



The Bagman's Newsletter - No. 8 – May 1999

Greetings,

Apologies to our Associate Side, **Winstor Morris Men**, who appear to have been missed off our listings for the last three years. Thanks to **David Thompson** for chasing us up and identifying that they were missed. [David was appointed Area Rep. at the ARM in place of the States-side **Geoff Thompson** – no relation and the name doesn't go with the job!!]

However, would all clubs please remember that communication is a two-way thing. If you stop receiving Newsletters and subscription reminders – you are not “onto a good thing” – you may not be insured. Chase the Officers and find out why things are not appearing.

Apologies also to Walter Abson for giving him an **m** in the ARM Minutes !!

If you were worrying in March – the Newsletter was delayed to allow the Minutes and Directories to travel together – thus saving the Ring postage. I am trying to keep in with the Treasurer, in spite of the photocopy bills!!!

Also enclosed with this mailing are:

- A summary of this Newsletter – as the last page of this bundle.
- Inevitably – there are already some more **amendments** to the Directory.
- For Members of the Advisory Council, the Minutes of their meeting in Bedford.

Your copy, or copies, of the Morris Circular will be dispatched separately to save delay and allow some deliveries at Thaxted.

E-mailed versions of these Newsletters are available on request [as a Word document either zipped or unzipped; or plain text – please request and specify by Email].

Remember: Unless you pass on the content of this Newsletter to the Men in your Side, the information stops with you. A summary is included on a separate sheet. Pass it around - copy it – read it out – précis it – whatever but let the Men know that the Ring does communicate to you and to them!!

IN MEMORIAM

Derek Gerring, Squire and Bagman of **Chelmsford** died unexpectedly on 19 December 1998. He suffered a blood clot, which, tragically, may have resulted from an earlier dance injury.

Dick Rendell, formerly of **Manchester**, and more recently of **Colchester** also died sometime before Christmas.

Charlie Williams, an early member of, and musician for, the **Letchworth** side and later a **Thaxted** man also died very recently. His funeral was on 7 April.

Dennis Darnell, one of **Bedford's** much loved members, died on 3 April. In recent years he had been Bedford's collector and seemed to know the majority of any crowd. He had learned long sword and danced as a boy in Ickwell and was involved with Ickwell May dancing and the May Festival all his life. His funeral on 15 April produced a packed church. All kept brave faces until **Roger Nicholls** played him out of the church with a selection of the May Pole dances he had known for so many years. Afterwards Bedford danced some of his favourites. They were thinking of him as the May Pole was garlanded [it was always Dennis's job] by his brother at "dawn" on 1st May this year. We send our condolences to Rene and to his family.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sherborne Instructional - 1st – 3rd October. Sutton Bonnington will again be a venue for a Ring Instructional. **Dolphin** have been bullied into hosting another of **Bert Cleaver's** spectacles. No doubt the **Greensleeves** team will be assisting. The cost will be £33.00.

Musicians' Instructional – This event is to be re-introduced after a short breather. It was scheduled for October [but date still to be confirmed] - and the hosts will be **Mendip**. Venue and details in due course, but expressions of interest can be forwarded to **Mike Chandler**.

Fools and Animals Instructional – this is scheduled for the **last week-end in October** at Wath upon Dearne. Contact **Eric Pressley**.

Pocklington Long Sword Instructional - 23 November 1999 - with **Ivor Allsop**. Venue Red Lion, Fritchley. Organised by **David Thompson / Ripley**. Details to follow.

Jigs Instructional 2000. 21 - 23 January 2000. **Bert Cleaver** has again imposed on **Dolphin** and chosen Sutton Bonnington as the venue for the Jigs Instructional.

Application forms for the Sherborne Instructional was in the last Newsletter. Application forms for other events will be included with future Newsletters – but to ensure places you can express interest to the organisers as soon as you like.

STOP PRESS – INSTRUMENTS FOR KOSOVO

Richard Day of **Helier** is proposing the collection of spare instruments to be sent to help raise morale in the refugee camps. Some refurbishment facilities may be available. Details to follow, but if anyone would like to help co-ordinate this project, or for immediate details, please phone him on 01534 863914.

RING MEETINGS – 1999

Plans are now well in hand for this year's Ring Meetings. Help the Meeting organisers by paying Deposits etc. promptly – late payers may be deselected. **N.B. There is still space at the Leicester Meeting.** They would be pleased to have a couple more Sides. **Apply NOW.**

ARM 2000

Ripley have confirmed that they are able to host the ARM next year. The ARM date will be the **1 April 2000** [the weekend events being over the weekend 31 March to 2 April 2000]. The venue will be Derby. More details later – but please note that **you have received due notice** – although further reminders and requests for nominations for Squire, Treasurer [although hopefully Steve will be prepared to continue] and three Area Representatives will follow at the appropriate constituted times. Our thanks to **East Surrey** who were also available in the wings in case of need.

JOINT MEETING

The Officers attended the annual joint committee Meeting with the Officers of the Morris Federation and the Open Morris. As usual there was a useful exchange of views on matters of mutual interest. Certainly there is a usefully co-operative spirit on such matters as marketing the Morris and the various events in the Millennium – including the Dome – see below.

The 1999 Combined Membership List – produced by the Federation from the Directories - is available. Officers and the Area Representatives have copies. If you require a copy - ask.

MILLENNIUM DOME

The “Domemaster” **Paul Montague** has tracked down a Dome Events Co-ordinator [thanks to a lead from the Morris Federation]. Following a site meeting, we should be dancing at three sites and busking around the dome perimeter at weekends from April to September 2000.

Days have been allocated to the three Morris Organisations pro-rata. The Morris Ring has 17 days - 8/9/15/16 April; 6/7/27/28 May; 17/18 June; 1/2 July; 19/20 August; 23/24/30 September.

The exact deal has still to be finalised, but **Sides should express an interest NOW** – the **Brittania Coconut Dancers** were one of the first. Monty will be co-ordinating – so let him know – and he will advise you of the current dates. As always, first come first served – but we do want to have a range of dance styles on each day. Once we see the level of interest, we can establish how many Sides will be available on each day – and can look at any reallocation of other dates. Monty is Bagman of **Yateley** and listed in the Directory.

WEB NEWS

The latest Directory includes the E-mail numbers for some 100 Sides. For updated information on latest E-mail numbers and current Website links consult **www.TheMorrisRing.org/email.htm** and **www.TheMorrisRing.org/idris.htm**.

FROM THE TREASURER – The last Issue's Stop Press - New CDs from the "Shop".

The last mailing included details of the EFDSS William Kimber CD. It includes material from the original LP, plus "new" material. The Ring is providing some sponsorship; we hope to recover much of this from our own sales. It is scheduled for issue on 24th May. Steve should have the CD in the "shop" shortly afterwards, at a price of about **£14.00** per copy.

Steve Adamson has also found, recommends and now has a supply of, a new CD "The Original MORRIS DANCE Music Album". Featuring Chris Bartram; Keith Holloway; Dave Townsend et al. 21 tracks - 63 minutes long. The price from his stall is a mere **£8.00**.

The first of the "Letchworth" tapes, transposed to CD, are also available from Steve or Mike Chandler. So far: The Morris Selection LMM-1; Headington LMM-4 & LMM-5; Fieldtown LMM-10 & LMM-11. See **Newsletter 7** for more details. **£7.00** each.

NB For mail order add + **£1.00 p&p** for first CD; then £0.50 per additional item.

1999-2000 EFDSS Folk Directory. Ring Meetings, Folk Clubs, Folk Festivals and covering matters Folk and Morris, local and international. **£5.00** [shop] - or mail order + £1.00 p&p.

OTHER EVENTS

Steve Rowley of **Gloucestershire** is organising a series of Pipe & Tabor events in conjunction with Gloucestershire Folk and Gloucester City Council. The first of these is imminent and details have already been circulated to Email-able Sides.

12 June 1999	Gloucester Pipe and Tabor Day - More details below
June 2000	National Pipe and Tabor symposium
June 2001	International Pipe and Tabor symposium

Steve would have preferred a later date, but the City Council wanted to fit it into their festival - and they offered to pay for it. He is also trying to build a list of Morris P&T players in the country so that they can be contacted for future events.

Gloucester Pipe and Tabor Day - Saturday 12 June 1999

A celebration of 900 yrs of three-hole pipe playing in the city.

11am on. **Whistle-about** -- Pipe and Tabor players in the streets of Gloucester. All players welcome, in costume if possible.

2 - 4pm. **Pipe and Tabor workshop** -- Learn to play the pipe and tabor. Suitable for beginners and improvers. Bring your own three-hole pipe, or purchase one on the day (£5). Gloucester Guildhall. Ticket £6.00 (usual concessions). Guildhall box-office: 01452 – 505089.

7.45pm. **'I can whistle - I can play'** -- An evening of entertainment on the history of the pipe and tabor in Gloucester and beyond. An illustrated talk, with live performers, recordings and items from the City collections. Tickets: £3.50. Gloucester Folk Museum: 01452 – 526467.

Information:- Steve Rowley, Tanronen, Lurks Lane, Pitchcombe, Stroud, Glos. GL6 6LL.
Tel: 01453 763181, E-mail: srowley@dial.pipex.com, Web: <http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/srowley/>

YOUR PROGRAMMES – AND POSTERS

Thank you to all those who have sent me programmes and posters. I have already been able to use **Yateley's** to find them out of an evening – see “Out and About”. They also sent a poster - as featured in the café in an episode of “Last of the Summer Wine” – they don't know where the Beeb got it – and they did not get a fee – but I'm sure that Monty tried!!

A useful idea gleaned from **Kennet's** Programme. They sell stamped envelopes to the interested public, who add their name and address and then hand them back. In due course these are used to send them a copy of the next year's programme.

ARCHIVAL MATTERS

A panic when **David Thompson** reported that a local radio programme had suggested that past Bagman, **Russell Wortley's** papers at Sheffield University were at risk of export to USA. The Ring had no space to store the whole collection, much of it books, most being available elsewhere. The Ring Archive copied most of the original material some years ago, before it passed to Sheffield - **Bristol** paid the not inconsiderable photocopying bill. The photographs were not copied at that time, and although it seems the radio report was a false alarm, about 220 photographs have now been copied. Extra copies have been made of some that may be of particular interest to the Sides featured, and will be forwarded to them in due course.

Omitted from the last Newsletter, was the acquisition by the Archive of the Morris Costume Records formerly kept by **Irvine Reid**. Ideally, these records need to be kept going – but meanwhile they provide a record of the costumes, and animals, of many extant and a number of defunct Sides. In due course it may be possible to update this material – **any volunteers?** A report will be prepared for the Morris Dancer.

A thought from **Gordon Ridgewell** who keeps the information flowing – as well as pointing out typos in the Directory!! Noting the MP's thought at **Ripley** Feast that we should dance on the Commons Terrace, Gordon started researching. Whilst we may not have danced on the terrace, **Westminster** did dance in the Lords' car park on 14 May 1960. He sent a photo of their Unicorn and a mere human doing the split capers in “Queen's Delight” on that occasion.

ANNIVERSARIES

Brackley celebrate the 40th Anniversary of their re-formation on 16th December 1999

A PAGE END THOUGHT!!!

Bob Sayles, of **Oakworth Village** writes “I thought you, and perhaps other Morris 'people' might be amused by this: I was discussing with a group of Morris Men on Saturday, half p***ed as usual, what to do about holding up Morris socks (an intellectual conversation as you may gather). The solutions offered were: elastic bands; sellotape; leg shaving - why? so the stubble holds the sock up; and finally: not washing the socks so they hold up of their own accord – eventually!! We all thought it was funny at the time, anyway and that it might make a useful contribution to the newsletter. Perhaps you could have a regular '**Tips for Morris Men**' section?”

PEWTER

Many thanks to those who were able to respond to my Email appeal for information, for **Dave Brewster** of **Thaxted**, on good sources of pewter. We had a number of good leads. I have summarised these and will include this in the next Directory. More information is welcome and, in the meantime, the summary can be provided by mail, fax or Email.

Steve Felton of **Shakespeare** also reminds us that if you need silver, then **David Hart**, Squire of **Chipping Campden** is a silversmith and may be able to help. Tel: 01386 840869 (home); 01386 841100 (Silversmiths).

The Pewter suppliers are listed below [with the informants' comments]: -

Tom Neale, 28, Adkin Way, Wantage, Oxon. Tel: 01235 769292 [Sem Seaborne, Icknield Way, says he is the country's top man on pewter, and lives handy to them in Wantage! An official of the Master Guild of Pewterers and handles commissions from many well connected and Parliamentary organisations.]

Williams Pewter, 6, Well Lane, Digbeth, Birmingham B5 5TE. Tel: 0121 643 0273. Contact: Bill Langham. [John Burke, King John's, uses them and John Culf, Dartington, also mentioned that his two "good" pots are "Hallmarked" with the makers name "Thomas Williams".]

A. R. Wentworth (Sheffield) Ltd., Tankard House, 25, Leadmill Road, Sheffield S1 3JA Tel: 0114 2725676 Fax: 0114 2726651 E-Mail: RAby22203@aol.com Contact is the owner Mr. S. Abdy. [Nigel Boreham says Lord Conyers, have used Wentworths for 15 years. The quality is good and reasonably priced. They also do engraving and have helped with plates, salvers, tankards (pint and half pint), wine goblets and so on. They have LC's logo on a template for quick turnaround.]

M & L Engraving, 42, Bromley Street, Derby DE22 1HL Tel: 01332 368777 Fax: 01332 342360. [Adrian Wedgewood, Uttoxeter, suggests they are the best specialist suppliers of Pewter by far. They have a mail order service and exhibit at many CAMRA beer festivals.]

Creative Cauldron, Tel: 01293 618314 [Richard Streeter suggests them as a source of figures (Morris dancers, Musicians etc.) and badges.]

PHOTOGRAPHS

The Photograph Archivist made a valid point at the ARM. If each Side sent that "best" Picture to the Photograph Archive each year, then the collection would be immeasurably improved. Remember – Archives are not just newly discovered historical gems. They should be comprehensive collections, which are more easily built up at the present [when details of dancers and locations are known] than many years hence. Submit NOW to ensure your Side's place in posterity.

YOUR NEWS

Many thanks to **Stafford**, and their Bagman, **Alan Dandy**, for their Newsletter. It included a very complimentary write up of the ARM, which was much enjoyed by the **Bedford** team. Comments on the school were much appreciated for submission with the Ofsted Inspection file!!! It included many details that the Bagman had overlooked in his Ring Log Report. Permission was granted to hijack some of the text for inclusion in that "official" record.

David Thompson co-ordinated an Instructional for the Midlands Area on the less well known traditions of North Leigh [a coconut hand clapping dance and a linked handkerchief dance] and Stretton on the Fosse [“the pre Ilmington Bennett tradition”] - including the “Lively Jig”. A small group enjoyed the day at Frinchley and David is hoping to extend the instructional to a wider audience, possibly early next year. Meanwhile those interested please contact David.

His predecessor as Area Rep, **Geoff Thompson**, writes from USA “I have just had the most fabulous week-end with **Pinewoods** at their annual family outing to Nantucket Island, off Cape Cod. I'll send you more details later and, hopefully, the odd picture. I will be back in England from Thurs 29th Apr to Mon 10th May. This enables me to dance the sun up with **Packington** on May Day and turn out for the **One Day Wonders** on 8th. As our tenant is away, I can even stay at home in Sheffield!”

Barabara Sunderland, widow of Past Squire, **Morris Sunderland**, who died ten years ago, celebrated her 70th birthday on Saturday 17th April 1999. It was perhaps just as well that not all the 360 invited could come, as it was a pretty tight fit in Langford (Beds) village hall. Barabara's interests and connections in the worlds of Morris Dancing, Country dancing, Choral singing, and the Peace movement were represented by some 180 guests.

The Morris Ring was represented by **Geoff Jerram** (Past Squire), **Bob Ross** (Past Bagman), and representatives of Black Jokers [USA], **Thaxted** [who cancelled their own Feast to attend], and of course **Letchworth**, one of Morris Sunderland's clubs.

The LSO (a.k.a. Letchworth Silly Orchestra) played for Country Dancing and the Letchworth gave several performances, including a Pace Egging play. Other entertainment was provided by **Peter Contrastano** (Black Jokers) - 'Hard Times'; **Geoff Jerram** (Past Squire) - 'Linden Lea'; and the Amici Singers, including Barabara, who gave an 'outnumbered by Altos' rendition of the South African song 'Si Yahamba'.

Barbara and Morris were married in 1977 and Barbara received Morris's Past Squire's Badge of Office at the Thaxted Ring Meeting in 1996, presented by Past Squire **Mike Garland** on behalf of **Richard Hankinson**, who had been injured in a car accident during the Squire's tour earlier that day. Morris died in the St. John's Palliative Care Home near Langford on 29th October 1989. A collection was held during the party for the Care Home.

MAY DAY NEWS

In response to my eve of May Day greeting and appeal for News etc, I had various Reports.

Peter Contrastano, itinerant American Fool, joined **East Suffolk** for May Day. They danced at Felixstowe point at sunrise and did a day tour in the Stour River valley. They visited the towns of Sudbury, Burres, and Chappell in Suffolk. A grand time was had by all.

Ron Ford of Chanctonbury Ring. “The Chancs had a super May 1st. Sky was entirely blue or virtually for the whole day! After dancing up at The Ring at 7am, then breakfast, we performed in Steyning, Henfield, and a Nursing Home. On to Glynde [1st pint!] and then Alfriston on the South Downs where we did our bit along with kiddies on the Maypole, as part of a village fete. As a “reward” we were given copious tea & scones/cream/jam. If asked again we'll have to refuse on the grounds of cholesterol damage limitation!”

Alan Dandy Reports on **Stafford's** Grand May Day Canal Tour, May 1st 1999.

"As befits the last May 1st of the 2nd Millennium, **Stafford** took on an ambitious day of dance. They started at Stafford Castle, high on the hillock to the West of the county town, shrouded in the early Spring mist. Ten Stafford Men were joined by seven from **Green Man**, fresh from welcoming the May dawn at Castlering, in a confident display of traditional Cotswold Morris from Bledington, Adderbury, Headington Quarry, Fieldtown and Bampton-in-the-Bush. Down and breakfasted by 9.30 am they proceeded on to Gnosall, dancing for an hour or so at The Boat Inn and around, before boarding to travel by 1935 Working Narrow Boat, to Norbury Junction and High Offley on the Shropshire Union Canal. Carefully time-tabled, five Stafford men joined at The Junction Inn for dance and lunch stop, and the last two of Green Man left the party; the others having left after inspecting the transport arrangements. By 1.30 pm, with the sun now high and comfortably warm a steady 4mph took them to The Anchor in time for further dance and liquid refreshment before the 3/4 mile walk up to the village to greet newly weds, Jill & Simon Copley. This small, prim and colourful village church, edges onto open pasture, falling away to the West with magnificent views over green hedge and early spring apple blossom, to provide the picture-book setting for this, the last May 1st wedding of the millennium. Church bells almost drowned out the Melodeon, and the Pipe & Tabor had no chance, but we managed two dances as the guests spilled out into the grassy churchyard. Morris Men then brought up the rear as the Wedding Party progressed down the ribboned lane to the reception there to show just two more dances and in Bride-in-Camp, raise a radiant bride to shoulder height before the clicking cameras. Bagman then rallied the men to return to the canal-side for the return trip. Tranquillity predominated as the water lapped banks spotted with bright yellow primrose amidst shady foliage of fresh spring green and contrasting bluebell. The odd heron lazily moved on, finally wheeling around, ducks and ducklings were abundant and a moorhen or two scurried up the bank. All too much for some as they dozed off with comfortable ease. Disembarking men, families and baggage at Norbury Junction, and Gnosall the boat finally arrived at High Onn for the last men to make their way up to Church Eaton for Tea. Special reserves were called on then for the evening's dancing but reinforcements were on-hand with **Uttoxetter** at The Hartley Arms, Wheaton Aston. All then returned to Church Eaton for a Finale of the Grand Tour fit for a such splendid May Day. In all about 61 dances, including a couple of jigs and one massed, were presented to moderate but most appreciative audiences. Sincere thanks are due to all who cooked and assisted, and not least to Narrow Boat Captain Rod, in traditional costume, determined not to be out-dressed by Morris Men".

Bob Dickson of **Silkeborg**. "May Day came and went and we did indeed dance, to a private birthday complete with maypole. We are still going strong and have a busy summer ahead. Apart from various festivals and a couple of trips to Germany, we have arranged a week long trip to England where we will dance around the Cotswolds and have arranged trips with **Ilmington**, **Shakespeare**, **Silurian**, **Ripley**, **Chipping Campden** and, I hope, **Coventry Mummers**."

Ilmington remind me they have only **one L**. My apologies for Newsletter 7's error. Their programme and "reminder" was just in time for me to correct the above!!!

Yateley followed their traditional morning dancing at Wyndham Pond in Yateley, with a "mystery" tour. This included a visit to Haddenham May Fair, where they danced with **Towersey**. The climax was a visit to Wheatley [now without its own side] where they danced some of the Wheatley dances, which were much appreciated by the residents.

A Web discussion page suggests that **St Albans** were involved with a female fool – I mention no more so as not to offend the sensitive!!! More seriously, a highlight of the day was **Gerald Farmer** dancing a jig to celebrate 50 years of Morris dancing. He confided in his musician, that he hoped he would remember it after all those years. This was suitably misinterpreted when it was announced that "Gerald hasn't done it for quite some time."

OUT AND ABOUT

Too late for inclusion in the March Newsletter [even though it was late!!] was the **John o' Gaunt** Day of Dance on Good Friday - a traditional date for them - and their 21st annual tour. Being in Lancaster, well to the North of the main Lancashire-Cheshire area, they do feel a little forgotten about sometime - however, I can assure all that they are very much alive and well. They suffer all the traditional characteristics of the area – and welcomed us with a fine rain in the morning.

The tour took in the Fylld peninsula. The rendez-vous pub was closed, and when we then by-passed the pub where we had parked the coach - and went to drink coffee from a stall and dance outside the church – I did start to wonder whether I had perhaps missed a vote for abstention at the ARM!! Having become suitably wet on the outside, we were finally permitted to enter licensed premises and adjusted the fluid balance!!

Also out were **Mossley** whom I had met in some strength at the ARM. The NW clog jig that had its debut on that occasion was performed again by its compositor.

Later Jo'G danced the three man “Old Man's Dance” from Dolphinholme. This is now a longer version, following their considerable recent research, and performed with great spirit. They do ask that it is not copied – and my photography was viewed with concern!!! [Coincidence being what it is, I was intrigued to find I have photographs of **Luton Longstraw** dancing a version in the 1950s.]

Easter Monday was a day out with the family; however, I became “lost” in Essex, and chanced upon the village of **Thaxted**. A goodly assemblage of Morris dancers [and Morris boys] provided entertainment. They also provided directions to a nearby hostelry, the Swan, where one of their number, wearing an impressive badge, bought a round of drinks – a tradition that has been carefully noted down!!! Indeed the Marston's Pedigree was far better than many. There was folk dance for all – and I persuaded family that this was good for them; better than the sea-side – and had another excellent pint.

King John's Day of Dance is centred in Hale, in the scenic New Forest [visitors be warned both beer and petrol prices are geared to rich tourists!!]. There was a very lively session in the Horse and Groom at Woodgreen [with four real ales – one of them a guest at the ARM] on Friday night. Transport was laid on to and from the hall to keep us legal. Music ranged from the traditional to the “The Sloop John B”, via **John Culf's** expanded “Phantom Flasher”; and jigs were also danced. Supper followed our return from the pub.

The informal dancing later included “Beaux” Adderbury, with Swedish plastic indoor hockey sticks. **Plymouth** passed around their Plymouth gin. ... and finally, at bed time, KJ's Bagman, read – as is now traditional - a selection from “Noddy” – this year's offering “At the Toy Farm” – we pass on!!

The tours around the New Forest called at Ringwood; Mudeford quay; Lymington [for a procession and lunch]; Beaulieu [and a rapid 30 minutes in the Motor Museum after the show]; and Winsor. The final spot was back at the Friday evening venue in Woodgreen. **King John's** toured as a North-West side, as the guest Sides - **Dartington; Moulton; Plymouth; Wansum** and **West Somerset** – were all dancing in the Cotswold tradition. Their performance certainly would not have disgraced any Side in the North-West.

Having been invited to help **Wansum** make up a Side, I had difficulties matching their distinctive arm movements – on enquiring later their Squire kindly reassured me: “We do Lichfield type arm movements for everything!”

Dartington have possibly the youngest man in the country regularly dancing in a show Side - generally as a very competent No 2. Bagman and Fool, **John Culf**'s son, **Matthew Culf**, aged $7\frac{3}{4}$, produced the quote of the weekend when challenged by one of the host side who teasingly suggested that surely he didn't really like Morris dancing. He replied “Yes I do, I love it. I love it as much as football and lego”. Oh that we could harness more of that enthusiasm – is there a gene for it in the Culf family? – and would a little genetic modification to the population help recruitment!!

The Feast was bountiful and speeches and toasts followed. I felt it appropriate to include thoughts of **Bedford**'s **Dennis Darnell**, when we drank the “Immortal Memory”. The Morris that we love is made up of many individual parts, all of them so very important, and not just “the great and good”, whom are generally remembered, in silence, together with Cecil Sharp.

Various dances followed – more show dances than massed in view of the wide and very different Cotswold traditions danced by the participants. The suggested Headington dance was a fiasco – with virtually no one present being “licensed to dance” the tradition. **Dartington** danced the “Sea Green Sash” in the Filkins tradition.

Plymouth intended to dance at the National Trust's Stourhead Gardens on their return journey – and expected to collect enough to “pay for the petrol”.

Horwich Prize Medal hold an annual event on the Saturday nearest to St George's Day. This year The Day was actually on the Saturday. Horwich was brought to a standstill for the second day in succession - the day previously a hijacked car had been pursued by the police down the procession route and the random shootings [of the former!] had hit both passers-by and the headlines. The delay caused by nine processing Clog Sides was considered a pleasant relaxation by comparison.

An untraditional aspect was the sun – this actually shocked some Sides into comparative sobriety – there was more dancing and less sheltering in hostelrys. A full day of North West brought home the great variety of dances, which is not appreciated by the Cotswold fraternity who may only see a couple of dances in the style at a Ring Meeting. Besides the hosts, there were teams from **Earlsden**; **John o'Gaunt**; **Mossley**; **Preston Royal**; **Ripon City**; **Rumworth** and **Saddleworth**. A non-Ring Side, Wiggley Head, were also in attendance.

The Horwich wind down meal was pleasantly relaxing after the day. The Ring Squire ate an obscenely large hot chocolate fudge cake – his first choice, the brandy-snaps with something even more calorific, having run out. The organisers of other Morris events will no doubt eagerly take note of this weakness!!!. The hospitality of the host Side and particularly their Bagman, **Bob Bradley**, and Diana, were much appreciated by the Officers.

The May holiday was celebrated on home ground with **Bedford**. The Squire of the Ring joined us at 6.30am on 1st May for carols and dancing at Ickwell Maypole, together with **Offley** and **Letchworth** and many other old friends. Some six sides were up for the massed dancing – an impressive showing. Breakfast and Bedford's May Tour followed. On the Monday, Letchworth and **Cambridge** assisted at the main Ickwell Festival.

The next day I visited **Yateley** for their pub evening at the Flask and Bottle at Shinfield. This also provided a useful opportunity to update myself on our Domemaster's progress at the Dome that day [report elsewhere].

The highlights included: Adderbury "Constant Billy" with a chorus that positively bounced; a splendid double "fighting" jig from Wheatley, danced by two of their younger members – **Jonathon Betts** and **Gareth Lloyd**; and Yateley's own "20th of September" in the style of Eynsham. My learning curve had to click into rapid play for a Fieldtown "Glorishears" [I thought I had volunteered for its Bledington namesake!!]

There was a wide range of music and song afterwards – including one featuring a ferret and sung to the tune of My Grandfather's Clock – and an even wider range of beers. My thanks to their past Squire, **Roger Sudding**, for providing transport and accommodation, so allowing judicious sampling.

Just in time for the press date – and filling the final space on the page – **Westminster** held their Day of Dance in early May. Sides present – together with a plethora of former Officers - included: **Bedford** + **Bagman**; **Bristol**; **Earlsdon**; **East Suffolk** + Past Squire **Mike Garland**; **Exeter** + Past Squire **Tim Sercombe**; **Offley**; **St. Albans** + Past Squire **Mike Chandler**; **Thaxted** + Ring Squire **Daniel Fox**, and the host Side's Past Squire, **Colin Fleming**.

The day comprised a walking tour of central London: Two morning tours took in the Westminster Arms, Westminster Abbey and a massed show in Trafalgar Square and three afternoon tours included Leicester Square and a further massed show in Trafalgar Square. The weather could have been kinder – but on our tour shelter was only sought for one spot – and we were moved on back into the rain by "security", much to the disgust of the audience.

IN CONCLUSION

Hopefully you have all had a fine start to the Season – certainly the weather for 1st May was kind to us in the South. Hopefully your Summer programmes will all be similarly blessed.

I look forward to seeing many of you at Ring Meetings, and at other events, as I travel around the country during the year.

As ever, please remember to update The Ring on changes of Contact Persons – and keep the gossip [and News] coming in for the Newsletter. The next Edition is due in July.

Wassail,

John Frearson
Bagman, The Morris Ring

P.S. ARM LOST PROPERTY

Bedford still have a red sweater. It was left in the library on Sunday morning of the ARM.

The Bagman's Newsletter - No. 8 – May 1999 - SUMMARY

The Eighth Newsletter includes:-

IN MEMORIAM - *Charlie Williams*, an early **Letchworth** musician; *Dennis Darnell* of **Bedford**; *Dick Rendell* of **Manchester** then **Colchester**; and *Derek Gerring*, Squire/Bagman of **Chelmsford**.

THE TREASURER – The William Kimber CD is on schedule for issue on 24th May. Steve has also found, a CD “The Original MORRIS DANCE Music Album”. 21 tracks - 63 minutes - a mere £8.00.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - **Sherborne Instructional** - 1st – 3rd October. **Musicians' Instructional** – October. **Fools and Animals Instructional** – last week-end in October. **Pocklington Instructional** - 23 ? November 1999. **Jigs Instructional** - 21 - 23 January 2000.

RING MEETINGS – 1999 - still some space at the **Leicester** and **Thaxted** Meetings.

ARM 2000 - **Ripley** will host the ARM next year. Weekend 31 March to 2 April 2000.

MILLENNIUM DOME - The “Domemaster” has succeeded in getting us into [or around!] the Dome. There should be dancing slots each weekend from April to September in 2000. The [Ring dates are in the NEWSLETTER. The exact deal has to be finalised but express interest **NOW**.

WEB - www.TheMorrisRing.org/email.htm has E-mail numbers for some 100 Sides.

OTHER EVENTS - *Steve Rowley* of **Gloucestershire** is organising a series of Pipe & Tabor events in Gloucester. The first is on 12th June 1999 - Gloucester Pipe and Tabor Day

ANNIVERSARIES – **Brackley's** 40th Anniversary of re-formation is on 16th December 1999

ARCHIVAL MATTERS - *David Thompson* reported that past Bagman, *Russell Wortley's* papers at Sheffield University were likely to be exported to USA. The original photographs will now be copied for the Archive. Remember: If each Side sent that “best” Picture to the Archive each year, then the Archive collection would be immeasurably improved.

PEWTER – Following an Email appeal, a list of good sources of pewter is now available.

NEWS - *Geoff Thompson* in USA met up with **Pinewoods**; an Instructional run by *David Thompson* on North Leigh and Stretton on the Fosse; a 70th Birthday party for Barbara Sunderland, widow of Past Squire, *Morris Sunderland*; May Day news from **East Suffolk**; **Chanctonbury Ring**; **Silkeborg**; **Stafford**; **Green Man**; **Yateley**; **Towersey** and **St Albans**.

BAGMAN VISITS - to: **John o' Gaunt's** Good Friday, [with **Mossley**]. **Thaxted** on Easter Monday. **King John's** Day in the New Forest [with **Plymouth**; **Dartington**; **Moulton**; **Plymouth**; **Wansum** and **West Somerset**]. **Horwich's** St. George's Day, [with **Earlsden**; **John o'Gaunt**; **Mossley**; **Preston Royal**; **Ripon City**; **Rumworth** and **Saddleworth**]. Ickwell May events [with **Bedford**; **Offley**; **Letchworth** and **Cambridge**]; **Yateley** for their pub evening and finally **Westminster** [with **Bedford**; **Bristol**; **Earlsdon**; **East Suffolk**; **Exeter**; **Offley**; **St. Albans** and **Thaxted**].

FIND OUT MORE - ask your Bagman to show you the full Newsletter!!!

Wassail,