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Newsletter No.79

May 2012

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Morris Dance For You(th) School Pack Offer

Have you missed your Morris Ring Newsletter? This is the first edition since the ARM Special in February. If your answer is "no" then let me know as I have no desire to waste my time and the MR money on printing and postage. If your answer is "Yes" then please let me have your news, information, announcements, and the like so that I fill the next edition rather more rapidly.

Radio Star On Wednesday 9th May 2012 our Squire: Peter Halfpenney was the 'Mystery Guest' on Chris Evans Radio 2 programme. It elicited these comments:

"a great interview with Peter Halfpenny. Light-hearted and fun and Chris sounded genuinely interested. Nice one Peter!" *(Ron Wood)*

"I am delighted that Morris dancing is getting the kind of positive air- time we've all hoped for for years. You were very well-spoken and represented Morris dancing as the vibrant, culturally interesting, cool thing that it is."

(Grace Jackson of Boggart's Breakfast)

Opportunities to meet the Radio Star:

5 th May	Harthill DOD Derbyshire
11 th - 13 th May	North Wood weekend, Purley
18 th - 20 th May	Richmond: North Yorkshire Weekend
25 th - 27 th May	Chipping Campden: National meeting
1 st - 3 rd Jun	East Surrey Rye weekend
4 th June	Lichfield Bower
8 th - 10 th June	Thaxted: National meeting
22 th - 24 th June	Chalice 40th weekend. North Somerset
30 th June	JMO Day of Dance Stratford
1 st July	Harthill @ Brinsworth Gala, Rotherham
13 th - 15 th July	Letchworth: National meeting
21 st July	Chapel-en-le-Frith Day of Dance, Buxton
28 th July	Harthill @ Beehive Beer Festival, Harthill
16 th August	Harthill Day of Dance, Chesterfield
24 th - 26 th August	Saddleworth Rushcart
31 st July - 2 nd Sept.	Hartley: National meeting





No strings attached!

Hartley MM levitating at
Igham Mote

Photo by Terry Heaslip

Calendar Dates - and

Publicity Unfortunately my offer to publicise where sides / clubs belonging to the Morris Ring, the Open Morris and the Morris Federation) planned to perform on St George's Day; May Day; Early May Bank Holiday; Spring bank Holiday and the Diamond Jubilee Holiday failed to produce sufficient responses to make the impact the JMO had hoped. Even using the flurry of information that came through towards the end of April we still did not have sufficient to publicise if we are to do justice to the range and number of events that were planned.

Future Events You will see from the information that follows that the Morris Ring has some exciting events coming up in the next 18 months or so but after that is looking a little bare. If your side might be interested in hosting what we are now calling National Events please talk to your Area Rep or one of the Morris Ring Officers. Events do not have to follow what has become the 'usual' weekend format: many early meetings were simply Days of Dance. The format is up to the Host side and do not have to be on a vast scale so please give it some serious consideration - it would be great to have new hosts and to be able to visit new areas of the country.

2012

332nd Meeting 8th - 10th June Thaxted

Cost £75 All male meeting Up to 200

The Friday evening reception will be at the Bolford Street Hall and NOT at the School as previously stated. The festivities start 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 Thaxted. The cost for the whole weekend is £75.00, 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 fewer than 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.

The Morris Shop will be attending for the full weekend

Contact: Ian Anderson 01702 466335 iandbanderson@btinternet.com

333rd Meeting 13th-15th July 2012 Letchworth's 90th Anniversary

There are still some places available at this event.

Based in the picturesque village of Cottered, Hertfordshire, there is both indoor and outdoor camping available and hot showers at both locations. The weekend will follow a familiar pattern, with the addition of a Wheatley Instructional on the Saturday morning, before the coaches' leave for a massed display in Letchworth's stylish town centre. There are then tours around various hostelryes in the N. Herts / S. Beds area, sampling some of the very best local pubs, before returning to Cottered for tea, and the Feast.

Sunday will see the morning church service (not obligatory!) in historic Ashwell, followed by a massed show in the village centre.

There is still space for full sides, or individuals, for either all or parts of the weekend. Costs: £66 for the whole thing; £51 for Saturday + Feast; £62 for Saturday & Sunday; and £22 for the Saturday tour only. There's a £10 reduction of the full weekend cost for under 18's, and lady musicians will be welcome.

Contact: Theo Thomas 01582 882831 theo.thomas@btinternet.com

Annual Fools and Beasts Unconvention 2nd - 4th Nov 2012.

Hosted by King John's Morris Men with Winchester Morris Men and Red Stags Morris. The weekend is open to all budding or experienced Fools, Beasts and Morris Characters from any team from the Ring, Open or Federation. The Unconvention will be based at Lyons Copse, Solent Scout Training Centre, Shedfield, Southampton, SO32 2HQ

There will be workshops, a Saturday tour and more TBA - plus the AGM of course - your chance to have your say!

- Further information and booking form from triggertrout1@aol.com

2013

- 19th Jan 2013 MR Jigs Instructional Weekend. Sutton Bonington
- TBC March ARM Hosted by Whitchurch
- 5th - 7th April 335th Adelaide MM (*See below*)
- 31st May - 2nd June 336th Thaxted Morris Meeting
- 21st - 23rd June 337th Dolphin Morris Men 
- 5th - 7th July 338th Martlet Sword & Morris Men (60th Anniv)
- 23rd - 25th Aug. 339th Silkeborg Morris Men, Copenhagen (*See below*)

2014 80th 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



The Inaugural Adelaide Ring Meeting

Adelaide Morris Men: founding members of the Australian Morris Ring & admitted to the Morris Ring in 2010

336th Meeting 5th - 7th April 2013

The Meeting will provide visiting teams and individuals with an opportunity to stay in an Australian bush setting and to experience some of the sights of [Adelaide](#), its finest

breweries as well as its nearby wineries and country side, while giving plenty of opportunity to dance throughout the weekend.

Friday evening 5 April 2013

Meet and Greet at the [Wheatsheaf Hotel](#) (not far from Adelaide Airport / Adelaide Railway Station / Adelaide Bus depot). Pick up can be arranged. Travel to accommodation – travel by bus to [Douglas Scrub](#) accommodation in McLaren Vale.

Saturday 6 April 2013

After breakfast (which will be provided) we will embark on a tour of the [McLaren Vale](#) wineries and pubs, returning to Douglas Scrub for the Feast. After the Feast we shall have the opportunity to sing, dance, and play to our heart's content. There are no neighbours and no closing time!

Sunday 7 April 2013

For those who wish we have made arrangements to attend the Church Service at 10.00 am at the Blackwood Uniting Church, following which there will be a tour by bus of Adelaide sights before returning to Douglas Scrub for a well-earned rest (or more dancing, singing and playing).

MEETING EXTRAS

Pre Dance Meeting *Easter 29th March 2013 to 1st April 2013*

The Adelaide Morris Men will be attending the [National Folk Festival](#) held in Canberra held over the Easter weekend. We are happy to arrange for dancing for other teams and individuals over the weekend should anyone wish to attend the folk festival. We can arrange billeted accommodation for those that get to Adelaide before the Dance Meeting.

Post Dance Meeting

The AMM are hoping that Adelaide's various Morris teams and the partner's and children of visiting Morris men would like to participate in the various post Dance Meeting events:

- *Monday 8 April 2013 and Tuesday 9 April 2013*

Billeted accommodation is available for those that need it. We thought most people would like a break from dancing after the weekend and to take in some other sights in and around Adelaide. On the Tuesday night we have arranged to meet with Adelaide's other Morris teams for dinner and an evening of dancing at one of Adelaide's better pubs, the [Rob Roy Hotel](#).

- *Wednesday 9 April 2013 to Friday 11 April 2013*

The beginning of the Melbourne tour! We shall travel in a convoy of cars to a Victorian town with some rather unusual accommodation and near the [Grampian Mountain Range](#). We plan to dance at Hall's Gap (a picturesque part of the Grampians), then Ballarat, before travelling on to Melbourne to arrive Friday evening.

- *Saturday 12 April 2013 to Sunday 13 April 2013.*

A weekend of dance in and around Melbourne is planned. Billeted accommodation or cabin style accommodation will be arranged.

PARTNERS & CHILDREN PROGRAMME

During the weekend of the Dance Meeting the partners of the Adelaide Morris Men will be running a separate programme to ensure that any partners and children of the visiting men dancing have an interesting time around Adelaide and its surrounds. If there is anything in particular you want to do, let us know. Billeting is available for families of Morris men attending at the Dance Meeting if required for the weekend and for everyone after the weekend.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

It would greatly assist us if any team or any individual dancers interested in, or planning to, attend for the week can send an expression of interest to Dave Smith at Dave@taliskerhouse.com

Robin Springett, Squire-Elect, has done some research into airline prices and possible concessions but has drawn a blank. He has suggested that if we have a rough working figure of numbers of potential attendees (& extras) we might be able to further explore booking through a booking agency that might allow us to customise flights. There is also a folk festival in Canberra the weekend before and with the trip to Melbourne it encompasses weekends. So ...if you as a side or an individual are seriously interested please copy the Bagman of the Morris Ring (bagman@themorrisring.org) into your emails to Dave Smith.



339th Silkeborg Morris Men are considering a Ring meeting in Copenhagen on August Bank Holiday, 23rd - 25th August 2013. They do not yet have all the details but want to give people advance warning because it is expensive to get to Denmark. They are working on costs, accommodation and tours.

(Thanks to Jacob Christensen of Silkeborg Morris Men)



Endurance: Congratulation to Ben Moss of the Hammersmith Morris Men for completing the 26.2 miles of the 2012 Virgin London Marathon, raising both the profile of Morris and £4,622 for Sense. *Sense International's mission is to ensure that*

deafblind people throughout the world receive the education and services they need to develop their talents and play a valued role in society. You can add to this total via <http://www.justgiving.com/benjamin-moss/new/2>

Record Attempt I recently circulated an appeal for help to set a new World Record only to find that I had opened an interesting can of worms! **Mark Baker** (Boston Borough Councillor 07929573306) wrote:

“A little while ago, I contacted you all with regards to the attempt to break the record for the World’s Largest Morris Dance. (But...) it became clear, with considerable disappointment, that (due to prior bookings) this record attempt would not be possible. Then Peter Karran, (of Anstey MM), made a fantastic suggestion that we set a new record for the Largest Synchronized Morris Dancing Event on a particular date and time. He proposed that on **Monday 4th June at 3.30pm** you all dance the same dance wherever you are in the country, Commonwealth or world. This most quintessential of English past times that helps to depict our heritage and history, is a great way to help celebrate the Queen’s Jubilee. Leeds MM have agreed to incorporate this into their 60th Anniversary Dales Tour using Queen’s Delight.

Those of you who can still make it to Boston Central Park on the day and those who cannot, thanks to Peter’s idea, can now still be part of a World Record Attempt.

I look forward to hearing from you with regards to involvement in the 'World’s Largest Synchronized Morris Dance' record attempt.” Mark Baker 07929573306

I have since been told by Paul Bryan that his side, ***The Traditional Ilmington Morris Men***, initially set the record at Moreton Show on 1st September 2007 with Ilmington 'Shepherd's Hey'. And that for it to be accepted as a World Record the Guinness criteria and verification with nominated adjudication has to be achieved. I do not know whether Mark Baker has looked onto this but regardless of the record please let me know if and where you plan to perform at 3.30pm on Monday 4th June and I will let Mark know.

A few early responses:

- The Kennet Morris men will be dancing at Frilsham and Yattendon that day. They will arrange to perform Queen’s Delight at 3:30 pm in the village of Yattendon, Jon Holmes of Kennet MM
- Abram Morris Dancers are performing in Abram on Monday June 4th. If all teams nationwide are to perform the same dance at the same time, it

would help us if the choice was between the Abram Morris Dance and Wigan St. John's Processional!

Michael Jackson Abram MD

- East Suffolk are on their annual spring tour of south Suffolk on that day, they plan to commence a performance of Queen's Delight at 3.30pm on the 4th of June.

Tim Huggins East Suffolk

- Why not do it at 8am on the morning of The Olympic Opening Ceremony, 27 July, it would then satisfy the All The Bells project and a collection for Children in Need?

Paul Reece Thaxted MM



Morris Bells of Britain?

<http://www.allthebells.com/home/>

We need you to make musical history. Help us ring all the bells in the UK on 27 July 2012 to welcome the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games.

Friday 27 July 2012 will be no ordinary morning.

At 8.00 a.m. people all across the UK will ring bells to perform Martin Creed's *Work No. 1197: All the bells in a country rung as quickly and as loudly as possible for three minutes*, a piece specially commissioned as part of the London 2012 Festival - the culmination of the four-year Cultural Olympiad. Hand bells, door bells, bicycle bells, church bells, town hall bells, sleigh bells, cow bells, school bells, last orders bells, dinner bells... where there is a bell, we need someone to ring it!



London 2012 Request for information from Derek Schofield

"In the next issue of **English Dance & Song** magazine I want to include events where folk music and dance are in any way connected to the Olympics. That could be Cultural Olympics events, special Olympic-themed events (before, during or after the event), and any involvement of morris, sword, folk dance displays in the celebrations

surrounding the Torch Relay. I already know about morris dancer Keith

Leech carrying the torch in Hastings - but are any other folk enthusiasts doing the same? Are you dancing in the Torch Relay celebrations? Are you putting on a special event? Are you adapting an existing event to give it an Olympic twist?"

Event, date, time, place and contact details where appropriate - would all be appreciated. Please reply to schofield7@btinternet.com as soon as possible.





News of another record attempt:

Morris Dancers pass the hat for Children in Need



“The Joint Morris Organisations, the National Associations of Morris & Sword Dancers, are launching a nationwide appeal on behalf of Children in Need,” announced Bethan Holdridge, Chair of

the Open Morris. “We are inviting all our member sides to participate and are hopeful that a significant sum can be raised.”



Barry Goodman, President of the Morris Federation added, “Co-operation between the Morris Federation, Morris Ring and Open Morris has made this initiative possible. We know that our members will respond generously to give of their time for this internationally recognised charity.”

Morris Ring Squire, Peter Halfpenney commented, “We are very disappointed at being overlooked by the culturally bewildered organisers of the Olympic ceremonies. We are determined to show the nation what Morris dancers can achieve when they unite for a worthy cause.”

We are aware that many Morris sides individually raise money for local and national charities and we are keen that this initiative does not detract from that activity. Nevertheless there should be ample opportunity to pass round the hat, rattle the tins or shake a bucket for a few extra pounds so readily donated by the public for this worthy cause.

If you are able to arrange a special day of dance for this project, you could legitimately claim that “every penny will go to Children in Need,” a sure fire way of boosting the collection. How about a fund raising garden fête on the back lawn or a tea & scones afternoon on the village green (all with Morris dancing of course)? The Children in Need websites have an abundance of other ideas for events and the ability to print off posters and images associated with the charity such as the Pudsey Bear logo.

Let’s aim high – if every Morris side raised £125, we should then be able to present Mr Wogan with a cheque for £100,000. No matter your contribution, large or small, this will be such a worthwhile and self-satisfying project for a recognisable good cause and will give many opportunities for great media coverage too.

Be aware that you will need a street collector’s permit (free from your local authority) if you are announcing that the collection is for charity. Further guidance on the Orgs websites.

Phil Watson is setting up a dedicated bank account to receive your collections. Details will be released soon and posted on our websites.

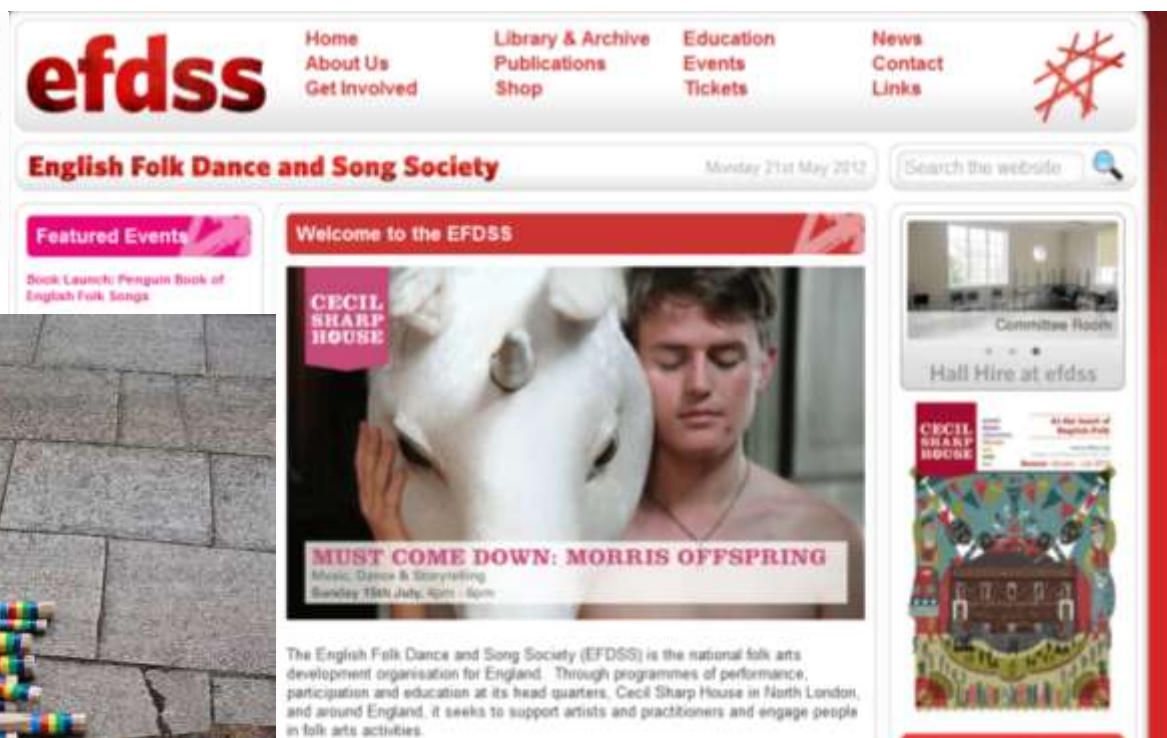
GOOD LUCK AND HAPPY COLLECTING!!

Peter J Halfpenny, *Squire of the Morris Ring*
Barry Goodman, *President of the Morris Federation*
Bethan Holdridge, *Chair of JMOs & Open Morris*

Peter Halfpenny added:

"If one Morris man can raise over £4,500 for charity, what can 850 Morris sides with 14,000 members achieve? Ben Moss of Hammersmith Morris Men recently amassed this creditable total not by running, but by dancing the length of the 2012 London Marathon in aid of the SENSE foundation.

Our English Morris dancing sides individually collect thousands of pounds for charity throughout the year but have never before pooled their resources for a national effort - until now!



Visit <http://www.efdss.org/> for full information about events organised by the EFDSS not just in London at Cecil Sharp House but across the country.

The Morris Photography Exhibition Curated by Jack Honeysett
May - September 2012 **Cecil Sharp House**

The Morris Photography Exhibition *Morris Offspring* dancer and artist **Jack Honeysett** has curated an exhibition that shines a light on the Morris. The exhibition concept was inspired by the wealth of images, which feature in the log books and web pages, captured of Morris teams all over the country. Displayed in the foyer of Cecil Sharp House, the exhibition demonstrates many aspects of Morris life - dancers in motion and at rest, inanimate objects that adorn the Morris world, and the social community surrounding Morris dancing (having a pint with your friends or patting each other on the back after a good dance out!).

Following a call for entries early in 2012, over a hundred photographers from across the UK and America submitted images for consideration. The exhibition brings together 20 photographs taken by 16 artists.

This is a rare and unmissable opportunity to see photographs from private collections, most of which are being exhibited for the first time.

Morris Sides represented in the exhibition include:

Berkshire Bedlam	Great Western
Red Leicester	Nonesuch Morris
Fool's Gambit	Eynsham Morris
Pebworth Morris Men	Peterborough Morris
Shakespeare Morris Men	Moulton Morris

May - September 2012 Cecil Sharp House

Ring Massed Dances 2012		
ADDERBURY	Lads a-Bunchum	
BAMPTON	Banbury Bill/Rose Tree	Maid of the Mill
	(both dances to finish on rounds)	
BLADINGTON	William & Nancy/Bonnets so Blue	Young Collins
	(preferred tune Bonnets so blue)	
BRACKLEY	Jockey to the Fair (full version)	
FIELDTOWN	The Valentine	
HEADINGTON QUARRY	Constant Billy	Laudnum Bunches
LICHFIELD	Vandals of Hammerwich	
	(first chorus show, second strike)	

MORRIS RING PUBLICATIONS

☺ **Harry Stevenson:** Editor of the Morris Circular

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Email: harry.stevenson@gmail.com

☺ **Andrew Bullen** Co-editor of the Morris Dancer

619 E. 111th St. Chicago, IL. 60628

Phone: 773-291-0005 Mobile: 773-297-6714 abullen@ameritech.net

☺ **Mac McCoig** Co-editor of the Morris Dancer

8 Redhills, Eccleshall, Staffordshire ST21 6JW

01785 851052

mac.mccoig@btinternet.com

☺ **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

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

Youth / Recruitment Fund Do you know of a group who might benefit from our support? We have recently received this request - do you know of any other initiatives or groups who might benefit from our support?

"I attended on behalf of M R and Chanctonbury Ring MM the 4th Annual Mid-Sussex schools day of dance at Plumpton Racecourse. I was impressed! There was Molly; Cotswold; Border; North-West (without clogs); Maypole and country dance for all, plus a singing session. Also present were Shirley Collins (EFDSS); Penny Allen (South East Folk Arts); and members from Longman MM; Knots of May; Brighton MM; Cuckoo's Nest; and Hunters Moon Border - all of in kit. Past Squire Brian Tasker was also there. All of these sides help fund the teaching and the Day of Dance. This really is a fun 3-4 hours. The children and teachers put a great deal of effort in making of kit and putting on a show but they need help with funding. Would it be possible for the Morris Ring to make a donation? I have not been asked to put this forward I just think we should be seen as helping to support the schools/event." Cliff Marchant (Past Squire of MR)



THE BRITISH POSTAL MUSEUM & ARCHIVE

On 4th August 1976 the Post Office issued a set of stamps depicting British cultural traditions. The 10p version depicts a Morris dancer in whites with royal blue crossed baldrics, scarlet waistcoat and straw hat.

The British Postal Museum & Archive says:

"Pass through any English village on May Day and during the summer and you could well come across a group of morris dancers. There is recorded evidence of **morris dancing** as far back as 1448 and although we tend to think of it as uniquely English, other countries have similar dances specific to their customs. Perhaps one of the most original morris dancing events recorded was in 1600, when Shakespearean actor William Kemp morris-danced all the way from London to Norwich. He named the journey his "Nine Days Wonder".



A set has come to light and we have been asked whether this design was based on the costume of a specific side or if it is a generic depiction? If you can throw any light on this please contact our Squire: Peter Halfpenney.



Colchester's Morris Banned

Picture & Text from *The Daily Telegraph* 7th May 2012



"It is dispiriting to learn that Colchester's Morris men have been banned from performing at a local shopping centre - not least because of the flimsiness of the grounds. Lumped in with the "chuggers" who plague passers-by, they have fallen victim to new regulations aimed at de-chugging our

shopping streets. This is an insult to a fine and ancient pursuit. If it is the morris itself that the bureaucrats dislike, rather than the passing round of a collecting tin, there are more creative objections they could raise. Is that Fool insured against any injuries he may cause when hitting people with a bladder? Has the fertility cake been cooked in properly hygienic conditions? And, if it works as advertised, will it be the Morris men or their hosts who are liable for the ensuing costs in food, clothing and education? As for the swords that some sides use, best not to dwell..."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/telegraph-view/9250301/Bells-and-whistles.html>

Sword Links:



DERT London 2012

30 MARCH - 1 APRIL

Results: <http://dert2012.co.uk/results>

Brian Tasker

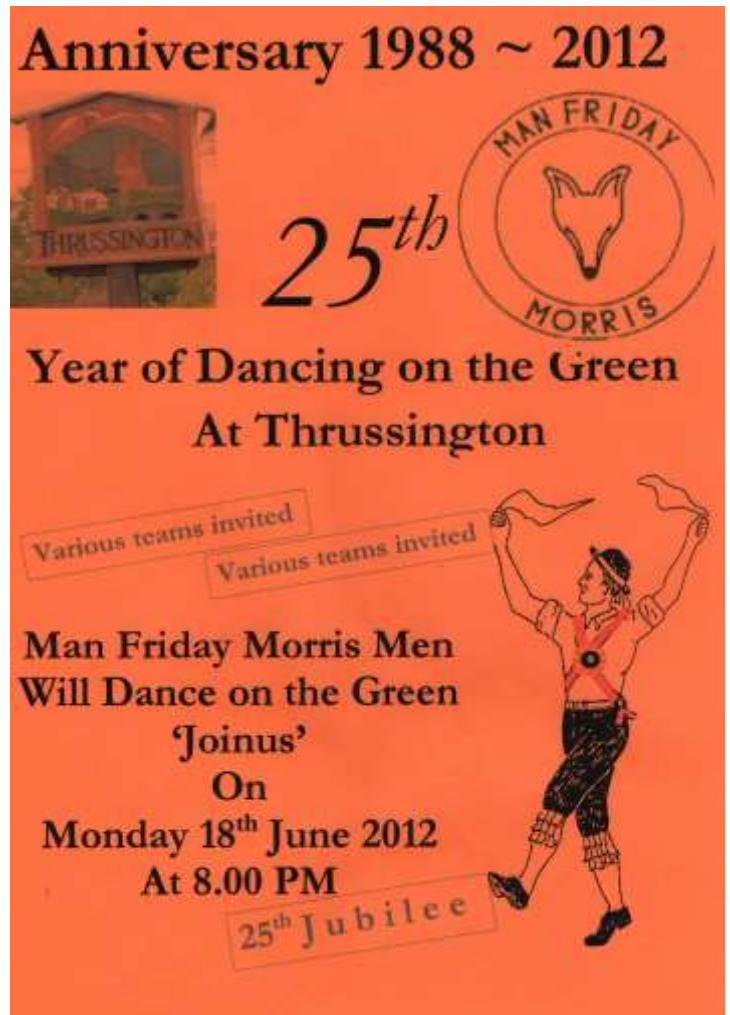
Recorded at this year's **Goatland Traditional Sword Dance Weekend**. Well worth a look. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IjwL_UzvUWA

Ivor Allsop With reference to sword dance I am delighted to report that Ivor Allsop, Squire of the Morris Ring (1978-80), Sword Archivist and all round good chap, following his recent hospitalisation has been home for a few weeks and is receiving treatment at home until his stitches etc. have fully healed. His phone (01226 281146) is open for anyone wishing to call him when he will tell you he is recovering well. Well enough in fact to be out with Barnsley on Tuesday evening May 15th for a local dance out and then the following evening when Barnsley were with Handsworth at Wortley (Between

Sheffield and Barnsley). On both occasions he was a 'Critical' bystander and very vocal in pointing out things that could be done better. Full recovery will take some time but it is all looking very hopeful. (Thanks to Jack Ledger for the up-date.)



Man Friday, a Morris Ring Associate side for 25 years are unfortunately folding due to falling numbers. They are however "going down" in style. They are inviting all of their numerous past members, many of whom have moved away with work and joined other sides, to re-join them for one final fling at their annual Thrussington Green mid-Summer event. In fact everyone is welcome! If you are in the area please go along to support them. Further information from their Bagman: Ian Hubbard 0116 2209133



And finally.....

Morris Ring Directory?

I am frequently asked why we no-longer produce the Directory of side contact information and details of suppliers of the various morris-related accoutrements that BfB is unable to supply through the Morris Shop. The answer is that as soon as such a directory is printed it is out-of-date. One side or another seems to be changing officers or contact person every day

(and some let the MR know) and a company that offers superb service this week might change hands next...

However, if a side needs the contact information fellow MR sides then the information is available either from the Area Reps or myself. With regards to supplies whilst the MR cannot be held responsible for the quality of goods or services of external suppliers I am always happy to pass on recommendations from named sides. In that light, on behalf of Leicester MM In can report that we have received excellent service and quality from the following:

- **Beer Mats** Jupiter Associates www.jupiterassociates.co.uk
- **Baldric Braid** Wyedean Weaving Co. Ltd. www.wyedean.com
- **Tour Lists / Programmes** Print24 www.print24.com/uk
- **Embroidered badges** Toye, Kenning & Spencer www.toye.com

We get our hats from a stall in Loughborough Market!

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



The Morris Ring - Annual Representatives' Meeting

Hosted by Harthill MM.

10th - 12th February 2012

Draft Minutes of 2012 ARM

1. Welcome of Guests

Phil Watson & Natasha Woodward

Open Morris

2. Apologies for Absence /Attendees (from Signing in sheets)

Side / Office

Squire	Peter J Halfpenney	✓
Bagman	Charlie Corcoran	✓
Treasurer	Edward Worrall	✓
Chair: Advisory Council	Brian Tasker	✓
Area Rep.: East	Mike Stevens	✓
Area Rep.: North	Alistair Hutchinson	✓
Area Rep.: North West	David Loughlin	✓
Area Rep.: South West & Wales	Robin Springett	✓
Area Rep.: West Midlands	Pete Simpson	✓
Area Rep.: North East	Brian Pollard	✓
Area Rep.: North Midlands	Ben Robinson	✓
Area Rep.: South Midlands	Roger Comley	✓
Area Rep.: South East	Fred Hands	✓
Archive Group Chairman	Chris Metherell	Apol
Keeper of the Mumming Archive	Ron Shuttleworth	Apol
Keeper of the Ring Photograph Archive	Duncan Broomhead	Apol
Keeper of the Sword Dance Archive	Ivor Allsop	Apol
Keeper of the Sound Archive	Andy Padmore	Apol
New Dance Collator	Mike Wilkinson	✓
Morris (Ring) Shop Keeper	Steve Adamson BFB	✓
Overseas Bagman	Nigel Strudwick	Apol
New Morris Ring Webmaster	Peter de Courcy	Apol

New	Morris Ring Webmaster (Assistant)	Andrew Bullen	Apol
	Publications - Editor Morris Circular	Harry Stevenson	Apol
Ret.	Scrapbook Keeper	Keith Francis	Apol
New	Scrapbook Keeper	Cliff Marchant	Apol
New	Morris Dancer (Co-Editor USA)	Andrew Bullen	Apol
New	Morris Dancer (Co-Editor UK)	Mac McCoig	Apol
New	Social Network Contact	Ollie King	✓
	Past Sq 1970	Bert Cleaver	Apol
	Past Sq 1978	Ivor Allsop	Apol
	Past Sq 1982	Barry Care MBE	✓
	Past Sq 1984	Ray King	Apol
	Past Sq 1986	Geoff Jerram	✓
	Past Sq 1988	Mike Garland	✓
	Past Sq 1990	Mike Chandler	Apol
	Past Sq 1994	Richard Hankinson	Apol
	Past Sq 1996	Tim Sercombe	✓
	Past Sq 1998	Daniel Fox	✓
	Past Sq 2000	Gerald Willey	Apol
	Past Sq 2002	Cliff Marchant	Apol
	Past Sq 2004	Bob Cross	✓
	Past Sq 2006	Paul Reece	✓
	Past Sq 2008	Brian Tasker	✓
	Past Bag 1977	Mike Garland	✓
	Past Bag 1984	Keith Francis	Apol
	Past Bag 1991	Chas Arnold	Apol
	Past Bag 1998	John Frearson	✓
	Past Tres 1979	Barry Care MBE	✓
	Past Tres 1990	Richard Sinclair	Apol
	Past Tres 1994	Steve Adamson BFB	✓
	Guests		
	Fee Lock	Morris Federation	Apol
	Phil Watson	Open Morris	✓
	Michael Stimpson	JMO Insurance Guru	Apol

M	1st Sedgley Morris Men	Apol	M	Mayflower Morris Men	Apol
M	Adlington Morris	✓	M	Men of Wight Morris Men	✓
M	Aldbury Morris Men	Apol	M	Mendip Morris Men	✓
M	Anker Morris Men	✓	M	Mersey Morris Men	✓
M	Anstey Morris Men	Apol	M	Moulton Morris Men	✓
M	Ashdown Forest Morris Men	✓	M	North Wood Morris Men	Apol
M	Bathampton Morris Men	Apol	M	Packington Morris Men	✓
M	Bedford Morris Men	✓	M	Peterborough Morris	✓
M	Benfieldside Morris & Sword Dns.	✓	M	Plymouth Morris Men	Apol
M	Bourne River Morris Men	✓	M	Ravensbourne Morris Men	✓
M	Cambridge Morris Men	✓	M	Richmond on Swale Morris Men	Apol
M	Castleford Sword Dancers	✓	M	Ripley Morris Men	✓
M	Chalice Morris Men	✓	M	Rutland Morris Men	✓
M	Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men	Apol	M	Saddleworth Morris Men	✓
M	Chapel-en-le-Frith Morris Men	Apol	M	Shakespeare Morris Men	Apol
M	Chester City Morris Men	✓	M	Southport Swords	Apol
M	Coventry Morris Men	Apol	M	Spring Grove Morris Men	Apol
M	Dartington Morris Men	✓	M	Stafford Morris Men	✓
M	Dolphin Morris Men	✓	M	Standon Morris Men	✓
M	Durham Rams	✓	M	Stevenage Sword Dancers	Apol
M	East Suffolk Morris Men	✓	M	Stockton Morris Men	Apol
M	East Surrey Morris Men	✓	M	Sweyn's Ey Morris & SD(Men of)	Apol
M	Exeter Morris Men	Apol	M	Thaxted Morris Men	✓
M	Gloucestershire Morris Men	Apol	M	Thelwall Morris Men	✓
M	Grand Union Morris	Apol	M	Towersey Morris	✓
M	Great Yorkshire Morris	✓	M	Traditional Bampton Morris Dncs	Apol
M	Green Man's Morris & Sword Club	✓	M	Trigg Morris Men	✓
M	Greensleeves Morris Men	Apol	M	Wadard Morris Men	✓
M	Harthill Morris Men	✓	M	Wantsum Morris Men	✓
M	Hartley Morris Men	✓	M	Wath-on-Deerne Morris Men	✓
M	Harwich Morris Men	Apol	M	Wessex Morris Men	Apol
M	Headington Quarry Morris Dncs	✓	M	West Somerset Morris Men	Apol
M	Helmond Morris Men	Apol	M	Westminster Morris Men	Apol
M	Isca Morris Men	Apol	M	Whitchurch Morris Men	✓
M	Jockey Morris Men	✓	A	Winchester Morris Men	✓
M	Kennet Morris Men	✓	A	Winster Morris Dancers	✓
M	King John's Morris Men	✓	A	Devil's Dyke Morris Men	✓
M	Leicester Morris Men	✓	A	Leominster Morris	✓
M	Leyland Morris Men	✓	A	Man Friday Morris Men	✓
M	Long Man Morris Men	Apol	A	Morris 18 - 30	✓
M	Manchester Morris Men	✓	A	North British Sword Dancers	✓
M	Martlet Sword & Morris Men	Apol	A	Orig. Welsh Border&CowPat Morris	✓

3. **Minutes of the ARM 2011** (See Newsletter No 73 March 2011)
4. **Matters arising from the Minutes**

3a Youth Fund

Officers are disappointed that no applications have been received that match our criteria. Simply put it is down to gender. We recognised that our rules were too severe so modified them to allow any project supported by an existing MR side that is likely to attract young people to be considered.

3b Up-date on the Olympics (Squire)

We have been disappointed by our lack of success. Organisers have made it abundantly clear that they are 'not interested'. Centrally the MR is now 'not interested' but we will encourage individual clubs to get involved as and where they can - esp. the torch route.

Paul Reece (Thaxted & Past Squire) encouraged all to get involved with All the Bells (See below); Chipping Campden meeting and the JMO event.

Bells of Britain

<http://www.allthebells.com/home/>

We need you to make musical history. Help us ring all the bells in the UK on 27 July 2012 to welcome the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games.

Friday 27 July 2012 will be no ordinary morning.

At 8.00 a.m. people all across the UK will ring bells to perform Martin Creed's *Work No. 1197: All the bells in a country rung as quickly and as loudly as possible for three minutes*, a piece specially commissioned as part of the London 2012 Festival – the culmination of the four-year Cultural Olympiad. Hand bells, door bells, bicycle bells, church bells, town hall bells, sleigh bells, cow bells, school bells, last orders bells, dinner bells... where there is a bell, we need someone to ring it!

Peter Halfpenney pointed out that the suggestion of 'Flash Morris' was never a serious suggestion!

3c Morris Ring Display Boards

It was reported that these look great but there were some outstanding issues. Some are going for repair /modification. We are not ordering extra sets at this time. Sides are encouraged to ask if they can make use of them.

3d Performance Standards

The Squire referred to his talk on Friday evening (the notes from which are included as an appendix to this Newsletter) and encouraged sides to arrange

that all gatherings should include some element of instructional. We have fallen behind the other JMOs and need to increase this element of instruction if we are to maintain the standards for which we are justly proud.

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



Peter Halfpenney
Photo by Tony Bartlett
of Kennet MM at their
ale.

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 / 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.



There followed some discussion regarding "female musicians" and apparent transgressions of our new constitution. PH pointed out that the Constitution provided latitude for the MR Officers to investigate and decide if further action was necessary. He considered that a conciliatory attitude was more appropriate in the reported incident especially as the 'complaint' had been made via YouTube rather than directly to the Mr Officers and this seemed rather inflammatory. MR Past Squires Geoff Jerram (Winchester); Tim Sercombe (Dartington) & Barry Care (Moulton) all contributed - expressing their concerns as to where the line should be drawn. John Edwards

(Stafford) stated that we appoint Officers to act on our behalf and that closed the discussion.

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 (1st May - 2nd June); Dolphin Morris Men (21st - 23rd June) and Martlet Sword & Morris Men (5th - 7th 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 31st 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*

Before I started to write this report I had a look back on the reports I had written last year and the year before. What is clear from reading them was a pattern had formed, one of slow but continued growth of the Photographic Archive, the on-going task of cataloguing and most rewardingly, the steady stream of enquiries.

This week has been unusually busy one for the archive, my busiest week ever, with seven enquiries in a week, four of them on the same day, absolutely brilliant.

Many enquiries can be answered by return, others can take a few days to answer and some require outside help. Thankfully, there is an increasing circle of men within the Morris Ring who I can turn to for help; I have to say that I been greatly impressed by their depth of knowledge and heartened by their willingness to help.

Please keep sending in your photographs, there have been some real gems this year, please also continue with your enquiries, it is your archive, it is there to be used.

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 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.

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



Discussion followed concerning archive issues:

- In view of the illness of Ivor Allsop, MR Sword Archivist, **Steve Adamson** (Great Yorkshire Morris) queried what was happening with this archive. PH reported that this was still with Ivor and that the future of the archive was secure as Ivor has 'willed' it to the MR.
- **John Edwards** (Stafford) reported that Grand Union Scrapbooks have been digitised and placed on the web

(<http://www.grandunionmorris.org/sbdisp.html>) and that Stafford planned to follow their lead.

- **Mike Garland** (East Suffolk) said that archives were a general concern. The problem is that they need to be both preserved and available. Malcolm Taylor, archivist of the EFDSS Vaughan Williams Library at Cecil Sharp House, is working hard to complete the task for their major collection. **Mike Stevens** (Peterborough MM & East Area Rep) believed that we need to have a consistent method or format. **Barry Care** (Moulton) suggested that we collate and publish lists of what already have. **Robert Chisman** (friend of Trigger) said that even in the short time that Fools & Beasts Unconvention had been in existence they had already amassed a considerable archive- see their website.

10. Publication Officers Reports:

Peter Halfpenney opened this item with his thanks to David Tommo" Thompson for his work on the Morris Dancers. He then gave a brief résumé of the history of the MR website, recording our debt of gratitude to the late John Maher, and recent developments, thanking Martin Jones of Natty Web Development, Keith Ashman (Manchester Morris), Peter De Courcy and the team of sub-editors who have helped transfer information from the old site to the new: Geoff Knapman (Bourne River); Jason Standing (Westminster); Richard Thomas (Chalice); Charlie Corcoran (MR Bagman); and Steve BfB Adamson (Keeper of the Morris Shop).

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 (Chicago & Leicester / Mac McCoig (Uttoxeter / Heart of Oak)

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 Nothing to report at this early stage.

Mark Carter (Stafford MM) commented on the importance of the MR Facebook site - and voiced our gratitude to Oli King (Cambridge Morris) for his work on this. He suggested that we all send Oli photos, news and links for him to include in the increasingly vital communication vehicle. **Stephen Adamson** (GYM) warned of potential copyright issues. Ollie King suggested that every side needed their own Facebook site - but that these, like websites, needed to be kept up-to-date. **Bob Cross** (Chalice) stressed the importance of people putting their mane and side / club on contributions - to maintain our profile.

It was suggested by **Peter Halfpenney** that the current Google Group Members Site set up by Geoff Jerram might be replaced by a section on the MR website.

Robin Springett (SW Area Rep) suggested that there might be a need for a Social Networking post. **Barry Care**(Moulton) said that he was very impressed with the new MR website but was disappointed that the 'header' was rather stereotyped - all the men had beards.

11. Overseas Bagman's Report Position vacant

12. Elections

a. Ballot for Squire of Morris Ring

Robin Springett of Dartington MM 55 votes

John Miller of King John's MM 19 votes

There were 32 postal votes and 43 cast at the ARM: 75 votes in all including one abstention.

b. Steven Archer (Ravensbourne MM) was ratified as Treasurer

Eddie thanked all in the MR for their support - and said that the experience had been 'enjoyable'. **Phil Watson** (Open Morris) offered his thanks to Eddie on behalf of the other two Morris Orgs.

c. The meeting welcomed the election of the following Area Representatives following decisions reached at the Area Meetings:

- North Midlands Ben Robinson
- Northern Alistair Hutchinson (to continue until David Gulipter takes over in September.)
- South Midlands Roger Comley

d. Announcement / Ratification of

- Overseas Bagman Nigel Strudwick
- Website Editor Peter de Courcy (Kennet) in Chief
- Assistant Website Editor Andy Bullen
- Keeper of the MR Scrapbook Cliff Marchant

13. Admission of sides to the Morris Ring

Peter Halfpenney reported that the predicted mass exodus from the MR following last year's changes to the constitution had not happened. We have lost:

Goathland	Resigned from MR
King Stone	Resigned from MR
Shropshire	Side folded
Milton	Side folded
White Horse	Resigned from MR
White Star	Side folded
Weald of Kent	Resigned from MR
Oxford University MM	Resigned from MR
Leeds	Resigned from MR

But we have gained:

Devil's Dyke MM *supported by Cambridge MM & Rutland MM*

North British Sword Dancers *supported by Saddleworth MM & Southport Sword Dancers*

(Both sides will 'dance in' and receive their Staffs of membership at the Hartley Meeting in September)

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 so 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 1st 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 so 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 33rd 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 27th 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 4th December, "Porlock Late Night Shopping" on 10th 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 4th successive year, and afterwards entertaining the guests in the company marquee. Exeter wassailed in Sanford on 7th in front of 200 people, and Isca were also out wassailing on 7th at the Ostrich Inn with Sweyn's Ey. Chalice managed two wassails, one of which was paid!! Plymouth held a ceilidh on 28th 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 40th 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 60th 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: Hosts Whitchurch Date & Venue to be confirmed..
17. A.O.B.
- a. Mike Stevens (Peterborough & East Area Rep) congratulated new officers and thanked the Officers for getting the MR through some difficult times.
 - b. Peter Copley (Stafford) passed on the sad news that John Colbert (Stafford & Woodside Folk) had terminal cancer. The meeting expressed our concern and that he and his family were in our thoughts.
 - c. Peter Halfpenney reported on the declining health of Ivor Allsop (Past Squire & Sword Archivist).
 - d. Chris Hutchinson (Icknield Way) told the meeting that they were planning to celebrate 500 years of Morris dancing in their area. Records make reference to something akin to Morris on 10th August 1513 and they hope to reproduce a 1513 Morris side. This will be both difficult and potentially costly. Further information will follow.
 - e. **David Thompson** (Ripley & Winster) suggested that we need to carry out an 'impact assessment' of the Equal Opportunities legislation. He believed that the MR only having one 'male only' meeting in 2012 showed that the MR had 'swung too far'. **Peter Halfpenney** reminded him that the MR does not direct clubs and that it is up to the host side whom they do or do not invite.
 - f. **Paul Cross** (GYM) gave notice that the 18-30s weekend for 2012 would be 12th-14th Oct and be based in York. £25 for waged and £20 for unwaged.
 - g. **Stephen (BfB) Adamson** (GYM & Shopkeeper) reported the bad news that our source of Morris handkerchiefs had folded / dried up. He was actively seeking an alternative supplier but did not hold out much hope.

[**Addendum:** This has now been resolved and hankies are again in stock. See Morris Shop Website for details]



*Dancing
with
Will*



*Open Morris on behalf of the
Joint Morris Organisations
JMO 2012 Day of Dance*

30th June 2012

Stratford upon Avon

*at the invitation of the Royal Shakespeare
Company & Stratford Town Council*



