they needed to. A driver for next year, (see section 6).

3 Insurance

Firstly, our insurance cover that is arranged as part of the JMO is in place for 2019 with a new provider – Hiscox. They are a specialist insurance company with excellent credentials and are providing the same levels of cover at a very good rate which still gives sides excellent value for money.

I have decided to change the method of distribution for the certificates to be produced on a request basis. This is because unless you need to provide proof of cover by a hardcopy it is unnecessary. Production is a time-consuming exercise which I'm sure that a lot of sides do not need. Like the MOT a database of qualifying members is maintained to ensure cover is correctly given to those entitled sides.

Classes of Membership

Our 2019 membership consists of;

Full	140
Associate	37
Joint	2

Overall membership is largely stable.

4 Ring Finances

We supported both Ring and non-Ring events i.e. Dancing England during the year and will continue to do so.

As last year, the officer's and shop costs for attendance at Ring Meetings from MR funds are shown as a separate line in the accounts.

The Shop - the shop attended fewer events this year which was partly due to Shaun becoming a father. Now things are under control a greater presence is planned for 2019

Archive Fund – As you will see from the Archive report, the group has been busy and some funds have been spent preparing to catalogue our archive at The Essex Record Office. Overall donations remained similar to last year.

Youth Fund – continues to be supported thinly by the membership.

Other costs and reserves – i.e. Ring Officers, ARM and travel costs have continued to be managed at previous levels.

5 General policy and financial reserves

Our finances are strong, we have a good level of reserves and as I have already stated we are able to hold subscription rates at current levels. However, we have a stable to declining membership at the same time as the costs of insurance and postage increase. So, we must still be prudent.

We are financially supporting youth projects to encourage new life into our tradition, jigs workshops to drive up dancing standards and providing grants to Ring Meetings to enable more of you to attend and meet other sides. We have enhanced our website to make it easier to view on mobile devices and we will continue to supply your needs from The Morris Shop.

Put together this is an ambitious combination of direct subsidy and increased risk taken against a background of increasing costs and falling membership. This is only made possible by our current financial strength and we must not squander it.

6 Future Plans

I am proposing a number of changes for the next round of renewals as follows;

- We move to an online system where the side details are self-maintained.
 - This will allow any changes to be current.
 - Information will be more easily extracted and analysed for better decision making
 - Sides will be financially encouraged to pay by bank transfer
 - Confirmation generated that payment has been made by the due date
 - Self-generation of the Insurance Certificate will be available on demand.
 - I am currently in dialogue with our website provider to cost out and implement this.
- Our reserves on deposit are sitting there. If there are any safe financial vehicles that can give a good rate of return with access, I would be more than willing to listen to suggestions.
- Lastly, I plan to move the accounting of MR finances from Quicken back to spreadsheets. This is primarily due to the fact that Quicken is now an old unsupported product. I am looking into how best this can be achieved.

Regards,



Clayton Francis, Treasurer, The Morris Ring

Extended thanks to Squire, Bagman and Past Treasurer, Steven Archer, for their support. Proposing to move to an online system for subscriptions in future. Sending our certificates of insurance on request.

Nigel Cox, Whitchurch MM: confirmation of insurance certificate requested as matter of course rather than by request, need to take account of e.g. the novice Bagman in providing guidance and instructions.

Joe Oldaker Anker MM: required to produce certificate on a regular basis – system will self-generate a PDF.

Barry Care, Past Squire: required to produce certificate on a regular basis.

Fee Lock, Secretary, Morris Federation: date of insurance renewal 25th January complicated to change.

Clive Du'Mont, Mendip Morris: There is no fund to support sides not in younger years, but it was confirmed that a suitable case would be considered.

[Accounts on next page]

Proposed	Ed Worrall, Past Squire
Seconded	Pete Austin, Traditional Ilmington MM

THE MORRIS RING - ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2018

		GENERAL FUND £	MORRIS SHOP £	ARCHIVE FUND £	YOUTH FUND £	RESERVE FUND £	2018 TOTAL £	2017 £
INCOME								
SUBSCRIPTIONS:								
Members 2017-18	0							
Members 2018-19	6,020							
Associates 2017-18	100							
Associates 2018-19	1,290							
Joint Members 2017-18	80							
Joint Members 2018-19	30							
Individual publications 2017-18	48							
Individual publications 2018-19	79	7,647						8,530
SALES								
Income	4,677							4,995
Change in stock	967							(2,715)
Less Expenditure	(5,548)							(2,164)
Surplus			96					116
Surplus on Meetings								
Hartley (3xx)	0							
Saddleworth (3xx)	0							
Joint Morris Organisations day of dance	0	0						1,369
DONATIONS/INTEREST								
Archive				100				225
75th Anniversary Fund					125			231
Bank Interest Received		15			2	214		272
Other		62						3,773
Total Income		7,724	96	100	127	214	8,262	14,516
	<i>prior year</i>	13,672	116	225	232	271		
EXPENDITURE								
Insurance	2,894							2,904
Cost of Circular & Newsletter	181	3,075						811
OFFICERS EXPENSES								
Squire	206							391
Bagman	19							251
Treasurer	270							246
Other travel	0	494						0
General Expenses Paid:								
AC Meeting costs	965							486
Advertising	0							0
Archive costs	0							326
ARM Costs	1,452							1,152
Events	200							500
General Overhead Expenses etc	368							20
Jigs weekend subsidy	60							176
JMO AGM expenses	240							223
Ring meeting costs (£500 subsidy per host)	0							1,500
Ring meeting costs (Officer attendance etc.)	332							479
Website	125	3,742						1,104
Charitable donations		0						0
Total Expenditure		7,311	0	0	0	0	7,311	10,575
	<i>prior year</i>	10,224	0	326	25	0		
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR		413	96	100	127	214	951	3,941
	<i>prior year</i>	3,448	116	(101)	207	271		
FUND BALANCE:								
Brought forward		3,688	16,749	3,438	2,166	65,329	91,370	87,430
Transferred to (from) Reserve Fund		5,000	0	0		(5,000)		
Surplus/Deficit for year		413	96	100	127	214	951	3,940
Carried forward		9,101	16,845	3,538	2,293	60,543	92,321	91,370
MADE UP OF:-								
Cash at Bank		9,031	5,265	3,538	2,294	60,543	80,672	80,758
Value at cost of Stocks held for resale			11,580					10,613
Fund balance at year end		9,031	16,845	3,538	2,294	60,543	92,251	91,371

7) Chair of the Advisory Council's Report – Ed Worrall

The Morris Ring Advisory Council met in October at the request of the Squire and discussed a range of issues.

Both Pete Simpson and Clayton Francis worked through a number of topics, following our Constitutional change at the 2018 ARM as co-chairs of a working group. This I set up as the then Squire to review matters that arose at that time.

The Advisory Council meeting reviewed those with the Squire and Treasurer, as well as a number of other issues, in a constructive and positive spirit. The Morris Ring officers will take matters forward as they will set out elsewhere.

The Council will meet again after the ARM meeting itself in March.

In conclusion I, on behalf of myself and my fellow Advisory Council members, would like to place on record our welcome to the Morris sides who have joined us as Associate and Joint members since the 2018 ARM.

Ed Worrall

Chair of the Morris Ring Advisory Council

8) Archive Report – Chris Wildridge

Archive Group Annual Report 2019

Chairman	Chris Wildridge
Morris Ring Archivist and Keeper of the Paper Archive	Geoff Douglas
Keeper of the Photograph Archive	Duncan Broomhead
Keeper of the Sword Dance Archive	Phil Heaton
New Dance Collator	Mike Wilkinson
Keeper of the Logbooks	Charlie Corcoran
Member	Colin Andrews
Member	Gordon Blunt
Member	John Edwards
Member	Derek Schofield

Introduction

This report covers activities of the Group for the period from the ARM 2018.

MRAG Meetings 2018

The Group held one meeting at the ARM. There was a wide ranging discussion on a series of topics including:

- 1 developing a message 'this is how the Ring can help with your side's archive'
- 2 developing resilience in the Ring Archive (in other words, it must not be dependent on the presence of any one individual)
- 3 should start contacting sides to find out what they are doing with their own archives, and a personal approach is better than using a 'general' method
- 4 developing a 'pre-test' survey to be sent to Sides known to members of the Group to cover such questions as 'is your side's archive digital or paper or both', 'do you have plans to preserve your side's archive'
- 5 the developing of a common usage for cataloguing the different archive components based on work by Duncan Broomhead and Colin Andrews

What is clear from the comment by Duncan Broomhead, from the experience of the Chairman and no doubt others, is that considerable work is carried out by members of the Archive Group in moving towards a greater accessibility of all aspects of the Morris Ring Archive. Recording that work, without going so far as to create a formal timesheet, will be a valuable record of the commitment of individuals within the Morris Ring, which will be a necessary component of any large scale formal bid to a national funding agency in the future.

Pre-test survey

The survey was carried out later in the summer. Returns were, not unusually, slow. A summary is being prepared and will be assessed by the Group before the ARM in March.

Morris Ring Archive – a future

In discussions with Essex Record Office [ERO] staff and Morris Ring Officers The Group has been developing a project to identify potential costs for the cataloguing, digitising and publication of the Morris Ring Archive on the internet. Such a project would probably cost in the order of a substantial six figure sum. This would require an application, in conjunction with the ERO, to a national funding body. This is a complex proposal which is in the early stages of development. What needs to be born in mind is that in all such proposals a quantifiable contribution from the proposers is required. This does not simply imply a cash contribution but it will require those working on this project, for example, to record their time as this is 'quantifiable' in terms of bid submissions.

Proof of concept model

A project of such complexity cannot be undertaken lightly. It is a usual practice when considering large scale projects to test the viability of the assumptions underpinning it. To do that requires the presence of a key resource. In a visit to the Essex Record Office [ERO] in 2017 a key packet of material by Lionel Bacon was identified. Its contents are listed in Appendix 1.

Using this packet as the basis for a 'proof of concept' project would allow some analysis of possible costs in key areas. The Bacon material has been chosen on several grounds. It will be of intrinsic interest to those interested in Morris dances. It is substantial as the table shows, and is in Bacon's own hand. If the project is completed it should provide an effective financial modelling tool to develop a bid application on a reasonably robust basis. Finally, once published on the internet it would raise the profile of the MR Archive, an important consideration in a bid proposal.

With the assistance of ERO staff a realistic project budget has been compiled including the use of ERO staff. On the basis of using salaried staff the projected cost of digitising MR/6725 is £5,400. This comprises £4,300 for staffing and £1,100 for digitising the contents. The staffing element could be mitigated by using an archive undergraduate on a placement at the Essex Record Office. The possibility of such a placement has been discussed with ERO staff. They are a common element of university courses. Such an arrangement would mean that the only cost to be incurred at this time is the digitisation of the contents of the packet. In comparison to a full scale programme it is a very small sum but it is significant nonetheless.

Discussions with a number of highly regarded individuals within the Morris Ring have identified a possible role for volunteers in developing a thesaurus for Morris based on the contents of the Bacon material. This would provide archivists with essential information in the cataloguing the whole of the archive.

Film archive

At the ARM 2018 a film crew recorded parts of the proceedings for a programme on Morris. The producers approached the Squire for access to the MR film archive. With the agreement of the Squire low resolution copies of the films have been made available to the producers for them to assess if they wished to make use of any of the footage.

Should they wish to do so high resolution copies of specific films will be made available. The conditions on which such footage is supplied will be determined by the Officers with advice from the Archive Group.

During the autumn the Chairman was approached by the former Treasurer, Steven Archer with a query about a film, 'Marathon Morris'. The current attribution of copyright is in the archive dataset 'unknown'. That has now been clarified. The copyright rests with Peter Coley of Bourne River. The MR data has been amended to reflect this.

Discussions continue with ERO staff on the cataloguing of the film archive.

Morris dance sources

Steve Roud, through his Folk Song Index has transformed access to source material. This has underpinned much of the work that led to the EFDSS's Full English.

Colin Andrews through his work in developing a database of Morris dances is addressing a similar issue. His report on its current status follows below.

The Chairman has been following on the footsteps of Steve Roud, and in the case of Morris, Keith Chandler, in attempting to identify key printed materials including dance notations and music transcriptions. This work in progress.

Based on the statement by Lionel Bacon in the Black Book, p 1 on Abingdon, "Apart from Princess [Princes'] Royal, the dances are unpublished, and the Abingdon dancers prefer that they remain so." and p 129 on Chipping Campden, "A living tradition. The dances are unpublished and the Campden dancers prefer that they remain so." The Chairman approached both Sides to ascertain whether their views had changed since 1974. The significance of the question relates to the contents of the Bacon packet where there are 79 [Abingdon] and 24 [Chipping Campden] documents respectively.

Morris Dance Database – update, 29th December 2018 – Colin Andrews

The Morris dance database now has 1076 different sides listed worldwide. Of these approx. 80% are UK based but also includes 64 that are defunct. The listing includes sides that perform one or more of the following styles of traditional dance:

Cotswold, Border, North West, Garland, Molly, Stave, Longsword, Rapper, Clog Step & other.

The database currently has 1540 different dances listed. Of these, the breakdown according to style is as follows:

Cotswold	1235
Border	588
Molly	62
North West	187
Garland	44 (some of these may be reclassified as NW)
Stave	21
Longsword	26
Rapper	9
Clog Step	7
Other	61

Over 50% of the UK sides now have at least some of their repertoire listed on the database. This has been gathered either directly from correspondence with a side or from information posted on a side's website or social media. There are many dances in the repertoire of various sides posted on Facebook and Youtube that have not as yet been included as they are mainly 'new' dances with no indication as to name or provenance. The analysis of listed repertoire data from UK sides is currently as follows:

	NO DANCES	1- 9 DANCES	10 -19 DANCES	20 OR MORE DANCES
ALL SIDES	370	212	86	78
Of which mainly				
COTSWOLD	60	165	46	58
BORDER	91	21	31	13

NW/GARLAND	95	19	5	7
MOLLY	19	3	2	0
OTHER STYLES	105	4	2	0

Full editorial access to the website lies with webmaster Anahata and myself at the moment but extensive access is also with Mike Wilkinson (Ring), Jerry West (Federation), and Geoff Hughes (NW dances). Open Morris has not yet nominated anyone for access to its member sides. About 50 other individuals have access to add/edit data for their own side.

MOVING FORWARD

For those sides who have an active website, a link to the morris dance database www.morrisdancedatabase.org.uk would be very much appreciated

It would be helpful if all sides could be encouraged to see what information, if any, is currently listed for them. Any side can add /edit data about the side and its repertoire directly on request, or send information to me (contact details on website). Individual contact is much more effective than any circulars by post or email in gathering information – but there is a limit to what I can do on my own!

Information on the provenance of dances listed as 'unspecified' tradition would be appreciated.

Many teams have developed their own dances, either based on an existing (often Cotswold) tradition or in their own 'new' tradition. I would very much welcome information on these new dances and traditions, for which due acknowledgement will be given. I DO NOT REQUIRE NOTATION - just name, size of set, stick or hankie or whatever, and tune if possible.

Any offers of 'expert' help on sorting out dances in those styles with which I am less familiar would be gratefully considered - e.g. border, stave & sword.

Photographic Archive Report for 2018 – Duncan Broomhead

Over the years that I have been keeper of the Morris Ring Photographic Archive I have been lucky enough to meet and get to know, many other collectors and archivists, we have got to know each other's areas of interest and freely exchange Morris related information and photographs. As a result, many of enquiries that I received were about other people's photographs and archives and were not just confined to those held in the Morris Ring Photographic Archive.

I knew that I had been very busy during 2018, and when I collated all information about my year I was staggered to find out just how busy I had been. In addition to my archival posts on social media, I had sent or received 689 emails relating to the Morris archives, photographs and research.

- I dealt with 92 different enquiries
- I sent out 361 emails
- 275 photographs
- 30 information files
- In return I received

- 328 emails
- 78 photographs
- 9 information files

I have dealt with groups such as morris sides, The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, The Morris Federation and The Sword Dance Union plus local history groups, museums and online groups and of course other members of the Morris Ring Archive Group. I have also dealt with request from individuals regarding photographs for a CD cover, a film, books, magazines, online articles, theses and academic articles, other collections, plus requests for fact checking, research and family history.

I must thank Richard Broughton of the Traditional Bampton Morris Dancers for his continued work on the Arnold Woodley collection and to John Jenner for the loan of a scrap book from the Travelling Morrice Archive which contained many important archival photographs that I had not seen before

I firmly believe that the Morris Ring Archive should be easily accessible and free to all. To the best of my ability, this is what I try to do with the material in the Morris Ring Photographic Archive. I aim to answer all enquiries within 48 hours, although some enquiries that require new research might take a little longer.

The Morris Photographic Archive is your archive, it is alive and well and here to help.

Appendix 1

Box 17 - MR/6725 Contents by Section

This is a list of the number of items in each packet. These individual items include letters from Bacon and others which will need individual cataloguing.

Side	Sheets
Abingdon	79
Adderbury	21
Bady	4
Bampton	137
Bidford	69
Bledington	60
Brackley and Hinton	66
Brimfield	14
Bromsberrow	5
Bucknell	35
Chipping Camden	24
Ducklington	33
Evesham	18
Eynsham	2
Fieldtown	39
Headington	93
Ilmington	27
Lichfield	89
Kirtlington	5
Longborough	78

Much Wenlock	11
Oddington	14
Pershore	1
Sherborne	59
Upton on Severn	4
Wheatley	12
White Ladies Ashton	1
Miscellaneous	92
Total	1,092

Archive Group meeting in the morning most productive in planning ahead.

Replacement of Michael Wilkinson, New Dance Collator, by Colin Andrews, Exeter MM.

Charlie Corcoran, Past Bagman, Leicester Morris: seeking someone with skills to digitise cine film.

9) Publications Officers' Reports –

Tony Foard - Ring Circular

2018 was a markedly fallow year for submissions to the MRC, with barely enough material received to furnish the current issue (sincere thanks to all contributors). This is largely unsurprising, given the energy with which sides now embrace social media and website to give an immediate airing to their news and activities. So 2019 is likely to see the MRC begin placing on the Morris Ring website (in the first instance) those articles and pictures sent in by sides, in an endeavour to offer a more timely delivery of these items to the wider community. A paper and ink compendium version (containing much the same content) will appear each spring to celebrate the achievements of the foregoing twelve months.

It is hoped that this proposed strategic shift will offer a practicable means of sharing news in both popular formats and will also meet future needs in a more effective fashion. Meanwhile, all snippets and photos are gratefully received!

Mac McCoig – The Morris Dancer

I have been unable to publish an issue of The Morris Dancer during 2018 due to insufficient copy. However, things are looking up this year and a new issue should be out shortly. In addition I am expecting a further two articles, both of which promise to be very interesting indeed.

That's not to say that more articles will not be welcomed. Please sharpen your pencils and let me have that piece you've always promised yourself you would write.

Mac McCoig, Editor, The Morris Dancer

Both publications require additional copy; the Squire requested more material for publication, ideally not a wealth of obituaries.

Peter De Courcy – Web Editor

A bit of a stutter in visitors to our web site with a 1000 drop off to just short of 59,000 visitor sessions during the last year, viewing our pages 131,627 times, down nearly 5% on 2017. This probably reflects the maturity of the site – though I blame austerity. For some reason, not counting our home page, the Morris Traditions booklet page was the most visited this year (8775 views) overtaking the usual leaders, Find-a-Side (6921), Morris Shop (4628) and the Handbook of Morris Dances page (4327). The most visited tradition page was Bampton, followed by Fieldtown and Adderbury. I've no idea what that suggests.



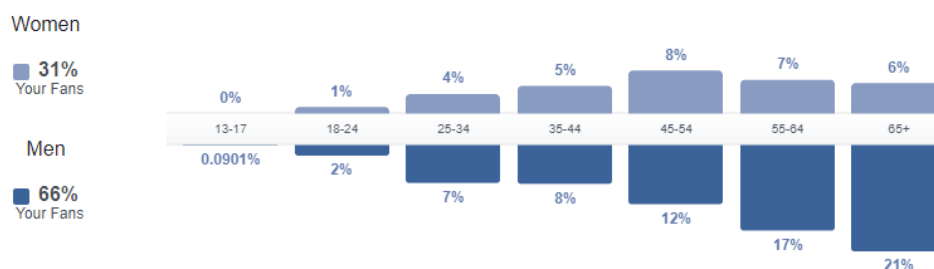
I introduced a web news subscription service after last year's ARM. You can subscribe to receive links to Morris Ring news items and important updates direct to your email in box using our [MailChimp subscription form](#). I promise not to inundate you and you may unsubscribe from the service at any time. Your details will not be shared with any third party and will be deleted should you unsubscribe.

The Morris Matters news summary still proves popular with Bathampton taking the prize for the first time for most "googlable" media coverage in 2018 with East Suffolk and Saddleworth tying for second place. It is amazing how many news articles refer to "the morris men" without crediting the side. Perhaps a bit of nudging is required with your local journalists to get the publicity you deserve. Traditional Events pages are updated regularly a couple of weeks before each of "the seasons". Sides without up to date websites will be missed unless tell me about your "Traditional" event.

As always, (in fact a copy and paste from previous years) any technical issues – and there were only a couple in 12 months were quickly solved by Martin Jones of Natty Web Development (and Dartington Morris); my thanks again to him for making my job so painless. My target of making updates within 48 hours of receiving them has been maintained, holidays and weekends of dance permitting.

We're keen to have a lively, fresh and informative web site that is a first port of call for anyone with an interest in Morris - but news on the website, in our opinion, must be newsworthy and not just for the sake of it. If your side has items or photos you believe are of national (or even international) interest, please, please let me know at webeditor@themorrisring.org.

I continue to share much information posted on Facebook by Ring sides, on our own Facebook page. Importantly I post links to website events, news items and journal publications. Some 300 people are reached on average each day, over 3000 each month "engaging" with our posts by sharing, commenting or liking. The most significant figure? We reached nearly 9000 people when we announced the outcome of last year's ARM! The number of people liking our page continues to increase and currently stands at 1111. Still worth the effort and I'm happy to carry on geeking.



Peter de Courcy

Mailchimp subscription provides regular updates, on request. Pete encouraged all to subscribe (free).

10) Overseas Bagman's Report – Nigel Strudwick

There is more to report from our sides outside the UK. Utrecht MM were at the Thaxted Weekend, and I was particularly pleased to see them do as their show dance their very own "Riggs of Doom", which they are happy for other sides to do so long as appropriate credit is given (my own side, Devil's Dyke, has picked up on this one, and I think I have just about memorised the credits requested by UMM!).

Graham Baldwin, Squire of Vancouver MM tells me they have had a very busy December, performing all sorts of different traditions, include Border, Mumming, the Abbott's Bromley Horn Dance, Molly as well as wassailing. They are taking a month's well-earned rest before doing Border on their North Shore tour.

Antony Heywood emails me that Helmond MM limp along with an ageing membership and no hopes of attracting new blood, frequently practicing with 4/5 dancers; a consequence of this is that they now have a repertoire of 4-man dances and one 5-man dance. However, their Ring Meeting last year was very successful; Antony thinks it may be their last, but he notes that is what they said the time before. They intend to attend a Ring event in 2019 but it may be with only four or five dancers. The success of their Ring Meeting was emphasised by Yateley Morris, who have put a record of their whole trip to the Netherlands at <https://yateleymorrismen.org.uk/> (scroll down through the 'Blog' section; thanks to Ross Healey for this information).

The news from Perth MM is not great. Various members have moved away, so PMM have been unable to commit to stands, and practices have been poorly attended, resulting in discontent from those who have turned up. There has been discussion about whether they should go mixed, but this was rejected. Rather than wind up the side, which was the first Morris side in Australia (formed late in 1973, first dance-out in 1974), it was decided to go into recess for the time being, and undertake a few stands if and as circumstances permit.

We all wish Helmond and Perth every success in finding new members, and Helmond's *modus operandi* is to be applauded since it shows determination.

11) Elections

Bagman

The Bagman of the Ring was re-elected.

Area Reps

Area Representatives (year of re-election in brackets)

North Midlands, Charlie Corcoran (2021)

South Midlands, Roger Comley (2021)

Northern, Jono Millward (2021)

North West, David Loughlin (2020)

North East, Brian Pollard (2019)

West Midlands, Mark Carter (2020)

Eastern, Nigel Strudwick (2019)

South Wales and West, Paul Reece (2020)

South East, Fred Hands (2021)

Highlighted candidates re-elected by agreement.

12) Proposal

1. Proposal from Charlie Corcoran, Past Bagman, and Leicester Morris for admission of First Class Stamp to full membership:

Leicester Morrismen are honoured and delighted to support First Class Stamp's application for full membership of the Morris Ring.

As near neighbours, Leicester first encountered them many years ago when Man Friday invited local sides to join them for their Mid-summer event at Thrussington. Until then all the dancing had been in the road outside The Star pub but that year, we saw boards being laid out under the trees on the very uneven Village Green and everyone's attention was drawn the Appalachian dances of First Class Stamp. They have been regular attendees ever since.

Always smartly turned out, their standard of music and dance is superb, as is their general attitude towards other sides and the public. They engage their audience and their enthusiasm for what they are doing shines through. Their success in recruiting is apparent for all to see. We believe they will be a real asset to the Morris Ring.

Charlie Corcoran, Bagman, Leicester Morris

Discussion: The Squire confirmed viability and quality of standards and presentation, but is aware of the contentious nature of Appalachian as "Morris." They fulfil the spirit of what the Morris is about.

Daniel Fox, Past Squire, Thaxted MM: election requires a substantial item on agenda and sufficient time to consider application for membership.

Emma Melville, Anker MM and First Class Stamp: offered to leave the room.

Bob Cross, Past Squire, Chalice MM: point of order – Constitution does not include Appalachian.

Mike Garland, Past Squire, East Suffolk MM: Appalachian is a derivative of English step dance; there is considerable variety already within the Ring.

Squire: Constitution states an organisation of Morris, Sword and Mumming – what about stave, garland and Britannia Coconut Dancers?

Barry Care, Past Squire, Traditional Bampton MM: do we need to alter the Constitution before we can approve this? Are we watering down the Morris and in danger of losing standards?

Ed Worrall, Past Squire, Saddleworth MM: Is NW actually Morris – as question has been asked. FCS are already Associate Members who should be encouraged to full Membership. Definition of Morris: every definition is by nature excluding some sides, need to build bridges not walls.

Fred Hands, SE Area Rep, on behalf of Winchester MM: read statement querying compliance with Clause 2 of Constitution.

Steven Archer, past Treasurer: Ravensbourne feel this requires further debate, Westminster feel it is not morris and is foreign, Harry Taylor's feel it promotes inclusivity, which is aligned to the direction of travel of the Morris Ring.

Charlie Corcoran, Past Bagman, Leicester MM: standard of dance is superb, should we be discussing Appalachian and admission of First Class Stamp separately? Insurance has included Appalachian since inception, Sharp was involved with it.

Simon Newman, Earlsdon MM: can they be accepted as Associates but not as full Members?

Randall Scott, Devil's Dyke MM: need to uphold Constitution.

Pete De Courcy, Kennet MM: FCS are excellent Morris dancers.

John Jenner, Cambridge MM: Associate Membership is less formal than full Membership; need to consider extending MR against Constitution.

Squire: do we abide by the letter or the spirit of the Constitution? Put to vote (FL and NP manage count).

Outcome: 28 for, 9 against, 5 abstentions. Congratulations to First Class Stamp, admitted to full Membership of the Morris Ring, Squire to refer to Advisory Council.

Bob Cross, Past Squire, Chalice MM: need to sort out Constitution and ratify a more standardised approach to membership.

Ed Worrall, Past Squire and Chair of AC: now a post issue, not a pre issue, a matter of amending Constitution to reflect reality.

John Jenner, Cambridge MM: agenda item required for notice period.

13) Area Representatives' Reports – Dave Loughlin (NW)

The last year has been on the whole a little better than last year for most of the sides in the North West Area. One side has more or less folded now unfortunately and another just about holding themselves together.

I am very grateful to the Bagman or Squires of the sides that have taken their time to reply to me.

The North British Sword Dancers have had a very successful year. As ever they had two practices, this time in Liverpool and Rugby, and were confronted with the problem of how to manage a large team when touring the pubs, a good problem to have. In Rugby they dealt with it by splitting into two, which had both good and bad points.

Their annual overseas excursion at Easter was to Kortrijk, in Belgium and included a trip across the border to Lille. Shortly after that they danced at the Todmorden Folk Festival, where they had an invitation to be at Whitby Folk Festival in 2019.

Other outings included London in January and Saddleworth Rushcart (as ever) in August. They are looking to a good year, with plenty to achieve in 2019.

Chapel-en-le-Frith still practice on Monday evenings over the winter months at the Playhouse, in the town and dance out at local pubs on Monday evenings during May to September. They have lost one member due to a knee injury (non-Morris related) but they are regaining another man who had to drop out due to a leg joint injury. The latter has been repaired and he hopes to take part in this coming year's dancing. They always have a good side out on Mondays at practice and at venues during the summer months. However, with limited numbers (there are 11 or 12 regulars, but not all present at the same time) they do find it difficult to form a side for a booking.

During the past year unfortunately the invitations to about ten local festivals and numerous days of dance due to lack of men able to attend has had to be turned down. However, the Buxton Day of Dance, held during the Buxton Festival in mid July goes from strength to strength, there are no problems in filling the allocation of sides and seems always to have a waiting list.

During the Chapel-en-le-Frith Arts Exhibition in early July they manned a stand displaying the history of the side (formed in 1975) which created a lot of interest but sadly no takers!

In early August five men recreated the Castleton (Derbyshire) Morris Dance in late 19th century working clothes. This was in conjunction with a longer film recording the festivities of the Castleton Festivals.

In order to generate interest in Chapel-en-le-Frith Morris Men they ran three taster sessions on similar lines to the one in 2017. These three sessions were held in New Mills, Buxton and Chapel-en-le Frith. The first session attracted over 20 people, mostly ladies, but sadly no one followed it up. Likewise, they had about 6 people at each of the latter two sessions, but again, no-one returned to a practice night.

Sadly I have to report that "John O'Gaunt Morris of Lancaster" is in the final stages of being "wound Up". After fifty mainly glorious years of Morris Dancing and having had quite an enviable reputation for their high standard of performance not to mention having taken part in many prestigious events over the years; regrettably, I have been informed the time has now come when it has become necessary to wind the side up. This decision was made in November last year at their AGM. Ironically the proposal was put forward by musicians and there were not enough dancers, who wished the side to continue, to vote it down. Death has claimed many of the members in recent times, particularly ones who were dancers and they have, as many sides are finding, been unable to recruit new blood. "The John O'Gaunt Tour of South Lakeland" that has taken place every year for the past fifty years may well continue to be organized by one of the teams who have supported them over those years. Very sadly, though, this is the end of a great traditional Morris Dance side.

I am sure no doubt we are all pleased to hear that some of those that are left are continuing to perform North West Morris with "Wrigley Head Morris"

Kinnerton Morris Men has 4 musicians + 9 dancers for the 2018 programme and generally this fits the needs of the team. It was a varied and had some particularly enjoyable events. Just one less than 2017 but there were two more dancing days so they were busier.

They organized a weekend of dance in the Yorkshire Dales based in Kettlewell in June with three guest sides and all thoroughly enjoyed the event. Good as that was, the highlight was their return to Brittany in September after a ten year interval. Flying out on the Tuesday and returned on the Saturday so they had three full and varied days and were well looked after by friends of the team developed over the past 24 years of contact. It was a great way to end the season.

They are now very well equipped with three regular musicians both in numbers and quality. Lyn still makes a guest appearance occasionally and we have another guest musician who adds considerable talent when he is available. The good news they have just gained a new dancing recruit who is very experienced and will be a great asset in 2019, though he will not reduce the average age of the team! That will bring their dancing numbers up to 10 and also with a returning man becoming available later in the year, albeit with limited summer availability, they should in theory be better supported for the 2019 programme.

Kinnerton have a "passive" recruitment policy rather than proactive one. Their new recruit found them, but regarding lady dancers they have not changed their constitution and remain a men only dancing team.

Plans for 2019 they are generally aiming to be less ambitious than 2018. Over the past years they have organizing weekends of dance, so to give themselves a rest a day tour is possible in North Wales.

It is not so good for Leyland Morris Men I am sorry to report, their situation is very little changed from last year in terms of activity or number of dancers and musicians. During 2018 they fulfilled 21 engagements while declining a further 18.

Age is creeping up with them and seriously threatening the team's capability so much so that this year they will need to actively pursue a recruitment drive. Should they be successful in this venture it will be all well and good, but considering the change of the gender status it is something they have to date not discussed. They are looking forward to reporting a more success next year, but watch this space.

Thelwell Morris Men had 14 men attend their AGM in 2018, one down on the previous year despite continued attempts at recruitment. They still managed a full programme of events during the year (12 outings on top of our regular summer Wednesday pub visits), notable highlights being the excellent

Helmond Ring meeting and performing Primrose and Blue, a dance that they have created to a tune written for them by Stephen Hough, the international pianist who was brought up in Thelwall. Thelwall have all so performed in front of Stephen Hough while he was performing in Liverpool.

As for future recruitment they will probably focus on maintaining a high local presence and seeking publicity opportunities whenever possible, such as when making donations to local charities.

Mossley Morris Men had a bad start to year due to lack of members and it was decided to suspend all activities till the end of year. Then in October as they returned to winter practice nights 5 new members arrived and they are currently training and teaching them to dance. Mossley have also had a re-think to their kit and are now dancing in black pants, clogs, white shirt (with blue/gold necktie), black waistcoat and black flat cap. They find it more cost effective, authentic and more comfortable to wear. So they are looking forward to a good and busy year in 2019.

They have 3 regular musicians, plus 3 'occasional, but only two who can lead (or solo!) when dancing out, which has resulted in them rejecting some invitations for lack of music.

Not much change for Manchester Morris Men this year as they still have a baker's dozen of regular dancers, but last year's recruit should be dancing out with them come summer. During the year they have danced at 8 weekend/Bank Holiday events, including Whitchurch Morris Men's 70th Anniversary weekend; and on 11 summer evenings, outside pubs, in lieu of practice. On with working with the local community project they have spent an evening teaching a local Beavers group and taught a dance to a secondary school group to perform at an international folk dance event.

Unfortunately they have had to turn down 22 other invitations / enquiries, either due to date clashes, or lack of dancers or musicians.

Libra TV has sent out a film, crew to their practices and dance outs. They are making a film for the BBC about Morris Dancing and the Morris Ring's decision to admit mixed teams to become members of the Morris Ring. They taught a dance to one member of the crew and danced out with them, that became part of the rejuvenation of Mossley Morris Men. So they look forward with some trepidation to see the TV programme. .

2018 was Southport Swords 50th year so they celebrated with two days of dance, one for Sword teams and a second for teams we have known. They both went well with the second gathering on the Saturday included the old members of the team. They rounded off the celebrations by winning the trophies for best own dance and best audience reaction at the Sword Dance Union Longsword tournament. They did try a taster session in 2017 with little response and their latest recruit was a returning dancer so no new ideas there.

2018 followed the same pattern as the past few years for Chester City Morris Men. Their season started with a very successful St George's celebration with the local teams Kinnerton Morris Men and Mersey Morris Men, together with Jockey Morris Men who joined them for a day of dance in Chester on the Saturday before.

Chester Folk Festival, over the spring bank holiday, provided them with a full weekend of dance displays and the opportunity to invite teams new to the festival.

The lack of dancing numbers inevitably restricted the number of times that they were able to dance out but they did manage a couple of evening dance displays over the summer. Their year finished as it usually does with a day of dance with their long time friends White Hart Morris Men.

One promising note is that they attracted two new members this year. One was able to dance out before the end of the season and it is fully expect to get the second new recruit kitted out and ready to dance out in the spring. So baring unforeseen events 2019 could see them being able to take on more commitments than last year. Especially as the practice nights continue to be well attended.

Mersey : It was a good year as always. New Year's Day at The Plasterers started it. Next we mollied and bordered in Chester. On May Day the sun came up over Liverpool and we had a view of it from Bidston Hill.

On Mondays from the end of April to the end of August we danced at pubs and once we found Chester City Morris Men! About eight bookings were made, the most profitable being for CBBC – see the 4 o'clock club in early February 2019. At the end of August we were in Lamballe, Brittany, with Les Gastadours Lamballe for a most enjoyable weekend. They have been invited to The Wirral in 2019. We finished the year with good weather, a good audience and a record bag on Boxing Day on Willaston Green.

We have new kit. Members 29: 5 musicians only (four of whom are women); 17 dancers; 1 stray from Jockey {lost his horse?} and 6 non-actives/part timers. We are solvent but the new kit cost a bit although it should last 10 years.

Andy Siddons, Bagman Mersey Morris Men, 9th January 2019.

Mersey Sword : Monthly practices have taken place during the year mainly for Flamborough and occasionally Scally Rapper. Hopefully Flamborough is now established as part of the core repertoire of the Side and danced out regularly during the season.

Following a teach-in from Southport Sword we have begun to develop our version of Papa Stour. In connection with this we have had the longer-term assistance of Steve Lamb of Natterjacks and Southport Swords. Steve would be a useful asset to the Side's sword dances should he be persuaded to a firmer commitment.

Sarah continues as the sole musician. She has selected excellent tunes and provided polished performances to drive the dancers along.

No Tommying or Bessying has been practiced.

As a final flourish to the season a Rapper tour of Heswall took place in December, with the usual success and audience enjoyment. Cheeseey emerged as a potential Rapper allrounder.

As I am resigning as the Captain of Sword, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the hard work that all the dancers and musician(s) have put in. All the sword dances are physically demanding, none more so than Rapper, so well done to all the sword dancers and maybe you will be thankful not to have me pushing you for more and better. During my time as CoS we have attended one DERT, participated in four and won a bronze medal in our first competition. This was a great achievement for a part-time side. I am retiring due to physical problems and diminished enthusiasm I hope the new CoS has the enthusiasm, youth and experience to push the Side to new heights.

Jono Millward (N)

I must first apologise for the brevity and tardiness of this report. A combination of me feeling my way through my first year in the post and life & work getting the better of me over recent months has meant that I have not been as proactive and involved as I would like to have been, despite my best intentions starting out. Apologies also to the sides who aren't yet included; I was late in asking for their contributions and can only hope I am in a position to add them later.

Of course the main focus of the year has been the aftermath and fallout from the monumental vote held at the last ARM and how sides are moving forward from it, and I was initially able to visit with Barnsley Longsword, Green Oak MM, Grimsby MM and Lord Conyers MM not long after the event, even going as far as to join the latter, to see how the result was received. I understand that some sides have capitalised on the change and become mixed, such as Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers and White Rose Morris. Others have had more tentative forays into the world of mixed Morris, with Lord Conyers MM welcoming an occasional female musician and Harthill Morris taking steps to remove any hindrance to mixed Morris from their constitution and holding joint practices and dance-outs with sister (Fed) side Three Shires.

It would seem that recruitment and/or member retention is still an issue for some, although we hope to explore this and solutions for this more in a North Area meeting before the ARM. On a positive note news has reached us that we hope to soon be welcoming mixed side Wakefield Morris into the fold as Joint Members of the Morris Ring.

I can only provide updates from three sides for now, but I hope to add more before the ARM proper:

Green Oak Morris Men

Our numbers have held steady from last year with no new members joining but equally no long term losses. Although a fairly strong side on paper – nine dancers and three musicians, raising a side for dancing out over the summer has often proved to be unsuccessful. This I suspect is a similar story to many sides as more members retire from work and take advantage of the summer sun to have family trips away. Having said all this we have managed to perform at Cusworth Hall for their May Day event, at Doncaster Day of Dance and the CAST theatre as a warm up act for the Demon Barber production of "Quest". We only managed to dance out on four Wednesday nights. For the first we travelled to Rawcliffe to perform at an Autistic Society residential centre after which we called in to the "Jemmy Hurst". This was followed by a new venue, the "New Inn" just outside Wakefield, an old favourite "The Angel" at Misson went well and a return to the "Eagle and Child" at Auckley saw a good and appreciative crowd witness our performance. Our alter-egos the Doncaster Mummers reappeared in December played at the "Doncaster Brewery Tap", "Jemmy Hurst at the Rose and Crown", Rawcliffe, and "The Beverley Inn" at Edenthorpe.

Ever hopeful we are now into our winter practice season under the stewardship of our new Squire, Peter Heigham and hope for a busier dance season in 2019.

Harthill

Morris

The last twelve months have seen significant changes within Harthill Morris. Last November we held an E.G.M. where the decision was taken to amend the constitution and remove all references to gender.

This ties in with our increased working partnership with the Three Shires Ladies Clog. We have held some joint practices with them and danced out together on several occasions in the past year. We look to maintain, and indeed strengthen, these links for the mutual benefit of both sides. On the personnel front Jono Millward is taking a break from the role of Squire after three very successful years during which he has worked tirelessly for Harthill Morris and more recently with his role as Morris Ring North Area Rep Jono is an inspiration to us all. John Lister has stood down as Old Man and taken on the role of Squire with John Erskine now Old Man. Darren Nugent remains as Bagman and David Chinn stays as treasurer. Sadly founder member Brian Shutt decided to call it a day and hang up his bells after giving sterling service to the side for 42 years. Brian will be missed for his experience and wisdom and leaves with our best wishes for a long and healthy retirement. Like other sides we are getting no younger and have difficulty in recruiting new members. However, as always, we face the future with optimism and look forward to a successful 2019.

Wath-on-Deerne

Morris

Men

The year 2018 was a bad year for Wath, and for various reasons we broached our AGM with trepidation fearing that after 47 years, it may all come to an end. At the AGM there was a strong feeling amongst members, not to give in, so the decision was made to dance thru' the Winter Season and have an EGM in January to decide what's happening. We held the meeting on the 15th, the positions of Squire & Bagman, both of who stayed in office from the AGM retired and new Officers were elected, the Treasurer who is carrying on confirmed that we had had a successful Winter season so far, the best to date, it was decided to carry on, but with a different presentation to our single Tradition - Bledington. So hopefully whilst 2019 might be a little quieter than normal, things should start to look up.

Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers have had a successful year, dancing at Beverley Day of Dance (following the cancellation of the folk festival), Ripon Day of Dance and Whitby. Several evenings were also spent taking longsword to the people of Sheffield on tours around the city centre - we have gone down particularly well in student bars on sports social night!

Most importantly, this year Handsworth took the historic step of becoming a mixed side. The traditional dance remains all-male, but the side has introduced several new dances for mixed sets and a new non-traditional kit for less formal occasions. This has allowed us to take a fuller part in festivals and days of dance and has helped us to push some longsword boundaries, for example by developing a five-person rapper-style longsword dance.

Overall the team is healthy, but aware that we cannot be complacent. In particular, we are often short of musicians and could do with a couple more younger dancers (despite the average age of the team being significantly lower than it was even a couple of years ago). This year we will be introducing a new American-style longsword dance and also perhaps doing a bit of rapper. We want Handsworth to be the team to go to for trying new things with longsword - whilst preserving and furthering the traditional dance.

Brian Pollard (NE)

Northeast Area Report 2019

.Benfieldside Morris and Sword

A pleasant year's dancing. As well as dancing out throughout the summer at a number of local pubs where we were always made welcome even if the audiences weren't always large, we fulfilled several bookings:

In April Black Diamond Morris day of dance in Darlington – with 18 sides!

May a family birthday at Lumley Castle and at Sedgfield Fair.

June at Wolsingham Fair and a lovely weekend with Whitchurch Morris at their anniversary celebrations.

September at Hawthorn Village Fete (a result of a weekly danceout at their local)

December at the South Causey Hotel Carols and Mince Pies evening where we managed to collect over £200 for our local hospital's children's ward.

January saw an impressive Plough Sunday where we were joined by five other local sides to dance and process the plough through Durham Market Place to the Cathedral for the blessing and giving of largesse to the Stotts – a very satisfying end to the year!

Again sharing practice nights and engagements with Durham Rams has worked very well and I'm sure it will continue.

Claro Sword and Morris Men

Our small numbers prevent us from appearing at many events and our aging knees and ankles prevent us from any morris, so all our activity is confined to longsword. Last January, as custom demands, we danced at Knaresborough parish church on Plough Sunday. We appeared a couple of times in Harrogate, and we were able to entertain a visiting group of Australians in Ripley village. Our repertoire of sword dances for fewer than six men is still expanding.

Durham Rams Morris and Sword

The side still practises Morris with Benfieldside Morris so that the two sides continue to dance out together with the same repertoire and dance style. A joint side also practises the Rapper dance. This is currently the Durham Rams dance based on the revival Hamsteels dance of the 1920's. We have also begun to work on the Poppleton Longsword dance which was taught to us by Sallyport Sword Dancers.

We have had a number of engagements with Benfieldside Morris over the last year. These include Durham Plough Sunday, Black Diamond Day of Dance, Sedgfield Fair, Wolsingham Fair, Leeds Morris Men's Wharfedale weekend, the Whitchurch Ring Meeting and the Saddleworth Rushcart Festival, plus fortnightly dance outs on Wednesday evenings throughout the summer. The Rapper side again attended the annual St George's Day meeting of local Rapper sides organised by Sallyport Sword Dancers.

The close ties between Benfieldside and the Durham Rams have continued and are very positive.

Monkseaton Morris Men.

A quiet year for Monkseaton Morris men, but we did manage to attend Saddleworth Rushcart in August and enjoyed great weather on the Saturday followed by torrential rain on the Sunday forcing everyone to dance in the church which was great. Other than that we have continued dancing out in the north east and raised around £1500 for local and national charities. Our special day is always the 1st January where we dance out in Monkseaton, killing off the old year and bringing the New Year back to life. Always a great atmosphere for the main show and after in the pubs.

Richmond-on-Swale Morris Men

The year proved to be an interesting one with the introduction (or should it be re-introduction?) of dances that have not been our repertoire for some years and dance tours of our local Dales. The former challenged the newer members of the side with new dances and the memories of the longer

standing members. Of the latter the tours of Teesdale, Swaledale and Arkengarthdale proved enjoyable and well worthwhile. The fourth Dale, Wensleydale, was covered also when we joined Leeds MM on their tour. We supported our local sides, Black Diamond and Blacksheep, at their Days of Dance in the early part of the season and also danced at Ebor's event in York near the end of the season. Our own Day of Dance in Richmond attracted several sides to dance at locations in the town.

Thursday evening dances and singing sessions at local hostelrys were very enjoyable, though it was the usual mixed bag of audiences from just one or two interested people to enthusiastic "crowds".

The side has maintained its numbers at a healthy size, though it would be good to get a couple of youngsters to bring our average age below 60!

Redcar Sword Dancers.

Numbers have remained static at nine dancers and one musician, but despite limited numbers, injuries and extended holidays, we were able to accept invitations to dance at a number of events.

These included Black Diamond Morris' Day of Dance in Darlington in April, Leeds MM Yorkshire Dales tour in May, The Sword Dance Union's annual Longsword Tournament and Day of Dance held in Sowerby Bridge and hosted by Kirkburton Rapier Dancers and a spot on Hartlepool Folk Festival's "Bishoprick Garland" concert, both in October. Cuthbert Sharp, (no relation to Cecil, as far as I know!) a Hartlepool antiquarian, published the 'Bishoprick Garland' in 1834 which contains references to a longsword dance performed in County Durham in 1815 and possibly earlier.

We finished the year with our 52nd performance of the Greatham Sword Dance and Play in the village of that name on Boxing Day.

Mark Carter (W Mids)

Well 2018 was a significant year for me: no, not because I became area rep, but my wife and I had our second child, Seth, on 7 June. Unsurprisingly, morris dancing took a slight back seat but I still managed to dance with three sides and attend several events, including the Open Morris AGM in Stourbridge along with the Squire.

Procreation aside, the highlight event of 2018 for me was the weekend of dance put on by one of my sides, Leominster Morris, to celebrate their 35th anniversary. We were joined by Pecsætan, Shropshire Bedlams & Martha Rhodens, Customs and Exiles, Chipping Campden, Lassington Oak and Domesday. One pub even reverted to 1983 prices for the duration of our visit, much appreciated in 30-degree heat!

2019 sees major anniversaries for Jockey (70), Shakespeare (60), Silurian (50) and Sedgley (40). The only UK-based Ring Meeting for 2019 takes place in Warwickshire between 19 & 21 July with Jockey and Shakespeare joining forces to celebrate those anniversaries. Silurian celebrate their half-century with a day of dance with other Border teams in Ledbury on 14 April and Sedgley will make a tour of the Black Country on 8 June to mark their four decades.

The summer brought some sad news and the death of Geoff Watkins, of Shakespeare, Pebworth and Original Welsh Border. He was also a driving force behind the Vale of Evesham Morris Weekend each June, an event that brings together morris sides from across the country and all organisations for a weekend of dance. Geoff's warmth and humour will be missed from the scene.

Recruitment continues to be the major worry for several sides though I'm heartened to hear of 3 new members at my original side, Stafford, who have been struggling for numbers for a while.

As I write, three of our sides are preparing for appearances on the stage at Dancing England: Earlsdon, Leominster and Chipping Campden. They will join a cast of some 16 traditional dance and folk art

groups in Nottingham for the biennial showcase. Thoughts turn to Coventry's year as City of Culture in 2021 and what part morris can play in it, watch this space.

Peter Austin, Traditional Ilmington MM: "Morris Dancer" engine plate now in his possession, does anyone know where the other plate is?

Squire's point of order – name change of Area from North Midlands to East Midlands:

Charlie Corcoran (E Mids)

My report for the area with a misleading name: North Midlands.

Charlie Corcoran

I am delighted to welcome sides who are joining the Morris Ring in the area, to date Knightlow, First Class Stamp and The Witchmen. It is clear that there is a huge amount of inter-side cooperation across the area with sides from all three Morris Orgs regularly performing together at events throughout the year, including an increasing number of side who plan joint tours. Below is a summary from some of the sides in the area concerning the past year, their health as a side, etc. I especially thank Stephen Ferneyhough, Bagman of the Brackley Morris Men, for his thought-provoking summary, which I quote extensively. Also I offer my apologies to those sides with whom I have failed to make contact.

First Class Stamp report that they had a good year, attending the Chippenham Folk Festival as an invited side, performing, running workshops and doing a spot in the massive evening ceilidh. They have good relations with local sides and dance out with many of them at various midsummer events, but like many sides they sometimes struggle a bit with audiences on pub dance-outs, blaming it on their chosen night is Monday.

They have a strong core of members who "come and go with university and pregnancy" which shows that they are a fairly young team.

They would like to attend more days of dance and so on but this is difficult with a set of boards to transport round.

Lincoln & Micklebarrow had to cancel 5 agreed gigs (3 were dancing out with other mixed sides) due to having only 9 dancers & 1 musician (which they have had for a number of years now) which obviously constrains them if any of those are not available, but still danced at Southwell Folk Festival, Newark Christmas Market, Lincoln Day of Morris, which were all days run similar to the JMO's, and attended Thaxted Ring Meeting.

Their youngest member joined the Navy, but they have recruited another accordion player who, although having not played for the Morris before is picking it up quite quickly.

For the future they plan to remain as a men's Cotswold side, but would welcome any gender to practices & are open to female musicians. They will have representatives at Ripley Feast & are hoping to be at Southwell Folk Festival, an event in Grantham on the first May bank holiday Monday, Newark traditions Festival in July, when they are co-hosting (with Poacher Morris) some German Folk Dancers

From Lincoln's twin town Neustadt, & they will hopefully be at the Queens Oak / Rose & Castle Morris weekend at the end of June and Lincoln Day of Morris on 1st September.

The Brackley Morris Men boast around 15 either regular or occasional member, averaging 10 or 11 at most practices, their ages being half well into their 60s, 3 in 50s, 2 in 40s, 1 in 30s, 1 20s and 1 age 9 attends with his Mum (who is a dancer with a local ladies side).

We are financially sound. Our paid events earned us £1,200. We also sometimes collect. This covers all our fixed costs such as practice hall, public liability insurance, website costs, etc. The men pay no subs, but fund their own kit and fuel costs. We have enough left in the kitty each year to make a donation to charity, which in 2018 was £200 for Save the Children.

In 2018 they completed 33 events: six of their own St Georges Day (Mumming); May Day morning (5.30am on Brackley Market Place with two visiting sides, followed by breakfast and beer in the pub); August Bank Holiday tour (2 days dancing at a fete and other local venues, mostly pubs); Winter Ale with other invited Cotswold sides, male, ladies and mixed; an low key Anniversary outing (a pub + eating and music) and Boxing Day (in the Market Place + a couple of pubs). In addition, they did 8 Community events; 7 Social events as guests of other sides and 12 Paid events (mostly fetes + occasional weddings) which pay all our fixed costs thereby avoiding the need for subs

Interestingly they received almost 70 invitations last year, far more than they could accept. They rejected 19 social and 20 paid events, either because they were already engaged or though lack of available men. The decision as to which to do is largely down to the availability and preference of the men. Stephen Ferneyhough, their Bagman, says that:

"I try to guide us according to three principles: Is it likely to be fun? Will it help our public profile and Will it earn us an income through collections or fees.

We also try to dance each year at important local places of interest, specifically Canons Ashby House (according to them the Curate in 1578 was reputed to have been a morris dancer), Stowe House (we have records of BMM dancing there in the 1800s) Aynho House (we have records of BMM dancing there in the 1720s and 1730s), and Sulgrave Manor (the ancestral home of George Washington)."

It's not just about the dancing. We are fully family friendly. We have men from all walks of life, from solicitors to gardeners. We try to harness all the skills of the men. One is good with internet and Facebook, another is a bookbinder who has bound all our logs from the last 60 years. One has taught morris dancing in one of the local schools, we have two accounts people, and we have musical skills. We've written up our history, published on the website, and in 2013 we made a CD telling the story of the BMM from Tudor times to the present day using the sound of our dances, narratives from our history, and songs that we've written ourselves. We sold almost 300 copies, mostly locally.

As a local side with four hundred years of history behind them we choose to retain our all-male heritage, but we voted unanimously to accept the recent proposal for the Ring to end its male-only stance. We have good relations with local ladies and mixed sides and women are more than welcome to join our tasters and practice nights, or to join us as musicians. When we danced at the York Festival of Dance in September, we found ourselves two men down. We were without our fool had had only 5 dancers and a musician. So my wife joined us. She wasn't

in kit and we played it as though we'd picked a random woman from the audience. As a dancer herself, she danced as well as most of the men (and better than some). We got bigger roars from the audience when she was in the set! Morris dancing is all about street entertainment. This isn't the thin end of the wedge towards becoming a mixed side, simply an invitation for a guest to join us if we choose. We can remain an all male side, but must have a modern approach if we aren't to be seen as a bunch of dinosaurs!

Publicity: *"We use all the means we can think of: Newspaper, village newsletters, our own website, other local web-based what's on media, Twitter, leaflets, and very heavy and regular use of Facebook. The impact has been better audiences at our Boxing Day and May Day outings, and a significant increase in requests to dance at fetes etc. All of this has given us, I believe, a much stronger public profile than we previously had."*

Recruitment: *We have the same difficulties as most other ageing male-only sides, but we keep at it. Repetition and perseverance. We've gained one or two new men each year in the last few years, but have lost men at the same rate, mostly through age-related injury (knee ops, arthritis, etc). Four or five years ago we had only 2 active men actually living in Brackley. We now have 6. I believe that our emphasis on local events, local publicity, and our local heritage has helped this. We've designated all our practices from January to March as 'free open tasters' for anyone to come and have a go - men, women, and (accompanied) children. Having such tasters gives you a specific subject to publicise. At the first practice of term last Thursday, one new (and experienced) dancer turned up - he lives in Brackley - and he's coming again tonight!*

Stephen's attitude could be a lesson to us all: *Keep distributing those leaflets; keep sharing those Facebook posts; ask Who else you can invite along? Don't wait to be asked and every man is a recruitment officer with the future of your club is in your hands. We want to thrive, not simply survive. Repetition, perseverance and a bit of bullying!!*

Aldbury Morris Inspired by the 1960s folk renaissance they date back to 1969, meeting in an unheated barn at the rear of the Greyhound Pub in Aldbury, Hertfordshire. They now practice every Thursday evening during the winter months in the Aldbury Memorial Hall and in the Summer they "explore some of the unspoiled corners of the Chilterns near the borders of Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, in close proximity to a pub. They are also well known for cracking a tune or two in the bar afterwards... " www.aldburymorris.co.uk

Anker Morris Men have 19 on their books, of whom 16 are fairly regular (the absentees include one who is away at Uni), with one dedicated musician but three of the dancers can also play in her absence. They usually get 12+ at practice. Their recent activities have been slightly curtailed due to recurrent fitness(usually knees) problems for some men. Their most recent recruit has been with us for 18 months, is progressing well and looks a stayer. They have used Facebook as a medium for recruitment but so far without success.

Their regular events include St George's Tour, Midsummer Morris at Baxterley with Guests, Willey Street Fair (which is establishing itself as a memorial event for John Dell, who died of a heart attack there in 2016), RailAle at Market Bosworth, plus the usual run of Wednesday evenings, some with

visitors. 2018 away days included Westminster, the JMO in Peterborough, Queen's Oak/Rose & Castle 40th weekend and Saddleworth.

Northampton Morris Men have around 12 dancers at present but last year they struggled to obtain a musician so had to cancel many dance-outs. This year they have one returning musician and have had a number of requests to perform.

Packington Morris Men describe their state as gloomy. Essentially they are now an occasional side. They no longer practice on a regular basis, and only dance out twice a year: May day and Boxing day, and although these used to be Packington led events they have passed this baton onto Pennyroyal garland dancers.

They attribute their decline in numbers to a combination of age and men relocating, and whilst they did try and recruit a few years ago they admit that it was rather half-hearted and so failed. They are now reduced to 4 dancers and no musician, they hang on due to the tenacity of two men.

Hinckley Bullockers are an event side, getting together annually for their Plough Tour. This year they had 30 people out on tour split 50/50 between musicians and dancers. Tony admits that "I know roughly how many will be out on the day about a week before the event. The number changes several times during that week, and I can't even give a precise number on the day! The nearest estimate is the number of lunches I book."

Ripley Morris continue to enjoy their dancing and the camaraderie of the Morris community. In 2018 they had their usual full programme of Thursday evening dance outs and were joined by other local sides on many of these, including Ripley Green Garters, Winster Morris, Penny Royal Garland Dancers, Sullivan's Sword, Lady Bay Revellers, Dolphin MM, Makeney Morris, and Stone Monkey Rapper.

They danced out on Boxing Day and Easter Saturday, made their annual visits to local schools on 1st May and attended the JMO Day of Dance in Peterborough and the St Albans' Day of Dance in September.

Following a fall off in numbers attending their annual Ale Feast in recent years they decided that 2019's feast would be an open event which lead to increased numbers and newcomers to the feast from local mixed sides and other Ring sides not represented for some time.

In October 2018 Ripley Morris Men decided to become Ripley Morris thus enabling the side to reach out to new female members. On 24th January after a sustained publicity campaign in local towns and villages, press and social media they held an open evening to introduce new recruits to Ripley Morris and morris dancing. At this session they attracted seven people new to Ripley Morris of whom two had not danced the Morris before. They also believe there are two or three others who were unable to attend this session but who intend to give it a go in the future. So hopefully they might pick up a few new members.

Dolphin Morris 2018 was Dolphin Morris's 50th Anniversary Year.

"This was celebrated with:

1. A "Reunion" of as many of the old members as we could find joining with the current members. A slide show of photographs through the years and a display of our archives helped jog memories of previous exploits.
2. Weekend of dance where we were joined by our old friends Greensleeves Morris Men and on the Sunday by friends from local sides displaying the full variety of the Morris. On the Saturday

tour we celebrated the 400th Anniversary of the arrest of the Bradmore Morris dancers for “profaning the Sabbath” in the village with a Mumming play style re-enactment. Both events were successful and enjoyed by all.

The side remains strong, although the membership is aging and injuries and changes in lifestyle that accompany retirement from employment are becoming noticeable. Practises and Tours have always been “quorate” in 2018. We have been joined by an experienced dancer, who also dances with another side.

Some members of the side provide support for the Ring Jigs Instructional and for the Hayfield Morris (the other Derbyshire Morris Tradition). While some individuals accepted invitations to feasts the side only did one paid gig and one weekend away as a side in the year.”

Leicester Morris Men have 19 men on their books, of whom 2 are specialist musicians and 2 others also play. We are not unique in that too many of the side are the wrong side of 60 but we do have a cohort of men in their 30s and a couple under 20. We recognise that we need to be more proactive in recruiting if we are to thrive in the future but we are currently able to still maintain a full programme of Wednesday evening fours in the summer, on many of which we are joined by neighbouring sides from all three orgs, and as Red Leicester over the Christmas / New Year period. We host our Annual Feast each February and attend a few others as well as attended a number of day events including the JMO in Peterborough and Whittlesey Straw Bear, and several weekends away – this year having been guests of Leeds Morris, Forest of Dean Morris, the Lobster Potties and Saddleworth Morris.

We have a fairly high profile locally with annual events including May Day by Old John (a Victorian folly on a hill in our local Country ‘Bradgate Park’), St George’s day (for the City Council) and Melton Mowbray’s Victorian Christmas Fayre. Throughout the Winter practice season, we retire after practice to The Ale Wagon , Leicester where we usually regale the locals with songs and music, something that we are developing for our Wednesday tours as we recognise that this is a valuable recruiting tool.

Roger Comley (S Mids)

I apologise for not attending the ARM this year but I have delegated the Letchworth Morris Men Squire, Steve Westwood, to sit in for me at the Area Meeting, so please look after him.

With all the recent winter feasts, wassails and Boxing Day events, it has been very enjoyable to participate in the many plough blessings which were seen by the media and given some good coverage on local BBC.

At the next village to Whitchurch Morris Men’s ancestral home, the plough was blessed at Oving church and could be seen as another opportunity to help the community by reviving the use of a great plough boys’ event next year with the help of the local vicar and the men of the village to push the plough around and collect for a local charity, the new church hall to be built there; maybe even a straw bear could appear with Whitchurch Morris Men.

Wassail, Roger – Fool to the Squire

Steve Westwood, Letchworth MM: please ensure you only contact Roger via telephone.

N Strudwick (E)

There is relatively little to report since last year. Other than Thaxted, I was not able to visit any of the sides in the area in the course of the twelve months.

We have not lost any sides since last year, and we have gained a new Associate Side, Golden Star of Norwich. They have joined in part to express support for the way the Ring has changed in the last twelve months. Belchamp Morris Men have changed their name to Belchamp Morris. I had hoped to convene an area meeting in October 2018 but that had to be abandoned due to my being abroad at the time. I will try and do better next year...

Little information of any significant events have reached me. However, Golden Star have opened their account by telling me about their successful visit to the Shannonside Winter Music Festival in Eire very recently. Peterborough report their numbers have stayed about the same, with about 16 regular dancers and musicians, and had a very good 2018 season. They will be celebrating their 40th birthday in 2019, and their Day of Dance on 28 Sep will be larger than usual with a two-coach tour. My own side, Devil's Dyke, had a pretty good season, although occasionally numerically challenged by men being away; like most sides, we need more men!

Golden Star Morris from Norwich: specifically joined as result of Constitution change, most enthusiastic.

Fred Hands (SE)

Following Last year's decision to allow female dancers, Men of Wight have recruited a lady dancer and Spring Grove MM have amalgamated with Kingston Morris (Formerly Offspring Morris) and become Kingston Spring Grove Morris a mixed side. So far no other side in the South East has admitted female dancing members.

Recruiting has been difficult in the last year, throughout the area with most sides reporting that they have not been able to recruit although many have held events designed to encourage new members.

Wantsum, Greensleeves and Ewell St Mary have recruited 2 men each Hartley have gained 2 men from Wadard, Long Man have managed to recruit 4 new men. Three sides have managed to recruit 1 new man each but most have been unable to attract any new members with the exception of Harry Taylor's who are taking new members but normally experienced dancers from a far wider area.

The Majority of clubs in the South East are thriving with attendance of 8 – 10 men regularly at practice, regular weekly performances, and many annual events days of dance weekend tours and overseas weekends. East Surrey held their 60th Peasemarsch weekend over the Spring bank Holiday Hartley Celebrated their 65th anniversary with their annual weekend of dance in June. Ewell St Mary and Long Man will both celebrate 40 years this coming season with celebration events planned. Blackheath MM are celebrating 50 years this year with a weekend of dance in July.

The occasional sides Mummers and Hoodeners are performing their seasonal events with very little change going out for a few evenings, normally at Christmas performing to raise money for local charitable causes

Several clubs in the area are now struggling with very low numbers and are having to dance 4 man dances or cancel practices as a result. King John's, Northwood, Thames Valley, Wadard, Woodchurch and Buckland Shag are all struggling with very low numbers 10 or less. Buckland Shag have had difficulty practicing due to low numbers and had not been able to practice for the last two months although they are hopeful that they will be able to start again in January. Wadard have had to cancel practice at short notice due to low numbers, and did not practice last year in January and February due to low numbers and did not produce a summer programme last year and only danced out on 10 occasions. Woodchurch only have one musician so can't dance if he is not available. However King John's, Northwood, Thames Valley are all still holding regular annual events and a regular weekly dancing programme.

P Reece (SW & W)

Sides are generally in good health, regularly performing Morris in addition to seasonal Mumming and a sustained rise in wassail attendances. Helier and West Somerset have moved to Border in a successful attempt to raise numbers to survive. Try Morris events, open to all, have resulted in greater take-up from females than males. In Mendip's case they have been so successful that they are having to decide whether to go forward as a mixed side or to have parallel male and female sides. The temporary suspension of the Mendip Ale was as a result of these changes. In the future, keeping a balance between sides that have increasing female recruits may require to be managed more carefully to preserve the essential character of what the side is about. Plymouth and Trigg have gone mixed with 3 female recruits each, the latter are very fortunate that their female recruits are already experienced Cotswold dancers which has considerably raised both the standard and the spirit of the dancing.

Bourne River 16 active members. A mixed taster session open to all is planned. If enough female dancers are forthcoming a parallel side will be formed.

Bathampton no report forthcoming.

Cam Valley Healthy position, 13 dancers and 5 musicians. Visiting pubs midweek has largely been abandoned. Regular performers at Royal Bath and West and Mid Somerset Shows and receive more requests than they can satisfy.

Chalice average 12 at practice and have had 3 new recruits of which 2 have remained. They have 7 musicians and the side performs weekly. Held 18-30 meeting last year. Move to dance outs at local community pubs is proving popular.

Dartington Successful 50th anniversary year with a special Dartmouth weekend of dance and a well attended Boxing Day at Totnes. Currently 23 active members, 16 regular dancers, 5 musicians, 1 fool and 1.5 horses performing weekly during the summer and 6 to 7 outings during the winter months. Repertoire comprises about 30 dances and 4 jigs, of these 6 dances and 1 jig are from the Filkins tradition.

Exeter 13 dancers and 6 musicians, but getting a stable side out is challenging. Recruitment campaigns have not been successful, consequently the future is not encouraging.

Gloucestershire have a full programme of weekly dancing, including seasonal Mumming and Wassailing. They have 2 new recruits and have formed a mixed side alongside the men. No report this year.

Helier have 5 orchards and a 20 year long tradition of Wassailing with 8 active dancers and 2 new recruits following a change from Cotswold to Border. Jersey can only support one men's and one women's side. Recruitment is more successful with Jersey Lilies. Transport costs sadly limit both hosting visiting sides and travelling away.

Mendip A significant drop of 10 in numbers despite a wellbeing campaign to attract recruits. A try out Morris session resulted in 12 and then 18 recruits, all but 3 were female. Rather than holding the annual Mendip Ale a Christmas party with Mendip and Try-out people was organised. Another 3 new people have been added. An EGM is planned for 27th February to discuss dropping the male-only restrictions to their constitution in order to have a mixed side. If unsuccessful the Try-out side will become a separate side.

North Curry Mummers have 10 members drawing crowds of around 200.

Plymouth have a core of 8 to 12 active dancers, 5 to 7 musicians and 3 female dancers. A very full programme of dancing and Mumming took place during the 2018 season, which included a successful visit to the Saddleworth Rushcart festival. We dance Cotswold and our own Plymouth tradition. Nautical events such as Pirates' Day, Trafalgar Day and Pickle Night are celebrated. Recruitment and the raising of new sides during the lead-up to perform at Mayflower 400, and Plymouth's 50th in 2020 is our current goal and hopefully that for all those Morris sides of the South and East coasts, East Midlands and beyond, with Mayflower connections. Planning for the Mayflower Morris Muster (5-6 September 2020) is well advanced.

Sweyn's Ey The only MR side left in Wales. No report this year.

Taunton Deane have 18 members performing Morris during the summer and at Wassails. No update.

Trigg have 12 to 15 active dancers, performing Cotswold in a full summer programme, and with Mumming in winter and at a regular Wassail booking. Some members also perform with the mixed Tywardreath team who also dance Cotswold. Despite the distances, Trigg regularly attend Ring Meetings. Trigg have gained 3 experienced female dancers this year.

Uplyme have 10 dancers (male) and 5 musicians (mixed) performing Cotswold and Border 20 times on average during the summer, including their June Morris Festival and 6 times during the winter within 40 miles of Uplyme. No update this year.

Wessex no update.

West Somerset have 17 members of which 5 are active and have had no new recruits. The side has divided into two dance groups, one of which is a mixed Open Border side. No update.

Wyvern Jubilee have 17 active members who dance out every Thursday during the season. No update.

14) Future Events Diary

2019

30th March **JMO National Day of Dance, Manchester, hosted by Medlock Rapper**

1st – 2nd June **Thaxted Morris Weekend**

22nd – 23rd June **Utrecht Ring Meeting (meeting no 360)**

19th - 21st July **Jockey MM 70th / Shakespeare MM 60th Ring Meeting (meeting no 361)**

24th – 25th August **Saddleworth Rushcart**

25th – 27th October **Fools and Beasts Unconvention, London**

2020

18th January **Dancing England, Nottingham Playhouse**

18th April **JMO Day of Dance, Liverpool, organised by Mersey MM**

30th – 31st May **Thaxted Morris Weekend**

22nd – 23rd August **Saddleworth Rushcart**

5th – 6th September **Plymouth Morris Mayflower Morris Muster Marine Ring Meeting**

Plymouth's 50th Anniversary coincides with the 400th anniversary of Mayflower.

Mike Stevens, Peterborough MM, potential to turn their annual day of dance in late September into a Ring Meeting to celebrate their 40th Anniversary.

15) Date and Venue of Next ARM

14th March 2020 @ Oak Farm Lodge. Confirmed with the venue.

Dr Peter Copley has kindly agreed to fulfil the role of organiser again.

15) AOB

1. Clive Du'Mont, Mendip MM: Taborers' Society has extended honorary membership to Mike Chandler and Bert Cleaver in recognition of their contribution to taboring and Morris. There are 55 taborers in the directory.

2. From Dave Loughlin, NW Area Rep:

The misuse of the Morris Ring Logo.

We have over the years had some sides using the Morris Ring Logo, which is no problem and well recommended by all, but some individuals, some sides and members of the JMO have taken to deface / alter our Logo.

This has come to light again unfortunately in the programme for Dancing England (and they got the date incorrect a year out). this is not acceptable and if we don't act to stop this practice it will get out of hand and make a laughing stock of the Morris Ring.

I will be bring copies of the programme with me on Saturday.

Jon Melville: Registration of copyright £41.50 pa; Registration of Trade Mark £270 for ten years.

Pete De Courcy, webmaster: Ring logo taken for Dancing England was from the "Christmas version." There is a need for a protocol for its use.

Simon Newman, Earlsdon MM: what is misuse? Squire responded that use of the logo by members is acceptable.

Steve Holder, Jockey MM: how would we enforce it? At what cost?

Bob Cross, Past Squire, Chalice MM (designer of the logo): logo devised for use on letterheads of any Member, logos of individual clubs or events to be inserted into the middle but no information to be deleted.

Proposal to offer use of logo via website, PdeC to devise a form of words for licensing its use (creative commons licence).

Mike Stevens, Peterborough MM – thanks to Officers for their efforts.

Meeting closed at 15:20.



Appendix 1: Annual Representatives' Meeting Application Form

Name of Side:

Contact Name:

Names of other attendees:

...../.....

Email: Tel No:

Address:

Postcode:

Friday Night accommodation & Saturday Breakfast	No@ £ 25	£
Camper van	No@ £ 15	£
Saturday ARM to Sunday morning including coffee, lunch, tea and Sat night accommodation & Sunday breakfast (U16 –half price)	No@ £ 70	£
Saturday Breakfast (for campers/vans & early arrivals)	No@ £ 8.50	£
Saturday ARM - including feast (No accommodation)	No@ £45	£
Saturday ARM* - excluding feast (Morning Coffee / Lunch / Afternoon Tea)	No@ £25	£
Feast only	No@ £30	£
ARM only - no meals	No.....@ Free	£ 0.00
Sunday Breakfast (for campers/vans)	No@ £ 8.50	£
TOTAL (pay by cheque/BACS) – delete as necessary		£ .

There are 20 twin bedded rooms and 5 double bedded rooms. Book early to get a twin room!

Please specify number of non-alcohol drinkers Please specify how many require vegetarian meals.....

Please indicate if disabled access is required Yes / No

Please fill in this form, (*even if only attending the afternoon meeting*) and post it or email it.

Cheques made payable to: **Stafford Morris Men (Misdemeanours)**

BACS details are 60-22-09. A/c 64513165. (*Put your name/club as reference*)

Peter Copley, 5, Woodleighton Grove, Uttoxeter, Staffs., ST14 8BX

drpetercopley@gmail.com

01889 567962 or 07949 309043