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Newsletter No. 97

December 2015

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*The officers of the Morris Ring
would like to wish all of you the very
best for the festive season.*



Future Events

2016

15th – 17th January **Jigs Instructional**

An intensive weekend of tuition in jigs for the main Cotswold traditions, all levels of experience and expertise accommodated with expert and patient tuition, excellent food, hospitality and beer. All for £47. See the advert later in this edition.

21st February **Longborough Instructional**

The first Harry Taylor's Men workshop, exploring the Longborough tradition of Cotswolds morris, will take place on Sunday 21st February, 2016. The workshop will be held at The Lost Theatre in Stockwell, London - SW8 2JU. <http://www.losttheatre.co.uk/index.php/your-visit/find-us>. The workshop will begin at 10 AM and end at 4 PM, with a lunch break around 12:30 when there will be the option to visit an excellent local pub, The Priory Arms, for food and refreshment.

The workshop starts from the premise that it should be possible for a team of dancers to perform a stand of 5 Longborough dances, and yet current popular interpretation renders the average dancer, having danced properly, incapable of performing more than one. We aim to re-introduce to the Morris world an interpretation of Henry Taylor's Longborough that we argue is more pleasing to the eye, more suited to the body, and offers tunes played more lyrically to the ear.

Please contact David Thompson at dwhthompson@yahoo.co.uk if you would like to attend the workshop.

5th March **ARM Hosted by Uttoxeter / Stafford MM.**

See later in this issue for details.

23rd April

JMO day of dance, York

Hosted by the Minster Strays, see details below. Applications to the Ring Bagman urgently, please – only 14 places to allocate.

3rd – 5th June

Thaxted Morris Meeting

11th June

Letchworth regional JMO day of dance

Day of dance open to sides from all Morris organisations. Applications directly to Letchworth Bagman Andrew Harper on harperandrew937@gmail.com.

8th – 10th July

Greensleeves MM 90th Anniversary Meeting

Based in Chipperfield village, near Hemel Hempstead. For more information contact bagman@greensleevesmorris.org.uk or look on the Greensleeves website.

15th – 17th July

East Surrey MM 90th Anniversary Meeting

Based in and around Tadworth, provisional cost £60-70.

20th – 21st August

Saddleworth Rushcart Meeting

2nd – 4th September

East Suffolk Meeting

*Plans are progressing well for the East Suffolk Ring Meeting. Although they have had considerable support from clubs in the South and East they would be pleased to have expressions of interest from clubs further afield, particularly from North West or Sword teams. They would appreciate communication from clubs before **January 20th**. Please remember that it may be possible to offer your young dancers a small bursary. Contact mike.garland1@btinternet.com*

28th – 30th October **Fools and Beasts Unconvention**

Hosted by Wyvern Jubilee.

2017

March **ARM** Hosted by TBA

2nd – 4th June **Thaxted Morris Meeting**

9th – 11th June **Hartley 65th Anniversary Meeting** (details TBA)

28th – 30th July **Ravensbourne Meeting** (details TBA)

JIGS THE MORRIS RING

15-17 January

Instructional 2016

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FEAST

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BEER
AND CIDER

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AND ALL LEVELS OF ACCOMPLISHMENT
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1st/2nd timer discounts. SOLD OUT IN 2015!

Booking info at www.themorrisring.org or get in touch with the Bagman, Tony Foard: jigsinstructional@themorrisring.org.

Joint Morris Organisations' National Day of Dance 2016 in York

Organised by the Morris Federation and Minster Strays Morris

Where and when?

In York on Saturday 23rd April 2016 from 10 am to 5 pm

How do we get to be part of this event?

Contact your side's Morris organisation (The Morris Federation, The Morris Ring or Open Morris) as soon as possible, and at the latest by **31st January** with the following information:

- Side name
- Contact name
- Contact email
- Contact mobile phone
- Website address
- Dance style (e.g. Cotswold, North-West, Rapper, Border, Molly, Longsword, ...)
- Approximate number attending (only for information)
- Will your side be staying in the York area for Saturday evening?
- Any additional notes (e.g. children's side...)

Please note that The Morris Federation would prefer it if teams did not have to share musicians to allow dance tours to be as mixed as possible.

Places will be limited to 55, and allocated in proportion 55% - 25% - 20% so there will be room for 30 Federation sides, 14 Morris Ring sides and 11 Open Morris sides.

What's the programme?

Dancing in York during the day at a number of dance spots within walking distance of each other, followed by all teams gathering together at the end of the afternoon for a massed social dance, which will conclude the formal programme for the day. There will also be an opportunity to get together in the evening for music, singing and socialising, and hopefully a ceilidh.

You will be responsible for your own travel, accommodation, food and drink at your own cost. Information on accommodation, transport links, park+ride, cafés, pubs etc. will be provided through the [JMO Day of Dance website](#), which will be updated on a regular basis. However, please do not book travel and accommodation until your place is confirmed.

So, if you would like to join us, please remember to let your Morris organisation know as soon as possible before **31st January**, so that Minster Strays Morris can make the final arrangements with full knowledge of the number and styles of teams attending.

Morris Ring Annual Representatives' Meeting, 5th March 2016

Elections

At the 2016 ARM we shall be electing a new Squire of the Morris Ring and several Area Representatives are due for triennial election/re-election.

Squire of the Morris Ring

There is one candidate for Squire of the Morris Ring, Eddie Worrall.

Personal statement:

"I started Morris dancing in the mid-1990's when I joined a Cotswold side, Green Oak Morris Men, my home town team in Doncaster.

Following a work move to Manchester, I joined Saddleworth Morris Men in 2000 and have danced with them since. I have been the team's Treasurer, Rushcart Secretary (twice) with responsibility for organising our Rushcart weekend and am now Squire of the side. I also served as Treasurer of the Morris Ring during the period 2009-2012, taking over from Steve Adamson (BFB) who was a valuable source of help and advice. I currently am a member of the Morris Ring Advisory Council and act as Morris Ring Auditor.

A major change in the Morris world in my time has been the emergence of the JMO with greater communication and co-operation between the 3 Morris Organisations. The Morris Ring has played a full part in this. Working together across the Morris world on areas of common concern has brought significant benefits to all. I believe it will continue to do so and would work for that. Issues such as recruitment or sides folding remain as pressing as ever and initiatives already in place need to be supported and developed. There are no quick answers but despair is not an option we can accept.

Whatever else, we must remember we dance Morris because we enjoy it!"



Eddie is nominated by Jockey Morris Men:

Jockey are honoured and delighted to support Ed Worrall's nomination as Squire of the Morris Ring. We've known Ed around fifteen years and always held him in high regard; he is friendly, approachable and very knowledgeable about morris.

Best known as a member of Saddleworth, Ed started with Cotswold in Doncaster; from 1996 dancing and playing melodeon for Green Oak, a side he still has close ties with.

2000 saw the birth of the Ed Worrall everyone in morris knows; joining Saddleworth as dancer and musician. Within two years he'd become treasurer, putting that role aside to take on arguably one of the most high-profile roles in morris – Rushcart Secretary. Ability to work with all types of people from councils to police and residents to merrismen ensured this landmark event ran successfully.

In 2009 Ed was elected Ring Treasurer, a role held until 2012. During his tenure, apart from Ring affairs, Ed was involved with JMO. His people skills enabled him to forge excellent working relationships with officers of Fed and Open; relationships that still hold.

After two more Rushcarts Ed is now squire of Saddleworth.

He is well-known at dance-outs, festivals and feasts across the country; either as an individual guest, or part of Saddleworth. He keeps his finger on the pulse of current morris, particularly through social media; Ed contributes wise comments on many threads, covering the whole morris continuum.

Ed has the experience, knowledge, support and personality to be an excellent Squire. Jockey fully supports his nomination.

Area Representatives (year of re-election in brackets)

North Midlands, Ben Robinson
(2018)

West Midlands, Peter Simpson
(2017)

South Midlands, Roger Comley
(2018)

Eastern, Mike Stevens (2016)

Northern, Paul Cross (2018)

South Wales and West, Tim
Sercombe (2017)

North West, David Loughlin (2017)

South East, Cliff Marchant (2018)

North East, Brian Pollard (2016)

Mike Stevens has decided not to stand again; Nigel Strudwick of Devil's Dyke Morris Men has been nominated for the position:

Nigel Strudwick has been a member of Devil's Dyke MM since 1992. He has been their Bagman in 1996-1999 and 2010-2011, and Squire in 2003-2006 and again in 2015. He was a strong advocate of DDMM finally applying for full membership of the Ring.

An Egyptologist by profession, at universities and museums, he has many publications to his credit. Other interests apart from Egypt and the Morris are wine, railways and blues music.

Sadly Missed

Roy Dommatt 1933 - 2015



Mike Garland writes:

Roy Dommatt first saw Morris Dancing at Bristol University in the early 1950s. He followed the Morris Side during the summer and the Rapper Team in the winter, but although he was asked to carry the collecting tin he did not start to dance until after University, when a friend invited Roy to help form a new Morris Side in Farnborough.

Through their musician, Reg Hall, he was introduced to Frank Purslow, and to Abingdon Morris Men. He was with them for twelve years,

but also had connections with other Sides, including Oxford City and Thames Valley. He was working at the time on the Blue Streak project, but when it was cancelled he found that he had a two year period when little was happening, so Roy took to investigating the recent history of the dance. He went to see every surviving collector, and every surviving member of the original Travelling Morrice team – Kenworthy Schofield, Douglas Kennedy, Maud Karpeles, Clive Carey. Using the information he gathered from them and from original field notes he began to run instructional sessions, often helped by Tubby Reynolds.

I spent a day with Roy and Marguerite in June 2011. It was perhaps not so much an interview as a gentle ramble through many topics, but there were interesting points made. Talking of the old Cotswold Sides he said, “The notations are only the core – the dances could be elaborated.” In Eynsham – “Each man had a range of favourite figures, so if he was No.1 he would call his own figures.” He spoke of the eventual stabilisation of the dances, largely because there were so few dancers. Four at Bampton one year, four at Abingdon, so visiting dancers had to be drafted in to the teams. In some of his comments Roy echoed the sentiments of Ivor Allsop. Ivor once said that young dancers should have one foot in the past but two in the future. Roy spoke about including jive and Bunny Hop in his folk dance sessions, and the need for Morris dancers to take on some elements of classical dance and acting. “A little

bit of acting training would do wonders for the average Morris Side.” Dancers, he suggested, should be on the balls of their feet, should look as if they are enjoying their dance, and should make eye contact with the audience. As with any time spent with Roy there was much laughter, much to consider, a little controversy, but an overwhelming sense of pleasure at having been able to spend time in company of a great personality.

Dennis Salt

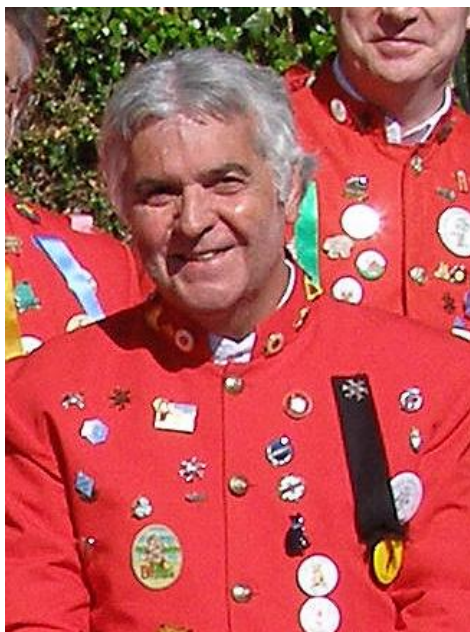
Dennis started dancing in the 1940's with Thames Valley and became the first Squire of the Broadwood side. He died on 11th November aged 85.

John Havercroft

John, squire of North Wood Morris 2007-2011, lost his battle with leukaemia on 11th November. Stephen Collingwood, current North Wood squire, recalls his infectious smile and as a “general piss-taker and deflator of pomposity.”

Vic Godrich

Greensleeves member Vic Godrich passed away on 19th November. As far as we are aware, he was the only morris man to have won a BAFTA (for sound recording in 1987).



Ben Green

Brian Pearce of Redcar Sword writes: Ben Green passed away on Thursday 26 November 2015 at the age of 71.

Ben was an active member of Redcar Sword Dancers from 1968 to 2008 until ill health eventually forced him to give up an activity that he greatly loved. During this time he performed a number of roles at our annual Boxing Day performance of the Greatham Sword Dance and Play, and appeared twice

with the team at the EFDSS Albert Hall events. He was also part of the winning team on a number of occasions at the Sword Dance Union's Longsword Tournament. Despite moving away from the area for work reasons for a couple of years, he would always try to join us whenever we had bookings at festivals, becoming what we termed a 'country member'.

Ben was also a fine singer and a regular performer for many years at the Cutty Wren Folk Club and the now defunct Eston Folk Club.

Noted for his sense of fun and an enviable memory for people and names he will be sadly missed.

Malcolm Walker



Malcolm Walker passed away on Monday 7 December 2015 at the age of 62

Malcolm was an active member of Redcar Sword Dancers from 1973 to 1986 when he moved out of the area. During his time with the team, he was part of the Boxing Day team at Greatham either as a dancer, clown or doctor. He could also be called upon to be our musician on occasion with a huge six barrelled harmonica that looked like the spokes of a wheel! Malcolm also danced with Redcar offshoots, Cleveland Morris and the Cleveland Country Dance Team.







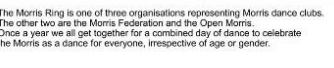
Malcolm will be sadly missed by all that knew him.

Morris Ring Display Boards

Are you making full use of this asset?

If you have any opportunity to make use of one of the five sets we possess please contact your Area Rep or the Ring Bagman.

If you want to use them, even if a set is not currently in your area, arrangements can be made to get a set to you.

<h2 style="font-family: serif;">the morris ring</h2>		
<p>The Morris Ring</p> <p>The Morris Ring is an organisation for men's clubs. Every year our members can be seen dancing out during the summer, either on their own or in the company of dancers from other clubs who have been invited along to share a day or a weekend of dance. We hold a number of special meetings of the Morris Ring each year at which clubs from all over the country come together to dance. The most important of these is the annual meeting in early June in Thaxted in Essex, the town where the Morris Ring was founded in 1934.</p> <p>You can find out more about the Morris Ring by visiting our web site at:</p> <p>www.themorrisring.org</p> <p>On our home page there are links which will enable you to find the Morris clubs in your area.</p> 	<p>Morris Dancing</p> <p>Morris dances are the national folk dances of England and have a recorded history going back six hundred years. In this display you will see examples of the various styles of dance which have developed over the centuries and which are performed today in all parts of the country. Why do we do it? That is an easy question to answer. It is because we enjoy it and for the fun and friendship which comes with being a member of a Morris dancing club.</p> 	<p>A Potted History</p> <p>Over the centuries the popularity of Morris dancing has waxed and waned but by the latter part of the 19th century dancing had died out in many parts of the country. By great good fortune in 1899 there was a chance encounter between Headington Quarry Morris Men in Oxford and Cecil Sharp, a professional musician. Following this meeting, Sharp devoted the rest of his life to the collection of English folk songs and dances. As a result of his work and the work of others who were inspired by him, there was a great revival of interest in our folk traditions in the 20th century and especially in the 1960s and 1970s.</p> 
<p>Fools and Animals</p> <p>Often the dancers are accompanied by a fool, whose job is to engage the audience with humorous banter and ensure that they are paying attention to the dance. Many clubs have made an animal head which is mounted on a pole and attached to a cloak. One of the dancers entertains the audience by going among them underneath the cloak and snapping the animal's jaws together.</p> 	<p>Regional Styles of Morris Dancing</p> <p>Most people are familiar with the Cotswold style of dance which comes from the counties of the West Midlands and which is characterised by the use of sticks and handkerchiefs. Other styles of dance have evolved in other parts of the country. There are sword dances from the North and the rapper, or shortsword dances from the North East. In the North West there are the processional dances, which are often performed in clogs. The Border style comes from the counties bordering Wales and there are the Molly dancers from East Anglia. Mummers' plays come from all parts of the country.</p> 	<p>Looking to the Future</p> <p>There are probably more people Morris dancing today than at any time in the past and our clubs are always keen to recruit new members. Many Clubs are involved in teaching young people to dance through programmes with schools, the Scout organisation and other youth groups.</p> 
<p>The Joint Morris Organisation</p> <p>The Morris Ring is one of three organisations representing Morris dance clubs. The other two are the Morris Federation and the Open Morris. Once a year we all get together for a combined day of dance to celebrate the Morris as a dance for everyone, irrespective of age or gender.</p> 	<p>How about you ?</p> <p>Would you like to try Morris dancing to see if it does for you what it does for us? Many clubs hold special sessions for potential members to come along and try it out. Find your local clubs by following the links on our web site and go along and meet the dancers. Before long you too could be a Morris dancer!</p>	
<p style="font-size: 2em; font-family: serif;">founded 1934</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-family: serif;">www.the morris ring.org</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-family: serif;">founded 1934</p>		

This is what the complete set of three banners looks like.

Morris Ring Publications

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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/>

Follow the latest media reports concerning Morris Matters at <http://www.themorrisring.org/article/morris-matters>

The Morris Ring Google Group (MRGG). Private Forum for debate or announcements. <http://groups.google.com/group/the-morris-ring?hl=en&pli=1>

Contact the Morris Ring Bagman to register to use.

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

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

The Morris Shop *"the Bells and Whistles"*

<http://www.themorrisshop.com/store/index.php?route=common/home>

Call for Contributions

Any items of Morris-related news, please send to me at bagman@themorrisring.org for inclusion in the next Newsletter. Longer pieces to Tony Foard, please, for the Circular.

If you have any photographs, you can send them to Duncan Broomhead, the Morris Ring Photo Archivist (duncan.broomhead@btinternet.com) and any articles, ideally accompanied with photographs, can be submitted to Tony Foard, the Editor of the Morris Ring Circular, details above.

Cliff Marchant, Keeper of the Morris Ring Scrapbook, is always delighted to receive appropriate contributions, and Charlie Corcoran, the Keeper of the Morris Ring Log Book, is keen to receive stories about Ring events, both the formal and the quirky (Charliecorcoran7@ntlworld.com).

