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The Newsletter No.52 November 2007

Hi Fellow Bagmen - and others,

This is principally a two topic Newsletter:

- a. An unashamed plug for future Morris Ring Meetings
- b. Members & Associates Subscriptions 2007-08

Morris Ring Meetings

Not wanting to be accused of teaching grannies to suck eggs but I start with an extract from our constitution:

OBJECT AND DEFINITION.

1. The object of the Morris Ring shall be to encourage the performance of the Morris, to maintain its traditions and to preserve its history; to bring into contact all the Men's Morris Clubs or Teams.

GENERAL.

10 There shall be at least one gathering of Morris Men in each year, to be sponsored or arranged by the Morris Ring.

Every year, since 1934, we have been indebted to four or five member clubs who have volunteered to host these gatherings – usually referred to as 'Ring Meetings'. What follows is an unapologetic sales pitch – to encourage more sides to support these wonderful gatherings.

There are lots of sides who have not attended a meeting of the Morris Ring for many years - in some cases not since they danced in when were admitted to full

membership. I hope that what follows might encourage a few of you to seriously consider reappearance as you ask yourselves "Why doesn't my side support these events?" There are a range of different meetings in different venues hosted by a variety of sides so there might be something that will appeal to your membership - even, or perhaps especially the youngsters. If you say that don't like what is on offer I pose two questions:

- i. Are you sure that you know what happens at meetings of the Morris Ring today?
- ii. If your answer to (i) is "No" then how about going to one?
- iii. If your answer to (i) is "Yes and I still don't want to attend" that how about your side offering to host a meeting in the future where you can present an alternative.

As I pointed out on page 1 of this Newsletter, one of the key objectives of the Morris Ring is to "bring into contact all the Men's Morris Clubs or Teams" and "There shall be at least one gathering of Morris Men in each year, to be sponsored or arranged by the Morris Ring." There is no way that we could get our entire membership to one single meeting but we will get more of a 'Morris Ring Spirit" if every side strives to get to a meeting of the Morris Ring once every few years. There is a clear need for more Sword / Mumming / Molly sides to attend so that we can better demonstrate to the world at large that Morris isn't simply Cotswold!

So - what is involved?

The outline format is a venue is found that can offer suitable accommodation—whether bedded hostel-style and/or indoor and/or outdoor camping. There needs to be appropriate access to toilet and washing facilities and space for informal socialising and dancing. Catering can be in-house or external but needs to be of a reasonable standard—including a cooked breakfast and a fairly substantial evening meal on the Saturday. This has traditionally been called a 'Feast' and is the vehicle for a few (usually!) speeches followed by songs / music. Other elements of the weekend are far more variable: Friday evening is usually informal but can involve dancing and singing in the venue or in local pubs. The Saturday usually involves a number of 'tours' but theses can be on foot, bus, barge, train, etc...... There can be massed displays on either or both Saturday & Sunday. There is usually a church service on the Sunday but there have been workshops, or discussion groups, etc....

The delights on offer in the near future are: 2008

 30^{th} May ~ 1^{st} June 2008

No.313 75th Anniversary Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting 200+ men



The Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting is like no other, its idyllic setting and tours into the picturesque North Essex countryside make it unique and draws dancers back year after year to what is considered to be the spiritual home of the Morris. Its early evening processions from both ends of the town to the displays in front of the Thaxted Guildhall culminating in the Abbots

Bromley Horn Dance on the Saturday make this a perfect Morris spectacle that has to be experienced again and again. Sunday sees the grand church procession, service and dancing outside the church and in the afternoon Morris and country dancing in Margaret Gardens. Accommodation is school - based indoor & outdoor camping. Cost - £65 (to be confirmed - with a reduction for day men and special reduced rates for children).

4th - 6th July 2008

No. 314 Whitchurch MM 60th Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting. 120 men The village of Cheddington will be our base, which some of you may remember

the village of Cheddington featuring prominently in the 1963 Great Train Robbery. It is worth reminding potential visitors that a large percentage of the haul has yet to be recovered. You may wish to pack a spade.

The Village Hall will be our headquarters for the weekend, and the location for registration, camping (indoor and out),



ablutions, breakfasting, feasting, drinking, dancing, socializing, and general merriment.

On arrival on Friday registration will take place in the hall, and will be followed by a hot and nourishing supper.

Saturday will be given over to those activities so beloved of morris men the world over; dancing, drinking, and feasting. There will be three themed tours, the Canal tour, the Chilterns Hills tour, and the Vale tour. A great deal of time has been spent ensuring that these tours take in all the most interesting and picturesque locations and drinking establishments in the area. We are immensely proud our territory and are very excited to have the opportunity to show it off to our visitors. Lunch will be taken at a hostelry, and the tours will conclude with a return to Cheddington for tea and refreshments, and a short massed dance show for the excited villagers.

The Feast will be held in the Village Hall, it will be catered by an outside company, and will be followed by normal revelries.

We are very fortunate (and possibly unique) at Whitchurch to have a member of the cloth within our membership, and it is he who will be officiating at the Sunday morning service to be held in his former parish church in Aylesbury. After the service we will make our way to the Market Square, situated in the centre of Aylesbury, for the Mass Dancing. Located right on the Square the Kings Head will provide us with refreshments and lunch. The Kings Head was built in 1455, and is reputed to be the oldest coaching inn in the country. It is also unique in that it is the only pub owned by the National Trust. The Farmers Bar therein will be at our disposal and will be well stocked with beer brewed at a brewery located no more than 3 miles distant. We are sure that our visit to the Kings Head will be a fitting finale to a memorable weekend.

Our website is up a running so please feel free to access it for up to date information. Cost - £70.

11th -13th July 2008

No. 315 Liverpool Morris: the 80th anniversary Ring Meeting 120 men Hosted by Mersey Morris Men

Liverpool Morris Men was the senior conspirator in its 1960 partnership with Wirral Morris Men; this collaboration - and a modicum of logical thought - gave rise to the side's present name.



By 1928 (the earliest documented date of their existence), Liverpool Morris Men was an established side. Their attendance in 1934 at Cecil Sharpe House on 20th October 1934 earned them and the other sides in attendance the appellation of Inaugral Members of the Morris Ring.

Our Ring Meeting thus celebrates 80 years of the Morris in and around Liverpool. Accommodation (indoor camping) and feast are found across the river at the historic Mostyn House School (www.mostynhouse.co.uk), spectacularly situated on the Banks of the Dee at Parkgate, and looking out towards the hills of North Wales. Three first class pubs lie within walking distance. Saturday's walking tours will allow our guests to enjoy the heart of Liverpool with its outstanding architecture and heritage pubs, and include the mandatory crossing of the Mersey by ferry. Sunday's church service will be held at Willaston (centre of the ancient Hundred of Wirral), followed by informal dancing on the green and lunch.

Co-incidentally, Liverpool is celebrating its achievement of European City of Culture in 2008, so expect to see this always dramatic city at its very best during your stay with us. We look forward to welcoming you to special corner of England.

Cost - £70.

25th - 27th July 2008

No. 316 Long Man MM "South Downs" Morris Ring Meeting 180 men Based in Eastbourne at the eastern end of the South Downs, Long Man MM are

hosting their third Meeting of the Morris Ring to celebrate our 30th Anniversary.

On Friday evening Pub Games will be available including "Toad in the Hole", a game said to have originated around East Sussex. Ales from Harveys of Lewes and Beachyhead Brewery, the newest brewery in Sussex, will be available.

Saturday starts with the Massed Display



at "The Bandstand" on Eastbourne Seafront, followed by tours by historic vehicles around the South Downs, which are designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including Beachy Head and 1066 Country, which includes Pevensey.

On the Sunday we are decamping to a former Saxon settlement, the charming village of Alfriston with its picturesque jumble of timber framed and tile hung buildings. We will hold the Church Service in the magnificent Parish Church of St Andrew, often called the 'Cathedral of the Downs', adjacent to the village Tye where will we dance after the service. Cost - £70.

5th - 7th Sept 2008.

No.317 Dartington MM 40th Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting. 200 men



Dartington Morris Men cordially invite you to their 40th Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting at which good dancing, good music, good beer and jovial company will be enjoyed by one and all.

Accommodation will include indoor camping on the outskirts of the historic town of Totnes. "The Hampshire Basin" will be your caterers for the weekend.

We will have locally brewed ales available and our own cider made by DMM under the instruction of our very own Pete "Black-Hand" Holdaway. Tours for the Saturday will include the delightful South Hams, the rugged charms of Dartmoor and the English Riviera. Cost - £69.

Application Process.

All applications must be made through the Morris Ring Bagman on the appropriate application form (example included as part of the Newsletter) and will you please note:

- 1. With there being five Morris Ring Meetings this year there is less competition for places than in 2007 but please do not assume that by only putting one choice you are more (or less) likely to be successful..
- 2. It has generally been possible to attend the Thaxted Meeting [for the Full Meeting or for the Saturday only] in addition to any other choice. Please indicate on the form if your Side would like to attend Thaxted in addition to any other choices but recognise that such consideration can only be made when first applications have been allocated.
- 3. Final costs may vary slightly from those given above. If deposits and final payments are not received at the designated time, your Side may forfeit its place in favour of a Side on the "waiting list".

- 4. Due to an increase in the number of sides 'defaulting' on bookings and thereby putting the financial viability of individual meetings at risk, your side will be asked to pay the 'per head' deposit within a month of having your application confirmed. These deposits will only be refundable under exceptional circumstances.
- 5. If you fail to appear without giving 'reasonable' notice you may be asked to pay the balance in full as with any other commercial contract.

2009 THE MORRIS RING'S 75th ANNIVERSARY

 29^{th} May ~ 31^{st} May 318 Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting 24^{th} - 26^{th} July 319 Exeter Morris Ring Meeting 21^{st} - 23^{rd} Aug 320 Men of Wight Ring Meeting 4^{th} - 9^{th} - September 321 Bathampton MM 75^{th} Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting

To finish - some other news and a few reminders:

The 2008 ARM will be hosted by Wadard on the weekend of 29th Feb, 1st & 2nd March 2008. The venue is Hopehill Scout Camp site. http://www.hopehill.org.uk/.

For this ARM we need nominations for our next Squire of the Morris Ring. Also due for election / re-election are the posts of Treasurer of the Morris Ring and Area Reps for the West Midlands; North West and South West & Wales.

The current post holders being:

Treasurer of the Morris Ring: Stephen Adamson BfB

Area Rep.: West Midlands Kevin Downham

Area Rep.: North West Duncan Broomhead

Area Rep.: South West & Wales Dudley Binding

Nomination forms for all these roles can be obtained from the Morris Ring Bagman or downloaded from the Morris Ring website. I can also provide information about what all of these honorary roles entail but if you are interested why not talk to the current incumbent.

→→→ Closing date for nominations: Friday 23rd November 2007

International Sword Spectacular The Fifth International Sword Spectacular Festival will be held in Yorkshire on the 23rd-26th May, 2008. The aim of the weekend is quite simple - to bring together the biggest and most varied collection of sword dancers ever seen. The organisers will welcome both individuals and teams. Further information from:

Andrew Kennedy: Andrew@north-british.co.uk or Stuart Higson: Stuart.Higson@virgin.net

Tonbridge Ring Meeting 2007 About 620 photographs (of variable quality) that were taken using the disposable cameras during the Tonbridge Ring Meeting. All three tours are covered as well as the Feast, pubs, Sunday, etc. They have been scanned during processing onto CDs and each photo is about 1 Mb in size. The whole lot of photos will easily fit onto one DVD. Stafford MM can provide a copy of a DVD for £10 (inc p&p). Sides who have already ordered a CD of their tour can upgrade to a DVD for just an extra £5. Please contact Peter Copley - cheques payable to 'Stafford Morris Men'.

Peter Copley

TREASURER'S RAMBLINGS (and you know I can!)

This is where my annual drum beating begins again. Recent years have seen a great improvement in your efficiency in the area of annual subscriptions. My warmest thanks to all. Contrary to popular myth, rumour and/or legend, my primary concern is not the gathering in of a few pence and pounds, but the general administrative and fiscal welfare of all our members and associates. You've guessed it, your subscription is your public liability insurance for the year.

Subscriptions explained:

We strive to restrict the renewal form to two sides of A4 in our desire to prevent this document taking on the appearance of a legally binding contact of membership/association (with all the gobbledegook that would bring into play). All members and associates subscriptions are inclusive of the Public Liability premium. Please do not confuse this with the optional Personal Accident. The deadline date is again 30^{th} November 2007. All subscriptions received after this date will incur an additional £10.00

Subs - Morris Ring Members: The default subscription is £45.00. For this you will receive one copy of each edition of the Bagman's NewsLetter (N/L) and three copies of each edition of the Morris Circular (M/C). However, if you

require more or fewer copies of the Morris Circular, please add/subtract £5 per copy. Minimum £35.00 for $1\times$ N/L and $1\times$ M/C.

Subs - Morris Ring Associates: The default subscription is £35.00. For this you will receive one copy of the Bagman's NewsLetter (N/L) and one copy of the Morris Circular (M/C). However, if you require more copies of the M/C, please add £5 for each additional copy.

If your subscription is received on or before the deadline date ('D' Day), your insurance document will accompany the next scheduled Bagman's Newsletter No. 53. Those sides whose subscriptions are received after 'D' day will receive their insurance document directly from the Treasurer. As previously stated, this situation has improved of late but it remains that if one Morris side is without the Public Liability insurance for any length of time......this is one Morris side too many. I know for fact that some sides members believe that their insurance cover is in place when I know that it isn't. I now have a serious suggestion: At the end of January, beginning of February, ask your Bagman to bring YOUR Public Liability insurance document along to your next practice session. I would appreciate any feed-back resulting from this experience.

Optional Personal Accident insurance: This deadline remains 20th January 2008. It was hoped to have this application/renewal form in time to accompany this Newsletter. Recent communications with our broker have brought to light that, due to circumstances beyond his and our control, this has not proved possible. However, I am assured that it will be with us in time for Newsletter No. 53.

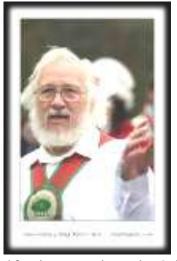
Morris Ring Contact details: I recently placed a message on the Morris Ring Google Group requesting that all newly appointed Bagman got in touch and revealed to us their contact details. This brought forth a deluge of emails that resulted in me spending most of that evening inserting received edits into our address database....... wonderful stuff! This makes me wonder, if not prompted, when were these new incumbents were going to inform us of their elevation to high office within their Morris Side. A very large part of what we do comes down to 'communications'. Our efficiency is only as good as the information that we receive from you. Like the subscriptions, this continues to improve with time. If you have, as a result of your recent AGM, changed your officers and/or your nominated Morris Ring contact name, please let us know.

This up-to-the-minute and comprehensive Morris Ring address list/db (excel spreadsheet) is available to all who contact either the Bagman or myself.

Well, there we are, I said that I could ramble. It remains that if you have any queries regarding members/associates subscriptions just get in touch and I will be delighted to advise accordingly.

Don't forget to see the Morris Shop leaflet for some of the latest goodies on offer. Best wishes all a litigious free remainder of 2007 into 2008.

Steve Adamson BFB, Treasurer, The Morris Ring



Honours for Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men Earlier this year, to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the amalgamation of the English Folk Dance Society and the Folk Song Society into the English Folk Dance and Song Society, the EFDSS gave 75th anniversary awards to people who had given significant service to the transmission of folk and traditions to others. Eight members of the Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men were nominated for and given awards. They are John Portlock, Paul Plumb, Jim Hoare, John Goddard, Sean Goddard

(father and son), Eddie Upton, Paul Setford and John Allen.

Each man not only has maintained a life long interest in the Morris, each has encouraged countless others to get involved in the folk movement. It would be unfair to single out just one person, however, special mention must be made about Paul Setford. Since he join Chanctonbury in the early 1960s, Paul has continually been involved in the teaching of the side and

has helped develop our particular style and interpretation of the Morris dance.

Cliff Marchant

Musicians' Instructional. Final call: 9th to 11th November at Wilstone Village Hall, near Aylesbury, Bucks.

The main aim of this Instructional is to give Morris musicians a chance to explore the musical needs of the dance and dancers, and to help promote and develop individuals' skills in delivering their best possible performance.

Based on the well-proven formula of previous instructionals, those attending can look forward to a weekend of activities that seek to expand and extend their knowledge and understanding in an atmosphere of good natured fun and mutual support. An Application Form was included with Newsletter. No 51

Jigs Workshop Sutton Bonington, 18^{th} - 20^{th} January 2008. Cost circa £42.

The Gate to Southwell: 7th June 2008. Once again, there will be a Folk Festival held in Southwell on the weekend 6th to 8th June 2008, and there will be concessions for sides attending the 'Gate'. Please put this in your diaries. Further information from Chris Gigg. Dolphin Morris Men

Terry Heaslip has passed this link to me. Respond as you see fit.



a portrait of England

Here's how to help...

We're assembling a massive national morris dancing scrapbook from all over the country. Do you have anecdotes or pictures you'd like us to include?

Help us to construct a portrait of all the different regional styles, men's and women's morris, and the various styles of kit.

Send your stories and pictures to morrisdancing@icons.org.uk

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THE MORRIS DANCER It is hoped that each edition of the Morris Dancer will have as a theme a regional variant of the morris. Alongside this each holder of the Archive will be asked to make available an account of their recent activity and some aspect of the collection that they hold. The editorial brief is that The Morris Dancer will become an important vehicle of academic excellence; it will become a worthy flagship journal of the Morris Ring.

This is a call for articles. In the first instance please submit a brief outline of your proposed contribution the Editor. The next edition is planned for January 2008 and the editor looks forward to receiving possible outlines of contributions in good time.

David Thompson

CONCLUSION

I have been known to appeal for contributions - news, adverts, comments, anything in fact, for this Newsletter. I received from Lawson Skuse, a new recruit to Isca Morris Men, who has been keeping a blog of his first year. http://amishboy.co.uk/default.aspx.

I will simply quote his summary of his first year:

"This first term as a dancer has been an educational, entertaining and interesting time for me. I have discovered pubs that one could die for and beers that one could cry for. I have made a lot of great new friends and learned the secrets of happiness:

Dance like no bu**er is watching! Sing like no bu**er is listening! Drink like no bu**er is paying!"

Charlie

Bagman of the Morris Ring

Future Dates:

2008

29th Feb- 2nd March ARM - Hosted By Wadard MM

30th May ~ 1st June 313 75th Anniv. Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting

4th - 6th July 314 Whitchurch MM 60th Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting

11th -13th July 315 Mersey MM 80th Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting

25th - 27th July 316 Long Man MM Morris Ring Meeting

5th - 7th Sept. 317 Dartington MM 40th Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting

2009 THE MORRIS RING'S 75th ANNIVERSARY

6th - 8th March (?) ARM Hosted By TBA

TBA April '3 orgs.' Event. Hosted by Open Morris in Nottingham

 29^{th} May ~ 31^{st} May 318 Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting 24^{th} - 26^{th} July 319 Exeter Morris Ring Meeting 21^{st} - 23^{rd} Aug 320 Men of Wight Ring Meeting

4th - 9th - September 321 Bathampton MM 75th Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting

2010

5th - 7th March (?) ARM Hosted by TBA

4th June ~ 6th June Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting

2011

4th - 6th March (?) ARM Hosted By TBA

3rd June ~ 5th June Thaxted "Centenary" Morris Ring Meeting

TBA...... Bristol 60th Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting

2012

3rd - 5th March (?) ARM Hosted by TBA

25th- 27th May Chipping Campden Cotswold Olympic Morris Ring Meeting

1st June ~ 3rd June Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting

27th-29th July Hartley 60th Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting



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RING MEETINGS - 2008 - APPLICATION FORM

 30^{th} May ~ 1^{st} June 313 75^{th} Anniversary Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting 4^{th} - 6^{th} July 314 Whitchurch MM 60^{th} Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting 11^{th} - 13^{th} July 315 Mersey MM 80^{th} Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting 25th - 27th July 316 Long Man MM Morris Ring Meeting 5^{th} - 7^{th} Sept. 317 Dartington MM 40^{th} Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting

Please note your order of preference on the form below, fill in the other information, and return the form by the 5^{th} November to the Ring Bagman, for consideration in the initial allocation. Sides may apply later, but their first choice of Meeting may have been filled.

Ring Meeting	Order of Preference	Anticipated No of Men
Thaxted		
Whitchurch		
Mersey		
Long Man		
Dartington		
SIDE:		
CONTACT NAME:		
ADDRESS:		
TEL NO:		
Email: (Vital)		