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West Midlands B23 6ND Tel: 0121 3734654
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BAGMAN: Jon Melville, 57 Shakespeare Drive, Nuneaton
Warwickshire CV11 6NW Tel: 02476 345543
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Newsletter No. 110

June 2018

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Future Events

2018

8th – 10th June **Hartley Morris Ale Ring Meeting (meeting no 357)**

23rd – 24th June **Helmond Ring Meeting (meeting no 358)**

29th June – 1st July **Whitchurch celebration weekend**

25th – 26th August **Saddleworth Rushcart Ring Meeting (meeting no 359)**

Any clubs seeking to host a Ring Meeting in 2019, please contact the Ring Bagman urgently.

Morris Ring ARM, Oak Farm Lodge, Hatherton, 10th March 2018

Highlights

- Peter Simpson of Jockey MM was ratified as Squire Elect; he will take over at the Saddleworth Ring Meeting in August
- Clayton Francis of East Surrey MM was ratified as Treasurer; the initial hand-over period is well under way and he is now fully in the role
- A new category of Joint Membership was introduced, to allow sides who receive their insurance cover as members of another Morris Organisation to become members of the Morris Ring, with the same rights as Associate Members
- Charlie Corcoran of Leicester was elected East Midlands Area Representative
- Jono Millward of Harthill was elected Northern Area Representative
- Fred Hands of Wadard and Hartley was elected South East Area Representative
- Roger Comley of Letchworth continues as Area Representative for South Midlands
- Peter Simpson was replaced as West Midlands Area Representative by Mark Carter of Leominster
- Leominster Morris were elected to full Membership of the Morris Ring
- The proposed change to the Constitution to allow sides with female dancing members to join the Morris Ring was passed with 87% of the votes in favour (70% of the overall membership eligible to vote).
- The next Annual Representatives' Meeting of the Morris Ring will be Saturday 2nd March 2019 at Oak Farm Lodge again.

The full minutes of the meeting are included as Appendix 1 of this Newsletter.

General Data Protection Regulations

On 25th May 2018, the new GDP Regulations came into force. The following guidance was issued to Member Clubs of the Morris Ring:

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applies from 25th May 2018. It, and the new Data Protection Bill, replace the Data Protection Act.

Organisations now require permission from members to hold data such as name, phone number, address etc. and inform all members of what they do with the data. It also requires consent from every individual (or parent/guardian of under-16s) for the processing of your data.

The Morris Ring undertakes to:

- *store all data securely*
- *never pass on your data to an outside organisation unless you have given us explicit permission*
- *delete all your personal data within 30 days if you cease to be a member*
- *provide you with details of the data we hold within 30 days of a written request to do so.*

The Morris Ring uses your data for the following purposes:

- *to communicate with you in respect of Newsletters, Circulars, other communications from time to time and membership renewal information*
- *contact details are put onto the Find a Side utility on the website*
- *financial details provided at membership renewal are stored on password-protected email and held by the bank only*

What do you need to do?

You need to send the Morris Ring Data Controller (Treasurer) a communication in writing or by email (verbal communication is not acceptable) confirming your agreement to the Morris Ring continuing to hold and use your data, by 25th May or as soon as possible thereafter. A simple "GDPR – I agree" will suffice.

If we do not receive this, your contact details will be removed from the website on 25th May.

Please note that it is best practice for your side contact to be of the form baqman@randommorris.org. This does not constitute personal data and so contact details of this nature can remain on the website, although the Morris Ring still requests confirmation of consent for data processing in this regard.

You will continue to receive Newsletters and other communications from the Morris Ring until membership renewal in the Autumn, when there will be another request for your consent to data processing. On this occasion, failure to provide consent to your data being used for this purpose will result in no further Newsletters or other communications.

Action: Member Clubs should undertake the same exercise with their membership, please, to ensure compliance (although providing any personal details are only held within the club and not made available to non-members this may not be absolutely necessary); currently, a status of “working towards full compliance” is acceptable for organisations of this type, full documentation obtaining consent can be finalised at the next membership renewals for clubs and the Ring.

The following is an exemplar email which Jeff Hopwood, Bagman of Etcetera Morris Men, has sent to his membership list. He has consented for this to be disseminated for the benefit of others, but please buy him a pint if you use it:

*This is a message to everyone whose email address is held by _____ Morris.
Please do not disregard it if you want the Morris to stay in touch with you.*

*The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) applies from 25th May 2018. It, and the new Data Protection Bill, replace the Data Protection Act.
Organisations like ours now require permission from members, ex-members, 'friends of', people we have danced for or with, and organisations and venues that we have 'worked' with (etc.), to hold data such as name, email address, phone number, address etc. and inform all such people and organisations of what we do with the data. **It also requires consent from every individual for the retention of their data - in most cases solely and email address.***

_____ Morris, an informal 'club' with no legal status, undertakes to:

- store all data securely
- never pass on your data to an outside organisation unless you have given us explicit permission
- delete all your personal data within 30 days if you cease to be a 'member'
- provide you with details of the data we hold relating to you within 30 days of a written request to _____ do so.

_____ Morris uses your data only for the following purpose:

- to communicate with you from time to time in respect of events etc. that may be of interest to you

What do you need to do?

You need to send the _____ Morris bagman (organiser) a communication in writing or by email (verbal communication is not acceptable) confirming your agreement to _____ Morris continuing to hold and use your data, by 25th May or as soon as possible thereafter. **A simple email replying to this one, saying "GDPR – I agree" will suffice.**

DO NOT "REPLY TO ALL"!!

If we do not receive this, your contact details will be removed from our records, and you will not receive future communications.

Of course you can always contact us again in the future, either by an email or via the contact page of our website.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Miscellaneous News

From John Connell, King John's MM:

After the success of the first Folk Dance Southampton in September we at King John's Morris Men have decided to hold the event again in 2018.

It is our aim to fill the centre of Southampton with as many different styles of English dance as we possibly can to show the rich diversity of our dance culture. The event will take place on the 15th September which will be the first Saturday of Southampton Boat Show Week so big crowds are guaranteed!

The event will take place right through the centre of Southampton at some really good dancing spots that attracted excellent audiences at last year's event.

We hope as many dance groups as possible will be able to take up our invitation to participate in what would be an excellent way to finish the year's dancing season.

Please contact us either by email at folkdancesouthampton@gmail.com or by calling John Connell on 01489 588187 for any further information.

You can find further details and photos of this year's event at facebook.com/FolkDanceSouthampton or at <http://folkdancesouthampton.weebly.com>

From Penny Munden (penny.munden50@gmail.com):

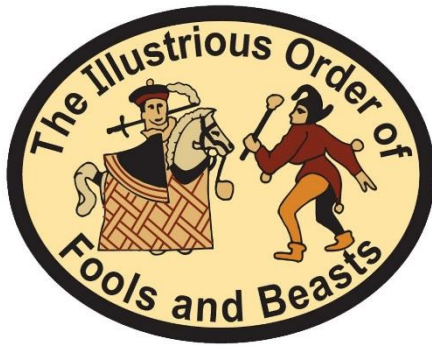
I have lived in southern Albania and have been visiting a folk festival in the south-west town of Vlora, which is under the auspices of CIOFF. I would like to find a Morris dance team that could take part in the festival next year, which runs for three days (Thurs, Fri, Sat in early May) to coincide with the opening of the summer tourist season in Vlora. Is there any way I could put out my request via your website? I would organise the transport from Corfu together with accommodation and there would be a chance to see some tourist attractions there.

Kind

regards,

Penny Munden

The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts



The first “team” to rejoin the Ring after the change to the Constitution would like the following information disseminated:

The next Fools and Beasts Unconvention will be hosted by Lassington Oak Morris in Highnam, Glos. 12th – 14th October 2018.

Open to all budding or experienced Fools, Beasts and Morris Characters, there will be workshops, a Saturday walking tour of Gloucester (bring your bus pass if you have one!) and a Feast on the Saturday night, before the AGM on the Sunday. This will be followed by an invitation to attend the Sung Eucharist at Gloucester Cathedral, in kit. A first!

Accommodation is indoor camping and the weekend cost is £70.

The application form is included as Appendix 2 of this Newsletter.

Ring Massed Dances

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

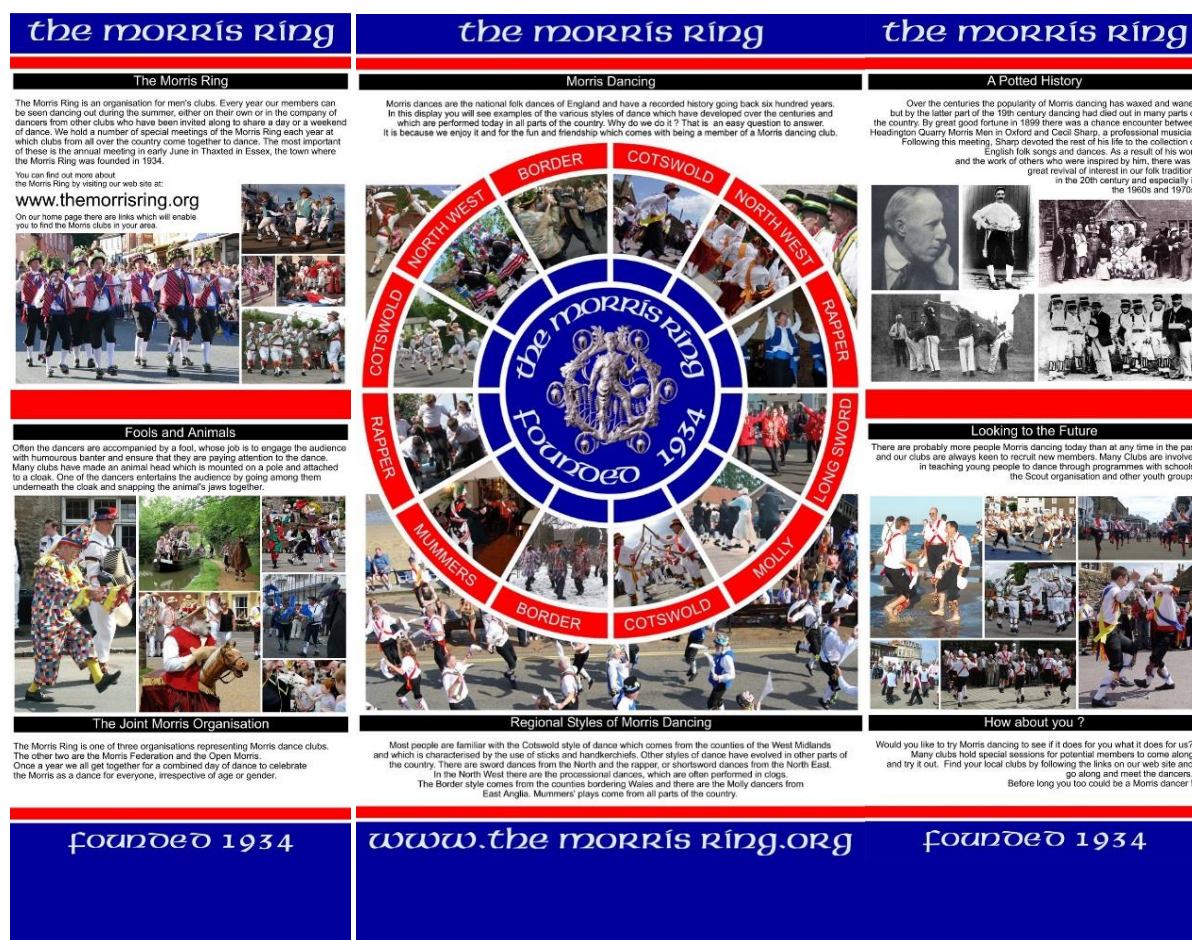
<u>Adderbury</u>	Lads-a-Bunchum Black Joke
<u>Bampton</u>	Bobbing Around
<i>(finish on rounds)</i>	Rose Tree Quaker
<u>Bledington</u>	Young Collins William & Nancy
<u>Brackley</u>	Jockey to the Fair
<u>Fieldtown</u>	Valentine Balance the Straw
<u>Headington</u>	Getting Upstairs Constant Billy (short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

Morris Ring 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.



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

Morris Ring Publications

Anthony Foard: Editor of the Morris Circular
33 Cunningham Drive, Bromborough, Wirral, CHESHIRE. CH63 0JX
Mobile Tel: 01513344566
thecircular@themorrisring.org

Mac McCoig Editor of the Morris Dancer
8 Redhills, Eccleshall, Staffordshire ST21 6JW
Tel: 01785 851052
mac.mccoig@btinternet.com

On-line Links:



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

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

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

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

Contact the Morris Ring Bagman to register to use.

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

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

The Morris Shop *"the Bells and Whistles"*

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

Call for Contributions

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

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

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



Appendix 1: Minutes of the Morris Ring ARM, 10th March 2018



SQUIRE: Eddie Worrall, 8 Bankside Avenue, Uppermill, Saddleworth, Oldham OL3 6JU Tel: 01457 829349
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SQUIRE ELECT: Pete Simpson, 69 Norfolk Road, Erdington, Birmingham, West Midlands B23 6ND Tel: 0121 3734654
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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

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

Agenda for the ARM 2018

Chair's Opening Remarks

Filming: Libra Television are producing a taster film to approach the BBC for a commission for a documentary; releases are to be offered to all speakers; all speakers for/against motion have had the opportunity to be omitted from filming although all have agreed. ToR for documentary to be discussed, will involve all three Organisations.

Bob Cross, Past Squire raised concerns over short notice; made proposal to vote on whether to film on discussions relating to the proposed amendment to the Constitution.

EW acknowledged that all speakers had consented so the decision is taken out of the meeting's hands, a meeting was held with film-makers, it led to a variety of responses but everyone wants to see documentary made. Hence a proportionate view was made in the time available, AC consulted, and the Squire has consented – nobody would say anything today if there were no cameras that they would not in the presence of the crew.

Voting procedure: the matter requires careful consideration, so the Google Group discussion and precis was offered to the membership, speaking will be a summing-up of arguments; two amendments were rejected as they were not actual amendments. A detailed discussion on proxy voting has taken place, with a large take-up showing huge engagement with the topic.

Bagman: Request for any sides attending with live proxy – Mersey.

1) Attendees and Apologies

Morris Ring ARM 2018 attendance list 1		
I. Elected Officers		Present
Squire	Edward Worrall	✓

Squire Elect	Pete Simpson	✓
Bagman	Jon Melville	✓
Treasurer	Steven Archer	✓
Treasurer Elect	Clayton Francis	✓
Chair: Advisory Council	Adam Garland	✓
<i>II. Elected Area Representatives</i>		
Area Rep.: East	Nigel Strudwick	✓
Area Rep.: North	Paul Cross	✓
Area Rep.: North West	David Loughlin	✓
Area Rep.: South West & Wales	Paul Reece	✓
Area Rep.: West Midlands	Pete Simpson	✓
Area Rep.: North East	Brian Pollard	✓
Area Rep.: North Midlands	Ben Robinson	
Area Rep.: South Midlands	Roger Comley	✓
Area Rep.: South East	Cliff Marchant	✓
<i>III. Appointed Ring Officers: Archives</i>		
Archive Group Chairman	Chris Wildridge	✓
Archive - Morris Ring Archivist & Keeper of Paper Archive	Geoff Douglas	
Archives - Keeper of the Mumming Archive	Ron Shuttleworth	
Archives - Keeper of the Photograph Archive	Duncan Broomhead	✓
Archives - Keeper of the Sword Dance Archive		
Archives - Keeper of the Sound Archive	Andy Padmore	
Archives - New Dance Collator	Lester Bailey	
Archives - Scrapbook Keeper	Cliff Marchant	*
Archives - Logbook Keeper	Charlie Corcoran	*
<i>IV. Appointed Ring Officers: Communications & Services</i>		
Publications – Editor Morris Circular	Tony Foard	✓
Publications - Editor Morris Dancer	Mac McCoig	
Social Newtwork Coordinator	Ollie King	
MR Web Site Editor	Peter de Courcy	
Overseas Bagman	Nigel Strudwick	
Morris (Ring) Shop Keeper	Shaun Lambley	
Auditor Current	Tony Tomlin	✓
Auditor Past (HMRC)	Richard Sinclair	
<i>V. Past Officers: Squires</i>		
Past Sq 1970	Bert Cleaver	
Past Sq 1976	David Welti	
Past Sq 1982	Barry Care MBE	✓
Past Sq 1984	Ray King	
Past Sq 1986	Geoff Jerram	✓
Past Sq 1988	Mike Garland	✓
Past Sq 1990	Mike Chandler	Apologies
Past Sq 1994	Richard Hankinson	✓

Past Sq 1996	Tim Sercombe	
Past Sq 1998	Daniel Fox	√
Past Sq 2000	Gerald Willey	
Past Sq 2002	Cliff Marchant	
Past Sq 2004	Bob Cross	
Past Sq 2006	Paul Reece	√
Past Sq 2008	Brian Tasker	
Past Sq 2012	Robin Springett	√
Past Sq 2014	Adam Garland	√
<i>VI. Retired Bagmen</i>		
Past Bag 1977	Mike Garland	*
Past Bag 1984	Keith Francis	
Past Bag 1991	Chas Arnold	
Past Bag 1995	Tony Parsons	
Past Bag 1998	John Frearson	
Past Bag 2005	Charlie Corcoran	√
<i>VII. Retired Treasurers</i>		
Past Tres 1979	Barry Care MBE	*
Past Tres 1982	Roger Baker	
Past Tres 1990 (current HMRC advisor)	Richard Sinclair	
Past Tres 2009	Edward Worrall	*
<i>Invited Guests</i>		
<i>Organisation</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Name</i>
The Morris Federation	President	Melanie Barber
	Secretary	Fee Lock
The Open Morris	Chair	Nicki Pickering
	Magazine Editor	Jen Cox
Morris Ring ARM 2018 attendance list 2	<i>Signatures</i>	
<i>Full Member Sides</i>	Representative 1	Representative 2
Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers		
Adderbury Village Morris Men		
Adelaide Morris Men		
Adlington Morris Men [incl. Adlington Mummers]	D Broomhead	
Aldbury Morris Men	Apologies	
Anker Morris Men		
Anstey Morris Men	Apologies	
Ashdown Forest Morris Men	Apologies	
Traditional Bampton Morris Dancers	BR Care	

Banchory-Ternan Morris Men		
Barnsley Longsword Dancers		
Bathampton Morris Men	Apologies	
Bedford Morris Men	Apologies	
Belchamp Morris		
Benfieldside Morris and Sword Dancers		
Bourne River Morris Men	Apologies	
Brackley Morris Men	Apologies	
Bristol Morris Men	Apologies	
Britannia Coconut Dancers of Bacup	Apologies	
Broadwood Morris Men	Apologies	
Bury Pace-Eggers		
Cam Valley Morris Men		
Cambridge Morris Men [aka The Travelling Morrice]	John Jenner	
Castleford Sword Dancers		
Chalice Morris Men	B Cross	C Singleton
Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men	C Marchant	
Chapel-en-le-Frith Morris Men		
Chester City Morris Men	D Loughlin	
Chipping Campden Morris Men		
Claro Sword & Morris Men		
Colchester Morris Men	Apologies	
Coventry Morris Men	Apologies	
Coventry Mummers	Apologies	
Darlington Mummers		
Dartington Morris Men	Illegible	
Datchet Border Morris Men	Apologies	
Devil's Dyke Morris Men	S King	R Scott
Dolphin Morris Men	Apologies	
Durham Rams Sword and Morris Men	Apologies	
Earlsdon Morris Men	S Newman	L Pound
East Suffolk Morris Men	M Garland	
East Surrey Morris Men	D Stewart	Illegible
Etcetera Morris Men	Apologies	
Ewell St Mary's Morris Men	Apologies	
Exeter Morris Men	C Andrews	
Faithful City Morris Men	Apologies	
First Sedgley Morris Men	Apologies	
Foresters Morris & Sword Dance Club	Apologies	
Gloucestershire Morris Men (including Gloucestershire Morris Mummers)	Apologies	
Grand Union Morris		
Great Yorkshire Morris	P Cross	

Green Man's Morris and Sword Club	P Taylor	P Simpson
Green Oak Morris Men [inc. Doncaster Mummers]	Apologies	
Greensleeves Morris Men	Apologies	
Grimsby Morris Men	Apologies	
Hageneth Morris Men	Apologies	
Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers		
Harry Taylor's Men	Apologies	
Harthill Morris	J Millward	D Nugent
Hartley Morris Men	Illegible	Illegible
Headington Quarry Morris Dancers		
Helier Morris Men	Apologies	
Helmond Morris Men	Apologies	
Icknield Way Morris Men	Apologies	
The Traditional Ilmington Morris Men	P Austin	
Jockey Morris Men	S Holder	
John O'Gaunt Morris Men	Apologies	
Kemp's Men of Norwich	Apologies	
Kennet Morris Men	P de Courcy	
King John's Morris Men	Apologies	
Kinnerton Morris Men	I Candlin	
Lassington Oak Morris Men	M Thomas	
Leicester Morris Men	C Corcoran	
Letchworth Morris Men	R Comley	
Leyland Morris Men	Apologies	
Lichfield Morris Men [Inc. Armitage Mummers]		
Lincoln & Micklebarrow Morris Men	Apologies	
London Pride Morris Men	Illegible	
Long Man Morris Men		
Lord Conyers Morris Men	Apologies	
Malvern Swordsmen		
Manchester Morris Men	CV Horie	
Martlet Sword & Morris Men	Apologies	
Mayflower Morris Men		
Men of Wight Morris Men	M Hector	
Mendip Morris Men	Apologies	
Mersey Morris Men	T Foard	
Monkseaton Morris Men	Apologies	
Mossley Morris Men		
Moulton Morris Men	S Lambley	
North British Sword Dancers	Apologies	
North Wood Morris Men	Apologies	
Northampton Morris Men	P Bignell	

Oakworth Village Morris Men	P Cross	
Offley Morris Men		
Packington Morris Men	Apologies	
Perth Morris Men	Apologies	
Peterborough Morris	M Stevens	
Pinewoods Morris Men	Apologies	
Plymouth Morris Men	Illegible	
Ravensbourne Morris Men	S Archer	
Redcar Sword Dancers	Apologies	
Richmond on Swale Morris Men	Apologies	
Ripley Morris Men	M Frier	
Royal Preston Morris Dancers	Apologies	
Rumford Morris Men	Apologies	
Rutland Morris Men	Illegible	Illegible
Saddleworth Morris Men	R Hankinson	P Hankinson
Shakespeare Morris Men	M Turvey	
Silkeborg Morris Men		
Silurian Border Morris Men		
Southport Swords		
Spring Grove Morris Men	D Seager	
St Albans Morris Men	Apologies	
Stafford Morris Men	J Edwards	P Copley
Sweyn's Ey (The Men of)	Apologies	
Taunton Deane Morris Men	Apologies	
Thames Valley Morris Men	Apologies	
Thaxted Morris Men	D Fox	
Thelwall Morris Men	D Devereaux	
Towersey Morris	Illegible	
Trigg Morris Men		
Het Utrecht Morris Team	Apologies	
Utttoxeter Heart of Oak Morris Men	Illegible	
Vancouver Morris Men	Apologies	
Victory Morris	Apologies	
Wadard Morris Men	F Hands	
Wantsum Morris Men		
Wath-on-Deerne Morris Men	Apologies	
Wessex Morris Men	Apologies	
West Somerset Morris Men	Apologies	
Westminster Morris Men	Apologies	
Whitchurch Morris Men	N Cox	C Du Mont
White Hart Morris Men	I Davison	
White Rose Morris Men	D Baker	

Winchester Morris Men	G Jerram	
Woodside Morris Men		
Wyvern Jubilee Morris Men		
Yateley Morris Men		
Morris Ring ARM 2018 attendees list 3		
<i>Associate Members</i>	<i>Signature 1</i>	<i>Signature 2</i>
Alvechurch Morris Men		
Blackheath Morris Men		
Blackmore Morris Men		
Bovey Tracey Mummers		
Buckland Shag Morris Men		
Chameleonic Morris Men		
Chewit Well Mummers,		
Crendon Morris Men		
Good Easter Molly Dancers		
Greenwich Morris Men		
Herga Mummers		
Hinckley Bullockers		
Leominster Morris	M Carter	
Morris 18 - 30	M Simons	
North Curry Mummers		
Original Welsh Border Morris Men & Cow Pat Morris	S Holder	P Simpson
Plymouth Reunion Morris Men		
Redding Moreys		
Rose & Castle Morris		
Saint Bees (Cumberland) Mummers		
St Nicholas-at-Wade with Sarre Hoodeners		
Spen Valley Longsword Dancers		
Stourvale Mummers		
Thameside Mummers		
The (Insert Name Here) Mummers		
Uplyme Morris Men		
Wantage Mummers		
Woodchurch Morris Men		
World Famous Ashdown Mummers'		
Wrigley Head Morris Men		

2) Minutes from ARM 2017

Minutes of the 2017 ARM were circulated as an Appendix to Newsletter No 105 in April 2017. They were accepted as a true record of the 2017 meeting.

Proposer	Robin Springett, Past Squire, Dartington MM
Seconder	Fred Hands, Wadard MM

3) Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

4) Squire's Report – Ed Worrall

The last year has passed quickly, and I have attended many events as Squire, meeting many of you along the way. Reports in the Circular have recorded this in more detail than I will here. However I would like to thank the generosity of the many sides who have invited me to their events. The friendship and fun of my time as Squire will stay with me for life.

I would also like to record my thanks to the members of the Advisory Council, and others beyond, who have been an invaluable source of assistance throughout my term in office. No Squire can operate in isolation. Jon Melville as our indefatigable Bagman and Steven Archer as Treasurer have also helped make my time as Squire more enjoyable by their company, and more smooth by their work as fellow Officers. Steven is due to retire after 6 years as Treasurer at this year's ARM and I wish him well in his (Morris) retirement.

I shall be dancing out myself on the Sunday of the Saddleworth Rushcart Ring Meeting. Subject to appointments being ratified at the ARM I am very pleased to be handing over the reins of office to my friend Pete Simpson of Jockey Morris Men.

Our other new Officer is Clayton Francis of East Surrey Morris Men who will be taking over as our new Treasurer. Many of you will know Clayton from his time as ESMM's Bagman. I first suggested he consider standing as Treasurer at East Surrey's Rye weekend in May last year. Having recruited his daughter Bethany to work on convincing him to stand, I am glad her hard work has paid off! I think I am right in saying Clayton will be the first East Surrey side member to be an officer of the Morris Ring. A proud moment for him and one of our 6 founding clubs. As you will know, the Morris Ring at this year's ARM must decide on a proposal by Leicester MM to alter our Constitution to remove the bar on gender in our member sides. By the time of the ARM many sides will have met to discuss their views, taken part in debate on the Google Group and elsewhere, and considered the issues raised.

In my statement on Leicester's proposal I asked sides to reflect on the fundamental principles of the Morris Ring: fellowship, friendship, standard of dance and its teaching, a concern for the perpetuation of Morris into the future. I also warned of decline and irrelevance if we turned away from the fact that both the society within which we live and the Morris world as it now stands are radically different from those at the time of our founding in the 1930's. If we fail to reflect this environment in how we are and act, we have little future.

I stand by all of this and I wish all Morris Ring member sides to consider these final points: We were founded to bring about change in the Morris world. Change, and an understanding of the possibilities that change can bring, are in our DNA. Without change there would have been no creation of the Morris Ring in 1934.

At countless feasts since, we have toasted the memory of those collectors and teachers of Morris who have given us all so much. But in doing so, we are toasting their foresight in passing on a legacy.

We stand at a point in time in our history where we can do the same if we embrace change. The principles I mention above do have value and relevance to the Morris world, but without change, we cannot hope to pass them on and we risk them fading from history.

Others have changed when we would not. Let us rediscover our confidence and founding spirit and take a leading role in the future of the Morris world.

Advisory Council Working Group

It is clear that many issues will require consideration, following the vote on Leicester's motion at the ARM. With that in mind I will be referring the matter to the Advisory Council immediately after the ARM. I have asked both Geoff Jerram and Mike Garland to join the Advisory Council discussion at this year's ARM to assist as co-opted members. Both bring much valuable experience and abilities to assist the Council's work.

If Leicester's motion was accepted, I also set up a working group to coordinate the taking of views, proposing action etc. on a number of issues: Internal/external relations, organisational change that may be required, the promotion of a higher standard of dance, among others. This would make an initial report back to the Officers and membership over the summer.

Pete Simpson has agreed to chair such a working group, if it is required, as Squire Elect. Clayton Francis as incoming Treasurer has agreed to be the vice-chair. They would decide the composition of such a working group beyond that.

There is a wide range of talent in the Morris Ring, and we would need to tap it all.

Ed Worrall, Squire of the Morris Ring

There were no matters arising.

5) Bagman's Report – Jon Melville

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

While I am delighted at the increase in membership on the Google Group and the increased traffic of both information and informed opinion, might I remind Bagmen to circulate the Newsletter to club members when it arrives, and ask everyone to read it, before requesting information which is contained therein?

I have been delighted to be involved in a number of activities this past year which will hopefully contribute to the continuance of the Morris and improvements in standards.

Many thanks to all those who volunteered their time to support nascent Morris sides in their start-up phase; through this we have provided support to two, one of which, Knightlow Morris of Ryton-on-Dunsmore, has now danced at both its first Ale and achieved its first public performance. Remarkable for a side where all the core membership are either new to Morris or are not currently members of other teams.

The Ring Jigs Instructional team has been on tour, supporting the Orchard Morris Project in Dorking; this is an independent set of come-all-ye Morris workshops intended to promote and encourage Morris in what is currently its heartland, the South East of England. Credit is also due to East Surrey MM who have also supported this initiative.

In similar vein, I have been gathering input from a number of Foremen with a view to collating a Foreman's Handbook – not so much a "do it like this" document, but something offering

advice and guidance to inexperienced Foremen on teaching the dance and improving standards. The next step will be a Musician's Handbook - watch this space!

I have attended a number of Ring, JMO and regular Morris events in the past year and it is impossible not to observe declining standards of both dance and performance from an ageing Morris population. While it is delightful to see youth and energy demonstrating how it ought to be done, it remains a shame to inform any team that their services will not be required for a Ring Meeting show dance.

As we enter what will be a period of considerable change for the Morris Ring regardless of the outcome of "the vote," I believe the above demonstrates that the Morris Ring has a relevance and a significant part to play in fulfilling its core objectives, encouraging the performance of the Morris and maintaining its traditions.

Jon Melville, Indefatigable Bagman of the Morris Ring

There were no matters arising.

6) Treasurer's Report – Steven Archer

1 Introduction

Despite a reduced membership, income held up due to some very generous donations. With substantial collections at Ring Meetings and reduced expenditure, the General Fund recorded a healthy 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:-

Harry Taylor's Men - following an overwhelming vote in favour of their full membership of the Morris Ring, the side danced in at the London Ring Meeting.

The Forest of Dean Morris Men – ran out of men and decided to go mixed to increase numbers. They have now joined the Morris Federation

Cinque Port Morris Men - ran out of men and disbanded

Hexham Morris Men – decided at their AGM to join the Morris Federation. Whilst wishing to remain a male dancing side they felt that the MR's perspective on women's involvement in Ring activities was increasingly anachronistic.

One Day Wonders Travelling Morris - has disbanded

One renewal remains outstanding and is expected in January.

Overall we lost 4 sides at this renewal, half disbanded and half joined the Fed. However the situation could have been twice as bad as a further four sides have informed us of their intention to follow a recruitment strategy free from the male only restriction in 2018. Under the current Constitution this would mean leaving the Morris Ring to pursue their future with another JMO member. However in the light of Leicester MM's proposal for constitutional change they have decided to renew for this year and await the outcome of the vote. These sides have no desire to leave the Morris Ring but will find themselves forced to do so unless the current constitution is amended. This has also been the case for many of the other sides which have left in the past 6 years of my tenure.

Prior year history
of net change

2016 - 3 lost

2015 - 3 lost

2014 - 4 lost

2013 - 2 gained

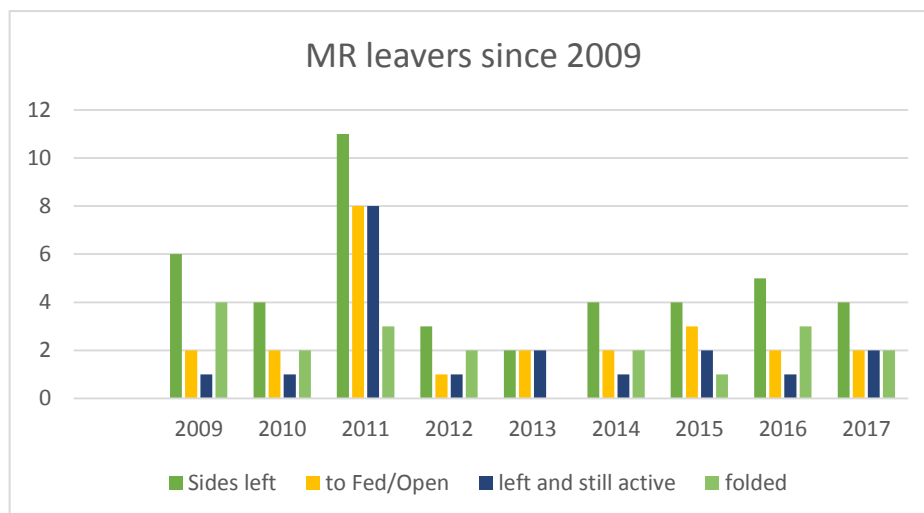
2012 - 3 lost

2011 - 10 lost

At renewal once
again we asked for
the "number of
active members".

This year just 75%

of our 169 sides responded. The data showed that 25% of sides had increased in number, 20% declined and 55% remained the same. This is a significantly different result from last year's even split between all three categories. Average membership remained at just under 18 per side, giving a total projected number of 3,000 individuals, down from 3,115 last year.



3 Classes of Membership

At present we have just two classes of membership:-

Full Membership with full voting rights and Public Liability Insurance.

Associate Membership without voting rights but with Public Liability insurance.

In order to permit and encourage Morris sides which already have Public Liability Insurance with another organisation to enjoy membership of the Morris Ring, I recommend the creation of a **Joint Membership** category. This will open up an opportunity for any side which meets the Constitutional requirements of the Morris Ring and has PL insurance cover elsewhere, to seek Joint Membership. The side may be a standalone entity or a distinct part of a larger umbrella organisation. In effect this will be Associate Membership without insurance cover at an annual cost of £20 subject to annual review.

4 Ring Finances

Donations – We have been very fortunate this year to receive donations totalling nearly £3,800. £3,000 came from an old friend and long standing supporter of the Morris Ring and will be used to purchase a special print run of the final printed edition of Lionel's Handbook of Morris Dancing. It will be on sale in the Morris Shop later in the 2018. £800 came from the closing bank balance of a side which folded.

Ring Meetings – Each of the three 2017 meetings received a grant of £500 and in return donated collections amounting to a total of nearly £1,370, so the net cost of meetings for the year was £130. Previous years are as follows:-

2016 – loss of £300

2015 – loss of £700

2014 – loss of £200

2013 – loss of £300

2017 has been the first financial year since you voted to pay the officer's and shop costs for attendance at Ring Meetings from MR funds. This is shown as a separate line in the accounts.

The Shop - the shop had a difficult time towards the year end when the website failed and Shaun suffered communications problems. However he managed to attend 13 meetings during the year including most of the Morris Ring events.

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

Youth Fund – It was a thin year for youth events as The Sussex Schools Festival did not run and the only claim on funds came from the Leicester MM Youth Instructional. The Sussex festival will run again in 2018 and we look forward to more opportunities arising in the coming year.

Other costs and reserves – Officer's costs were only £900 this year, lower than last year. £175 was paid out to members attending the Jigs weekend for the first or second time, more than the previous year. The cost of Insurance rose less than expected but remains and increasing expense. Over £270 interest was received on funds deposited. This is less than last year, reflecting lower interest rates.

5 General policy and financial reserves

Our finances are strong, 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 have enhanced our website to make it easier to view on mobile devices and we will continue to supply your needs from The Morris Shop. Put together this is an ambitious combination of direct subsidy and increased risk taken against a background of increasing costs and falling membership. This is only made possible by our current financial strength and we must not squander it.

6 And finally

This is my sixth and final report. I shall be handing over the "cheque book" to a new Treasurer at the ARM. I have served with four Squires and two Bagmen so now seems a good time to move on. I have had a wonderful ride over the last six years and I am pleased to be able to hand over the role to such a talented and capable team at such an optimistic time for the Morris Ring.

Of course I am personally pleased that the finances are now stronger than ever and that the subscription rates have not increased on my watch; we are spending money on things which directly benefit you all and we are moving forward. I came to office just after the vote to admit female musicians and I am leaving on the cusp of a decision to make the Morris Ring open to all those who wish to celebrate The Morris and enjoy its fellowship. By moving forward to reflect the society around us whilst continuing to respect our heritage, we have a bright future ahead.

It's been a pleasure meeting so many of you over the years and if you live near a canal I may yet drop in to see you on my retirement tour of the inland waterways, so we could meet again.

Steven Archer, Treasurer of the Morris Ring

Substantial surplus is due to a generous donation for the specific purpose of a last printing of Bacon Handbook of Morris Dances.

Nigel Cox, Whitchurch MM: requested issue of balance sheet a week in advance.

Proposal:

To create an additional category of Joint Membership of the Morris Ring, for sides already members of other Organisations, at a cost of £20 per annum. All conditions of Membership other than the requirement for membership of another Organisation shall be as Associate Membership.

Proposer	Steven Archer, Treasurer of the Morris Ring
Seconder	John Edwards, Stafford MM and IOF&B

EW explained rationale for proposal and put to a show of hands. One abstention, no votes against, motion carried.

THE MORRIS RING - ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2017								
		GENERAL FUND	MORRIS SHOP	ARCHIVE FUND	YOUTH FUND	RESERVE FUND	2017 TOTAL	2016
		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
INCOME								
SUBSCRIPTIONS:								
Members 2016-17	0							
Members 2017-18	6,970							
Associates 2016-17	100							
Associates 2017-18	1,160							
Individual publications 2016-17	181							
Individual publications 2017-18	119	8,530						8,711
SALES								
Income	4,995							6,956
Change in stock	(2,715)							(4,708)
Less Expenditure	(2,164)							(2,905)
Surplus			116					(657)
Surplus on Meetings								
Hartley (354)	553							
Ravensbourne (355)	716							
Saddleworth (356)	100							
Joint Morris Organisations day of dance	0	1,369						1,694
DONATIONS/INTEREST								
Archive				225				258
75th Anniversary Fund					231			573
Bank Interest Received					1	271		382
Other		3,773						209
Total Income		13,672	116	225	232	271	14,516	11,168
<i>prior year</i>		10,614	(657)	258	573	381		
EXPENDITURE								
Insurance	2,904							2,967
Cost of Circular & Newsletter	811	3,715						1,002
OFFICERS EXPENSES								
Squire	391							682
Bagman	251							238
Treasurer	246							121
Other travel	0	888						0
General Expenses Paid:								
AC Meeting costs	468							570
Advertising	0							0
Archive costs				326				111
ARM Costs	1,152							1,124
Events	500				25			850
General Overhead Expenses etc	20							225
Jigs weekend subsidy	176							165
JMO AGM expenses	223							389
Ring meeting costs (£500 subsidy per host)	1,500							2,000
Ring meeting costs (Officer attendance etc.)	479							0
Website	1,104	5,621						139
Charitable donations		0						0
Total Expenditure		10,224	0	326	25	0	10,575	10,582
<i>prior year</i>		10,085	36	111	350	0		
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR YEAR		3,448	116	(101)	207	271	3,940	587
<i>prior year</i>		528	(693)	147	223	381		
FUND BALANCE:								
Brought forward		3,240	18,633	3,540	1,960	60,058	87,430	86,843
Transferred to (from) Reserve Fund		(3,000)	(2,000)			5,000		
Surplus/Deficit for year		3,448	116	(101)	207	271	3,940	587
Carried forward		3,688	16,749	3,438	2,166	65,329	91,370	87,430
MADE UP OF:-								
Cash at Bank		3,688	6,136	3,438	2,166	65,329	80,758	74,102
Value at cost of Stocks held for resale			10,613					13,328
Fund balance at year end		3,688	16,749	3,438	2,166	65,329	91,370	87,430

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

Since I took over this position my responsibilities have been fairly simple to perform. Our Squire has basically had only two items on the agenda; how the Ring goes about recruiting, and how the different areas recruitment projects are performing.

There is a common understanding that recruiting is a difficult matter and though many different ideas have been tried there is still limited success. The discussions at the Advisory Council have centred around this issue but I shall let the Area Reps pass comment in their reports on the current situation.

More recently our Squire has asked the Council to consider the procedural aspects of consulting with members re the motion to alter the constitution to welcome mixed sides as member clubs.

The discussion highlighted the following aspects;

- 1) The process should be open and transparent
- 2) It should aim to be fully inclusive allowing all clubs to voice their opinion and not just those who speak loudest
- 3) It should be mediated so as to be constructive and not just deteriorate into personal vitriol or insults
- 4) As a matter of priority it should confirm that **individual clubs will not be forced to alter their own membership**
- 5) It should encourage all member clubs to exercise their right to vote

The Morris Ring is on the verge of being able to make a hugely important decision in order to make another step forward in the evolution of this 600 year old tradition. The Advisory Council were keen to ensure that all current member clubs could participate in this process and be content that their voice would not be ridiculed, the mediation of the process will ensure that personal attacks will not be acceptable.

There were no matters arising.

8) Archive Report – Chris Wildridge

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

Introduction

This report covers the period which commenced with a meeting of the Morris Ring Archive Group at the ARM 2017.

MRAG Meetings 2017

Two meetings were held in 2017, one in March at the ARM, another in September at John Edwards' house. My thanks to John and his wife, Carol, for their accommodating the Group and their excellent catering.

In March several new members were welcomed to the Group, Gordon Blunt [Rutland], John Edwards [Stafford] and Derek Schofield [Manley]. Gordon and John bring their experience of web sites to the skills set in the Group and Derek has a national profile throughout the world of traditional music and dance. There has been one resignation from the Group as Andy Padmore has resigned as the Keeper of the Sound Archive.

At the March meeting there was a wide ranging discussion on a series of topics including the:

- 1 possibility of using the MR website to host copies of key documents
- 2 constitution of the Morris Ring Archive Group
- 3 status of the Morris Ring Archive at Chelmsford should the Morris Ring be wound up
- 4 transfer of films in the MR Archive to digital formats. It is now possible to access films in the MR Archive by visiting the Essex Record Office. Work is in progress to obtain copyright permissions

Visit to Chelmsford, 10th February, 2017

On 10th February 2017 I visited the Essex Record Office [ERO] with Geoff Douglas. Staff reductions had resulted in the postponement of any bid development activities. The discussion with the Archivist covered methods of obtaining a better understanding of the contents of the Archive.

Visit to Chelmsford, 25th – 28th July 2017

As a result of that visit I started working on the Chris Metherell database to better understand how it related to the MR Archive in Chelmsford.

A detailed account of that exercise, "Report on the analysis of documents in the Essex Record Office 2017 08 25" is available from the Chairman.

The Metherell database includes material in his private collection and material now in the Sword Dance Archive administered by Phil Heaton.

A desk exercise to remove those two classes of material from the database and to integrate the remainder with details contained in the Essex Record Online Catalogue SEAX was carried

out. A report on that exercise, "Resolution of queries about the Morris Ring Archive 2017 09 08" is also available from the Chairman.

These reports have been discussed by the Group. Further work is required to provide a more accurate estimate of the contents of the MR Archive.

Contents of the Morris Ring Archive Chelmsford

In preparing the above reports a number of issues were discussed in emails with Chris Metherell. In summary this is the definitive statement by the Morris Ring Archive Group:

The MR Archive contains manuscript material, original research, letters, agendas, minutes, accounts, working documents, photographs, films, music recordings, videos and ephemera.

It does not contain books, magazine articles collected by Ivor Allsop and others and previously regarded as part of the MR Archive. Chris Metherell confirmed that the Essex Record Office would not accept any books or magazine articles. Books had been passed to the Morris Ring shop and sold. Magazines had been disposed of prior to the transfer to the Essex Record Office in 2010.

MRAG Meeting September 2017

The meeting considered the following:

An 'operating document' for the Group and the copyright of films in the ERO.

Electronic archive and a survey of websites

Individual team archives

Morris dance database – being developed by Colin Andrews

The development of a programme to address these and other initiatives was discussed.

Morris Ring Photographic Archive Report- 2018

It has been another good year for the Morris Ring Photographic Archive; with a regular stream of enquiries throughout the year.

New photographs and information have been donated by Morris sides, individual collectors and dancers plus relatives of ex Morris men, the largest single donation was of 51 photographs from Paul Woloschuk, all are gratefully received. I have also liaised with other collectors and archives in a quest for information about various historical photographs in the Morris Ring Archive, often has often involved interesting detective work. The bulk of the work I have carried out during the last year has been answering enquiries, supplying photos and providing information. During the year I have supplied photographs and information, to a wide range of different people including Morris sides researching their own history, individual Morris dancers, other collectors, academics wanting photographs for papers, authors wanting illustrations, genealogists researching their family Morris heritage, CD and book cover designs, a blog, Archivists plus two exhibitions and a talk about the history of Morris Dancing.

Since the September meeting work has progressed on obtaining copyright clearance for films in the MR Archive, re-assessing the descriptions of the films and with ERO staff on upgrading the catalogue entries on the ERO web based catalogue prior to the films being made available online.

Mumming Archive Report – Ron Shuttleworth

As always I am continuing to develop, expand and service the Digital Collection. In the past year I have compiled a full list of all known collections which contain or might contain material about Folk Plays, including lists and where possible, scans, of such material. Also, courtesy of Duncan Broomhead I have digitised and fully listed the Papers of Major Arnold Boyd, who revived Antrobus Soulcafers.

I have recently abandoned the TDRG website and started my own at <https://folkplayarchive.co.uk/>

During the Summer, 'new' material dried up to the point where I began to wonder if there was any more to get, but in the last couple of months things have really hotted up in a way that shows that there is still work to do.

There were no matters arising from the floor. Chris Wildridge (Chair) explained the difficulty in indexing materials to ensure all possible searches are possible. A proposal is under consideration to fund the MRAG to widen the archive beyond the material in ERO Chelmsford. EW praised the work of MRAG members.

Duncan Broomhead, Keeper of the Photographic Archive: from a photograph of Bucknell morris late 1800's, and a recording in 1980's of Bert Cleaver playing Joseph Powell's pipe and tabor, where the instruments were loaned by family, Duncan tracked the instruments down and they are now in the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford.

John Jenner, Cambridge MM: need to catalogue materials not held by the MR archive; CW stated that this process is being started with 15 sides initially, to be widened next year.

Barry Care, Past Squire, Traditional Bampton MD: MR previously circulated a request for archival material through magazine advertisements and acquired Joseph Powell's belt. EW highlighted the value of archival material and offered thanks to the Group.

9) Publications Officers' Reports – Tony Foard - Ring Circular

A dearth of submitted material, and the non-appearance of some pledged articles, resulted in just one issue of *The Morris Ring Circular* being published in 2017. I have to echo Mac McCoig, editor of *The Morris Dancer*, when he remarks, "Sadly...contributions [for publication] come to me rarely and in dribs and drabs." It is an established fact that, as far as the remit of *The Morris Ring Circular* (celebrating the activities of Morris Ring member sides) is concerned, very many sides now find it far more convenient and timely to share the fruits of their energies on Facebook, Instagram and Flickr etc. as well as through their own world wide web domains (including the Morris Ring's very own website, on occasions). The advantages of this approach are undeniable and the community, in the main, benefits greatly. Of course, one must knowingly seek out or be led to such jewels (cf Donald Rumsfeld's "unknown unknowns"), whereas printed Morris publications like the *MRC* do at least present a topical record, however incomplete, of boots, shoes and clogs on the ground (and digital enfranchisement is not a prerequisite to its enjoyment).

You may also be interested (but not astonished) to learn that postage for the last issue of MRC, at twenty-four A4 pages, constituted 47% of the overall production cost.

In the light of all this, it may be time to consider anew how best we provide a house organ in paper form that adequately shows off what Morris Ring sides are all about.

Meanwhile, grateful thanks to those who have sent photographs and articles to *The Morris Ring Circular*, and I invite contributions of any scope and length for future issues— even that one photograph you took which somehow captured the moment. I'd especially appreciate more reports and photos from Morris Ring meetings and other similar showcase events, many of which fail to find their way into the editorial in-box. Mac, Jon and I will liaise to sort out what gets published where, so please get writing and snapping. *Thanks!*

Mac McCoig – The Morris Dancer

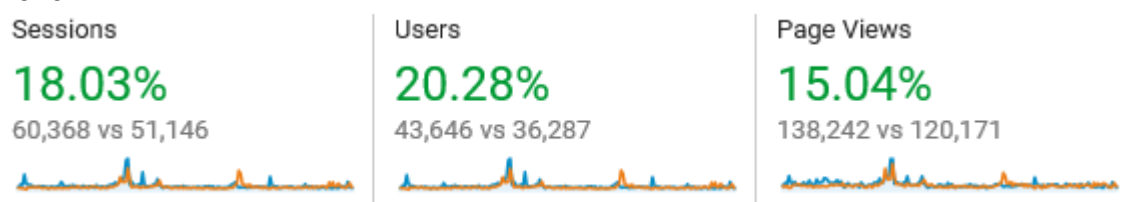
I have managed just one issue in the last year – once again due to the dearth of articles to include. I am therefore appealing for any articles/papers/studies etc. for likely inclusion in the 'Dancer'.

One thought I had was to publish an issue or two dedicated to histories of our Ring sides, past or present. Anyone that has written a history of their side (and I know most of you have), and would like to see it in The Morris Dancer, would you please send me a copy: mac.mccoig@btinternet.com. Don't forget, copies of The Morris Dancer are lodged with the British Library as a permanent record for future historians and academics.

Peter De Courcy – Web Editor

It has been another very satisfactory year for your web site with healthy increased activity in all areas with over 60,000 visitor sessions during the last year, viewing our pages 138,242 times. The 20% users increase was due in no small part to Martin Jones' new "responsive" mobile friendly interface. Desktop visitors now account for just half of the traffic with mobiles taking a third and the final sixth from tablets. I know of a fair number of musicians who now listen to the mp3 of a dance tune on their phone to remind them how it goes – progress!

The following metrics give an idea of reach of our pages for the year 2017 and % increases on 2016



The Morris Matters news summary still proves popular with Saddleworth taking the prize yet again for most "googlable" media coverage in 2017 followed again by Grimsby with Icknield Way and Silurian tying for third place. A reminder; 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". Last year's May Day page had over 5000 hits! Those sides without up to date websites will be missed unless you let me know about your "Traditional" event.

As always, any technical issues – and there were only a couple in 12 months despite the upgrade - 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 (well over 400) has been maintained, holidays and weekends of dance permitting.

We're keen to have a lively, fresh and informative web site that is a first port of call for anyone with an interest in Morris - but news, in our opinion, must be newsworthy and not just for the

sake of it. If your side has items or photos you believe are of national (or even international) interest, or a traditional annual event worthy of inclusion in our seasonal calendar, please, please let me know at webeditor@themorrisring.org.

I continue to share much information posted on Facebook by Ring sides, or their active Facebookers, on our own Facebook page, regularly beating Eddie Worrall to it. Importantly I post links to website events, news items and journal publications. Some 400 people are reached regularly each day, over 3000 each month “engaging” with our posts by sharing, commenting or liking. The January Newsletter reached over 6000 people in 3 days! I wonder why? The number of people liking our page broke the 1000 barrier and currently stands at 1024. Our audience is rather diverse - and could be potential recruits. Worth the effort I believe, which I’m happy to carry on doing.



There were no matters arising.

10) Overseas Bagman’s Report – Nigel Strudwick

I have probably more events and things to write about from overseas than in my East report. I understand that Silkeborg came to the Thaxted meeting which I was unable to attend due to a clash with my village’s Whitsun event. We hosted Martin Graetz of Pinewoods for a few days, and he also danced out with DDMM one evening. Although not a Ring side, Minnesota Traditional Morris, a men’s side whom I have known for more than a few years, did a tour of the UK and also danced with DDMM and attended the Ely Folk Festival in July.

I have done a check-in with all sides about whether they have any strong feelings one way or the other on the Leicester MM motion that is going to dominate the ARM. I have not heard from every club, but where I have, the feeling seems as in the East to be inevitable acceptance but that everyone has indicated that they intend to stay male dancer only. Several sides in North America and Australia have commented on the very different Morris histories and environments there anyway, and Perth MM particularly noted that they and Adelaide MM, our two Antipodean sides, are the only male sides left in Australia.

Talking of Australia, it was a big Morris year Down Under. The Australian Morris Ring National Ale in August–September, which went from Adelaide to Melbourne to Canberra, was by all accounts a great success. Despite some interest, in the end the only UK side to go was Ragged Robin, but I received a very enthusiastic write-up from Peter Austin (Jockey etc). I had given serious consideration to going, but an earlier invitation to lecture in that country meant I was there in March–April, where I had the opportunity to dance in Perth with Perth MM, one of

the highlights of my trip. It was great to see the most isolated Ring side on the planet in their home environment.

As usual, many UK sides have made overseas trips this year, including my own Devil's Dyke. Everything I have heard is good. I have had a few more enquiries than usual about whether I am aware of any particular overseas event, but I have to confess that data available to me really rarely extends beyond what most sides already know or what is available via CIOFF. I would again encourage sides who have travelled to let me know any information that they think might be useful for others.

There were no matters arising.

11) Elections

Squire of the Morris Ring for 2018-2020

There is one candidate to be ratified as Squire of the Morris Ring, Peter Simpson of Jockey MM, nominated by Chalice MM.



Peter's statement: I discovered the joys of Morris dancing on joining Jockey MM 20 years ago. Being a member of Jockey I've danced Cotswold, Border, Rapper and some Longsword. I'm also a member of the Original Welsh Border and, last year, I proudly became a life member of Green Man Morris. Over the years I've served Jockey as Archivist, Deputy Foreman and Foreman.

Nine years ago I was asked to become West Midlands Area Representative for the Morris Ring. It's a role I thoroughly enjoy, enabling me to meet clubs, make friends and stretch my dance skills. As Area rep' you're at the heart of the Morris Ring, giving you a unique insight into its workings, your own area and of the JMO.

In recent years, as AR, I've helped breathe life into the first regional JMO at Warwick and put a team together to organise ARMs. I have helped and supported 18–30, enabling them to come to Birmingham. Currently I am looking for a way to revitalise the Lichfield tradition.

I regularly attend Saddleworth Rushcart, Thaxted, JMO meetings and days of dance, happily dancing with scratch sides if my own club is not there.

For me the big issue is the future of the Morris Ring. Recruitment is a big part of this, not just young men but capable men of all ages. I've strong opinions on the importance of dance and display standards. We are, after all, dancers and should be careful to maintain the Morris Ring's high standards.

Peter Simpson was ratified by the meeting, without objection. PS thanked all for support and encouragement.



Treasurer of the Morris Ring 2018

There is one candidate to be ratified as Treasurer of the Morris Ring, Clayton Francis of East Surrey MM, nominated by Greensleeves MM.

Clayton's statement: I have been dancing with East Surrey Morris Men since 2000 and have been Bagman from 2007-17 (this is a

combined secretary and treasurer role). During the course of my tenure the accounts which were barely breaking even were transformed to have enough working capital to see the year through and create a deposit account with a healthy balance.

In my professional career I have had full Profit and Loss responsibility for Europe for a medium sized business and run my own Consultancy business. Currently I am a teacher of Computer Science and Business to 11 - 19 year olds in a secondary school. I have also held the Treasurer role for Balham Cycling Club for 8 years up to 2002.

I put my name forward to become Treasurer of the Morris Ring having had proven experience in managing the accounts of East Surrey MM for 10 years. I have exercised prudent financial management but significantly am not afraid to spend money when it is necessary.

I have been a huge supporter of the Morris Ring partly coming from a founder side, and as a result have a long heritage and commitment to make it an organisation to be proud of. I believe that I can be a positive influence within the Morris Ring and the Morris world beyond and will apply my skills in partnership with the Bagman to support the Squire in the future.

I would be honoured to be elected and serve as Treasurer.

Clayton Francis was ratified by the meeting, without objection. Steven Archer handed over the official chequebook and the original MR cash book containing Walter Abson's records of the first two years of the MR.

Area Reps

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 (2020)

North East, Brian Pollard (2019)

West Midlands, Peter Simpson (2020) *Requires replacement, see above*

Eastern, Nigel Strudwick (2019)

South Wales and West, Paul Reece (2020)

South East, Cliff Marchant (2018)

Elections for Area Rep positions:

North Midlands	Candidate	Charlie Corcoran
Northern	Candidate	Jono Millward
South East	Candidate	Fred Hands
South Midlands	Roger Comley continuing	
West Midlands	Candidate	Mark Carter (replacing Peter Simpson)

All positions ratified at the Area Meetings in the morning.

12) Proposal:

To admit Leominster Morris, Associate Members of the Morris Ring, to full Membership.

Proposer	Pete Simpson, Jockey MM
Seconder	Chipping Campden MM

Supporting statement: Pete Simpson, in his capacity as Area Rep, confirmed that he has seen Leominster Morris perform to a standard suitable for Membership of the Morris Ring.

Outcome: *Application for Membership ratified with all votes in favour.*

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

This last year has been as follows;

The Britannia Coconut Dancers have been attending various events & folk festivals through the country to show their great tradition whilst recruiting and training up new members. Also a new secretary and treasurer have been working on the new website and shop that is up and running but updates and improvements on the site continue. Now they are busy organizing the Crown Affair which is the day of dance that they host. They have been able to double the number of sides that they can invite.

Going into 2018 they are working very hard to get the newest members up to scratch whilst looking for more (new members). Up to now they have a nice selection of venues which they are working on to have a strong team in order for them to keep on dancing. Easter Saturday preparations are well on the way for them to continue the Annual Customary Boundary Dance on 31st March 2018. They are also working with the local council / councillors and TM Company.

Unfortunately this is not the same for Mossley Morris Men. They have had a quiet year due to lack of numbers, danced locally and at Rush Cart, but unless they get more members it is not looking good for this year.

Kinnerton MM have had a good 2017 season dancing out 16 times which was (the same as 2016). That broke down in to 7 pub nights, 3 paid bookings, 2 good will bookings, 3 full days of dance which included Saddleworth Rush Cart and a tour of Derbyshire. They only have nine dancing members and three musician members; their last dancer recruit was in 2015. They gained a musician recruit this autumn and also saw the return of a past member for the practice season only....he returns to Spain in March! They now have no one under the age of 60 with one man over 80.... as is the returnee.. Average age is 67. They can still put on a lively show though, so things are looking good for 2018. Already they have accepted three invitations to dance with others sides and are also hoping to organize a weekend of dance....and yes have invited two ladies teams.

Chapel-en-le-Frith Morris Men are pretty much the same as this time last year, although they have gained a musician - a fiddler who has recently come to be in love with the area and has already proving to be a great acquisition. This therefore enables the longstanding musician/dancers to take more part in the dancing effectively increasing the dancing men by one.

They continue to practice on Monday evenings at the Playhouse, Chapel-en-le-Frith and dance out regularly on Monday evenings from May to September. With many invitations to dance out they find they are frequently unable to accept them. The usual reason - they are all getting older and a number of the men are carrying age-related injuries such as knees and ankles. Present number is about 17, but two are now non-dancing for the reason just given.

Leyland are still ticking over with no new recruits it was their 50th last year and they had a busy year dancing out at least once per month thro' 2017.

Thelwall Morris Men had another full programme in 2017, most engagements being local but with a notable trip to the Thaxted meeting in June. The side has made extensive attempts to recruit. There was hope with three potential recruits appearing in September, but one has not been seen since and the other two immediately picked up injuries so will be unlikely to be dancing out in 2018. The team now has a nominal 15 members, but their 2018 programme is likely to be reduced, due to a significant number of on-going injuries. They are however looking forwards to the Helmond Ring meeting.

In 2017 the North British Sword Dancers celebrated their 25th anniversary with yet another visit to the Saddleworth Rushcart, which was where it all began for them. In the last year they have had their two regular practice weekends, this time in Birmingham and Liverpool, and have recruited several new members. The regular Easter excursion was to Antwerp, and in view of the anniversary an extra trip on the ferry was arranged dancing at the Hasseltse Jeneverfeesten, a Belgian celebration of gin and was enjoyed by all. In the coming year they are already looking forward to Easter in Kortrijk (also Belgium), closely followed by the Todmorden Folk Festival and of course Saddleworth Rushcart.

There has been little change with Manchester Morris Men. Still have 14 active dancers, and can turn out a North West side to most of their dance-outs. The two last joining members of about 2 and 4 years are 'up to speed' and in the past few weeks another newcomer has appeared at practice. However, they are still low on musicians, and have had to turn down some events because of this. In 2017 they hosted Cyprus Morris for a week in return for having spent a week as their guests in 2015. They have danced at 13 other events at weekends, 7 of which were fee-paying; plus 15 weekday evenings dancing outside local hostelrys, etc.

John O'Gaunt Morris are now able to see some light at the end of the tunnel. They are returning to their roots and reverting to once more become a "rapper team". The lads have been practicing hard and it is hoped that their first public performance will be at their annual tour of South Lakeland on Good Friday. This year the "John O' Gaunt Good Friday Tour" will be a special one as they will be celebrating their 50th anniversary. They are hope to be joined, as usual, by "Southport Swords" who are also celebrating their 50 years of existence. Other guest teams invited are "Stone The Crows" and "Yon Lot". They are still in need of new members so if anyone reading this who is moving to Lancashire they would be

pleased to welcome them, especially if they are under retirement age! They are hopefully to get a teenage member soon, this being dependent on Derek Humphrey's grandson being accepted at the university.

This year is Royal Preston Morris Dancers 40th Anniversary and they are hoping to have a couple of events in celebration. One is on July 1st at Clitheroe where Ripon City Morris Dancers will join them with whom they have a good relationship and will be based around Clitheroe-a suitable halfway venue; the rest of the season is currently being put together. They attend the Grange-over-Sands Edwardian Festival in early June also celebrate the Longest Day with a Dance-Out on the earliest Thursday Evening in Croston along with Stone-the -Crows Border Morris and other guest Teams. This year they have been invited for the first time to Waddington, again near Clitheroe, for their Annual Duck Race Weekend. In August they are booked to appear at the village of Higham's Scarecrow Festival and during September plan to have a Day of Morris in the City of Preston with a few Guests, as part of the 40th year celebrations.

They are fortunate to have a new Member join earlier this month who has danced with a Cotswold Sides previously and will shortly be able to dance out

In addition to actual Dance-Outs and Practices they have completed a number of Workshops over the last year or so on behalf of Lancashire County Council, teaching local school children and giving them an insight into the Traditions of Morris-particularly North West of course.

In 2017 Adlington Morris Men had fewer dance out requests than the previous year however, they did managed to dance out about 12 times at various events and evening pub dance outs. They had an excellent day out at the JMO in Leicester along with their annual pilgrimage to the Cotswolds in October where they were joined by Pebworth MM and Belle D'Vain ladies North West sides at the Fleece Inn, Bretforton. They performed the Alderley Mummers play on 3 nights around Christmas, along with a Souling and Easter play. Membership stands at around 9, but this has grown at the back end of 2017 with not one, but two new members! Both are fresh into the Morris having never tried it before and are picking it up very well. One was via social media / Morris Ring website, the other as a friend of one of the existing members who came along having been cajoled by his wife, and loved it so much, returned. So keeping all recruitment avenues open, and being super friendly on practice nights really does pay off.

2017 Chester city Morris Men followed a similar course to the previous few years. They had a flurry of activity in April and May followed by sporadic activity over the summer. Celebrating St George's Day in their usual fashion by dancing in the centre of Chester with local team Kinnerton Morris Men. The programme ensured that they all finished up at their favourite public house but sadly this year the Landlord missed the event because of illness. This was duly reported by the local newspaper and included a quote from the Landlord's hospital bed: "I may be in hospital but I'm doing my best to celebrate St George's Day". Chester Folk Festival continues to thrive and there was a good turnout for the dancing displays and North West workshop. Lack of men and difficulties guaranteeing a full dancing team restricted their

summer programme to one event and no weekends away. Unfortunately, because of a diary malfunction they also missed our usual end of season outing to the White Hart Ale. Practices continue to be well attended and they are even looking through their back catalogue of dances to resurrect one or two for the coming year. Planning is under way for St George's Day and hopefully a few more outings over the summer.

There were no matters arising.

Paul Cross (N)

Following the 2017 ARM, there was a meeting of Northern Clubs, six out of thirteen clubs were represented. The main focus of the meeting was a discussion concerning recruitment. While we didn't fix the recruitment issue facing Morris teams during the meeting, it felt productive nonetheless!

An idea that arose from the meeting was that of a Regional day of dance on Saturday 4th August 2018 (to tie in with Yorkshire Day [apologies to Grimsby]). The idea is for teams to dance somewhere local to their practice venue, and to put out local and regional press releases.

A follow up meeting is due to take place in March.

Barnsley Longsword

At the meeting, the representatives from Barnsley told the rest of us about some Saturday morning sessions that they had been running in Barnsley. These sessions have yielded one new recruit for the team. Two other recruits have been found, so a productive year for Barnsley.

Barnsley are now in touch with Barnsley Council and getting involved with their Feel Good initiative, with a view to advertising Longsword as an exercise routine as well as traditional dancing. The council seem to be on board, and have given the team space on the Council website, as well as a practice room in the Town Hall on Saturday mornings. Barnsley Longsword are also hoping to get involved with the Mayor's parade, and the 2018 Tour de Yorkshire.

Great Yorkshire Morris

GYM had a good dancing season, and a fairly poor practice season up to Christmas due to illness and injury. During the summer, dance spots were advertised on Facebook and by actual posters (rare for us), and audience numbers seemed to reflect this. At an early pub spot we were filmed by a drone, and hope to have an exciting video of the top of our hats to share around soon.

After a poor practice season between September and December, GYM have kicked off 2018 with two Rapper tours of local towns, with an emphasis on chatting up young men. We hope this will yield some next recruits, or at least a bit more interest.

Green Oak MM *(report provided by Martin Johnson of GOMM)*

After the highlight of the Bulgaria trip of 2016 the dance season for 2017 was more localised for us. Looking back over the year the resurrected May Day event at Cusworth went well, gave us contact with the new “management” and even got us a mention in the colour supplement of the “Yorkshire Post” as one of the top five things to do over the holiday weekend. Peter Higham, one of our number, stepped up to the plate and organised the dancing for the Doncaster Folk Festival Day of Dance giving the side a showcase opportunity in the town centre.

The summer dance outs were often arranged at short notice once it had been established that we had a full side available. Old favourite spots like “The Angel” at Misson and “King William” at Scaftworth again welcoming us. It was good to return to the “Eagle and Child” at Auckley where we had perhaps the largest and most enthusiastic audience for a Wednesday night for quite some time. The experimental “flash dance”* around Bawtry was taken well by both venues as was the joint dance out with Lord Conyers Morris in Tickhill. For this last event due to numbers it looked as though we would have to dance the “Neap House”+ tradition, but on the night we did make six and a musician. The side was also represented at the Saddleworth ring meeting in August. Martin, Neil and Danny in the form of their alter-egos Nep House Morris and Ivanhoe Morris danced on tour with other sides in Darlington, London and Northern France and performed on the South Bank of London in early December as guests of Northwood Morris.

Practice nights have usually had at least six dancers and one musician and on the occasions this wasn’t the case then the disembodied** “Norman in a box” stood in admirably to supply the music, members have been willing to ditch “tradition” and adapt the dancing to the numbers present. This may not be the ideal situation but reflects the new attitude of the side to be flexible, open to improvisation and has on at least one occasion been included in a dance out.

In April the side hosted a meeting of the Northern area of the Morris Ring at the Brewery Tap which discussed several issues including recruitment, publicity and co-operation between sides, this hopefully helped to raise the sides profile in the Ring and helped create links with nearby sides.

The Doncaster Mummers took centre stage in December with a dress rehearsal performance downstairs at the “Tap” and a successful tour around the Bawtry area.

+A two/three/four man “tradition” devised and choreographed by Neil, Danny & Martin

*We just turned up at two of the pubs and asked to dance – a bit like a flash mob but with less people stood around watching!

**Recorded music played through the sound system at the practice venue.

Numbers have remained the same as 2016 although we had two musicians incapacitated by either serious illness or operations over the year. One has now returned in good health the second is still requiring further surgery.

Grimsby MM

GMM had a very busy time celebrating their Golden anniversary, with dozens of events, lots of press coverage and even a museum exhibition.

In September GMM hosted their 50th Anniversary Feast, and invited the MPs for Great Grimsby and Cleethorpes. Ed and myself were also invited, and had a great evening.



(Photo courtesy of GMM. Guess who didn't get the memo that it was "dress down"!)

October saw two "Boarder" Morris workshops, with several attendees learning GMM's winter tradition.

Yes, "Boarder" is spelt correctly, it is in celebration of Grimsby's history of boar hunting.

Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers

Handsworth have announced that they will be operating as a mixed gender club, with the Handsworth eight-man dance remaining all male. They've benefitted from an influx of new members in the past few months, strengthening the side and allowing them to undertake more bookings, including an international sword dance festival in Belgium.

Lord Conyers MM *(report provided by Darren Yendley of LCMM)*

Last year was quite a good year for Lord Conyers. It was the first season out for one of our new recruits, and it was good to see his confidence and capabilities increasing with every dance out through the summer. High points included the National Morris Weekend at Evesham in June where we performed well with a restricted side, our annual weekend of dance at Robin Hood's Bay in August and also performing at Bromyard Folk Festival in September.

Attending the local village 'Pit-nic' with the MR display boards yielded three potential new recruits, none of which have attended a practice yet, despite repeated contact, there always seems to be an excuse as to why they cannot make practice at the moment! We remain hopeful that they may make an appearance soon.

We have seen the return of one of our previous side members who has not attended for a couple of years due to knee injuries. This has been solely due to the changes that we have made to our repertoire, where we have moved dances to different traditions so that galleys and hook legs no longer feature in any of our dances, which has led to more of our dancers being able to dance more of the repertoire to a higher standard without fear of injury.

Oakworth Village MM

Oakworth struggled on again through the summer of 2018, before deciding, due to a lack of dancing members, to practicing on a regular basis. The team will be meeting up at least once a year for a day of dance, but normal activities are on hold. You can see OVMM next June, as guests of Kinnerton MM, in the Yorkshire Dales.

White Rose MM

White Rose had a reasonable year, but were not as busy as some teams. As per GYM they were hampered a little by illness and injury. WR are holding a taster session in January, and hope to gain some new recruits.

WR are gaining their Bus Pass in 2018, and are planning a lavish celebration. Failing that, a weekend of dance will suffice. You can see White Rose and friends (plus birthday cake) on the 20th-22nd of July, in and around Huddersfield.

There were no matters arising.

Brian Pollard (NE)

Still looking positive in the Northeast with sides enjoying their dancing and being generally well received by appreciative crowds of onlookers. We keep Morris in the public eye by engaging audiences, talking to people, enjoying what we are doing and dancing well!

The Sides:

Benfieldside. We have enjoyed a successful year with many productive practice nights leading to a very enjoyable dancing out season. Our excellent sharing relationship with the Durham Rams means numbers are steady at around fifteen dancers and three musicians allowing us to fulfil several engagements – Sedgefield Fair, Wolsingham Fair, Leeds MM Wharfedale tour, Otley Folk Festival and Richmond on Swale MM day of dance ending up with the highlight of the recent Plough Sunday when a large turnout watched dancing, playing and processing the plough up to the cathedral where the Dean blessed the plough and distributed “largesse” in the time honoured fashion!

Durham Rams. The side currently practises Morris with Benfieldside Morris Men so that the two sides are able to dance out together with the same dancing style and repertoire. A joint side also practises the Rapper dance. At the moment this is the Durham Rams dance based on the revival Hamsteels dance of the 1920's, but we have also begun to learn the dance previously done by Benfieldside.

We have had a number of engagements with Benfieldside over the past year. These include Sedgefield Fair, Wolsingham Fair, Leeds MM Wharfedale weekend and Otley Folk Festival, plus fortnightly danceouts on Wednesday evenings throughout the summer. The Rapper side also attended the annual St. George's Day Meeting of local rapper sides organised by Sallyport Sword Dancers.

These closer ties between Benfieldside and the Durham Rams have been extremely positive, and we hope to continue to develop them in the future.

Monkseaton Morris Men. We have had an interesting year although not much recruitment. We danced at a sword dance festival in St. Niklaas, Belgium in May and also at Westminster Morris Men's day of dance in London.

We were contacted by a cruise ship entertainment agent and were asked to perform on a German cruise ship docked on the Tyne in August. This involved two performances on separate nights. We did a 45 minute show with morris and sword dancing followed by some country dancing which enabled the audience to participate. We think it went down well and hope to get some repeat business.

New Year's Day 2018 was another excellent event with record crowds watching the show and in the pubs afterwards. The large collection has allowed us to make a donation of £800 to MacMillan nurses charity.

Richmond on Swale. Our year got underway in April with our attendance at Black Sheep's Day of Dance on St. George's Day, followed in May by our own Day in Richmond. Both events were successful with significant public interest. However, the highlight of the year was undoubtedly our attendance at the London Ring Meeting in July, not least because it was the first of such to be attended by several of our members. We were swept along with the energy and enthusiasm of the other sides and the large crowds along the Embankment.

Throughout the summer we danced out and sang, as usual, on Thursday evenings at a range of pubs in the area.

In September we attended the York Festival of Dance, which brought the enthusiasm of performing in front of a substantial audience, and will attend again in 2018.

This was another successful year for us, although there remains the ongoing concern to attract new members, both as dancers and musicians.

There were no matters arising.

Pete Simpson (W Mids)

We have had a year of mixed fortunes in the West Midlands.

After more years than we care to remember Forest of Dean Morris Men, as a result of dwindling numbers, have decided to become a mixed side. While across the region at Ryton on Dunsmore in Warwickshire a new side is born, Knightlow Morris Men. It is still early days and they are receiving support from Anker & Jockey MM, but they have a kit, have been seen at a feast & have performed at a booking. So we wish them all the best for the future.

We have had a couple of significant birthdays as well. Faithful City celebrated their 50th birthday & Stafford their 60th. Both clubs marked the anniversaries in their own way. May they have many more.

Recruitment has been quiet over the last 12 months with nothing to report on top of last year. The initiatives mentioned last year seem to have stalled or run their natural course. A lesson to us all that we can never afford to stop working at recruitment.

In last year's report we were awaiting the Green Man EGM and their decision for the future. As you probably know by now, they decided to wind up the club. However, this has left a gap with no one to safeguard and drive on the Lichfield tradition. As a result some of us have kept the name of Green Man alive with the idea of reforming them, possibly as, a peripatetic club to run workshops and attend a few larger events. If you are interested please let me know, especially if you would be prepared to act as Bagman and / or treasurer as I may find myself a bit busy over the next couple of years.

This will be my last report to you as area rep as I am having to stand down due to becoming Squire Elect for the Morris Ring (so you ain't got rid of me yet). Mark Carter has been asked to step in to the breach. I have every confidence he will do a fine job, but I will let him introduce himself.

For those who don't know me, I'm squire/foreman at Leominster Morris and occasionally seen sporting Jockey colours. I have been in morris for 20 of my 30 years, learning initially at Stafford before moving to Herefordshire. I live in Hereford, but work in Worcester, and whilst love getting out to morris events, it is within the context of having a 4-year old and one on the way so free time will be limited! That said, there will be plenty of sleepless nights in which to answer emails so if you have any queries or want assistance or signposting with anything you are doing/wish to do then just drop me a line on mt.carter@live.co.uk and you'll also find me behind the LM social media pages on facebook & twitter. I look forward to corresponding with/meeting you in the near future.

There were no matters arising.

Ben Robinson (N Mids)

Report not available

Roger Comley (S Mids)

The season of Ales and Feasts is well upon us and for those sides still willing to host these events, even with falling numbers occasionally, they are still a joy to attend.

Please help the Bagmen by saying 'yes' when possible and communicate early enough to enable some new men and women to experience the fun.

Anniversaries of sides are good to celebrate and Whitchurch have some places left for sides and individuals 29th June – 1st July.

I will help the new Squire of the Ring as his fool.

There were no matters arising.

N Strudwick (E)

2017 was a very busy year professionally for me (apparently I was away from home almost a third of the year) and I did not get round to sending out any questionnaires this time; for the

same reason I never got to visit any of the sides except where we came into contact at the regular Morris events like Ales and so on. That said, I am not aware of any seismic changes to sides in my area over the last year either.

The issue of “blacking up” reared its ugly head earlier in 2017. It directly affects only a couple of Eastern sides who exist as border/molly teams, but several others do a little border during the winter so I did sound them all out. Not surprisingly, there was almost universal exasperation on how the media and other vested interests have interpreted it, but I was not made aware of anyone who was intending to change their practices. I was approached for a short interview by Radio Essex on the occasion of a planned visit by Good Easter Molly Gang where I repeated the Ring/Open line, but I have no idea if any was broadcast.

No-one has indicated anything particular that they want drawn to the Ring’s attention that is not already on the agenda. Obviously the early part of 2018 has seen checking in with sides about whether they are coming to the ARM and whether they have any strong feelings one way or the other on the Leicester MM motion that is going to dominate the event. I have not heard from every club by any means, but where I have (and that includes public postings that everyone will have seen) I sense that there is a broad sense of inevitable acceptance in the East, along with understanding of where the motion is coming from, with the proviso that every side that has put forward a view has indicated that it intends to stay male dancer only.

There were no matters arising.

Cliff Marchant (SE)

I met with Victory and Men of Wight on VMM day of dance, VMM are managing to get a full side out but the MoW said they are struggling to get men out to dance on a regular basis. Also met up with Hartley MM always a busy side, Ales etc, one of the stronger sides in my area, I attended Broadwood day of dance with Chanctonbury Ring North West side, as usual a very enjoyable annual open event, but both all three sides need new members otherwise their future is unsure. Although Chanctonbury have gained an apprentice, the side moved their practises back to Shoreham and decided to do a leaflet drop in the area, two new men came to a practice, one danced out on Boxing Day. I danced with King Johns NW side at Hastings Jack in the Green, K J seem to be maintaining a healthy membership, Martlet MM are also managing to keep busy, Longman MM were back in Orleans France for two days during the summer, they will be celebrating 40 years this year, they have also gained two apprentices, hopefully they will stay.

Winchester MM have some new men dancing and the side is looking confident, they are always a joy to watch, they also organise a very enjoyable winter feast. Winchester are also one of the mainstays of the MRing jigs weekend with Geoff Jerram organising and Ian cooking, with others demonstrating the jigs.

Ravensbourne held a very successful Ring meeting in the Capital, they seem to maintain a healthy membership.

The display boards have only been used twice during the summer.

East Surrey helped to run a Fieldtown instructional, one that was open to all, Winchester were involved with an open jigs instructional, neither of these events were MRing events but called on Ring sides to help.

I have not heard of any side folding but I do know some are really struggling to get enough men out to dance each week, the common denominator is an aging membership, even with sides doing well.

I have emailed sides asking them to vote at this meeting a 'yes or no but make sure you vote.'
Concludes my last report as area rep.

There were no matters arising.

P Reece (SW & W)

Sides are generally in good health, regularly performing Morris in addition to seasonal Mumming and a rise in Wassail attendances. Success stories are Sweyn's Ey, who 5 years ago were on the verge of folding, and Helier and West Somerset who have moved to Border in a successful attempt to raise numbers to survive. Gloucestershire now have a mixed side alongside the men and West Somerset have a male Morris Ring Cotswold side and an Open Morris mixed Border side, to comply with the current Morris Ring Constitution. At the time of this report, most sides have begun serious discussions on the Leicester motion prior to a formal decision being taken. So far 5 sides are clearly in favour of the motion.

Bourne River completed 50 dances in 50 locations during their 50th with their 16 active members, but have no new recruits.

Bathampton have enjoyed a good season, including a visit to Prague, with 16 active members out of 32 and 2 new recruits.

Bristol have 20 members, mainly over 60, and have scaled down performances to every couple of weekends.

Chalice average 12 at practice and have had 3 new recruits of which 2 have remained. They have 7 musicians and the side performs weekly.

Dartington have had a good year gaining a recruit in preparation for this year's 50th. They have 15 regular dancers, 5 musicians, 1 fool and 1.5 horses performing weekly during the summer and 6 to 7 outings during the winter months. Repertoire comprises about 30 dances and 4 jigs, of these 6 dances and 1 jig are from the Filkins tradition.

Gloucestershire have a full programme of weekly dancing, including seasonal Mumming and Wassailing they have 2 new recruits and have formed a mixed side alongside the men. They are in favour of constitutional change.

Helier have 5 orchards and a 20 year long tradition of Wassailing with 8 active dancers and 2 new recruits following a change from Cotswold to Border. They support constitutional change.

Mendip have a membership of 30 with an active core of 12 to 15 performing a full programme. No new recruits.

North Curry Mummers have 10 members drawing crowds of around 200. They are in favour of constitutional change.

Plymouth have a core of 8 to 12 active dancers, 5 to 7 musicians and a very full programme of dancing and Mumming. We dance Cotswold and our own Plymouth tradition. Nautical events such as Pirates Day, Trafalgar Day and Pickle Night are celebrated. Recruitment and the raising of new sides during the lead up to perform at Mayflower 400 and Plymouth's 50th in 2020 is the current goal and hopefully the goal for all those Morris sides of the South and East coasts and East Midlands and beyond with Mayflower connections. Plymouth will be voting for changing the constitution.

Sweyn's Ey, the only MR Morris side now left in Wales, have experienced a renaissance with now 12 dancers and 4 musicians providing a full weekly Summer programme. They are unanimous for constitutional change.

Taunton Dean have 18 members performing Morris during the Summer and at Wassails.

Trigg have 12 to 15 active dancers, performing Cotswold in a full Summer programme, and with Mumming at Winter and at a regular Wassail booking. Some members also perform with the mixed Tywardreath team also dancing Cotswold. Despite the distances Trigg regularly attends Ring meetings.

Uplyme have 10 dancers (male) and 5 musicians (mixed) performing Cotswold and Border 20 times on average during the Summer, including their June Morris Festival and 6 times during the Winter within 40 miles of Uplyme.

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

Wyvern Jubilee in their 40th year have 17 active members who dance out every Thursday during the season.

Exeter Morris still exists, has 17 dancers and 6 musicians, recruited 2 new members following a recruitment evening held at Exeter Cathedral last October, will be attending the Helmond Ring Meeting in June, we will be at the Devon County Show and the Mid Devon Show and will be dancing out every Thursday during the summer season. In addition to our normal pub visits, we have participated in 3 wassails last month, will be entertaining international students from Exeter University at one off our practice sessions and performing at one of our local secondary schools in front of their year 12 and 13's plus their counterparts from a French school. In short, Exeter Morris Men are very much alive and kicking.

There were no matters arising.

14) Motion for Constitutional Change

Proposed by Leicester MM:

Motion for Morris Ring A.R.M. March 2018: The Future of the Morris Ring

Aim: To ensure that the Morris Ring is credible, relevant and representative of morris in the future.

The proposed revised Objects and Definitions would be:

- 1. The object of the Morris Ring shall be to encourage the performance of the Morris, to maintain its traditions and to preserve its history; to bring into contact all the Morris Clubs or Teams. The purpose of the Morris Ring is not to replace or supersede the existing organisations, but to sub-serve them. The Clubs shall in all respects retain their independence.*
- 2. The Morris Ring shall be an association of Morris, Sword and Mummers Clubs and Teams. Any established Club or Team which meets regularly for Morris or Sword Dancing or Mumming, and endeavours to uphold the standards and dignity of the Morris, shall be eligible for Membership of the Morris Ring.*

Proposed Charlie Corcoran Leicester Morrismen December 2017

Discussion

Speaker F1: Charlie Corcoran, Leicester MM

It is with some trepidation that Leicester Morrismen proposed this friendly, positive motion to change the Morris Ring Constitution. Having been active supporters of the ethos and events organised in the name of the Morris Ring for nigh on 60 years, Leicester are very conscious of the importance of both our history and traditions; and, of course, the Morris Ring's contribution towards encouraging high standards of performance through instructionals and Ring Meetings, which are also wonderful social events!

Having been the Morris Ring Bagman when the last change was accepted, which allowed individual sides to remain in membership if they had female musicians, I was also personally painfully aware of how potentially divisive the proposal might be! However, I would like to add my thanks to everyone for the way the debate has been conducted. Most of my many good friends across the Morris world, some of whom vehemently disagree with what we are proposing, are still speaking to me.

There have been numerous discussions around the proposal, both informally and formally, at club level. These have been mirrored in the contributions to the MR Google Group and distilled in the recent Bagman's Newsletter. Therefore, I will not dissect or rehash the arguments but simply stress that the proposed change will not impact upon how Leicester Morris, nor any other individual side, conducts themselves. Leicester will not have to accept female dancers as a result of the proposed change, any more than we had to recruit female musicians after the previous change.

What it will do is leave that door open in future for members of Leicester Morris (and members of any other sides in the Morris Ring) to recruit female dancers, should the need or desire arise, without them being forced to leave the Morris Ring, as sadly has been the case with several of our friends in the last few years.

Following the publication of the Motion a substantial number of sides indicated their willingness to second it. Technically, this was not necessary, but I would like to thank them for their support and encouragement. I firmly believe that by accepting this friendly amendment to the Constitution we will demonstrate our commitment to the future of the Morris Ring, in its continued support of all forms of Morris, of a high standard as we build upon our history and traditions but look to the future. (From notes)

Speaker A1: Barry Care, Traditional Bampton MD

I am against this proposed change to the constitution for as everyone knows I am pro men's Morris. On many occasions my defence of men's Morris has landed me in situations where I've needed to face up to quite fierce criticism – my position is clear. I am not anti female Morris dancers, but I am opposed to mixed gender teams on grounds of dance performance and artistry. If this change was proposing only admitting all-female Morris teams so membership was all male and all female dancing teams I could have raised little enthusiasm to oppose it.

Men and women have different body physique, and despite your age, some of you may have noticed that! There are muscle strength and centre of gravity differences and the obvious example where these differences have been exploited to produce artistic excellence is in classical ballet. The controlled, yet almost epicurean, but beautiful dancing of ballerinas is contrasted by the powerful and dramatically forceful movements of their male partners. They are counterpoint, their distinctiveness and variance of body differentiation used to effect choreography of great artistic merit. It is all about artistry as it should be with Morris. This proposal, however, is all about emancipation, not artistry, and underlying it all a belief that fun and enjoyment are the only criteria to weigh up Morris dancing and gender differences don't matter in considerations of performance. It implies a rejection of heritage considerations and long established practice of high standards of performance in a traditional way. Today I'm here as representative of the Traditional Bampton Morris Dancers I've danced with for nearly 40 years. They embody all that makes good Morris ... continuity of form and character and an enduring performance style. They are members because they believe the Ring aimed to encourage the performance of the Morris as it says in the Constitution, to maintain its traditions, and preserve its history. To change membership as proposed will run contrary to this, and whatever is said to support the change, in the long term may pose a direct and real danger to the integrity of the dance.

We will be accepting all comers including some teams whose presentation of the dance have crossed over from traditional dance to street entertainment. I've been criticised for that evaluation of some teams with that comment... "well, we are street entertainment which is true, but gimmicks are now commonplace – and our tradition is too valuable to risk on some of the experimental frivolities around. All round the world distortion of traditional

presentation is a threat to the cultural heritage of many countries where tourism often moves performances away from traditional settings and into commercial venues also changing styles and content. I urge you to read more about this problem please. Some changes provide opportunities and already Women's Morris is developing its own look and style where teams have insights into the artistic characteristics special to female dancing. They already have the advantage of two Organisations to encourage this development. We need such support so I hope will see the importance of the Ring remaining guardians of the male Morris dancing and why it is absolutely desirable to see the tradition survive in our culture being danced by men. No-one is misogynistic just because they are members of an all-male side and wish to preserve that particular performance format. Any more than membership of a male voice choir. It is about the artistic importance of retaining the male dance form with all its traditional characteristics and quintessence. I hope you feel the Ring needs to continue its historic support for that and reject the proposed change and keep things as they are. (from notes)

Speaker F2: Liam Parker, White Rose MM

White Rose would have left the MR – MR should be maintaining history and traditions; the current Constitution, promoting male-only morris, carries a negative perception publicly and it is difficult to explain this in modern circumstances. The organisation has a chance to change and reflect society.

Speaker A2: Daniel Fox, Thaxted MM

Sides have come to the ARM with a mandate, this will not change minds: this is not a numbers game, but about maintaining the traditions of the MR, established for standards of the morris, which continues to survive from a start with six members. Dilution of this heritage will cause sides to leave, Thaxted will continue their tradition of organising their men's meeting in Thaxted.

Speaker F3: Velson Horie, Manchester MM

Manchester MM have seen the benefit of admitting female musicians. This will increase inclusivity. What is the MR community? Need to be outward looking and reflect wider society to ensure recognition and respect, this cannot be achieved in isolation and exclusivity. Need to promote standards, but also integration.

Speaker A3: Dave Stewart, East Surrey MM

Mandated to vote against, a close vote, he is personally sympathetic to the motion. ESMM dance with sides from other Organisations. They proposed an amendment on quality and would have voted for the motion on that basis. Male-only morris teams are endangered

species, the demographic time-bomb is ticking, we need to maintain that tradition alongside other morris activities, teams and traditions.

EW: Deeper issues need to be understood, how MR is at risk for the future: risk of decline and irrelevance. Many men's sides not in MR, consider Jack Worth's data (50-60 all-male sides, some former members).

Vote

No. of votes cast	111
No. of valid proxy votes (included in the number above)	59
No. of votes For the motion: 97	87%
No. of votes Against the motion 13	12% (one spoiled paper)

Outcome Motion passed.

EW: The effect of the change is immediate, although meetings already organised will be unaffected. AC working group will look at issues arising forthwith. Thanks to all for the manner of the debate and considered contributions. A significant majority of all the members have voted in favour. We need to retain the sense of fellowship and support for each other and the morris.

Mike Stevens, Peterborough MM – vote of thanks for conduct of debate, seconded widely.

Nigel Cox, Whitchurch MM – can they call their anniversary event a Ring Meeting? No change in 2018 (EW).

Cliff Marchant, Past Squire, Chanctonbury Ring – The MR is better with everyone in it, better together and can work to maintain and improve standards. Please stay together!

15) Future Events Diary

19th May **JMO Day of Dance, Peterborough**
Hosted by Crosskey Clog (Open Morris). Applications received to date from Grimsby, Rutland, Peterborough, Jockey, Anstey, Letchworth, Foresters and Ripley.

1st – 3rd June **Thaxted weekend of dance**
Please apply directly to Thaxted Morris Men.

8th – 10th June

Hartley Morris Ale Ring Meeting (meeting no 357)

The Hartley Morris Men will be holding their annual Ale in the format of a traditional Morris Ring Meeting (but without a Church service). The weekend will be based in the village of Wrotham (Kent), as it has for the past 40 years, commencing on the Friday evening with a hot supper plus free beer in the hall and singing/music sessions in the local pubs. After a full English breakfast Saturday morning there will be two tours by classic transport taking in local breweries, pub lunches and the Kent countryside. An early evening informal massed display will be followed by a lavish Feast provided by our regular chef and his team from the Belladonna Pie Company. After a full English breakfast on Sunday morning we depart to dance at various sites in the nearby town of Tonbridge where there will be another chance for all sides to come together for a final informal display prior to a cooked lunch.

Accommodation, with hot showers provided, is indoor camping and a secure campsite; female musicians are welcome and the anticipated cost will be in the region of £79 per person. It will also be a bit more relaxed than previous events. Numbers are limited to 85 on a first come basis so early applications are advisable and must be received by 1st February 2018.

Interested sides are therefore requested to submit applications by email to bagman@themorrisring.org and bagman@hartleymorrismen.org.uk stating name of the side, estimated numbers and contact details (phone No. & email address). Further details/enquiries, email - events@hartleymorrismen.org.uk

23rd – 24th June

Helmond Ring Meeting (meeting no 358)

This will be a repeat of the very successful 2015 Ring Meeting. In order to keep costs down (Brexit has led to a fall in the value of the pound) there will be a walking tour in the city of Helmond (cars will be used to transport sticks etc. and to provide transport for needy dancers). The meeting will be based at a museum for historical agricultural implements. There is one single-sex sleeping room, plenty of outdoor camping, museum toilets (male and female) and a trailer with shower cubicles. Meals etc. will be in one of the exhibition rooms and there is an outside area for dancing. There are several city centre hotels for those who prefer this (details on the website).

The Saturday tour will visit the market, the harbour, the castle and shopping streets. On Sunday there will be an indoor show at another museum (this time for barrel organs). The meeting is open to all Ring sides. Numbers are limited to 100. The cost of the meeting will be €75 per person and it is up to bagmen to choose when to transfer the money (subject to date limits). Applications by email to bagman@themorrisring.org stating name of the side and estimated numbers. Details will be regularly updated on www.helmondmorris.nl

29th June – 1st July Whitchurch celebration weekend

In 2018 Whitchurch Morris Men will be celebrating our 70th Anniversary of formation. From the small beginning of two families of brothers, who enjoyed country dancing, thinking they would like to give Morris Dancing a try, and progressing so well that Whitchurch MM were elected to join the Morris Ring in 1949, the side is still thriving and attempting to promote the Morris, and demonstrate good dancing, and fun!

We are planning a special weekend to celebrate our 70th Anniversary, and we would like to invite your side to be part of our celebrations, because you have been part of what we are, certainly in the past decade, although some sides have been involved with us for many more years than that.

Because we are aware that some sides, we have been involved with, have changed over the years, and, for example, do not now belong to the Morris Ring, whilst others are not members of the Morris Ring, we are planning the weekend in such a way that ALL Morris sides are welcome to join us for this celebration.

We have secured excellent accommodation at the Stoke Mandeville Stadium [which is the National Centre for Disability Sport in the UK] in Guttman Rd, Aylesbury HP21 9PP, which can accommodate, probably, any number who wish to join us. Overnight, there is single sex dormitory accommodation, or, upgrades to twin room accommodation will be possible, all with linen and showers included. Those using the accommodation get free use of the gym, swimming pool and tennis courts (dependent on availability). For those wishing to bring their caravan or motorhome, there will be space on the carpark.

The full weekend will start on Friday evening, with tea and coffee provided, a bar, and opportunities to meet and greet. On Saturday following a full cooked breakfast there will be dancing tours, including lunch, in and around the Vale of Aylesbury and the Chilterns. In the evening, there will be a formal Feast, with speeches and party pieces, and dancing. On Sunday, after cooked breakfast, we will move to the centre of Aylesbury, for a Church service, followed by Massed Morris dancing, and departure after lunch.

The cost for the full weekend will be £95 for all accommodation, food, tour travel, etc., The rate for the twin room upgrade will be £130. For those unable to join us for the full weekend, the cost will be as follows: Saturday tour, lunch and Feast £43; Saturday tour and lunch £16; Saturday Feast £28; Sunday lunch £10.

We would like to receive expressions of interest, to join us, as soon as possible, Send to info@whitchurchmorris.org.uk

25th – 26th August Saddleworth Rushcart Ring Meeting (meeting no 359)

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

Daniel Fox, Past Squire: Thaxted weekend will take place in 2019.

16) Date and Venue of Next ARM

Saturday 2nd March 2019, Oak Farm Lodge.

Paul Cross / Peter Copley: need for electronic payment facility, already addressed for next year, essential to read application form and follow instructions clearly.

17) AOB

Items of Any Other Business to be submitted to the Bagman of the Ring by post or email before 1st March please; items submitted on the day will only be considered by exception and if time permits.

1. Steven Archer

I won't keep you long but I'd just like to say a few final words from the top table.

As you know, our finances are strong and I'm pleased to be leaving them in good order and in the good hands of Clayton. I know he'll do a really good job for you.

During my time as Treasurer I've been fortunate to work with two excellent Bagmen and you really don't appreciate just how good they are. Both Charlie and Jon have an incredible ability to deliver a huge workload whilst holding down full time jobs. My role as Treasurer has been comparatively easy.

I've also served four squires each of whom has taken us forward, sadly one is no longer with us. But cometh the hour cometh the man - Ed will go down as the man who led us to become a relevant organisation for the 21st Century and it's been a privilege to be here and help it happen. Let's have a round of applause for your officers.

I should add that it's the executive structure of the MR which enables this talent to be so effective and that is one of our great strengths.

I've had a fantastic time during nearly 50 years of Morris dancing, it's been the best fun I've had without taking my clothes off, and I owe much of it to the MR, so I'd like to give a little something back.

A former Squire said to me when I stood for Treasurer - why are you taking this on - the MR will be dead in 5 to 10 years. Well I think reports of the death of the MR have been exaggerated. The future is bright. The MR has finally shed its outdated image. So I'd like to encourage current members to stay and old friends and new members to join. I'm offering to pay the subs for all the sides that wish to renew their membership or join this year. Jon won't thank me for this but here are the cheques and a covering letters to each side. It's been a

great 6 years and I'm so pleased to have done my bit to help develop this truly great organisation. Thank you. (from notes)

2. Tony Foard

Collect copies of Circular to save postage.

3. Shaun Lambley

Morris Tradition books to available to purchase from Morris Shop to give away.

4. Colin Andrews

Morris dance database available via web reference for inspection:
<https://www.treewind.co.uk/mddb/>

5. Iain Davison

Fools and Beasts Unconvention 12th – 14th October, Gloucester

6. Geoff Jerram

Jigs Instructional has received requests from non-male dancers to attend but this could not be achieved in the past due to facilities. A plea for an alternative venue, ideally with long-term availability, please contact Tony Foard or Geoff Jerram.

7. John Edwards

EW invited Fools and Beasts to rejoin MR.

8. Matt Simons

Morris 18-30 12th – 14th October, Weston Super Mare

9. Clive du Mont

Seeking details for current and past taborers for Taborers' Society.

Closing Remarks

Thanks for attendance and conduct of meeting. Meeting closed at 16:02pm.

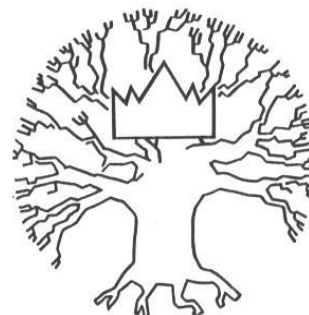


Appendix 2: Fools and Beasts Unconvention Application Form



Fools and Beasts **Unconvention** **2018**

Hosted by Lassington Oak Morris
Highnam Community Centre, Glos.



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 the Parish Rooms, Highnam community Centre, Highnam, Gloucestershire, GL2 8DG and will involve workshops, Saturday walking tour of Gloucester, plus the Feast at The Toby Carvery, Highnam. On Sunday we will have the AGM of course - your chance to have your say. Accommodation is indoor camping; there may be provision for outdoor camping and Motorhomes, to be confirmed. Please indicate at time of booking. For anyone who wishes to be posh, there are some excellent B&Bs in Gloucester.

The cost this year will be £70 per person, which includes all meals except Sunday lunch. Pro rata rates available for those who wish to attend part of the proceedings, please contact Rob for details.

Closing date for Applications 20th September 2018.

Yours,
Robert Chisman, Scrivener and Convenor

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

2).....email.....Fool/Beast/Other.....*
....

Team:.....

Address for correspondence.....
.....:

Tel: Day:.....Eve:.....

Any Special Dietary needs.....

We anticipate having further applicants, if places available.

Return this form with cheque for the full amount (£70 pp) payable to "The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts" to Robert Chisman, Fools and Beasts Convener, 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
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Trigger Morris-Horse



@TriggerMHorse

**Provision of email address indicates willingness to be included on IOFB e-mail list. If you DO NOT wish your email address to be included, please tick HERE*