



SQUIRE: Eddie Worrall, 8 Bankside Avenue, Uppermill,
Saddleworth, Oldham OL3 6JU Tel: 01457 829349
Email: edworrall@gmail.com

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

TREASURER: Steven Archer, 28 The Glade, Fetcham, Surrey,
KT22 9TH. Tel: 01372 454024
Email: RingTreasurer@themorrisring.org

Newsletter No. 104

February 2017

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Please note that no hard copies of the ARM papers, or minutes from the previous ARM, will be available at the Meeting.

Morris Ring 2017 Annual Representatives' Meeting Saturday 4th March

Just a few weeks to go, and still not too late to apply. The venue is Oak Farm Hotel, Watling Street, Hatherton, Cannock, Staffs WS11 1SB (one minute from M6 junction 12). Please send application forms to the Bagman for the ARM, Mac McCoig. The application form is included as an appendix at the end of this document.

There are a number of agenda items which may affect the running of Ring events, or of the Ring itself. It is important that as many sides and viewpoints are represented, so the ARM can be genuinely representative of the Morris Ring as a whole, so please try to send a rep. To encourage the voice of young morris, any under-18s are half price if they wish to attend. If your side is unable to be represented, please send apologies to bagman@themorrisring.org.

Items of Any Other Business to be submitted to the Bagman of the Ring by post or email before 24th February please; items submitted on the day will only be considered by exception and if time permits.

Programme for the day

10:00 – 11:00 Arrival and coffee

11:00 – 12:30 Area meetings

Discussion topics from the Squire:

1. Who in your area is struggling
2. Who in your area is doing well
3. What lessons can be drawn from that to help those struggling
4. What practical help can sides offer their neighbouring sides? Are joint initiatives possible? Should your area organise regional events. Do you coordinate to ensure potential recruits are put in touch with a side local to them? This is not an exhaustive list.
5. What opportunities are there in your area to establish new sides e.g. Universities, Schools etc.?

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 15:30 ARM

15:30 – 16:00 Tea and coffee

16:00 – 17:30 Workshop: Longborough (Taylor's Men)

16:00 – Advisory Council meeting

17:30 – 18:30 Informal dancing

19:00 - Feast (in kit)

Informal singing and dancing to follow

00:30 - Bar closes

Annual Representatives' Meeting of the Morris Ring

4th March 2017, Oak Farm Lodge, Hatherton

Agenda

1. Attendees and apologies

Please can any sides not able to attend let the Bagman of the Ring have their apologies as a matter of urgency.

2. Minutes from the 2016 ARM

Minutes of the 2016 ARM were circulated as an Appendix to Newsletter No 99 in April 2016. Copies will NOT be available for perusal at the Meeting.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes

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.

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.

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 with the assistance of Kevin Lane of Long Man Morris Men. 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.

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.

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.

Duncan Broomhead

Keeper of the Morris Ring Photographic Archive

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 Cliff Marchant 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.

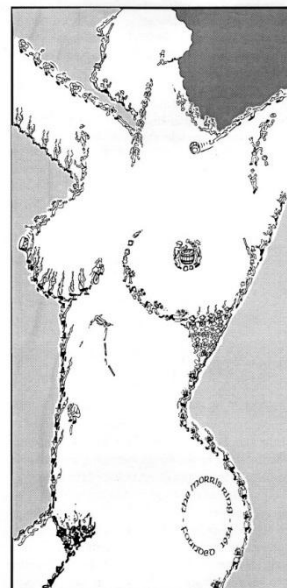
Both the Log and the Minutes provide some entertainment. *I suspect that fifteen years on this Silurian attention grabbing poster would be frowned upon!*

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

SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND?



291th meeting of the Morris Ring

19.20.21 JULY 2002

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 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.

EXETER MORRIS MEN

: LYME REGIS : 1985



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

3rd 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.

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.

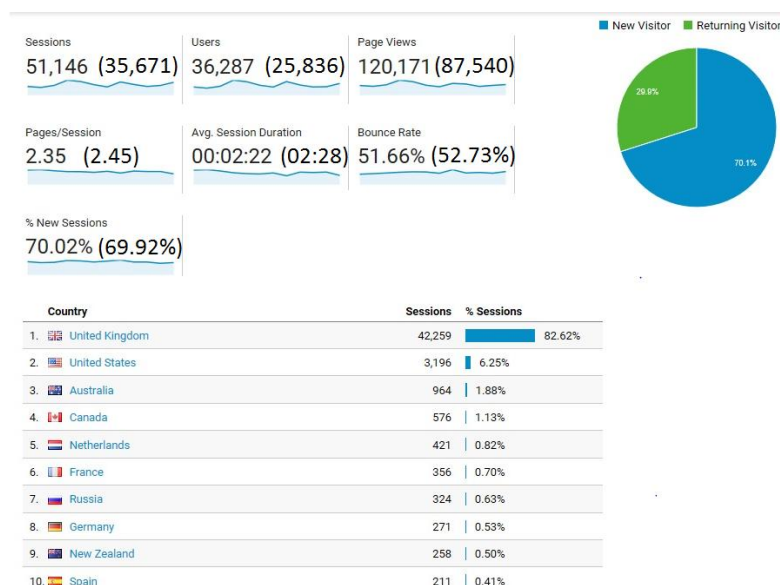
Peter de Courcy, Web Editor

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 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?)

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!

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)

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)

Please note that only clubs in South West and Wales area are able to cast votes for their Area Rep. Any club not able to attend the ARM can submit a postal or email vote to the Bagman of the Ring, to arrive at least seven days in advance of the ARM date.

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 Sedgefield 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.

13.Discussion Item 1 – Recruitment

Ed Worrall, Squire of the Morris Ring, writes:

In November I tasked the Advisory Council and specifically your Area Reps, to discuss recruitment at a meeting. There is no more important and urgent issue in my view to sides in the Morris Ring. We have been collecting data on the number of active side members in clubs as part of the subs renewal process. I have tasked the Area Reps to:-

- 1. Contact sides who have not given information on this, to complete the picture*
- 2. Establish the reality behind the numbers in their areas, which sides are really struggling?*
- 3. Identify those sides to me and the other Officers so we can offer concrete help.*

The recruitment document first put together by Pete Halfpenney and updated by Adam Garland provides a wealth of ideas. We need to put that theory into action.

I, the Officers and your Area Reps will do all we can to help you. However, you must meet us halfway and work with us if you want help. Demand more of us and your Area Reps.

14.Discussion Item 2 – Attendance at Ring Meetings

Nigel Cox of Whitchurch MM requests clarification on eligibility to host and invite attendees to Ring Meetings.

15.Future Events Diary

2017

25 th – 26 th March	Histories of the Morris in Britain
13 th May	National JMO day of Dance, Leicester
2 nd – 4 th June	Thaxted Morris Meeting
9 th – 11 th June	Ring Meeting no. 354: Hartley 65th Anniversary Meeting
28 th – 30 th July	Ring Meeting no. 355: Ravensbourne London Meeting
18 th August – 4 th September	Australian Morris Ring National Ale
26 th – 27 th August	Ring Meeting no. 356: Saddleworth Rushcart Meeting

16.Date and Venue of Next ARM

17.Any Other Business

Items of Any Other Business to be submitted to the Bagman of the Ring by post or email before 24th February please; items submitted on the day will only be considered by exception and if time permits.



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
			Gloucestershire Morris Men (including Gloucestershire Morris
25	25	50	Mummers)
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 Mummers]
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 Mummers]
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-Dearne 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	Spenn 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

Appendix 2 - ARM application documentation

The Morris Ring – Annual Representatives' Meeting Sat 4th March 2017

Name of Side:

Contact Name:

Names of other attendees:

...../.....

Email: Tel No:

Address:

..... Postcode:

Saturday: Workshops: No of men: _____

Saturday ARM to Sunday morning incl. Sat night accommodation & Sunday breakfast (£25 per person shared twin room)	No@ £ 67	£
Saturday Breakfast (for campers* & early arrivals)	No@ £ 7.50	£
Saturday ARM - including feast (No accommodation)	No@ £42	£
Saturday ARM* - excluding feast (Morning Coffee / Lunch / Afternoon Tea)	No@ £25	£
Feast only	No@ £30	£
ARM only - no meals	No.....@ Free	£ 0.00
Sunday Breakfast (for campers*)	No@ £ 7.50	£
TOTAL		£ .

* There is very limited camping available (for which there will be a small charge). It is essential to book in advance through Mac McCoig. There may also be the possibility of local indoor camping in the village hall in Church Easton; please notify Mac McCoig if you wish him to pursue this option. There is space for up to five campervans at the venue at a cost of £15 for the weekend (2 nights) on a first come basis. Please book this direct with Mac McCoig 07939 084374.

Please specify number of non-alcohol drinkers

Please specify how many require vegetarian meals.....

Please indicate if disabled access is required Yes / No

Please print this form, fill it in and post it (with a cheque for the requisite amount) made payable to
Uttoxeter Morris Men to: Mac McCoig, 8 Redhills, Eccleshall, Staffs. ST21 6JW