



## **The Bagman's Newsletter - No. 1 – 26 March 1998**

*Greetings,*

Those who were not at the Annual Representatives Meeting [ARM] last Saturday may be somewhat surprised by the change of author for this missive. Tony Parsons has been struggling with his new shift pattern of work and announced to the Meeting that he had decided to step down as Bagman.

We must all be very grateful to Tony, for the very considerable input he has made to Ring matters over the past three years, and his regular support and attendance at so many events in that period, in spite of house moves, job changes and the traumatic Morris smash at Thaxted two years ago.

Article 4 of the Constitution states that "The Squire may appoint a deputy for any Officer in case of need". He therefore appointed a replacement Bagman, at the Meeting, who would hold the fort [and filing cabinets] until the due time for an election. This will be at the ARM next year, when candidates may be proposed by Sides in the normal way; the appointed Bagman being free to stand also subject to him finding a nomination and having survived that long.

The purpose of this first Newsletter of the 1998 season, is to appraise Sides of this change; provide a copy of the Minutes of the Meeting and the various Reports; and to deal with a few more pressing matters.

### **THE ARM**

Firstly, a big thank you to the Ravensbourne Morris Men for hosting this year's ARM, and providing copious food and drink to support us through the rigours of the Meeting.

## ELECTIONS

The scheduled elections took place: **Daniel Fox** of **Thaxted Morris Men** was elected **Squire**. He is scheduled to dance in at the Exeter Ring Meeting. Commiserations to Gerald Willey of Shakespeare Morris Men, who was well supported.

The present **Bagman-Treasurer, Steve Adamson**, was re-elected unopposed. His record round up of outstanding subs to the great benefit of the Ring coffers should not go unnoticed.

## RING MEETINGS

The **Shakespeare/Chipping Campden** Meeting has expanded beyond all expectations, to some 400+ men. It had outgrown its intended venue, and a tent city will cover a large part of the Campden recreation field to house the event. This does mean that there will be an additional cost to participants of £2.50 per man. Details will follow from Shakespeare.

The **Exeter** Meeting has also been well supported – and is laying on an extra tour.

This has produced an unforeseen problem for the **Thaxted** Meeting – a key annual event with a regular expectant audience – that has had fewer applications than expected. Thaxted are naturally concerned that the town should not miss its accustomed spectacle. They have asked me to let you all know that it is not too late to apply to attend, and indeed any Sides who are already down to attend another Ring Meeting will be welcome to attend Thaxted in addition. It is expected that all Sides should be able to be accommodated at the feast and will be allocated a show dance in both afternoon and evening sessions.

The Ring and its member Sides have a certain obligation to support Thaxted now, considering the hospitality they provide to the Ring and its Member Sides year by year [and the very considerable contributions that Meeting makes to Ring funds]. We would like to assist Thaxted in overcoming this difficulty, considering the service they provide to us all year by year.

Contact the Thaxted Bagman to discuss your attendance. [**Dave Brewster Tel: 01245-420742**]

## FUTURE EVENTS

Boxing Day 1999 will be the Centenary of Cecil Sharp's first experience of the Morris during his Christmas visit to Headington – from which his collecting and the Morris, as we know it today, all derive. We need to give urgent consideration as to how we celebrate this Anniversary, which will be a forerunner to the Millennium Year and any Morris involvement. Together with the other Morris Organisations, we will have to consider ideas urgently. Any thoughts will be welcome.

We possibly need a common theme, if only, say, a logo similar to that used for the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ring, on our programmes for all our appearances over the period. As suggested at the ARM "a thousand dancers in a thousand different places will be more effective than a thousand dancers in one place".

## THE CONSTITUTION

The Ring Constitution has always been kept simple, on the grounds we did not wish to become entangled in legalities; however, from time to time problems of interpretation have occurred. This year produced queries on the nature of supporting statements for candidates; canvassing and statements to the ARM; the procedures for elections; the appointment of deputies; and the declaration of voting figures.

It seemed timely to clarify some of these issues. The Squire has asked Geoff Jerram [past Squire] and John Burke [St John's Morris Men] who is a Deputy Returning Officer, to review various aspects of the Constitution and to propose amendments, or alternatively, guidance notes. These will be considered by the Advisory Council in November and will hopefully result in suitable motions for debate and vote at the next ARM.

Any Sides having thoughts on this subject, or amendments for consideration at this earlier time, [in order to save tedious debate into beer time at the next ARM], should communicate them via the Bagman.

## THE DIRECTORY

All Sides should by now have received a copy of the updated Directory, either at the ARM or by post. There are, inevitably, some amendments already and these are listed on a separate sheet. Please remember to communicate any changes of Bagman [or any other changes] to me [ideally on the form provided] and to copy this to your Area Representative.

## ARM 1999

Bedford Morris Men will host the **1998 ARM**. This is not a conspiracy, but had already been agreed in principle with Tony Parsons at some indecent hour when not in a fit state to argue at a very late hour at Ripley Morris Men's Feast!!

The **ARM** will be combined with the next **Archive Workshop**, which will be a follow on from the first Workshop held in Bedford last year. Last year we looked at general matters and paper archive material. This year we will look at modern media – film, photographs, audio and video tape. Hopefully there will be a display of Archival material and a chance to view some historical footage.

The date that for the **ARM** is the weekend **6 – 8 March 1999**. This should avoid Mothering Sunday, but I'm told it already clashes with a Mother in Law's birthday – we cannot please you all!!

The **ARM and Feast** will be on the **7 March**. The **Archive Meeting** will be on **8 March**. Hopefully this will allow effective use of time and travel expenses. Details will follow nearer the date, but this will serve as "due notice". A booking has been made at my long-suffering wife's school in Kempston. Bedford Morris Widows' Catering have agreed to assist again; those who attended the Bedford Ring Meeting in 1992, or the last Archive Day, will no doubt be making their bookings promptly in order to ensure their places at table!!!

## THOUGHTS ON NEWSLETTERS ETC

One of the Bagman's main tasks is communication, and to this end I hope to produce rather more regular mailings – based broadly on the rationalisation scheme produced some two years ago.

However, the Ring Treasurer has to consider the balance between the excessive cost of frequent mailings; and the false economy alternative of keeping you all in the dark for months – with consequent multitudes of time consuming phone calls to the Bagman seeking information. We also try to arrange that publication dates for the Circular and the Morris Dancer are such that they provide a timely envelope for Newsletters – however, unless you assist by providing material for those publications they may be delayed, with consequent knock on effects!!

Once we have discussed and reconfirmed our timings, I shall pass them on. The Bagman's Newsletter should provide opportunity for Sides to pass on News etc. The next Edition will ideally be produced in May [possibly with interim E-mail versions – see below]. If you wish to include anything, send it to me before the end of April please.

Much as I have disliked the thought of modern technology for the Morris communications, it appears that a large and increasing proportion of Sides have access to E-mail and its use by those who have such access could be advantageous to us all.

It would be helpful, and cost effective, for each Side to have a postman [not necessarily the Bagman] who can act as a post box and print and deliver that Side's electronic mail. I could then send news-updates on a more frequent basis with no postage [or envelope or paper] costs and the Bagman Treasurer will be our friend for life!! Non-electronic Sides would receive a collated set of updates at the due time, thus receiving everything and at no lesser frequency than should be the case at present.

A trial can commence as soon as contact numbers have been collated. If you would like to receive information in this way please communicate the name of your Side; your postman's E-mail number; and your preferred language [hopefully WORD] for any attached documents, to me on **frearsonj@rugbycement.co.uk** .

You would still receive some conventional mailings – the Circular, the Morris Dancer and some formal notifications etc., which will be addressed in the normal way to the Bagman of the Side.

Any comments on these proposals will be welcomed.

## COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE BAGMAN

If you need to contact me, my home number [01767-681057] is also at the head of this Newsletter; a summary is also included on the Directory "Update Sheet".

I tend to work longish hours and you are unlikely to get me at home before 8pm ish. My wife Joanna [Jo] and younger daughter [Sarah - in university vacations] are long suffering message takers - but there should be an answer-phone installed very soon.

I can be rung at work in case of urgent need, but I would appreciate if this was limited during normal office hours as I do have a day job to do as well!!

However, after 5.30pm, I am normally still in the office for a while and more available to take calls on my direct line [01788-564348] which also has voice mail. My mobile/car phone [0976-577723 also with voicemail message service] is also a good bet. The Mobile is especially so in the morning [say 7.30am to 8.15am] and the evening [in the period 5.30pm to say 7.30pm] as I have an hour to drive each way if I am going to the office [and if not, I am probably in the car for even longer!!].

I check my Email most days [in the office I'm connected full time]. For those so inclined, and equipped, it may be an easy way to leave messages – if only a request for me to respond with a time that you can phone me.

## IN CONCLUSION

I am very much looking forward to working with you all as your Bagman, and will endeavour to perform the job in a way that will justify the Squire's decision to appoint me.

I will no doubt be out of communication from time to time – and may even dare to take a holiday [France for the last two weeks of August].

However, I would hope that regular communications from me will pre-empt as many of your enquiries as possible – but no doubt you will still come up with plenty of unexpected items to ensure that I do not remain idle!!

My job does take me around [generally] the South and Western part of the country; and I try to take the opportunity to drop in on a local Side if my movements allow [it is better than sitting in a hotel all evening!!] – a recent visit to Saddleworth's practice evening was quite an experience – do any other Sides practice outside in an open barn in the depths of winter?

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have been so supportive of my appointment, both at the ARM and subsequently, and give special thanks to all those who have offered to assist if required – their names have been noted [and I took the opportunity to check several tongues for stamp licking qualities after the Meeting!!!]

I intend to enjoy this post. Hopefully a light-hearted approach will not mask the serious endeavour that I intend to apply to the position.

I am Sirs, your humble and obedient Bagman [pull the other one!!!],

*Wassail,*

John P H Frearson.  
Bagman