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Newsletter No. 88

February 2014

ARM 2014 Special

2014 80th Anniversary of Foundation of the Morris Ring

**7th – 9th March ARM Hosted by Hartley
St George's Hall, High Street, Wrotham, Kent TN15 7AB**

Please seriously consider sending representatives to this important event.
*Details of the venue and accommodation options were in Newsletter No 86 &
on the meeting web site <http://www.hartleyringmeeting.org> "*

All booking & accommodation enquiries direct to Bagman for the A.R.M.
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The Morris Shop

The new shopkeeper, Shaun, has been a member of Moulton Morris Men for over 23 years, since he was 10. In 1997 he joined The Stony Steppers, a Morris Federation step Clog side, and is currently in their touring Roadshow "One Step Beyond". In addition he has been working with the Demon Barbers now for over a year.



Shaun Lambley, 6'6" tall with long, really long, blond hair,you can't miss him!

He is joint founder of recently formed Ar Bay Morris who are a new mixed side aged from around 14 to 33 based in Birmingham, currently intending to join the Open Morris; Shore Tar' Rapper (Morris Fed rapper side from Stony Stratford) in 2003 and also danced with Cobblers Clog (a Fed Northwest side) until they folded.

He enjoys going to folk festivals, attending as many as ten each year Morris dancing, Step Clog dancing, stewarding, working or sometimes all at the same festival. In between times Shaun works as a Decorator and Kitchen designer and fitter.

Shaun says:

"I look forwards to running the Morris Shop online as well as taking the shop out to events etc. If you historically have had, or would like to have, the Morris Shop at your event please drop me an email at shaun@themorrisshop.co.uk so we can discuss details.

If you have an order outstanding or wish to place a new one it is the same email address: shaun@themorrisshop.co.uk"

The Morris Shop has a new web address: themorrisshop.co.uk and has a presence on Facebook at www.facebook.com/themorrisshop with Amazon and eBay being actively researched.

PROGRAMME for the 2014 ARM Weekend

Friday:

- 18.30 ARM Reception opens
- 19.00 The Bar opens for an informal evening with the opportunity for informal dancing in the Hall, visiting local pubs for singing, music and chat.
- 19.30 - 21.00 Hot supper will be provided. With leftovers available for late comers.

Saturday:

- 08.00 - 09.00 Full English breakfast at St George's Hall
- 09.15 - 10.45 Presentation and Workshop:
i. Cotswold & Sword at the School and
ii. Music at the Hall
- 10.45 - 11.15 Coffee / Tea at School
- 11.15 - 12.00 Area Meetings
- 12.30 - 13.30 Buffet Lunch at St George's hall
- 13.45 - 15.45 Annual Representatives Meeting, including the election of the next Squire of the Morris Ring
- 15.45 - 16.15 Tea / Coffee and Cake at school and general discussion about the future of instructionals.
- 16.30 - 18.00 iii. Workshop: Molly dance (Seven Champions Molly)
- 16.30 - 18.00 Advisory Council Meeting [In room at school]
- 17.00 Dancing in Wrotham Square (in kit) and/or visit the pubs in the village, depending on the weather.
- 18.15 - 18.45 Dancing outside the Rose & Crown to be joined by the Seven Champions
- 19.00 FEAST at St George's Hall
Post-feast: Go down the pubs or informal dancing in the Hall.

Sunday:

- 08.00 - 09.00 Full English breakfast and departure
OR
Dance by the Castle in Tonbridge (just 8 miles from Wrotham (close to A21/M25)), with invited local sides followed by Lunch and Session in pub.

AGENDA for 2014 ARM

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Minute's Silence
3. Minutes of the ARM 2013 (Circulated as part of Newsletter No. 84)
4. Matters arising from the Minutes
5. Squire's Report: Robin Springett

The BIG event of 2013 just has to be "Amazing Adelaide", or put another way, the 335th Meeting of Morris Ring Sides, hosted by Adelaide Morris Men from 5th to 7th April, with an extension for those who will to the 14th! This was an act of faith, both by the hosts and by those attending, due to a lack of information coming from our friends in Adelaide, which caused a number to drop out, but Thaxted, Mersey and Foresters travelled as sides and there were men from Ravensbourne, Cambridge, Letchworth and Dartington (me) who made up a scratch side, plus the hosts and Perth, making 6 sides in total; quite respectable actually. The Adelaide meeting has been reported on quite extensively in the Morris Circular, Newsletter and on the website, so I won't dwell on it here, but suffice it to say, the meeting was impeccably hosted throughout; I and others had a brilliant time. Many thanks to the Adelaide Morris Men for organising and hosting the event, and an equally big thank you to those who attended from the UK. Having met and watched Perth Morris Men dance they were invited by the Squire and Treasurer of The Morris Ring to apply for membership, which they have done; doubling our numbers in Australia. I look forward to them being welcomed by the membership at the ARM; they will be a worthy addition.

I managed to be home one full day before I was off with Dartington to Exeter for the JMO Day of Dance; again blessed with amazing weather; brilliant sunshine all day. The day was orchestrated by Great Western Morris on behalf of the Morris Federation, with sides from the three Morris organisations participating. North West was a bit lacking, but most other traditions were on display. The Morris Ring participation was organised by Jed Dunn, the SW & Wales Rep and I managed to see most of them, plus Whitehorse, still dancing as a men's side, despite having left the Morris Ring.

Great Western did a wonderful job - Cambridge please note! There were over 500 Morris dancers, in a small city which also hosted on the same day a parade by soldiers just returned from Afghanistan, with no incidents of bad or drunken behaviour; well done the Morris. There was of course the usual banter, but with only one minor exception, no abuse towards your Squire! The day finished with massed dancing outside Exeter Cathedral, followed later by some music and singing in local pubs. I had a truly entertaining and memorable day.

Morris sides were out in force across the country for May Day, but the season really got under way for me as Squire of The Morris Ring with a very Traditional Meeting at Thaxted weekend 31st May to 2nd June. The weekend was blessed with really wonderful weather, and 17 sides were represented. The Morris Ring officers were conveyed round to see the dancing in Roy Page's Jaguar - very appropriate! (Roy, now a well-known face on CountryFile). The weekend finished with the Sunday parade to church, the service, where Thaxted danced and a massed display outside the church; the whole weekend enjoyed wonderful weather. My first UK Morris Ring Meeting as Squire, but most definitely a classic Thaxted meeting.

OMG! Just when we were getting used to weather which was passing as summer, along came the Dolphin Morris Ring Meeting 21st- 23rd June, with wind and rain. For someone who rarely these days ventures north of Watford, except for the Morris, Nottingham is a long way north - it's the East Midlands of course, but on a cold and wet weekend camping in a very muddy field, it feels very far north! We put the tent up in glorious sunshine on the Friday and the rain didn't really start until the Saturday morning, but the walk to the village hall for breakfast was accompanied by torrential rain, so we started out wet and just got wetter from then on. I appreciate Dolphin had no control over the weather, which was very unkind to say the least. However, Dolphin arranged things so well in the camping field that there were toilets and hot showers, and in the admin tent we could get a hot drink and a piece of cake at any time; how good is that! In fact, the food was plentiful and good the whole weekend, especially the Feast. Well done to their catering team!

Sunday was also wet. After church, in addition to the sides attending the Morris Ring Meeting, Dolphin had invited several other local Fed and Open sides. We danced outside the church and then processed to the pub. The organisation was so good, that the weather didn't spoil the enjoyment.

In contrast, the weather for the Martlet Ring Meeting 5th- 7th July was quite fabulous. Martlet were celebrating their 60th anniversary, as were 2 of the sides attending, Westminster and Whitchurch. This Meeting of Member Sides of The Morris Ring, the 338th, was so well organised and free with the beer, that I have only a hazy recollection of some parts, but a couple of things; we learnt that Martlets are legless birds, and were reminded just how much traffic there is in West Sussex when the Saturday Tour of Tours spent nearly an hour on the Chichester bypass! The school accommodation was good; the food was excellent and never ending, as was the beer, and the Feast quite outstanding. I had been looking forward to reacquainting myself with Chichester, as I went there when I was 19 and stayed 3 years. The massed display outside the Cathedral in Chichester in glorious sunshine, watched by a large and good natured crowd on Saturday afternoon, was for me really fun and the epitome of the Morris. Sunday dancing after church near the Festival Theatre was well set up for dancing, but we had no audience to speak of, and it was somewhat of a disappointment. Good Meeting though!

What a year two Overseas Meetings of Morris Ring Sides! The 339th hosted by Silkeborg Morris Men was held in Copenhagen on 23rd- 25th August, and once again the weather was amazing. This is a bit like Trigg hosting a meeting in London, so there were a couple of minor glitches, but nothing the ever flexible and ever cheerful hosts couldn't deal with. Three sides attended from the UK, King's, Bathampton and Shakespeare, and Helmond from the Netherlands. It was a real pity that the weekend clashed with Rushcart, which I was very upset to miss, and must have affected the number of sides attending. (Of course, if Rushcart was a Morris Ring Meeting, the Morris Ring Bagman could refuse a clash of dates!). This was my third Silkeborg meeting, so I expected a good weekend, and was not disappointed. To some extent, it was a weekend of two halves, as the morning tour with Bathampton and

Shakespeare got mixed up with a Gay Pride march and the host leader didn't have either the knowledge of Copenhagen, nor the confidence to break away. The other tour with Helmond and King's was unaffected and blissfully unaware of the problem. The problems were resolved at lunch. In the afternoon both tours danced to large crowds. The feast was unusual, both in location and cooking method, and the Guest of Honour, who was our Ambassador to Denmark; a lovely lady who turned out to be a fan of the Morris. Be sure to email her if your side is in Denmark! Sunday was fun, and I thoroughly enjoyed the weekend.

In this report on the year, I am only dealing with Morris Ring or JMO events or supported events. On these lines, I am happy to report that a Youth workshop hosted by Mike Stevens, our Eastern area Rep on 7th September was well attended and went well; there is to be a follow up at Thaxted on 1st March this year. Well done Mike. There will also be a Children's Festival of Dance in Sussex in May, also supported by the Morris Ring, with funds from the Youth Fund. One unusual event worth noting was the celebration of 500 years of Reading Morris held in Reading town centre on 10th August. Morris dancing (?) from 500 years ago was faithfully created by Kennet Morris Men, and a great day was had by all. I took the precaution of going there and back by train; it was a wise decision.

To Sheffield for the Advisory Council meeting in October, kindly hosted in his mansion by immediate past Squire Peter Halfpenney.

My last official attendance of 2013 was the Unconvention of Fools & Beasts, held in Sheffield a couple of weekends later.

Of course, we have lost some notable members of our community since the last ARM, and amongst those was the sad loss of BfB, suddenly in early December. Steve had run the Morris Shop in his own inimitable way for 19 years, to the great benefit of the Morris Ring; I am pleased to say that the Morris Shop is again open for business. Steve Adamson had announced his intention to 'retire' from the position of Morris Shopkeeper many months ago and negotiations about the transfer were well under way before his untimely

death. The new shopkeeper, Shaun Lambley, who is based in Milton Keynes, had visited BfB in Bradford to make sure that he knew what he was taking on. I feel sure that Steve would have approved.

I am very pleased to report that the Morris Ring Jigs Instructional went ahead 17th- 19th January without a hitch, and with a record number of attendees. Of note, past Squire and founder of the Jigs Instructional, Bert Cleaver was the guest of honour.

We have a new editor for the Morris Circular - one Tony Foard, who many will know. His first offering bodes well for the future. My thanks to his predecessor Harry Stevenson, for many years of sterling effort.

We welcomed at the last ARM Ian Bush as South East Rep; this time we welcome Paul Cross as Rep for the North. Area Reps are important to Morris Ring officers; we do like to hear from you, not just at AC meetings!

The JMO will meet under my chairmanship on 2nd February; I shall report verbally at the ARM, but please remember that if you host a Day of Dance or similar that includes sides from either or both the Fed or Open, ask your Area Rep and get his agreement to call it a Regional JMO DoD and get some extra publicity.

Well, quite a year of Morris Ring Meetings for me; it started in Adelaide in April, went via Thaxted in the sun, Nottingham in the rain, Chichester in the sun and finished in glorious weather in Copenhagen. All very enjoyable, with great company. I and others do appreciate all the hard work host sides put in, and it was certainly very evident all through this year at everything I have attended just how committed everyone is. This ARM is the time to elect a new Squire to dance in at Dartington Meeting; I certainly wish him well; whoever you elect!

6. Bagman's Report: Charlie Corcoran

This has been an 'interesting' year.

The Newsletter remains the most obvious of the tasks associated with my role as Bagman of the Morris Ring. I have produced six editions which have been received with indifference by the majority, positively by some and barbed criticism by a few. Ignoring the latter I would like to thank those who have supplied me with news, information and requests for inclusion. I repeat that it is the Morris Ring Newsletter and as such available to all sides to use to publicise or promote their events, request information, etc. and my job would be easier if more sides availed themselves of this opportunity.

In a quiet moment during the Jigs Weekend Tony, Mac and I seized the opportunity to have an editors meeting. Mac confirmed the planned publication dates for the 'electronic' Morris Dancer as March & November, and Tony hopes to continue to publish three printed editions of The Circular, in October, February and June, with the possibility of up-dated digital editions as pdfs on the website. I hope to produce Newsletters in January / February just prior to the ARM with the final agenda, reports, etc.; in March / April post ARM to include draft minutes; June; September and November. We took the opportunity to clarify content policy. Of the publications the role of the Morris Dancer is clearest - it is very much the vehicle for book reviews, articles and papers that broaden our knowledge of all forms of the Morris. The dividing line between content of The Circular and the Newsletter is more fluid and requires careful cooperation between Tony and I. Put simply in addition to the obvious 'information' I tend to include the shorter and more time-sensitive stuff and leave the longer and more retrospective things for Tony and The Circular.

A linked task is the calendar or diary of regular events that the Squire has asked me to compile. His idea is that we (along with the other two Morris Organisations) have a record of who does what and when on an annual basis. This would include date specific 'dance outs' such as St George's Day; May 1st and Boxing Day or Annual events such as appearances at festivals or galas or

annual Feasts or Ales. Whether public or private events could be made clear on the list and the public events could be used to inform the media and public at large and both could assist the future planning of other groups - dates to avoid! Please let me have details of any regular events that your side have in their calendar.

I was unable to attend all of the meetings, and of course the world did not end because I was not there! I would really encourage every side within our 'family' to attend one of these gatherings - it is through these gatherings that ideas are exchanged, friendships formed and the future of the Morris Ring will be cemented. Even better - we are looking for future hosts. As has been seen at a couple of recent meetings the host side does not have to follow what has become the 'usual format' of a whole weekend with bus tours and feast, speeches and formalities. The MR Log Books contain many examples of single day events being numbered as "Ring Meetings". Please give it your serious consideration. Mentioning the Log Book - one of the problems with my not attending two of the meetings is that I have little or no information to record in the Log Book so if you have any information including stories, menus or anything concerning either the 335th meeting in Adelaide or the 339th meeting in Silkeborg (or in fact any of the meetings) please let me have it. Having gleaned the information for the Log Book I will pass things on to Cliff Marchant for the MR Scrapbook.

Steven refers in his report to the sides that have joined or left the Morris Ring over the past year. There has been a lot of discussion about how we can attract both new dancers and obviously new member sides into the Morris Ring. If your side has worked on an initiative please share your experience - if it worked for your side, or even if it didn't, it might work for another side. Examples of recruitment events, posters, hand-outs, anything that might help raise the profile of the Morris and potentially attract new dancers or musicians.

Archives is on the agenda later as a 'discussion item'. I have included this to raise the profile of the MR's own archive and following an increasing number

of enquiries from the 'public' about the Morris in 'their area' via the MR website and enquiries from various sides about archive issues in general. I asked in several Newsletters for the opinions from the wider membership as to what the Morris Ring should keep in its archive. There seems little point in maintaining such a resource if it is not used by the people on whose behalf it is maintained. The stalwarts who have been carrying out this maintenance need our encouragement and support, but also our reassurance that what they do is valued beyond a few words at the ARM each year.

Selfishly, on a personal level, I have been asking for information about how individual sides maintain / store their scrapbooks or archive material, where it is stored and perhaps more importantly, how others can access the information therein contained. My own side, Leicester Morris, has 40 plus large ring binders of stuff collected over the past 60 years and we are keen to find a way of making this available to the wider world! We do not want to reinvent the wheel, even if we could, so we are keen to draw upon the knowledge and experience of those who have already gone down this path.

I have enjoyed another year as your Bagman but remind you that I will not be seeking re-election at the 2015 ARM. I will happily continue a few months working in tandem with whosoever is elected to replace me but I will have been in post for ten years by then and both I and the Morris Ring will be ready for a change. I say that I have enjoyed the year. That is true of most of the events that I have attended, and I thank the host sides, including or perhaps especially those from the Open Morris and the Morris Federation, because one of the really positive developments that I have witnessed during my time as Bagman has been the increased cooperation between the three organisations. There are only a few individuals who still appear to harbour grudges from the 1970s.

As usual I would like to thank all the Bagmen, and Bagwomen now, who help to make my, and Steve as the Treasurer, jobs possible - especially when you let us know about changes in officer, address, bank account, phone numbers, etc.. Naturally I also thank my fellow civil servant, Steve, who has really

settled into his role and with his help we endeavour to serve our ministerial master - Robin.

I will finish by commenting upon the low point of my year. Each year I attend a funeral or two - some personal and some connected with the Morris Ring. Stephen Adamson fitted into both categories. He was Treasurer when I stepped into the shoes of the inestimable John Fearson. John was a hard act to follow and without the friendship and support of BfB I don't think I would have survived. I admit that there were a few times when I had to smooth ruffled feelings when his Yorkshire bluntness offended the more sensitive souls but Steve was a true friend, a copious tea drinker and to the end the best proof reader I ever met.

I am delighted to report that it is hoped that we are going to have one of the diamonds in window by Fools Corner engraved in memory of Steve and dedicated during the Sunday service on Sunday 1st June. Neither the church, nor Albert Tetlow of Westminster MM who will do the engraving, charge for this but donations to the Thaxted Church Restoration Fund would be welcome. Individuals and sides who are not attending for the whole of the Thaxted meeting will be welcome to come along on the Sunday but please let Ian Anderson, Bagman for the meeting, know in advance - especially if you want lunch.

7. Treasurer's Report: Steven Archer

"Times they are a changing"

Many changes are fairly predictable; for instance the effect of increasing age. As many of our member sides were formed in the 1960's by bright young 20 something's, 50 years on many men are now in their 70's and looking to retire from the Morris. It was therefore a pleasant surprise to find that this year we have had a net increase in membership, reversing the decline of past years.

The net increase in membership is made up of 4 new members and 2 resignations. The new members have each come via a different route. We have had one new birth, one adoption, one club division and a resurrection.

Redding Moreys burst forth on 10th August 2013 recreating a 500 year old tradition recorded by the church in Reading. Perth Morris Men were recruited to the fold during the spectacularly Adelaide Ring Meeting. Wantage Mummers decided to have their own identity, separate from their parent side Icknield Way. And finally Bury Pace Eggers reformed and reapplied for membership.

Sadly Standon Morris Men called it a day when their numbers fell below the critical level and drew to a close nearly 60 years of dancing. However Charlbury Morris Men found their solution to falling numbers by admitting female dancers. For them the dance does go on under the name of Charlbury Morris as they follow White Horse and others into the Morris Federation.

The JMO insurance return now shows 781 UK Morris sides. Open Morris 144 (141 last year) The Morris Ring 176 (but 185 total including overseas sides) The Morris Federation 461 (409 last year). So we can confidently say that all sections of the Morris community are growing. These numbers take account of sides which are members of more than one organisation. Apparently five members of the Morris Ring are also members of other JMO organisations. I know of only one. I'd be pleased if the others would step forward and let me know who they are. Links across the JMO are always worth knowing about.

Another change is that we now have a Bagman named Sue (not like the one Johnny Cash sang about). We also have Michelle, Julie and Treasurers named Caroline, Myfanwy and Sue. So constitutional change has lead to further changes in some of our mixed sides.

Perhaps the biggest change recently has been the shop. The untimely death of Steve Adamson just before Christmas was a great sadness and a severe blow but Shaun Lambley stepped forward to become the new shopkeeper and Bob Cross, son Paul and his trusty builder's van did a grand job of collecting and moving the stock from Bradford to Milton Keynes. Thanks to a lot of hard work Shaun was able to re-launch the shop at the Mendip Ale and is now working hard on the website. As well as being a member of Moulton Morris

Shaun is also a member of sides in both the Fed and Open. We hope this will help the Morris Shop reach deeper into the wider Morris community.

Why aren't I talking about money? Well the accounts are yet to be audited and so the main financial report will come at the ARM but there is something worth noting. Insurance costs; these rose by 30% this year and are expected to rise significantly in the coming years to twice the 2013 level. The Open Morris has already put up their subscriptions and I will be watching the Fed's reaction. Our finances remain strong and I do not propose an increase in our subscription rates for 2014. There are several upward pressures on our costs, none the least of which is postage but it is my aim to find solutions other than putting up the cost of membership.

More of this at the ARM

8. Chair of Advisory Council's Report: Peter Halfpenney

The Advisory Council met twice during the past year, immediately following the March 2013 ARM and again in October 2013.

All eligible members were present with the exceptions of Jed Dunn South West & Wales (on both occasions), Brian Pollard, North East and Ben Robinson, North Midlands (March 2013 meeting), Steve BfB Adamson, Past Treasurer (Oct 2013 meeting). The North Area Rep position remained vacant however has subsequently been filled by Paul Cross (Great Yorkshire).

At both meetings a wide range of topics were discussed including:

1. Street closures & marshalling events in public places, particularly highways. Of concern to all, the conclusion was that the Squire would interpolate first hand experiences and specialist knowledge from such as the Britannia Coconut Dancers, our experienced legal minds and those with specialist knowledge such as John Burke (King John) & Adam Garland (East Suffolk) and issue guidelines for sides in conjunction with other JMO officials
2. The future of the Morris Shop - much progress has been made subsequently with the appointment of Shaun Lambley

3. MR archives
4. MR publications
5. Structure & content of ARM & 'hosted meetings'
6. Instructionals (open discussion on this topic will convene immediately following this ARM)
7. Recruitment
8. JMO events - concluding that, as the annual event is always such a great success, we should extend this format and, via Area Reps, encourage more localised JMO days of dance
9. Clog iron scarcity and future sourcing - Dave Loughlin (North West) has done sterling work here and can offer advice & product to those in need

Conclusions of the AC have been that the Morris Ring is a settled and equitable organisation presently and that this environment is fertile for future growth and prosperity. Initiative by the Squire and endeavour at grass roots level will be needed to translate this into results.

The Squire has thanked the AC for its sagacious council and guidance.

9. Archival Reports:

a. Chair of Archive Committee: *Chris Metherell*

This year the Archive Group has prepared a report covering the whole of the group's activities. We hope that this will provide an overview of the current position and also inform clubs of what we hope to achieve in the future.

The issue facing all archives in the 21st century and particularly the Morris Ring Archive, is not so much one of acquisition and storage but more one of making the collections available to a wider audience.

However before considering the latter issue it is good to be able to report that the Archive has had a very good year as far as acquisitions are concerned. The Photographic Archive received donations of photographs on 14 occasions and the archivist continues to buy photographs on eBay and donate them to the archive. However prices are rising. If anyone reading this has outbid

Duncan, would you please consider sending a digital copy of your purchase to the archive! Small amounts of material continue to reach the mumming archive but the largest acquisition has been the return of a large part of Ivor Allsop's papers which he gifted to the Sword Dance Union. Although the SDU have retained anything dealing specifically to sword dance anything relating to the Morris Ring and to his time as Squire has been recovered and will in due course be digitised and deposited at the Essex Record Office.

Some years ago the Arnold Woodley Collection was gifted to the Morris Ring Archive and although the paper based collection has been digitised and incorporated into the main archive his photographs have been awaiting action. We are delighted to report that Richard Broughton of the Bampton Traditional Morris Dancers and Charlbury Morris Men has taken on the task of sorting, cataloguing and digitally copying Arnold's entire collection. We are very grateful to Richard, for taking on this task, it is a major undertaking and when completed, it will be an invaluable addition to the Morris Ring Archive and the Traditional Bampton Morris Men will also have their own digital copy of the Arnold's collection.

Which conveniently brings the report round to digitisation and dissemination. Some sections of the Archive such as mumming, sound and film have now been almost completely digitised and much progress has been made with paper and photographs. More is being done slowly but surely, week by week as time permits. Although some copyright difficulties might arise we have been in touch with the Morris Ring webmaster in order to see whether this material could be made available through the Morris Ring website. The excellent example set by the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library through their Take Six and Full English websites shows just what can be achieved. It is clear that access to archival material is now best achieved via the internet and we hope to be able to report next year that large swathes of material has been uploaded and can be viewed.

Because of the possibility that someone else might take on the mumming archive after Ron Shuttleworth (still a bit in the air) he was prompted to undertake some major housekeeping by comparing the digital and paper records with their database entries. This is time-consuming and tedious but

the number of anomalies uncovered proved that it was overdue. Some of this is still ongoing.

Making material viewable over the web is likely to reduce the number of enquiries received by the Archivists. Although we have no check on how many individuals access material at the Essex Record Office, Duncan kept a record of all the enquiries relating to the Photographic Archive over a six month period. He either sent or received 77 e-mails, the following six months being equally busy. Enquires came from as far away as New Zealand, others involved local history archives, writers, students, morris sides, the Morris Ring Circular and individual collectors.

During the year Ron Shuttleworth again attended the Gloucester International Mummers' Festival and its Symposium and contributed a short paper, this time titled "Mumming is not Acting". He was able to help a number of people and made several new contacts. Over the same period Duncan Broomhead visited four archives/collectors and exchanged photographs or information with them.

Chris Metherell (Chair and film)

Geoff Douglas (Paper)

Duncan Broomhead (Photographic)

On a personal note, our only regret this year is that our Sound Archivist, Andy Padmore has decided to hang up his tape recorder. He has done much sterling work during his period of office and we are sure that all members of the Ring would wish to join us in thanking him for his efforts.

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| b. Paper: Geoff Douglas | See above |
| c. Photographic: Duncan Broomhead | See above |
| d. Mumming: Ron Shuttleworth | See above |
| e. Sword: | |
| f. Sound: Andy Padmore | |

Since my last report I have little to add. This last twelve months have been busy for me which has meant that the Sound Archive has taken a bit of a back

seat and not moved forward very much at all. I have added a few new sound files to the list and continued to digitise the cassette tape collection but this has been very sporadic and I have not been able to give it the time it requires and deserves. There are still lots of cassette tapes to digitise.

The purpose and scope of the Sound Archive has never been formally discussed or written down and as such remains an open ended project. What constitutes a 'sound' is very much open to interpretation. I think it is anything that has a connection to Morris in its widest context and should include any recordings that are stand alone, not soundtrack from a video for example, (Where the video exists), it should include singers, musicians, tunes, radio broadcasts, speeches etc. in fact anything that it is felt should be kept for posterity or at least until it is decided that it best kept somewhere else, or exists somewhere else. I also think it should include interviews with the elders of the Morris and those with something to say that may prove useful to researchers at some time in the future.

Any sounds contained within the archive should also be made available to a wider audience by some means, preferably contained on the internet in an accessible state where they can be listened to or downloaded if appropriate. Necessary permissions and copyright issues need to be sorted out first.

The sound archive would be a great project for the right person who has the time and the focus to make something of it. I have decided that I am not that person. I need to hand the work on to someone with more time and commitment and the necessary focus. It could be a great treasure trove of sounds but it would require a lot of time and effort to achieve that, and I simply do not have the time, or the necessary resolve to make it what it could and should be.

So sadly I wish to resign from the post in order that someone more suited can be found to make it work.

- g. New Dance Collator: Lester Bailey** **See above**
- h. Keeper of the Morris Ring Scrapbook: Cliff Marchant**
- i. Keeper of the Morris Ring Log Book: Charlie Corcoran**
See Bagman's Report

10. Publication Officer's Reports:

a. Editor Morris Circular: *Tony Foard*

I apologise for my absence from the ARM; with two daughters competing in the Dancing England Rapper Tournament in Leeds this weekend, my geographic location today was never in question.

I took up the editorship of the Morris Ring Circular (MRC) in the spring of 2013, following in the footsteps of Harry Stevenson, and filled with trepidation and admiration for all he had achieved since 2005. In the lead-up to the publication of my first MRC, and since then as well, my admiration for his endeavours has only risen while my trepidation has subsided considerably thanks to his timely advice. Harry even offered to help out with the production process when the day job encroached heavily and unexpectedly upon my free time over several crucial weeks last summer - thanks, Harry!

To date I have produced issues 68 and 69, with issue 70 planned for publication in June.

The *Morris Ring Circular* is published in both electronic and conventionally printed formats, and I aim to produce at least three issues a year. The MRC seeks to celebrate, in words and pictures, the activities of member sides by (*inter alia*):

- reporting their recent involvement in local, national and international events;
- featuring their important anniversaries;
- publishing original commentary on matters of immediate interest;
- Reflecting upon the lives and accomplishments of memorable individuals.

Contributions may be commissioned, but the vast majority of articles are the work of the readership.

I avoid unnecessary overlap with the other two Morris Ring publications by adhering to some simple guidelines: notices about forthcoming events and

Morris Ring business or policy matters are the province of the *Morris Ring News/letter*; scholarly items dealing with the history of the dance, its practitioners and its literature are the concern of the *Morris Dancer*. The MRC focuses on recent events in Morris Ring World.

I'm neither a journalist nor a graphic designer, and I have not sought to change unduly the nature of the MRC, but it is, I suppose, somewhat inevitable that each new editor concocts the mixture in a different fashion. In all sorts of ways, though, I hope that little I do is particularly noticeable - I would rather that the words and pictures remain the stars of the show. One change, however, that has been favourably received is the introduction of full colour printing, a feature hitherto confined to special issues but now routinely affordable - just! - thanks to innovations in the printing industry.

Colour printing has, of course, been available for the online manifestation of the MRC for some time now, and there are those who might advocate abandoning the printed version with its considerable production expenses and its almost-as-considerable postage costs in favour of an electronic-only edition. Whilst this proposal is not without merit (and deserves to be regularly revisited), I believe that the paper version is popular, reader-friendly, shelf-ready and makes a visual impact that the online version can seldom achieve. I'd say that it has an assured future.

All that's left to say is thank you to the elected officers for their contributions both textual and photographic, to applaud all those from across the globe who have written and illustrated articles for the past issues of the MRC, and to appeal for a fulsome flow of material from member sides to keep future editions vibrant and relevant. Please give generously!

b. Editor Morris Dancer: Mac McCoig (& Andrew Bullen)

The Morris Dancer is published as and when sufficient suitable material comes to hand. It is usually a case of 'feast and famine', and 2013 has been no different, but unfortunately we are in the grip of a famine. I am reliant on those interested in the study of the Morris in all its forms to provide me with suitable articles and very little has been forthcoming.

However, at the Jigs Instructional, I have had offers of articles from five individuals - feast! If all the promised material comes through, I will be able to publish an issue in March 2014 and again in September. You know who you are, so get busy please.

During the Jigs weekend, the three Ring editors met to discuss a number of issues. One such was the thorny subject of what goes into which publication. There are grey areas, which will always present a small issue, but we agreed to publish a short note in the three publications outlining where the boundaries are, as closely as we can define them, without being overly pedantic.

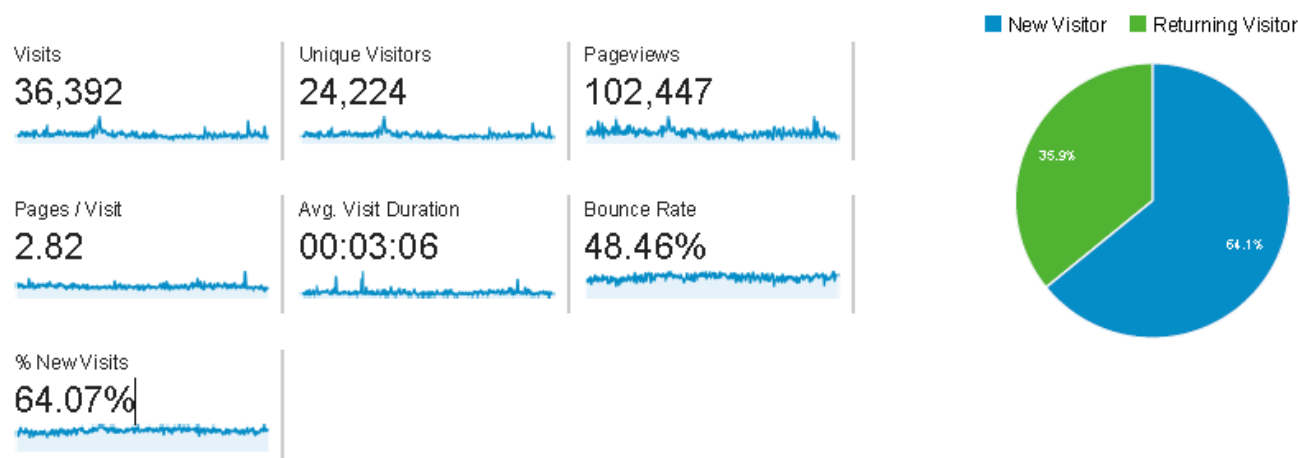
The purpose of The Morris Dancer is to publish articles which aim to expand the pool of knowledge about the Morris in all its forms. The study of aspects of the Morris, not necessarily historic, is what the 'Dancer' is looking for and hopes to encourage.

c. Social Network Coordinator's Report: Olli King Report awaited

11. Web Editor's Report

It has been year of consolidation for the Morris Ring Web Site, improving pages, publishing relevant news and keeping the content up to date. There have been no technical issues of note and the site has been on-line continuously throughout the year - a feat of which several banking organisations would be jealous. Martin Jones of Natty Web Development (and Dartington Morris) is largely to thank for this robustness through his site design, which allows updating and improvements to be quickly achieved. Given that over a third of our 100+ standard pages were edited at least once during the year, another 30 odd articles and events added (some more odd than others) and nearly 100 changes made to side locations, all carried out by a Fool, this functionality is essential. In fact it makes the job a pleasure, and I was largely able to achieve my own target of making updates within 48 hours of receiving them, weekends of dance permitting.

The following metrics give some idea of the successful reach of our pages for the calendar year 2013:



Country/Territory		Visits	% Visits
1.	United Kingdom	29,426	80.86%
2.	United States	2,672	7.34%
3.	Australia	717	1.97%
4.	Canada	325	0.89%
5.	Netherlands	282	0.77%
6.	Germany	280	0.77%
7.	France	225	0.62%
8.	New Zealand	207	0.57%
9.	(not set)	177	0.49%
10.	Spain	173	0.48%

(Bounce rate is a measure of the effectiveness of a website in encouraging visitors to continue with their visit. It is expressed as a percentage and represents the proportion of visits that end on the first page of the website that the visitor sees, so roughly half of our visitors went on to explore further.)

As I wrote last year, we're keen to have a lively, fresh and informative site that is a first port of call for anyone with an interest in Morris - but news, in our opinion, must be newsworthy and not just for the sake of it. So if your side has items or photos you believe are of national (or even international) interest, or a traditional annual event worthy of inclusion in our seasonal calendar, please, please let me know at webeditor@themorrisring.org.

12. Overseas Bagman's Report

Being truly an overseas bagman, I have to submit my apologies for failing to be present at the ARM. There is not a huge amount to report, but there is an interesting issue below on which I'd like opinions.

Morris Ring Meetings: Most unusually, two Meetings of Ring Clubs this year have taken place abroad, Adelaide in April and Silkeborg in August. Regrettably I was unable to attend either due to teaching commitments earlier in the year and the fact that my side attended Saddleworth Rushcart which clashed with Silkeborg. I believe Robin Springett will be able to report on both; from what I hear, it sounds like they went very well. The issue of the cost of such meetings has of course arisen, although one would never expect a meeting on the other side of the world to be a cheap endeavour.

Other events: I've had no enquiries about foreign matters, and only one (to my knowledge) email of information about foreign events, which I duly circulated. **Clubs:** I have not heard much from the handful of overseas clubs, other than of course those who held meetings this year. One of our very limited number of North American sides is Pinewoods MM in Massachusetts. They are celebrating their 50th anniversary in 2014, and of the varying ways to celebrate, they have chosen to tour the UK from about June 21st-29th; any side who wants to know more is encouraged to contact Martin Graetz (jmgraetz@ttwriter.com).

More overseas sides? The Squire started a discussion with me during the Thaxted Meeting about how we might get more overseas sides into the Ring. Having danced with a few sides here and there in North America, I am aware that male-only Morris dance is not as common outside the UK as in the UK, and thus the pool of 'eligible' sides is more limited. Nonetheless, there are a number of teams who could be approached. Robin asked me to look into what we could do for them to make membership a more attractive option. One highly practical option mentioned was to see whether, if they were visiting the UK, the Ring's/JMO's insurance would be of benefit to them, so I turned to Michael Stimpson, who told me that overseas sides would not be covered by the policy, so that rather attractive carrot for those who come to the Old

Country is not open to them. I reported this to the Squire. I tried to think of other inducements that we could offer to overseas sides; one which did come to mind was whether we could have an overseas member category at a somewhat lower cost than what we have at the moment to reflect the fact that they have fewer benefits—something to encourage them to keep in contact with the Morris at its roots. I did sound out one US male side of my acquaintance and they said they could be interested. However, I realised that any issue with subscription levels would need input from the Squire and the Treasurer, and so I put this to them, and I haven't had any response since August 2013.

It's worth noting that the JMO policy covers UK sides performing within the EU, and indeed anywhere in the world except North America (for which cover needs to be arranged separately); sides based in places such as Channel Islands are covered but not those elsewhere in the EU.

Thus, I'd be interested to know whether the ARM thinks it is worth pursuing such a subscription option (the Internet eliminates the need for higher foreign postage costs), or indeed whether there are any other ideas on how we can improve our contacts with similar sides abroad.

13. Elections

a. Ballot for Squire of Morris Ring.

- A reminder of the Morris Ring voting procedures is included as Appendix 1 at the end of this newsletter.
- *Geoff Jerram has agreed to act as Returning Officer for this election. His deputy will be confirmed by the Squire at the meeting prior to the vote taking place.*

Three candidates who have been put forward for the post of Squire of the Morris Ring 2014-2016. They are:

Simon Care Moulton Morris

I am Simon Care, aged 48, professional musician, morris dancer, music agent and manager. I have worked in the music/entertainment industry for 30 years as a member of The Albion Band, The Morris On Band and Edward II. But more recently involved in collaborative work with Arts Council England, EFDSS, London School of Contemporary Dance and Spotlight England. I am also the dance programmer for Towersey Village Festival.



I have been involved in the Morris world since the age of ten, mainly as a member of Moulton Morris and also the Traditional Bampton Morris Dancers. I have had close contacts with numerous other sides through my work with The Morris On Band and Ashley Hutchings. My professional work puts me in contact with many Morris dancers across the country from all three organisations.

I am very passionate about the Morris, in all its forms and often run workshops at the many festivals I attend throughout the year.

I have always been proud to be a member of a Ring side and I believe that the Morris Ring has an important role to play in presenting good quality Morris to the wider world. I also think it is very important that the Morris Ring, whilst respecting the past, looks to the future and supports its membership teams in their recruitment of younger members in order to ensure its survival.

Nominated by King Johns Morris Men of Southampton

King John's Morris Men have known Simon Care for well over 30 years, having been regular attendees at the Moulton Village Festival. We have seen him grow and develop as an integral part of Moulton Morris Men, a club who have always, in our opinion, maintained consistently high standards of dance, presentation and innovation in their performances.

Simon has become extremely well known as a very accomplished professional musician on the Folk scene but has always put his love of the Morris first and foremost. For him, everything comes back to "the Morris" as demonstrated in his recent time as Squire of Moulton MM

We feel that Simon, because of his love and passion for the Morris, along with his extensive knowledge, would be an excellent Squire of the Morris Ring. His enthusiasm and personality make him, we think, the ideal candidate to take the Morris Ring forward and meet the challenges that face it.

Adam Garland East Suffolk Morris Men



I started dancing at the age of 8 and quickly realised that the custom and tradition was something worth preserving. Over thirty-three years I have played an active part in many events in the Morris World. I have helped to arrange weekend tours, ales, 40th and 50th celebrations, and evenings of dance.

I have had the honour of dancing with, and being a member of, many Sides from Gloucestershire to East Anglia and I was made an honorary member of Cambridge Morris Men in 2000.

As 'Henry', a hooden horse, I was asked to run a workshop on animal behaviour at a Fools and Animals weekend, and I have been a guide to new club members, assisting in their learning process wherever possible. I have taken the Morris into schools in Suffolk to advertise our heritage to a younger generation and more recently I have taken on the role of Morris correspondent for our local Suffolk folk magazine, 'Mardles'.

Following recent changes I believe that now the Ring needs a time to settle into its current constitution; further major changes would not be welcomed by the Sides. However I do want to continue the good work of my predecessors in advertising the work of the Ring and its clubs, in supporting sides in encouraging recruitment from younger generations, and to forge links abroad with other Traditional Dance organisations. Further, I believe strengthening the links with our fellow organisations in this country, while protecting the interests of the Ring, is important.

Nominated by Dolphin Morris Men

Dolphin believes that the Ring exists for the benefit of the member clubs and it is not an end in itself. The Squire of the Ring is there to represent the

member clubs: it is an important job, not a "position of importance". We propose Adam Garland as Squire because he understands what the Ring is for: to promote the enjoyment of the Morris for all of us and for the public.

Adam is young, likeable, and a talented Morris dancer. He dances in set, he dances jigs, he sings and plays. He understands the importance of tradition, being the middle one of three generations of dancers in his family. He also understands that in order to thrive, a tradition must grow and develop.

When Adam first expressed interest in standing for election as Squire, we asked what he thought he would bring to the role, and what plans he had. His immediate answer was that he wanted to remind the Ring that we dance for pleasure. We take our dancing seriously but we don't take ourselves seriously. It is a tradition but it is also a hobby.

As Squire, Adam Garland would present a likeable and credible face to the public, he would challenge the stereotype of the Morris that we often read in the media, and he would preside over Ring meetings and other events in which good dancing and good fellowship would be the order of the day and politics would become a distant second to dancing.

Peter Simpson Jockey Morris Men

I joined Jockey MM, 18 years ago. During that time I have been Archivist as well as Deputy Foreman and Foreman; positions which have driven home the importance of dance standard and display.

I also perform Rapper, Longsword and have joined the Original Welsh Border Morris. I am often seen out and about supporting other clubs and I enjoy trying to adapt to their styles. This year was a bit of a landmark for me when I attended Thaxted with Chalice MM and wore their kit for the weekend.

I regularly attend Saddleworth Rushcart, Ring meetings, JMOs and Days of dance. I have become so regular at Thaxted that my wife has taken to organising the WAG's tour and she backs me wholeheartedly in my application.



I am the West Midlands area rep. This has given me an excellent insight into the working of The Morris Ring and the JMO, enabling me to get to know people in the greater Morris world.

The big question for me is how we continue to strengthen the Morris Ring and secure its future. We need to carry on looking at recruitment, to attract all age groups, not just the young; identify what makes a strong club & spreading the lessons learned.

Learning to use the media, especially local press and finding better ways of promoting ourselves is also important.

Good work has been done nationally with the JMO but it is time to start moving this on at a local level.

Nominated by Green Mans' Morris and Sword Club

Peter is a member of Jockey Morris Men and we have danced in his company for the last eighteen years, since he began to dance with them.

Peter is an outgoing, confident person, who is comfortable either as a member of a side or as an individual, dancing jigs. He is also conversant with many traditions, including Fieldtown, Adderbury, Ducklington and Bledington to name but a few. We know that Peter also has an interest in Border long sword, and Rapper, having recently taken part in his first DERT in 2013.

Peter's knowledge of various traditions means that he is a welcome addition to a side, when, for whatever reason it finds itself short of a man. He is able to adapt to differing styles with relative ease, and we are always happy to have him dance with us.

Since becoming Area Rep five years ago, Peter has visited as many sides as he can and has joined in with their dancing on a regular basis.

Peter can also see the challenges which face the Morris in today's world. He has strong feelings for the dance, is aware of the problems many sides have with recruitment and has offered us great support when we have attempted to find new members.

He is a good communicator who we feel would be an excellent ambassador for the Morris Ring and we commend him to you.

b. Ratification of Area Representatives following decisions reached at Area Meetings (no additional nominations received)

- West Midlands Pete Simpson (2014)
- South West and Wales Jed Dunn (2014)
- North West David Loughlin (2014)
- Northern Paul Cross (2016)

14. Admission of new member of the Morris Ring:

- Perth Morris Men, Redcliffe, Western Australia
Web address: <http://perthmorrismen.org/>
Dance Styles Cotswold & Border
Application supported by:
Thaxted Morris men
Foresters Morris Men

15. Area Representatives' Reports.

(Note: The constitutional role of the Area Reps is to "...to advise and assist the Squire and the other elected officers to further the objects of the Morris Ring".)

a. North West David Loughlin (2014)

It is good to report that Morris dancing in the North West is on the up. Most of the Morris sides are recruiting some might have just one new member but at least no one has said that they are going to fold and hang up their hankies, sticks or clogs.

The most serious problem which is still high on the agenda for any Morris side and this is also with the JMO is dancing in the streets or on the open highway. The problem with Britannia Coco-nut Dancers of Bacup with their traditional Easter Saturday Dancing the Boundary to Boundary of the Town has still not been resolved. Lancashire County Council is being very stubborn and this has not gone down well with the Town Council, the Ward Councillors or the community themselves. There is wide support for the Nutters as we all know,

but in some areas the local councils are more amenable or should I say sensible in their approach to the situation. This has not only happened to the Morris in general but also other organizations like the Scouts. Saddleworth Rushcart has had to finance their Street Closures themselves this year, so let us hope this gets sorted amicably and very quickly.

Talking of Saddleworth Morris Men this is their 40th Anniversary as a side and 40th Rushcart this year, which is Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th August 2014 and this is to be a Ring Meeting so if you haven't been before now is the time to come and dance.

Horwich Prize Medal Day of Dance is Saturday 26th April 2014 an annual event unfortunately Chester City Morris Men have arranged a St George's Day of Dance on the same day in the City of Chester which is a walking dancing tour.

Saturday 19th July is Chapel-en-le-Frith Morris Men Day of Dance with more dancing spots than ever and they have just about filled their intended numbers.

Thelwall Morris Men 40th Anniversary and their Day of dance was another good success.

Finally Royal Preston Morris Dancers are steadily going from strength to strength; it is always good to see that everyone is enjoying their involvement with the dancing traditions.

b. Northern Paul Cross (Appointed by Squire in Autumn 2013)

This report commences with my agreeing to take on the role of Northern Area Rep. at Steve Adamson's funeral in December. As this is my first report, it is late and unfinished. I hope to improve on this matter after this appointment becomes official. Apologies to any teams I've omitted.

First of all, the most important news!

After a traumatic Christmas, I am happy to report that Mr. L. Willy, has settled in to his new accommodation in North Yorkshire, and will be dancing out with Great Yorkshire Morris, and others, in the near future. Currently he is engrossed in a book, and has his favourite tipple to hand.



Barnsley Longsword Dancers

On the 10th of December BLD did a rapper tour of Barnsley followed by a Christmas sing in The Old No.7 where we were offered good real beer at discount. It was felt it would be ungentlemanly to refuse! On the 29th was the annual dance at The Spencer Arms, Cawthorne, Barnsley.

Chewit Well Mummers

As well as joining GYM for their carols evening before Christmas, CWM were out with Claro on Boxing day (see below) and have since been on their traditional Nidderdale Tour.

Claro Sword & MM

On Boxing Day, Claro were at the Harlow Inn, Harrogate, with guests Chewit Well Mummers as well as a stray member of Great Yorkshire and an Ex-Squire of the Ring (well, he was staying with me for Christmas). After several dances in the brilliant sunshine, all retired inside for songs and tunes.



Great Yorkshire Morris

We were honoured to bear BFB's coffin in to his funeral, though couldn't help wondering how good the hearse would have been for the Morris Shop stock. It was a delight to learn from Christine (Steve's sister) that the box of tea

bags in the coffin had been BOGOF, and that she now had more tea than she knew what to do with. I think Steve would have been happy with the economy.

GYM held the first ever Bradford Traditional Carols evening just before Christmas, with guests Chewit Well Mummers. Unfortunately The Sparrow, in Bradford, was unreceptive, and the singing didn't last long. Still, these traditions take a while to kick off.

On the Mid-Winter Solstice, GYM were among around two dozen people who climbed to the summit of Great Whernside (2,310ft) to scatter the ashes of our musician John Page, who died in February 2013. Amazingly, the weather was perfect for the climb, and everyone who set off made it back safely. This was followed by a ceilidh in JP's memory, and stiff, tired, limbs were soon forgotten.

Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers

Handsworth were out on Boxing Day to do their traditional performance, with this year being special as it was the 40th anniversary of the dance and a mumming play being performed at Handsworth Church. This was followed by local carols in the Cross Keys.

A visit to the HTSD's Facebook page is well worthwhile. The page is regularly updated with photographs and events.

Oakworth Village MM

Christmas was kicked off in traditional style with appearances by OVMM at the Scroggling the Holly and Haworth Traders weekends in Haworth, West Yorkshire (a.k.a. Bronte Country), with a few members of Leeds MM joining in to bolster numbers.

OVMM also tried to gain new members by holding an open evening, with the promise of a pint for any attendees. This was advertised by press release, with articles appearing in several local papers. Sadly the promise of free beer failed to lure any new members.

White Rose MM

White Rose MM performed in Huddersfield town centre for their annual Sunday before Christmas outing on a fine day and in front of enthusiastic

onlookers followed by good food, an excellent music session and a bit more dancing in The Sportsman. We also attended (for, I think, the 30th year running) the Straw Bear Festival at Whittlesea in January.

Practice is going well led by foreman Will Hampson with 'back to basics' analysis of our current traditions: Bampton, Fieldtown, Headington and Adderbury.

Our next dance-out is outside Halifax Victoria theatre on 22nd February preceding the Demon Barbers' Lock In show. The summer fixture list is starting to take shape already.

c. North East

Brian Pollard (2016)

Benfieldside Morris and Sword have enjoyed a successful year with many productive practice nights leading to a very enjoyable dancing out season. Numbers are steady at nine dancers and two musicians including two recruits enlisted by word of mouth. We continue to have a very good shared working relationship with the Durham Rams and with Stockton MM allowing us to fulfil several bookings over the year.

Richmond on Swale MM: Numbers are holding at fifteen with one new member on the year. They have had no new members from a publicity drive including telephone interviews with BBC Radios York and Tees and articles in the Yorkshire Advertiser, Northern Echo and the Darlington and Stockton Times. They are awaiting a postponed visit to a practice night by cameras from BBC Look North. Thursday night dances out round the pubs have gone well but there is difficulty in fielding a team at weekends and for Ring Meetings. They hope to make it to a Ring Meeting in 2014.

Durham Rams: Having lost several men at the beginning of the dancing season it was always going to be a difficult year for the Rams but we persevered and managed to adapt a number of our regular dances so that we could perform them with four men rather than six. We managed to fulfil our dance out commitments quite successfully that way. The highlight of our year was dancing in front of a large and appreciative crowd at Sedgefield Mediaeval Fayre in May which also gave us the chance to dance rapper in the parish

church. Later in the summer we danced at Wolsingham Church Fair, again for a very receptive audience, although the very high temperature that day meant we were thankful for the presence of the ice cream seller! An invitation to dance for a Ladies Group at a Salvation Army Citadel in Acklam proved to be a most enjoyable evening. After dancing a number of Cotswold dances and our Rapper we invited volunteers onto the floor and taught them Constant Billy, Headington. The ladies rose to the challenge and amidst much hilarity they successfully completed the dance! In October we danced alongside Benfieldside in Durham Marketplace on behalf of the Motor Neurone Disease charity helping them to raise over £300 for this worthwhile cause.

Monkseaton MM: We attended a couple of weekends away this year both of which were in or close to London: We danced at Westminster Morris men's day of dance and had another great day dancing at the usual fantastic venues including three times in Trafalgar Square. Great feast at the Marquis of Anglesey made all the better if you downloaded a free beer token from the internet before you arrived.

We travelled to and from London on the train and for the trip down we took a poly pin of Mordues "Five Bridges" which ran out at Peterborough

The second trip was to Chipperfield for Greensleeves weekend. It was around 35°C in the shade for most of the weekend which almost killed us northern lads.

Our big dance out is always on New Year's Day in Monkseaton where again we were welcomed by huge crowds and packed pubs. We managed to collect £1,281 this year and donated £600 to the UNICEF Syrian appeal.

We are planning a Weekend of Dance over the weekend of the 13th- 14th September for which invitations have already gone out.

Stockton MM: Over the last few years we have been having trouble with our numbers and also a lack of a musician. During 2013 we resolved our musician problem as a former musician has returned to play for us. However our lack of members is still with us, and, despite contacting local schools and youth clubs and holding an "Open Day", we have been unable to make any inroads into this problem. We have only been able to continue due to the help given to us by

other local clubs such as Benfieldside and Durham Rams, for which we are most grateful. We will continue to seek new members for as long as we can and we can only hope we can turn the corner at some time in the not too distant future.

All in all an encouraging and positive outlook from the area despite the usual problem of numbers and recruitment. Strategies developed to cope with these issues ensure we continue to enjoy the dancing.

d. West Midlands

Pete Simpson (2014)

Compared to the last few years 2013 has been on the quiet side, with no big meetings of Morris Ring sides or JMOs. Having said that most clubs seem to have been busy enough, with demands for Morris dancing out stripping what the clubs can deliver.

There have been 2 birthdays of note this year with Leominster Morris celebrating their 30th and the Original Welsh Border Tour their 40th. Both clubs marked the anniversary after their own fashion and both seem to be doing well after all these years showing us all how to approach the Border tradition.

As usual the end of the summer was marked with at least 5 local Morris Ring sides plus Bristol MM, Lord Conyers and others dancing at Bromyard Folk Festival. Despite heavy rain on the Friday and a wet grey day on Sunday a good weekend was had by all.

Here is what some of the clubs have to say for themselves:

Jockey Morris Men: Despite, for the first time in some years, not attending a meeting of the Morris Ring, JMO or foreign trip, it has been another busy year for Jockey.

We have danced at four folk festivals as far apart as Yorkshire, Cheshire, Herefordshire and Birmingham. Had a couple of trips to Shropshire, as well as our usual events.

Membership has remained stagnant at around 20 full members and 14 associate members, however with the sad passing of BFB we have lost an honorary member, he will be much missed.

Earlsdon Morris Men: Earlsdon Morris Men danced out on 21 occasions between March and December 2013, including six folk festivals, St George's weekend and Easter weekend. We currently have 29 dancers and 15 musicians on our books, although we never get everyone out at the same time.

Stafford Morris Men: Since taking over as squire I've noticed that the team's attitude has changed. The group now seems keener to dance. 2012 was a tough year and we unfortunately lost some influential figures within our team which no doubt affected the spirit of the dancers.

I have introduced more social events to the team which I think has helped, as well as more interesting practice sessions. Throughout the year we have been much pickier about which events we decided to take on and tried to focus the majority of our dancing within Staffordshire. This I think helped boost our local reputation.

As for dancing, I tried to focus on teaching the men one tradition at a time. This way many of our members feel confident enough to try a new dance out in public that they may not have done before as long as it is in the tradition we have been learning.

As for team numbers. This year we have seen a rise in numbers, we have had two new men join, one of which is a musician. We unfortunately are still low in number when it comes to musicians but I plan to use social networks etc to try to encourage more musicians.

We have just finished our winter dancing period. It went very well and we look to continue our positive progress in the New Year.

The Original Welsh Border Morris Men 40th Tour December 2014

Some things you can set your watch by and some things you can set your calendar by! If it's the first Saturday in December then it's the The Original Welsh Border Morris Men's practice day at the Bell Inn, St Johns, Worcester. This year it was our 40th year and so, following the practice of the border dances led by foremen, Richard Sinclair and Richard Hannah, we sat down to a

pig roast at which one of our founder members, the Fool since year one and this year our squire, John Barker of Faithful City Morris Men addressed the men with a brief history of the side. Nothing stays the same and he mentioned the burgeoning numbers of the side over the years and formalised the new role of the Shepherd. When you have 60 plus on a coach tour you need someone whose express purpose is to herd the mob from bus to dance spot to pub and out again. Dean Clarke was appointed and presented with his new staff of office - a crook! He has already learned to accept the inevitable response of the bleating of sheep whenever he urges his flock. If it's the Saturday before Christmas then it's the tour. This year the 57 seat coach was full with cars following on behind, a fantastic turnout, and we often wonder if any other side ever manages to get more than 62 men out, all in kit. It makes a superb day, leaving aside the rush and panic of Christmas preparations to enjoy the good company of so many who are up for a good day out.

There were many highlights but for some getting four good sets out for the Upton dances in Upton was most impressive. It's great to see an increasing number of young men joining us too ensuring that this wonderful tradition continues for many years to come.

As a bonus when the sums are done it looks like we'll be able to present Macmillan Nurses with £340+.

So that's it, done for another year till the ex-squires gather in October 2014 to arrange Tour 41. The Facebook page has some very telling photos - search for Original Welsh Border or use this link <http://tinyurl.com/OriginalWB>

Shakespeare Morris Men: have continued to support local events within Stratford upon Avon including: the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations; May Day Celebrations within the town; the Stratford Mop and the Christmas lights switch on. These are regular features in our annual calendar.

As guardians of the Bidford tradition, we also maintain our links with the town of Bidford on Avon dancing there on Trinity Monday and also for the Christmas lights switch on.

We participated in the Evesham Morris Weekend acting as hosts to the sides dancing in Stratford and also performed at Bromyard Folk Festival.

There is a slow and steady rejuvenation of the side, as 'more mature' members hang up their dancing shoes, newer recruits have responded to adverts placed in local free publications and whilst there is no waiting list for potential members, the membership number is improving.

The indisputable highlight of the year was participating in the Copenhagen Ring Meeting, hosted by Silkeborg Morris Men. Not the place for a cheap night out but certainly the place to celebrate our tradition to a bewildered audience.

Green Man's Morris & Sword Club: Once again in 2013, Green Man has made an attempt to recruit more members, but to no avail. We held a morning of dance in Lichfield in March, followed by a free taster session the same afternoon. Although the morning was well watched, there were no takers for the free session.

Our dancing year really began at the Duke of York in Lichfield to celebrate St. George's Day, and we danced at most of our 'usual' pubs. We have been joined by Three Spires, a Federation side, on many of our appearances and they have been well received.

Our Annual feast was attended by 40 people and we invited the aforementioned Three Spires for the first time. We also sent a side to the Martletts Meeting in July, an event which we really enjoyed.

By the time this goes to print, we will have danced and performed our mummers play at Shenstone on Boxing Day.

1st Sedgely Morris Men: Following holding the AGM's move in January 2012 we have decided to move the event to the start of the New Year rather than October/ November as had always been the previous practice. Officers remained the same Paul Davis as Squire, Jack Cotterill as Foreman, Dave Jeffery as Bagman and Graham Suffolk as Wardrobe Mistress.

We attended our regular Annual events - Kinver Fayre, demonstration for Spice, 3 Beer Festivals, St George's Day in Dudley and, of course, our Maypole Festival which although, disappointingly only attended by one school, was a

great success. May the 1st was celebrated for the 33rd year running on Sedgley Beacon at 4.30 a.m.

We attended Bromyard Folk Festival as a side. On the 20th of July we were involved with our annual tour with Ewell St Mary Morris Men this year centred on North Oxfordshire - an excellent day out in a vintage double-decker bus. We have also joined with other local sides for dancing out (when the weather permitted) during the summer.

Membership has increased by 3 new members during the year sadly all are over 40 but welcome none the less. There are 20 active members as dancers and musicians at the start of 2013. Total membership is 24 +.

Our practices during the year concentrated on consolidating the regular repertoire whilst extending it to a number of dances that had slipped from it over the past few years.

We have supported a number of different charities during the year - mainly focused this year on Cystic Fibrosis for whom one of our members Ed Jones raised £4000+ on a sponsored climb of Kilimanjaro - much of the sponsorship coming from members and £400 from a coffee morning organised by the wife of a member of the side. We also donated our services to the charitable activities of Ashwood Nurseries as we do every year.

Faithful City Morris Men: Pausing to write a summary report like this is always useful to make us realise what a variety and number of events we have been involved in this year.

We have danced at three folk festivals, four beer festivals, three fetes, three weddings, a local historical society and two wassails. In the centre of Worcester we also collected for Comic Relief in March and Children in Need in November, raising about £500 for those two causes. But the core of our dancing is still the Wednesday evening dance out at a different pub every week, from May to September, in the glorious countryside of Worcestershire and Herefordshire.

We danced on the front at Sidmouth during the first weekend of Folk Week. We set ourselves a new record by dancing 38 different dances over the

weekend. Our challenge now is keep increasing this total each year. Perhaps our 'heritage' dance spot at the end of each practice session will help. In this spot a different member each week picks a dance we no longer practice for dancing out so those dances don't become completely forgotten.

Our rapper team competed at DERT again and had a very enjoyable tour of the pubs of Hereford in preparation for this. We are now working on a new dance ready for DERT 2014.

The Knightwick tradition, being written specially for the side by our member Dave Hislop, has continued to expand with a jig and a new hankie dance being added. Dave is now writing a pamphlet setting out all six dances.

Our active membership stands at 20. We had a few promising leads for new members but, unfortunately, we haven't actually recruited any new members this year and our last member under 40 will pass that milestone very soon.

e. North Midlands

Ben Robinson (2015)

It's been quite busy in our part of the country this year. I was pleased to be able to attend a small number of events around and about, the highlights of which began in the summer when Dolphin Morris Men celebrated their 45th Anniversary by hosting a meeting of the Morris Ring. It was every well attended and we danced for modest but enthusiast crowds in a rainy Loughborough shopping centre followed by a selection of some of the finest pubs around North Leicestershire and South Nottinghamshire - including a taste of Forty Five a brew available in all the pubs on tour that had been brewed to celebrate the last 45 years, there was even a bell on the pump clip!

Leicester Morris Men were also in party mode, celebrating 60 years. The weather at the end of August was much kinder than for Dolphin as we danced throughout Leicester City Centre. By the clock tower two sets danced side by side with audiences around and between, bigger most I've seen in more obvious places like Oxford and Stafford. After leaving the city we toured some of the best pubs in the county, before retiring to Copt Oak for BBQ,

beer, entertainment and (I think for me around 4am) camping. Sunday was a glorious day spent playing around on the Great Central Railway.

Christmas brought the usual events; it was great to see Ripley Morris out in good form for our usual pre-Christmas party in Etwall on the Wednesday before the big day. The rain was heavy so we cleared the tables and occupied the bar of the Hawk and Buckle along with Packington Morris Men and Pennyroyal Garland Dancers. Boxing Day saw a full Packington side out again for our traditional gathering at the Bull and Lion in Packington along with several other sides from around the area.

The festive season, and this year was rounded off superbly by The Hinckley Bullockers - Leicestershire's own Molly tradition. This is a day of dance on the Saturday before Plough Monday and is well supported by men from Anker, Packington, Anstey, Ripley and many others who practice through December for a walking tour of the villages around Hinckley. The weather was kind and the audiences kinder, with much support from the many pubs around the tour - If you have some time next year, it's a highly recommend day and your all welcome to come along!

f. Eastern

Mike Stevens (2016)

In November I sent out a survey to bagmen of all the sides in the East. This is the result:

- In the Eastern Area in 2013 there were 16 member sides and 7 associate sides. I have received reports from 13 of these sides, representing Sword, Molly, Mummers and Border, but mostly Cotswold sides. I attempt to summarise their responses here. In addition I received a very sad letter from the bagman of Standon Morris Men announcing their demise and reincarnation as a mixed side: Standon Morris. I can only share their regret and wish them success in their new form.
- Sides which responded had an average of 29 members and 12 regular attendees. The high average membership was due in part to the way a few sides retain "distant" members or have large "seasonal" participation. Clubs

report from between 2 to 15 musicians, with an average of 4 per side. Some of the musicians also dance.

- Most popular practice night is Wednesday, followed by Monday and Tuesday, but clubs with a regular dance-out favour Friday followed by Monday and Wednesday. Molly and Sword sides have no particular dance-out evening.
- Sides report between 6 and 20 regular summer gigs and between 2 and 6 winter gigs. Sword, Molly and Mummers are mostly active in the winter with just a few gigs they organise themselves (or bookings only). Festivals and community events are preferred by several. Gigs were mostly felt to be a success, but with some plans affected by pub closures.
- Collections at gigs ranged from nil ("we don't collect") to £80, with season totals reported from £265 to £800.
- The number of paid bookings averaged three with a range from nil to 8, with fees for Community events around £50 and sometimes free and for others ranging up to £280. Several reported doing events for "beer only".
- During the year five sides hosted a Day of Dance, all but one attended other people's events and two undertook a foreign adventure.
- Seven sides reported experiencing difficulties with availability of men whilst five reported no difficulties when choosing "enjoyable" events. It pays to be picky.
- Recruitment is still a live issue and a tricky one. Five sides reported not actively recruiting (possibly because it seems just too difficult to be effective). I've listed below the various strategies that were reported and this may help other bagmen.
 - New men:- thirteen were recruited in all, an average of one per side. Sides report that their members include eleven men in the 18-30 age-group and fifteen under 18 (but there may be some double counting here). However, there were 13 active members "lost", plus a few more from those living further afield or from retired members.
 - Eleven bagmen reported that 2013 was an improvement on the year before and that the mood of the side was good, positive or buoyant. Two sides reported that they have in the past discussed mixed dancing but

none is actively considering such a move and no action has been taken, apart from that by Standon Morris Men, reported above.

I asked about use of the Morris Shop.

- Three sides use the Morris Shop occasionally, two, annually, two buy bells when needed and have members who have bought hankies, books or CDs. Seven don't use it at all.
- Essential items were thought to be bells and Lionel Bacon's black book. Opinion varied on hankies, socks and recordings.
- Three sides think they could not manage without the shop, two would have difficulty, three probably could manage and four do manage without it and would continue to do so (three of these four are non-Cotswold sides).
- Suggestions for how the Morris shop might extend its useful products and services are: Coloured Leather, badge making facilities, sources of ribbon, petersham and rosettes. "We love the new Morris booklet and would appreciate more books from obscure traditions on display ". " How about negotiated rates for printing advertising material (leaflets, beer mats, etc.)?" " A directory of suppliers on the MR website and direct mail order" Also a vote in favour of CD's, handkerchiefs, Morris related books, tea-towels, tankards etc.

My questions about the Morris Shop were included before the news that it will definitely continue with a new proprietor. I can only suggest that bagmen get in touch directly with Shaun Lambley as he wants to provide the best service he can. I offer the above as a starter.

Other comments were invited:

"We discussed summer turnout and have reduced the programme by 6 Fridays, pruning at each end of the season".

"Key members of our Side are aging" (aren't we all!). "Some feedback on how other sides recruit would be good".

In answer to this last request, see below.

Strategies for recruitment: (these are worded as offered by respondents)

- We don't, they just turn up; word of mouth; chatting to people; Facebook, Friends and family.

- Using our Website & talking to friends, also leaflets and social media (to no effect so far).
- Posters in local colleges, two issues of beer mats, the second sponsored by a local brewery, plus by our performances (being out there). Advertising locally, using radio.
- Publicity and word-of-mouth. Our strategy is to publicise events and then perform well to attract interest. We have danced before a folk concert and handed out invitations to join.
- We're distributing A5 handbills when we dance out. We aim to pay for adverts in the local folk magazines (Unicorn and Puddingstone). Apart from that, we use word-of-mouth (persuading friends/relations to give it a go).

Finally, following this survey, I'd like to thank all those bagmen who were able to respond and hope that you will all find something of use within the above. Additionally, I'd like to remind people about the workshop held in Cambridge in September for *Young Cotswold dancers in the East*. It was successful and those who attended enjoyed it so much that there will be another in Thaxted on Saturday 1st March, and again on 22nd March. The intention is to foster contacts within the age-group of under-21s among sides in the East and provide a repertoire for them to perform together when they meet up informally and at regional Morris events. Watch out for an appearance at the meeting of the Morris Ring in Thaxted in May.

g. South West and Wales Jed Dunn (2014) **No Report received**

h. South Midlands Roger Comley (2015)

We have many fine Traditional sides in the South Midlands. They always are respected by their community, and by the other sides when they are invited to their events.

With the help of electronic communication the Squire's planned central list of events we can all benefit by complimenting each other's Ales, Feasts and Days of Dance. Please let the MR Bagman know about what you do, your regular events, so that we can provide more information to our public. (This is me seeking credibility with our elected leader through grovelling.)

Our newer members are usually surprised to hear about the many local customs which abound our nation, and with the help of local funding we can reach the media with more impact, please ask wisely for finance to help with the cost of new kit, printing and subsidy.

Fortunately my Manx scallops are still in good fettle and hope to be got out more this year.

Much thanks to Whitchurch and Towersey Morris Men for hosting the 18-30's weekend and seeing Matt Simons (of PMM, TKM, CMM, TM, & LMM) 'dance in', see them if you can this year.

Wassail. Roger 'Fool to the Squire'

i. **South East**

Ian Bush (2016) **No Report received**

- 16. Discussion item: The Morris Ring Archive (See below)
- 17. Future Programme.
 - a. Morris Ring Meetings 2014 and beyond. (Bagman)
 - b. Instructionals
- 18. Date and Venue of Next Meeting.
- 19. A.O.B. (Notified to Squire in advance please.)



Discussions

1. Morris Ring Archives

Archives is on the ARM agenda as a 'discussion item'. Included to raise the profile of our archive amongst the wider membership and beyond. We are seeking the opinions as to what the Morris Ring has and should keep in our archive. There is no point in maintaining such a resource if it is not used. How does your side maintain / store your scrapbooks or archive material, where it is stored and perhaps more importantly, how others can access the information therein contained? *If you are unable to add to the debate on the day please let the Squire or any of the Archive Team have your ideas and opinions prior to the meeting.*

2. Informal discussion about Instructionals

Immediately following the ARM there will be an informal discussion to examine the future of instructionals organised by Morris Ring sides. It is regrettable that the planned instructional at Uttoxeter last year had to be abandoned due to lack of take-up. We shall be examining the reasons for this and the degree of interest in future such events.

If you will not be at the ARM but would like to contribute by informing us what would entice you to come to instructionals, please email your ideas to meeting Chair, Peter Halfpenney, HPAServices@aol.com

Morris Ring Display Boards

Contact your Area Rep if you can make use of a set of the Morris Ring Display Boards.

Arrangements can be made to get them to you!



Squire's Massed Dances for 2014

This marks no change from 2013 as the Squire is content that this pool of commonly practiced dances has allowed the construction a varied and interesting programme of massed dances with which to intersperse the individual side performances. The uniform, almost regimented, displays performed by dozens of different Morris groups in as near symmetry as possible have passed but the public love massed displays:

ADDERBURY	Lads a-Bunchum	Constant Billy
BAMPTON	Banbury Bill/Rose Tree	Maid of the Mill
BLEDINGTON	Idbury Hill	Young Collins
BRACKLEY	Jockey to the Fair	
BUCKNELL	Queen's Delight	
FIELDTOWN	The Valentine	Balance the Straw
HEADINGTON QUARRY	Constant Billy	Laudnum Bunches
	Vandals of Hammerwich	
LICHFIELD		



Side Contact information: Please ensure that you let us know if you elect (or press-gang) new officers and check & change your Morris Ring *Find a Side* Entry.

Recommendation: We strongly suggest that each side creates a generic "bagman@sidename.web address". This has the twin advantages of anonymity plus as ease of administration (for you and for the Morris Ring) where post holders change.

Click here <<http://www.themorrisring.org/find-side>> and follow the instructions, to check your side's entry.



Children in Need.

At their recent annual meeting the three Morris Organisations have agreed to retain BBC Children in Need as their charity. A Presentation of the monies raised so far this year (So far this year a disappointing £2,4628) will be made at the JMO Day of Dance and every team or side in the country is being encouraged to boost this sum through additional donations.



A reminder of the bank details:

Sort Code: 40 - 41 - 44

Account number 01729780 (HSBC)

Please do not pay it directly to Pudsey.



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☺ **On-line Links:**



The main MR website with millions of pages stuffed to the gunnels with all you need to know about the MR: <http://www.themorrisring.org/>

The Morris Ring Google Group (MRGG). Private Forum for debate or announcements.

Contact Morris Ring Bagman to register to use.

<http://groups.google.com/group/the-morris-ring?hl=en&pli=1>

Morris Ring Facebook site: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Morris-Ring/158759257502840>

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



Young dancer workshops

In September, Cotswold Morris Ring sides in the eastern area cooperated to offer a dance workshop to their young dancers (under 18s), mentored by several men aged 18-20. Held in Cambridge and supported financially by the Morris Ring, it was well received and resulted in several further informal dancing occasions. *See the December Morris Ring Circular for a full account.*

The Morris Ring Officers have decided to support two further workshops in March with the aim of developing a young men's side ready to give displays at

the Cambridge JMO day of dance and the Thaxted meeting of the Morris Ring. We would like to extend participation in this project to young dancers in Cotswold sides outside the eastern area.

You will appreciate that we are subject to some practical limitations including space and the demands of school and exams.

We invite three or four dancers, in the age-range 13-15, who can be available for all four dates.

- This is not a beginner's class so dancers should be competent in several traditions with at least 2 years good experience.
- Nominations must be made to me by the Ring member side, which will be expected to pay £12 per participant and get them to the workshop location in Thaxted.

We have a Child Protection Officer and a CP policy covering participation and transport to which parents will be expected to sign up. There is a practical limitation on numbers but we will try to include all we can.

We in the East hope that by extending participation in this way sides in other areas will be encouraged to try such activities themselves.

Details required:

Name of side and your location. Estimate of the return mileage to Thaxted.

Name and age of the young dancer & brief assessment of traditions danced and competence

Availability for 1st March in Thaxted, 22nd March in Thaxted, 10th May in Cambridge and 31st May in Thaxted,

Any special considerations - eg. Diet, medical

Email to me, please (bearing in mind that the first workshop will be on 1 March). Those already enrolled need not re-apply.

PS. If your young dancer is outside the requested age-range but you feel he should be included then let me know.

Mike Stevens

Eastern Area Representative mikestevenspe11@aol.com

80th Anniversary of Foundation of the Morris Ring

4th – 6th April Devil's Dyke Morris Meeting Venue: King's Ely

Meeting full

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Saturday 10th May JMO Day of Dance Hosted by the Cambridge Morris on behalf of the Morris Ring.

MR sides booked in so far: Adlington MM; Brackley MM; Colchester MM; Dartington MM; East Suffolk MM; Greensleeves MM; Kemps Men; Leicester MM; Letchworth MM; London Pride MM; Peterborough Morris; Ripley MM; Rumford MM; Stafford MM & The Kings Morris.

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17th of May 2014 Regional 'JMO' Day of Dance in Warwick on the 17th of May 2014 Being organised by Shakespeare in conjunction with Chinewrde Morris; Plum Jerkum and Hereburgh. 20 teams are being invited and it is being split 10 to the Fed, 5 to the Open and 5 for the MR. So far 11 local MR sides have expressed an interest!

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30th May – 1st June Thaxted Morris Meeting

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

Bagman for the meeting Ian Anderson 01702 466335

iandbanderson@btinternet.com

22nd-24th August Saddleworth 40th Anniversary Rushcart

As you may know, 2014 is our 40th birthday as a side and also the 40th Saddleworth Rushcart, since we revived the local tradition after a 50 year break. The weekend will operate as a hosted meeting of Morris Ring Clubs (a 'Ring Meeting' in old money), but will follow our tried and trusted format of the last 39 years. There will be NO feast, NO speeches, NO massed dancing, NO p.a. systems, and NO bus tours. If you want all these things, this may not be the event for you!

The 'Cart is pulled around the villages of Saddleworth on the Saturday with dance spots throughout the day. On Sunday the 'Cart is pulled up to Saddleworth Church for the spreading of rushes on the Church floor, with dancing and competitions such as Gurning, Wrestling, Clog Stepping & Worst Singer, throughout the afternoon.

As in previous years, both indoor and outdoor camping will be available at a minimal cost over the weekend (approx. £5 per man/tent pitch). No other cost is charged by us, all we ask is that you buy your own food & drink over the weekend. A Morris weekend where you are in charge of how much you spend! A fact sheet will be sent out in the New Year to all sides who have accepted our invitation.

Eddie Worrall Rushcart Secretary Saddleworth MM

edworrall@gmail.com

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5th-7th Sep. Dartington Morris Meeting. **Meeting full**

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The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts

17th- 19th Oct. Annual Unconvention

Hosts: Trigg MM Venue: Cornwall

2015 Ripley;

2016 Wyvern Jubilee;

2017 Stafford



JMO Workshop: Saturday 18th October
Rickmansworth British Legion
RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL MORRIS SIDE
Cost £15.00 per person including lunch

**JOINT MORRIS
ORGANISATION**

MORRIS FEDERATION,
MORRIS RING & OPEN MORRIS

1 - Role of Officers

2 - Finance

Why have a Side Bank Account

Possible Inland Revenue Problems

Sudden death of fund holder

Paying for kit & events

3 - Insurance

Public Liability Insurance

Additional Covers

Personal Accident Insurance

4 - Constitution

Why have a constitution

Why have an AGM

5 - Organising Events

Day of Dance

Ceilidh

Publicity

6 - Morris and the Law

Public Entertainments Licence

Road Closures

Marshals & Stewards

Collecting

Application information to follow.

2015

- 16th-18th Jan Morris Ring Jigs Instructional
Dancers at ALL levels of competence a full weekend of high-quality dance coaching - even if you don't aspire to be a solo performer. jigsinstructional@themorrisring.org
- Jan 29th -1st Feb Musicians Instructional Hosts: Ripley MM
Venue: Kirky-in-Ashfield
Open to male and female musicians from three Morris organisations. More details will follow.
- March ARM Hosted by TBA
- April 11th JMO National Day of Dance in Bristol
Hosted by Rag Morris of Open Morris
- 29th - 31st May Thaxted Morris Meeting
- Late June Great Yorkshire Morris
- 4th - 6th Sept Anker Morris' 40th Anniversary

2016

- March ARM Hosted by TBA
- 3rd - 5th June Thaxted Morris Meeting

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Calendar of all Feasts, Weekends and Days of Dance



Please let the MR Bagman have outline details / dates of the Feasts, Weekends and Days of Dance & other events that you regularly organise. The MR Squire would like to have compiled a list or catalogue that could be used by all for propaganda or publicity purposes (for example the number of sides who are performing on a particular day or date across the country) or simply to help to prevent avoidable clashes of events. Information please to bagman@themorrisring.org

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Ebor Morris reunion

40 years ago on 1st May 1974 the newly-formed Ebor Morris danced in public for the first time outside the

Lord Collingwood pub in Upper Poppleton. On 1st May this year, after 40 enjoyable years dancing Cotswold and Yorkshire Longsword dances, locally, nationally and internationally, the current members (including some of the original dancers) will dance at the Lord Collingwood again from 8pm. Everyone welcome.

Then on Sunday 4th May they will also be dancing at places around the Bar Walls on their annual "Walls Tour" starting 11am at Walmgate Bar and then to Monk Bar, Bootham Bar and onwards!


They would like to reunite with any former dancers and musicians who can come and help celebrate the 40 years. Former members, or anyone who would like to join, can email: bagman@ebormorris.org.uk

Anyone who would like further information about Ebor Morris, or dance-outs including the York Traditional Dance Festival on September 6th and 7th, please email or visit the website www.ebormorris.org.uk




Morris Ring Web Site: Morris Matters

Have you spotted this new addition to our website? Peter de Courcy, our web editor is maintaining a section devoted to *News and Views from elsewhere in the Morris world*. As he says at the foot of the page - if we have overlooked your Morris news item email details to webeditor@themorrisring.org.



The Morris Ring

The National Association of
Men's Morris & Sword Dance Clubs



HomeAbout the MRMeetingsAbout MorrisFind a sideMorris MusicPublicationsShopFor sidesLinksContact

Events Diary

- 7/03/14 Annual Representatives Meeting 2014
- 4/04/14 Devil's Dyke Morris Meeting - King's Ely
- 10/05/14 Joint Morris Organisation Day of Dance Cambridge
- 30/05/14 Thaxted Annual Ring Meeting
- 22/08/14 The 40th Saddleworth Rushcart - hosted meeting of Morris Ring sides
- 5/09/14 Dartington Morris Meeting

Home

Morris Matters

News and views from elsewhere in the Morris world

Date	Side	Media	Link
13 Feb 2014	Britannia Coconutters	Lancashire Telegraph	Britannia Coconut Dancers SAVED by 1847 Act ↗
12 Feb 2014	Adderbury Village MM	Banbury Guardian	Try out for village morris men team ↗
12 Feb 2014	Britannia Coconutters	Rosendale Free Press	Britannia Coconutters saved after crunch talks with county council ↗
7 Feb 2014	Saddleworth Morris Men	Saddleworth Independent	Special honour for Morris Men in 40th year ↗
4 Feb 2014	Saddleworth Morris Men	Oldham Evening Chronicle	Morris men play a part in war drama ↗
4 Feb 2014	Redding Moreys Dauncers	GetReading	Redding Moreys Dauncers head to Wokingham to explain history of the dance ↗
31 Jan 2014	John O'Gaunt Morris Men	Lancaster Guardian	People of all ages joined in the annual Wassailing event at the Fairfield Community Orchard ↗
30 Jan 2014	Plymouth Morris Men	Plymouth Herald	Plymouth Morris Men raise cash for city charity ↗
27 Jan 2014	Peterborough Morris	Peterborough Telegraph	Morris dance group on the hunt for members ↗
22 Jan 2014	Taunton Deane Morris Men	Somerset County Gazette	Taunton Deane Morris Men raise cash for SURE ↗
18 Jan 2014	Grimsby Morris Men	Louth Leader	Morris Men Entertain in Louth ↗
17 Jan 2014	Plum Jerkum and others	Coventry Telegraph	Watch: Wassailing away the evil to save the Warwickshire cider! ↗
13 Jan 2014	Grimsby Morris Men	Grimsby Telegraph	All hail the apple Gods! Annual Waes-Hal held in Grimsby ↗
11 Jan 2014	Oakworth Village Morris Men	Keighley News	Oakworth morris dancers raise a glass to recruits ↗
9 Jan 2014	Hinckley Bullockers	Hinckley Times	Morris men set to paint village venues red ↗
8 Jan 2014	Original Border Morris	Tewksbury Ad Mag	Morris dance tour makes its annual visit ↗
6 Jan	New Zealand	Nelson Mail	Morris dancers here with bells on ↗

Visit <http://www.themorrisring.org/article/morris-matters>

Breaking news:

Britannia Coco nut Dancers

After protracted negotiations this 'announcement' has been made:

“At a meeting held last night, the Britannia Coco nut Dancers agreed in principal to proposals made to them by County Councillor Sean Surridge that should secure their Easter boundary dance for the foreseeable future. Rossendale Borough Council will invoke The Towns Police Clauses Act 1847 which will not require the Police or County Hall to become involved in a road closure notice or marshalling duties. Marshalling will be conducted by a traffic management company paid for out of public funds. The Coco nut Dancers hope to have their own trained marshals available in the near future thereby removing the need for outside assistance.”

This means that on 19th April 2014 the Annual Easter Saturday Procession, will be going ahead and starts at 9am.

Although this issue may seem unique to a few groups such as the Nutters and Saddleworth this is a problem that has the potential to affect us all in the end as the traditional support is withdrawn by councils and the police. Employing trained marshals is a costly business and the Morris Ring, along with the Open Morris and the Morris Federation, is interested to discover the experience of sides across the country - what is the attitude of the authorities in your area? Are any of your members trained, qualified marshals? Does your side have any experience of using the 1827 Highways Act, The Towns Police Clauses Act 1847 or any other legislation to enable your events to take place? If you can add anything to this debate please get in touch with the Squire of the Morris Ring.



Morris Hey Project: an up-date

Morris Hey is a multi-media teaching pack introducing schools and others to traditional Morris dancing. Consisting of a DVD, a book and CD this was conceived by Mike Ruff, filmed by Max Thomas and features the dancing of Fool's Gambit. This is a resume, from Mike, of the current situation:

The filming and editing of the DVD was finished some time ago and those who have seen the initial copies have been very favourably impressed. However there was a technical problem with those early copies which has not yet been resolved. A full assessment to find out how simple, or otherwise, it is to fix and the likely cost is to be done in the next few weeks.

The project as a whole has so far been within the original budget estimates; we just never had that money available. We have not been looking for additional funding recently while the focus was on completing the main product and sorting out various organisational issues. Clearly that situation is now changing.

So the immediate challenges are:

- Complete the Morris Hey Resource Pack so it is available for purchase
- Create a structure that allows for proper product development and marketing.

This is likely to involve additional funding and probably involvement of others and the challenge will be to find a way to do this without compromising the interests of those who have already contributed in a major way.

If there are individuals or organisations who would be interested in being involved in taking this forward whether by contributing expertise or funding then we would be very interested in hearing from you. We remain optimistic that we have a product that will take the teaching of Morris dancing forward although it is not clear whether this can be the commercial success we originally envisaged in the short term. That may depend upon the responses we get over the next few months.

Contact Mike Ruff for further information: Morris Hey Set Ltd
www.morrishey.co.uk
mikeruffmusic@btconnect.com

A suggestion from Anker MM

"As a follow-up to Ed's news about the possible cost of policing the traffic at this year's Rushcart, we should like to make a suggestion, presuming the ongoing discussion with the local authorities do not bear financial fruit. As regular attendees at the Rushcart for many years, we regard it as one of the highlights of the Morris year, and would happily make a contribution to the costs for the enjoyment it gives. Where else would you get a weekend like it for only the expenses you choose to incur?"

We are pledging a donation of £50 from the team as and when needed, and suggest other attendees consider something similar, either as a team or on a donation/man basis. If we all do that, given the numbers, it should go a long way to meet the costs involved."

Joe Oldaker Bagman, Anker MM

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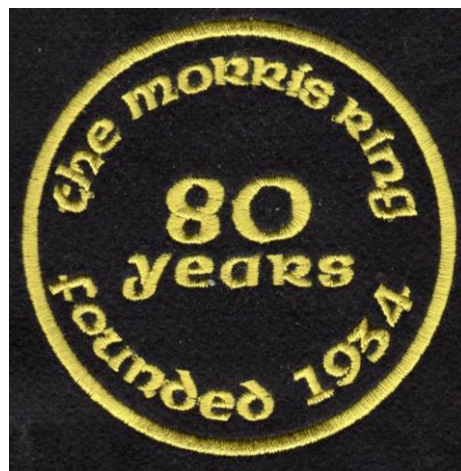
Morris Ring 80th Anniversary Polo and Rugby Shirts.

You can now purchase polo or rugby shirts in a selection of colours embroidered with the Morris Ring 80th Anniversary logo, and have your own wording as well from www.snappycrab.co.uk.

You can use debit cards, but not credit cards for your purchase; choose your colour and add your own wording on the chest or sleeve.

Go to the website, select Home and scroll down to The Morris Ring, or use the following link:

<http://www.snappycrab.co.uk/products/92/-the-morris-ring/>



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And finally...

Please remember to let me have details of your regular events and that it is not too late to apply to attend the Morris Ring ARM. I hope to see you there but if you cannot make it and have any questions that you would like to ask or comments that you would like to make about any of the reports being presented to the ARM or concerning the Archive discussion item please contact your Area Rep., or one of the Officers of the Morris Ring: Robin, Steven or myself.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charlie". A long, sweeping horizontal line extends from the end of the signature towards the right side of the page.

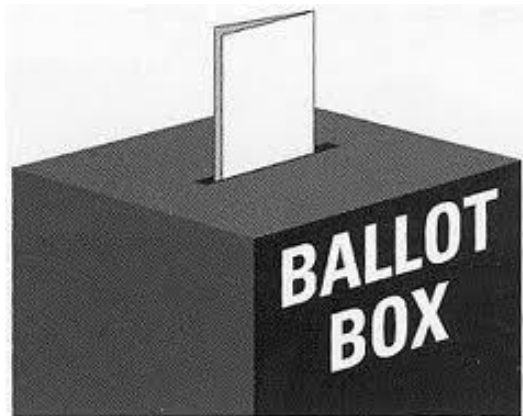
Bagman of the Morris Ring

Appendix 1

A reminder of the Morris Ring voting procedures:

The Squire shall appoint a returning officer and a deputy who will take responsibility for the collection and counting of votes and returning the result to the Squire.

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



The name of each club submitting a voting slip will be marked on a voting register. The voting slips should not bear the name of the submitting club.

Single transferable voting system. The key point is our use of the single transferable voting system whenever there are more than two candidates for an office:

Please clearly NUMBER the candidates in order of preference.

1= First choice;

2 = Second Choice and so on.

EQUALITY OF VOTES - A DRAW

In the event of equality or, at the discretion of the Returning Officer, a near equality of votes, the result should first be verified by a recount, to eliminate any doubts or concerns about the count.

In the case of continued equality, the Ring adopts the relevant instructions for Returning Officers in Local and Parliamentary Elections:

The Returning Officer marks a blank ballot paper for each of the two tied candidates, folds them, and places them in a suitable receptacle and then draws one ballot 'blind'. The candidate for whom it is marked is awarded one more vote.

POSTAL VOTES



Postal votes may be submitted to the Bagman of the Morris Ring by those clubs not personally represented at the ARM. The voting slip, posted to the Bagman / Bagwoman of each Member side with the printed version of this Newsletter, should be used for this purpose and be enclosed in a sealed envelope bearing the name of the member club on whose behalf the vote is submitted.

The envelope will be checked by the Returning Officer to ensure the submitting club has voting rights. The club's name will be marked on the register of clubs as having voted. The voting slip will be added to those ready for sorting/counting and the envelope discarded.

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

Due to the vagaries of the Snail Mail system Postal Votes should be posted to reach the Bagman of the Morris Ring by 5th March 2014.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF WINNER

The name of the winner is announced to the meeting as soon as the result is known.

In keeping with the principle of 'open' democracy, the number of votes will be made known. The Returning Officer will also announce the number of spoilt papers and summarise the reasons for their exclusion.

Australia's Oldest Morris Side, **The Perth Morris Men**
Invite you to our

40th Anniversary Ale

Our first performance in public was
in March 1974 in Hay Street, Perth.

To commemorate 40 years of performing we
Would like to invite you to an ALE!

5th to 7th September, 2014

RSVP by 25th July 2014.

*But indicative numbers from sides would be appreciated a.s.a.p. to
assist with planning.*

Contact details:

Email:

Phone:

Steve Mansfield

squire@perthmorrismen.org

0400731049



Inaugural performance of Perth Morris Men in Hay Street, Perth in March 1974

the MORRIS RING
founded 1934