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Newsletter No. 105

April 2017

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Future Events

2017

13th May

National JMO day of Dance, Leicester

Hosted by Leicester Morris Men. More details on page 9.

2nd – 4th June

Thaxted Morris Meeting

9th – 11th June

Ring Meeting no. 354: Hartley 65th Anniversary Meeting

2017 marks the 65th anniversary of the formation of Hartley Morris Men so to celebrate they will be expanding their long established weekend Ale to offer more places in the form of a Meeting of the Morris Ring. Based in the village of Wrotham, there will be indoor and secure outdoor camping accommodation, modern shower facilities, a professional caterer plus free beer in the hall from 7pm Friday onwards. Saturday tours will be by vintage transport with the massed display taking place in Tonbridge Castle midday on Sunday.

Numbers are limited to 120 at an anticipated cost of around £70.

28th – 30th July

Ring Meeting no. 355: Ravensbourne London Meeting

2017 marks the 70th anniversary of the formation of Ravensbourne Morris Men. Dance with the backdrop of some of the most iconic sites in London! These include the Tower of London, St Paul's Cathedral and The Globe Theatre. Take a leisurely perambulation on London Underground and historic buses via the magic of the Oyster Travel Card to the walking tours, taking in a number of delightful pubs that Ravensbourne have already arduously vetted on your behalf at prime tourist spots in London. This is based in an East London school with indoor camping at around the £90 mark (less if possible) which covers:- Indoor camping / Supper on Friday night / Breakfast on Saturday & Sunday / Lunch on Saturday / Saturday Feast with Ale ! / Travel on the

Tube and London Buses on Saturday. It's close to good road and public transport links. Potentially maximum 120 guests. Photos, map and contact details etc. all available at www.ringmeeting.org

18th August – 4th September **Australian Morris Ring National Ale**

26th – 27th August **Ring Meeting no. 356: Saddleworth Rushcart Meeting**

This is open to all; no need to apply via the Bagman, please inform the Rushcart Secretary of your interest directly.

2018

10th March **Annual Representatives' Meeting, Oak Farm Lodge, Hatherton**

17th – 18th June or 24th – 25th June **Potential Ring Meeting**

Details to follow when confirmed

Any clubs seeking to host a Ring Meeting in 2018, please contact the Ring Bagman urgently.

Ring Massed Dances

Please will sides practice these dances through the winter season and in advance of any Ring events they are attending; please only get up to perform dances you are confident of doing and remember the overall impression is what is important for massed morris, rather than one side's particular interpretation.

<u>Adderbury</u>	Lads-a-Bunchum
	Black Joke
<u>Bampton</u>	Bobbing Around
<i>(finish on rounds)</i>	Rose Tree
	Quaker
<u>Bledington</u>	Young Collins
	William & Nancy
<u>Brackley</u>	Jockey to the Fair
<u>Fieldtown</u>	Valentine
	Balance the Straw
<u>Headington</u>	Getting Upstairs
	Constant Billy (short sticks)
	Blue Eyed Stranger
<u>Lichfield</u>	Vandalls

Morris Ring ARM, March 2017

The ARM was another successful event and the minutes are attached as Appendix 1 of this document. In the absence of any other offers, next year's ARM will be at the same venue on 10th March.

There was an additional item of business not addressed in the meeting which was announced at the subsequent Feast. This was communicated to all eligible Bagmen of sides and an electronic vote was held on the following motion:

To admit Taylor's Men as full members of the Morris Ring under the terms of article 8 of our constitution, on the recommendation of the Squire of the Morris Ring.

Voting closed on the 6th April and a meeting was held between the Squire and the Returning Officer to confirm the outcome of the vote.

I am delighted to confirm that an overwhelming majority voted in favour of the motion and Taylor's Men are expected to dance in to full Ring membership at the Ravensbourne London Ring Meeting.

This was an excellent opportunity to test voting software and in fact the response rate from Bagmen (over 50%) meant that more clubs were represented in this vote than had been in attendance at the ARM.





Joint Morris Organisation's National Day of Dance

Saturday 13th May 2017

Leicester



The Morris Ring, Open Morris and The Morris Federation come together each year for a spectacular Morris event. This year in Leicester there will be more than 60 Morris and Sword Dance sides from across the country dancing around the City.

To attend please apply through your Morris Organisation.

For further information, visit our [Facebook page](#).

Sides will be provided with a programme for the day detailing the 22 dance venues, all of which are within walking distance, along with information about local cafes, pubs, restaurants, parking and public transport (including Park & Ride).

Free to attend.

Sadly Missed

Charlie Adams, Traditional Bampton Morris Dancers

Richard Broughton writes: It is with great sadness that we announce the untimely death of Charlie Adams, son of our Squire Lawrence and his wife Carol. Charlie was a member of our side since his early teens, a time captured on the cover of the Morris Ring's booklet [*The Morris Tradition*](#). Charlie died on February 10 at the age of 34 and he leaves a son, Cameron, and a daughter, Millie. His dancing, laughter, and pungent commentary whenever "Flowers of Edinburgh" was called will be missed by all his Bampton comrades.

Charlie's funeral took place on Monday, 13 March at the Church of St Mary with a large number of family members, friends and fellow Morris dancers of Bampton in attendance.

Sword Dance Union Longsword Tournament

October 7 will see the first SDU event held in the Goathland 'Hub'

Keith Thompson, President of the Plough Stots, ably assisted by John Atkinson and the rest of the Goathland team, has planned, designed and BUILT the amazing new HUB at the Cricket Ground in the village.

To celebrate the new home of the Plough Stots, the Longsword Tournament in 2017 will be both a Competition and a chance for SDU teams to simply Exhibit and show their dances.

Visiting the new Hub to gawp at the new development will be an experience to be savoured.

- Camping, Motorhome/Caravan Parking and possibly indoor camping will be available. Day visitor tickets available.
- Classes for the competition are: Traditional Teams; Traditional Dance; Invented Dances; Traditional Juniors; Traditional Dance Juniors.

Information from SDU Secretary; Phil Heaton

pcheat@btinternet.com

Grimsby Morris Men 50th Anniversary

From Nick Booth, Bagman, Grimsby MM:

This year is GMM's fiftieth year and we have designated 21st December as our "official" 50th anniversary as this was the date of the side's first public dance-out at the Lifeboat Hotel, Cleethorpes, back in December of 1967.

As you may imagine, we have a few celebrations planned and I hoped that the key ones could be added to the Ring's website events diary.

The first of these is an exhibition of the history of Grimsby Morris Men. This will be on display at the Museum of Lincolnshire Life in Lincoln and runs from 4th April to 2nd July.

The next big one is the annual Cleethorpes Folk and Cider Festival. The event runs from Saturday 27th May to Monday 29th May. Sides from all over the country are invited to dance on the Saturday and/or the Sunday. The folk song and music is hosted at the Lakeside Station of the Cleethorpes Light Railway as is the cider bar with a very wide selection of excellent ciders.

Our biggest celebration is the Grimsby Morris Men's 50th Anniversary weekend of dance. This occurs on Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th July. We have free camping at the Meridian Showground where some of the dancing will take place, as well as the ceilidh.

We will, of course, be celebrating on 21st December but the plans for that day are still in the early stages.

We are also going to be doing some important away fixtures. We will be at the JMO day of dance in Leicester on 13th May, Southwell Folk Festival and the Yorkshire Coast weekend in June and possibly The York Festival of Traditional Dance and Lincoln BIG Morris in September.

Finally we are having a selection of workshops and open days to promote the anniversary and hopefully get some new recruits.




Further details can be found on our website at www.grimsbymorrismen.org.uk.

Morris Ring Display Boards

Are you making full use of this asset?

If you have any opportunity to make use of one of the five sets we possess please contact your Area Rep or the Ring Bagman.

If you want to use them, even if a set is not currently in your area, arrangements can be made to get a set to you.

<p>the morris ring</p> <p>The Morris Ring</p> <p>The Morris Ring is an organisation for men's clubs. Every year our members can be seen dancing out during the summer, either on their own or in the company of dancers from other clubs who have been invited along to share a day or a weekend of dance. We hold a number of special meetings of the Morris Ring each year at which clubs from all over the country come together to dance. The most important of these is the annual meeting in early June in Thaxted in Essex, the town where the Morris Ring was founded in 1934.</p> <p>You can find out more about the Morris Ring by visiting our web site at: www.themorrisring.org</p> <p>On our home page there are links which will enable you to find the Morris clubs in your area.</p> 	<p>the morris ring</p> <p>Morris Dancing</p> <p>Morris dances are the national folk dances of England and have a recorded history going back six hundred years. In this display you will see examples of the various styles of dance which have developed over the centuries and which are performed today in all parts of the country. Why do we do it? That is an easy question to answer. It is because we enjoy it and for the fun and friendship which comes with being a member of a Morris dancing club.</p> 	<p>the morris ring</p> <p>A Potted History</p> <p>Over the centuries the popularity of Morris dancing has waxed and waned but by the latter part of the 19th century dancing had died out in many parts of the country. By great good fortune in 1899 there was a chance encounter between Headington Quarry Morris Men in Oxford and Cecil Sharp, a professional musician. Following this meeting, Sharp devoted the rest of his life to the collection of English folk songs and dances. As a result of his work and the work of others who were inspired by him, there was a great revival of interest in our folk traditions in the 20th century and especially in the 1960s and 1970s.</p> 
<p>Fools and Animals</p> <p>Often the dancers are accompanied by a fool, whose job is to engage the audience with humorous banter and ensure that they are paying attention to the dance. Many clubs have made an animal head which is mounted on a pole and attached to a cloak. One of the dancers entertains the audience by going among them underneath the cloak and grasping the animal's jaws together.</p> 	<p>Regional Styles of Morris Dancing</p> <p>Most people are familiar with the Cotswold style of dance which comes from the counties of the West Midlands and which is characterised by the use of sticks and handkerchiefs. Other styles of dance have evolved in other parts of the country. There are sword dances from the North and the rapper, or shortsword dances from the North East. In the North West there are the processional dances, which are often performed in chaps. The Border style comes from the counties bordering Wales and there are the Molly dancers from East Angles. Mummers' plays come from all parts of the country.</p>	<p>Looking to the Future</p> <p>There are probably more people Morris dancing today than at any time in the past and our clubs are always keen to recruit new members. Many Clubs are involved in teaching young people to dance through programmes with schools, the Scout organisation and other youth groups.</p> 
<p>The Joint Morris Organisation</p> <p>The Morris Ring is one of three organisations representing Morris dance clubs. The other two are the Morris Federation and the Open Morris. Once a year we all get together for a combined day of dance to celebrate the Morris as a dance for everyone, irrespective of age or gender.</p>		<p>How about you ?</p> <p>Would you like to try Morris dancing to see if it does for you what it does for us? Many clubs hold special sessions for potential members to come along and try it out. Find your local clubs by following the links on our web site and go along and meet the dancers. Before long you too could be a Morris dancer!</p>
<p>founded 1934</p>	<p>www.themorrisring.org</p>	<p>founded 1934</p>

This is what the complete set of three banners looks like.

Morris Ring Publications

Anthony Foard: Editor of the Morris Circular

33 Cunningham Drive, Bromborough, Wirral, CHESHIRE. CH63 0JX

Mobile Tel: 01513344566

thecircular@themorrisring.org

Mac McCoig Editor of the Morris Dancer

8 Redhills, Eccleshall, Staffordshire ST21 6JW

Tel: 01785 851052

mac.mccoig@btinternet.com

On-line Links:



The main MR website with millions of pages stuffed to the gunnels with all you need to know about the MR:

<http://www.themorrisring.org/>

Follow the latest media reports concerning Morris Matters at <http://www.themorrisring.org/article/morris-matters>

The Morris Ring Google Group (MRGG). Private Forum for debate or announcements. <http://groups.google.com/group/the-morris-ring?hl=en&pli=1>

Contact the Morris Ring Bagman to register to use.

Morris Ring Facebook site: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Morris-Ring/158759257502840>

Morris Ring Twitter: <http://twitter.com/#!/TheMorrisRing>

The Morris Shop *"the Bells and Whistles"*

<http://www.themorrisshop.com/store/index.php?route=common/home>

Call for Contributions

Any items of Morris-related news, please send to me at bagman@themorrisring.org for inclusion in the next Newsletter. Longer pieces to Tony Foard, please, for the Circular.

If you have any photographs, you can send them to Duncan Broomhead, the Morris Ring Photo Archivist (duncan.broomhead@btinternet.com) and any articles, ideally accompanied with photographs, can be submitted to Tony Foard, the Editor of the Morris Ring Circular, details above.

Charlie Corcoran, the Keeper of the Morris Ring Log Book, is keen to receive stories about Ring events, both the formal and the quirky (Charliecorcoran7@ntlworld.com).



Appendix 1 - ARM Minutes 4th March 2017



SQUIRE: Eddie Worrall, 8 Bankside Avenue, Uppermill,
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Minutes of the Annual Representatives' Meeting of the Morris Ring

4th March 2017, Oak Farm Lodge, Hatherton

Agenda

1. Attendees and apologies

<i>Officers</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>In attendance</i>
<i>I. Elected Officers</i>		
Squire	Ed Worrall	✓
Bagman	Jon Melville	✓
Treasurer	Steven Archer	✓
Chair: Advisory Council	Adam Garland	✓
<i>II. Elected Area Representatives</i>		
Area Rep.: East	Nigel Strudwick	✓

Area Rep.: North	Paul Cross	✓
Area Rep.: North West	David Loughlin	✓
Area Rep.: South West & Wales	Tim Sercombe	
Area Rep.: West Midlands	Pete Simpson	✓
Area Rep.: North East	Brian Pollard	✓
Area Rep.: North Midlands	Ben Robinson	
Area Rep.: South Midlands	Roger Comley	✓
Area Rep.: South East	Cliff Marchant	✓
<i>III. Appointed Ring Officers: Archives</i>		
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 Sword Dance Archive		
Archives - Keeper of the Sound Archive	Andy Padmore	
Archives - New Dance Collator	Lester Bailey	
Archives - Scrapbook Keeper	Cliff Marchant	✓
Archives - Logbook Keeper	Charlie Corcoran	✓
<i>IV. Appointed Ring Officers: Communications & Services</i>		
Publications – Editor Morris Circular	Tony Foard	
Publications - Editor Morris Dancer	Mac McCoig	✓
Social Network Coordinator	Ollie King	
MR Web Site Editor in Chief	Peter de Courcy	✓
MR Web Site Assistant Editor	Andrew Bullen	
Overseas Bagman	Nigel Strudwick	✓
Morris (Ring) Shop Keeper	Shaun Lambley	✓
Auditor Current	Tony Tomlin	✓
Auditor Past (HMRC)	Richard Sinclair	
<i>V. Past Officers: Squires</i>		
Past Sq 1970	Bert Cleaver	

Past Sq 1976	David Welty	
Past Sq 1982	Barry Care MBE	✓
Past Sq 1984	Ray King	
Past Sq 1986	Geoff Jerram	✓
Past Sq 1988	Mike Garland	✓
Past Sq 1990	Mike Chandler	
Past Sq 1994	Richard Hankinson	Apologies
Past Sq 1996	Tim Sercombe	N/A
Past Sq 1998	Daniel Fox	
Past Sq 2000	Gerald Willey	Apologies
Past Sq 2002	Cliff Marchant	N/A
Past Sq 2004	Bob Cross	✓
Past Sq 2006	Paul Reece	✓
Past Sq 2008	Brian Tasker	✓
Past Sq 2012	Robin Springett	✓
<i>VI. Retired Bagmen</i>		
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
<i>VII. Retired Treasurers</i>		
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

<i>Member Sides</i>	<i>Representative 1 name</i>	<i>Representative 2 name</i>
Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers		
Adderbury Village Morris Men		
Adderbury Village Morris Men		
Adelaide Morris Men		
Adlington Morris Men [incl. Adlington Mummers]	Duncan Broomhead	
Aldbury Morris Men	Apologies	
Anker Morris Men	Joe Oldaker	
Anstey Morris Men		
Ashdown Forest Morris Men		
Traditional Bampton Morris Dancers	BR 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	Apologies	
Brackley Morris Men		
Bristol Morris Men		
Britannia Coconut Dancers of Bacup		
Broadwood Morris Men		
Bury Pace-Eggers		
Cam Valley Morris Men		
Cambridge Morris Men [aka The Travelling Morrice]	John Jenner	
Castleford Sword Dancers		
Chalice Morris Men	Bob Cross	Chris Singleton
Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men	Illegible	
Chapel-en-le-Frith Morris Men	Apologies	

Chester City Morris Men		
Chester City Morris Men		
Chipping Campden Morris Men		
Claro Sword & Morris Men		
Colchester Morris Men		
Coventry Morris Men		
Coventry Mummers		
Darlington Mummers		
Dartington Morris Men	R Springett	
Datchet Border Morris Men		
Devil's Dyke Morris Men	N Strudwick	
Dolphin Morris Men	Apologies	
Durham Rams Sword and Morris Men		
Earlsdon Morris Men		
East Suffolk Morris Men		
East Surrey Morris Men	Clayton Francis	Ray Fuller
Etcetera Morris Men		
Ewell St Mary's Morris Men		
Exeter Morris Men	Colin Andrews	
Faithful City Morris Men		
1st Sedgley Morris Men		
Forest of Dean Morris Men		
Foresters Morris & Sword Dance Club		
Gloucestershire Morris Men (including Gloucestershire Morris Mummers)		
Grand Union Morris		
Great Yorkshire Morris	Paul Cross	
Green Man's Morris and Sword Club		
Green Oak Morris Men [inc. Doncaster Mummers]		
Greensleeves Morris Men	Apologies	

Grimsby Morris Men		
Hageneth Morris Men		
Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers		
Harthill Morris	Darren Nugent	
Hartley Morris Men	Fred Hands	Tony Tomlin
Headington Quarry Morris Dancers		
Helier Morris Men		
Helmond Morris Men		
Icknield Way Morris Men	Apologies	
The Traditional Ilmington Morris Men		
Jockey Morris Men	Steve Holder	Pete Simpson
John O'Gaunt Morris Men		
Kemp's Men of Norwich		
Kennet Morris Men	Peter de Courcy	
King John's Morris Men		
Kinnerton Morris Men		
Lassington Oak Morris Men	Martyn Thomas	
Leicester Morris Men	Charlie Corcoran	
Letchworth Morris Men	Steve Westwood	Andrew Harper
Leyland Morris Men	Apologies	
Lichfield Morris Men [Inc. Armitage Mummers]		
Lincoln & Micklebarrow Morris Men		
London Pride Morris Men		
Long Man Morris Men	John Wardle	Mark Hardcastle
Lord Conyers Morris Men		
Malvern Swordsmen		
Manchester Morris Men	Apologies	
Martlet Sword & Morris Men		
Mayflower Morris Men	Geoff Douglas	Ken Smith
Men of Wight Morris Men	Apologies	

Mendip Morris Men	S Dillon	C Du'Mont
Mersey Morris Men		
Monkseaton Morris Men		
Mossley Morris Men		
Moulton Morris Men	BR Care	
North British Sword Dancers	Colin Messer	
North Wood Morris Men		
Northampton Morris Men	Peter Bignell	
Oakworth Village Morris Men	Paul Cross	
Offley Morris Men		
Oxford City Morris Men		
Packington Morris Men		
Perth Morris Men		
Peterborough Morris		
Pinewoods Morris Men		
Plymouth Morris Men	Paul Reece	
Ravensbourne Morris Men		
Redcar Sword Dancers		
Richmond on Swale Morris Men		
Ripley Morris Men		
Royal Preston Morris Dancers		
Rumford Morris Men		
Rutland Morris Men		
Saddleworth Morris Men	Ron Yates	John Bradley
Shakespeare Morris Men	Apologies	
Silkeborg Morris Men		
Silurian Border Morris Men		
Southport Swords		
Spring Grove Morris Men	Colin Messer	Helena Cooper
St Albans Morris Men		

Stafford Morris Men	Peter Copley	
Sweyn's Ey (The Men of)	Apologies	
Taunton Deane Morris Men		
Thames Valley Morris Men		
Thaxted Morris Men	Ian Anderson	
Thelwall Morris Men	Sam Addison	
Towersey Morris	PAS Dolman	
Trigg Morris Men	Paul Reece	
Het Utrecht Morris Team		
Uttoxeter Heart of Oak Morris Men	Mac McCoig	
Vancouver Morris Men		
Victory Morris		
Wadard Morris Men	Fred Hands	
Wantsum Morris Men		
Wath-on-Dearne Morris Men		
Wessex Morris Men	Apologies	
West Somerset Morris Men	Apologies	
Westminster Morris Men	Colin Messer	
Whitchurch Morris Men	Nigel Cox	
White Hart Morris Men	Iain Davison	
White Rose Morris Men		
Winchester Morris Men	Geoff Jerram	
Woodside Morris Men		
Wvyern Jubilee Morris Men	Apologies	
Yateley Morris Men		
<i>Associate Member Sides</i>	<i>Representative 1 name</i>	<i>Representative 2 name</i>
Alvechurch Morris Men		
Blackheath Morris Men		
Blackmore Morris Men		

Bovey Tracey Mummers		
Buckland Shag Morris Men		
Chameleonic Morris Men		
Chewit Well Mummers,		
Cinque Port Morris Men		
Crendon Morris Men		
Ebor Morris		
Frome Valley Morris		
Good Easter Molly Dancers		
Greenwich Morris Men		
Harry Taylor's Men	David Thompson	Helena Cooper
Herga Mummers		
Hexham Morris Men		
Hinckley Bullockers	Toby Melville	
Hoddesdon Crownsmen		
Leominster Morris	Mark Carter	Chris Donovan
Morris 18 - 30		
North Curry Mummers		
One Day Wonder Travelling Morris	Joe Oldaker	
Original Welsh Border Morris Men & Cow Pat Morris	Steve Holder	Pete Simpson
Plymouth Reunion Morris Men		
Redding Moreys		
Rose & Castle Morris		
Saint Bees (Cumberland) Mummers		
St Nicholas-at-Wade with Sarre Hoodeners		
Spen Valley Longsword Dancers		
Stourvale Mummers		
Thameside Mummers		
The (Insert Name Here) Mummers		
Uplyme Morris Men		

Wantage Mummers		
Woodchurch Morris Men		
World Famous Ashdown Mummers		
Wrigley Head Morris Men		
<i>Invited Guests</i>	<i>Representative 1 name</i>	<i>Representative 2 name</i>
<i>JOINT MORRIS ORGANISATIONS</i>		
Morris Federation	Jenny Everett	Mike Everett
Open Morris	Nicki Pickering	Malcolm Hills

2. Minutes from the 2016 ARM

Minutes accepted. Proposer – Bob Cross, Seconder – Paul Reece.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

Joe Oldaker, Anker MM – can we confirm storage of electronic archival material safely and securely? The Squire confirmed that an electronic archive is being considered; a hard copy of every Newsletter, Circular and Morris Dancer journal is currently sent to the British Library.

4. Squire's Report – Ed Worrall

Time has passed quickly since I danced in at East Suffolk in September. I have met many sides as well as friends old and new at various days of dance, Ales etc, with many more planned this year. The welcome I have received has been fantastic and has illustrated the fellowship we all value as Morris dancers and musicians. Thank you all and also to Jon Melville as Bagman and Steven Archer as Treasurer for their hard work and help.

However, being Squire is not about undertaking a grand tour of Morris sides, no matter how it may appear. It is to serve you as the member clubs.

When I stood as Squire I said that recruitment initiatives that were already in place needed to be continued and supported. I have therefore tasked the area reps to help collect information on the strength of sides in their areas and which of those sides need help to recruit.

The Officers and area reps will work with sides that need help. This is intended to be practical support. A recruitment document has been available for some time and is on our website. It has been recently reissued by Adam Garland with the latest updates. This is based on actual work done by sides and what has worked for them. It is there to be used.

None of this will be easy and in fact will often be difficult requiring persistence and a willingness among sides to change how they think and act on recruitment. However, real failure would be not to try at all. Judge your area reps on this one issue. Demand more of them, you elect them after all to work for you.

My supporting statement also mentioned the benefits the Morris world as a whole has drawn from the Morris Ring, Morris Federation and Open Morris coming together as the JMO. The Morris Ring acts as Chair of the JMO in 2017 and as hosts of the national day of dance in conjunction with Leicester MM. I look forward to welcoming all to another great day of dance and also working with the Federation and Open on the issues we all face.

Recent media interest in the issue of sides using black face paint, has caused concern. Discussions between the 3 Morris Organisations over the last year have resulted in all releasing guidance and advice to sides. I urge you to read the statements I and Adam Garland have issued on this point.

What is clear from the work that has been done on this, is that the distinctions we see between us matter little to others outside the Morris world. Today the Morris Ring accounts for just 22% of Morris sides in the UK. We are a shrinking organisation and but a small part of a much larger whole.

I have heard it said over the years that we started with 6 sides and could go back to that and survive. I think that misses a vital point. The Morris Ring was founded on the principle of encouraging the performance of Morris dancing, maintaining and preserving its history and bringing into contact Men's clubs. This was a time in the 1930's when Men dancing Morris as a side was not common. However we live in very different times and much has changed. It is up to us now as to how we best serve these founding principles of the Morris Ring. This is a question we must answer successfully in order to have a future as an organisation.

5. Bagman's Report – Jon Melville

Two years from election, I now feel I have grasped the role of the Morris Ring civil service. I would like to thank Eddie and Steven for their invaluable guidance and support, and also offer thanks to Charlie for continuing to be a sounding board and source of sanguine advice and experience when needed.

The bulk of my role remains communication. Converting the bulk of Newsletter delivery to email has eased the workload no end – much less swearing at the printer as it devours yet another sheet of labels, and the loss of my printing facility due to a change of jobs has had less impact than feared – and the cost to the Ring of Newsletters have been greatly reduced, by approximately £500 per year at present. I still receive a significant number of enquiries from members of Ring clubs asking for information which has already been published in the Newsletter, so I would please encourage you all to read it.

The Bagman's email address remains a source of amusing spam amongst the opportunities to answer the many questions which come in from genuinely interested individuals and organisations. Radio and television opportunities, as well as a significant number of bookings, come via that route and the Find a Side facility is most useful for both myself and external customers in locating and contacting teams. I have resisted a number of attempts to provoke a newsworthy response on the recent issues surrounding blacking-up. Pete de Courcy remains in expert control of the website and associated facilities and appears to be psychic, often making changes and announcements just ahead of my asking for them.

The other key method of communication within the Ring membership is the Google Group. I would encourage every side to have at least one member who belongs to the Group. A Google account is not required; just send an email to the Bagman of the Ring and you can gain access.

I would also remind member clubs of the need to notify myself and/or the Treasurer of any changes in officers and contact details in a timely fashion; there have been occasions this year when we have tried to contact a side only to find that the officers have changed and the communication has been lost.

From a personal perspective, I would like to thank the many clubs who have invited me to their Ales, Feasts and weekends of dance; the commitment shown to organising such events is admirable. I have had the opportunity to join many sides on an ad-hoc basis as dancer or musician, although the opportunity to dance with Harry Taylor's Men has been the highlight of the year. It is a pleasant if humbling situation to be among the team members least far off the ground, and the standard of uniformity of style and quality of dancing has been set, established and maintained rigorously. In performance, Taylor's Men are an illustration of why we all dance the Morris.

Strong relations within the JMO continue, and the three Organisations continue to work effectively together. The Ring recently hosted the JMO AGM, and the spirit of collaboration in the interests of furthering the Morris remains strong, a decade after the organisations originally came together to fight for our right to perform in the face of proposed legislation.

The Bagman extended his thanks to Mac McCoig for his excellent organisation of the ARM event.

6. Treasurer's Report – Steven Archer

1 Introduction

Despite a reduced membership, subscription income rose in the year due to late payments from the prior year and strong interest by individuals in our publications. With substantial collections at Ring Meetings and reduced expenditure, largely due to the new practice of sending out the Bagman's Newsletter by e-mail, the General Fund recorded a small surplus in the year. As our reserves remain strong, once again I have no plans to propose a subscription increase.

2 Membership

Update on the changes in membership this renewal:-

The King's Morris – following an extraordinary general meeting about recruitment, the side decided to go mixed and has now joined the Morris Federation.

Stockton Morris Men - ran out of men and folded

Middleton Mummers (Middleton Page Eggers) – decided not to renew but continue performing without insurance cover.

Overall we lost 3 sides at this renewal for a range of reasons:-

Losses

1 side retired due to old age

1 side went mixed and left to join the Federation

1 side has not renewed their MR sub but continued performing without insurance.

Prior year history of net change

2015 – 3 lost 2014 – 4 lost 2013 – 2 gained 2012 – 3 lost 2011 – 10 lost

At renewal once again we asked for the “number of active members”. This year just under 90% of our 173 sides responded. The data showed that 1/3 of sides had increased in number, 1/3 declined and 1/3 remained the same. Average membership was 18, up from 17.5 last year, giving a total projected number of 3,115 individuals, up from 3,075 last year.

Update on the changes in membership since the report:-

Green Man's Morris and Sword - ran out of able men and folded

At renewal once again we asked for the “number of active members”. This year 158 of our 173 sides responded. The data showed that 47 sides had increased in number, 53 declined

and 58 remained the same with 15 unreported. Average membership was 17.75, up from 17.5 last year, giving a total projected number of 3,075 individuals, down from 3,079 last year. Basically it is swings and roundabouts.

3 Ring Finances

Last year you voted to pay the officer's and shop costs for attendance at Ring Meetings from MR funds. These changes will be reflected in the coming financial year.

Ring Meetings – Each of the four 2016 meetings received a grant of £500 and donated collections amounted to a total of nearly £1,700, so the net cost of meeting for the year was £300. Previous years are as follows:-

2015 – loss of £700

2014 – loss of £200

2013 – loss of £300

The East Suffolk meeting returned a significant surplus and in accordance with the new RM guidelines a refund of £15 per attendee was paid.

The Shop - the shop had a turbulent year in which it physically moved location twice. Shaun married Jess in a big celebration in Milton Keynes yet they still managed to attend 18 events and festivals, including all major Morris Ring events. We invested in a new laptop and a new gazebo to keep stock more secure and waterproof. Stock levels fell, including slow moving stock, releasing cash but overall the shop lost £2,000. Shaun expects the shop to return to a surplus next year.

Archive Fund – As you will see from the Archive report, the group has been busy and some funds have been spent looking at the Dommett Archive and arranging for The Essex Record Office to proceed with cataloguing our archive. Overall donations exceeded costs and there was a slight surplus. Part of the fund will be spent in the coming year making some of the film archive accessible in DVD format.

Youth Fund – The Sussex Schools Festival ran again this year and we supported Kevin Lane who taught and played for one of the youth sides. In addition we supported Simon Care to attend the Lincoln Family Folk Day. We look forward to more opportunities arising in the coming year.

Other costs and reserves – Officer's costs were only £1,000 this year, lower than last year despite having a Squire elect. £165 was paid out to members attending the Jigs weekend for the first or second time. A record of nearly £400 interest was received on funds deposited. This will decline in the future as interest rates have fallen.

Update: The Shop - following a close examination of the initially reported £2,000 loss it was discovered that an invoice for bells, paid during the year actually related to the previous year. With the agreement of the Auditor this cost has been written back into last year's accounts, reducing the shop loss this year to £650. If the one off costs of replacing the gazebo and laptop are taken into account then the shop broke even in the year.

4 General policy and financial reserves

Our finances are strong and we have reasonable reserves and as I have already stated we are able to hold subscription rates at current levels. However we have a declining membership at the same time as the costs of insurance and postage increase. So we must 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 are enhancing our website to make it easier to view on mobile devices and will be making past publications available on it. Archive film will be available to view via the internet later in the year 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.

THE MORRIS RING - ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2016

		GENERAL FUND	MORRIS SHOP	ARCHIVE FUND	YOUTH FUND	RESERVE FUND	2016 TOTAL	2015
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOME								
SUBSCRIPTIONS:								
Members 2015-16	120							
Members 2016-17	6,980							
Associates 2015-16	150							
Associates 2016-17	1,280							
Individual publications 2014-15	7							
Individual publications 2015-16	174	8,711						8,481
SALES								
Income	6,956							9,412
Change in stock	(4,708)							161
Less Expenditure	(2,905)							(9,401)
Suplus			(657)					171
Surplus on Meetings								
Greensleeves (350)	579							
East Surrey (351)	462							
Saddleworth (352)	100							
East Suffolk (353)	552							
Joint Morris Organisations day of dance	0	1,694						309

DONATIONS/INTEREST							
Archive				258			140
75th Anniversary Fund					573		706
Bank Interest Received					1	381	348
Other		209					
Total Income		10,614	(657)	258	573	381	11,168
<i>prior year</i>		8,790	171	140	707	347	
EXPENDITURE							
Insurance	2,967						2,912
Cost of Circular & Newsletter	1,002	3,969					1,682
OFFICERS EXPENSES							
Squire	682						464
Bagman	238						443
Treasurer	121						215
Other travel	0	1,040					136
General Expenses Paid:							
AC Meeting costs	570						640
Advertising	0						0
Archive costs				111			263
ARM Costs	1,124						1,198
Events	500				350		496
General Overhead Expenses etc	189		36				34
Jigs weekend subsidy	165						0
JMO AGM expenses	389						214
Ring meeting costs (£500 subsidy per host)	2,000						1,000
Ring meeting costs (other)	0						12
Website	139	5,076					276
Charitable donations		0					0
Total Expenditure		10,085	36	111	350	0	10,582
<i>prior year</i>		9,226	0	263	496	0	
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR							
		528	(693)	147	223	381	587
<i>prior year</i>		(436)	171	(123)	211	347	
FUND BALANCE:							
Brought forward		3,712	21,826	3,393	1,736	56,176	86,843
Transferred to (from) Reserve Fund		(1,000)	(2,500)			3,500	
Surplus/Deficit for year		528	(693)	147	223	381	587
Carried forward		3,240	18,633	3,540	1,960	60,058	87,430
MADE UP OF:-							
Cash at Bank		3,240	5,305	3,540	1,960	60,058	74,102
Value at cost of Stocks held for resale			13,328				
Fund balance at year end		3,240	18,633	3,540	1,960	60,058	87,430
							86,843

Green Man have now ceased to exist.

Approximately 1/3 of sides are each increasing, static or declining in size; total membership is constant at around 3000.

Shop finances have improved due to moving expenditure into 2015/16; loss of £650 is less than the cost of the new gazebo and laptop, so approximately broken even.

Geoff Jerram, Winchester MM queried the shop accounts and these were confirmed as having been imported from another page after audit.

7. Chair of the Advisory Council's Report – Adam Garland

Since I took over the role of Chairman of the Advisory Council we have had one meeting which concentrated on the thorny issue of recruitment.

The Morris Ring is sadly an ageing organisation and the issue of how to attract new, and younger men into our ranks is one that has been discussed over many years.

The Squire aims to tackle this head-on and asked that the Advisory Council meeting be solely based on this topic. He introduced this by giving a brief talk on the latest updates I submitted to Peter Halfpenney's document, and spoke about how he feels the Area Representatives are ideally placed to play a key role in helping the membership transfer the theoretical document into practical action.

The meeting then discussed the information to hand;

- 1) The census data, and the membership renewal forms – How accurate is this information, can it be verified?
- 2) Whether there are known successes and if so what did the Side do to achieve an influx of new dancers/musicians, and
- 3) The Area Representative's responsibilities; how can they be developed.

It was a constructive meeting and gave the Squire a number of things to think about. In due course the Squire will advise the membership of findings and actions through the usual channels.

8. Archive Report – Chris Wildridge

Archive Group Annual Report 2017

Chairman	Chris Wildridge
Morris Ring Archivist & Keeper of Paper Archive	Geoff Douglas
Keeper of the Photograph Archive	Duncan Broomhead

Keeper of the sword dance archive	Phil Heaton
Keeper of the sound archive	Andy Padmore
New Dance Collator	Lester Bailey
Scrapbook Keeper	Cliff Marchant
Logbook Keeper	Charlie Corcoran

Introduction

The year 2016 / 2017 has seen a number of changes in the Morris Ring Archive Group. A long standing member, Ron Shuttleworth, resigned from the Group in early 2016. Others are far better qualified to pay tribute to him but I would point to his lasting memorial, the mumming archive, he has so assiduously created and which is now lodged in the Special Collections Department of Sheffield University as well as being available online.

By the time of the ARM a number of individuals will have joined the Archive Group. These include Gordon Blunt [Rutland MM] and John Edwards [Stafford MM] who, given their work on their own Sides' material, have been asked to act as electronic archive mentors for Sides wanting to take their first, or even second or third steps along this road. Derek Schofield [Manley MM] has also agreed to join the Archive Group. He brings his own manifest skills and his many links within the folk world to benefit the Archive Group and the Morris Ring. Finally Colin Andrews [Exeter MM] whose work on an index of 'traditional' dance shows great potential has agreed to join the Group.

Activities

ERO Meeting, 2016 - Cataloguing the Archive

In April 2016 I visited the Essex Record Office [ERO] with Geoff Douglas. In the discussions with the archivist we explored the situation regarding the cataloguing of the Archive.

The archivist indicated that following the acceptance of the cataloguing structure agreed in 2015 between the Morris Ring and the Record Office, the staff had re-assessed the contents of the Archive. Their conclusion was that the Archive is of national importance and that the staff would pursue funding possibilities with major grant making organisations.

At the Memorial Service for Roy Dommett in November 2015 I had a conversation with John Lewis on the inaccessibility of Chris Metherell's index of the MR Archive [it used an obsolete version of MS Access]. This led to an offer by him to convert the database to an Excel spreadsheet. This was completed in March 2016 and with this conversion the very large amount of data on the contents of the Archive, developed over a long period of time by Chris

Metherell once again became available. I would like to extend my personal thanks to John for his work which has enabled our access to the material in the Record Office.

Morris Ring Archive films

As a consequence of the discussions with Allyson Lewis of the ERO on the digitisation of the MR Archive films I became aware that my predecessor, Chris Metherell, had created high definition .AVI files and had them in his possession. At the time of the deposit of the majority of the Archive, the electronic files could not be utilised within the ERO.

Following discussions with members of the Archive Group and the Treasurer, Steven Archer, Chris Metherell was commissioned to make low definition copies of these files in the DVD .MPEG format for public use. The .AVI files and the .MPEG files have now been deposited in Chelmsford in the ERO. The ERO Sound Archivist is working on the files and at the time of writing the proposal is that the .MPEG files will be available on YouTube from 1st May 2017 and on 2nd May 2017 in the ERO [it is closed on the Bank Holiday].

ERO Meeting 2017 – Cataloguing the Archive

On 10th February 2017 I visited the ERO with Geoff Douglas. Since 2016 our principle contact has retired and because of local government cuts, has not been replaced. That has delayed the preparation of a funding bid but another option has become available.

The ERO now has a tool which enables it to convert data held in an Excel spreadsheet into the format used in the ERO software which produces the SEAX catalogue. The archivist has offered to evaluate the spreadsheet of the MR Archive to see if it can be converted using the conversion tool. The evaluation should be completed by the end of May 2017.

There are nearly 26,000 lines of data in the Morris Ring Archives spreadsheet. If the tool works with the MR data the ERO has proposed that a programme of converting small blocks of data in the index file could commence in 2017 with a target date for the completion of the work by March 2019. This may seem a significant way off but my view is that this is a realistic and deliverable timescale. The cost of this will be borne by Essex County Council.

The discussion also covered an evaluation of the requirement for an externally funded programme to allow the contents of the MR Archive to the ERO numbering convention, a complex task involving handling each document in the Archive. This will be necessary to enable the production of items from the archive using the catalogue [production means finding the item in the archive and delivering it to a researcher]. My estimate is that by September 2018 the ERO and the Morris Ring will be in a position to complete the first draft

of a bid document for later submission to an external funding body for the work necessary to enable the easy production of documents.

Electronic files

In last year's report I referred to electronic archive developments. In common with many other organisations little attention is being given to electronic data. For example, most individuals use commercial email from the main providers, Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo mail etc. I am told that it is possible to extract material from these services but if my own practice is common then the majority of emails are deleted.

The majority of Morris Ring documentation is generated by individual officers who each keep the files on their own machines. I have confirmed that the ERO has protocols for the storage of electronic records, particularly their own. Those protocols can apply to electronic documents deposited by organisations like the Morris Ring.

Over the course of the next year I will be exploring with the Officers of the Morris Ring what electronic files exist and what mechanisms might be used to transfer copies to Chelmsford.

Chris Wildridge

Morris Ring Archivist

Morris Ring Photographic Archive Report- 2017

The Morris Ring Photographic Archive is held at my house, which allows for speedy replies to any queries, most can be dealt with 48 hours, although more complicated enquiries might take a little longer to answer.

It has been another busy year, I dealt with 41 separate enquiries which generated a total 376 email exchanges, in addition to the e-mails, I have also had three visits to the Archive by researchers.

Keeping the Morris Ring Photographic Archive is very much a two way process with new photographs and information being donated by Morris sides and individuals but the bulk of the work I carried out has been answering enquiries. I have supplied photos and information, to a range of different people including Morris Ring officers, Morris sides researching their own history, individual Morris dancers, students and researches writing papers, books or articles about Morris Dancing and related customs, I have also supplied information to the press and material for a forthcoming exhibition at Cecil Sharp House and a small exhibition at Dancing England.

Keeper of the Morris Ring Log and Minute Books – Charlie Corcoran

Over the past 12 months I have attempted to clarify the indexing of both the Log and Minute Books – there being a large degree of cross-over and confusion between the two. Based upon work carried out by various people in the past this has resulted in a hopefully comprehensive index to all the meetings of the Morris Ring.

Thanks to Past Squires of the Morris Ring Geoff Jerram and Tim Sercombe volumes one to seven and most of volume eight of the Log have been digitised (and are available as PDF files). *This does not include the various inserts.* All minutes from ARMs since 1974 are also available (as pdf files). I plan to complete volume eight in the near future and the initially concentrate upon the Minutes as they provide an insight into the history of our organisation and the angst it has passed through to get where we are today.

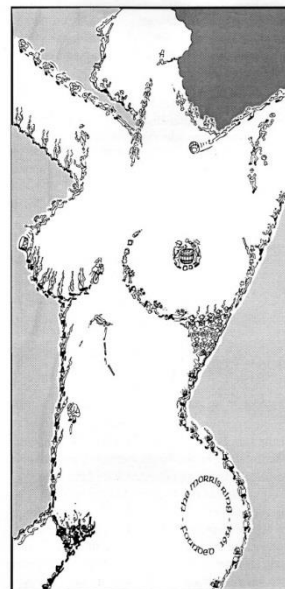
Both the Log and the Minutes provide some entertainment. *I suspect that fifteen years on this Silurian attention grabbing poster would be frowned upon!*

Also, this extract from the 4th Vol of the Morris Ring Log Book illustrates that some topics go round and round:

“At the 92nd meeting of the Morris Ring, held at Cecil Sharp House on 8th February 1964, held primarily as an instructional in the Longborough, Wheatley and Oddington traditions, there was a discussion session. This covered two topics: Playing for Dancing and Beasts.

The Squire (Lionel Bacon) invited Bert Cleaver, of Greensleeves, to comment upon Morris music. Bert referred to two weaknesses: those caused by dancers and those caused by musicians. The foreman of the team might not make it clear to the musicians what he wanted, particularly if the musician were not himself a dancer. He spoke of undesirable legato playing, particularly by bellows instruments; and even by the pipe if the notes were not properly tongued. He wanted more variation in tempo during a dance; he illustrated his point by playing Jockey to the Fair and Fieldtown Leapfrog. For massed playing he wanted more crisp, almost staccato playing. Denis Smith said that the silences were as important as the notes. The Squire said that the correct speed was the slowest speed at which the team as a whole could do the capers. At this, Past Squire

SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND?



291th meeting of the Morris Ring

19.20.21 JULY 2002

Nibs Matthews said that the most poorly executed movements in the Morris were the capers; and galleys were always poor if the head were bent.

The Squire thanked Bert Cleaver and began the section on Beasts by putting it under two headings: i. Should there be Beasts and ii. How should they be used.

It was generally agreed that a Beast should not appear except when its own side was dancing; that the man inside should never be seen by the public to come out of it; and that each club should give thought to what is done with its Beast – its activities should not be haphazard."

The Log contains both hand-written reports of events as well as more recently copies of the various handouts. These include pamphlets provided for attendees and the public, menus, Orders of Service for church services, including funerals, and even newspaper cuttings.

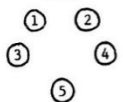
One such is the notation of a dance composed by Helmond MM to commemorate the Morris Dancers who died in WW2.

THE TWENTY-NINTH OF MAY

Handkerchief dance for 5
Composed in memory of Morris dancers who died in the Second World War
Headington tune and Headington style (no cross-backsteps)

Start in a ring facing the centre with arms straight out in front.

top



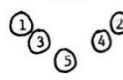
Once to yourself. On last beat, shout "hoy" and raise the arms.

A1 Half rounds (2 bars double step, 1 bar single step, feet tog. jump)
Straight in but turn out to come back. Right foot begin.

B1 Facing centre with arms down. 1st bar: arms up and down; 2nd bar: stamp RLR; 2 bars single step (right begin) to stay in above formation facing up, 1,2,3 & 4 turn in to face top, arms make low circles. Foot up ending facing centre.

B2 Same as B1 but during single step with low circles, 1 & 2 move out still facing down, 3 & 4 turn in and face down and 5 turns right about to face down. All are now in V formation. Foot down ending in circle facing centre.

top



A1 Straight line In one strain of music, 1,2,3 & 4 fall back to make line with 5 facing up, in the order 1,3,5,4,2. In second strain, dance forward on double step and on single step, reform the circle.

B Chorus as before.

A Hey Numbers 3,4 & 5 dance a half rounds making sure that 5 has his back to top half way. Turn out to come back. Meanwhile, 1 & 2 cast to the bottom of the set, where the circle is momentarily visible, and then cast back to places.

B Chorus as before ending with all in and "hoy".

Published by Helmond Morris Men and presented to the Morris King on the occasion of the Helmond King Meeting, August 1985.
Correspondence regarding this dance should be sent to Jo Kuypers,
Burg. Krollaan 42, 5707 BD Helmond, The Netherlands.

Morris Ring Log and Minute Books

1 st Log Book	October 1934 to September 1948
2 nd Log Book	September 1948 to May 1955
3 rd Log Book	July 1955 to Sept 1961
4 th Log Book	Sept 1961 to October 1965
5 th Log Book	March 1966 to Sept 1969
6 th Log Book	December 1969 to July 1973
7 th Log Book	Sept 1973 to Nov 1980
8 th Log Book	Jan 1981 to July 1991
9 th Log Book	July 1991 to July 1996
10 th Log Book	July 1996 to August 2001
11 th Log Book	Sept 2001 to November 2010
12 th Log Book now	December 2010 to date. This is very much a work in progress. It is word-processed, with the large majority of meetings having increasingly detailed printed Programmes.

1 st Minute Book	Minutes from 1950 to 1966
2 nd Minute Book	Minutes of Annual and other meetings from 1966 until 1979
3 rd Minute Book	March 1979 onwards (Minutes now typed / word processed and included in a file rather than handwritten into a book.)

I have prepared the text that is attached as, when completed, a revised entry for the History section of the Web Site – subject to the Squire's Approval.

As will all aspects of the Archive the Log can only contain the information that is provided to the recorder. This is especially true when I am not present at a meeting or event.

Charlie Corcoran (Leicester MM) requested information for the Log Books on 2016 meetings.

9. Publications Officers' Reports

Tony Foard, Ring Circular

The *Morris Ring Circular*, published in both electronic and paper formats up to three times a year, aims to showcase the diverse activities of member sides: anniversaries, innovations, media triumphs, days and weekends of dance, workshops and outreach events, to name just some.

Articles in recent issues have included tips on preserving your side's archives, the joys of playing the whittle and dub, the ageing of the Morris population, notations of newly minted dances (with original tunes), and a celebration of the lives of much-missed colleagues. As you see, a very wide range of topics stand ready to entertain, bemuse or infuriate.

So if your side's been involved in something special and you want to share the news with the wider community, please send your words and pictures – or just the pictures! - to the *Morris*

Ring Circular. Articles need be no longer than a fat paragraph, especially when accompanied by high-quality photographs, so don't feel that long reports are obligatory (but if inspiration seizes you, we'll happily accept those too). All contributions are considered for publication.

Mac McCoig, Morris Dancer

Sadly, I have been unable to produce a copy of The Morris Dancer since last February due to insufficient materiel for publication. The Morris Dancer relies on being provided with articles, research and information that relate to the history of the Morris or that expand our understanding of the Morris in some way. These articles have to come from, chiefly, yourselves and indeed, I have received some very good pieces of work in the past from Ring and non-Ring members. I am sure there must be some of you out there who have the germ of an idea that, with a little polish, could be just the thing I'm looking for. If you're not sure, call me or send me an email.

Let's hope that 2017 will be a fruitful year for The Morris Dancer.

Mac McCoig (Utttoxeter MM) requested contributions. The next issue will arrive shortly.

The Squire confirmed that digitisation of paper copies of Newsletters, Circulars etc. is ongoing and these will be made available on the website.

Peter De Courcy, Web Editor

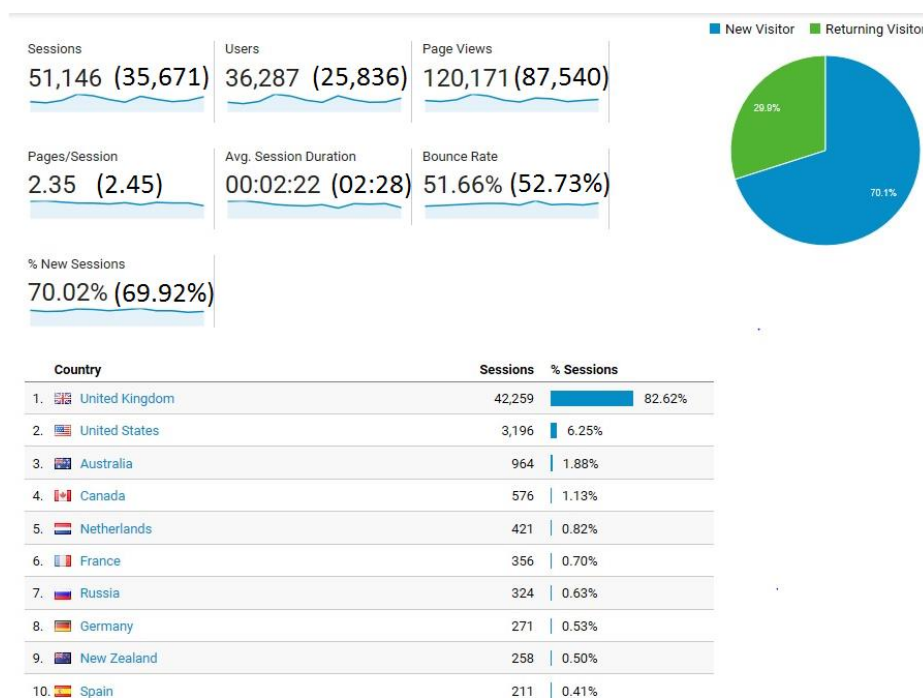
Didn't we do well? I have pursued a policy of actively sharing member sides' events and news on Facebook, together with regular posted links from our website and it appears this has resulted in greatly improved traffic to our web pages – up nearly 50% on the previous year. Last year I reported an unexpected 20% downturn but this has been dramatically overcome, making this a record year. This certainly supports the recently approved project for investing in a new “responsive” version of the website. This will be able to cater for the smaller screen sizes and download rates of tablets and smart phones used more and more often – not far off 50% of sessions. Hopefully, by the time of the ARM (my report was written in January), the upgrade will be under way and we will be able to announce a timescale for its completion and detail the exciting new features.

The Morris Matters news summary added 173 media entries (180 last year) with Saddleworth taking the prize again for most “googlable” media coverage followed by Grimsby with Ripley and Mendip tying for third place. For the record, I only post news involving member sides. Traditional Events pages continue to be updated regularly, usually a couple of weeks before each of “the seasons”. Those sides without up to date websites will be missed unless you let

me know about your “Traditional” event. These are accessible from the front page as is our “Find A Side” service. Keeping that up-to-date seems to be working well and standard e-mail feedback to side contacts enabling them to check and approve any changes made continues to be appreciated.

As always, 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, holidays and weekends of dance permitting, has been maintained by and large.

The following metrics give an idea of reach of our pages for calendar year 2016 (2015 in brackets).



(Bounce rate is a measure of the effectiveness of a website in encouraging visitors to continue with their visit. It is expressed as a percentage and represents the proportion of visits that end on the first page of the website that the visitor sees, so roughly half of our visitors went on to explore further.)

As I write every year, we’re keen to have a lively, fresh and informative site that is a first port of call for anyone with an interest in Morris - but news, in our opinion, must be newsworthy and not just for the sake of it. So if your side has items or photos you believe are of national (or even international) interest, or a traditional annual event worthy of inclusion in our seasonal calendar, please, please let me know at webeditor@themorrisring.org.

As stated at the outset of this report, I have shared much information posted on Facebook by Ring sides, or their active Facebookers, on our page and sometimes have even shared posts

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before Eddie Worrall ☺ Importantly I continue to post links to website events, news items and journal publications. Some 16000 people are reached regularly each month, over 3000 “engaging” with our posts by sharing, commenting or liking. The number of people liking our page increased from 777 to 905 this year and 2017 should see us breaking 1000. I trust all Facebookish members have liked us!

These are our 909 Fans’ metrics.



(I continue to worry about our missing 3% with no gender – perhaps mixed sides?)

The conversion to website for mobile devices went live on 18.02.17, thanks to Martin Jones. 80% increase in phone use, 30% increase in use of tablets.

10.Overseas Bagman’s Report – Nigel Strudwick

I never feel that I spend enough time in contact with the Ring’s overseas sides. I did have the pleasure of spending some time last summer with Utrecht MM, as they were over for the

September Ring Meeting, and my side and they were on the same tour, along with Saddleworth, and a good time was had all round, with lots of excellent dancing all round.

I have sent out a questionnaire to the overseas sides along the lines of the one I sent out to the Eastern Area sides. To date I have had one reply, from Helmond. I looked at the numbers provided by the Treasurer from the annual return that goes with the subscription renewal, and while there are several numbers missing from 2016, the impression I get is that most sides are pretty static in numbers. Certainly Utrecht were dancing well in September, and even though their returned numbers are not huge, they achieved an impressive turn out. Helmond are clearly concerned for the future, worrying whether 2016 could be their last season; Antony's assessment of the side's mood is "Excellent but sombre".

There are two overseas events being organised in 2017 in which Ring sides are involved. The first is the Helmond Weekend of Dance on 12–14 May. Details of this are on the Ring web site, <http://www.themorrisring.org/event/helmond-morris-men-weekend-dance>. They obviously have interest from Utrecht, and possibly also from Chanctonbury Ring, Long Man and Greensleeves. It is not impossible that the fact that this weekend coincides with the JMO day in Leicester does not help.

The second is the Australian Morris Ring National Ale and Tour, in which Adelaide are taking a leading role. This complex event begins in Adelaide and goes via Melbourne to Canberra, over Friday, August 18 to Monday, September 4, 2017. <http://www.themorrisring.org/event/australian-morris-ring-national-ale-2017> There has been some interest of which I am aware from the UK, but I don't know the precise level at the moment, as not everyone is letting me know over here!

Nigel is seeking to support sides and to receive information on travelling abroad; please provide information, and request assistance. No-one else present was going to the Australian Ring event.

11.Elections – Area Representatives

Area Representatives (year of re-election in brackets)

North Midlands, Ben Robinson (2018)

South Midlands, Roger Comley (2018)

Northern, Paul Cross (2018)

North West, David Loughlin (2017)

North East, Brian Pollard (2019)

West Midlands, Peter Simpson (2017)

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Eastern, Nigel Strudwick (2019)

South Wales and West, Tim Sercombe (2017)

South East, Cliff Marchant (2018)

Elections:

- North West (Dave Loughlin continuing)
- West Midlands (Peter Simpson continuing)
- South West and Wales (two nominations, Paul Reece, Trigg MM and Colin Andrews, Exeter MM)

The vote for Area Rep was held in the Area Meeting and the Bagman confirmed that Paul Reece had been elected. Paul is keen to work with Colin and the Area clubs.

12.Area Representatives' Reports

- **North West (Dave Loughlin)**

Reports from the North West as reported to me by the various sides. Thankfully none have folded and are working hard to find new recruits. Overall I feel the year has been positive, but recruitment is paramount to keep our North West Traditions alive.

Chapel-en-le-Frith Morris Men have once again had a successful year, with the highlight being their Buxton Day of Dance during the Buxton Festival in July. With great weather the 'day' extended into Sunday for those sides that stayed overnight. This annual event is becoming heavily oversubscribed and they have had to limit the sides coming to 16 because of the availability of dancing sites in Buxton.

Monday is practice night during the winter months and during the spring and summer they dance out at local pubs on Monday evenings.

The tally of active dancers and musicians is 15, though this is augmented occasionally by other 'visiting members'. Even with a few of them carrying age-related injuries, they can always get a good side out for a Monday evening. Getting sufficient numbers to attend other outings/days of dance can be a problem but they did manage six such events in 2016.

During the year one member left but almost simultaneously a new recruit approached so they are facing 2017 with optimism.

It is sad to report that John O'Gaunt Morris is still without enough fit dancers to field a team suitable for performing in public. This situation has been made worse by the death, last December, of John Slinger one of the long standing stalwarts of the side. However all is not "doom and gloom". They did manage to do their annual Good Friday tour of South Lakeland with: "Southport Swords", "Stone the Crows" (border) and a clog stepping side known as "Yon

Lot” This combination providing a wide variety of dance styles. As usual the sun shined on them and a good time was had by all. The day finished with a meal and festivities at the “Lansil” club in Lancaster. Plans are being made to repeat this event again this year.

The Coconutters are doing well as a team, they have new blood at training at this time of year which is good “as uz owd’ns” start to wither. They hope everyone else is gaining, ‘tis bad to lose sides, many with their own special history personal to their villages’tis the origins which make it worth the effort and this should not be overlooked.... Despite the modern distractions it’s good to do something REAL and as they always say spring & summer would be grey without us Folkies!

Royal Preston try to operate within their resources as they do have a number of Members who are linked to other Teams and have people who are not available for all of the bookings. Although they have not officially "lost" anyone, but do have a couple of dancers who live outside the area and come along as and when convenient.

They have been very busy during the last year notably Hebden Bridge Folk Festival, Preston Guild Ale House, The Grange-over-Sands Edwardian Festival, Celebration of the Longest Day in Croston Village near Preston-with a new venture in Barrowford at the Pendle Heritage Centre with their "Clogs & Canal" Event.

So hopefully during 2017 they will repeat some of the above, as they have already been invited to Grange, Downham and East Lancashire Railway and in addition they are awaiting details of Ripon City Morris Dancers 35th Anniversary Day in Ripon in mid July.

Last year they did a couple of School Workshops, teaching children Dances and explaining the background etc, another one is penciled in for 5th July as part of International Culture Week, so a request for the Display Boards has been made which may make it useful.

In 2016 Adlington Morris Men had 88 ‘dance out’ requests and danced out as a side 27 times with two workshop events where they taught a simple jig to school children. Also Souling on one night and Mumming on 5 nights. So actually quite a positive year, but in October however, a musician moved away from the area (to the South Coast), one member has developed what is becoming a long term shoulder injury, another member has broken his elbow, but should return in the next 3 months, yet another has had to hang up his bells due to medical advice from his Consultant (long term back pain related issues). So in short they've gone from 9 good dancers to 6 in the short term, with a maximum of 8 in the longer term. Their recruitment campaigns have been in the main fruitless. Trying all main aspects: around 1000 flyers inviting new members to a dance workshop (even with free beer) were put up in local shops etc, workshops during dance-outs, social media etc. They are in short “on our knees” and at serious risk having to call it a day in the next few years. Ideally they don't really want to fade into a 4 man team. Reading the info posted on the various Morris organizations websites regarding recruitment, they believe that they have followed the key points, so any help or support in recruiting new members now has to be gratefully received.

Saddleworth however currently have 38 active members and have been reasonably busy in the past year. Good Friday day of dance was a bus tour of Uppermill with Earlsdon then weekends at Moulton Village Festival, Thaxted and Warwick Folk Festival and finished the year with Rushcart and finally to help Ed Worrall to dance in at East Suffolk. Locally they danced at the Horwich Processional day of dance, Middleton Maypole the Bacup Crown Affair with the Nutters and had a really good day on the East Lancs Railway.

Kinnerton Morris Men are soldiering on with a good programme last year of mainly pub dance outs but enjoyed DODs with Chester City and Saddleworth and had a very enjoyable Day out in Derbyshire. They do not take on many paid bookings these days but did perform at the Cheshire Show again, they have good links with all of the local teams and those they have come across on their travels. There are nine regular dancers and three musicians in addition an occasional dancer and one occasional musician. The average age is 66, the youngest 59 and eldest 79. (This seems to ring a bell we have all heard before). They have had one recruit in the last two years and he is a friend of an existing member. They see the need for recruitment but do not give it a huge priority.

Thelwall Morris Men have 10 dancers, 2 musicians and one dancer/musician. While they are reasonably healthy numbers for dancing sets of 6 they are still struggling with age and injury.

Despite this they dance out (pubs, carnivals, folk festivals and usually a ring meeting) on about 25 days of the year. Most of the dancers also dance with other sides so they are of course, working on recruitment but do not have anything specific that they feel the Morris Ring can help them with other than generally getting Morris dancing into national news for the right reasons and not the contentious ones.

Mersey Morris Men are going well 28 members, 24 active, getting older (average age gone up by one since last year). They do have lots of booking requests, so Morris is popular, but unfortunately they have had to turn some down.

To sum up the year for Chester City Morris Men it has been quiet, not by choice but by circumstances. Getting enough dancers together is not getting any easier. Highlight of the year was their St George's weekend with a number of visiting teams dancing in Chester. The format of future St George's is likely to vary - full weekends, days of dance or evening dance and that will depend on when the date falls.

The Chester Folk Festival had good audiences and a few evenings dancing with local teams completed the year, they still have good turnouts for practice nights which is good.

Leyland Morris Men has no new members this year so they are continuing to 'creak' along, a total of 17 dancers and musicians and throughout the year they maintained a regular weekly practice. Despite this they managed to fulfill 23 invitations during the year but had to decline another 27. Their invites are specific requests for them to attend a summer fete, a local school or a residential home for the elderly so Morris dancing is very much appreciated in this area but sadly little or no interest from prospective new members. On a more upbeat

note the team will in April this year celebrate 50 years since the present team was reformed and they plan to mark it on Saturday April 29th which will be exactly 50 years to the day since this team first danced out in public. Of that team two of the lads, as they then were, are still dancing with the present team. The team plans to dance out in and around Leyland during the morning before adjourning for lunch. In the afternoon there will be a display of photos and recordings spanning the 120+ years of the teams existence this will be at the local cricket club. They are envisaging inviting past members and others associated with the team to share their memories and reminisce.

- **North (Paul Cross)**

Apologies to the teams missing from this report; “mea culpa, mea culpa, as they say”.

Barnsley Longsword

Barnsley appeared on BBC2 recently, on the programme “Our Dancing Town”. The programme has focused on several Yorkshire towns, causing me to curse inwardly (and outwardly) that I didn’t know about it until too late. Barnsley appear in the final dance briefly creating a lock. The video can be found on YouTube by searching for “Our Dancing Town Barnsley”.

Great Yorkshire Morris

GYM revisited Beverley Folk Festival this year, as well as taking their semi-annual pilgrimage to Cranham for the Gloucestershire Morris Passed Masters Weekend (except me, I was on the M6 with a broken clutch).

Green Oak

Green Oak had a week-long tour of Dobruja, Bulgaria in June, visiting a former member. As well as Cotswold dances, they performed an adaptation of the Kirkby Malzeard sword dance, a mummers play, took part in a line dance and tried their hands at Tai Chi.

Grimsby Morris Men

Grimsby were present at the JMO Day of Dance in York, where I finally got to meet them. In January they presented a cheque for more than £1600 to Prostate Cancer UK. Grimsby are celebrating 50 years of dancing this year, with events planned throughout the year, culminating on the date of their 50th birthday in December.

Handsworth Sword

HTSD were at Shepley Spring Festival this year, as well as several other dance spots, culminating in “the big one” on Boxing Day.

HTSD were also represented by one member at events commemorating the centenary of the battle of the Somme. Joe Dunn, along with Fool's Gambit Morris, were present at the International Memorial at Notre Dame de Lorette and at the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing.

Oakworth Village

Oakworth have soldiered on throughout the last year with just 5 regular dancing members. They danced out several times last year, finishing up with the torchlight procession at Haworth.

- **North East (Brian Pollard)**

Northeast Area Annual Report 2016

Northeast sides on the whole appear positive in their outlook and enjoying their dancing. The image of morris dancing has certainly improved of late and I think the public perception of the dance is a lot more sympathetic than it may have been in the past. This has all helped to encourage recruitment. I think, certainly where Benfieldside is concerned, being seen, dancing well, talking to your audience, being enthusiastic and looking happy has helped us to recruit.

The sides:

Benfieldside. A successful year. Practice nights continued to be productive with a pleasing number of men taking part – old traditions revised and new traditions discovered. Our shared practices with the Durham Rams continued to help make this all possible as well as introducing new dancers to the Rapper giving us a choice of sides to put out and an opportunity to involve (inveigle?) some ladies into a side!

January saw us processing the plough through Durham on Plough Sunday and the summer saw us dancing regularly round local pubs – usually followed by a music session! We accepted invitations to dance at Sedgefield Fair, Wolsingham Fete, South Shields Coast Festival, Barnard Castle with Black Sheep Morris, Raby Castle Gala (rained off!) and joined Gloucestershire MM for their Past Masters weekend in Cheltenham – rounding off the year with our Christmas Carol Flash Dance netting £250 for our local children's ward.

A quite enjoyable year!

Monkseaton. 2016 saw us appoint a new squire which may not sound earth shattering for most teams however this was the first one for about 30 years in Monkseaton.

New Year's Day is always a special day for Monkseaton and this year we were collecting over £500 for a local children's cancer charity in aid of one of the teams sons who was critically ill with a brain tumour. Sadly he lost his fight in March and the team continued collecting throughout the year for this very worthwhile charity.

Despite not having a huge squad for selection we did manage to get away to dance in Moulton for their village festival, a literary festival in France, Saddleworth Rush Cart and Harthill's Day of Dance for their anniversary.

We also organised 4 rapper dance tours in local pubs collecting for charities including Children in Need. Total raised in the year for charities was £1250.

Durham Rams. Continuing to hold joint practices with Benfieldside has given both sides the opportunity to learn new dances and means that, with men from both sides being comfortable dancing together, we can honour all of our dance out commitments. Successful displays were performed locally at Sedgfield Mediaeval Fayre, Wolsingham Church Fete and Black Sheep's Day of Dance in Barnard Castle. Further afield, a very enjoyable weekend was spent with Leeds Morris Men on their annual invasion of the Yorkshire Dales.

Our rapper dancing continues to flourish. Over the past year we have tutored several Benfieldside men and have reached the stage where we can confidently put onto the floor several combinations of dancers. Our most recent initiative has been the tutoring of a potential ladies rapper side. It is early days yet but their enthusiasm for the dance and their commitment are already in evidence. The biggest stumbling block has been a choice of name for them which would link them to the Rams. "Leg of Mutton Rapper" was not well received by the ladies and neither was "Ewe Lot". At the moment "Durham Lambs" is favourite but watch this space!

Redcar Sword. Redcar had a better 2016 than 2015 in that we were able to accept more invitations to dance, but still had almost no success in recruiting new members. February saw us giving a talk and demonstration of longsword dancing to the local history society in the village where we now meet (Great Ayton)and finished the evening with dancing in one of the village pubs. Another local outing was to perform in Great Ayton and Stokesley when the Tour de Yorkshire cycle race passed through. Further afield we ventured to Knaresborough and Harrogate in May courtesy of Hornbeam Molly and Betty Leptons Ladle Laikers respectively. July saw us in Ulverston for a rather soggy Furness Tradition Festival, and in October we were once again successful at the Aword Dance Union's longsword tournament held in Goathland. Our final outing of the year was our 50th Boxing Day performance of the Greatham sword dance and play.

As mentioned earlier attracting new members has not been very successful with only one new recruit – an ex member of a southern sword team who has moved north following retirement (although he still lives over an hour and a half away!) A ploy that we have adopted, but which has yet to show any results, was to start a mixed sword team in the hope that any men who

came along with their partners could be persuaded to join the men's side. The mixed side, Known as Leven Sword, has proved quite successful and occasionally fifteen people have attended practices. If only we could achieve the same for Redcar Sword!

- **West Midlands (Pete Simpson)**

Green Man celebrated their 60th birthday this year. They did nothing special to mark the anniversary other than their usual excellent feast. The other noteworthy thing GMM did this year was to move their practice from a social club in north Birmingham to a pub, The George the 4th, in Lichfield hoping it will raise their profile locally and attract new members. Over the last few years they have tried many initiatives with little success. We wish them well. There are at least 4 other clubs in the region facing similar difficulties.

Most other clubs seem to be holding their own if not increasing membership. Last year Shakespeare MM ran a taster session with the idea of recruiting. By accident, out of this they have formed a ladies side which in turn has brought in some new members and seems to have revitalised them. On 2 occasions I have seen them with at least 17 men for evening dance outs. Something I have not seen them manage before. A pleasing sight.

In August the problems of blacking up, at Shrewsbury folk festival, hit the headlines. Whilst not directly affecting any Morris Ring clubs many of us know someone touched by it. However things changed on Jockeys annual Plough tour when some protesters interfered with Alvechurch MM whilst they were dancing. I did not witness it but it sounds as if it was all very unpleasant but well handled by all dancers who were there. At the time of writing the repercussions are still being felt so we shall have to see what happens. Apart from that it was a cracking day out with 10 teams enjoying good crowds, including supporters from 4 football clubs (no trouble from them) and reasonable weather for January.

On a personal note, as many of you know I have had a 'trying 18 months'. The support from the Morris world and Morris Ring in particular has been fantastic if fact almost overwhelming at times. A big thankyou to you all.

- **North Midlands (Ben Robinson)**

Top of the Squire's agenda this year has been recruitment and ensuring the Ring knows how well the teams are doing with gaining and retaining members. I've very pleased to say that everyone in the North Midlands area returned their number of active members with the subs this year and last year, so we have a good picture of the state of teams in the area, and what the last year has brought for us all.

On the whole, most teams are reporting no change, so either retaining all members or less frequently recruiting to replace the odd member who has left. From the returns we can see three sides have increased their membership this year: well done to Anstey, Dolphin and Uttoxeter. Whilst the numbers are small, we all know that every little helps to ensure the longevity of the team.

Sadly it isn't all good news, with a few of our teams losing members since last year. Overall we can see an average of one fewer member across all the teams in the North Midlands area, although in fact we have only lost one or two members from five of our teams, a case of statistics making it look worse! That said, every lost member is an issue. This increased tracking is a big help to understanding where we are, and to help drive efforts in the right direction. Thanks again to all for your help collating this data.

- **South Midlands (Roger Comley)**

The joy of Ales and Feasts during these winter months, then huddled together in halls to sleep off the over-indulgence in your sleeping bag, is still a wonder to be experienced. Remembering to take your pills in the morning and finding where you left them last night; it's all part of the ritual and fun of the Morris.

The hospitality and pleasure of meeting up again is why we do it, so thank you all for sharing this during a time when feeling good helps boost the immune system.

The Letchworth MM Curry Night will soon be upon us, in Ickleford on Sat 18th March, more fun with good food, ale and dancing.

The statistical reports have given our Treasurer, Steven Archer, some encouragement and many of our traditional sides have responded to our Squire's request for information; all good bagmanship; Eddie Worrall is looking forward to the Area Reps to keep helping him when we can.

- **East (Nigel Strudwick)**

I took over this task from Mike Stevens at the 2016 ARM, whose shoes it will be very hard to fill. Nonetheless I am trying. I did not get to make any trips out specifically to visit "my" sides during the dancing season, although I did see members of many of them at Ales, Ring Meetings etc. They do tend to be the same sides/individuals that appear at these events, and I will try and see if I can visit some of those with whom I am less acquainted.

The sad news of last year was the decision of the King's Morris to go mixed. This was not from any specific wish to embrace mixed Morris, but it was for them the only alternative to folding. We have to accept their decision; I have talked to Mark, their Squire, and I also introduced him to Eddie at the Peterborough DoD. As far as I am aware, they have not renewed their membership. I hope the officers and the ARM will explore ways of keeping sides like this within the Ring in some form, even though to survive they have to do what King's have done.

On a cheerier note, one of last year's Ring Meetings was of course hosted by East Suffolk and was extremely successful and enjoyed by all. Peterborough's DoD was well-supported as ever, and of course the annual Thaxted meeting was the success that it always is.

Following Mike's example, to ascertain in more detail what is going on in the Eastern sides, I sent out a questionnaire based on the ones he used, but with some extra questions. Here I will extract some of the general trends. Of 19 sides, 15 have responded. The most important thing I and the Ring need to monitor is side numbers and side mood. As ever, these are a mixed bag, and low numbers do not automatically mean a side on the decline. Overall, allowing for new and lost members, the total members of the whole set of sides is about the same, with some 10% average under 30 years old; however, there are major differences between the average side that may have between 0 and 2 youngsters (with some at Uni) and then Thaxted with 7 under 18s. The fact is that most sides have a very small number of young members, if any, and the age profile is quite top-heavy. A number of younger members tend to dance with several sides, and the question was raised in one return as to whether this could result in a more generic Morris style?

However, the overall mood assessment of sides is very positive, with lots of "good" and "enthusiastic" comments, although with hints of apprehensiveness about the future. Only one side's mood was noted as "declining". Most comments about recruiting show an element of despair, that it has been tried and nothing clearly seems to work, whether it be fliers, word of mouth, social media or whatever. However, I did see one interesting idea from East Suffolk, that they have a free-standing sandwich board out at most events; could this be an approach that most sides haven't tried? There does not seem to be a lot of interest in local instructionals, although two sides did suggest that Morris musicians could perhaps do with a "playing for Morris" workshop, both jigs and set dances. From written and verbal communications, there is an element of exasperation with the "blacking-up" issue so vexing certain social media.

I also asked the question as to how the changes in the Ring's constitution made in 2011 and Adam's decision about the use of "Ring Meeting" nomenclature had been received. The general response is positive to indifferent, which I suppose the best for which one can hope.

More detail on my questionnaire will be provided to the Ring Officers and obviously is available to anyone else who might request it.

- **South East (Cliff Marchant)**

Quiet down here!

Have met with Victory, Broadwood, Wantsum, Hartley, all managing to get sides out to dance, Hartley still a busy side: a feast and this year a Ring Meeting, but all looking for new men.

Attended the East Surrey meeting, a smaller but very enjoyable one travelling around the Surrey hills.

King Johns NWest side were at the Jack in the Green at Hastings, KJ Cotswold side seem to be doing well, some new men in the side.

Winchester MM, are another side who have managed to attract some new men, I attended their feast which was well attended, I have to say I was impressed with their dancing they are and always have been a very good dancing side.

Chanctonbury Ring MM, North West side attended the Broadwood day of dance held at Horsham, the side also organised a walking tour of Rye, including both Cotswold and NWest dancers. Chanctonbury are in the same situation as many other sides, problem, an ageing membership. I am trying to get them to have their own dance tradition put on paper and passed to the MRing list.

Long Man MM, toured Orleans in the summer, Guernsey in September where they met Kemp's Men and Victory MM. Long Man always have a busy programme but like other sides, need some younger men, they are off to Orleans again in May.

I met Martlets MM at the Surrey meeting they were in good spirits, another side that manages to keep going by gaining a new man occasionally.

I would ask the sides in my area to keep informed in what they are doing please.

As for the display boards East Surrey are the only side to ask for them.

I will be stepping down as area Rep at the next meeting so someone needs to put their hand up!!

- **South West and Wales (Tim Sercombe)**

No report submitted.

In the absence of the Area Rep and in response to the Squire's request to look at recruiting in the SW Area, the seven sides represented at the ARM were canvassed for their opinions.

General. Whist the sides approached gaining new members in different ways, there were several common themes to which all could agree.

Every dance out is a display, so look your best.

Talk to the public/audience. Be an ambassador for your side and the Ring.

Take part as a side in as many high profile events as possible in the year.

Always dance well, dance happy!

Chalice. Generally in good shape, with a happy-go-lucky attitude to recruiting. Generally aim at men in their 20s, settled in the area, and also try to recruit dads with young sons. Reasonable level of success.

Dartington. Recruiting “events” have generally proved useless. More success with Days of Dance, such as the South Devon JMO, which they run each year, and at popular pubs. Have learnt that it is essential to follow up on any interest, and get new recruits into kit and dance them out as quickly as possible, as that aids retention. Two new members this winter, adult 30+ and a young boy (not connected), plus one from a side gone mixed. They never turn anyone away, if women express an interest, they point them at local ladies Cotswold/North West sides.

Exeter. Have a reasonable age spread, and are in a healthy state. They organise a Cotswold Morris Open Day at Exeter Cathedral, along with a ladies side, Glory of The West. Both sides have received follow up enquiries leading to new members.

Gloucester. Are sponsoring a junior side and are hoping to recruit some new members that way.

Mendip. Healthy, but have an age profile that they would like to bring down! But they target those in the 40+ age range, especially if they have stopped playing regular sport and are looking to fill the gap in their lives. Personal invitation is important, as is working hard to keep new members once they walk through the door. They have sponsorships with Thatchers and Butcombe which helps recruiting.

Plymouth. Numbers are OK, but are currently exploring links with the rapidly expanding university.

Trigg. One of the sides struggling and are not actively recruiting, sinking in a sea of Celtic border it seems.

This is just a snapshot of SW sides, but it is probably an accurate reflection of the region. There is a worry that some sides become so “old” that attracting new members becomes well nigh impossible!

Robin Springett

13. Discussion Item 1 – Recruitment

The Squire explained the theme from the Area Meetings of recruitment and viability of sides.

- *NW – Dave Loughlin: make sure you keep your Area Rep updated. Very few clubs from the region were in attendance at the ARM. Consider performance standards and engage with the audience.*
- *N – Paul Cross: meeting merged with NW and NE.*
- *NE – Brian Pollard: meeting merged with NW and N. Need to avoid cliques within long-established sides which might unconsciously discourage new recruits.*
- *WM – Pete Simpson: Green Man tried hard to recruit but made mistakes, there are other sides in a similar position. Highlighted the distinction between membership numbers and side viability. Discussed how to use the media or “sell” the Morris. Market Morris to wives as an activity for their husbands? Does the Ring need a recruitment tsar? Provide a link on the club’s publicity material to the Find a Side facility on the website in case they are not local?*
- *NM – Joe Oldaker (for Ben Robinson): Would we benefit from a Facebook Messenger group for teams within an Area to co-ordinate activities? Young people struggle with money and meeting in a pub is not ideal either. A mixed response to establishing new sides vs recruiting. Most recruitment is through personal contacts. Can the Ring create a recruiting drive at a national level?*
- *SM – Roger Comley: traditional sides are local and parochial.*
- *E – Nigel Strudwick: echoed issue of perception of viability; morale is good but age and infirmity makes sides increasingly vulnerable. Most recruiting success is through personal contacts and result from putting on a good show and engaging with an audience. Links with other sides, including from other Organisations, benefit struggling sides. School links are a challenge, university sides could be an issue over gender.*
- *SE – Cliff Marchant: marketing morris through collaboration and all sides in the Area working together; target men in 40’s and 50’s? Contact and communicate with your Area Rep. The display boards need to be on show.*
- *SW&W – Robin Springett (for Tim Sercombe): improve communication between sides, be a good ambassador for the Ring and provide contacts to local Fed/Open sides for ladies. Participate in high profile events, dance well and look happy.*

The Squire highlighted the over-arching themes of communication and collaboration, which would be taken to the Advisory Council.

Barry Care, Moulton MM – individual sides should focus on their local area.

Ian Davison, White Hart – remember that tourists may be potential recruits for their “home” area.

14. Discussion Item 2 – Attendance at Ring Meetings

Nigel Cox of Whitchurch MM requested clarification on eligibility to host and invite attendees to Ring Meetings: Whitchurch will be celebrating anniversaries, and given that non-Ring sides and officers of other Organisations have been invited to RMs, what is the protocol?

Paul Reece – Trigg MM – it is good to place morris in the wider context of traditional dance.

Geoff Jerram – Winchester MM – applications to RM are through the Ring Bagman; can this be done through collaboration?

Mike Garland – East Suffolk MM – the progress in incorporating active dancers when invited as honoured guests is excellent and should be continued and extended.

Ian Anderson – Thaxted MM – there are invited teams as well as Ring applicants to the Thaxted meeting; need to separate invited numbers from numbers available for the Bagman to allocate.

Nigel Cox – Whitchurch has access to several venues of differing sizes.

Cliff Marchant – Chanctonbury Ring – not against guests, but is it a RM if it is open to sides from other Orgs?

The Squire confirmed that a RM is defined on entitlement of all member sides to apply and attend; in addition, other sides could be invited.

Adam Garland – East Suffolk MM – confirmed the nature of a Ring Meeting and encouraged sides to be more welcoming to the wider morris world. Echoed by Charlie Corcoran (Leicester MM).

Pete Simpson – Jockey MM – need to ensure places are available for Ring sides.

Bagman – confirmed that other Orgs' sides would be by invitation and not by application for places.

Robin Springett – Dartington MM – need to ensure sufficient places for Ring clubs.

Paul Cross – Great Yorkshire Morris – clarified the numbers issue (specific places would be allocated by invitation, the rest would be open to application within the Ring only).

Paul Dolman – Towersey – need to publicise meetings where this is taking place in communications to the Ring membership.

Nigel Strudwick – Devil's Dyke MM – would it be feasible to propose a proportion of guests and officers determine whether there are sufficient Ring places available?

The Squire confirmed that criteria such as this would determine whether it can be a Ring Meeting.

Brian Pollard – Benfieldside – is it crucial for the Whitchurch event to be a Ring Meeting?

Nigel Cox confirmed this related to loyalty to the Ring.

John Jenner – Cambridge MM – there used to be issues with some Ring clubs in the past, which should be avoided.

Bob Cross – Chalice MM – suggested calling it a Centenary Weekend of Dance without a number

The Squire clarified the scrutiny which is applied to Ring Meeting proposals, including on numbers. A Ring Meeting is a meeting which Ring clubs can apply to, and Whitchurch's outline proposal meets the criteria; more detailed proposals would be scrutinised.

Subsequent to the meeting, the Squire has sent the following response to Nigel by email, summarising the discussions:

Is it possible to run a Ring meeting and have sides attend as guests of the host club, who are not members of the Morris Ring?

My response was as follows:-

- 1. The essential feature of a Ring meeting is that it is open for all Ring member clubs to apply to attend*
- 2. If in addition the host club wishes to invite sides as guests who are not Morris Ring member sides, it would be possible to do this and the event still be classed as a Ring Meeting*
- 3. Any proposal for an event would need to be approved by the officers of the Ring as any other event would be on the usual practical criteria before it could be adopted as a Ring meeting in the diary of events.*

Nigel will take this back to Whitchurch MM.

15.Future Events Diary

2017

25th – 26th March **Histories of the Morris in Britain**

13th May **National JMO day of Dance, Leicester**

Charlie Corcoran (Leicester MM) confirmed publicity activities ongoing and a youth morris workshop at lunchtime. Ring applications disappointing, encouraged late applications.

2nd – 4th June **Thaxted Morris Meeting**

9th – 11th June **Ring Meeting no. 354: Hartley 65th Anniversary Meeting**

28th – 30th July

Ring Meeting no. 355: Ravensbourne London Meeting

Steven Archer (Ravensbourne MM) : Update of the Ravensbourne London Ring Meeting 2017

- 1) *Accommodation: The school in Bethnal Green has become unavailable and so the accommodation will now be at Newstead Woods school in Orpington. In effect the location moves from NE to SE London.*
- 2) *Travel: The school is 1/2 mile from Orpington station where there is a train service every 10 minutes to London Bridge taking 15 mins. London Bridge station is on the dancing route so travel to and from the tours will be both swift and convenient and included in the price.*
- 3) *Dance Locations:
All sides will dance at the following locations which are on a circular route along the north and south Thames embankment bounded by Tower Bridge and the Millennium (Wobbly) Bridge.*

Tate Modern - The Founders Arms

The Anchor

Southwark Cathedral

The Scoop (HMS Belfast)

The Tower of London

St Pauls - now to be rearranged due to London cycling event.

There will be three tours each starting at different points on the circuit culminating in massed dancing after lunch - probably at Tate Modern.

Whilst there will be train travel from the school to the dancing circuit and further public transport to the starting point of the tours, most of the travelling will be on foot. This will amount to some 2.5 miles round the dancing circuit plus the mile to and from the school, mostly on the flat. Whilst this is but a stroll in the park compared with the Saddleworth RM, any side having members who will struggle with this distance need to advise the meeting in advance and car/taxi transport will be available to assist them.

- 4) *Sunday Events: The Church service for those that will, will be at St Giles the Abbot in Farnborough village, just half a mile from the school with Sunday dancing in the village at Ravensbourne's practice pub, The Change of Horses.
For those that don't wish to go to church there are several alternative opportunities in this culturally and historically rich area.*

18th August – 4th September **Australian Morris Ring National Ale**

26th – 27th August **Ring Meeting no. 356: Saddleworth Rushcart Meeting**

Paul Cross confirmed there will be a Morris 18-30 weekend in October, details to be supplied to the Bagman shortly.

16.Date and Venue of Next ARM

*Potential hosts were requested, although Oak Farm Lodge is a good option. Any applications before the end of March, otherwise Stafford will confirm arrangements at Oak Farm Lodge for the weekend of **10th March 2018**. Note that this would fall one week later than this year.*

17.Any Other Business

1. Foreman's handbook

A call to identify sources who could provide input into a guide to being a foreman. The Bagman will be requesting more information shortly.

2. Morris start-up support

A discussion within the JMO to support the development of new sides. More information from the Bagman shortly.

3. Safeguarding policy

A Policy will be placed on the Ring website and the Officers recommend sides adopt it for their own protection.

Clive DuMont (Mendip MM) presented a call for membership on behalf of the Taborers' Society.

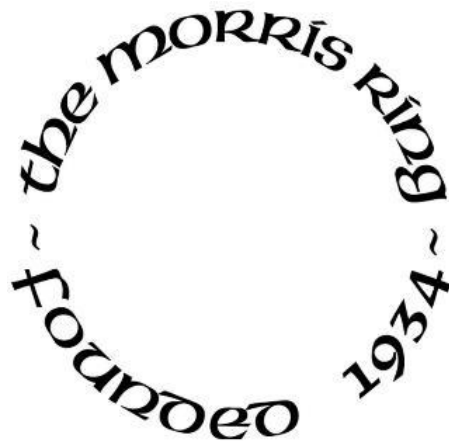
Colin Andrews (Exeter MM) highlighted the existence of a pilot version of a morris database.

Barry Care (Moulton MM) requested clarification whether the Whitchurch approach to Ring Meetings would be widened to other Ring Meetings, and whether this dilutes Ring membership and the special character of Ring Meetings. The Squire responded that this could and may happen. Barry: if the Ring is not special, why belong to it? The Squire queried the special character of a Ring Meeting, and whether the decline in applications is related.

The Squire also pointed out that the format of Ring meetings can be varied, as Mersey MM had shown with their 'day of dance' style hosted meeting. Barry's comments about the cost burden on young dancers showed the need to innovate on the format of Ring Meetings to attract applicants, as Mersey did, was real.

Ian Anderson (Thaxted MM): What is the Ring's intention if a female musician expresses a wish to dance? The constitution is clear in that a Morris Ring member side should restrict its dancing members to men. The Squire confirmed that a Ring Meeting must be open to all member clubs of the Morris Ring; there are no strictures in the Morris Ring Constitution on invited guests.

Meeting closed 4:00pm.



Appendix 1 – data from the Treasurer on membership numbers.

2015	2016	Full Members 2016	
Active	Active		
22		1	Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers
12	12	2	Adderbury Village Morris Men
14	12	3	Adlington Morris Men [incl. Adlington Mummers]
17		4	Adelaide Morris Men
20	20	5	Aldbury Morris Men
18	17	6	Anker Morris Men
14	23	7	Anstey Morris Men
15	15	8	Ashdown Forest Morris Men
17	14	9	Traditional Bampton Morris Dancers
12	?	10	Banchory-Ternan Morris Men
17	11	11	Barnsley Longsword Dancers
18	18	12	Bathampton Morris Men
20	20	13	Bedford Morris Men
27	29	14	Belchamp Morris Men
14	16	15	Benfieldside Morris and Sword Dancers
24	21	16	Bourne River Morris Men
11	11	17	Brackley Morris Men
20	15	18	Bristol Morris Men
16	21	19	Britannia Coconut Dancers
22.5	24	20	Broadwood Morris Men
10	10	21	Bury Pace-Eggers
10	10	22	Cam Valley Morris Men
8	8	23	Cambridge Morris Men [aka The Travelling Morrice]
6		24	Castleford Sword Dancers
23	25	25	Chalice Morris Men
30	30	26	Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men
15	15	27	Chapel-en-le-Frith Morris Men
20	20	28	Chester City Morris Men
17	15	29	Chipping Campden Morris Men
10	8	30	Claro Sword & Morris Men
25	20	31	Colchester Morris Men
10	11	32	Coventry Morris Men
12	13	33	Coventry Mummers
9	9	34	Darlington Mummers
30		35	Dartington Morris Men
16	19	36	Datchet Border Morris Men
19	21	37	Devil's Dyke Morris Men
15	16	38	Dolphin Morris Men
5	5	39	Durham Rams Sword and Morris Men
54	50	40	Earlsdon Morris Men
30	34	41	East Suffolk Morris Men
18	16	42	East Surrey Morris Men
9	12	43	Etcetera Morris Men
22	20	44	Ewell St Mary's Morris Men
25	23	45	Exeter Morris Men

17	22	46	Faithful City Morris Men
20	21	47	1st Sedgley Morris Men
18	20	48	Forest of Dean Morris Men
19	17	49	Foresters Morris & Sword Dancing Club
25	25	50	Gloucestershire Morris Men (including Gloucestershire Morris Mummerys)
13	7	51	Grand Union Morris
10		52	Great Yorkshire Morris
17	17	53	Green Man's Morris and Sword Club
14	16	54	Green Oak Morris Men [inc. Doncaster Mummerys]
25	25	55	Greensleeves Morris Men
17	16	56	Grimsby Morris Men
15	14	57	Hageneth Morris Men
20	20	58	Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers
24	22	59	Harthill Morris Men
24	24	60	Hartley Morris Men
17	14	61	Headington Quarry Morris Dancers
15	12	62	Helier Morris Men
17		63	Helmond Morris Men
18	16	64	Icknield Way Morris Men
18	10	65	The Traditional Ilmington Morris Men
20	42	66	Jockey Morris Men
10	12	67	John O'Gaunt Morris Men
25	26	68	Kemp's Men of Norwich
22	26	69	Kennet Morris Men
20	20	70	King John's Morris Men
16		71	King's Morris, The
13	12	72	Kinnerton Morris Men
23	18	73	Lassington Oak Morris Men
22	22	74	Leicester Morris Men
20	20	75	Letchworth Morris Men
17		76	Leyland Morris Men
7	6	77	Lichfield Morris Men [Inc. Armitage Mummerys]
9	9	78	Lincoln & Micklebarrow Morris Men
10	10	79	London Pride Morris Men
23	20	80	Long Man Morris Men
14	17	81	Lord Conyers Morris Men
17	35	82	Malvern Swordsmen
15	18	83	Manchester Morris Men
17	24	84	Martlet Sword & Morris Men
15	15	85	Mayflower Morris Men
18	15	86	Men of Wight Morris Men
25	20	87	Mendip Morris Men
25	22	88	Mersey Morris Men
15	14	89	Monkseaton Morris Men
8	12	90	Mossley Morris Men
25	25	91	Moulton Morris Men
13.5	12	92	North British Sword Dancers
10	8	93	North Wood Morris Men
18	17	94	Northampton Morris Men
9	?	95	Oakworth Village Morris Men

10	10	96	Offley Morris Men
7	5	97	Packington Morris Men
17	15	98	Perth Morris Men
17	18	99	Peterborough Morris
25	25	100	Pinewoods Morris Men
22	24	101	Plymouth Morris Men
25	20	102	Ravensbourne Morris Men
9	9	103	Redcar Sword Dancers
14	16	104	Richmond on Swale Morris Men
16	16	105	Ripley Morris Men
18	18	106	Royal Preston Morris Dancers
16	15	107	Rumford Morris Men
25	20	108	Rutland Morris Men
37	40	109	Saddleworth Morris Men
25	40	110	Shakespeare Morris Men
17		111	Silkeborg Morris Men
30	26	112	Silurian Border Morris Men
12		113	Southport Swords
12	16	114	Spring Grove Morris Men
14	14	115	St Albans Morris Men
12	12	116	Stafford Morris Men
		117	Stockton Morris Men
10	12	118	Sweyn's Ey (Men of)
17	18	119	Taunton Deane Morris Men
20	20	120	Thames Valley Morris Men
26	27	121	Thaxted Morris Men
13	13	122	Thelwall Morris Men
15	15	123	Towersey Morris
20	18	124	Trigg Morris Men
11	12	125	Het Utrecht Morris Team
12	15	126	Uttoxeter Heart of Oak Morris Men
12	13	127	Vancouver
32	35	128	Victory Morris Men
10	10	129	Wadard Morris Men
20	15	130	Wantsum Morris Men
12	14	131	Wath-on-Deerne Morris Men
30	30	132	Wessex Morris Men
16	17	133	West Somerset Morris Men
12	12	134	Westminster Morris Men
13	12	135	Whitchurch Morris Men,
12	12	136	White Hart Morris Men
18	19	137	White Rose Morris Men
17	17	138	Winchester Morris Men
15	16	139	Woodside Morris Men
15	14	140	Wyvern Jubilee Morris Men
22	25	141	Yateley Morris Men
			Morris Ring Associates
34	30	142	Alvechurch Morris Men
17.5	18	143	Blackheath Morris Men
13	12	144	Blackmore Morris Men
17		145	Bovey Tracey Mummers

		146	Boyden Gate [Mummers of]
8	6	147	Buckland Shag Morris Men
17	?	148	Chameleonic Morris Men
17	?	149	Chewit Well Mummers
11	12	150	Cinque Port Morris Men
16	12	151	Crendon Morris Men
30	60	152	Good Easter Molly Dancers
12	10	153	Greenwich Morris Men
18	15	154	Harry Taylor's Men
10	10	155	Herga Mummers
18	17.5	156	Hexham Morris Men
35	Var	157	Hinckley Bullockers
24	26	158	Leominster Morris
10		159	Middleton Mummers (Middleton Page Eggers)
24	30	160	Morris 18 - 30
11	11	161	North Curry Mummers
9	9	162	One Day Wonders Travelling Morris
70	80	163	Original Welsh Border Morris Men & Cow Pat Morris
20	14	164	Plymouth Reunion Morris Men
6	7	165	Redding Moreys
20	20	166	Rose & Castle Morris
17		167	Saint Bees (Cumberland) Mummers
6	?	168	St Nicholas-at-Wade with Sarre Hoodeners
8	10	169	Spen Valley Longsword Dancers
12	9	170	Stourvale Mummers
		171	Tarka Morris Men
18	16	172	Thameside Mummers
6	?	173	The (Insert Name Here) Mummers
14	14	174	Uplyme Morris Men
8	8	175	Wantage Mummers
25	15	176	Woodchurch Morris Men
17	?	177	World Famous Ashdown Mummers'
20	20	178	Wrigley Head Morris Men
3078.5	2785.5		

average average
17.4915 18.0877

2015	2016
average	average
17.49	18.09

Sides which are also members of the Fed

Overseas sides

Sides who are not renewing membership

	51	declining numbers
	46	increasing numbers
	51	same numbers

SAFEGUARDING POLICY THE MORRIS RING

Safeguarding Policy

1.1 Introduction

Everyone who participates in morris dancing is entitled to do so in an enjoyable and safe environment. The Morris Ring and its member clubs have a moral and legal obligation to ensure that, when given responsibility for young people, its members provide them with the highest possible standard of care.

The Morris Ring is committed to devising and implementing policies so that everyone involved in morris dancing accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse. This means to follow procedures to protect children and report any concerns about their welfare to appropriate authorities.

The aim of the policy is to promote good practice, providing children and young people with appropriate safety/protection whilst in the care of member clubs of the Morris Ring and to allow members to make informed and confident responses to specific child protection issues.

A child/young person is defined as a person under the age of 18 (Children's Act 1989).

1.2 Policy Statement

The Morris Ring is committed to the following:

- the welfare of the child is paramount
- all children, whatever their age, culture, ability, gender (notwithstanding constitutional restrictions), language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity should be able to participate in morris dancing in a fun and safe environment
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment and to respect their rights, wishes and feelings
- all suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately
- working in partnership with parents and children is essential for the protection of children.

1.3 Monitor and review the policy and procedures

The implementation of procedures should be regularly monitored and reviewed. The Bagman of the Morris Ring should regularly report progress, challenges, difficulties, achievements gaps and areas where changes are required to the Squire.

The policy should be reviewed every 3 years or whenever there is a major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation.

2 Promoting Good Practice

2.1 Introduction

To provide children with the best possible experience and opportunities in morris dancing everyone must operate within an accepted ethical framework.

It is not always easy to distinguish poor practice from abuse. It is therefore NOT the responsibility of participants in morris dancing to make judgements about whether or not abuse is taking place. It is however their responsibility to identify poor practice and possible abuse and act if they have concerns about the welfare of the child, as explained in section 4.

This section will help you identify what is meant by good practice and poor practice.

2.2 Good Practice

All personnel should adhere to the following principles and action:

- always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets)
- make the experience of morris dancing fun and enjoyable: promote fairness, confront and deal with bullying
- always moderate your conversations in the presence of young people (in terms of bad language, references to alcohol consumption etc.)
- treat all young people equally and with respect and dignity
- always put the welfare of the young person first
- maintain a safe and appropriate distance with dancers (e.g. it is not appropriate for team members or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with a child or to share a room with them)
- Avoid unnecessary physical contact with young people. Where any form of manual/physical support is required it should be provided openly and with the consent of the young person. Physical contact can be appropriate so long as it is neither intrusive nor disturbing and the young person's consent has been given
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible, e.g. where young people need to be supervised in changing rooms, encourage parents to take responsibility for their own child. If groups have to be supervised in changing rooms always ensure parents and others work in pairs
- request written parental consent if members are required to transport young people in their cars
- gain written parental consent for any significant travel arrangements e.g. overnight stays
- ensure that if mixed teams are taken away, they should always be accompanied by a male and female team member
- ensure that at away events adults should not enter a young person's room or invite young people to their rooms
- always give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism
- recognise the developmental needs and capacity of the young person and do not risk sacrificing welfare in a desire for club or personal achievements. This means avoiding excessive training or competition and not pushing them against their will
- secure written parental consent for the club to act in loco parentis, to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid or other medical treatment if the need arises
- keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with details of any treatment given.

2.3 Poor Practice

The following are regarded as poor practice and should be avoided by all personnel:

- unnecessarily spending excessive amounts of time alone with young people away from others
- taking young people alone in a car on journeys, however short
- taking young people to your home where they will be alone with you
- sharing a room with a young person
- engaging in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay
- allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any form
- allowing young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- making sexually suggestive comments to a young person, even in fun
- reducing a young person to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by a young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- do things of a personal nature that the young person can do for themselves.

When a case arises where it is impractical/impossible to avoid certain situation e.g. transporting a young person in your car, the tasks should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of the parent/carer and the young person involved.

If during your care you accidentally hurt a young person, the young person seems distressed in any manner, appears to be sexually aroused by your actions and/or if the young person misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, report any such incidents as soon as possible to another colleague and make a written note of it. Parents should also be informed of the incident.

3 Defining Child Abuse

3.1 Introduction

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm, it commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and is an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a young person regardless of their age, gender, race or ability.

There are four main types of abuse: **physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect**. The abuser may be a family member, someone the young person encounters in residential care or in the community, including sports and leisure activities. Any individual may abuse or neglect a young person directly, or may be responsible for abuse because they fail to prevent another person harming the young person.

Abuse in all of its forms can affect a young person at any age. The effects can be so damaging that if not treated may follow the individual into adulthood.

Young people with disabilities may be at increased risk of abuse through various factors such as stereotyping, prejudice, discrimination, isolation and a powerlessness to protect themselves or adequately communicate that abuse had occurred.

3.2 Types of Abuse

Physical Abuse: where adults physically hurt or injure a young person e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, biting, scalding, suffocating, or drowning. Giving young people alcohol or inappropriate drugs would also constitute child abuse.

This category of abuse can also include when a parent/carer reports non-existent symptoms or illness deliberately causes ill health in a young person they are looking after. This is called Munchausen's syndrome by proxy.

In dancing, as with any sports situation, physical abuse may occur when the nature and intensity of training disregard the capacity of the child's immature and growing body

Emotional Abuse: the persistent emotional ill treatment of a young person, likely to cause severe and lasting adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve telling a young person they are useless, worthless, unloved, inadequate or only valued in terms of meeting the needs of another person. It may feature expectations of young people that are not appropriate to their age or development. It may cause a young person to be frightened or in danger by being constantly shouted at, threatened or taunted which may make the young person frightened or withdrawn.

Ill treatment of children, whatever form it takes, will always feature a degree of emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse may occur when the young person is constantly criticised, given negative feedback, or expected to perform at levels that are above their capability. Other forms of emotional abuse could take the form of name calling and bullying.

Bullying may come from another young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. There are three main types of bullying.

It may be physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages), emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group), or sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

In dancing or sport bullying may arise when a parent or coach pushes the young person too hard to succeed, or a rival uses bullying behaviour.

Neglect occurs when an adult fails to meet the young person's basic physical and/or psychological needs, to an extent that is likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development. For example, failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect from physical harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

Refusal to give love, affection and attention can also be a form of neglect.

Neglect in dancing, as with sport, could occur when a coach does not keep the young person safe, or exposing them to undue cold/heat or unnecessary risk of injury.

Sexual Abuse occurs when adults (male and female) use children to meet their own sexual needs. This could include full sexual intercourse, masturbation, oral sex, anal intercourse and fondling. Showing young people pornography or talking to them in a sexually explicit manner are also forms of sexual abuse.

In dancing, activities which might involve physical contact with young people could potentially create situations where sexual abuse may go unnoticed.

3.3 Indicators of Abuse

Even for those experienced in working with child abuse, it is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place. Most people are not experts in such recognition, but indications that a child is being abused may include one or more of the following:

- unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruising, cuts or burns, particularly if situated on a part of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- an injury for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- the young person describes what appears to be an abusive act involving them
- another young person or adult expresses concern about the welfare of a young person
- unexplained changes in a young person's behaviour e.g. becoming very upset, quiet, withdrawn or displaying sudden outbursts of temper
- inappropriate sexual awareness
- engaging in sexually explicit behaviour
- distrust of adults, particularly those with whom a close relationship would normally be expected
- difficulty in making friends
- being prevented from socialising with others
- displaying variations in eating patterns including over eating or loss of appetite
- losing weight for no apparent reason
- becoming increasingly dirty or unkempt.

Signs of bullying include:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, clingy, depressed, tearful, emotionally up and down, reluctance to attend practices or dance displays
- physical signs such as stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, damaged clothes, bingeing e.g. on food, alcohol or cigarettes
- a shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.

It must be recognised that the above list is not exhaustive, but also that the presence of one or more of the indications is not proof that abuse is taking place. It is **NOT** the responsibility of those working in the member club to decide that child abuse is occurring. It **IS** their responsibility to act on any concerns.

3.4 Use of Photographic/Filming Equipment at Events

There is evidence that some people have used public performances as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage of young people. All clubs should be vigilant and any concerns should be reported to the Bagman.

4 Responding to Suspicions and Allegations

4.1 Introduction

It is not the responsibility of anyone in the Morris Ring and its member clubs to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. However there is a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities so that they can then make inquiries and take necessary action to protect the young person. This applies **BOTH** to allegations/suspicions of abuse occurring within the Morris Ring and its member clubs and to allegations/suspicions that abuse is taking place elsewhere.

This section explains how to respond to allegations/suspicions.

4.2 Receiving Evidence of Possible Abuse

We may become aware of possible abuse in various ways. We may see it happening, we may suspect it happening because of signs such as those listed in section 3 of this document, it may be reported to us by someone else or directly by the young person affected.

In the last of these cases, it is particularly important to respond appropriately. If a young person says or indicates that they are being abused, you should:

- **stay calm** so as not to frighten the young person
- **reassure** the child that they are not to blame and that it was right to tell
- **listen** to the child, showing that you are taking them seriously
- **keep questions to a minimum** so that there is a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said. The law is very strict and child abuse cases have been dismissed where it is felt that the child has been led or words and ideas have been suggested during questioning. Only ask questions to clarify.
- **inform** the child that you have to inform other people about what they have told you. Tell the child this is to help stop the abuse continuing.
- **safety of the child is paramount.** If the child needs urgent medical attention call an ambulance, inform the doctors of the concern and ensure they are made aware that this is a child protection issue
- **record** all information
- **report** the incident to the Bagman.

In all cases if you are not sure what to do you can gain help from the NSPCC 24 hour help line Tel No: 0800800500.

4.3 Recording Information

To ensure that information is as helpful as possible, a detailed record should always be made at the time of the disclosure/concern. In recording you should confine yourself to the facts and distinguish what is your personal knowledge and what others have told you. Do not include your own opinions.

Information should include the following:

- the child's name, age and date of birth
- the child's home address and telephone number
- whether or not the person making the report is expressing their concern or someone else's
- the nature of the allegation, including dates, times and any other relevant information
- a description of any visible bruising or injury, location, size etc. Also any indirect signs, such as behavioural changes
- details of witnesses to the incidents
- the child's account, if it can be given, of what has happened and how any bruising/injuries occurred
- have the parents been contacted? If so what has been said?
- has anyone else been consulted? If so record details
- has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Record detail.

4.4 Reporting the Concern

All suspicions and allegations **MUST** be reported appropriately. It is recognised that strong emotions can be aroused particularly in cases where sexual abuse is suspected or where there is misplaced loyalty to a colleague. It is important to understand these feelings but not allow them to interfere with your judgement about any action to take.

The Morris Ring expects its members to discuss any concerns they may have about the welfare of a child immediately with the person in charge and subsequently to check that appropriate action has been taken.

It is assumed that the Bagman of the individual member club will take responsibility for Safeguarding as part of their role, supported by the Bagman of the Morris Ring. Clubs may choose a different individual to act in this capacity, however, the designation of Bagman has been used in this document for consistency. If the Bagman (or appropriately nominated individual) is not available you should take responsibility and seek advice from the NSPCC helpline, the duty officer at your local social services department or the police. Telephone numbers can be found in your local directory.

Where there is a complaint against a member, there may be three types of investigation.

- **Criminal** in which case the police are immediately involved
- **Child protection** in which case the social services (and possibly) the police will be involved
- **Disciplinary or misconduct** in which case the Morris Ring will be involved.

As mentioned previously in this document the Morris Ring and its member clubs are not child protection experts and it is not their responsibility to determine whether or not abuse has taken place.

All suspicions and allegations must be shared with professional agencies that are responsible for child protection.

Social services have a legal responsibility under The Children Act 1989 to investigate all child protection referrals by talking to the child and family (where appropriate), gathering information from other people who know the child and making inquiries jointly with the police.

NB: If there is any doubt, you must report the incident: it may be just one of a series of other incidences which together cause concern.

Any suspicion that a child has been abused by someone within your club this should be reported to the Bagman of the club who will take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk. This will include the following:

- The club Bagman will refer the matter to social services department
- the parent/carer of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department
- the Squire of your club should be notified to decide who will deal with any media inquiries and implement any immediate disciplinary proceedings
- the Bagman should also notify the Bagman of the Morris Ring
- if the Bagman is the subject of the suspicion/allegation the report must be made to the Bagman of the Morris Ring who will refer the matter to social services.

Allegations of abuse are sometimes made sometime after the event. Where such allegation is made, you should follow the same procedures and have the matter reported to social services. This is because other children may be at risk from the alleged abuser. Anyone who has a previous conviction for offences related to abuse against children is automatically excluded from working with children.

4.5 Concerns outside the immediate environment (e.g. a parent or carer)

- Report your concerns to the club Bagman
- If the Bagman is not available, the person being told or discovering the abuse should contact their local social services department or the police immediately
- Social Services and the Bagman will decide how to inform the parents/carers
- The Bagman should also report the incident to the Bagman of the Morris Ring. The Governing Body should ascertain whether or not the person/s involved in the incident play a role in the organisation and act accordingly
- Maintain confidentiality on a need to know basis.

4.6 Confidentiality

Every effort should be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. This includes the following people:

- The club Bagman
- The parents of the child
- The person making the allegation
- Social Services/police

- The Bagman of the Morris Ring
- The alleged abuser (and parents if the alleged abuser is a child).

Seek social services advice on who should approach the alleged abuser.

All information should be stored in a secure place with access limited to designated people, in line with data protection laws.

4.7 Internal Inquiries and Suspension

- The club Bagman will make an immediate decision about whether any individual accused of abuse should be temporarily suspended pending further police and social services inquiries.
- Irrespective of the findings of the social services or police inquiries the club officers will assess all individual cases to decide whether a member can be reinstated and how this can be sensitively handled. This may be a difficult decision; especially where there is insufficient evidence to uphold any action by the police. In such cases the club officers, in consultation with the Bagman of the Morris Ring, must reach a decision based upon the available information which could suggest that on the balance of probability, it is more likely than not that the allegation is true. The welfare of the child should remain of paramount importance throughout.