



## The Newsletter - No. 21 – December 2001

*Greetings,*

As most of you with Email contact will have heard, our Treasurer, **Steve Adamson** has had a further misfortune. A fire at his flat means he is temporarily re-housed [see **new address** above – same telephone number – **NO** Email at present].

Steve is OK, out of hospital, and thanks those who sent good wishes. The fire destroyed much of the shop stock [and the proposal form for the new Insurance – will they ever believe this!!!]. More seriously, the fire has destroyed the computer and the subscription records and badly charred some cheques. Although these are mostly identifiable, Steve will be contacting some of you for a new cheque to save excessive special clearing charges from the banks.

For the majority who had submitted payments on time, please check that your subscription payment has been cleared at the bank, and enter details on the enclosed form. Those who paid the personal accident supplement will be due for a rebate. Those few who have not paid – please do so NOW.

Welcome to new Associates, “**The [Insert Name Here] Mummers**” – from London.

*Also enclosed with this mailing are:*

- A **Summary** of this Newsletter – as the last page of the Newsletter. The Newsletter includes some Proposals on Subscriptions for information ahead of the AGM [page 7].
- Inevitably, more **Amendments** to the 2001 - 2002 Directory [collated with above].
- The Squire's choice of **Massed Dances** for Ring Meetings [collated with above].
- A **Booking Form** for the **Annual Representatives Meeting**.
- A “**What did you pay questionnaire**” to help sort out the Treasurer.
- If available, a copy of the revised **Insurance Letter**.

*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].*

## **A FEW WORDS FROM THE SQUIRE.**

*Greetings to everyone.*

A few reminders:

### **Associate Clubs.**

I want to encourage as many Associate Clubs as possible to progress to Full Membership. I shall be contacting Associate Clubs to talk to people and hear their views.<sup>1</sup>

### **To all Bagmen and Area Representatives.**

If there are Sides in your region that fall into this category, then please make contact and “talk” with them about changing over. Quite simply, I believe the Ring would be much healthier and have more vitality with as many Sides “on board” and working together to promote the Morris as possible.

### **Ring Meetings.**

The choice of dances to be used for the Massed Shows at Ring Meetings in 2002 remains the same as for last year. The feed-back from Clubs was that most people were happy with the selection. As you have probably noticed, there are no corner dances in which to have a momentary rest – and I particularly want to feature “Jenny Lind” as a stick dance.

If your Side is attending a Ring Meeting next year [it is past the deadline for choice, but I hope you will try to make an appearance at one of the sessions], please make sure you are familiar with these dances and the various figures. [A revised sheet is enclosed]

## **CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR.**

*“Time passes over more cheerful and gay,  
Since we learned a new dance to drive sorrows away”*

In some four weeks or so, it will be Christmas and then the end of 2001. A New Year always brings change and the promise of something new. 2002 will be no exception and will be special in that a new Squire will emerge after the election at the next ARM, March 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2002.

Meanwhile, I am doing the rounds of a succession of Ales and Feasts and Days of Dance, and look forward to fitting in as many visits next year as possible .... particularly to those Sides which I had to miss out on last year.

I send Good Wishes to you all and thank you for your support during 2001.

Wishing you a Very Happy Christmas and a bumper New Year.

*Gerald*

Gerald Willey, Squire, The Morris Ring

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<sup>1</sup> A note on Annual Fees, which is relevant to transfer of Associates, is included on Page 7 of this Newsletter

## IN MEMORIAM

**Cyril Papworth** [Cambridge] "... was admitted to Addenbrooke's Hospital on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October and died on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October. He was alert throughout. It is many months since Cyril took part but he viewed the Cambridge Men in the past year and attended the Round regularly until very recently. Cyril prepared detailed plans for the Men and various dance groups to take part in his funeral, but practical constraints may demand a separate thanksgiving service for such tributes."

[Information from: **Graham Cox**, Squire, Cambridge]

## ELECTION FOR SQUIRE – 2002

The date for final nominations [1<sup>st</sup> December 2001] is past and three candidates have been proposed and are standing. Their details and the proposal papers will be enclosed with the next mailing, together with voting paper for each Member club.

### **Bob Cross** [Chalice]

Contact number Tel: 01934 632850. No Email, but his address is 22, Clevedon Road, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset BS23 1DG.

### **Cliff Marchant** [Chanctonbury]

Contact numbers: Tel: 01273 204891 or Email: [cmarchant@UKonline.co.uk](mailto:cmarchant@UKonline.co.uk).

### **Bob Pierce** [Gloucestershire]

Contact numbers: Tel: 01285 821433 Email: [b.pierce@fluid-transfer.co.uk](mailto:b.pierce@fluid-transfer.co.uk).

## NORTH-WEST AREA REPRESENTATIVE

Ron Yates the North-West Representative is standing down at this ARM. Clubs in the area have been advised that candidates are required. Because of the short notice, an extended deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> December has been set for any candidates to be notified to the Bagman. A postal vote will be available if more than one candidate is declared. [So far, there are two expressions of interest – procedure details for candidates / proposer Sides from the Bagman.]

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS - ARM 2002.

As already announced, the 2002 ARM weekend will be hosted by **Stafford**, at the Moreton Millennium Centre, Nr. Newport, Shropshire and will be held on **1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2002**. The ARM will be on **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March**. This returns to the more normal earlier date. A Booking Form is attached to this Newsletter. We understand that the "**Geoff Jerram, Winchester** jig and catering team" will be in attendance to deal with the Feast. Those who attended **Dartington** last year will no doubt be booking without delay!!!

Both **Isca** and **Chalice** expressed interest in hosting the **ARM** in **2003** – Isca having also volunteered last year, "got in" first this time. Ideally, in 2004, the ARM venue should move North – are any Northern Sides interested? – Contact the Bagman.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS - RING MEETINGS – 2002

A summary of the dates of the 2002 Ring Meetings is outlined below. The Application Forms should have been received by **11<sup>th</sup> November**. Applications may still be submitted, but Silurian and Bristol are full. There is room for a couple of sides at Richmond. Thaxted and Hartley can take more Sides, the latter is already larger than some of the other meetings!!

10 <sup>th</sup> - 12 <sup>th</sup> May	<b>RICHMOND-ON-SWALE</b> RING MEETING - 100 Men - <b>Richmond</b> .
7 <sup>th</sup> - 9 <sup>th</sup> June	<b>THAXTED RING MEETING</b> - 200 plus men - <b>Thaxted</b> .
19 <sup>th</sup> - 21 <sup>st</sup> July	<b>SILURIAN RING MEETING</b> - 150 Men - <b>Ledbury</b> .
26 <sup>th</sup> - 28 <sup>th</sup> July	<b>BRISTOL RING MEETING</b> - 180 Men - <b>Bristol</b> .
30 <sup>th</sup> Aug - 1 <sup>st</sup> Sept	<b>HARTLEY RING MEETING</b> – 200 Men - <b>Kent</b> .

For Info: **2003** CHANCTONBURY RING MEETING - NOW - 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> August 2003.

## INSTRUCTIONALS

The Squire is taking a personal interest in Instructionals and is assisting with their co-ordination. Please let him know your needs. Forthcoming Instructionals include: -

**Jigs Instructional 2002.** **Dolphin** has agreed to host next year's Jigs Instructional at Sutton Bon(n)ington. **Dave Walters** has booked the hall for **18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> January 2002**. Booking Form was enclosed with the last mailing.

**Longborough and Adderbury Instructional** with *Jack Brown* and hosted by **Stafford** in **September 2002**, and ...

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

More details of these latter two, and booking forms, nearer the date.

Following cancellation/postponement of **Fools and Animals Meeting** this year, there are offers of a re-run by **Ripley** in **2003**, with rather more notice, or by a joint **Plymouth** and **Trigg** team. The latter felt that an overseas trip was “too local” for most Sides!!! Hopefully the Fools will come to a decision in the near future.

## OTHER EVENTS

**Area Excursion** to the **Cotswolds**. The next “North” and “North Midlands” Areas’ trip will be on Saturday **14<sup>th</sup> September 2002**. Visiting [hopefully]:- Bucknell; Wheatley; Headington; Banbury; Adderbury; Hinton-in-the-Hedges and Brackley. Details available from *David Thompson*. Email: Tradswag@btinternet.com. [It is filling very fast].

### Morris Federation Instructionals.

These are also available to Ring Members. Forthcoming Federation events:

**North-West Morris** – Bolton, Lancs. – Rivington Morris - January 2002.

**Morris Issues for Discussion and Debate** – Cecil Sharp House – 23 February 2002.

Details from the Morris Federation Events Officer: Nicola Bouault; Tel: 01332 882857; mob: 07811 833693; Email: niq@supanet.com.

## The Banbury Hobby Horse Festival

**Simon Pipe** writes “The Festival extends an open invitation to all hobby horses and related animals, plus companions, for next year's gathering. It takes place on **29 - 30 June 2002**. Next year the festival is likely to provide a rare opportunity to perform alongside a group of dancers with a tradition stretching back centuries - and their hobby horse, of course. They are "almost 100% certain" to attend. Those who have attended the previous two festivals say they have had a wonderful time. There were around 40 animals in 2001. The atmosphere is extremely convivial, and the pace fairly laid-back. As well as general horsing about and processing spectacularly through the pleasant market town of Banbury, there are music and song sessions, talks and great food in the fine surroundings of Adderbury village. There are also community events. **Doc Rowe**, folklorist extraordinaire, has said he will return for the third year and give another talk. **Stephen Rowley**, professional beast-maker and taborer, will give a workshop on "working" an animal. There's always time for sharing ideas and knowledge over a pint. There is no charge - participants pay their way as they go for excellent camping and food. The Morris element is being expanded for 2002, but cannot extend to an open invitation. A welcome may be possible to sides with several animals. Fools, musicians, green men or a groom or two are very welcome to accompany their animal, especially those with restricted vision. Stephen Rowley, organiser of Gloucester Pipe and Tabor Festival, is keen to bring a company of taborers to Banbury - so again, if you know of any, please give them the details. The website <http://hobbyhorsefest.has.it> should be updated shortly.

## ANNIVERSARIES

**Phil Marsh**, sometime musician for **Bedford**, celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. A side from Bedford danced at the event – and **Roger Nicholls** re-convened an early line up of the Orange and Blue Band for the occasion.

## THE MEDIA

**Thames Valley** appeared [briefly] dancing atop the Tate Modern in London on a BBC TV promotion for Radio 3 in early October. This was narrated by Benjamin Zephaniah. “The gist was that "all sorts of music is on Radio 3". It starts with Ben quoting the old "Try everything except morris dancing and incest" line, but ends with a side of men in pale blue waistcoats apparently dancing on the flat roof of a high building, apparently in London.”

[Information from **Lester Bailey**, now **Aldbury**, and **Sandy Glover**, **St Albans**]

On Radio 4's Today [17 October] Rory Bremner and Gerald Scarfe suggested that Ian Duncan Smith had no features worth satirising. They suggested he could turn out to be a cross-dressing Morris Dancer, but that it would take a few months to find out his quirks.

**Manley** were featured in a full article in October's issue of Cheshire Life magazine, with photographs of them dancing in the village of Great Budworth. In another article in the same magazine, there are photos of Mossley Rose & Clog. [Info: **Keith Ashman**, **Manchester**.]

**Green Man** are to be seen, almost subliminally, in a new TV advertisement for Nescafe.

## EFDSS – GOLD BADGE

On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November at the EFDSS AGM, Gold Badges were awarded to **Roy Dommett**, **Trevor Stone** and **Dennis Smith** for their unstinting work in the fields of Morris Dance, Sword Dance and Folk Dance respectively. Roy Dommett was awarded an EFDSS Gold Badge for his huge contribution to the Morris. Our congratulations to Roy on his award and our thanks for his immense contribution to the Morris. [I am indebted to **Adrian Williams**, Morris Federation Archive Officer, for this copy that follows, of the draft citation, prepared by **John Bacon** (President of the Morris Federation)]

**“Roy Dommett** -- There can be few Morris teams today who are not indebted to Roy Dommett in some way; either directly through his unfailing generosity of both time and material, and his willingness to run workshops and to talk for hours about anything remotely to do with Morris, or indirectly as his collected material forms a large part of the modern Morris dancers bible. His work on filming and collecting dances has taken him years at considerable cost and this forms a unique and valuable record for present day and future researchers.

“As both men and women began to perform the Morris 1970's, he was there with support, information and teaching skills and this involvement has continued over the years. He has done much to encourage the development of the Morris as a living tradition rather than a display of historical interest. He is blessed with the gift of an ever-open mind, while always promoting the need for thought and consideration of the tradition. Meanwhile his talent for remaining non-committal in the face of the latest Morris invention is super human. His greatest contribution to present day teams is to have given them the confidence to own and promote their traditions

“He retired from his daytime job several years ago, and received a CBE for his work in the Ministry of Defence. However, he continues his lifetime job of supporting the development of the Morris by continuing to give workshops to new generations of dancers - although each year he threatens that it will be his last. At the age of 67 we appreciate his contribution, and would wish it to be recognised more formally.

“To summarise Roy Dommett's activities, he has been involved extensively in the Morris for many years as; A Musician; A Morris dancer; A teacher of the Morris; A collector of dance notation including films; An organiser of over 400 Morris workshops all over the world including 5 Folk camps in the USA; a member/associate of Fleet Morris, Minden Rose Morris, **Thames Valley** Morris, Alton Morris, **Winchester** Morris, **Kennet** Morris, Shinfield Shambles Morris, **Abingdon** Morris, **Bampton** Morris, Berkeley, Seattle and California Morris in the USA and Glorishears and Adelaide Morris in Australia.”

## WEB INFORMATION

John Maher asks all Bagmen and other interested parties to look at the Ring's alias list at <http://www.themorrisring.org/email.htm> and check that their entry is up-to-date. He says “It has been updated by me (somewhat sporadically), but a lot of sides seem to be setting up their own names, and this may confuse matters. It is best to set the Ring aliases up with a direct e-mail to whom-so-ever is the side contact. Otherwise two (or more) aliases will need keeping up-to-date, and also have to be checked by the e-mail system when a message is sent. There are interesting recursion possibilities with this situation.”

## MEMBERSHIP FEES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

At the last ARM the level of annual membership fees for Associate Members was discussed. It was the view of the Meeting that annual fees for Associates should not be raised.

As you will know from the Squire's message herein, we are encouraging Associate Sides to aim to progress to Full Membership. However, it would seem sensible that Associates should not feel discouraged by the apparent higher cost of the present Full Member subscription.

The main difference in the level of the two subscriptions is the cost of the additional Morris Circulars that are provided to Member Sides. The basic subscription is, effectively, identical.

It is proposed that the Membership element of the annual fees [Insurance; a single copy of each publication, i.e. Newsletter [5/6 per year], Morris Circular [2/3 per year] and Morris Dancer [1 per year] and a general overhead element] are separated from the Subscription for any additional copies of the Morris Circular [and indeed any other publications if required].

The Membership element would thus be identical for both Associates and Members, and would be at whatever was the current Associate subscription level.

The Side would select the number of extra publications needed. Initially, unless advised to the contrary, the number of extra copies supplied would remain unchanged – current Full Member clubs receiving, and being charged for, their normal three [i.e. two extra] copies of each Morris Circular. Payment levels would thus, effectively, remain unchanged.

This Proposal has the following advantages:

- Basic Membership costs would not be dissimilar to the other Morris organisations.
- There would be no financial disincentive to progressing from Associate to Member.
- Those Sides not requiring additional publications need not take them. This would be helpful to those [albeit few] Sides that are living on in name, supported by an individual, who need not incur additional subscription costs.
- Larger Sides, requiring more copies, can receive them in the one mailing.
- The matter of cost of membership, and whether Members subsidise Associates [or vice versa], would no longer be a matter for debate. The basic package will be identical [as effectively, it always has been!].

No formal proposal is required; effectively there is no change, merely additional transparency and a clarification of the make up of the annual fee that allows flexibility on publications. The Treasurer, who is, in any case, required to review and propose adjustments to these each year, can introduce any minor subscription changes. [For approval at the ARM].

Whilst not formally required, for the avoidance of doubt, there will be a confirmatory Proposal at the ARM, and the change will be effective from the next subscription year. In any case, no additional subscription is required from any Associates elected to Membership at the ARM, until the following November renewal time.

Any comments or queries on this Proposal would be welcomed by the Bagman, before the ARM, so that they can be clarified. It is hoped that this mainly administrative [non-] matter will not become a convoluted discussion item!!!

## NEWS

A follow up on the **Greensleeves** Ring Meeting. Before the evening Tours, **Chester City** invited those present to visit their area of the camping ground, to while away the time in their “Casino” club. Cocktails were served, and gambling chips in the form of “dolly mixture” were sold. Gambling proceeded both on the tables and at various card games. An attractive “hostess” circulated. Fun for all, but the hosts won most of the games by means fair or foul. **Tom Clarke**, Secretary of Chester City has advised Greensleeves that their local hospice has benefited to the tune of £45.90. Well done Chester City [and all the losing punters!!!].

A note from the MDDL on **St Alban's** tour of USA. “St Alban's were here to spend a couple of days each with Shepherdstown Northwest Morris and Foggy Bottom Morris Men. The Shepherdstown NW team took them out for a canoe ride, but none of them drowned, so Foggy Bottom had to host them Saturday and Sunday. We danced at the National Cathedral, as part of the cathedral's open house festival, then embarked by bus to the Capitol Building, a bar on Capitol Hill, and the Jefferson Memorial. The weather was near perfect, and the settings were picturesque. We were pleasantly surprised to find that increased security measures were barely noticeable. .... This was not an ordinary morris tour, by any means. We had been planning on dancing at the Capitol Building and the Jefferson Memorial all along, but after the 11<sup>th</sup> September attack, the tour took on new meaning, and there were some serious moments. First of all, we danced at the National Cathedral, where we announced that we were dedicating our day of dance - and all monies from the hat - to the memory of Steve and Chris. There were misty eyes on all sides, dancers and audience alike, at this reminder of recent tragic events and of its connection to what we were doing. The audience was very generous, too. I think the St Albans men were gratified to be able to express some sympathy to Americans about the events, and the sentiments were roundly appreciated. Other 'misty eyed' moments were: At the Capitol Building, thinking that it was likely one of the targets, and how awful that would have been. And, when we finished our tour, and our bus driver, a craggy-faced, older man said he was a volunteer fireman and had been at the Pentagon. This big, tough guy started to tear up, and so did everyone around him. A lighter moment occurred at the Jefferson Memorial when we crashed a wedding photo-session, much to their delight. SAMM did a lady-lifting dance with the bride - the wedding photographers pressing in like paparazzi in the presence of a movie star. Harry the Hart accompanied SAMM as well, wondering surreally about the Capitol grounds, clacking his teeth, and puzzling the tourists.”

**Tim Sercombe** reports that a “side” with much Morris Ring membership, “The Nine Daies Morris” “... have just completed their annual reunion, (28<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> September) which took place here in South Devon, we stayed at the Salcombe YHA, with spectacular views over the coast line. The weather was kind to us on the Saturday tour of Kingsbridge, Totnes, Dartmouth, and Tor Cross. Sunday, we had showers, but as we were only dancing in Salcombe, before our departure, it did not matter that much. 21 hardy souls turned up for the event, and all had a wonderful time of it, (or so they said).”

A multitude of Feast and Days of Dance on 6<sup>th</sup> October. **Anker; Bedford; Dartington; Jockey; Rutland** and **White Hart**, to name just six – who says Morris is not alive and well!!

The **Ring Squire** was at **Rutland**, and **Steve Tunnicliff** reports that he “made it from Lands End to John o'Groats and **Eddie [Dunmore]** was busy taking pictures along the route. Rutland's new squire took office on Saturday evening: **John Wood**, Rutland musical supremo who has undertaken to learn how to dance - we shall see! I believe there were some initial mutterings between Squires about a possible future Rutland Ring Meeting.” However, it seems there was “early retiring to bed of almost all present on Saturday night”. The Ring Squire adds that this was “after an excellent Feast” and “after some energetic and varied dancing that included “I'll go and enlist” [Sherborne] from the Ring Squire and **Mike Mathew of Coventry**” “There was thus no post-dancing song and music.”



From **Yateley** – “I'm sure **Dartington** or **Bristol** or **King John's** will be letting you have some details re the Dartington Bells Tour last weekend 6<sup>th</sup> Oct but from YMM it really was a most enjoyable weekend celebrating the villages mentioned in the song about the Devon/Cornish border bellringers.”  
 From **Bristol** – “PS Dartington's Bells Tour was to quote our Martin “The best thing I've ever seen in my life!” [Hopefully, an illustrated Report will be included in the next Morris Circular]

**Bedford** retained the *Bagman*, and were joined by **Chipping Campden**, **Coton**, **East Surrey** and **Manchester**. Doughnuts to start the morning. Then two walking Tours of Bedford [the River Embankment in the morning and the Town Centre in the afternoon], with a massed show in Harpur Square before a long lunch [with two shows] at the Bedford Beer Festival. A few more beers and some singing in the late afternoon at the Wellington Arms [CAMRA Regional pub of the year with 12 Real Ales!!], before an excellent feast catered by the BCT [Bedford Catering Team - the wonderful wives]. The main course “beef cobbler” included a gallon of Porter from the Beer Festival!! - delicious. There was further dancing afterwards, and a “Full English” the next day before departure.

The *Ring Treasurer* visited **Jockey** for their Annual Tour and Feast. He was made an honorary member for services to the sales of Jockey's CD. “Saturday, 6<sup>th</sup> October saw Jockey Men's Morris' annual tour of Birmingham City Centre. Although numbers were down a little, compared to recent years, there were still 30 or so souls in the tour party. Our guests included two members of **Green Man**, one from the **Original Welsh Border** side and one from **Boar's Head** (BFB). Jockey's numbers were supplemented by several of our associate members.

“On the whole the weather was fine, although we were forced to prolong the first pub stop and go from there directly to the lunch spot because of heavy rain. I'm delighted to report that the lunchtime catering was spot on this year; far, far better than that provided by a different pub on the last couple of tours. A pub to stay with (as long as the management doesn't change in the meantime).

“In the evening we adjourned to Perry Barr for the feast. Here the tour party was joined by men from North British Rapper, **Ripley**, **Stafford**, **Uttoxeter** and a member of a Welsh Male Voice Choir that also uses Jockey's favourite watering-hole – The Lamp Tavern. The numbers were further swollen by the arrival of a double-decker bus containing **White Hart**'s guests from their annual tour. We believe that the location of the feast was kept from White Hart's guests until as late as possible.

“To those men of **Chester City**, Bradshaw Mummers and White Hart who unexpectedly found themselves eating with Jockey and friends, thank you for coming and we hope you enjoyed the evening.

“The feast consisted of a soup course, followed by an extensive cold buffet and a range of succulent desserts. Throughout the evening the men's tankards were kept topped up with a range of fine ales from local brewery, Beowulf, served at the table by Jockey servers.

“The feast was followed by a few songs. *John Stait* (Jockey) sang ‘Jones' Ale’; a Chester man gave a fine rendition of ‘Barbara Allen’, accompanying himself on concertina; one of White Hart sang a song about woad. Huw, from the Welsh choir, concluded the singing with a haunting song about the last whale on earth – marred somewhat by the tuneless joining in of those who couldn't hold a tune in a bucket. (Why is it that the most haunting songs are the ones where that happens?).

“There were two further highlights of the evening. The first was the presentation of a Jockey baldrick to BFB to welcome him as an honorary member in appreciation of the number of our CD's he's sold, and for being an all round good egg. (Jockey CD ‘Five More Men’ still available from the Ring Shop now. Buy now for Christmas!).

“The other highlight was the performance by Bradshaw Mummers of their play. This was very well received, although hardly anyone saw much of the second part through the thick shrouds of smoke – good job the hall didn't have smoke detectors. Definitely recommended.

There was unfortunately no Officer left to attend **Anker**'s Day and Feast. It appears that after the excitement of his brush with the law last year, the Treasurer felt he would better fade into anonymity in Birmingham

**Alan Barber** of **Mersey** noted “Mersey will be migrating South this weekend, primarily to dance at the wedding of one of our expatriated men down in deepest Egham. To break the journey on the way home on Sunday we are planning to take up the open invitation at The Coalbrookdale Inn, which claims to welcome "any passing minstrels, troubadours, dancers, singers, poets musicians or other folkies". A request for more details for the Newsletter produced the following: “One of our men expatriated himself from Mersey to Surrey earlier this year and then decided to get married. Fearing for his safety, and to wish him well, we mustered a side, including some of the band booked to play at the Ceilidh in the evening, and set off bright and early on Saturday morning for deepest Egham. The good news was that neither the M6 near Birmingham nor the M25 were doubling as car parks, which proved a good omen for the weekend. Consultation with the Beer Guide had led us to agree to meet up at "The Crown" on Egham High Street. What is it about the local council - are they ashamed of Egham and trying to hide it? We spiralled in, having overshot on the M25 and reaching Sunbury on the M3 before we could turn round. We really appreciated the nice trick of running a short stretch of the road we should have been on parallel to the motorway. We could see the Egham signs but not do anything about it. Beer and food for those in the first car to arrive were both excellent and the staff very friendly. Car two arrived with just time for beer and the remaining car with band gear went, very self sacrificingly, straight the hotel. For those who know the area, it was the "Great Fosters" - quite smart - and named after our Squire too. We danced for 30-40 minutes in front of the hotel as bride/ groom and guests arrived, successfully retaining their attention. We then presented Matthew with an autographed Morris stick signed by all the side. The formal posed photographs with Mersey all happened then. Who knows, maybe we'll be in Country Life next month? We next moved through to the formal gardens behind the hotel and continued dancing spasmodically (the only way we know how) for a further hour or so, whilst the informal bride and groom shots were taken. As a grand finale, Matthew joined us in full wedding gear for a final spot of Headington (Laudnum Bunches). Why is it that these big posh hotels serve such awful beer? I hope the bush survived the 9-10 pints of vinegar it was fed. This was what prompted us to dump our bags at the two houses where we were staying and meet up at the Crown again. This was the final disappointment of the weekend - staff still very friendly, beer still excellent, but despite the menus saying food until 9:00, the kitchens closed at 17:30 and it was now 18:00! Chippy's are wonderful things. I'm always wary of Ceilidh's at weddings, especially when interspersed with a disco, but this one really worked well. All who were there were keen to dance and energetic to the point of hyperactive. No problems getting them up but I had to re-jig the planned programme at half time as I'd skipped all the slower stuff and had to dig out more fast and furious dances. Forget Circassian, we finished them off with what felt like a twenty minute strip the Willow. I thoroughly enjoyed it but each member of the band finished in his own puddle of sweat. We left Egham about 9:45 on Sunday and the gods of the traffic smiled on us again. We were at The Dale in Coalbrookdale almost before they opened (well 2 out of 3 cars were). It gradually filled with local drinkers and folk enthusiasts. The musicians in particular met a few old friends and discovered many common friends and acquaintances. I can't understand the popularity of the place though. Perhaps it's the range of beers (over 2000 types recorded apparently in the years leading up to the year 2000) and the friendliness of the staff and customers? We ran through six or seven dances until the average age of the side began to tell on us and the gasping for breath was louder than the music. When we retired to the bar, we found a very welcoming mountain for sausages chips and bread. Fortunately, we had plenty of volunteers to help us and we just about managed to polish it all off. Thanks to those who showed up to watch and help us eat, thanks to the staff at The Dale for the hospitality and thanks to Dave Hunt for passing the word round. I'm sure it will be a major topic of conversation at practice tonight - after we've reminded the Foreman how to dance Lass of Richmond Hill of course. It was a much enjoyed weekend, well worth the 500 mile round trip.”

**Stephen Rowley** mentions that a group from **Gloucestershire**, **Gwilym Davies** (Musician) and **Tony Poulter** (Squire) took part in a Pipe and Tabor festival in Catalonia. They hope to arrange a full side in future years (any takers?). They met up on the Friday night with the local Black Horse Morris, whose musician runs a hotel booking service and found them a very reasonable deal in the centre of Barcelona. [A Report may appear in the next Circular]

The clocks went back and our new Associates “**The [Insert Name Here] Mummers**” were in fine form at two pubs in Hampstead, dancing with Tyler’s Men Border Morris [dancing Dave Jones style Border]. These Sides appear to be comprised, in part, of members of **Blackheath** and Hammersmith. An excellent time was being had by all.

The Bagman looked in on a **Kennet** Monday night practice; they had two full sides up for practice; for an energetic night of Fieldtown and Bucknell. The “gents” in their after practice pub contains plaques various, commemorating the auspicious users of the facilities; near the window is one inscribed “***The Kennet Morris Men tinkled here***” - that’s fame!!! Two sides again at a practice the following night with **Taunton Deane** – Fieldtown and Adderbury [they only do two traditions at a time as “more leads to lower dance standards”]. On the way into Taunton, a sign reads “***Tacchi Morris Arts Centre***”. Their dancing was not in the least tacky – and at least they can spell!!! Home to **Bedford** for practice on the Wednesday and again two sides plus – Morris is indeed alive and well.

## SNIPPETS

Could not resist copying the following quotation sent to MDDL by Steve Cunio.

**“Dancing is in itself a very trifling, silly thing, but it is one of those established follies to which people of sense are sometimes obliged to conform, and then they should be able to do it well”**

Philip Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield (b 1694).

**An Anecdote:** **St. Albans** arrive at a pub on a Monday evening and rush to the bar before performing. *JOHN*, as usual, is first there to buy Wadworth’s 6X for himself and three colleagues. “24X, please”, he says to the barmaid. After a moment’s thought, she picks up six tankards and walks towards the tap labelled “Fosters XXXX”.

## IN CONCLUSION

My apologies that September issue’s “Summary” purported to be for August – and you received it in October. Having completed the sale of my late parents’ house, I had to clear the place and that put my timing back. It then seemed sensible to wait a couple of days for the Morris Circular, rather than having you wait until this Newsletter [or incur a lot of extra postage] – well the Treasurer was in favour!!! I hope that no urgent matters were overlooked.

If you feel that some Sides are over-represented in this Newsletter – then it is time that you sent in some News of your own Side!!!

As ever, please to keep the News [Gossip and Scandal] flowing in and as usual report any changes for the Directory [available by Email].

The next Newsletter will be produced in January, and should include the Morris Dancer and final details for the ARM – and the voting papers for the Election of the next Squire.

## Wassail

John Frearson, Bagman, The Morris Ring

## **The Newsletter - No. 21 – December 2001 - SUMMARY**

**Ask your Bagman to show you / provide you with a copy of the full Newsletter.**

**THE SQUIRE**, in his “few words”, wishes you all a “Very Happy Christmas and a Bumper New Year”. He hopes to encourage more Associate Clubs to Full Membership. His choice of dances for Ring meetings is included and is as last year.

**IN MEMORIAM - Cyril Papworth** [Cambridge] died on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October. His grandfather was a Molly Dancer and he was largely responsible for the Molly revival.

**ELECTION FOR SQUIRE – 2002.** There are three candidates. **Bob Cross** [Chalice]; **Cliff Marchant** [Chanctonbury] and **Bob Pierce** [Gloucestershire].

**NORTH-WEST AREA REPRESENTATIVE** – Candidates are required.

**FORTHCOMING EVENTS - ARM 2002.** Hosted by **Stafford** and held on 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2002.

**INSTRUCTIONALS - Jigs Instructional, 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> January 2002.** **Longborough and Adderbury Instructional** in September 2002 and **Bucknell and Badby** in November 2002.

**OTHER EVENTS - Excursion to the Cotswolds - 14<sup>th</sup> September 2002.** **Morris Federation Instructionals.** North-West Morris - January 2002. Morris Issues for Discussion and Debate – 23 February 2002. **Banbury Hobby Horse Festival - 29 - 30 June 2002.**

**THE MEDIA - Thames Valley** atop the Tate Modern - **Manley** in Cheshire Life magazine - **Green Man** in a new advertisement for Nescafe.

**EFDSS – GOLD BADGES** – for **Roy Dommett**, **Trevor Stone** and **Dennis Smith** for their unstinting work in the fields of Morris Dance, Sword Dance and Folk Dance respectively.

**MEMBERSHIP FEES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS** – The Squire is encouraging Associate Sides to aim to progress to Full Membership. This will be assisted by a proposal that the Membership element of the annual fees should be the same for Associates and Members, and at the current Associate level.

**NEWS - Chester City** raise charity funds at the **Greensleeves** Ring Meeting. **St Alban's** tour of US. The Nine Daies Morris” reunion. **Mersey** migrate South. The Dartington “Bells” Tour. **Gloucestershire** in Catalonia. “**The [Insert Name Here] Mummers**” in Hampstead. Feasts and Days of Dance at **Anker; Bedford; Jockey; Rutland** and **White Hart**.

Sides also “getting a mention”: **Blackheath; Bristol; Boar's Head; Chipping Campden; Coton; East Surrey; Kennet; King John's; Manchester; Original Welsh Border; Ripley; Stafford; Taunton Deane; Uttoxeter; and Yateley.**

*Wassail,*

John Frearson, Bagman, The Morris Ring