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## Newsletter No.78

February 2012

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# *2012 ARM Special*



## Hats & Bling

On Saturday afternoon following the ARM and through until close of play that evening the celebrated commercial photographic artist **Andy Glass** will be on hand taking pictures of Morris individuals, sets & characters as part of a project to celebrate our revered art.

He wishes to capture as many faces as possible in full kit. If attendees not staying for the feast would like to be included, please bring your Morris costume with

you and be photographed after the main meeting. Everyone feasting should be aware that **full** kit should be available including hats, bling, flora etc. Beasts would also be very welcome.

Andy's stunning work can be viewed on his website [www.andyglassphoto.com](http://www.andyglassphoto.com)



## Can you help the Morris Ring?



**Overseas Bagman:** We are still looking for someone to fulfil this role. Someone who, to re-quote John Maher, can:

"field questions about overseas visits where these occur, from individuals and from sides"

....and "...try to keep an eye on all 'overseas Morris'."



## **The Morris Ring - Annual Representatives' Meeting**

**Hosted by Harthill MM.**

**10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> February 2012**

All booking & accommodation enquiries direct to

**Alan Cox - Bagman for the ARM**

[harthill.oldman@gmail.com](mailto:harthill.oldman@gmail.com)

01909 772030

**Venue: Mount St Mary College, Spinkhill, Sheffield, Yorkshire S21 3YL**

### **Programme for the 2012 ARM Weekend**

**Please remember that real beds, including bed linen, towels, etc. are provided**

#### **Friday**

18.00 ARM Reception opens.

18.30- 20.30 Food available (If arriving late please let Alan Cox know)

Instructional: Peter Halfpenney. Set awareness - including informal dancing and discussion.

#### **Saturday**

7.30 - 8.30 Breakfast

9.15 - 10.45 Instructional: Upon-upon-Severn Handkerchief Dance  
Tutor: Joe Oldaker (Anker MM)

10.45 - 11.15 Coffee / Tea

11.15 - 12.00 Area Meetings

12.30 - 13.30 Buffet Lunch

13.45 - 16.30 Annual Reps. Meeting

16.30 - 17.00 Tea

17.00 - 18.15 Instructional: Jig: Bledington Princess Royal

& Tutor: Geoff Jerram (Winchester MM)

17.00 - 18.15 Advisory Council Meeting

19.00 - FEAST (followed by informal dancing/singing)

#### **Sunday**

8.00 - 9.00 Breakfast & departure

## AGENDA for 2012 ARM

### 1. Welcome of Guests

Phil Watson	Open Morris
Fee Lock	Morris Federation
Katy Spicer	EFDSS

### 2. Apologies for Absence

Individuals	Sides
Ivor Allsop      Past Squire / Sword Archivist	Exeter MM
Harry Stevenson   Editor of The Circular	
Keith Francis      Past Bagman & Keeper of MR Scrapbook	
Geoff Douglas      Archivist	

### 3. Minutes of the ARM 2011 (Circulated as Newsletter No 73 March 2011)

### 4. Matters arising from the Minutes

- 3a      Youth Fund (See Squire's Report)
- 3b      Up-date on the Olympics (Squire)
- 3c      Morris Ring Display Boards
- 3d      Performance Standards

### 5. Squire's Report: Peter Halfpenney

I have to confess that I approached the ARM at Clevedon last year with more than a degree of trepidation. I had been sorry to report my feeling that the Morris Ring had broken anchor and was drifting into the future without apparent purpose or direction. There were contentious issues on the agenda to be resolved and in the preceding debate there had been several protagonists on every side of the argument who were vociferously vehement in their beliefs and aspirations for the future of the Morris Ring. Change is never easy not least because you are never going to please all of the people all of the time. The differences of opinion in argument however are essential for it is only by approaching problems from different angles and viewpoints and considering a myriad of solutions that the best way forward emerges.

In the event, my fears were groundless. The conduct at the meeting was impeccable. As many as time could accommodate were given the opportunity to opine their views and did so succinctly and courteously. Voting procedures worked well and the meeting gave the Morris Ring Officers overwhelmingly clear instruction as to how they wished the Morris Ring to progress and be managed.

At this point I must interject to thank all those who contributed to a most successful meeting; our hosts, Mendip Morris Men, my fellow Officers, advisers and tellers, Area Reps and of course the delegates themselves.

The die then was cast and it was for the Morris Ring Officers to instigate the will of the people. We have worked tirelessly to that end over the past 12 months and I am delighted to report that we have been rewarded with great success in many regards.

**Adoption of women musicians.** I hope that this will be one of the last times that I speak of our member sisters as if they were a separate race. We all know that they were already in our midst and last year's meeting served only to recognise that. They contribute hugely to our organisation and have done so for some considerable time. They are now formally part of the whole and welcome to be so. We left Clevedon eager to know how recognition of that fact would play out. We need not have been worried. The first major testing ground was the Rutland Morris Ring Meeting. It was inevitable that many eyes would be on the event to see how well it worked. The hosts did their utmost to prepare the ground for a successful meeting and their labours paid off in fine style. There is no doubt in my mind that the mixed format not only worked but that the meeting was all the more enjoyable for it. This success has given three of the host sides for this year's calendar of national meetings the confidence to open their events up to women musicians also. I am sure that they will be similarly rewarded. On the smaller stage, I have been honoured to attend many ale feasts and days of dance during the year and there also the mixed events have been particularly enjoyable. More and more of our member sides are building associations with ladies and mixed sides in the realisation that it can enhance a day's activity rather than detract from it. On the grander stage this was no more evident than at the JMO day of dance, which I was proud to organise in Sheffield in May. Integration of the three JMOs into one glorious spectacle works well. I

urge any doubting Thomas that did not attend to listen to the reports of those who were there rather than being blindly judgemental.

**Whither the gender future?** My own father was debarred from marrying for five years by his employer until he had completed and passed his professional examinations. On marrying, my mother's employment was terminated by her employer as a matter of policy. Clearly such attitudes and regulation would not be permitted today. It is imperative that we recognise the fact that gender discrimination is becoming less and less tolerated in our modern world and, no matter how strongly we feel about protecting the masculinity of MR dancers, we must be mindful that perception is changing and that we must keep a finger on the pulse of public opinion or risk being marginalized. As a direct result of the Equality Act and ensuing debate and decisions, we have lost a number of our member sides this year. Some revered clubs have gone because they have elected to adopt female dancers, White Horse being an example. Some have left as their environment disapproves of female exclusion, for example university sides such as at Oxford. Some have gone because of a moral interpretation of our new rules and the feeling that we have not gone far enough and are prejudicial in the setting of our boundaries. Your Officers last year averred that the move to recognise adoption of female musicians would not be the thin end of the wedge and be part of a covert operation to open fully to sides with female dancers. I can assure the meeting that we hold by that assertion. Yet to ignore the issue completely would be foolhardy. The KISS solution, as I couched it, would in fact allow for us to become completely non-discriminatory without compromising those sides that want to remain all male. If and when the time comes when we need to reconsider, the framework then is in place. The important thing is that Officers and members are watchful and do not ignore the possibility, playing ostrich until the MR shrinks down to a critical mass and then finding that survival is compromised.

**Welcome to the fold.** We are still shrinking in numbers but there is good news. For the first time in many years we are to consider at this meeting the admission to full membership of two of our Associate sides, Devil's Dyke Morris Men and North British Sword Dancers. Let us hope that these are the first of many new applicants.

Feedback from the recruitment guides I prepared last year has been good. Many sides have campaigned for new and younger members and success is apparent in many quarters. As a further boost to encouraging youth to join us, the Officers have reviewed qualification for accessing the 'Youth Fund'. Existing sides may now apply for grants to support initiatives to attract younger members and we hope this will show positive benefits.

**Advisory Council.** The 2011 ARM decision to limit AC service appears to have worked well. We did not implement the change until October's meeting but the content and advice offered at that gathering was most constructive. I have fulfilled my promise that I would look for additional advice from past AC members and others when appropriate and feel confident that this new arrangement is more manageable and successful in its execution.

**Press & Media.** Refreshingly we have enjoyed some supportive media coverage this year, particularly from the BBC both on radio and TV. I urge all sides to build a good relationship with their local media and to get into the habit of providing quirky press releases and pictures advertising their activities. The ground for these is more fertile at the moment than it has been for years.

**Website and publications.** Considered and patient efforts were applied to the building, population and launch of our new website and I'm delighted to report that we have been amply rewarded with an excellent facility that will serve us well for years to come. My thanks to all who participated and contributed to the venture, and congratulations to Andy Bullen (Chicago) and Peter de Courcy (Kennet) who will be the Co-Editors-in-Chief.

After some controversy last year, content guidelines and boundaries were discussed with the Editors of the Newsletter and the Morris Circular. I am pleased to report that there has been no further conflict and can heap praise upon Charlie Corcoran and Harry Stevenson for a series of excellent publications through the year.

David Thompson decided to retire from editing the Morris Dancer this year. We thank him for his past efforts and congratulate Andy Bullen (Chicago) and Mac McCoig on their appointments as Co-Editors. Their first efforts will be seen around May this year and we wish them well.



Keith Francis is another retiree having given up recording of minute books, logbooks and MR scrapbook. Charlie Corcoran has stepped into the breach for the former two items and we are anticipating an announcement very shortly for the scrapbooks. We have also used this opportunity to review content for these and to examine how we can make them more accessible. We are similarly encouraging the archive group to continue their sterling works and to discuss using the new website to make interesting material available to view.

**Teaching and standards.** Following my announcement last year, much has been done to encourage sides hosting group meetings to include an element of tuition into the proceedings. This is working well, is good practice and should continue. We owe it to our audiences and to the memory of our forebears to demonstrate our skills to the finest standards. Indeed there is much personal satisfaction to be gained by so doing. I was certainly pleased to hear that the incentive to reduce attendance costs for first time attendees of the jigs instructional has worked well with a high percentage of newcomers this year. We recognise the dedication of Geoff Jerram and his team in making the jigs instructional such a worthwhile contribution to our Association.

**Attitude & enthusiasm.** I reported my dismay last year at the poor attitude expressed, particularly on the Google Groups, towards Officers and others who try their best to make the MR and other JMOs effective umbrella organisations for the good of Morris in general. I am heartened by the observation that this has largely ceased and the common sense realisation that we need to nurture a pleasant and constructive environment in order to encourage future membership and further the principal aims of our movement. Thank you for heeding this message.

**Conclusion.** During the course of this afternoon we shall elect a new Squire of the MR and a new Treasurer. I wish all candidates well. I shall be pleased to offer help and support whenever needed and invited. I can affirm that the incumbent MR Bagman and retiring Treasurer are absolute pillars of our Association and can also be relied upon to give wise counsel and support.



For me they have always been and continue to be a joy to work with. Incoming Officers will find the MR to be a stronger, more cohesive organisation than it was 12 months ago. This is due in no small part to the efforts of a large band of supporters, managers, editors and contributors each running their own sphere of interest with enthusiasm, dedication and respect for this Morris art which we love so dearly. My heartfelt thanks to you all.

## **6. Bagman's Report: Charlie Corcoran**

After the excitement of Constitutional Change leading up to last year's ARM this year has been comparatively calm. It is obvious from the majority of correspondence that I receive that the majority of our membership is oblivious to the politics of the Morris world.

My year is summed up in the contents of the Newsletters - from No 73 with the Minutes of the 2011 ARM up to No.78 with these latest reports. I again thank those Bagmen and others who send me news and events to publicise - and take this opportunity to encourage the rest of you to follow suit. The re-vamp of the Morris Ring website, with its simplified process of posting information for all to see, ensures that those members who care to can access not just the Newsletter and Harry Stevenson's Circular but the wide range of other information that can be found there. This, along with the Google Groups, the MR Google Site (<https://sites.google.com/site/morrisring/>); Google Maps; the Morris Ring Facebook and Twitter sites have dramatically increased the opportunities for individual members of each side, as well as their Officers, to communicate.

Whitchurch MM have offered to host the ARM in 2013 and we have offers to host meetings from Adelaide MM (date TBC); Thaxted Morris (1<sup>st</sup> May - 2<sup>nd</sup> June); Dolphin Morris Men (21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> June) and Martlet Sword & Morris Men (5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> July) but we are still looking for sides to host meetings in 2014 and beyond.

Now, my usual catalogue of thanks:

- Starting with my fellow Bagmen. I appreciate how hard it is to get men to read notices, or emails, much less commit themselves to an event or booking. You do a grand job!
- To Eddie. Steve was a hard act to follow but Eddie did it with style. This year even though settling into a new job and coping wedding with preparations he has remained calm and diplomatic even when I ask him daft questions. I wish him and Carolyn every happiness in the future - freed from the yolk of 'Treasureship'.
- Steve (BfB) - again for his unstinting efforts in maintaining the Morris Shop, offering an unparalleled service to performers of the Morris not just in the UK but across the world.
- Peter - what a diplomat! After a fraught first year in Office I hope that now that the dust has settled that he is able to enjoy this Summer
- Rather like winners of film & television awards I need to thank my family: (There are people who still phone and when Jane answers simply say "Can I speak to Charlie?" without any attempt at politeness or civility) and Leicester Morris Men and Man Friday. Their support and encouragement continues to be invaluable. I enjoy dancing the Morris with them.

## 7. **Treasurer's Report:** Eddie Worrall

Dealing with Treasury business first, how has 2011 been for the Morris Ring's finances?

### Accounts

Unfortunately, due to the ever earlier ARM date, it has again proved impossible to balance, audit and circulate accounts in advance of the meeting. To all sides looking to host the ARM in future, please bear in mind our financial year end is 31<sup>st</sup> December!!

The accounts show however that the Morris Ring is in a strong financial position in a period of declining membership. Income and expenditure are in balance in 2011, with a transfer of £2,500 to the reserve account of surplus income.

Difficult, and to some unpopular, decisions about how and what we can or should finance from income were made prior to my term of office. I have continued with this policy of restricting our expenses to those issues that

are central to the administration or work of the Morris Ring. This is not through ideology, or personal politics, but simply to ensure that the resources we do have are properly channelled to those things that can make a real difference for the member clubs of the Morris Ring. It is all our money after all.

As part of this, I have looked to identify the true position with regard to the money we hold. The reserve account was created as a means of readily identifying the funds we have that are available for use without affecting our day to day operations. I'm pleased to say that we now hold in excess of £30,000.00 in this reserve which gives a solid financial platform for the future. It will be a matter for the Morris Ring through its officers and membership to decide how it will be spent. I trust it will be used wisely.

I propose no increase to subscription rates for 2012/13

### JMO

2011 saw the Morris Ring host the JMO Day of Dance in Sheffield. My own side, Saddleworth, were able to attend and we had a cracking day in and around the city centre. A small profit was made on the day and split pro rata between the 3 Morris Organisations as normal.

The JMO insurance policy continues to be amazing value and again the premium has barely risen, my heartfelt thanks go to Mike Stimpson for his work as the JMO Insurance broker on this.

### Jigs weekend

We continue to support the Jigs weekend, and after a few years of subsidising newcomers to the event, it continues to do excellent work in tutoring Cotswold dancing. If there are members in your side who have not been, please consider co-funding them to make it even more accessible.

### Web-Site

As you will know, we lost John Maher in 2011, who set-up and acted as the web-site owner/manager for the Morris Ring. After a short tender process, the new web-site was developed to continue John's hard work. This has meant funding the development on a commercial basis, to ensure we could continue to offer the same service to our members, and to

maintain an on-line presence for the Morris Ring. Hopefully you will all have had chance to visit this for yourselves and see the excellent work done by Natty Web Development.

### The Future

Again as you will know, this will be my last ARM as Treasurer as I have decided not to stand for re-election. It has been at times an interesting experience, but on the whole more fun than not. After 3 years, that's not a bad average!

The support from my partner Carolyn and my own side Saddleworth have helped keep all things in perspective over the last 3 years, sometimes it is only Morris dancing we discuss and not the fate of the world. As Carolyn and I are to marry in July, I'm pleased to say my home life has survived the experience!

At the risk of sounding like an Oscar acceptance speech, I must also thank the fellow officers with whom I have worked, Brian Tasker, Peter Halfpenney, Paul Reece as Advisory Council Chairman and most of all my fellow Civil Servant Charlie Corcoran. I would have quickly come unstuck but for the help Charlie gave me in settling in and in supporting the things I have looked to do. We are very lucky to have him as Bagman of the Morris Ring.

When I took up office, my predecessor Steve Adamson had left part way through a term of office in somewhat turbulent times. However, he did not walk away from the Morris Ring or its membership and he has been an enormous source of help and information during my 3 years, without ever once interfering with my work as Treasurer. If I am able to do half as much for my successor, I will count myself lucky.

Finally, I must of course thank all the countless Bagmen and Treasurers of our Member and Associate sides who have been helpful, supportive, patient and a pleasure to work with. I thank you all for putting up with me!

I of course must end with wishing my successor well and to pass on the one piece of advice that any Officer needs to remember, listen to advice but be your own man.

Ed Worrall Morris Ring Treasurer  
Saddleworth Morris Men - Jan 2012

## 8. Chair of Advisory Council's Report: Brian Tasker

There have been two meetings of the Advisory Council since the 2011 ARM. The first was immediately after the ARM. This meeting was extremely short as the ARM finished late and there was little time left before the feast. The Squire updated the meeting on some current issues but there was no time for discussion.

The second meeting was held on Sunday 9 October in Wantage and was added onto the 18/30s Weekend. The meeting was held under the new rules approved at the 2011 ARM and as a consequence was a smaller meeting than some previous meetings. All but one of the Area Reps was present. The subjects discussed and on which views were expressed to the Squire were:

- The future of the Youth Fund
- The London Olympics
- Dancing standards and instructionals
- The new Morris Ring web site
- The guidelines for future meetings held under the auspices of the Morris Ring
- The role of the Area Reps
- The Archive Group and the future of the "Morris Dancer"
- The new Morris Ring display boards
- Morris Ring leaflets and hand outs
- Public relations
- Co-operation within the Morris Organisations
- The future of sides own archives
- The impact of the Equalities Act on the Morris Ring

## 9. Archival Reports:

### a. Chair of Archive Committee: *Chris Metherell*

I would normally expect my report to the ARM as Archive Group Chair to be very short indeed! However on this occasion I have provided rather more detail as the Morris Ring Archivist himself is presently abroad and unable to report.

I was able to report to the ARM in March last year that the paper and film sections of the Morris Ring Archive had been delivered to the Essex Record Office and is safely stored.

Since that date progress has, unfortunately, been relatively slow due to staffing problems at that office. However, I am now able to report that our collection has been allocated to a specific archivist at the ERO to act as its curator. That will, doubtlessly speed up the process of arrangement and integration.

The Archive Group is to meet at the ERO in the next couple of months to discuss the potential deposit of items from the photographic and sound collections.

However, perhaps one should look forward rather than report on what has been achieved in the past? It is clear that 2012 is a year of real opportunities for the Archive. Many years ago, we began the process of making materials available in digital form across the web. Much was done, however the technical issues were far more restrictive even 10 years ago than they now are. With the deposit of the Archive in a permanent home, it may be felt that a more wide dissemination of materials from the collection is desirable.

That desire coincides neatly with the revamping of the Morris Ring's web presence and at its next meeting the Archive Group will consider how best to begin making our collections available across the web. We already possess digital transcripts of the Ring logbooks, thanks to the excellent work done by Geoff Jerram, Tim Sercombe and others and it may well be that one could use that information as a framework upon which to hang much other information. There are other possibilities!

- b. **Paper:** *Geoff Douglas*    *No Report - see above*
- c. **Photographic:** *Duncan Broomhead*    *No Report*
- d. **Mumming:** *Ron Shuttleworth*

Progress has once again been steady though slow. The increase in the number of pages held has however been dramatic due to my concentrating on chasing down previously unknown or un-located theses and dissertations. In this I have been helped particularly by Professor Michael Preston of Boulder,

Colorado, who has used his considerable academic clout to prise copies from the US library system.



Matt Levitt, the Canadian student who consulted your archive last Winter, has achieved his Masters degree and is now studying for his mumming-related Doctorate with as much help from us as we can provide.

The big event of the year was the successful International Mummers' Unconvention at Bath in November where I manned a table publicising the Archive on all three days, answering queries and making new contacts.

The final appearance of this board was much enhanced by Duncan who printed my pieces on coloured paper and rearranged everything in a random and attractive way.

The academic side was covered by an all-day 'Symposium' on the Friday at which a number of Papers were

read and at which publicity was greatly enhanced by an impressive display board supplied by Duncan Broomhead. This was primarily to detail the activities of the Traditional Drama Research Group but I was given one section of it for the Archive

Once again I would like to thank those who have contributed material and especially Chris Little of the TDRG for his invaluable help in expanding and refining the databases.

#### *e. Sword: Ivor Allsop*

Circumstances prevent Ivor from submitting his usual comprehensive report this year but he says that all enquiries and requests that he receives concerning the Sword archive are responded to - albeit not as rapidly as of yore.



f. **Sound:** Andy Padmore

Not much to report this time I'm afraid. I continue to digitise the recordings on cassette tapes when time permits but this year I've not had too much spare time and so progress has been slow.

I have been contacted by Keith Francis who has approximately 35 more cassette tapes of recording he made in the 1980's and these will be added to the archive collection at some time this year when we can make the arrangements. Keith is currently trying to identify the recordings before he hands them over.

g. **New Dance Collator:** Mike Wilkinson *No Report*

h. **Keeper of the Morris Ring Scrapbook:** *Keith Francis (Final Report!)*

This is my last report as Scrapbook Keeper. I handed over my role as Keeper of the Logbooks last year, and Charlie now holds the Log books. The Scrapbooks are presently being copied by Chris Metherell - he has done 3 books so far. When they have all been copied, they will be placed with the rest of the Morris Ring Archive in Essex. The Squire wants the Books then to be placed on the Morris Ring Website, so that they are accessible to all.

I'm looking for some help to find Scrapbooks to complete the records. I particularly need the hardback covers so that the loose sheets, on which the photos/paper records are fixed, can be inserted. They are fixed in place by screws. The covers measure 17 inches by 13 inches (42mm by 33mm). I have sufficient loose sheets, though more are needed. Or any other contacts to purchase Scrapbooks of any kind. I can be contacted on

[Keith@wilfmorris.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:Keith@wilfmorris.fsnet.co.uk).

Unfortunately I shall not be at the ARM. My best wishes to my successor.

10. **Publication Officers Reports:**

i. **Editor Morris Circular:** *Harry Stevenson*

By the time of the ARM the Morris Ring Circular No.65 will be with you and the copy date for MRC66 is 31st March. I am always grateful to all contributors and thank all who contributed in the last 12 months. As I have indicated in MRC65 the MRC66 edition is to have a theme of Christmas/New

Year Celebrations across the Country, no, the World! So if your side did something the editor would be most pleased for copy and Photographs.

ii. Editor Morris Dancer: Andrew Bullen / Mac McCoig

Andy and I don't have much to say as yet, save for this:

We will be publishing some Instructions for Contributors on the Morris Ring web site shortly. This is to let contributors know what the 'house style' of The Morris Dancer will be. At the same time we will be making a call for papers. We will suggest some themes for articles, although we will be looking for any researched material at this stage. We will also be asking for reviews of recent relevant books, DVDs and CDs. In addition, we will be looking for some original pithy personal observations on relevant subjects, stories and events. Our aim is to make The Morris Dancer a journal on Morris and related topics which carries weight and is respected in its field. We do not intend to print many hard copies, preferring to publish online.

Mac & Andy

iii. Webmasters Report

Andy Bullen (Chicago) and



Peter de Courcy (Kennet) Co-Editors-in-Chief.

11. Overseas Bagman's Report      **Position vacant**

## 12. Elections

### a. Ballot for Squire of Morris Ring



Robin Springett of Dartington MM  
Proposed by Plymouth MM



John Miller (King John's MM)  
Proposed by Saddleworth MM

### b. Ratification of Steven Archer (Ravensbourne MM) as Treasurer

### c. Ratification of Area Representatives following decisions reached at Area Meetings:

- North Midlands      One candidate: Ben Robinson (Packington MM)
- Northern              Vacancy - no nominations so far received
- South Midlands      Roger Comley (Letchworth MM) End of 3 yr.  
term but eligible for re-election.

### d. Announcement / Ratification of

- Overseas Bagman      **Post still vacant**
- Website Editor in Chief Andy Bullen (Chicago & Leicester MM)  
and Peter de Courcy (Kennet)      Co-Editors-in-Chief.
- Keeper of the MR Scrapbook      Cliff Marchant

13. Admission of sides to the Morris Ring (Both long-standing Associate sides)

**Devil's Dyke MM**

Based around Bottisham, Cambridgeshire.  
Perform Cotswold

*Application supported by Cambridge MM  
& Rutland MM*



**North British Sword Dancers**

Dancing area "whole of the UK and parts  
of France & Belgium"  
Perform Longsword and Rapper Sword

*Application supported by Saddleworth  
MM & Southport Sword Dancers*



14. Area Representatives Reports.

a. **North West** David Loughlin (2014)

I think, first I must thank everyone for the good sense to move forward into the next century in accepting women musicians within the Morris Ring sides. This has helped certainly a lot for the North West Traditional sides to survive and I keep stressing the Morris Ring is a male only dancing fraternity.

As far as the North West clubs are concerned they are all doing a lot more dancing with unfortunately the loss of some good dancers through old age, morris knees or to that call to their final performance in life. One or two of the clubs are getting new members quite regularly, which is very good news.





Royal Preston Morris Dancers are still geared to perform at the Preston Guild Celebrations this year, let's hope they can carry on after that and be ready for the next one in 20 years' time.

As for the Olympics some of the clubs are performing when the Flaming Torch goes by, I don't think it's so important for the Olympics themselves but more to be seen out dancing and eager to encourage new members to join.

b. Northern

Vacancy **No report**

c. North East

Brian Pollard (2013)

Not a great deal to report. A rewarding season of dancing out and a weekend or two away, notably at Bishop Monkton in darkest Yorkshire hosted by Great Yorkshire Morris dancing round the villages and in Harrogate and Ripon and a weekend down in refined and gentle Cheltenham with Gloucestershire Morris Men - excellent weekends all!

Nearer to home Benfieldside, Durham Rams and Stockton Morris have joined forces/ helped each other out on several occasions, especially for Apple Day in October in Durham.

Stockton also shared dancing with Hexham Morris at a festival on the Headland in Hartlepool.



d. **West Midlands**

Pete Simpson (2014)

It's been a lively year in the West Midlands, unfortunately saddened by the loss of Pete Round, long standing Squire of 1<sup>st</sup> Sedgeley MM, to cancer. Pete was a popular figure well known by local Morris dancers. He will be sorely missed.

Earlsdon MM celebrated 40 years with a weekend of dance. Due to prior arrangements I was unable to join them but by all accounts a good weekend was had by everybody.

Ilmington MM were joined by Thaxted MM for their Day of dance round the Village and as usual Forest of Dean's MM Family weekend went with a swing.

Stafford MM organised a Day of Dance to commemorate 50 years in the Morris Ring. They were joined by Leominster MM, Manchester MM and a few others for a very pleasant day dancing round Stafford.

2012 has got off to a good start with Jockey MM plough tour. With six full teams out and good weather it was the best for a few years.

Afterwards nine 'plough boys' headed off to Stafford MM feast while several others headed to Worcester for a Wassail, meeting up with Faithful City MM and others. Let's hope it is the shape of things to come for the next 12 months.

*Below are a few reports from clubs in their own words:*

**Jockey Morris Men** A busy year starting with 2 well organised workshops Easter bought probably our highlight of the year with a long weekend at a festival in Lueven, Belgium, (much Stella to be avoided). After that we fell into a heady round of visits to Thaxted, Saddleworth, Bromyard, Clun and various days of dance etc.. Membership is steady at around 20 with 5 under 30 and good support from out of town members

**The Original Welsh Border Morris Men** So try and envisage 50 men from all corners of England meeting at The Fox Inn in Wichenford, Worcester for a wholesome breakfast at 8:00am with many old friends from other sides - somehow a pint at this hour on Christmas Eve in such company seems to be perfectly acceptable.

The anticipation of a day to remember is reinforced on the coach by waiter service with first Richard's black pudding on a stick and then Derrick's chocolate liqueurs served on a silver salver not to mention the countless hip flasks being passed round and a barrel of Barker's Best Cider.

As we pull into White Ladies Aston older members will have recollected the one or two spectators who might have grudgingly watched from their windows in the earliest tours but now we are greeted by at least fifty locals, and a table groaning with welcoming hot punch and mince pies arranged by villagers

The tour continues to Evesham this year - a promise kept to return there after an absence of ten years. Then on to Pershore, for the AGM, where we celebrate a traditional English democratic process of officer election.

New members are "greeted", "credentials" checked and enrolment is completed with a kiss from JB's trout and a pint from the Fool. Additional "garment accessorisation" is distributed to those who have fallen foul of the Fool's understanding of the way things should be

Then as the light fades we head to Upton on Severn where we perform for the gathered masses - two huddled people

Finally, to one of the world's finest pubs, The Three Kings, in Hanley Castle, the dingy, cosy rooms made magic by a coach load of blacked-up men in black coats. Such a fabulous session of hearty song to round off a perfect winter celebration. Christmas, for most will have just started in earnest!

**EARLSDON** 2011 was our 40th anniversary year and we danced out on 19 occasions between February and December. This included five folk festivals, St George's Day, Easter Monday and our 40th anniversary tour of the Cotswolds. We currently have 27 dancers and 16 musicians on our books, though some of these perform with other sides and some live quite far away so it is still not easy to turn out a team. The average age of the dancers has dramatically gone down, with over half now aged less than 30. 2012 promises to be a busy year.

**GREEN MAN MORRIS** Unfortunately, the year 2011 did not contain as momentous an event as the Opera in 2010. Nonetheless, Green Man managed to dance at a number of places and events, apart from their usual pubs.

We danced at St. Alphege's Medieval Fair in Solihull, The Mall Sutton Coldfield and at the Lichfield Christmas Festival in December. After a number of years of trying we were able to dance at the Mall in Solihull, and we decided that this ought to be turned into a recruitment attempt. We publicised the event in local papers and borrowed the superb publicity zip frames from the Morris Ring. We had an appreciative audience, some of whom gave their names and e-mail addresses and promised to attend a free 'taster' session at a local church hall. In the event, and, although a significant number of Green Man went to the taster, new recruits failed to materialise. Nevertheless, we have decided to repeat the event in 2012.



A highlight of the year was the annual Lichfield Bower. This year there was a goodly turnout of guests, including the Squire of the Morris Ring, and together we battled both the elements, heavy rain, and at times, the idiosyncratic progress of the procession, controlled as it was by a lead car which seemed to want to drive within the lines of the Morris men, thus curtailing progress.

Green Man went to the Greensleeves MM Ring meeting, in Chipperfield where we were made very welcome and had a thoroughly good time. Our year ended with a performance for the members of the Streetly Flower Arranging Society and our usual Boxing Day dancing at Shenstone with our friends from Jockey MM

e. North Midlands

Vacancy **No Report**

f. Eastern

Mike Stevens (2013)

*I have been a member of Peterborough Morris since 1982 and am currently Squire. Previously I danced with Chanctonbury Ring MM and was a founder member of their Northwest side. I also dance whenever I can, with Foresters MM and the Travelling Morrice.*



Eastern Area sides have been very active in 2011 and I've had some good discussions (often by email) with a number of bagmen and other members. There are 17 Member sides (down from 18) and 8 Associates. I summarise below what information people have been prepared to share.

Cambridge Morris Men: Six of their members, including the Squire, are under 21. They hosted successful Winter Ale and a Day of Dance. They attended Thaxted Ring Meeting, Peterborough Day of Dance and King's walking tour of Thornham. Assessment of the year is good and the Squire's report is very positive.

Colchester Morris Men: with a membership of 18, they can rely on a dozen or more at practice and now have a new man, aged 17. The 2011 season was successful and the side is in good heart. The regular Boxing Day spot in Wivenhoe raised £375 which they donated to the Colchester Children's Charity Appeal. They attended Thaxted Morris Ring meeting and for 2012

they plan a full programme of Friday evenings, and other events and remain keen to recruit and train.

East Suffolk Morris Men (now 51 years mature): 20 regular dancers, 3 new recruits, 2 youngsters, 2 members lost through injury/moving away. They organised 19 Monday evenings and attended Thaxted Ring Meeting. Mood of the side is very positive.

Kemp's Men of Norwich: I met them last July in Sherringham and last week at the Straw Bear festival in Whittlesea. From their bagman:- "The trip to Koblenz to represent Norwich at the Bundesgartenschau was a high point of the season... and the loss of "Win" Winstone certainly saddened us all". See here for comments about Win (whose funeral was in October):

<http://www.btinternet.com/~djfalse/kemps/incriminating-evidence/a-parcel-of-rogues/norris-win-winstone-mbe.html>

The King's Morris: I attended their walking tour of Thornham - always a good day! and their winter training day (delivered by Mike Garland). They, too, were at the Straw Bear festival and they have some new members, experienced and novice.

Mayflower Morris Men: They have 11 regular dancers, organised 12 fairly successful Thursday evenings and attended Thaxted Ring Meeting. Mood of the side is upbeat.

Milton Morris: Sadly, this side has folded during 2011 due to aging and loss of key men. On the positive side, several men have moved on to neighbouring clubs.

Peterborough Morris: 11 regular dancers plus 2 new novices. One dancer is under 12, one off to University. Their season saw 13 Tuesday evenings and their Day of Dance. They attended JMO, the Rutland Ring Meeting, King's walking tour of Thornham and several local events and paid gigs. They are reviewing their strategy for mid-week pub gigs. A proactive relationship has been pursued with the Peterborough (daily) evening paper, resulting in good articles before events and photos and reviews afterwards.

Rutland Morris Men: 8-10 regular dancers, 14 Monday evenings of mixed success. Has been very active in 2011, attending Saddleworth, Northwood DoD and a number of local events. Organised a Ring Meeting (as well as a DoD) attended by 14 sides including, from the Eastern area: Thaxted,

Peterborough and Devil's Dyke. Mood of the side is buoyant, with hopes for some new dancers in the offing.

Standon Morris Men: This side has 8 regular dancers having recently "lost" 3 young members off to University. They attended Thaxted Ring Meeting, but have danced a reduced number (9) of Thursday evenings in a season that the bagman describes as "just about kept going". This is sad as the club has been led very recently by a Squire aged 18, followed in office by his brother, aged 17. I know they have been making efforts to recruit through local press and hope that their 2 prospective new members do indeed join and stay the course.

Stevenage Sword Dancers: Attended the Whittlesea Straw Bear festival last week for the 33<sup>rd</sup> time (out of 33 occurrences).

Thaxted Morris Men: have had a very busy 2011 - their centenary year. They are the only club to organise a Ring Meeting every year and in 2011 it was huge, with over 400 men attending from 32 sides. (Yes, we have the Moorcroft Centenary Vase! - a most imaginative gesture, and highly prized!) Eastern area sides attending were: East Suffolk, Thameside Mummers, Colchester, Mayflower, Cambridge and Standon.

Crendon Morris Men: Annual walk round of Long Crendon with Abingdon and Owlswick, attended Headington MM Ale. 12 fortnightly gigs - mostly successful, team positive, wants to recruit.

Devil's Dyke Morris Men: This associate side has applied for full membership of the Ring and in my view fully deserves to be elected. They attended Saddleworth, Rutland Ring Meeting, a twinning trip to Germany and 13 Thursday evenings. Mood of the side is positive with confidence in the future!

Good Easter Molly Gang: An associate side, they dance only once a year ("When?" you may ask) and practice for 2 weeks prior. Some members dance regularly with other clubs.

Thameside Mummers: have just started their 40th year!! The anniversary was Boxing Day, celebrated at the Crooked Billet in Old Leigh - a venue on that date for over 30 years. I was privileged to share a tour with them at the Thaxted Ring Meeting.

May I wish all sides a wonderful 2012 and offer my thanks to bagmen who have been prepared to reply to emails and have provided news of their activities.

**g. South West and Wales** Robin Springett (2014)

Once again a very mixed year for most sides in my area. I have already covered the early part of the year, so this is an update for the remainder of the summer (or what passed as summer in the South West and Wales).

Most sides kindly sent me details of their summer programme, and I did get out with some. I also went to Dartmoor Folk Festival, Sidmouth Festival for 2 days, and Dartington Day of Dance, held on the last day of Totnes Week.



The weather was kind enough for camping at Dartmoor Folk Festival. A small and often overlooked Folk Festival over a Saturday and Sunday, this is an interesting event, as sides are invited to attend, and there is rarely more than one Ring side, but there is plenty going on, and it is very family friendly. We danced out in Oakhampton shopping centre on the Saturday morning, together with a mixed North West Side from near London and a female Cotswold side. The former were actually very good, and the latter adequate. At the Festival itself, there were a couple of Border sides. Dartington had a good day and the evening in the pub was also excellent.

Sidmouth needs no introduction, and I am aware a number of Morris Ring sides were there over the week. Dartington, Plymouth and White Horse were there when I was, but on my second day, I only saw Open and Federation Sides. Several of these are all male sides; one from Yorkshire, with a robust numbers of dancers, put on a very good display. When asked why they were not members of the Morris Ring, I was quite surprised what a dated view they have of us. It was more or less along the lines of "we are quite happy and don't want to be told what to do, or how to dance". In contrast to this, Dartington struggled for numbers, and were saved (again) by Plymouth. The numbers question is an issue for many Morris Ring sides in the South West and Wales. Dartington have a nominal 17 dancers on their books, yet with injury, holidays, work or school and family pressure, we were

down to 4 dancers at Sidmouth. Over the summer, the same happened at one evening out and some other dance outs were cancelled or postponed due to lack of numbers. I hear this from other sides too. If Sidmouth is anything to go by, we also don't have a monopoly any more on dance, behaviour and turn out. If you know the answer to our problem, send it to me on a postcard please!

The Day of Dance in Totnes is also by invitation of Dartington's Bagman, and is used to repay hospitality to some extent. Five sides were present; should have been six, but you will all be pleased to know that a local Open side was short of numbers, which destroyed any theory I may have held!!! Plymouth was again dancing with us. The weather was kind, the crowds were friendly, and the £5 two courses Sunday carvery at the Dartmouth Inn in Totnes unbelievably good, and enjoyed by many. (Organisers of the Advisory Council lunch please note). Plymouth does a dance with naval cutlasses, which ends with someone throwing in a bloodied hand. Great fun, with only one lady in the audience revisiting the recent lunch she had eaten; guys, do it before lunch please next time! The Cornish Wreckers are a very special Border side and very entertaining too if you ever get a chance to watch.

The late summer seems to have been a busy time for dancing at weddings. Exeter, Dartington, White Horse and Bathampton all report dancing at weddings, and I am sure there were others. In particular, I should like to record the wedding of Captain Russell Archer MC of The Royal Engineers, who has danced with Bathampton and Ravensbourne, to Alice a fellow (female) Army officer. Russell, who was decorated for bravery in Afghanistan, is the son of Steven Archer of Bathampton and current Squire of Ravensbourne. The wedding was near Exeter on 27<sup>th</sup> August, and Bathampton and Exeter both danced for the Happy Couple. The Morris Ring will survive if it continues to attract young men of Russell's stature; good luck to them both.

On behalf of sides in the South West and Wales, I attended the Advisory Council Meeting in Oxford in October; nothing to report which hasn't already been published. Thanks to those sides who gave me feedback for the terms of reference for area reps!



In the run up to Christmas Dartington held a quiz night, with participation from Plymouth and Exeter; the latter winning, will we ever live it down! Swyens' Ey performed their Mummers Play, collecting a resounding £300 for Epilepsy Wales. Mendip report that their Christmas Ale got the festive season off to a cracking start once again, with over 120 men attending (including the Squire and Bagman of the Morris Ring). Unlike 2010, the



weather was favourable, if less seasonal so almost everyone who wanted to attend got there and back without incident. Christmas is always a busy time for Morris sides, and I know that many sides were out and about over the holiday period. West Somerset did "Dulverton by Starlight" on 4<sup>th</sup> December, "Porlock Late Night Shopping" on 10<sup>th</sup> December. Not sure whether these were paid performances, but as far as my side is concerned, our paid performances were precisely zero with the Cider Press Shopping Village at Dartington

telling us they couldn't afford to pay us this year. Our Christmas Carol evening was performed in a pub instead of the church, as the choir we normally share the evening with suggested we only have 20 minutes of the 2 hours, which we declined! Dartington were out on a brilliant sunny Boxing Day, and seriously wet New Year's Day to dance, perform our historic Mummers Play, The Christmas Boys and collect for our chosen charities. Despite money being tight, we still collected £380, which compares well with the £400 of 2010, when we had good weather both days. Mendip held their traditional Boxing Day tour at the Ploughs at Wrington and Congresbury, both of which were attended by large and enthusiastic audiences. Swyen's Ey joined Isca for a dance out on Boxing Day at the Ostrich Inn, Newlands. West Somerset and Plymouth report being out over the holiday, others as well I expect, but they didn't tell me. (The message being to tell me so I can get you in to the report). West Somerset (well done them!) got a photo in the local paper, with the following caption:

"The West Somerset Morris Men visited Dunster on Boxing Day for their traditional celebration. Led by Squire Reg Gutteridge they performed a series of intricate stick and handkerchief dances accompanied by a group of musicians. A large crowd enjoyed the entertainment and were most generous in their donations to the "Charity Bag" Refreshment for the men was gratefully accepted from the Yarn Market Hotel"



Since Christmas, I am delighted to record that Bovey Tracey Mummers did their annual wassail at Stoke Gabriel Community Orchard, along with non-ring Morris and storytelling etc. The event was to raise funds for the village primary school, and actually did make it onto BBC TV for the South West, although they didn't show the Mummers!! These guys only perform once a year, so it is quite an event once they are out. Wassailing was everywhere, for example, Saltram House, a National Trust property in Plymouth had an event, with bonfire, candle lit walks, shotguns, cider and home-made cakes, plus the Morris of course. Mendip report wassailing the apple orchards at Thatcher's Cider for the 4<sup>th</sup> successive year, and afterwards entertaining the guests in the company marquee. Exeter wassailed in Sanford on 7<sup>th</sup> in front of 200 people, and Isca were also out wassailing on 7<sup>th</sup> at the Ostrich Inn with Sweyn's Ey. Chalice managed two wassails, one of which was paid!! Plymouth held a ceilidh on 28<sup>th</sup> January, at which their chosen charity, a local Hospice gratefully accepted a cheque.

I am pleased to report a small success; Sweyn's Ey, a side in serious trouble for numbers in 2011 report the New Year has started with two returning and two new dancers, two new musicians and a reporter who came along to a practice to write a piece for the local rag. We wish them well. Chalice report some success with recruiting as they move into their 40<sup>th</sup> year, with Past Squire Bob Cross as their new bagman.



Finally, I hope sides saw my piece in Newsletter No75 regarding the demise of White Horse Morris Men as a Ring side. Their choice may not have been everyone's, but I know it was taken after much reflection. I mourn their passing and shall miss my contact with them, as they were a side that always responded to my emails.

#### **h. South Midlands**

Roger Comley (2012)



With twenty-two great sides in the South Midlands area its good fun to see so many reports of their activities in press and TV - and even better to see them live?

Abington Traditional Morris Dancers pride themselves on being maligned by Cecil Sharp and delight in telling you about it; and with Adderbury Village Morris Men delighting us

with The Way of the Morris film - full of local pride.

All this fun with some 'grumpy old men' ridiculing each other out of sight and ear of most of us should be remembered as part of our male tradition - I love it and enjoy being part of it. Every side some: are you one? Let's hope so.

Another tradition that Cecil missed, and which ought to be added as a supplement to the Black Book, is the "No Dancing" tradition. This is performed by quite a few of us these days; it requires a doctor's note - soon to be available from the Morris Shop! For a small fee Dr Peter Copley of Stafford will diagnose something for you!

Finally,

If it's full, empty it; if it's empty, fill it and if it itches, scratch it.

Wassail Roger



## i. South East

Fred Hands (2013)

For the majority of sides in this area they continue to operate as usual continuing with regular events, feasts weekends and days of dance and regular weekly tours throughout the summer season. Four sides from this area attended the Thaxted centenary meeting. **Long Man** and **Ravensbourne** reported very successful Wassailing events. **Spring Grove** again hosed their very successful midsummer evening tour of Richmond and Twickenham. which I attended along with **Ewell St Mary**, **Thames Valley**, **Yateley Datchet and Greensleeves**, a good evening dancing by the river and enjoyed by all. **Northwood Hartley Broadwood** and **Winchester** all hosted their annual feast, day or weekend of dance all of which I was unable to attend. **Ravensbourne MM** appeared on ITV with Ade Edmonson. The episode was very well edited to show their dancing. They have also made the local press on a couple of occasions, with some good publicity.

Recruitment is still a major concern for many sides most are managing to stay operational by recruiting the occasional new man who replaces a man who has retired or left the side so managing to maintain the status quo. There are however several sides with operational numbers below 12. **The Men of Wight** are now only able to field 8 competent dancers, associate side **White Star** have folded due to lack of numbers after about 25 years, they were however only a once a year side in recent years. One of the local federation sides in Kent was becoming close to folding last year, **Wadard** took 3 of their men to the Thaxted Centenary meeting and since then Frog Island Morris folded. Two of them have remained with **Wadard**. **Weald of Kent Morris** resigned their associate membership. **East Surrey** are planning a big recruitment drive in the coming year. With a try out day at the end of June and a change of direction on their web site to focus upon Facebook a tactic Associate side **Cinque Ports** are also trying. The only side to have bucked the trend in recruitment over the last few years is **Victory MM** who have recruited another 3 men this year - making it about 15 men in the last 3 years.

Three sides are celebrating notable anniversaries this year **Ashdown** and **Broadwood MM** are both celebrating 40 years. Ashdown are hoping to

have a reunion event in September for all past and current members. **Hartley** are celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> this year

**Hartley MM** have been invited to dance in London at an event for the Queens Jubilee and **Winchester** are to perform at a local Cultural Olympiad event **Spring Grove** are participating in the final cultural Olympic event All the Bells Ring

**Ravensbourne** managed a town twinning trip to Nuiwied in Germany while **Northwood** and **King Johns** both had weekend trips to France.

Generally all sides in the South East are continuing with their usual busy dancing programmes while trying to cope with ageing membership and reduced numbers of active dancers.

## 15. Future Programme.

- a. Morris Ring Meetings 2013 and beyond. (Bagman)
- b. Instructionals

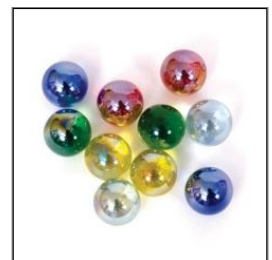
## 16. Date and Venue of Next Meeting.

## 17. A.O.B.

**London 2012** Details of the Cultural Olympiad are available from their web site.

<http://www.london2012.com/cultural-olympiad>.

**Paul Reece reports that:**



Having campaigned for over six years to have our national dance represented, as is the norm for countries hosting the Olympic Games, it is somewhat perverse that Mr Boyle has ignored the rich dance traditions of these islands and focussed on the bell, Shakespeare and the island theme as his motif all of which have strong resonances with the Morris and Will Kemp, Shakespeare's famous fool and dancer. John Donne had a lot to say about bells and islands as do some 20,000 Morris Dancers in these islands. The snub to a national cultural icon that could quite easily be choreographed into this artistic production could have catastrophic effects

not least to that cultural expression that the people for hundreds of years have made their own.

\*\*\*\*\*

Terry Heaslip, Squire, Hartley Morris Men comments:

As an incentive to other sides who may wish to be involved with the Olympic Flame Relay I am happy to advise you of the progress I have made on behalf of Hartley MM in Kent.

We have built up a very good relationship with the local Borough Council who have now confirmed that they would like us to dance before and after the Flame passes through the town of Borough Green and on it's High Street once it is closed to traffic. The Council are very enthusiastic about our input and we will be sharing the glory with a local Samba band as they are expecting large crowds to congregate in the Town and along the length of the High Street.

I will need to attend a briefing and liaison meeting beforehand much as I did when we were similarly involved with the Tour de France cycle race through the Borough.

Security and organisational arrangements will be very tight so I would most certainly advise against any side hoping to just 'turn up on the day' to dance along the route or assuming they can get away with simply telling the local authorities what they intend to do. Such actions may well disrupt the planned programme (which is being timed to the minute) and have a detrimental effect on how authorities view the Morris in general.

Working with the authorities does also have it's reward as, in return, we have been offered an acceptable donation towards our expenses.

The message is that 'it pays to talk'.

Terry Heaslip    Squire, Hartley Morris Men



**Geoff Knapman**

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☺ **On-line Links:**

<http://www.themorrisring.org/> the main MR website with millions of pages stuffed to the gunnels with all you need to know about the MR. No registration required to access - the site is open for the world to visit.

<http://groups.google.com/group/the-morris-ring?hl=en&pli=1> The Morris Ring Google Group (MRGG). Still open for messages but files section is now closed. Forum for debate or announcements. Private site; Contact Morris Ring Bagman to register to use.

<https://sites.google.com/site/morrisring/?pli=1> Morris Ring Clubs Website. Private site, register to use. Files can be posted here so you can access Newsletters, circulars etc. as well as current affairs, events calendar & What's On news.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Morris-Ring/158759257502840> Morris Ring Facebook site: Managed by Ollie King. [oliver.king11@btinternet.com](mailto:oliver.king11@btinternet.com)

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

If your side has forthcoming events or items of interest to all, make sure that you get them posted on one or more of these sites.





**Unique opportunity:** The six remaining TRADITIONAL Sword dance teams left dancing their own dance will be converging on Goathland on the 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> May 2012. Joining Goathland will be Grenoside, Flamborough, Handsworth, Papa Stour & High Spennithwaite Blue Diamond.

This is the first time EVER that all the TRADITIONAL teams have danced at the same venue. And it is unlikely to happen again for a very very long time. Goathland now can turn out two senior teams and two mixed junior teams - hopefully securing the next 20+ years of dancing in Goathland.

John Atkinson via Brian Tasker

### **The Gate to Southwell 16<sup>th</sup> June 2012**

Dolphin Morris men would like to invite you to the 2012 Gate to Southwell. This will be the 31<sup>st</sup> Gate to Southwell since it was revived by Bob Hine of Dolphin Morris Men in 1981.

The history of Nottinghamshire's oldest tradition dates to 1109 when the Minster at Southwell became the Mother Church for Nottingham and its surrounding districts. The annual payments for the upkeep of the Minster were taken from Nottingham to Southwell in a Whitsuntide procession. Records in 1530 show that Morris dancers were paid to accompany the great and the good and were paid for their 'coats' and the 'ale which they drank at all times'.

The modern day event is started by the Lord Mayor of Nottingham who gives a short speech then starts the procession by presenting Nottingham's contribution of the 'Southwell Pence'.



Since 1981, the 'revived' Gate to Southwell has been an annual event for many local Morris dance teams. Each team presents a bag of pre-decimal coins which represent part of the Minster upkeep costs, to the Dean of Chapter and his colleagues at the North Gate of the Minster. The 'Gate' is designed to recreate the ancient Nottinghamshire procession to Southwell Minster, but using buses to travel the majority of the way. However, some sides walk several miles carrying the banner and cross.

On arrival in Southwell we process along the main street to the Minster in the time honoured way. The 'Southwell Pence' is presented at the Minster's North Gate, which is followed by a short service which includes Morris hymns and dancing in the Minster. Afterwards, we retire to the Bramley Apple Pub for informal dancing, with the buses returning to Nottingham in the evening.

We had a great time last year and raised over £700 for the Help for Heroes Charity, they send their thanks to all those who took part in last year's event. We shall be collecting for charity again this year.

All sides are welcome to attend; there is a small charge for the bus, the badge, a cream tea halfway through, and a free pint at the Bramley Apple pub.

To help with planning, can you please contact Chris Gigg by email to give an idea of numbers attending. We would like replies by **Mid-April 2012**. Costs depend on numbers but will be approximately £10 person.

<http://www.dolphin-morris.co.uk/gate.htm> & follow the link for *Gate to Southwell*.

### **Morris 18-30 Weekend: 12<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> October 2012**



Pictures of 2011 in Oxford  
visit their website:

[www.morris1830.org.uk](http://www.morris1830.org.uk)



**JOINT MORRIS ORGANISATION**  
**MORRIS FEDERATION - MORRIS RING - OPEN MORRIS**  
**PUBLICITY WORKSHOP SATURDAY 3rd MARCH 2012.**

A workshop to discuss and plan effective publicity for Morris Sides focusing on the types of medium available and how to get the best out of the use of publicity for the benefit of each Side throughout the Country.

The workshop will be held at: **The Samuel Barlow**, Alvecote Marina, Robeys Lane, Tamworth, Staffs. B78 1AS. From 11am to 4pm.

As with the last workshop it is hoped that Sides will bring ideas to the table and these will be collated and a document will be produced after the event to circulate to all Sides.

The cost of £10.00 per delegate includes a buffet lunch which will include a choice of sandwiches, salads, hot roast potatoes, and Yorkshire puddings with stuffing, a selection of meat and a vegetarian pie.

To book your Side's delegates in, please send a cheque payable to PHOENIX MORRIS\* for £10.00 per person to Michael Stimpson, PO Box 115, Rickmansworth, Herts. WD3 1WB to arrive no later than the 23rd of February 2012. (\* Phoenix have agreed to act as "bankers" for this event on behalf of the three Morris Organisations)

### **Agenda**

11.30 Introduction and welcome Barry Goodman	PRINTING and DESIGN
TYPES OF PUBLICITY	14.00 Design Mike Everett
11.40 Adverts Michael Stimpson	14.15 Production Michael Stimpson
11.50 Press Releases Grace Beardsley	WHO
12.10 Articles Grace Beardsley	14.30 Publicity & Press Releases Michael Stimpson
12.20 What's On Page Grace Beardsley	14.40 Web design Jemma Gurney
12.30 Social Networking Barry Goodman	HOW
12.40 Events Michael Stimpson	15.00 Methods of printing Michael Stimpson
12.50 Web Sites Jemma Gurney	15.10 Distribution Barry Goodman
13.00 Media Martin Banks	15.20 Setting up a web site Jemma Gurney
LUNCH 13.10 - 14.00	15.30 - 16.15 CONCLUSION AND QUESTIONS

### 331<sup>st</sup> Meeting 25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> May Cotswold Olimpicks Meeting

Cost £85 Female musicians welcome 250 max

Come to Chipping Campden in the Olympic year to celebrate the roots of the Olympic movement, a true people's games. 2012 sees the 400<sup>th</sup> running of Dover's Games, also known as the 'Cotswold Olimpicks'. Dover's Games were referred to in the British Olympic Committee's bid to host the games as the "*first stirring of Britain's Olympic beginnings*." The games will be held on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012.

The meeting will follow the traditional format -

- informal on Friday evening, giving visitors the opportunity to enjoy the delights of the town
- tours in the Cotswolds on Saturday (all tours will include at least one traditional village), followed by a massed display in Chipping Campden and a feast
- Sunday - procession through the town to Parish Church of St James ( a Wool Church) and a further massed display, followed by lunch and a fond farewell

The meeting is based at the town's academy school. We are offering indoor camping there and outdoor camping (tents, motorhomes, and caravans) at a local site which backs on to the school field. Showers are available at the school. For those who like a real bed, there are plenty of B&B's close at hand. We can accommodate approximately 250, including female musicians.

**Bagman for the meeting:** Steve Felton Shakespeare MM & Ilmington MM  
01789778047 (home), 07811 747055 (mobile) 01789 455811 (office)  
steve.felton@lineone.net

#### Sides attending:

Lincoln & Micklebarrow MM	Waddard
Cambridge MM	Thelwall
St Albans	Ravensbourne
Rutland MM	East Suffolk
Mayflower MM	Thaxted MM
Utttoxeter Heart of Oak MM	Darlington MM
Stafford MM	Shakespeare MM
Greensleeves MM	Kennet MM
Taunton Deane MM	Trigg
Wath	Gloucestershire MM

## **332<sup>nd</sup> Meeting 8th - 10<sup>th</sup> June      332<sup>nd</sup> Thaxted Meeting**

Cost £69

All male meeting    Up to 200

After the biggest and best of our 'centenary' meeting, where over 400 Morris men attended, doubling our usual number, we revert to our standard 'classic' tried and tested meeting on which all other meetings have been modelled. This will be the 79th meeting we have hosted.

The meeting starts on the Friday evening with sessions in all of the Thaxted pubs and informal dancing at The Star. After leisurely tours of some splendid village pubs in the outstanding North Essex countryside during the day on Saturday we then reach the main event of the weekend. This consists of the two processions that meet in Town Street followed by two massed shows of massed and show dances with a feast in the interval. This culminates in the Horn Dance, the climax, in front of an appreciative audience of several hundred people.

Indoor and outdoor accommodation will be based in and around the school. Cost for the whole weekend will be in the region of £69 but men can attend as day men, as individuals or sides, and choose not to have meals if they wish thus reducing the cost. There is a reduction for under 16s. Alternatively B&B may be obtained at The Swan in Thaxted, or at The Farmers Arms, Monk Street, one mile outside Thaxted. There is also a Travelodge at nearby Great Dunmow.

**Bagman for the meeting** Ian Anderson    01702 466335

[iandbanderson@btinternet.com](mailto:iandbanderson@btinternet.com)

### **Sides attending:**

Spring Grove MM	Winchester MM
Mayflower	Dolphin MM
Westminster MM	

### **333<sup>rd</sup> Meeting 13<sup>th</sup> -15th July Letchworth Centenary Morris Meeting**

Cost £66 Female musicians welcome 100 max

"Join Letchworth Morris as they celebrate 90 years of dancing in the North Herts area. Based in Cottered, coach tours will visit Letchworth's unique and stylish town centre, as well as exploring delightfully rural North Hertfordshire villages. The Saturday will commence with a short instructional, and there will be ample opportunity for dancing after the formal Feast. Sunday will conclude with a church service, displays, and lunch in the picturesque village of Ashwell.

There will be indoor camping in the hall, and outdoor camping 200 yards away, with hot showers at both locations. Cost £66 for the full weekend with reductions for part attendance, and £10 reduction on the weekend price for under 18s."

**Bagman for the meeting** Theo Thomas 01582 882831

theo.thomas@btinternet.com

#### **Sides attending:**

Green Man MM	Plymouth MM
Wyvern Jubilee MM	Mendip MM
Manchester	

## **334<sup>th</sup> Meeting 31<sup>st</sup> Aug-2<sup>nd</sup> Sept. Hartley 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Morris Meeting**

Cost £65      Female musicians welcome      250 max

The Hartley Morris Men invite you to join them in celebrating their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and seeing out the incumbent Squire of the Morris Ring and welcoming in the new.

We are an 'all male' side but extend a welcome to every member of the Morris Ring to join us in our 'adopted' village of Wrotham for this special occasion.

Indoor and outdoor camping plus full facilities for up to 250 will be provided at a local school, together with wholesome meals provided by a professional caterer. Local ales, dispensed from hop strewn barrels, will be available at the accommodation site for no additional charge although informal music, dance, and song at local hostelries will be encouraged on Friday and Saturday evenings.

Sunday morning we intend to arrange some interesting workshops followed by the massed display which will be held in the grounds of nearby Tonbridge Castle. There will not be a formal Church Service but participants may join the congregation at one the local churches.

We currently estimate the cost of the weekend to be in the region of £65 with discounts for those unable to join us for the full weekend. Applications from either complete sides or individuals are welcomed as we are very happy to make up suitable composite sides if required.

The meeting website is at [www.hartleyringmeeting.org](http://www.hartleyringmeeting.org) where more information will be posted as it becomes available.

**Bagman for the meeting** Tony Tomlin, 01622 685960 [TonyTomlin@aol.com](mailto:TonyTomlin@aol.com)

Sides attending:

Horwich	Victory
Wessex MM	Mersey MM
Broadwood MM	Harthill
Letchworth MM	Devils Dyke
North British SD	Rumford
Bourne River MM	North Waprilod MM
Men of Wight Morris	Ripley MM
Westminster MM	Woodchurch

## 2013

- TBC March ARM Hosted by Whitchurch
- TBC March / April 335<sup>th</sup> Adelaide MM
- 31<sup>st</sup> May - 2<sup>nd</sup> June 336<sup>th</sup> Thaxted Morris Meeting
- 21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> June 337<sup>th</sup> Dolphin Morris Men 
- 5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> July 338<sup>th</sup> Martlet Sword & Morris Men (60<sup>th</sup> Anniv)

## 2014 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Foundation of the Morris Ring

- March ARM Hosted by TBA
- TBC Thaxted Morris Meeting

## 2015

- March ARM Hosted by TBA
- TBC Thaxted Morris Meeting

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

## Calendar Dates - and Publicity

Please let me have details of where, if anywhere, your side (& all sides / clubs in the Open Morris and the Morris Federation) are performing on:

- St George's Day (23<sup>rd</sup> April)
- May Day (May 1<sup>st</sup>)
- Early May Bank Holiday (May 7<sup>th</sup>)
- Spring bank Holiday (June 4<sup>th</sup>)
- Diamond Jubilee Holiday

For each please let me have:

- Name of Side / Club
- Venue (s)
- Time (s) - if for May Day it is dawn please give approx. expected time - from returns last year it varied from 4am to 7am!
- Side / club web address where further information can be found

For my use only please say whether your side is MR / Fed / Open

Please email information to [bagman@thrmorrisring.org](mailto:bagman@thrmorrisring.org)



**And finally.....**

**If your side would like to be part of the major JMO event of 2012 contact Charlie Corcoran, Bagman of the Morris Ring, a.s.a.p..**

Places are limited and allocated between the three JMOs which means that there is room for only 15 Morris Ring sides.

If your side are not going to be represented at the ARM please get your Ballot paper to vote for our next Squire into the post as a matter of urgency. Ballot paper - to be cut out or copied - at the end of this Newsletter.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlie". The signature is written in a cursive style and is followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that extends to the right.

Bagman of the Morris Ring



# Morris Ring Ballot paper

## Election for Squire of the Morris Ring for period 2012 to 2014

Each member club is entitled to one vote in each election. *Associate clubs are not entitled to vote.*

Candidate	Place an X in the box below for the candidate of your choice.
John Miller (King John's MM)	
Robin Springett (Dartington MM)	

**Postal votes** may be submitted to the **Bagman of the Morris Ring** by those clubs not personally represented at the ARM by Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2012. This voting slip, or a copy, should be used for this purpose and be enclosed in a sealed envelope bearing the name of the member club on whose behalf the vote is submitted. Do not include anything else in this envelope. The unopened envelope will be passed to the Returning Officer who will check to ensure the submitting club has voting rights. The club's name will be marked on the register of clubs as having voted. The voting slip will be added to those ready for sorting/counting and the envelope discarded.

Sides voting on the day will also submit their votes in a sealed envelope marked with the name of the side. *If two votes are received from the same side that received first will be counted.*

Postal votes that are submitted in a form other than described above will be treated as a spoilt vote.



# *Dancing with Will*



Open Morris on behalf of the  
Joint Morris Organisations announces

**JMO 2012**

**Day of Dance June 30th**

**Stratford upon Avon**

at the invitation of the  
Royal Shakespeare Company  
and Stratford Town Council



the MORRIS RING  
founded 1934