



The Newsletter - No. 19 – June 2001

Greetings,

As you will see none were gallant enough to relieve me of this burden at the ARM – so the Newsletter carries on under the same compiler – unless there are any volunteers out there?

Someone commented at the ARM that the Newsletter contained too many references to the beer at our events, and would this not give the wrong impression of the Morris. I commented that I was guided by the longstanding notes for compilers of Reports on Ring Meetings and the like, which suggested that these should include details of the Feast and the beers served. With the quality of beers that are generally presented, they deserve mention. As a staunch CAMRA supporter, I make no apology for encouraging good beer!! However, let us all also aspire to keep the general standard of dancing equally high, and I will be able to continue to report enthusiastically on the highlights of the dancing also!! [End of Comment!!!!]

Hopefully your dance schedules were not irreversibly ruined by Foot and Mouth and now things are “under control” we can get on with the dancing season. Some events were disrupted – and for some Sides this gave opportunities!! See the reports on **Dartington’s** May Day activities, that are included in the latest Morris Circular.

Also enclosed with this mailing are:

- A **summary** of this Newsletter – as the last page of the Newsletter.
- Inevitably, the first **amendments** to the new Directory - three had appeared within two hours of going to press – keep them coming!!!
- Your / your Side’s copy/ies of the latest **Morris Circular**.

The Minutes of the ARM, and the Minutes of the Advisory Council will hopefully follow in the next mailing, when I have had time to transcribe the tape!!!

Remember: Unless you pass on the content of this Newsletter to the Men in your Side, the information stops with you. A summary is included on the last sheet.

E-mailed versions of these Newsletters are available on request [ideally as an attached Word document; please order and specify by Email].

IN MEMORIAM

Stuart Lawrence of **Furness** died over the weekend 21/22 April. He was co-compiler and co-founder of the Furness Pace Egg play. The funeral was a private family affair because of a forthcoming wedding. However, there is to be a memorial service in due course when Furness will be "in kit". [Information from **Eddie Cass**]

Neil and **Bruce Thompson** of **Lothians**.

Bruce Thompson, a member of **Lothians**, Beltane Rapper, and Caledonian Morris, in the 70s, was killed on 5th May 2001, when the car, in which he was a passenger, was hit by an express train near Pitlochry. It is understood that some 600 people attended Bruce's funeral - he was a lecturer at the University and well liked.

To add to the tragedy, Bruce's brother **Neil Thompson**, a former **Lothian's** Bagman and the founder of Caledonian Morris, was found dead in Bruce's flat on 22nd May 2001. Neil was probably the better known of the two, as he had an entrepreneurial streak, running Morris events in Edinburgh, including a Dommatt instructional, and inviting sides to the early Edinburgh Folk Festival. Neil was a social worker, both in Edinburgh and later in the borders, where he had moved not long before the Lockerbie crash, with which he was heavily involved. [Information from **Richard Sinclair**, Past Treasurer]

HONOURS

In the Queens Birthday Honours, **Dennis William Manners MBE**, for service to the community through Morris Dancing in Oxfordshire. It is understood that he was the founder of **Towersey** and a former **Oxford City Man**. [Information: **Pete Thomas**, East Kent]

COMMENTS FROM THE SQUIRE: "Looking ahead:---

"2009 will be a special year for the Morris. It will be the 75th Anniversary of the organisation of the Morris Ring. I have set up the 2009 Anniversary Committee to start thinking about suitable celebration events. So far we have Roy Yarnell, Chairman and John Frearson, Secretary with further people to be co-opted along the way. You may recall the 50th Anniversary involved a Feast at the NEC Birmingham with "local" Clubs arranging dancing tours both for the Saturday, before converging for the Feast, and for the following Sunday. With the large numbers likely to be involved this time, there will be much planning/organisation to do. Some preliminary discussion is already underway So if you have any views/ideas about the format of this Special Anniversary, please contact either Roy or John.

"Election of Squire 2002. Although it seems barely possible, I am well into my first year of office and thoughts will be turning to the next incumbent. [As I have been often reminded, you soon become a "has-been" in this job]. The election for Ring Squire will take place at the next ARM (around March, 2002, details tba) and I hope a good choice of candidates will emerge. Both Cliff Marchant (Chanctonbury Ring) and Bob Pierce (Gloucestershire) have intimated their interest in standing for election again. Of course other people may well be interested in doing the job and they should be encouraged to come forward."

Gerald Willey, Squire, The Morris Ring

ELECTION FOR SQUIRE – 2002

Gerald has asked that candidates are identified in the Newsletter as they “throw their hats into the Ring” [or is that “at Ring members”!!!]. Further nominations are welcome and completed papers [available from the Bagman] should be returned at least three months before the ARM. For those wishing to contact candidates the following information is available:-

Cliff Marchant [Chanctonbury] “As you know I will be standing for Squire again”
Contact numbers: Tel: 01273 204891 or Email: cmarchant@UKonline.co.uk.

Bob Pierce [Gloucestershire] “... would like to thank all those who have inquired and offered support for his intention to stand for Squire of the Morris Ring and he would like to confirm that he will stand for the election of 2002”. Contact numbers: Tel: 01285 821433
Email: b.pierce@fluid-transfer.co.uk.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - INSTRUCTIONALS

The Squire is taking a personal interest in Instructionals and will be assisting with co-ordination. Please let him know your needs. More details and booking forms, nearer the date.

Fieldtown Instructional – 21st - 23rd September 2001. **Green Man** have agreed to host a further Fieldtown Instructional in the Sutton Coldfield area . The tutor will be the inimitable, **Bert Cleaver**. A Booking Form was enclosed with the last mailing.

Fools and Animals “Instructional” – 26th - 28th October 2001. Hosted by **Ripley** - exact format to be decided, details to follow in next Newsletter. Preliminary details from **John Butler** at Ripley [Tel: 01623 456831 or Email: JohnTheFool@butlerh.freemove.co.uk].

Jigs Instructional 2002. **Dolphin** have agreed to host next year's Jigs Instructional at Sutton Bon(n)ington. **Dave Walters** has booked the hall for **18th - 20th January 2002**.

Longborough and Adderbury Instructional with **Jack Brown** [not Jack Rowell as stated on Page 2 of the Morris Circular] and hosted by **Stafford** in **September 2002**, and ...

Bucknall and Badby Instructional with **John Burke** of **King John's** in **November 2002**.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - RING MEETINGS – 2002

Preliminary details and [expected] dates of the five proposed 2002 Ring Meetings are outlined below. Fuller details will be given in the September Newsletter, with an Application Form. We hope that Sides can be advised of their success, or otherwise, by mid December. This will require Sides to return the form without delay. Start thinking about next year **NOW**.

10th - 12th May - **RICHMOND-ON-SWALE** RING MEETING
7th - 9th June [probable date] - **THAXTED** RING MEETING
19th - 21st July - **SILURIAN** RING MEETING
26th - 28th July - **BRISTOL** RING MEETING
30th Aug - 1st Sept - **HARTLEY** RING MEETING

WEB INFORMATION

The latest edition of "Traditional Drama Forum" is published on the Folk Play Research website - http://www.shef.ac.uk/~tdrg/TD_Forum_2.htm - Apart from news, it has articles on the International Mummers' Festival held at Enniskillen in December 2000; a review of the Morris Ring Folk Play Archive; and memories of Mummers at Kendal, Westmorland.

SIDEFINDER

The Morris Federation's "Sidefinder Site" <http://www.morrisdancing.org/finder/sfcgi.html> now includes those Ring Sides that are performing on a regular basis. Users can identify Sides local to any area and obtain contact details, and Email and Web site information. Our thanks to the Federation for allowing us "bulk access" to this resource. I will be sending updates from time to time – but please expect some time lag after you advise contact changes.

ARCHIVAL MATTERS

Ron Shuttleworth, Keeper of the Mumming Archive, announces "At long last my website is up and running on <http://www.mumming.org.uk> . Yippee!! Like all new-born, it will have to learn, grow and develop so your ideas will be very welcome."

Roger Comley, the **Letchworth** Fool reports that the Pipe and Tabor used by *Charles Bardswell* [92], was presented to the Side on 12th May at a ceremony at Graveney, near Stevenage. He danced and played for many Morris Sides in the 1920s and 30s, and toured the world with the National EFDSS team. Hopefully, a longer feature will appear in the Circular.

Thank you to all those [including Past Squire, *Barry Care*], who identified the archived Staff of Membership, mounting a flat carved brass "beacon" basket, with three flames coming from it. It was held originally by **Thannet**.

ANNIVERSARIES

Thaxted celebrate their 90th Anniversary this year. They were founded in 1911. **White Horse** are celebrating their 50th Anniversary this summer. **Harthill**, **Yateley**, and **Isca** all celebrate their 25th Anniversaries.

A 500th anniversary of a Morris related event? - Or Not a lot of People Know This!

"On Tuesday, 29th May, **Yateley** will be dancing at Longwater Lane, Finchampstead, Berkshire, where the local society have erected a notice-board commemorating the summoning of Prince Arthur, who was hunting in Windsor Forest, to meet his betrothed, Catharine of Aragon, at nearby Dogmersfield House in 1501. According to Roy Dommett, the English and Spanish Courts had distinctly different repertoires of dances, so it is unlikely that Arthur and Catharine could have danced together that evening, but the English court was particularly taken by a dance performed by a little blackamore page in Catherine's entourage to the tune 'Morisco', so much so that a similar dance was assimilated into the English court thereafter. Perhaps then this local event in our nation's history had some effect on the development of the dances that we know as Morris today? Yateley would like to think so and likewise think that the occasion is worth celebrating. They will be reminding their audiences throughout the year, at venues along the route that Arthur might have travelled between Finchampstead and Dogmersfield, of the 500th anniversary of this historical event!"

PUBLICATIONS and REVIEWS

Another thing for you to look out for coming soon on **Gloucestershire's** web-site: "A history of Morris dancing (according to *Chris Farr*) - a unique view of the origins of our dance." Their webmaster is currently putting the finishing touches to Chris's 18 page epic.

THE MEDIA

- - **Television:** *Derek Schofield* noted that Winster were due to be on BBC's Blue Peter TV programme on Monday 30th April. *Howard Mitchell* [now Winster!!!] wrote on the MDDL "... yes, Blue Peter asked some time ago, on air, if there were any junior Morris teams in the country. One of the Winster lads wrote to Blue Peter and a reply was received .. asking for a team to come to the studio today. The BBC have organised a coach, are providing lunch and a tour of the studio before practices and a live spot at 5.00pm. Frantic last minute practice and restoring of kit was going on over the weekend. The men's team are accompanying the lads. Even though I've only been with the team for two weeks, they asked if I'd like to come along - unfortunately I'll be on my way to Copenhagen so I won't get a Blue Peter Badge"

Phil Preen reported on MDDL on 29 May "... I just saw **Vancouver** Morris Men and one *Norman Stanfield*, on Midlands Today on the BBC." ... and this no doubt despite his blacking ... However, *Brian Bird* of **Belchamp** reports on C4's Big Breakfast. "... which had invited Belchamp onto their morning show due to go out live on Wednesday morning, when during negotiations they discovered we black up they withdrew the invitation, surprise, surprise."

NEWS

From **Green Oak** of Doncaster, news of *Doug* [*Marginally Miffed*] *McClone* and *Andy* [*Mad Dog*] *Holden* who set sail on the Spanish Main, on the brig Stavros Niarchos from Santa Cruse in the Canaries. As well as galley slave duties, "... we sang for our suppers and gave the rest of our ship mates the choice of walking the plank; keel hauling; the cat or learning to dance the Morris a number of burials at sea took place, ... but the really frightened ones learned how to dance the Shepherd's Hey and Banbury Bill [the sailor]"

Aldbury Ale [16th March] attracted dedicated travellers, braving the weather for the dancing and a fish and chip supper [and Beechwood Bitter [4.3%] from the Chiltern Brewery]. Sides represented included: **Bedford; Grand Union; Crendon; Offley; Whitchurch** and **Yateley**. An energetic evening of dance – which might explain the copious musicians [perhaps if there had been less chairs on the stage, they might have had less incentive to get comfortable!!!] Six of the musicians did form up a set for Monks March, playing as they danced!!

An excellent turn out for **Shakespeare's** Feast [24th March] – the first for some time. Much enlivened by the pre-feast, one pub, pub crawl and a disinfectant dip [this is not another beer – it was for the Foot and Mouth!!!] at the Shire Horse Centre. The top table included *Gerald Willey*, Squire of the Morris Ring [on his home ground]. Full sides from **Green Man** and **Ilmington**; and representatives from **Anker; Chipping Campden; Coventry; Coventry Mummers; Earlsdon; Manley; Saddleworth; Stafford; Uttoxeter; Rutland**; and **White Hart**; a plethora of Past Squires:- *Richard Hankinson; Roy Yarnell, Geoff Jerram, Tim Sercombe* and Past Bagman, *Tony Parsons*, again on home ground.

Devil's Dyke Ale attracted a broad selection of Sides and representatives to the wilds of Burwell, including: **Anker; Bedford; Cambridge; Colchester; Coventry;** English Miscellany; **Hagenath; Harwich; King's; Milton; Northampton; Peterborough; Rutland;** and **Standon**. An excellent selection of sausage hotpots were accompanied by four ales from the local Lidstones Brewery [Rowley Mild 3.2%; Session Bitter 3.7%; Triple Gold 4%; and Rawlpindi IPA 5%] – all too good not to list!! Dancing was generally lively, but larger bands do tend to produce somewhat reduced speed for the dances – especially those which are less familiar except as tunes. **Rutland** having danced one figure more in “Hunt the Squirrel” and thus appearing to be “doing a show dance” reacted to the “cheers” of the remainder by extending the dance yet further. Headington thus acquired half and whole gyps and rounds - some even recall that Adderbury processions up and down were danced - but by that time the event may have been entering the realms of fantasy and folklore. We were all grateful that Cecil Sharp was not present to collect it!!!

The week-end of 20th – 22nd April saw a plethora of events hosted variously by **King John's; Harthill; Horwich; Thaxted** and **Yateley**.

Harthill were celebrating their 25th Anniversary over the week-end. The Squire, **Gerald Willey**, reports “Friday evening gathering in “The Blue Bell” to enjoy a reunion drink with a cold buffet and some spirited singing. The Saturday morning began with a massed dancing display at the village shopping precinct and then off to tours around the locality visiting Dinnington, Chesterfield, Worksop, Clumber Park and Sherwood. Sides represented included: **Green Man, Uttoxeter, Boar's Head, Green Oak, Ripley, Green Ginger** and **Coventry** together with **David Thompson**, Midlands and North Representative and Ring officers **Gerald Willey** (Squire) and **Steve Adamson** (Treasurer). In the evening the celebrations continued in traditional style with a Feast in the village hall. An excellent menu included home made soup, roast ham / beef / pork and apple pie / fruit salad and a variety of ales. Representatives from **Lord Conyers, Jockey** and **Isca** were also present for the evening festivities. Toasts were given by **Keith Bloomfield**, Squire of Harthill; **Gerald Willey**, Ring Squire; **Ron Oxley**, Old Man of Harthill; and **Les Chittelbrough**, Isca. This was followed by singing at table and then impromptu dancing to midnight. On the Sunday morning we gathered at the village well for a short dancing display and then processed to All Hallows Church for a Morning Service that incorporated two baptisms and two dances from the Men of Harthill. Afterwards to “The Beehive” for a cold luncheon, farewells and the conclusion of an excellent weekend. Congratulations to **Harthill** on reaching their 25 years milestone.”

King John's celebrated with a weekend with a nautical flavour – including boat trips. An illustrated report appears in the Morris Circular – and more photos can be viewed on the **Dartington** web-site, with their report. “This years excursion to Hampshire took us on a return visit to Sarisbury Green, the centre for the weekend, and our tour was purposely kept close to home, so (as Jim so delicately put it) "if any landlords decide to bugger off and close their pubs, we should hear about it, and hopefully avoid the fiasco we experienced last year!" Also in attendance: **Plymouth** and **Moulton**.

Horwich Prize Medal held their St. George's Day of Dance on 21st April 2000. **Ron Yates** [**Saddleworth** and North-West Representative] writes “A most enjoyable day out and I was personally pleased to see so many north-west morris sides in one place, and good to see old friends again. The weather was very unseasonable for **Horwich**, there was no biting wind or heavy rain, just loads of sunshine - totally unsuitable for Saddleworth, who are used to rain and wind usually in that order. Horwich were host to the following teams: - **Britannia Coconut Dancers, John of Gaunt, Mossley, Rumworth, Stockport, Saddleworth** and Wrigley Head. Thanks to Horwich for inviting me and hope to see them all again soon.”

The **Thaxted** Ale was also on 21st April 2001. **John Tarling** writes "This was the usual relaxed event. It was, however, unusual in the fact that the menu was not sausage and mash! **John Bull** cooked an excellent salt beef. The new vicar of Thaxted, Fr. Raymond Taylor was the special guest - and a very funny (ha! ha!, not peculiar) man he proved to be. He was once a policeman, so he had a good tale to tell."

Yateley "kick started their season early this year, as it is their Silver Jubilee, with a half-day of dance to which they invited local mixed and female sides with whom they have danced over the previous 25 years. They were joined by Alton (now mixed Border), Fleet (ladies Cotswold), Hook Eagles (Border), Jackstraws (ladies Cotswold) and Mayflower (ladies N-W clog). The sides met up at Yateley's home pub, The Anchor, before some sides adjourned to entertain the residents of an old people's home before the procession to the Massed Display at their usual venue outside the Dog & Partridge P.H. Here the weather was kind and the Yateley audience, as usual supportive and appreciative of a varied programme of dances which included a massed Dilwyn (Border) and Shepherd's Hey Jig for all led by a local children's side, as well as a show dance by each side present. Yateley performed 'Old Tom of Oxford', a new dance to their Bampton repertoire. At the Ale in the evening the fellowship, company and dancing were excellent in every respect. Again there was a variety of show dances by each team as well as massed and social dances along with music and song with a roast beef buffet washed down with Hampshire's own Cheriton Brewery 'Pots' or 'Diggers Gold' ales. Yateley enjoyed leading a massed 'Jenny Lind' as they have also enjoyed practising it this winter and hope that Gerald will call it as a massed dance at the East Surrey Ring Meeting that they are attending!" [remind me on the day - Editor!!!] Plaudits came from all the sides attending for Yateley's impeccable organisation and hospitality and indeed, Yateley hope, that their traditional male only Day of Dance on 15th September and their intervening dancing season will be as good as this start to their 25th year."

MAY DAY NEWS

Hooray, Hooray, the First of May-O; Outdoor sex begins today-O
Cast your fears and clothes away...; Come and make whoopee on the First of May.

[from the web - Ashley Yakeley, Mossy Back MM, USA]

Oakworth and a few **Boar's Head** danced with Flag Crackers of Craven. "We danced up the most glorious sunrise for years at Keighley Tarn. Swans glided over the water; mallard flew overhead, and the cloudless sky slowly turned from purple to pink until the sun rose majestically over Rombalds Moor. Three police cars drove slowly past, with the drivers looking puzzled. And we sang - The First of May, Hal an Tow, May Day Carol, Following the Old Oss. ... And then off to Cononley for a champagne breakfast - a fine start to the season." [info on MDDL - Paul Hudson, Flag Crackers of Craven]

Tony Kelly of **Cuphill** notes that they "began their 2001 Season in earnest today. Dancing on top of Hydon Ball (aka the Cup Hill) near Godalming in Surrey as the sun tried to rise! On a bitterly cold, damp and rainy morning the side danced to only a handful of spectators this year. After the annual performance of the Worm of Wormley Hill (Wormley is a village a couple of miles from the hill), the men moved on to the Merry Harriers for breakfast. After a brief interlude dancing began again in the pouring rain in Haslemere. The final session started in Crown Court Godalming at 19.00 BST before moving onto the Red Lion, also in Godalming."

[Photos: <http://members.netscapeonline.co.uk/kellygu7/cuphillmorris/mayday/>]

Bedford - also **Offley** and **Letchworth** sang May Carols and danced at the Ickwell [Bedfordshire] May Pole at 6.30am on 1 May. They later featured in a half-page article in the local "Bedfordshire on Sunday" newspaper. The Revd Steve Williams of Harlington [Bedfordshire], advised that the Harlington Clock was programmed to chime the Bedfordshire May Day Carol on 1st May, thanks to **Bedford's** help"

Alan Jeffries reports on the **Greensleeves** annual pilgrimage to Wimbledon Common. “We danced a 35 minute show at 05:30 to a small, but select audience by the Windmill, on Wimbledon Common, South West London. The weather was good to start with, but there was a biting wind that forced the melodeon-playing writer to do a couple of dances to get the circulation back in his hands. At about 06:00 there were a few spots of rain, but nothing that curtailed the show. Sadly we never saw the sunrise as such. A large breakfast followed at the Wimbledon Squash and Badminton club, accompanied by a few May songs and pints of Young's ordinary. We were joined by the Mayor of the London Borough of Merton, who seemed to enjoy himself, although one can never tell for sure.” *[Apparently an un-named ex-Squire of the Ring, who allegedly imbibed a large quantity of fortified wine the night before (a) took 30 minutes of screaming at to get upright at 04:45 (b) played the first two tunes on the wrong pipe and therefore not in G, and (c) spent most of the first dance, picking up hankies he kept dropping ...]* - N.B. Draft copy only !! - Reminder to **delete** from Printer's Edition]

Norman Stanfield recounts the **Vancouver** May Morning: “The weather was mild, yet overcast, ... VMM shared the attention of about 50 groupies with the women's side called Tiddley Cove (named after a small bay in a suburb community). All told there was some 26 dancers (doing a variety of Cotswold and proto-Carnival choreographies, performed by the men and women, respectively) gambolling about in a park very distant from the hubbub of the city. No tour for us. People zoomed off to work shortly thereafter. There was a "Green Man" (not a Jack-in-the-Green, but a person dressed in a sort of cape of foliage, topped with deer antlers, looking like the spitting image of Cernunnos), a "Horse", a "Fool", a "May Queen" (i.e., a real woman), cavorting amidst a flurry of wink, wink, nudge nudges. A Maypole, actually a Maysapling, was surreptitiously hoisted in a corner, topped by a garden flower. A good time was had by all, I think. It certainly is great fun to get up so early and meet all those friends in a park in the dark.”

Wyvern Jubilee [and Treacle Eater Clog], danced atop Ham Hill, nr. Yeovil, Somerset at sunrise. “... although as the weather was, unusually coming from the East, the rain didn't spoil the party. It was very cold and windy, but we saw the sun come up, were treated to mulled wine and bread pudding and then retreated to the Half Moon, Stoke-sub-Hamdon, for an excellent breakfast.

[Info from Steve Cuneo on MDDL; there are pictures on http://www.cunio-marsh.freeserve.co.uk/may_day]

King's Men - May Garland Day. **John Tarling** writes “Why I ever said I'd go to this, I don't know! Up at 4 a.m. for dancing at dawn. This took place on the highest hill near to King's Lynn - in the middle of a roundabout all of 167 feet above sea level! Later that day - around lunch time - we paraded around the town for about two hours, following a garland on a pole and blowing animal horns with a variety of mouthpieces! (ancient tradition researched by **David Jackson**, Bagman). I must remember for the future that a pair of earplugs would be useful to alleviate the cacophony. It was a most enjoyable, if somewhat tiring day with a good crowd of King's Men and three men from **Peterborough**.” They were on local TV with the dawn dance – and made the local press also.

Alan Barber of **Mersey** reports “Despite the ravages of Foot and Mouth and the fencing off of our traditional May Day dance spot on Thurstaston Hill, Mersey nevertheless continued their May Day at Dawn tradition today - joined by the ladies of Mockbeggar. For those who know the area, we moved to Bidston Hill. ... This year we had the night-time vista of Birkenhead and Liverpool in front of us. This even looked rather nice in the dark with the street lights twinkling. For the first time an audience was waiting for us (2 - later swelling to 4!). The sun slowly rose over the horizon whilst were dancing. This was another first - from Thurstaston we could never see it – we always danced in a dip on the wrong side of the hill. Who knows, this may mark a change in "traditional" dance spot - and just a few weeks after a local history book was published with a full colour photo of Mersey dancing at dawn in their old traditional spot. Clearly it's going to be a year of major changes. The landlady at our favourite pub - The Harp - has changed. Anne, the new incumbent seems as misguided as her very supportive predecessor. She's not only kept our photograph hanging in the bar, she provided jugs of beer for us last night despite our post dance music and singing. Shame we had to leave a little earlier than usual to be able to get out of bed at 04:00 this morning.”

Paul Woods, Bristol, noted “Our May Day Tour was pretty good once again, though two days later the aches remind me that none of us are getting any younger. We started at 5.42 in Castle Park, and ended well after Sunset at The Old Barn at Wraxall (dancing with Bristol Blue, the local women's side). In between we performed at 4-and-a-bit schools, some alms houses, the local radio station, and visited two other pubs. We were fortunate that we had a good number of us take the day off work this year, so for a couple of the above gigs (the radio station and the bit-of-a-school) we were able to split the side in two and perform in two places at once. (Mind you, our lines are so bad that we sometimes look as if we're performing in two places at once anyway...) - I've bunged up a few images of the day on: <http://info.bris.ac.uk/~lipw/morris/2001pix.htm>. The one I find interesting is of the couple with the baby. They came specially to see us at the alms houses. Last year I had given the lady some of our fertility cake, and this year they had brought back the results of that cake to show us!”

Richard Smith of Bristol recounted “Bristol have already received feedback from one school we visited yesterday, where one "teacher" is, in fact, an undercover morris man: Two comments you might appreciate: One teacher said she was not looking forward to some dull Morris Dancers coming in to bore the kids, but she has now totally changed her mind. We have also been doing a lot of follow up work in English today and you might appreciate this comment from one of the children in my class: "Mr XXXX's balls were ringing as he walked down the corridor" (Pupil's spelling mistake not mine). I would hate the 1st to be the holiday, because schools would be closed, which would spoil our fun of bringing them a bit of English culture and whipping the kids into frenzy with the appearance of Horse, then leaving the teachers to cope with calming them down.”

John Culf notes “**Dartington** were unable to dance the sun up on May Day at their planned venue - on the South Devon Coast Path, near the appropriately named offshore rocks "The Dancing Beggars" (they really are there - look at the OS map), because of foot & mouth restrictions. An alternative venue was suggested by an ex-Navy member of the side - the Parade Ground of Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth. Britannia welcomed the idea with open arms, keen to show their support for local organisations, and issued their own press release. The novelty of the situation led to the attendance of a crew from BBC TV's local Spotlight News and BBC Radio Devon. A well-compiled, sympathetic report showing Morris in a very good light lasting a full two minutes went out during the lunchtime and evening local television news programmes, alongside a report from Padstow.” Further reports and photographs are included in the Morris Circular.

Ron Ford of Chanctonbury Ring wrote “Although most Sussex footpaths are open, those on the South Downs are still closed in respect of foot & mouth disease. So, at 06.30 on May morning we compromised by dancing at the base of Chanctonbury Ring, the Iron Age hillfort, from which our side derives its name. For some dances we had two sets up - such was the turnout, although this may have confused the photographer from the local Argus newspaper! Those of us who did not have to rush off to earn our daily crust, then danced in nearby Steyning to a few early risers, and, at 8 a.m. knocked up the adjacent café for breakfasts”.

LATER NEWS

Bedford's traditional North Bedfordshire May Tour took place on 5th May. The photograph on Page 2 of the *Morris Circular* 38 shows them dancing at Harrold Green on that occasion [not at Northill – where they hosted Letchworth – see *MC* 38 front page - on the 7th !!!].

Nigel Strudwick reports that “On 7th May 2001, **Devil's Dyke** repeated a feat first done in 1991, that of dancing along the Devil's Dyke (Anglo-Saxon earthwork near Newmarket from which the club takes its name). This was done for charity (Guide Dogs and Wildlife Trusts) and is expected to raise in the region of £2000. The foot and mouth outbreak in fact caused the Dyke to be closed, and thus an alternative 7.5 mile route was devised, pausing at various villages en route, but ending up as before at the annual fair at the Dyke's end at Reach. Fifteen dancers and musicians took part. The weather was great, and the feat was achieved with minimal injury although a considerable degree of exhaustion after dancing two full shows at the fair. A most enjoyable day.”

The Squire, **Gerald Willey**, reports on the **Westminster** Day of Dance, 12th May 2001. "Quite a gathering with representatives from **Aldbury, Chester, Chipping Campden, Colchester, East Suffolk, Ilmington, Moulton, Offley, Shakespeare, Thaxted** and **Winchester**. For the morning session, starting from 'The Barley Mow' on Horseferry Road, the three tours set out at 10am for dancing in and around the streets of Westminster leading up to a massed display in Trafalgar Square at noon. After a break for lunch the afternoon tours continued around Westminster high spots finishing with another massed display in Trafalgar Square at 5pm. During the Day there were sightings of six Past Ring Squires plus the current Squire all in dancing mode. The evening Feast, held in the basement bar of 'The Silver Cross' on Whitehall, rounded off a very tiring but enjoyable day."

Andy King reports on this year's **Plymouth Reunion** [12th May] that was danced in Oxford. [*The Bagman was there for a Dinner – but managed to miss them*]. He noted that "... the weather was excellent. We had a walking tour of the city on Saturday - all the usual spots i.e. The Cornmarket, Gloucester Green, Head of the River Tavern & the Museum. We ended in the Lamb & Flag at about 6pm before finding something to eat and returning to The Friar for our traditional musical evening until 01:20 hours on Sunday (approx.) !! On Sunday we performed at Blenheim Palace and Woodstock at lunchtime before going our separate ways."

COVENTRY'S "NOT THE LUTTERWORTH DAY of DANCE" – Saturday May 19th 2001. A report from attendee **Alan Dandy** of **Stafford**. "A relatively cloudy day following the promised sunshine, but a goodly gathering of mostly Leicester MM, & Ripley, (both being quiet sides, difficult to distinguish at times), joined Coventry MM, a couple from the original Lutterworth and ourselves for a tour of the south Warwickshire countryside at around 9.30 from downtown Kenilworth. JE's ability to cut timing to the bone left us flagging down a departing coach just grinding into second for the climb up Kenilworth High St. - A crash stop, and we were just lucky it wasn't the W1 annual romp as we were on the bus amid the flowers 'n hats before anything registered. First impressions count - Once in the pub at Wellesbourne, Christened by Coventry as the 'White Hart' (as was every pub for the rest of the day), but known locally only as the Stag's Head, - sharp intake of breath when confronted by the bar pumps "Abbot Ale; London Pride; Spitfire and Cumberland Ale". Staggering under the pressure of choice at that time of day, assistance came as the first two were working solidly for 20 minutes which enabled me to catch the Barmaids eye and ask for a pint of Spitfire whilst she was waiting for other staff to get out of the way. The dancing had started two 'n half hours before in Castle St. Warwick outside one of the few surviving timber-frame buildings from the Great Fire of Warwick with CMM (or was it LMM) doing a Bampton dance followed by 4 Ripley men and SMM 2 with Laudnam Bunches. (Remembered only as it started as Banbury Bill and was changed once we were "on" because the others had done a Bampton dance. We survived and went on to dance a massed Wilm 'n Nancy, Trunkles Ft. as **Leicester** did Valentine and **Coventry** Young Collins Ascot & Beaux Badby. The bus had parked in Warwick Castle, no-one seemed to worry that we were not visiting the castle as several tourists grabbed a pic. Entering Wellesbourne we'd been advised the aforementioned White Hart/Stags Head was closed until 12.00 but that didn't seem to stop **Ripley** who arrived at the shopping centre late and with Ale-a-plenty having, persuaded the landlord to open up; the alternative being inconceivable. With respect however Ripley, now at full strength with two members being picked up from a car park on the way, they certainly did more than their share of the dancing. Performed at the centre was Mrs Casey As., Highland Mary Ba., Massed Bobbing Around, Postman's Knock (Ripley version !) and a few others before returning to the White Hart/Stag's Head where Leics. treated the locals to The Rose Tree. On then to the Castle at Edgehill, of Civil War repute, where a longer than planned stay got off to a slow start as a rather large dog didn't like bells. CMM did Rapper whilst he was pacified then followed Jockey Asc., Brighton Camp (with reluctant/willing virgin), Constant Billy Ilmington, Swaggering Boney and SMM 2 did Nutting Girl double as **Pete Grasby** sang it ! Hook Norton Ale helped the throat altho' it was not a cheap at over £2/pint. On then to the lunch spot at Not the White Hart but The Plough, Warmington (not -on-Sea) for up-hill versions of some 7 or 8 including Abnalls and Vandals by Ripley. Lunch - what can one say: - a cordon bleu cob, with generously proportioned irregular rectangloid of mature Cheddar, and not just any old bag of crisps but a packet of Walker's Cheese & Onion, - significantly above adequate without the apple !

That some still had room to indulge in a Club Biscuit more than justifies recent national claims of a high percentage of obesity in the UK. Over-eating probably accounts for the fact that I can remember neither the Ale nor the post-lunch dances. The Crown at Napton-on-the-Hill (we couldn't find the White Hart), on the other hand presented an even more uneven uphill than any yet encountered but did not deter from the Orange in Bloom As., Ripley's special - Jubilee, Leics. Black Joke Ad., Ripley Trunckles Hd Q., Flowing Bowl Ft, massed Balance the Straw, others and Cov's Long Sword. We returned in sober form to Kenilworth where outside the Queen & Castle LMM & CMM did the Upton Stick dance and others Valentine, Dearest Dickey, Young Collins and a few others. Walking then down the street to the "something & Virgin" for a quiet pint before the feast at 7.30. in the Parochial Hall just a few strides away. - Cup 'o Soup, copious selection of pies, quiches, bargees, crispy bits and sundries followed by Gateau (various), with strawberries heading the miscellany of fruit, and an excellent Ale. Toasts included Immortal Memory by **John Edwards**, Guests reply from **Ripley**, with timely comment and control from CMM Squire **Dave Marr**. Songs then ensued with contributions from Ripley about courting in a sack, and "A song of Eastern Gentlemen" by our very own JE. Fortunately **Pete Grasby** was around to raise the quality of song, but not of content until second strength was realised and dancing re-started a'pace with Willow Tree Bu. a Leics. (particularly **Charlie C**) version of Step-Back (previously un-danced by SMM and I believe may others, even possibly not noticed by C# !), Beaux Badby, Queen's Delight, an exquisite Shepherd's Hey Ft. by a very mixed side, Jockey Asc. double Jig by **Dave Marr & "son of" Trewinnard**. Also performed at some time were Hunt the Squirrel Hd., Trunckles in several traditions, Lad's a Buncham, Bluebells 'o Scotland, 29th May and no doubt a few others during the short time we were called to the bar. A very good day, well organised and orchestrated by the most hospitable Coventry Morris Men."

Following the **North Wood** Day of Dance, attended also by **Greensleeves**, [see Report/photographs in the Morris Circular], **Rutland** diverted to do the town on Sunday 20th May. **Jonathan Unna** sends news their visit to the "London Eye" "We danced at the very top on Sunday 20th May. ... Six dancers and two musicians did The Nutting Girl, all at one end of the capsule (which may have been a mistake, with hindsight!)." A photograph appears in the Morris Circular.

Bruce Henderson noted that "... **Vancouver** joined Hammersmith, New Esperance (both London sides), and Cotton Mill Clog of St. Albans for a pub tour in Hampstead, North London on Saturday. The VMM are dancing border on this trip (mostly "Pershore" dances) and seem to have recovered from the jet lag pretty well, although very warm temps and high humidity had people streaming to the bar for refreshment by the time that I caught up with them late in the day (yeah, I hear you say, what's new?). VMM danced well, **Norman Stansfield** (who is a little strange but apparently a very lovely man and it was a pleasure to meet him) borrowed a tuba from someone here in the UK for the tour -- I didn't know that it's possible to play more than "Boomp, Bah" but Norman shows very well that wonderful music can come out of one **Graham Baldwin** played melodeon for VMM and they had additional drums, etc. making a fine band. ... VMM are off to dance with Eynsham today (Sunday), then it's off to **Bampton** tomorrow, followed by a full "Morris dance death-march" of the UK with dance-outs every day, ending at **Thaxted** next weekend."

Various activities on the w/end 26th - 27th May. It is understood that **Helier** hosted their week-end in Jersey [and a report is awaited in due course - please!!]. As **Greensleeves** had accepted their invitation, it meant they were missing - for the first time in very many years - from **East Surrey**'s tour of Rye and its environs in Kent and Sussex. Undeterred East Surrey and guests, **Bedford**, set to and danced 50% more dances than usual, losing valuable drinking time in the progress. A noteworthy event on the Sunday, when the Mayor of Rye, Councillor Geraldine Bromley, presented **Bob Davies** of East Surrey with the Rye Millennium Medal - in recognition of the annual tours that he has organised and led over the Whit weekend for the last 43 years - and Bob has been on every one of them, fitting any minor inconveniences like knee replacements carefully between tours!! A photograph should appear in the next Morris Circular.

Jockey's Annual 'Whit' Tour of The Cotswolds - 28th May 2001 – “Another year, another 'Whit' Tour. This was originally going to be an extra special tour, we were hoping to have our friends from Belgium (*de Rollewagen*) with us, but they were unable to make it. Maybe next year! So Monday saw us having our usual 9:15 start from Henley-in-Arden to face another trip around The Cotswolds. The coach's 'In Flight' entertainment was provided by our very own Deputy Squire, **Steve 'Fiddler' Lowe**. He played the part of the air hostess to near perfection - the timing of the clash between his comments and the voice on the radio saying 'I'm wearing a little black and white skirt' couldn't have been better. Fortunately our pilot, Jason of Johnson's coaches, was relatively sane (albeit having an interesting choice of headwear) and kept us safely on the road. The weather also played its part, sending us a gloriously sunny day. A great day out! This year's itinerary saw us visiting:- Moreton-in-Marsh; Stow-on-the-Wold; Chipping Camden; Welford-on-Avon and Stratford-upon-Avon.”

Several Ring Sides were among the evening guests at Bampton on 28th May. **Bristol** with the Village; **Handsworth Sword** [plus **Geoff Thompson** on a flying visit from USA] and **Abingdon** with Bampton Traditional; and **Vancouver** [in Border Mode]; **Icknield Way** and **Bourne River** with **Traditional Bampton**. As usual, Morris persons various were too numerous to list, but it was very good to see Past Squire, **Nibs Matthews** in good form [and enjoying the Draft Bass in the Talbot].

Thaxted Ring Meeting [1st – 3rd June] will be covered in the next Morris Circular – however, a good time was had by all and noteworthy was a Border spectacular on Sunday with **Vancouver** as odds and **Silurian** as evens, in a sixteen man set – and using a combined band – not for the faint hearted!!!

Steve Tunnicliffe (Rutland) noted on 9th June: “... great day out on the Gate to Southwell today. Thanks to **Dolphin** as ever for the organisation. Spotted **Doc Rowe** documenting the whole affair; it must now be truly traditional having been going since the 11th century on and off.”

An excellent range of dances from **Leominster**, featuring as one of the full week-end guest Sides at the Kirtlington Lamb Ale on 10th June.

SNIPPETS

We learnt from the Estonian Folk Dance and Folk Music Association (ERRS) [via **David Brewster** of **Chameleonic**] that April was International Dance Month and it was the 20th World Dance Day on the 29th of April. They asked that “ ... your action and support can help that every nation's unique, original and important folk dance culture would keep up. So I wish you can help effectively folk dance culture and understand the problems of folk dance activists. ... Thanks to you the nations will stay special and unique.” There was also reference to “Dance Month” on **Gloucestershire's** web-site - hopefully, we were all out there on the 28th!!

From **John Milce** of **Sydney**, a copy of an Email that he received: “Dear Mr. Milce, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our english pub name "The Stanford Arms" which is located at Ambhara Hotel Jakarta, Indonesia. Since its official opening last year by the British Ambassador, Sir Robin Christopher, this pub becomes one of the famous pub in Jakarta. ... On May 22nd 2001, we have planned to celebrate the 1st anniversary of our pub. To mark the event we arrange to have morris dancers show at our pub and british traditional music. Their are some expatriat who use to dance morris dancer, but they don't have the costume. One of my friend informed me that we can have it from Australia. Is it possible for us to borrow the costumes for May 22nd 2001? If it's available we will try to arrange the accomodation for 1 of your people to assist the costumes”.

AN APPEAL

Roy Marshall, formerly of **Bristol** writes “As an ex Morris Man, I am writing to the Ring and Federation to ask a favour on behalf of The British Red Cross. The Red Cross is some 60% down on funds due to cancellation of events. This will affect how we can provide our services in the community. If I say that our main fund raising event was to be at The Badminton Horse Trial you understand how badly foot and mouth is affecting us. The favour is to ask Morris sides to help the Red Cross by sharing their bag. Contributions may be sent to the address below or sides can contact their local Red Cross Branch. If sides wish their local Red Cross to benefit, enclose instructions and we will forward contributions to your local branch. [Contributions can be sent to: Lesley Robinson, Office Manager, British Red Cross (Avon), Red Cross House, Alma Vale Avenue, Bristol BS8 2DX]”

AND FINALLY

Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? It seems that the "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" winner, **David Edwards**, is a former Morris dancer. The audience were told nothing of his morris career: It began with The Men of Sweyn's Eye, when he was a university student in Swansea, and continued with Mersey, and was also a member of our former Associates Redbournstoke. He also learned rapper while studying for a post-graduate teaching qualification at Keele University. He says that he can now retire and "carry on ... traditional Northumbrian sword-dancing". Apparently, he had already won the Mastermind tournament on television in 1990. [With acknowledgements to Alan J Green [in the web MDDL] and to the "Shave the Donkey" web-site [linked from the Morris Ring pages] which includes a full report]

IN CONCLUSION

We now have only 20 of our 167 Full Member Sides who cannot be contacted by Email – although some of those who were listed seem to have changed their numbers. If we do not have an Email contact, you may miss out on “Stop Press” information and possible bookings. Some numbers go into disuse as you change your “provider” – remember to update both the Ring Bagman and the Overseas Bagman/Webmaster, John Maher, with any changes.

As ever, please remember to keep the News [Gossip and Scandal] flowing in and as usual report any changes of Contact Person, Addresses or – as noted above – Email numbers.

The next Newsletter will probably be produced in August – September, probably with the next Morris Circular.

Wassail

John Frearson,
Bagman, The Morris Ring

The Newsletter - No. 19 – June 2001 - SUMMARY

Ask your Bagman to show you / provide a copy of the full Newsletter – and the Circular.

IN MEMORIAM - *Stuart Lawrence* [Furness] and *Neil* and *Bruce Thompson* [Lothians.].

HONOURS – *Dennis Manners MBE*, founder of Towersey and formerly Oxford City.

FROM THE SQUIRE: Looking ahead: **Ring 75th Anniversary in 2009**; **Election of Squire 2002** - candidates so far - *Cliff Marchant* [Chanctonbury] and *Bob Pierce* [Gloucestershire] - are their more ??

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - INSTRUCTIONALS – **Fieldtown**, 21st – 23rd September 2001. **Fools and Animals**, 26th - 28th October 2001. **Jigs**, 18th – 20th January 2002. **Longborough** and **Adderbury**, September 2002, **Bucknall** and **Badby**, November 2002. **RING MEETINGS 2002** – hosted by RICHMOND-ON-SWALE – THAXTED – SILURIAN – BRISTOL – HARTLEY

ARCHIVAL MATTERS - *Ron Shuttleworth's* Mumming Archive data now on the Web. Presentation of the Pipe and Tabor used by *Charles Bardswell* [92], to **Letchworth**

ANNIVERSARIES - **Thaxted** celebrate their 90th; **White Horse** their 50th; **Harthill**, **Yateley**, and **Isca** all celebrate their 25th.

THE MEDIA - **Winster** on Blue Peter. **Vancouver** on BBC Midlands Today.

MAY DAY NEWS – from **Oakworth**, **Boar's Head**, **Cuphill**, **Bedford**, **Offley**, **Letchworth**, **Greensleeves**, **Vancouver**, **Wyvern Jubilee**, **King's Men**, **Peterborough**, **Mersey**, **Bristol**, **Dartington** [at the Royal Naval College] and **Chanctonbury Ring**.

OTHER NEWS – from **Green Oak** on the Spanish Main; **Aldbury Ale**; **Shakespeare's** Feast; **Devil's Dyke Ale**; **Harthill** 25th Anniversary; **King John's** weekend; **Horwich St. George's** Day of Dance; **Thaxted Ale**; **Yateley Silver Jubilee**. **Devil's Dyke** dancing the Devil's Dyke; **Westminster** Day of Dance; **Plymouth Reunion's** Reunion in Oxford; **Coventry's** "Not the Lutterworth Day of Dance"; **North Wood** Day of Dance; Rutland on the "London Eye"; **Helier's** week-end in Jersey; **East Surrey's** tour of Rye; **Jockey's** Annual 'Whit' Tour of The Cotswolds; **Bampton** on Whit Monday; **Thaxted** Ring Meeting; **Rutland** at "The Gate to Southwell"; **Leominster** at the Kirtlington Lamb Ale.

The "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?" winner, *David Edwards*, is a former Morris dancer. with **Sweyn's Eye**, **Mersey**, and **Redbournstoke**.

Also mentions for: **Abingdon**; **Aldbury**; **Anker**; **Bedford**; **Boar's Head**; **Bourne River**; **Bristol**; **Britannia Coconut Dancers**; **Cambridge**; **Chipping Campden**; **Chester**; **Colchester**; **Coventry**; **Coventry Mummers**; **Crendon**; **Dartington**; **Dolphin**; **East Suffolk**; **Earlsdon**; **Grand Union**; **Green Ginger**; **Green Man**; **Green Oak**; **Greensleeves**; **Hagenath**; **Handsworth Sword**; **Harwich**; **Icknield Way**; **Ilmington**; **Isca**; **Jockey**; **John of Gaunt**; **King's**; **Leicester**; **Lord Conyers**; **Lutterworth**; **Manley**; **Milton**; **Mossley**; **Moulton**; **Northampton**; **Offley**; **Peterborough**; **Plymouth**; **Ripley**; **Rutland**; **Saddleworth**; **Shakespeare**; **Silurian**; **Stafford**; **Standon**; **Stockport**; **Thaxted**; **Uttoxeter**; **Vancouver**; **Whitchurch**; **Winchester**; **White Hart**; and **Yateley**

.*Wassail*,

John Frearson, Bagman, The Morris Ring