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Newsletter No. 100

July 2016

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As this is the 100th Newsletter in current format, I have taken the liberty of including a copy of the first of the series, from John Frearson, as an appendix. Interesting to note how email and mobile phones were obviously in their infancy, and that the cost of printing and postage for Newsletters has always been an issue.

Future Events

2016

8th – 10th July **Ring Meeting no. 350: Greensleeves MM 90th Anniversary Meeting**

Based in Chipperfield village, near Hemel Hempstead.

15th – 17th July **Ring Meeting no. 351: East Surrey MM 90th Anniversary Meeting**

Based in and around Tadworth and Walton on the Hill, at an independent school with excellent facilities, provisional cost £60-70.

20th – 21st August **Ring Meeting no.352: Saddleworth Rushcart Meeting**

2nd – 4th September **Ring Meeting no. 353: East Suffolk Meeting**

Based in and around Framlingham. Squire Elect Eddie Worrall will be dancing in to office at this meeting. There may be a few places left. Contact mike.garland1@btinternet.com.

10th September **Dartington JMO regional day of dance**

In and around Totnes. Details on the Dartington MM website and applications to baqman@dartingtonmorrismen.org.uk.

28th – 30th October **Fools and Beasts Unconvention**

Hosted by Wyvern Jubilee, see application form on page 9.

2017

4th March **ARM Oak Farm Lodge, Hatherton**

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

9th – 11th June **Ring Meeting no. 354: Hartley 65th Anniversary Meeting** (details TBA)

28th – 30th July **Ring Meeting no. 355: Ravensbourne Meeting** (details TBA)

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

See separate article on the next page.

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

Please note that as a result of decisions made at the ARM, booking places onto Ring Meetings for the 2017 season will revert to the Bagman to administrate. More detail on how this process will operate will be in the next Newsletter. In the meantime, please do not contact host clubs to book for next year.

Australian Morris Ring National Ale 2017

18 August 2017 – 4 September 2017.

The Australian Morris Ring in conjunction with the annual National Ale is organising a tour to commence in Adelaide, travel to Melbourne, and then concluding in the Australian national capital, Canberra.

We would like to invite your side to visit Australia to take part in our 2017 National Ale and Tour. The Australian Morris Ring is the representative organisation of all Australian morris teams. Membership is not defined by gender.

The Tour will include three of Australia's most interesting cities with travel and dancing in the "bush" in between. We boast many great wineries and a reasonably new real ale / craft beer culture. We anticipate the usual exchange of dances, songs, and culture; with dance workshops, singing and music sessions (subject to interest and sobriety). Family groups are very welcome.

We are flexible – choose which bits you want to do if for any reason you do not wish to participate in the entire event. We will have separate costing for each of the cities and the travel components. So "mix and match" as you wish.

Preliminary Itinerary

Friday 18 August	Adelaide, South Australia	Visiting breweries, wineries and the beautiful city of Adelaide
Saturday 19 August		
Sunday 20 August		
Monday 21 August		
Tuesday 22 August	Travel	Travel between Adelaide and Melbourne, stopping at landmarks, historical sites and excellent drinking spots on the way.
Wednesday 23 August		
Thursday 24 August		
Friday 25 August	Melbourne, Victoria	A weekend in the lush bushland north of Melbourne
Saturday 26 August		
Sunday 27 August		
Monday 28 August		
Tuesday 29 August	Travel	Travel between Melbourne and Canberra
Friday 1 September	Canberra, Australian Capital Territory	Visit the scenic beauty and experience the political and cultural excitement of the Australian capital.
Saturday 2 September		
Sunday 3 September		
Monday 4 September		

We will offer all accommodation, transport and most meals for the duration of your stay. We will be able to provide you with a ballpark costing per head very soon, once we have a better idea of how many people to expect. **Please let us know if you have any interest in attending** and we will keep you informed of all details. Let us know if you have any questions!

AMRtour2017@gmail.com

Sadly Missed

John Dell, Anker MM

On Saturday 4th June, immediately after a show with Anker, John collapsed and never regained consciousness. He was the only founder member of Anker still dancing with them after 41 years. This happened a day before his planned 60th birthday party. It took place anyway – it is what he would have wanted. Our thoughts are with widow Karen and son Tom.



Advance conference announcement and call for papers



The Histories of the Morris in Britain

25 - 26 March 2017

Cecil Sharp House
2 Regents Park Road, London NW1
7AY

Organised in partnership by **The Historical Dance Society** with **The English Folk Dance and Song Society** and **The Morris Ring**, **The Morris Federation**, **Open Morris**.

The focus of the conference is morris dancing in all its forms (including rapper, long sword, molly, and other ceremonial dance) within the British Isles and its history up to recent times. As an enduring feature of British culture across more than six centuries, research in, and understanding, appreciation and practice of, our vernacular dance genre is worth celebrating. We invite contributions from practitioners and scholars to this two-day event to share practice, archival research, oral history and local custom. This may be in the form of papers and talks for 30 minute slots to include discussion time, or workshops of 90 minutes, or posters. We hope to publish selected papers in a volume of proceedings.

Topics: the following suggestions are offered as a guide and further relevant ones will be of interest.

- Morris within specific historical periods (including 20th century)
- Morris within specific contexts; English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish; morris on the move; external influences on morris in Britain
- Histories of morris sides, both national and local
- Morris and calendar customs
- Morris as national identity
- Comparative histories; historical development
- Morris music and instruments
- Costume, equipment, and characters
- Morris in literature, morris on the stage; representation in other art forms
- Issues: gender, age, teaching, public perception, decline/renaissance
- Forms: Cotswold, NW Morris, Border Morris, Rapper and Sword, Molly dancing

Please send your proposal (with a 300 word biography), stating whether for a paper, workshop or poster to: Anne Daye conference@thds.org.uk or 96, Dover Crescent, Bedford, MK41 8QH by 31st August 2016.

Programme committee: Theresa Buckland, Anne Daye, Mike Heaney, Laura Smyth

Historical Dance Society



efdss
english folk dance
and song society



Dancing England rebooted and crowdfunded – Sheffield City Hall, Saturday 18th February 2017



Dancing England is back. Yes, the highly successful and oft-missed Showcase of traditional dance is taking place once more.

The rationale at the tail end of the 1970s was to create THE Premier Dance Event. Not a one-day Festival and definitely not an extended ceilidh with interval entertainment from a local dance side. The message was very clear; 'All you traditional dancers out there, come and look at the real thing, the proper traditional stuff, and watch the excellent dancers that we have in England'.

Phil Heaton and John Shaw (of the Black Cap Sword Dancers ignominy) were the original organisers, and now I've joined forces with Phil to reboot the event. The

rationale behind the revived event is very similar to what went on before.

Both Phil and John wanted to see all the different traditions of folk dance in England. Their first choices were the "continual tradition" teams. This was only possible in certain areas, so for other areas reputable revival teams were chosen.

It was billed as 'The Traditional Dance Event' but what John and Phil didn't want to see was a team from Kent doing Cotswold or Welsh Border Morris. They wanted them to at least come from the right area.

They both felt that if a team were dancing Cotswold Morris they would enjoy, and maybe learn from, watching a team that actually came from the Cotswolds.



The revived Dancing England will have good representation from all the usual dance styles and traditions; Cotswold, Border, Molly, Rapper, Longsword, Step Clog and North West.

Added to the mix will be the unique and the wonderful; something like the Britannia Coconut Dancers, Abbotts Bromley Horn

Dancers and/or the Whittlesea Straw Bear.

There will be the same great mix of the Traditional and the Revival. Again it will be a professional, well managed show with lighting, blackouts for dramatic effect and a great MC in control

An event like this takes a lot of effort and money to organise, so we're running a crowdfunding exercise through Indiegogo. Please do take a look to see if you can help. In return for varying contributions there are various Perks available. You can access the campaign online at:

<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/dancing-england-reboot>

For more information click to **www.dancingengland.co.uk** or find and Like us on **Facebook**.

Edwin Dyson - Dancing England and Northgate Rapper

GREENSLEEVES' TARGET: 90 PUBS FOR REACHING 90

'Greensleeves are 90 today' announced the Squire at a Friday night practice in January, having consulted the club's log from 1926. In anticipation, Greensleeves had volunteered to host a meeting of Ring clubs during 2016, but we needed a celebration more personal to the club. So emerged the idea of logging all the different pubs we visited during the year we celebrate being ninety, to see if they totalled ninety.

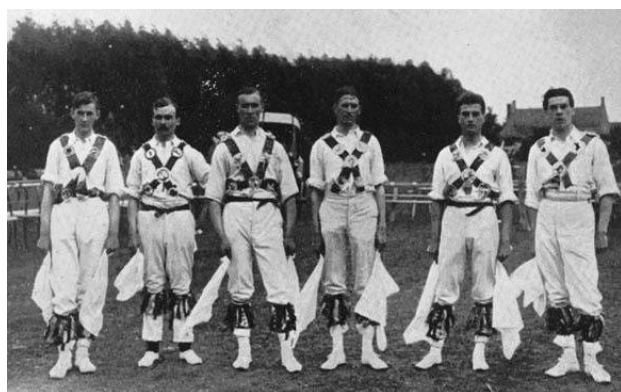
We needed some rules. Simply organising a tour of every pub in SW19 and having a half in each didn't seem dignified enough for a nonagenarian club: they had to be on our 'regular' circuit or where we danced as guests of other clubs. And although the ideal was to dance at each pub, a visit would count if we were in kit, for instance after performing at a 'dry' venue and we were particularly thirsty. Or just thirsty. For documentation purposes, there would be a photocall in front of the sign at each pub.

Half way through the year, the pub score is half way to ninety. A Greensleeves spokesman commented, 'We know 90 pubs is a tough target, but we have a strong, experienced side who have the legs, and the livers, to achieve it'.

Banks of Green Willow – update

Further to the information in the last Newsletter, Fool's Gambit morris and their commemoration of Sharp's demonstration team, four of whom died at the Battle of the Somme, has attracted coverage in the Saturday Telegraph, copied below:

Dancing in the trenches to honour the Morris Men killed at the Somme



The demonstration team of the English Folk Dance and Song Society CREDIT: ENGLISH FOLK DANCE AND SONG SOCIETY

2 JULY 2016 • 12:00PM

There is a surviving photograph of six young Morris men taken shortly before the outbreak of the Great War. They are standing on what appears to be a village green and resplendent in

matching flannels with bells and ribbons tied to their calves. Each man brandishes a pair of large white handkerchiefs hanging by their sides.

It is a picture of rural innocence that within a few years would be shattered. Their dancing outfits were swapped for thick woollen khakis and folk accoutrements replaced by trench tools and Lee Enfield Rifles. Instead of soft English grass under their feet was the mud of the Somme. Four of this band of brothers never came home.



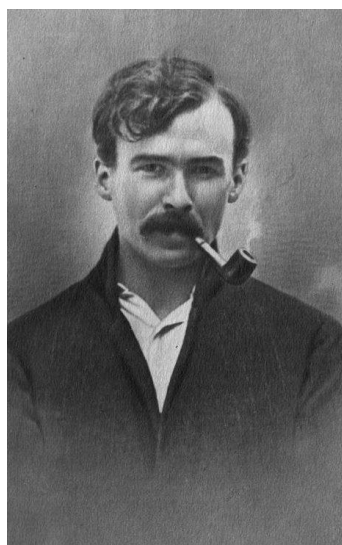
British soldiers bringing in German prisoners during the opening days of the Somme CREDIT: DAILY MIRROR

The men were the members of the demonstration team of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, founded in 1911 and credited with inspiring the great morris dancing revival which dated back to the 15th century.

When war broke out, the demonstration team volunteered almost at once to go and fight for their country. Young, fit and well-educated, they quickly rose through the ranks until finding themselves among the hundreds of thousands of British troops sent to the Somme in the summer of 1916 for a battle which raged until mid-November, with an average of 2,500 losses per day.

First of the morris men to be killed was Sergeant George Wilkinson, 31, cut down on the opening day of fighting on July 1, which left 19,240 dead and remains the bloodiest 24 hours in the history of the British Army. Second Lieutenant Percival Lucas, a 36-year-old serving with the Border Regiment and skilled writer who helped edit the English Folk Dance and Song Society's pamphlets, died in battle five days later.

On August 5 George Butterworth, educated at Eton and Oxford University and one of the great folk composers of his era was shot through the head. The 31-year-old was recommended for the Military Cross for his bravery and awarded it twice (the second time posthumously).



A portrait of George Butterworth

Another former Oxford graduate, Reginald Tiddy, was the last of the morris men to lose his life. On the night of August 10, the 36-year-old Lieutenant in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry was attempting to retrieve corpses from no man's land when he was struck by a shell and killed. His body lies in the English burial ground at Laventie beneath a cross bearing the words "Greater Love Hath No Man".

Morris men played a vital role in swelling the ranks of the British Army during the First World War. In 1914 many villages boasted their own teams – particularly in areas such as the Cotswolds, Cambridgeshire Fens, Pennines and Welsh Borders – and they fought and died, en masse.



Reginald Tiddy, one of the last morris men to lose his life

The story of the Adderbury morris side from near Banbury in Oxfordshire is an all too familiar one. Of five who volunteered only one survived the war. Percy Pargeter was another killed at the Somme; his brother Ronald died in France two years later.

But it was the massacre of Cecil Sharp's demonstration team that was to have the greatest impact and altered the face of folk-dancing in Britain throughout the 20th century.

Now a century on from their deaths a modern day troupe of young morris dancers are heading out to the Somme in July to perform at the cemeteries and memorials where the names of their forefathers are recorded. The dancers are part of a side called Fool's Gambit whose 16 members hail from across the country and are aged between 17 and 25.

"The folk world was changed by what happened on the Somme," says morris dancer Edd Bennett, a 25-year-old accountant from Sheffield. "It was an entire generation of dancers who knew their local traditions by instinct and were just wiped out."

Prior to the outbreak of the First World War mixed sex morris dancing was just beginning to be encouraged, but the death of so many of the demonstration team put paid to that and surviving members had far more traditional “misogynistic” views about women dancers which endures today.

However in recent years a new wave of morris dancers has been coming to the fore. Since Eric Idle performed Always Look on the Bright Side of Life with a group of morris dancers at the Olympics Closing ceremony in 2012 the oft-maligned tradition has started to be seen as hip once more with sides up and down the country reporting resurgent interest.

Fittingly, Fool's Gambit is a proudly mixed-sex side. Rosie Wright, a 25-year-old from Warrington, is representative of the changing stereotypes away from what she calls the traditional “morris man with the beard and beer belly”. The former Bath University student got into morris dancing through her brother, Thomas, and will be playing a 150-year-old fiddle that once belonged to her great grandfather Ernest William Wright in France.



Fool's Gambit performing at Whitby Folk Festival

He also fought in the Somme in 1916 but survived the bloodshed only to be injured in the final years of the war with a shoulder injury that destroyed his dreams of becoming a professional violinist. Wright says she and her fellow dancers have already found themselves welling up several times in practise.

“One of the things I’ve loved researching this is you feel this shared connection of people who were just like us and ended up going into the military and dying on the Somme,” says Edd Bennett. “George Butterworth was maybe two years older than me when he volunteered. It makes it strike home much more. When teams lost dancers, the folk community’s first reaction was to volunteer to help. That makes me immensely proud.”

The morris men’s songs and dances often proved to be vital in raising morale. Letters from Reginald Tiddy to his father in the immediate months before his death speak of performing “Jockie to the Fair” and “Mollie Oxford” to his fellow troops. “It quite won the dear Tommies’ hearts,” he wrote.

Spreading their music is all these men ever intended to do with their lives, yet died in a futile battle in a terrible war. A century on if they could hear the tell-tale thunder of bells and boots over their graves, the Morris Men of the Somme would no doubt muster a joyful salute.

<http://www.foolsgambitmorris.co.uk/>

Details of their performances in France 21 – 25 July are available from their website.

MAYDAY: GREENSLEEVES AID THE RNLI

MAYDAY means dancing at dawn to most of us in the Morris. But in a very different sense the word has special significance to lifeboat crews.

Greensleeves Morris Men lost two of their long-standing members last year. Their families nominated the RNLI as the preferred charity for donations, as both Vic Goodrich and John Marshall were long-term supporters of lifeboats. The club also wanted to mark their passing with a memorial tour. With 1st May a major collecting day for the RNLI, the choice of date was easy. So was the venue: the Thames bank between Hammersmith and Chiswick has its very own lifeboat station, and it was very much John's patch.

With major support from the RNLI including T-shirts for collectors, boxes and badges, the Morris side and their families began near Hammersmith Bridge at 11.30 am. Aided by



superb weather that brought the crowds out, we danced whilst families and supporters collected enthusiastically. After at least ten dancing stops, the tired but elated group descended on one last pub at 6.30 pm, to be met with rapturous applause.

Counting the day's collection, Greensleeves found they had exceeded their notional target three times over: £615 was collected. This was donated to the RNLI at a short ceremony at another Thames lifeboat station a week later when the club danced nearby on the South Bank. Unfortunately, we could not be delivered to our venue by lifeboat!

Greensleeves thoroughly enjoyed aiding the RNLI on May Day, and look forward to doing so again.



Fools and Beasts Unconvention 2016

Hosted by Wyvern Jubilee Morris

Castle Cary, Somerset

28th-30th October 2016

Open to all budding or experienced Fools, Beasts and Morris Characters from any team from the Ring, Open or Federation. A truly JMO event!

This year's Unconvention will be based at Caryford Community Hall, Somerset BA7 7JJ and will involve workshops, Saturday bus tour to Wells and Cheddar Gorge, with Wyvern Jubilee and guests Enigma Border Morris.. The Feast will follow at the Hall. On Sunday we will have the AGM of course - your chance to have your say, followed by a walking tour of Castle Cary.

Accommodation is indoor camping; there may be provision for outdoor camping and Motorhomes, to be confirmed. Please indicate at time of booking. Sorry, no dogs allowed.

We have been able to keep the cost at £65 per person, which includes all meals except Sunday lunch, plus coach trip etc.

Closing date for Applications 17th October 2016.

*Yours,
Robert Chisman, Scrivener and Convenor*

Delegate:1).....Fool/Beast/Other.....

2).....Fool/Beast/Other.....

Team:.....

Address for correspondence.....

.....

Tel:Day:.....Eve:.....e-mail.....

Any Special Dietary needs.....

We anticipate having further applicants, if places available.

Return this form with cheque for the full amount (£65 pp) payable to "The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts" to Robert Chisman, Fools and Beasts Convenor, 1, Treverbyn Road, St. Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4EU Tel:01726 68178 mobile 07970063922. OR pay by BACS - please ask for details.

E-mail: triggertrotter1@aol.com

Follow Trigger on Facebook and Twitter!

******PLEASE NOTE NEW ADDRESS AS FROM 16TH SEPTEMBER 2015******



Trigger Morris-Horse









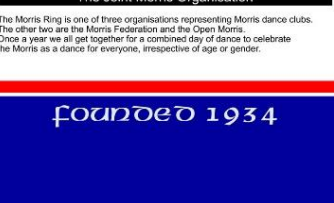
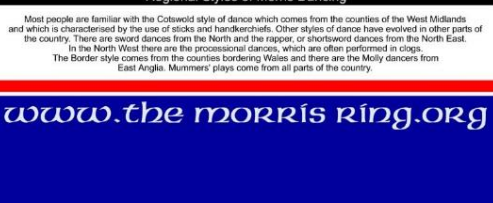
@TriggerMHorse

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.

the morris ring		
<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>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>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 snapping 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 clogs. 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.the-morris-ring.org</p>	<p>founded 1934</p>

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

Morris Ring Publications

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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).



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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 60th 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