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The Newsletter No. 39 - June-July 2005

Hello,

As I set about writing my first Newsletter I must start by adding my tribute to the staggering amount of hard work that John has put in over the past seven years. His commitment, skills and enthusiasm were clearly transmitted to us all through his Newsletters - much of which was a catalogue of teams visited, Feasts eaten and ale sampled by him. I cannot hope to match the miles he travelled but as to the rest I will do my best.

Ever since the ARM when my election was confirmed I have been overwhelmed by congratulatory good wishes - usually delivered with a wry smile and a slight shaking of the head. Bob and Steve have been very encouraging and wave away those of my friends who suggest that I am mad. John is, of course, very supportive if increasingly demob happy. Copies of innumerable emails and enquiries as to 'How may filing cabinets do you want?'

The first event I attending in an 'official' capacity was the **St George's Day** joint gathering in - **Newcastle upon Tyne**. Following the success of the Trafalgar Square event, celebrating the progress with the Licensing Law exemption, it was decided to run a similar event in the North. All three Morris Organisations were involved but numbers fairly low due to the majority of sides having other St George's Day commitments. I was disappointed that a lack of a single focal point meant that I had no opportunity to meet most of the other participating sides.

Leicester MM are creatures of habit in that there are a number of events we inevitably attend - in addition to our obvious May Day and Boxing Day jaunts. In mid May we join with Ripley MM and Coventry MM for a '*Not the Lutterworth Day of Dance*' - in memory of the many wonderful 'Days' organised by Brian Higgs and the **Lutterworth MM**. This year it was Ripley's turn to organise and we went by Cable Car to dance in a cave! (The Heights of Abraham at Matlock is well worth a visit.) Then it was to **Leeds Morrismen** and friends for their 52nd Annual Dales Tour at the end of May. It was an excellent weekend, as usual, with **Moss** his usual ebullient self. It was nice to see **Norman Peacock** distributing the cake on the Monday. He claims to have only missed one year since the tour started in 1953.

I danced in at **Thaxted Ring Meeting**. The main street in the early evening makes a truly wonderful venue but it is rather daunting to be watched by so many people - some of whom know what they are looking at! Thanks to **Mike Chandler** for playing (I will buy you a pint for that Mike but not at The Star where they were charging £2.70 a pint). Sadly the gilt was taken off what was otherwise an excellent event by the untimely death of **Bob Waller**. [See below]

On a lighter note I must mention young **Toby Melville**. At Thaxted he was in East Suffolk kit A couple of weeks earlier I had seen him dancing in **Anker** kit and was impressed by the speed with which he learnt new dances and adapted to different styles. Upon enquiring I was told "He has a strong Morris pedigree: Mum, Emma, (Daughter of Mike Garland) , has been a dancer (North West, clog, Appalachian) and a musician for years. His dad, Jon, has been a dancer and musician since youth, starting as a boy with **Derby MM**, as his father was Jim Melville who was prime mover of Derby MM for years. Toby has been dancing with Anker since last autumn, when he turned 8; he has also been out with **East Suffolk** (in their kit) alongside his granddad and his uncle Adam (Garland), most recently at **Westminster's** Day of Dance. He has also danced with the **Hinckley Bullockers** on the last 3 outings."

Thanks to Joe Oldaker, Anker MM

Another annual pilgrimage for Leicester MM is to the **Forest of Dean MM**. Dave Evans, Ken Winter and the lads performed a miracle this year - they found as pub that Leicester had not previously danced at and got us to The Boat at Penatlt.

My first 'solo' event was the **Durham Rams Ring Meeting** - made easy for me by a wonderfully welcoming set of hosts. The omens were good - on the Friday the directions were easy to follow so I found the school and the first spot on Saturday morning was the Baltic Square by the Millennium Bridge. A more detailed report of the weekend will be filed in the Ring Logbook (kept by *Keith Francis* for those who might have forgotten) but I must mention a couple of highlights: Steve Adamson (Ring Treasurer - formally known as BFB) was seen to perform a dance with his side **Boar's Head MM** - and **Castleford Sword** dancers did a mean Cinderella at the Feast!

Sad news.

[Please note - no disrespect is intended but I am including only fairly brief information in the Newsletter and obituaries and appreciations will appear in our other publications as appropriate.]

Ted Ovenden of Standon Morris Men

Ted Ovenden, Musician for Standon Morris Men died suddenly on 22nd May 2005.

Ted joined Standon Morris Men around 1980, initially as a dancer, but subsequently taught himself melodeon and gave up dancing some years ago. Only a few days before his sudden death he had been out with Standon and in fine spirits sampling the ales at The Woodman, Wildhill.

Submitted by Derek Wisbey of Standon Morris Men.

Bob Ross, Bagman of the Ring (1946-50)

Bob Ross died peacefully at home in Evesbatch on 24th May. The funeral was held on Thursday 2nd June, at Bishop's Frome church, Herefordshire. The church was packed with family and friends - including many members of his own sides (Cambridge and London Pride) and representatives from many other sides.

Bob Waller

Bob Waller, a popular member of some 15 years standing, and ex-Squire of King John's Morris Men, collapsed and died after completing a dance at the Thaxted Ring Meeting on Saturday. Bob was only 53 and will be missed by everybody. His wife Jane was at the Meeting and persuaded KJM to stay on and honour Bob in the way that he would have wished.

Andy Bloom

Andy Bloom of Colchester Morris Men lost his battle with cancer on 24th May. One of the soundest men anyone could know, Andy danced with Colchester for many years, had variously been bagman and Squire, was a musician, and sang enviably. Remarkable for his even-tempered good nature and generosity of spirit, he was always ready to pass on dances to the newcomer to Morris, to support and to encourage. He was out with the side, playing melodeon, until the end of April. He died from a spreading cancer which he had lived with nobly. Few men could be more missed than he will be. His funeral took place on Wednesday 1st June in Colchester.

Submitted by Graham Mitchell

Peter Hardy of the Devil's Dyke Morris Men

With the greatest of sorrow, the Devil's Dyke Morris Men announce the passing of Peter Hardy, dancer since 1995, and squire 2000-2003. He had just passed his 53rd birthday.

Peter collapsed in what was intended as our penultimate dance of a most enjoyable and warm evening at the Wheatsheaf at Exning near Newmarket on 26 May. Despite the efforts of first-aiders at the scene, ambulance staff, and the A&E at Addenbrookes Hospital, he failed to recover.

The funeral took place at Withersfield Church on 10th June. We are very grateful to the sides who were represented: Bedford, Cambridge, Hageneth, Haughley Hoofers, Letchworth, Standon, Thaxted, Witchmen, and Steve Adamson representing the Ring. David Dolby played the Morris Call as the hearse left for the crematorium, and DDMM processed before the mourners to the village hall.

Submitted by Nigel Strudwick of the Devil's Dyke Morris Men

Dr. Len Luckwill, founder member and first squire of **Mendip MM** died on 27th June aged 91. As I finish the final draft of this, my first newsletter, I received this news. Len was a real gentleman. He was Squire when I joined Mendip MM in my teens. Others will write of his academic skills (an 'apple expert' as it was explained to me all those years ago) and of his Morris prowess but I will remember his great patience and humility. A lovely man.

Other news:

Open Question

Neil Fretwell of Harthill asked this question: "Are you aware of many clubs suffering any 'knock on' effect of the music bill? A couple of our (managed part of a chain) pubs have cancelled us. Even though we've explained about Morris Dancing exceptions & as first spot we'd be outside, senior management have told onsite managers it's too much trouble & 'all music type events' must be cancelled."

If you have evidence of this reaction please let Ring Officers have details as a matter of urgency.

The Magic Spring

"The Magic Spring" is a new book that puts Morris Dancing in a good light. Many familiar people were interviewed during the research and people like Bert Cleaver, Simon Pipe and Ron Shuttleworth pop up. Ben Higgs says that he hate books and avoids reading if he can, but even he enjoyed it!

Submitted by Ben Higgs

Tom Foolery

"Baked beans, Custard, Macaroni cheese and Chips...." sums up the flavour of the weekend of Tom Foolery by Chris Harris which Robert Chisman attended at Bristol University at the beginning of April. It was in the form of workshops taking place in the drama studio, where aspects of Fooling, Beasting and Betsying (à la Pantomime Dame) were covered, together with some basic drama techniques. One important lesson was that 'characters' with the Morris need to do more than just stand about and look pretty (?), and must play to and interact with the audience.

Submitted by Robert Chisman, Fools and Animals Convener

Find out more at the annual Fools and Beasts Unconvention. (See separate advert),

BIG WALK BREAKS RECORDS

A RECORD number of 4,000 walkers turned out for this year's Walk the Wight, a 26-mile trek between Bembridge and Alum Bay raising money for Newport's Earl Mountbatten Hospice. Among the walkers who braved blisters and sunburn were Andrew Jackson and Malcolm Hector of **Men of Wight** fame did the entire walk in full Morris dancer regalia. The dancing duo raised around £1,000 by giving a short performance at every checkpoint.

Isle of Wight County Press 30th June 2005

RING PUBLICATIONS

Just to remind you that following the retirement of **Eddie Dunmore** who was Ring Publications Officer from 1986 to 2006 that there are now **NEW EDITORS** for all the Morris Ring publications. All need 'copy' - they will appreciate any articles, photo's etc.

Harry Stevenson has taken over editing the Morris Circular

Contact him at:- Erin House,
59, Olivers Battery Road North,
Winchester Mobile 07775 785271
SO22 4JB. Tel: 01962 855911
Email: harry_wmm@trunkles.freemove.co.uk

Sean Goddard now edits the "Morris Dancer".

Contact him at:- 142, Hollingbury Road,
Brighton
BN1 7JD Tel: 01273 559107
E-mail: s.p.goddard@sussex.ac.uk

THE TREASURER'S RAMBLINGS

May I also join in the multitude of appreciation for the efforts of John Frearson. We, the big three, have to work as a team. John has been a key player in this triad for several years and we feel sure his advice and experience will remain on tap for time to come. As his presentation (Thaxted 2005) tankard now appropriately states, 'For service above and beyond the call of duty'. However, after making the decision to graze the Morris Ring pastures of retirement at leisure, his most difficult task remained ahead of him..... a successor !!

I believe that this is where John, yet again, succeeded in coming up with the goods in the form of this newsletter's author. Welcome to the team Charlie.

The '2005 Treasurer's Review' continues along its lengthy and rocky road. I am fully aware that some aspects of this are akin to 'pulling teeth' but, as some of you are already aware; I can be (intolerably) persistent. One of the most recent advances to have already taken place is we now have three dedicated bank accounts with the HSBC as opposed to the previous singular repository. These are in the name of *The Morris Ring*, *The Archive Group* & *The Morris Shop*.

At the end of the year, all membership subscriptions will continue to be made payable to '*The Morris Ring*'. This account is specifically dedicated to paying for our obligatory 'must haves' such as insurance, publications, PRS fees, web site costs and all things appertaining to the every day running of The Morris Ring. All future payments for Morris Shop merchandise are to be made payable to 'The Morris Shop'. I will report via this newsletter should any further changes affect you directly. A full and comprehensive summery (riveting stuff) will be prepared in time for the ARM in March. I'll bet that you can hardly contain your anticipation!

THE MORRIS SHOP.

The Morris Shop continues to flourish. We still have a few Morris Ring meeting T-Shirts at only £6.00 plus P&P . These are available by mail order or from the travelling Morris Shop at:

23rd -24th July 2005 Long Man Morris Ring Meeting
 29th -31st July 2005 St Albans Morris Ring Meeting
 21st August 2005 Saddleworth (or maybe Whitby FF) TBA
 9th - 11th Sept. 2005 Bromyard folk Festival
 12th Sept, 2005 Abbots Bromley Horn Dance Day (Monday)

Please note that the Abbots Bromley Day of the Horn Dance is Monday 12th September. During this year, numerous other publications have got this wrong. The formula is: The first Monday after the first Sunday after the 4th September. When the 04/09 falls on the Sunday, life can become a little confusing. If any individual wishes to contest this interpretation of the formula, please send comments (on a postcard) to 'The Samaritans'.

THE MAGIC OF MORRIS. (£15.00 (+ £1 p&p), Double CD)

Many thanks to the hundreds of Morris Ring members that have now added this superb double CD set to their collection. And even more thanks to those of you have contacted me with your constructive comments and criticisms. I am delighted to report that 99% of these expressed a reassuring positive attitude towards this project.



Supply is only just managing to keep up with demand (and that is the truth, trust me, I'm your treasurer). If you do not have this yet, you know where I am.

The artists are: **Albion Morris Men**, **Ashley Hutchings**, **Black Pig Border Morris**, **Chris Leslie**, **Crucible**, **Cry Havoc**, **Fr Kenneth Loveless MBE**, **Grand Union Morris**, **Jake Walker**, **James Melville**, **Jim Catterall**, **Jockey Morris Men**, **Morris On Band**, **Moulton Morris Men**, **Silurian Border Morris Men**, **West Hill Morris**, **White Rose Morris Men**, & **William Kimber**.

CD THE DANCES OF ADDERBURY MORRIS MEN (£12.00 + £1.00 p&p).

Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of Adderbury Morris Men. This CD was added to the Morris Shop stock after attending their Day of Dance (26/07) with Adderbury Village Morris Men. To all parties concerned, congratulations and thanks for sharing a wonderful day.

And by the time you read this, I should have copies in stock:

CD MORRIS ON ~ THE ROAD (£13.50 +£1.00 p&p).

No !! this is not the 'First Cousin of Great-Grandson of Morris On'. **Morris On The Road** is the live touring show of the combined Morris On series - Morris On to Great Grandson of M/O. It was recorded at such festivals as Cropredy (35,000 people) and Sidmouth (68,000 people) and has received rave reviews. Featuring: Ashley Hutchings (Fairport Convention/Steeleye Span/Albion Band), Ken Nichol (Albion Band/Steeleye Span/Al Stewart) and Simon Care (Albion Band/Tickled Pink/E2K).

THE BELLS: I previously reported that there was a question over the future supply this essential Morris apparatus. I am delighted to report that this situation is now resolved and our existing supplier has decided to continue with the manufacture of what has become known as the 'traditional two piece bell' Phew!! I would have been lynched if I ever had to commence stocking the one piece bell (Don't let this information give anyone ideas). We now have in stock the 7/8", 1", 1 1/8", and 1 1/4" Brassed Bells.

I hope to see as many as will during, what remains of, this tropical 2005 dancing season.

Steve Adamson BFB

Treasurer, The Morris Ring.

The Morris Ring Website - a view from a Horse in an Anorak!

Morris Dancers were very quick to set up web sites, the first few appeared back in 1994 before most people had heard of the 'www'; in 2005 over three quarters of all Sides have a web site, in addition a very large proportion of dancers also have e-mail. The Ring web site was started in August 1998; prior to this I started a site called 'Mainly Morris Dancing' (MMD) which held some information about the Ring. The early versions of MMD were logged by the Wayback Machine the internet archive. (See section labelled Folklore) The Ring now has three registered 'names'; if you go to any of these on the web you will see the same site, **.org** is the international name, the **.org.uk** and **.co.uk** are UK registrations. Again you can check the history of these sites with the Wayback Machine.

Until July 2005 our website used disk space on my personal site with the Internet Service Provider (ISP), Freedom2 (Argonet), but this had to change when Freedom2 decided to cease working as an ISP. We are now registered with a company called Orpheus Internet. At present the site is being rewritten to include more information, e.g. versions of The Morris Tradition booklet in different languages (currently French, German and Dutch), and also an edited version this Newsletter (*when I get it from Charlie*). The other aim is to improve the technical quality of the site by using style sheets (CSS) and adhering to various other Web standards (XHTML). In the future it is hoped that we can have a members section, so that more of the information made available to Sides can be easily disseminated.

In the past we used an email alias system, so that the Squire, Bagman and Treasurer could have emails such as Squire@themorrisring.org, sales@themorrisring.org Bagman@themorrisring.org, and Treasurer@themorrisring.org. There were also emails such as Bristol@themorrisring.org to provide aliases for Sides. Due to the change in ISPs the aliases are not working at present, but will hopefully be back again soon. A welcome feature of emails, at least for me, is that the amount of spam has decreased; mine was running at over 100 a day, but has now dropped to single figures. To combat spam, individual's emails were either removed from our Member and Associate lists, or were encoded into JavaScript. I will keep the situation under review.

I welcome comments and suggestions about, and contributions to the Web site. We have 50Mb of space to fill with the new ISP - so news, articles, and especially good pictures are always very welcome.

Wayback Machine	http://www.archive.org
Mainly Morris Dancing (1)	http://emrs.chm.bris.ac.uk
(2)	http://users.argonet.co.uk/users/johnmaher/mmd/
(3)	http://www.mainlymorrisdancing.org.uk
The Ring (main)	http://www.themorrisring.org
(alt.)	http://www.themorrisring.org.uk
(alt.)	http://www.themorrisring.co.uk
(old)	http://users.argonet.co.uk/users/johnmaher/Ring/
Orpheus Internet	http://www.orpheusweb.co.uk/

John Maher, john.maher@mac.com

OVERSEAS TRAVEL

Gibraltar

Tired of dancing on the same lump of wet rock in the Wirral peninsula on every May Day Morning **Mersey Morrismen** upped sticks, girded their hankies, and boarded a plane for sunny Gibraltar. On May Day Morning, as the sun rose they danced, amongst other things, Fieldtown Signposts to an audience of about five people, and twenty-odd bemused apes. For further information, including pictures, visit the *Mersey Morris Fanclub Site* (www.freewebs.com/merseymorrisfansite)

Submitted by Dan Corcoran

Helmond Ring Meeting 20th-22nd May.

A well organised and welcoming visit to the Netherlands. See further report in Circular.

Submitted by Bob Cross

Jockey M.M. in Brussels 24th - 27th June.

Our second visit to Flanders. As usual Jockey trips start & end at the "Lamp" in Brum. Exceptionally hot weather. Weekend spent with wonderful hosts in and around the Brussels area. *Full account to follow.*

Submitted by Bob Cross

ARCHIVE NEWS

Nothing to report.

MORRIS RING - AND RING MEMBER -EVENTS

Moulton Village festival

Hammersmith, Greensleeves, Saddleworth, Handsworth Sword, King Johns, Rose and Castle, White Rose, Adderbury Village and Moulton all attended the Moulton Village Festival. A good time was had by all - and the landlord of The Artichoke would like to thank you all for helping in the clearance of 29 barrels of ale.

Submitted by Simon Care - Squire Moulton Morris.

Daily Mail 3rd May 2005 Roy Hattersley described Icknield Way Morris Men. May thus ".....each man foot perfect.....singing in perfect harmony.!!"

Submitted by Graham Hubbard Icknield Way MM.

BBC Radio

A number of Bristol MM were interviewed concerning the specialist vocabulary used in the Morris. There was one unbroadcast segment:

" Grant (Bristol MM) said, "Rapper sword dancing, of course, also has its own specialist terms."

(Interviewer) "Can you give me an example?"

"Errr...well, 'Line'"

"And what does that mean?"

"It means you get in a line."

Submitted by Wudzi, Bristol Morris Men

BBC 2s

Information on the BBC2 Morris dancing 2s logos.

http://www.bbcbroadcast.com/design/bbc2_morris.shtml

Thanks to John Price of St Albans MM

May Morning

St Albans Morris Men got their 75th Anniversary season under way at 6 o'clock on a beautiful May Day morning.

The first dance was Postman's Knock - it was probably in 1930 that a postman last knocked at 6 a.m. Several anniversaries were celebrated at one fell swoop; our 75th, the 18th birthday of the daughter of one of our men, and the 31st anniversary of the May Morning dancing "tradition" in the club. The last was doubly significant; the Squire back in 1974 (Gordon Myland) got the Mayor out of bed to witness the first event, and that same Squire is now Mayor and was himself compelled to get up to join us!

I'm glad to say that two people found May blossom further advanced than mine, and turned up with sprigs in full white bud, even if the flowers were not actually open. Mind you, it's now a hot, sunny day so I expect things will roar ahead.

Submitted by Sandy Glover

Wessex Morris Men: Congratulations on your wonderful double page spread in the Sunday Observer (01.05.05).....great stuff !!

Submitted by BFB

Beltane Celebrations in Vancouver BC, Canada

Tiddley Cove Morris and the Vancouver Morris Men danced up the sun at Trimble Park, Point Grey, overlooking English Bay and the city, as we've been doing for years and years and years and.....

The weather was mild, the sun came out and everyone had a great time. Our appreciative audience seems to get bigger every year.

After dancing up the sun on May morning, the Vancouver Morris Men celebrated Beltane in the afternoon. It was a long day! Some photos are available at

<http://www.vancouvermorrismen.org/Beltane2005/>

Submitted by Graham Baldwin

May Morning in Rutland

The May in my hedge started to open on May Eve, so there was a bit of blossom to gather in the spectacular thunderstorm at 04.00 before heading off to Uppingham, still under thunder and

lightening. On arrival at Uppingham, the rain stopped, the dawn chorus started, the landlord at The Vaults turned on the lights and Rutland Morris Men started to creep into the Market Place. Dancing commenced as usual at about 05.15 and finished more or less on the Dot at 06.00 when the Vault's doors opened and breakfast and Bass was served. A token bunch of may was left at the door and a couple of Rutland carols were sung but hardly anyone noticed because they were all in the pub.

Submitted by Steve Tunnicliffe

Ron Shuttleworth recommends

From the 'links' section of Peter Millington's website *Traditional Drama Forum*.

[Morris Bibliography](#) [Compiled by: Tom Keays from MLA Bibliography, Humanities Abstracts, and ERIC - Includes many folk play references]

Question?

Did anyone see Stafford & Uttoxeter Morris Men battling it out on Bargain Hunt on BBC1 , Monday May 9th at 12:15? I only heard about it after the event. Who was bought by whom?

Leyland Morris Men

"So what is the great attraction to this seemingly strange hobby where the men wear flowers on their hats, bells on their shoes and dance with sticks.

Roy Smith, leader of the Morris Men, said: "You can get a lot of stick but it doesn't bother us. It is all part of the fun!

"I think that the friendships you develop in the group.

"A lot of the people who come along to dance have developed good friendships and some were friends long before they joined the Morris Men.

"We are very sociable and have grown close over the years."

Extract from an excellent article about the Leyland MM Visit

<http://www.leylandtoday.co.uk/ViewArticle2.aspx?SectionID=77&ArticleID=1070786> for full effect

Forthcoming events

Misdemeanours - A Celebration of Combating 350 years of Unreasonable Authority.

John Edwards of **Stafford** invites Sides to this Celebration. **15th to 17th July 2005**. Details of this event were included in the last Newsletter; further information from John Edwards (01785 823067) or lapley@staffordmorris.org.uk or visit www.staffordmorris.org.uk and click "Misdemeanours".

A weekend in Scarborough

One of the bits of Scarborough Fayre which has become traditional has been the presence of a scratch side 'Scragenz' for odds and ends of Cotswold dancers without a full side.

This year's Weekend of Dance organised by Yorkshire Coast Morris is not including a Scragenz side, as numbers have had to be strictly limited, but some of the Scragenz regulars still want to get together in Scarborough. (See over)

If you've got a weekend to spare, and enjoy Cotswold dancing, then please come to Scarborough Fayre Scragenz 2005 Friday 29 - Sunday 31 July; £5 for indoor camping & breakfasts
Please contact Shirley Doyle: 01723 862842 or Wendy Bostock:
wbostock@mistral.co.uk for more details

Sidmouth Folk Week 2005 29th July - 5th August

Following lots of hard work and delicate negotiations Sidmouth appears to be recreating itself 'under new management'. More information about programmes, events, prices, etc. from www.sidmouthfolkweek.co.uk

Tommo's Cotswold Tour 2005, arranged by *David Thompson*, will be on **10th September 2005**. Venues should include: Badby, Hinton, Brackley, Bucknell, Oddington and Stow. Details to follow - or from Dave on Tel: 01332 770578 or Email: tradcap@ntlworld.com.

Yateley, 30th Anniversary Day of Dance - Saturday, 10th September 2005 - "We continue to be disappointed with the response from Ring sides to our first troll of invites. This year we return to our more usual cottage pie and vegetables, all washed down with some of our excellent local ales. An invitation is extended to all Ring sides - we would very much like to celebrate our first 30 years in the manner to which we have been accustomed, namely with male dance sides, for without their support I fear that our membership will seek the only obvious course open to us when trying to present a spectacle to the discerning audiences who support us in Yateley & that is to promote mixed days of dance in future."

The **Fools and Animals Unconvention, 21st -23rd October 2005** in Cromford, near Matlock, Derbyshire, and hosted by **Ripley**. An **Application Form** is enclosed with this Newsletter. This will again be open to the other Morris Organisations. Contact **Rob Chisman**, 01503 272250, E-mail triggertrotter1@aol.com for information.

Jigs Instructional - Although Bert Cleaver has stepped down as Jig Instructional maestro, the Jigs Instructional will be repeated on the same weekend next year [**14th - 16th January 2006**] under the capable guidance of **Geoff Jerram**. *An Application Form will accompany the next newsletter.*

Endurance

"Between 15th and 20th April 2006 Ben Dauncey will Attempt to Dance from Tunbridge Wells to Worcester, a distance of over 210 miles to establish a new world record for Morris Dancing and to raise £100,000 for two national charities"

For further information visit <http://nextfootup.com/default.htm>

OTHER EVENTS

18-30s extravaganza

This year's Morris 18-30 extravaganza is taking place in Leeds from the 21st - 23rd **October**. Morris 18-30 is essentially a weekend when the youth of the Ring get together to enjoy dancing and socialising without the more mature members muttering about the depressing state of the youth today and how they can't caper that high anymore.

This year will be our fourth outing, the first two having been in Oxford and last year's festivities in Leicester. We have developed a core of members who cover a wide variety of traditions, and the weekend has developed a routine of sorts. Arrival is on Friday night, and we have a practice session to work out which dances we can perform together to any degree of competency, and then adjourn for 'refreshments,' usually the local coffee bar.

Saturday morning is greeted with a round of headache powders, fried breakfasts, and cries of '*mind the heron!*' before we set out to make the world, in some small way, a slightly better, or at least more colourful, place. There follows a feast in the evening, with traditional folksongs and dirty limericks, followed by general socialising once again at the coffee bar. On Sunday we generally dance out with the local side(s) at lunchtime before going back to our real lives.

The weekend is open to any male dancer who is roughly 18 to 30 years old. It has always been a good do, and this year promises to be no exception. If you or any of your side is interested in attending please contact Alistair as soon as possible on squire@morris1830.org or visit the website at morris1830.org. I hope we will see you there!

Submitted by Dan Corcoran

Battle of Trafalgar There will be various celebrations of the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar on 22nd **October 2005**. We would like information about what your side is involved with - just in case we are asked

ANOTHER REMINDER - INSURANCE

Please note: From the 14th January 2005 **NO ONE** can give formal insurance advice unless they are regulated by the FSA [Financial Services Association] - indeed it is a criminal offence so to do!!

ALL QUESTIONS WITH REGARD TO INSURANCE MUST BE REFERRED TO OUR INSURANCE BROKER / MANAGER - MICHAEL STIMPSON.

[Michael Stimpson's telephone number - 01923 770425 - is on the Insurance Document.]

LINKS WITH THE MORRIS ORGANISATIONS

A resumé from the last Newsletter:

Insurance is not the only thing that is done "Jointly" by the three Morris Organisations.

- **Performing Rights** - The annual "subscription payment" that is made to the Performing Rights Organisation is arranged jointly by the Morris Organisations. This ensures that Sides are already covered for royalties payments, should they occasionally use non-traditional or copyright tunes to accompany their dances - or in their après-morris pub sing-songs. *[Please note this is quite distinct from any requirement under the new Licensing Legislation for the venue etc. to be licensed for such activity!!!]*

- **Media - and the problems of "blacking-up"** There have been further developments following the reporting of a complaint under the Race Relations Act about the "centuries-old" Cornish festival known as Darkie Days (in which locals "black up" and tour the town of Padstow singing minstrel-style songs). While the Crown Prosecution Service decided that a prosecutable offence of inciting racial hatred or similar, had not been committed, "guidance" as to how to ensure that offence is not given in the future was suggested. This does show that "blacking-up" is not always understood - especially by those who wish to go out of their way to stir up trouble. You might like to read the article "a black and white issue?" [*Their choice of lower case rather than capitals - sorry*] in the Summer 2005 edition of the EFDSS magazine English Dance & Song by Derek Schofield.

In the light of this article highlighting the issue once again here is a repeat of The Joint Morris Organisations advice:

One key item that can cause offence is if the blacking-up is interpreted as being akin to a "Black and White Minstrels" type activity rather than being used as a traditional disguise. In particular, it is suggested that Sides DO NOT USE any "minstrel-style" tunes.

It is suggested that Sides that do "Black up" should be ready and primed with a response to any queries to explain why "blacking" was the most available disguise and why it was used, in times when soliciting for funds was even more hedged with legislation than it is today. Fee Lock, Secretary of the Morris Federation provided the following text as background to what she says about "Blacking Up".

"No, it's not racist, it's remembering the tradition of disguise. "It's easy in this day and age of machine tools and chemicals to forget how important the seasons were, right up until the end of the Second World War. And far more people lived by the seasons and on the land than lived in the towns. Going back even just three generations (your grandparents!) it's possible to have been completely dependent on what you could produce yourself. If you had some land of your own you would spend nearly all year planting, nurturing and harvesting everything you could in the hope that you'd live through the lean months of winter and spring. If you were a tenant farmer, you relied on the master to make sure you and your family didn't starve.

"It doesn't take much for food to be scarce: a wet August ruins grain crops and it's almost impossible to dry it out in bulk, and men and horses take six weeks to bring in the harvest (hence the long school holidays where children were more use in the fields than learning to write) as opposed to the week and a bit with the use of tractors. You could be as good at husbandry as it's possible to be and you'd still go hungry in January and February. No welfare state, no benefits and no one else could afford to look after you. You and your family could starve to death.

"Dancing throughout the winter was one way of keeping yourself going. Money or food, it didn't matter which as long as it was something. Dancing can be a very loose term: these people were performing in their own villages - most people could expect to live and die in the same house - and often they were trying to get something out of their employers. I can just imagine it: ten minutes of dancing up at the manor house then knock-knock at the door: "Give us some bread and cheese, missus, we're starving!". And what if there wasn't much to go round? These people were hungry, frightened, and desperate. Weak children and the elderly are particularly prone to failing to thrive, let alone thinking about how much extra nutrition a pregnant woman needs. You bet they disguised themselves - I damn well would!

"So they'd disguise themselves simply but effectively, with tatter coats, made from old rags kept behind the sink, like we all do! Free and easy to make, they bulk a person up and make

everyone look the same. Add a shapeless old hat and some burnt cork or soot, easily available and Bob's your uncle. A perfect disguise for probably more threatening behaviour than we'd like to believe today.

"And carbon is black. If cork burned red like iron oxide, we'd be talking about "redding-up".

"Just as an aside, black skinned people from the Australian aboriginals to the bushmen of the Kalahari desert disguise themselves in ritual dances by whitening up. Racist? I don't think so!"

- **Camping / Touring Caravan Exemption Certificates** - This may be an issue if an event also allows outdoor camping - or use of caravans or similar. It may be that a school field or whatever, cannot be used as a campsite, unless an appropriate exemption is granted. As this has given problems in the past, the Open Morris has been obtaining guidance and working to obtain the appropriate "Exemption Certificate". These are issued by DEFRA who also produce a Guide. An Exemption Certificate is currently being obtained in the name of The Morris Organisations. As more information is available, it will be passed on - but if any Side has a problem with "outdoor camping", please contact the Bagman in the first instance.
- **Child Protection Policy** - There have been understandable concerns that Morris Sides are not sufficiently aware of current Child Protection legislation and good practice. Some Sides will be aware of requirements when they undertake "teach-ins" for schools. With an emphasis on recruiting younger members, it is essential to "be aware".

A Child Protection Policy has been drafted by the Morris Federation from a version drafted by Bev & Ray Langton, (who organise a number of children's festivals throughout the country) on behalf of the Association of Festival Organisers. The Policy is intended for use by Morris sides when holding workshops or other events where Morris dancers come into contact with unsupervised children.

For children joining Morris sides as members, this policy should be viewed alongside the approach that - *"it is for the parent or guardian of the child to decide how much unsupervised contact his/her child will have with the side. If the parent or guardian feels the level of contact, on a 'weekly practice basis' is inappropriate, it is for the parent or guardian to arrange for supervision"*.

This Policy also satisfies a number of concerns that Morris sides have about children joining what is, in essence, an adult hobby, particularly regarding dancing in licensed premises.

The policy will need to be amended for use by any particular Morris side, by including the name of the Side or organisation holding the event. Electronic copies of the Policy can be obtained from the Morris Ring Bagman or from the Morris Federation secretary at sec@morrisfed.org.uk.

CONCLUSION

Please keep the News flowing - this can only truly be a newsletter if you provide me with news to write about. I would also like to receive copies of your programme, and, obviously, information concerning any changes for the Directory. Information, reports, fliers for events are best (for me at least) by Email - it is so much easier to copy than type.

A random thought to leave you with:

"Morris Dancing shakers should not be confused with Cheer Leading Pompoms which are long and floppy, Morris Dancing shakers should be quite firm and tight and be more like and stretched football shape."

From a Fluffy Morris site

The next Newsletter should be produced in early Autumn - if YOU let me have some news.

Charlie

Bagman

The Morris Ring

Remember: Unless you pass on the content of this Newsletter to the Men in your Side, the information stops with you. E-mailed versions of these Newsletters are available on request

AMENDMENTS TO THE 2005 - 2006 DIRECTORY

Past Officers

Chairman Advisory Council	Cliff Marchant	2, Willetts Cottage	Muddles Green	Chiddingly	Sussex	BN8 6HR	cmarchant@UKonline.co.uk	01825 872998
Immediate Past Squire (2004)	Cliff Marchant	2, Willetts Cottage	Muddles Green	Chiddingly	Sussex	BN8 6HR	cmarchant@UKonline.co.uk	01825 872998
Past Bagman (1946)	Bob Ross	Died 24 th May 2005						

Member Clubs

Bampton Morris Dancers (Traditional)	Tue	Paul Smith	No. 8 Bec Close	Wantage	Oxfordshire		OX12 9EP		01235 764033
Bathampton Morris Men		Chris Wildridge						bmbagman@tiscali.co.uk	01749 850439
Broadwood Sword & Morris Men		Bob Weddell						bob@rweiddell.fsnet.co.uk	01293 536887
East Kent Morris Men		Cliff Robinson						webagman@ekmm.org.uk	01233 720435
Lichfield Morris Men [Inc. Armitage Mummers]	Tue	Chris Pattison	Poolfield Cottage	189 Walsall Rd	Lichfield	Staffordshire	WS13 8AQ	Chris@rock-cottage.demon.co.uk	01543 263041
Icknield Way Morris Men	Wed	Graham Hubbard	9, Ashdown Way	Grove	Wantage	Oxfordshire	OX12 0AG	bagman@icknieldwaymorrismen.org.uk	07855 548512
North Wood Morris Men		Jon Wimhurst						jmwhurst@aol.com	0208 668 1830
Yateley Morris Men		New email						monty60@tesco.net	
Wyvern Jubilee Morris Men [Confirmation that they are a MEMBER not Associate Side as previously listed.]		Alan Cocker	5, West View	South Cadbury	Somerset		BA22 7EX		01963 440612

East Kent Morris Men - Please note that **Pete Thomas** is no longer an additional Email contact for East Kent – he is no longer with the Side!

Other info for 2006

3rd - 5th march

ARM hosted by Chalice Morris Men

2nd - 4th june

Thaxted Ring Meeting

30th June - 2nd July ..

Coventry 75th Anniv. Ring Meeting

28th - 30th July

Mendip 50th Anniv. Ring Meeting