

ISSUE 68

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# The Morris Ring *Circular*

## AMAZING ADELAIDE!

Inaugural meeting at 35 degrees south "impeccably" hosted by South Australia's finest. Morris Ring Treasurer **Steven Archer** was there.

At a distance of 10,000 miles from the UK, Adelaide was always going to be the most distant meeting. Inevitably that would also make it the most expensive to attend but with ten days of events it also became the most protracted meeting. Further more as we travelled from Adelaide to Melbourne, a distance of 450 miles, it became the longest tour, staying at three different locations. If the "walk" at Halls Gap is included then we must have recorded the greatest change in altitude and I certainly know of no other meeting which crossed into a different time zone. Certainly the organisation and commitment of

the Adelaide men and their wives was superlative as was our relief to find that the very laid back Australian approach of "no worries mate – everything will be just fine" was, in fact, a quite masterly understatement. Actually everything was just amazing and worked incredibly well, despite the exceptional challenges. As a bonus we doubled our membership in Australia by recruiting Perth MM.

It's worth looking at just what Adelaide MM achieved over 10 days. First they hosted a meeting of the Morris Ring which included stops in a winery, a bierhaus and a brewery, whilst providing accommodation for our families.



Adelaide Morris Men

This was just the opener to the tour. On the Monday we toured the Southern Vales wine region before dining at a restaurant owned by one of the side. On Tuesday we

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Adelaide Morris Men and guests gather for the 335<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Morris Ring, 5<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> April

☞ p.1

were treated to a day tour of Adelaide and an Ale in the Wheatsheaf which proved that Australians don't just drink Fosters a n d Castlemaine XXXX.



Steven Archer

Then we set off on a 5 day tour to Melbourne, stopping off at Halls Gap and Daylesford with a little bit of mountaineering (it was a 1,500 ft descent), nature spotting and even some star gazing as well as numerous dancing spots.

It's worth putting this in a UK context. It's rather like someone running a Morris Ring meeting in London and then taking everyone off to visit the Yorkshire Moors and then a couple of days in Northumbria before dropping into Edinburgh. I know of no UK side to attempt such a thing. This was a truly amazing achievement.

It's also worth looking at some of the little things that went on. Whilst the men were having their meeting, the WAGS and WADS (yes, there were daughters as well) were being entertained by the wives of Adelaide MM. After that, many of the men were billeted with their wives for two more days. Nobody from the UK brought any bedding and so 30 sets of linen and towels were m a g i c a l l y produced, only to be produced clean and tidy again on arrival in Daylesford. Usually men go to a Morris Ring meeting with a small weekend bag, but not here; most had 20+ kg of international luggage for a month in Australia. This was effortlessly transported the best part of 500 miles, and then the Adelaide MM had to return the same distance

“ This was a truly amazing achievement...a very hard act to follow ”

after we all left them in Melbourne. However, my personal award has to go to the genius who selected the pub near Bordertown. Whoever it was obviously realised that whilst the lads were in the pub having a beer and changing their watches by ½ hour, the girls really needed to

have something to keep them occupied, so he managed to find a pub that was right next door to Australia's number one drapery; genius! What more can I say? Thank you, Adelaide, for an unforgettable experience; we look forward to

seeing you here in the UK next year and hope to be able to reciprocate. It will be a very hard act to follow.

More photos of the Adelaide Meeting at <http://goo.gl/uGcuit>.

(Other Facebook albums are available.)

## Perth to Adelaide via Canberra - the long way around!

Perth Morris Men's **Steven Mansfield** sings the praises of the Morris – Australian style.

In April last it was suggested that the Perth Morris Men should make another appearance at the National Folk Festival in Canberra (the previous one was back in 2007). Back in July the previous year we were invited by the Adelaide Morris Men to attend the Morris Ring meeting in Adelaide which was scheduled for a week after the National Folk Festival. The Adelaide Morris Men are our nearest Cotswold side. They are only about 2,700 km (1,680 miles) away – a bit far to go for a practice!

Anyway, back to the trip. Perth Morris Men (PMM) decided that attending both events was a good idea and worked towards that end. In the end we only just had the

minimum number (six) dancers plus two musicians Terry and Rosie. Perth is reputed to be “the most remote capital” in the world and consequently we (PMM) don't often get a chance to see other sides performing so it was with great excitement that we embarked on the trip over East. The National



Perth Morris Men

Folk Festival at Easter was great with five other Australian sides plus other Morris personnell swelling the numbers. There were “Massed Morris” events, a Morris Showcase (where individual sides could do something different), a Jig Display and numerous workshops.

After it was all over three of our number went their own way and the rest of us piled into an eight

seater for a road trip to Adelaide. We arrived on the Thursday evening after having travelled along the scenic “Great Ocean Road.”

First event of the Adelaide Ring meeting was the “Meet & Greet” at the Daniel O'Connell Hotel where it was time to both renew old acquaintances and make some new ones – in particular with those who had travelled even further than we had! After sufficient “lubrication” and conviviality it was off to the Rymill Centre – a Scout training centre to find our bunks and get some sleep.

Breakfast was enjoyed at the centre prior to hopping on board a substantial sized bus (there were quite a few of us) to go for a tour around the Adelaide Hills kicking off with a visit to Mount Lofty for a few dances to the amazement of the locals which included quite a few

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# Squire's Capers



**Robin Springett,**  
Squire of the Morris  
Ring, looks back on  
the first six months  
of 2013.

Of course, I was out with Dartington on New Year's Day, at Hope Cove, where we enjoyed good weather and a very appreciative crowd. However, for me, 2013 really cracked off with the Stafford Feast, held on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> January in the splendidly modernised village hall. A great time was had by all, and I should just like to say a big thank you to John Edwards and his wife for making all of us so welcome. Unfortunately the Jigs Instructional had to be cancelled at short notice by Geoff Jerram due to adverse weather. However, the Winchester Feast on Sat 2 February was up to the usual standard, though my loyalties were tested somewhat, given that it was such a major weekend in the Six Nations tournament!

The following day, it was up to Hertfordshire for the Annual Meeting of the Joint Morris Organisation. The President of the Morris Federation, Barry Goodman, is current Chairman of the JMO. It was my first meeting, and interesting

and lively would be a good way to describe it, but with an underlying wish to take forward items of common interest, share expertise and promote the Morris. Among the items was the establishment of a JMO website, which will be the first stop for people wanting to find out about the history and traditions of the Morris, and there will be a calendar of major events, together with links to the websites of Open Morris, the Morris Federation and the Morris Ring, and information about the JMO. One of the items

will be the charity supported by the JMO, currently Children in Need, and the amazing sum of £10,000 raised by since last November [see page 5]. It was agreed that the JMO will continue to urge sides to collect for this charity, not only because of what it does, but also because of the publicity for the Morris. We also discussed the well-publicised difficulties associated with crowd safety and management encountered by the Britannia Coconut Dancers this year. The JMO will be issuing guidance to sides how to approach such challenges; one thing is sure, it won't go away! I am a fan of the JMO; it is good to get together with representatives of the other organisations. However, it is important to keep our own identity, and I am not an advocate of anything else, but there is more common interest drawing us

“  
*Lively would  
be a good way to  
describe it*  
”


together, than history splitting us apart, I think. Dartington hosted our annual quiz night, with our friends from Exeter and Plymouth MM joining us. The tradition is that the winning team sets the questions for next year; Exeter set the questions this year, and Plymouth will next year, but it was a great evening, with the room and food provided by the ever-popular Dartmouth Arms in Totnes. On 25<sup>th</sup> February, Dartington, plus 9 other sides, were in Exeter for the *Lock-In* Morris show. We were blessed with a beautiful evening, and dancing before the show on the streets of Exeter was quite a delight. The show itself was really

amazing, but you have all probably seen it by now anyway. Afterwards, we danced and socialised with various sides in the bar of the Phoenix theatre, until they threw us out!

The ARM was hosted by Whitchurch at the Paralalympic Centre at Stoke Manderville, and my thanks to John Bush, Nigel Cox and all the Whitchurch Morris Men, together with those who hosted instructionals, for a very professional hosting, and for all the effort put in to ensure things ran smoothly. Charlie has done a fine job of drafting the Minutes in Newsletter No 84, so I won't repeat here. However, I will flag up my appeal to sides hosting Meetings of Morris Ring Clubs to get hold of the costs and keep them down.

All of a sudden, mid-March was upon me, and Julia and I were heading for Heathrow. It's a long time since I was last in Australia, but Dartington had hosted Adelaide for one evening on their last tour of England, and it seemed too good an opportunity to miss. So we looked at the map and our diaries and went ahead and booked. We planned to spend 5 nights in Singapore, where I had lived for 4 years as a young man (and where my eldest son was born), fly onto Brisbane, then to Cairns, Sydney, Adelaide for the Ring Meeting and finally fly back to London from Melbourne.

It's not here that I shall dwell on the tourist aspects of my time away, but I will pick up the story on 3<sup>rd</sup> of April, when Julia and I arrived in Adelaide to “do the tourist thing” for a couple of days. The weather was really good: dry, warm, almost hot during the day and cool at night; if it stayed like this then the meeting would be wonderful. We arranged to meet up with our host

 p.3 family on the Friday lunchtime. Bill and Maggie turned out to be delightful and made us really welcome, showing us to their period bungalow near the beach. In the evening, we left for the Adelaide Hills and the Rymill Scout centre, our venue for the duration of the Morris Ring meeting, and wonderfully located amid scenery and gum trees, with sulphur-crested cockatoos noisily settling down to roost. We settled in and met up with our hosts. The guys were very generous with the beer and it was included in the price of the weekend. As the evening progressed, renewed acquaintance was made with the guys from home, including our Treasurer, and we met up with the host side, plus a side from Perth, and guys from the now defunct sides: Whyalla, Sydney and, from Melbourne, Britannia. Singing ensued, and the evening was brought to a close in traditional style with cheese and pickles.

After breakfast we headed down to the bus, which took the whole caboodle, less a few of the host side, for our first stop at Mt Lofty, where the clear air, sunshine and appreciative crowds set the tone. For the dancing we had the host side, Perth, Thaxted, Mersey and Foresters, plus a scratch side made up with men from Letchworth, Ravensbourne, Cambridge, myself and others, making a total of 6 sides; not bad at all. From then on it was a succession of good stops with a beer or wine as the theme. Lunch was somewhat of a novelty; we stopped at the Tilbrook Estate winery, where for a small contribution we had wine tasting before receiving a packed lunch brought by our hosts on the coach (is there a lesson here?).

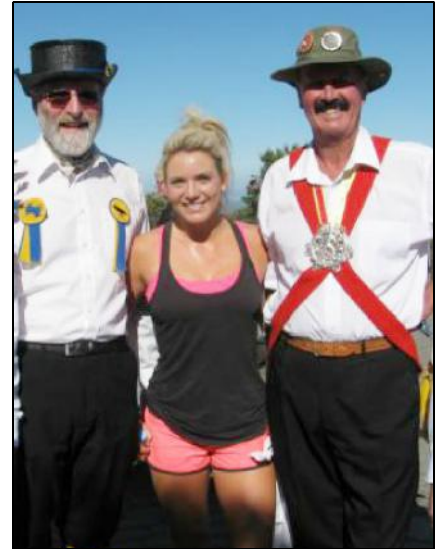
The formula was repeated in the afternoon, and we ended back at the Scout centre for tea and the feast. Despite the programme saying a 7 pm start for the feast, we actually got underway at 6.30. I am afraid that I was wrong footed, as it was to be a self-service affair. I know now that I should have got everyone to table, said grace and lit the candles, before queuing for the

meal; that is not what I did, and due to a delay between the first batch of food and the next, we got off to a poor start. Well, I am learning, and it was Adelaide Morris Men's first attempt at a Morris Ring meeting. As they say, "No worries." We soon got back on track, and as the feast was only two courses, we were soon into the singing, before the toasts and a short speech from the guest of honour, the President of The Royal Society of St George, South Australia Branch. After the feast, there was some dancing, lots of singing, and an amazing amount of chat!

Next morning we went to the nearby Blackwood Uniting Church for a pleasant family service; the minister being the wife of one of the host side. Dancing outside the church followed before it was on the bus to gently make our way down from the hills towards Port Adelaide, where we were due to dance in the afternoon. Lunch was at the Brewboys Micro Brewery, where their excellent ale, beer and lager went down well with our packed lunch, supplemented by freshly grilled prawns – wonderful! After lunch, we proceeded to the Lighthouse Hotel on the quay at Port Adelaide, where in front of the old lighthouse; there is a fine area for dancing. We danced here for nearly 2 hours, entertaining shoppers from the adjacent quay shopping centre, passers-by and hotel patrons alike. Then it was on the bus to return to the Scout centre for everyone except me and my host; so my thanks and goodbyes were made. I was to join up with the wives of our hosts and the wives and family who had travelled from the U.K.

The Morris Ring meeting was over, but for some, a week-long tour terminating in Melbourne was arranged. I shall leave others to describe that; suffice it to say I had a brilliant time and was impeccably hosted throughout. Many thanks to the Adelaide Morris Men for organising the meeting; well done guys! And a big thank you to the sides and individuals from England, without whom there would have been no real meeting.

As an aside, Perth Morris Men impressed me with their consistent dancing over the weekend, and



**Rank has its privileges:** Treasurer & Squire comfort a distressed local.

*Editor's note: only one of these hats was allowed back into Blighty.*

after talking to our Treasurer, I invited them publicly to apply to join the Morris Ring; happily, I can confirm that they have! OK, so can I look forward to an invitation to an Ale in Perth before I step down as Squire?

I was only home one full day before we were off to Exeter for the JMO Day of Dance; again blessed with 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&WA Rep – thanks Jed – and I managed to see most of them. 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, I say. 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 by music and singing in the local pubs. I had a truly entertaining and



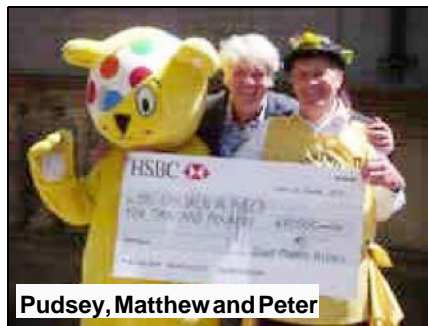
p.4 memorable day.

May Day was also blessed with really good weather, and Dartington danced inside Totnes Castle, an English Heritage property (which they charge us £75 to use!). Apart from 40 or so spectators, not including children and dogs, ITV South West were there and the 6pm News carried quite a good piece, including an interview with me. Somebody must watch ITV: I walked into a bar in Spain the other day, and someone said, "Saw you on TV!" There is no hiding place these days. Finally, an appeal to all sides out there. If you organise something on a regular basis, say an Ale, DoD, Tour, or whatever, please let our Bagman know. We are trying to construct a database of all the Morris events, just so we can show how vibrant our tradition really is!

Wassail,

*Robin*

## Pudsey benefits from Morris Dancing



Pudsey, Matthew and Peter

**Peter Halfpenney**, Immediate Past Squire of the Morris Ring, presents Pudsey Bear with a cheque for £10,000 in support of BBC Children in Need on behalf of the Joint Morris Organisations. The money had been collected by Morris dancing sides from all over the country during the previous year.

Pudsey Bear was accompanied by actor and TV presenter, Matthew Kelly.

Further details of the 2013 Morris appeal and how to contribute can be found on the Morris Ring website at [www.themorrisring.org](http://www.themorrisring.org).

# Leaping onwards

## Paul Cross owns up to mis-spending his youth with the distressingly energetic Morris 18-30.



**Making it look easy:** vertical aspiration from Winchester Morris Men's Mike Burke, supported by Alun Davies of Leeds Morris Men at the 2012 Morris 18-30 weekend.

At the tender age of 18 I stepped off a train in Leicester for my very first ever Morris 18-30 weekend. Having a few hours to spare, I decided to walk the short distance to the hall, checking out a few of the local pubs on my way. The hall was in Birstall. Four miles, and several pints later, I made my way into the hall – and collapsed.

The weekend passed in a haze of drinking and dancing. On the Sunday, when we were saying our goodbyes, I knew I was hooked.

That was in 2004. Nine years later I am now the treasurer and have attended all but two of the weekends since then.

Now into our 12th year, we aim to encourage an energetic group of young men who, whilst representing their own local teams, can dance together to push the Morris Ring into the future – Morris

18-30 is about dancing, and dancing well. It also provides the more youthful members of Morris Ring sides with a collective voice, and every year we organise a weekend of dance to which all young Morris Men are invited.

Following our last very successful weekend hosted by Great Yorkshire Morris, Morris 18-30 is moving south once more. Harry Cox, the current squire, has kindly volunteered Whitchurch and Towersey to host this year's event on 1st-3rd November, at a cost of £25 for working men and £20 for others. Do not be put off by being the only person from your side, or not knowing anyone; any youngish person of broadly 18-30 years of age will be made very welcome. We hope to see you there!

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

# Still “reignin’ ” after 75 years!

**Manchester Morris Men** celebrated 75 years of membership of the Morris Ring in 2011. Here, in an article which escaped publication at the time, the side looks back at a memorable, if moist, day of dance.

Wherever you travel, and Stafford Morris Men.

Manchester’s reputation for damp weather seems to go before it! But then we Mancunians don’t overly moan about the rain because we’ve grown up with it, and for those who have



Manchester Morris

adopted the City as home they’ve just had to get used to it. And you have to remember that it was Manchester’s climate that ensured it became the international centre of the cotton and textile processing industries during the 19th century, gaining it the title ‘Cottonopolis’.

So, it came as no surprise on Saturday 17 September, the morning of our Day of Dance in celebration of 75 years of Morris Ring membership, when the weather forecast was, how shall we say, not the brightest. Still, if the weather and the City needed brightening up, what better way than to have nine morris sides performing across the city centre, all day long?

The planning had all been completed, permissions arranged, invitations accepted and we were determined that such an important milestone should be well and truly marked.

Thankfully, the forecast didn’t put our friends off either and Manchester Morris Men were delighted to be joined for the celebration day by old friends Leeds Morris Men, the Britannia Coco-nut Dancers of Bacup, Thelwall Morris Men, Fiddlers Fancy Women’s Morris, Saddleworth Morris Men, Mossley Morris Men and contingents from Jockey Morris Men of Birmingham

All started well in Piccadilly Gardens, where Manchester got things under way, and all was going reasonably well until a few spits of rain fell towards the end of the last dance.

As Thelwall took their places to dance, there was an ominous darkening of the sky and by the time they’d finished there was a definite rush for cover, coats and umbrellas as the clouds opened up. Fortunately it dried up after a little while as the teams set off in their tour groups, making for the various dance locations across the city centre.

Throughout the day the tours criss-crossed the City so that everyone had an opportunity to dance at each of the venues and appreciative audiences had something to brighten up their day. Changing venues also provided an opportunity for teams to dodge some of the heavy cloud bursts that were now rapidly becoming a feature of the late morning and early afternoon. Some teams were becoming more adept at this ‘dodging’ than others. Thelwall, it seemed, were having a job mastering the skill, whilst other nameless ones always seemed to be close to a local hostelry at the appropriate time!

The main thing was that everyone was true to the spirit of the day and our 75 years of Morris Ring membership were well and truly marked in the late afternoon—by which time the weather had dried up—when all the teams came together again in St Ann’s Square,

in the heart of the City, for a series of showcase performances. This was before a large and approving audience, many of whom commented very favourably on the spectacle before them, with several suggesting that it should become a regular event.

This all passed in warm autumn sunshine and without any further interference from the elements. At its conclusion those that had trains or buses to catch set off for the station, whilst those remaining headed for the pub to round off with a celebratory drink.

Throughout the day we had asked each tour to collect at every dance venue they visited as we had decided to share the bag equally between the Morris Ring Archive and our own Manchester Morris Men’s fund for fostering contacts in local education.

Consequently, we were very



Mossley Morris Men

pleased when, in October, we were able to send a cheque for £225.00 to Ed Worrall [*the then Treasurer of the Morris Ring*], being the Morris Ring’s share of the bag. In this respect we’d like to thank all the sides for their splendid efforts. It was an excellent event, thoroughly enjoyed by all, and Manchester Morris Men would like to thank everyone for helping us to mark, so successfully, this very special 75<sup>th</sup> year in our 81 year history.

*More Macunia on page 12*



# The Men of Green Ginger bid farewell

Ian Morrison, Squire of Kingston-upon-Hull's *Green Ginger Morris and Sword*, writes

It is with regret that I have to announce that the Green Ginger Morris and Sword team has decided to go into retirement. We have had well over 40 years of pleasurable dancing and have enjoyed it all.

We would like to thank all our friends for their continued support of our activities; sitting around with a cool drink outside a country pub on a warm summer's evening, or at a wedding reception or church or school fête watching us dance is one thing, but 5.00 am for sunrise on May Day morning or outside on a freezing cold Boxing Day is dedication indeed.

We would also like to thank the Morris Ring and member sides for all their help and support in the past and say "Thank you" for all the good times we have had at Morris Ring meetings, Feasts, Ales and Days of Dance. We have many happy memories to savour in our retirement. We would also like to thank the organisers of the various festivals that we have attended and been invited to perform at, especially Durham Folk Party that we have attended regularly for over twenty years at least. We will miss you all.

It is the end of an era for us here in Hull but we hope that the Morris will go on from strength to strength throughout the country and that a new and vigorous generation of young men, rejoicing in their youth and vitality may carry on the tradition for many years to come.



**Green Ginger Morris Men:** members of the Morris Ring since 1971



## Perth to Adelaide via Canberra - the long way around! *continued*

cyclists who view the "lofty" heights as a challenge and no doubt relish the down hill bit on their return. Apart from Mount Lofty, I cannot recall the actual names of the places that were visited. However lots of fun was had in the way of dancing and drinking for the rest of the day and then we returned to the Rymill centre again. The feast was enjoyed with some formal speeches from members of the Morris Ring executive. One of the speakers made reference to the value of the fellowship and camaraderie that we enjoy as part of the Morris fraternity. After the serious stuff there was singing etc from various individuals and a good time was had by all. Of particular note I thought, was the first song of the evening that took a number of familiar dances that we do that had reference to our rural heritage and, for example, had lines like "Are we shepherds? Are we be buggered" – you probably had to be there and those that were would know to which song I allude.



**Moments in the sun:** enjoying antipodean conviviality

On the Sunday there was a church service with the Thaxted men dancing as part of the ceremony which was conducted by the wife of an Adelaide Morris Man. After this there was more dancing outside the church and then further touring, with a group photo at the Stanley Bridge Hotel. After this it was a return to the Rymill Centre for more eating, drinking and festivities. Some characters showed remarkable endurance and stayed up all night. Anyway it was a great event. Well organised, very enjoyable and from Perth's point of view a great opportunity to mix with other sides.

# North British über Alles

Martin Hanley remembers a short trip to Germany by North British Sword Dancers



North British Sword Dancers

Last year, to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee, North British Sword Dancers took a little trip across the channel to Paris and enjoyed it so much that we thought we'd do it again and take Mabel Gubbins Rapper along with us.

We decided upon a weekend in Lüneburg, a mediaeval town about thirty miles southeast of Hamburg, partly because of its history and beautiful buildings and partly because it's rumoured to have the highest concentration of pubs in Germany.

As previously mentioned, the Mabel Gubbins came along with us, as did Anna Downes, a clog dancer. We would later employ both the Mabels and Anna to break up our dance spots to provide both variety for the audiences and a rest for ourselves.

Friday, our arrival day, found us sampling the local beers. After a while we realised that this would lead to alcoholic disaster and decided to take a break by going on a pointless and utterly boring boat trip around the city's lakes.

Opinions differ on this, but the people who disagree and say that this was informative and educational are quite wrong and that's an end to it. The fact that this area of Hamburg was mostly flattened in first half of the twentieth century and therefore has few buildings of architectural interest did not help.

Eventually we made a move over to Lüneburg and spent the evening in a very pleasant little brewpub called Nolte, which put into perspective one of Britain's major news stories of the time: the speciality of the house was horse steak, which was delicious. The pub also made its own schnapps which was equally agreeable.

Saturday came and we all set off into town for some dancing. We'd decided to put on some shows in the streets and intersperse this with pub dances, and at this point we must take a little diversion into the workings of the German authorities.

Having spent time in Lüneburg before, one of us realised that we

might need a public performance licence and so had contacted the authorities to see if this was the case. We were told that it was. Lüneburg itself was not a problem: for around €30 we were granted written permission to perform and although the conditions were a little stricter than we'd thought (one location only, which was a specific distance from shops, doors and walls) we could work within that. Hamburg was a different kettle of fish. In addition to the Lüneburg rules, our musicians would be limited to 65 decibels, which is roughly equivalent to normal conversational levels. We were also banned from Street Theatre for some reason. Oh, and for a couple of hours dancing they wanted around €300. We decided to risk dancing without a licence in Hamburg.

Anyway, back to the dancing. We found our allotted area, and performed our soon-to-be standard show: North British starting with an Elgin longsword dance to grab an audience, Mr Kennedy (being fluent in German) introducing us, with the rest of the show split between North British doing longsword, Mabel Gubbins with rapper and Anna Downes clogging. We'd finish with North British performing the Papa Stour longsword. This worked very well, and the audiences were large and very appreciative. The collecting talents of Mr Hanley were tested to their very limits as they were translated into Very Basic German, but he soon hit his stride and within an hour had managed to collect snuff for any team members who wanted it.

We ran through this show three times, taking a break in a different pub each time. The second (the Mälzer Brauhaus) was most

**IT'S BACK!** The Morris Ring's acclaimed JIGS INSTRUCTIONAL returns in 2014 to Sutton Bonington with top-notch food, fine ales and expert coaching to suite everyone. **When?** 17-19 January - **don't miss it!** (Snow shoes optional.)

*More details soon on the Morris Ring website and in the Bagman's Newsletter.*



memorable as it not only brewed its own beer but it also sold it to you in little barrels... we just couldn't resist. Sadly, we took a dancing break and left the remains of the barrel being guarded by the Mabels' Men. Mysteriously, when we returned it had vanished.

After all this beer we needed a little exercise, so we nipped over to Hamburg and went on a bike ride. Now, being North British, we couldn't be expected or indeed trusted to use individual bicycles, so we hired the Bier Bike. This is a sixteen-seater bike with its own bar, in our case ably staffed by Sally and Katy Mabel. Much beer was consumed and much energy was expended, but little distance was covered. Indeed, our progress was so pedestrian that we were overtaken by an elderly jogger at one point.

On Sunday we did things the other way around: we started in Hamburg and finished in Lüneburg. Well, almost. We actually started by ignoring all our plans and dancing on top of the Water Tower in Lüneburg, which is the highest point in some region or other (I wish I'd taken notes when people told me things like this) and was covered in snow. Absolutely freezing, but what a place to dance! We felt a little nervous about



dancing in the streets in Hamburg as we'd declined to buy a licence, but as things turned out no one checked. €300 saved! We danced in many locations throughout the city, each one better than the last. One memorable pub remains in the memory: Lis Mabel managed to get her belt loop caught on the bar not once but twice. Needless to say the

gentlemen of North British were only too keen to lend her a hand and, after a short while, free her.

Our final show was down by the docks with a huge audience, and it was here that we noticed Mr Kennedy's absence which left Mr Hanley to introduce the show in Bad German. It seemed to entertain the locals, but not necessarily for the right reason. They were certainly generous with their applause though, with particular appreciation given to the Mabels' first dance and North British's final Papa Stour, so everyone was happy. After a brief break for lunch (where the Mabels' Men got distracted by paintings of nudie ladies – thank god we avoided Reeperbahn), we made our way back to Lüneburg for an evening rappertour.

And what a tour it was! Mabel were on absolutely top, DERT Championship-winning form especially back in the Mälzer Brauhaus where they brought the house down. There's a video of this on YouTube which we heartily recommend. The ladies won over all the pubs they appeared in with vigour, style and panache.

North British of course relied on style and panache in most places and saved their best till last: in a packed pub run by a pony-tailed karaoke-singing pirate in a powder blue jumpsuit, they took the place by storm, collected an outrageous sum of money and garnered more free beer than even they wanted to drink. Oh, and left one of their number behind singing a spirited karaoke rendition of Ferry Cross



the Mersey.

What an end to a wonderful weekend this was. As we sat having a few final beers we reflected on what we'd learnt on this cultural journey. Lüneburg is a beautiful town, Hamburg less so. The German people are warm, generous and unexpectedly funny, and were very taken with our dancing. Their railway's fare system is as insane as ours, and they also suffer bus replacement services. Oh, and their food lives us to the stereotype of pork and potatoes. To any other teams contemplating a trip to Germany, we can only recommend it. Just don't be tempted by bicycles made for more than one person.

Finally, thanks to Andrew Kennedy who arranged all this, from the accommodation to the schedules, from the pubs to the dancing licences. A magnificent piece of organisation.

*This is a shortened version of Martin's article; enjoy the full account in the June 2013 issue of Rattle Up My Boys, that estimable periodical for all sword dance enthusiasts.*

#### Morris Ring Staff Vacancy

## MORRIS SHOP KEEPER

After 20 years of merry Morris Shop Keeping, Steve BFB is stepping down before or at the 2014 ARM. Just as he made the emporium his own, so could YOU! New eyes and ears equals new ideas!

If you would like to discuss any ideas you might have regarding this vacancy, contact any of the elected officers or get in touch with Steve BFB (01274 773830) for a non-committal chat.

# The Unicorn at 60

**Westminster Morris Men** reach their diamond jubilee this year. Current squire **Rupert Ainley** shares the side's memories of dancing in the heart of London—and further afield—since 1953.

Like a number of other Morris Ring sides, 2013 marks Westminster Morris Men's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. With most of our archives filling up one member's living room, the most rapid way to de-clutter seemed to be to collect team members' memories from their Westminster times. What follows is a canter through 60 years of dancing, singing and general tomfoolery all of which has no doubt become embellished with a few folk memories along the way. Westminster Morris Men (WMM) began practising in September 1952 after John French (one of the Johns after whom the WMM-composed dance "Big John" was named) put up an advert in Cecil Sharp House. The commonly accepted team myth is that we first danced out in public on Coronation Day 1953. Sadly, like all good legends, further digging around in the archives shows it's not quite true with our first performance coming slightly earlier at The Grove pub in Wood Green. What's clearer is that Westminster

must have had one of the fastest accessions to the Morris Ring on record; the team danced in at the Thaxted Meeting on 3 June 1953. Westminster quickly began to tour the heartlands of the Cotswold tradition and, being based in the capital, were frequent visitors at top folk events. Between 1956 and 1982, WMM performed 13 times at

the Albert Hall. One of the most memorable occasions was a performance in 1972 with the Royal Ballet School to a Malcolm Arnold composition for which Westminster split their yellow and black costumes half way down the middle of each man (an innovation which looked great in the figures). Perhaps Westminster's most famous (and frequently repeated) appearance was in the film *The Great St Trinian's Train Robbery* (1966) during which Frankie Howard uses a Westminster performance as cover to flee the police. Less glamorous was an appearance on a breakfast TV slot entitled "Morris dancing is bad for your health". Still worse was the

then Squire to claim that they had "danced for all the Crown Heads of Europe". The big trip in 1973 was to Japan as part of a British trade delegation. With "Jimmy" the guide assigned to look after Westminster and whisky on tap, tales from this week abound. From frequent dance spots on roofs of artificial grass, through the earthquake tremors in a restaurant overlooking Mount Fuji, to the bar whose name translated (unintentionally) as the "Place of Honourable Touching". More recently we've had three splendid trips to the ever hospitable Sancerre folk dance team sampling glorious local cheese and wine. Last year, we crossed the pond to attend the Marlboro Morris Ale in Vermont, USA, where we had a fantastic reception, and were intrigued to see how styles had evolved, with one particularly interesting interpretation of Long Sword to the tune of "Take Five". Some of the key characters that have populated these decades were from the early days. Leslie

"Ginger" Saunders, variously described as a "folk nerd" and, more flatteringly, an "avid researcher of morris dancing" devised many of the dances in the style of Longborough we perform today: "Big John", "Old Harry" (named after Harry Taylor, a Longborough dancer), and Longborough "Leap Frog" to the tune of Golden Vanity. John French, who began the team and with

Keith Lester largely inspired the costumes, John Strange who set much of Westminster's early dancing style, and Colin Fleming who, as squire and foreman for many years, improved both the accuracy of the dancing and the team's costume.

The black and yellow tunic which WMM have made their own seems



**Westminster Morris Men at Thaxted 1957**

Photograph by kind permission of the trustees of the estate of David Campbell

kids' TV programme where Westminster, proudly boasting of requiring only one take, received their comeuppance when told by the seasoned extras that they were being paid by the hour.

Westminster have also had their fair share of overseas trips. In the 1950s they toured France, Denmark and Holland, leading the



p.10 to have come from the team's seemingly limitless desire to stand out from the crowd (some might call it "showmanship"). The black straw pork pie hats turned up at the brim were inspired by the bushwhacker hats worn by the 1950s London dustmen, many of whom were from South Africa. Despite this distinctive costume, one recurrent theme down the years is WMM's penchant for

swapping costumes for certain performances. There were the steel dustbins used in a performance at the Albert Hall in 1966, the flat caps employed to

perform the three-man dance Old Man's Morris at the Cork Festival in 1968, a version of Queen's Delight performed in a Scots Costume (unclear whether the kilt was worn in the traditional fashion for the RTBs), and – slightly off track – the pilfered girls gym slips used as kit for a heavy defeat to Headington Quarry Morris Dancers in a 1960s football match in the margins of a Morris Ring meeting at Chichester.

So, what's the secret behind these 60 years of dancing? Is there a "Westminster ethos? For Westminster dancers – as with all teams – a large part of the enjoyment has come from the social life. This has extended into other spheres with a series of "Unicorn Nights" (folk dances and ceilidhs), the Westminster Construction Club (largely used to dig Colin Fleming's never-ending pond projects), and the Westminster Caravan Club (essential for access to special camping grounds).

But more than the social side, when talking to the men, I detected a genuine pride in striving to meet a high standard of dancing. Asked to describe what for them made Westminster special, the unanimous view was that it was the attention to the "whole performance" consisting of:

accuracy in the dance, so that every dancer (in theory) performs together with the other five; a handsome unicorn that is part of the performance; and, critically, excellent music. As one dancer with 50 years' experience behind him put it: "we had [I hope, have] a double whammy: a team that could dance and a musician whose music people wanted to listen to".

That music was, for many years, provided by Denis Smith, an exceptional musician who was, apparently, introduced at a practice session in around 1956/57 with the immortal words: "this is Westminster's musician". His

sensitive accordion playing, despite not being a dancer, enabled Westminster to develop their own style. Westminster do not go in for Morris bands, and that's largely because we've been hugely lucky in having had a series of top-class musicians who have developed Denis's interpretations further. Notable among these are Mitch Hursey (accordion) and Jim Heywood (fiddle).

But what about that strange, loveable beast, which is the last surviving unicorn in captivity (we don't believe Ripley's beast is a true thoroughbred)? As anyone who has ever asked a Westminster Morris Man will know, the unicorn was discovered in Epping Forest searching for pennies in the undergrowth. In fact, when Bill Aitkin found the unicorn in about 1953, the Westminster men derided it for being "too white and too pretty". It spent its early months stabled in the back of Bill's car. By the Thaxted Meeting of 1954 the unicorn was certainly alive and well. It had found a new energy and lease of life with characteristic head-high kicks which were his best trick well into the unicorn's middle age (now going out of fashion). Lately, in keeping with modern teaching methods, the team has tutored the

unicorn just to be itself, whether that be following bicycles, befriending dogs, sitting on park benches to watch the world go by or cuddling unsuspecting (usually female) audience members.

Despite all the constants, some things have changed. One of the most marked is our ability to travel. The first Cotswolds Tour in the late 1950s was a week-long affair navigated in one car, two scooters, one bantam and several bikes; no one would have considered travelling for a weekend to such far flung places as Chester or Monkseaton, now frequent destinations.

The older members of the team describe the opportunities afforded by WMM as being "an education", providing the chance to travel, eat in restaurants, drink wine and see places outside London they would never have thought of visiting. The newer members have more vogueish reasons for joining – they want to get some exercise. Some have arrived in England from foreign shores and, after a few years, want to try something traditionally English. Others have just always fancied giving it a try, whilst still others continue to have the more traditional drivers of good company and excellent ale.

As for another 60 years, the best advice I heard was "just keep teaching new dancers", dance as well as you can trying to keep with the style and standard that Westminster expect. Thankfully we've had a recent injection of new blood just as some of the more established dancers are less keen to perform every dance – especially those from Longborough, a village which is aptly named given its strenuous dances. At this year's annual Day of Dance we put out a team of six dancers under 35(ish). With the current Squire's and Bagman's combined age a good few years less than the oldest active member, all our dancers are looking forward to the rest of this anniversary year.

We recently began the main segment of our 60th in traditional style welcoming around 100



Denis Smith and unicorn on homeground in 1961

☞ p.11

dancers to London for our annual Day of Dance, which has been



Trafalgar  
Square 2006

running continuously since 1954. The threatened storms held off and the nine visiting teams (Chester City, East Suffolk, Greensleeves, Jockey, Thaxted, Ravensbourne, Monkseaton, Ripon City – their first visit – and Winchester) seemed to enjoy their trips around central London. These culminated with two massed shows in Trafalgar Square, at which Westminster performed Staines Morris, a Longborough dance which we resurrected for our anniversary year. Our other familiar and enjoyable events this year are the Ring Meeting in Thaxted, and our tours around the villages of the north Cotswolds and then south Gloucestershire. We also met up with our old friends Martlets at their Morris Ring meeting, and continued our set of popular Wednesday evening tours around the best spots and pubs of London, which usually prove good recruiting grounds.

This year we've added some new events to keep everyone, including our younger members, interested, appearing for the first time at the Oxford Folk Festival. Later in the year we tour with Hammersmith Morris Men, our local rivals. We will end our celebrations with a special anniversary dinner in The City of London at which we look forward to sharing a splendid evening with members past and present and with old friends from across the folk world.

If you'd like to see more recent performances as well as archive footage, we're on the web at [www.westminstermorris.org](http://www.westminstermorris.org), on [facebook.com/morrisdancers](https://www.facebook.com/morrisdancers) and, of course, dancing capital Morris

## Crossing Swords and Oceans

**Manchester Morris Men's David Doolin** introduces the Boa Nova dancers from Madeira

Saturday 8 September was a beautiful sunny day in Manchester – a somewhat rare event in 2012's summer of rain – but just what the doctor ordered as far as we were concerned for our annual Day of Dance.

And 2012 was especially important as we were hosting the first visit to the UK of our friends from Madeira, the sword dance team of *Grupo Folclore e Etnográfico Boa Nova*. Manchester Morris Men have been friends with the Madeiran team since 2008 when we visited the island to dance in their Morris and Sword Dance Festival in Funchal. 2012 was our return invitation and our guests clearly brought the sunshine with them across the ocean from Madeira.

Based in Boa Nova, a suburb of Funchal – the island's capital – our guests are primarily a Madeiran folk dance group (mixed couples). However, the men of the group also specialise in the sword dances from the island which they have researched and revived. They are a well travelled group, having performed across Europe, in the Americas and Australia.

The visiting sword team consisted of 13 men which included dancers, musician and flag bearers. The visitors arrived in Manchester on Thursday evening on a flight from Madeira, via Lisbon. For the four

days in Manchester they stayed with members of Manchester Morris Men in their homes.

Thursday is our normal dance out evening so following pick up at the airport (after a two hour flight delay in Lisbon) the guests joined us at one of our local pubs to watch us dance, sample some English beer and to catch up with friends.

The next evening was scheduled as the first display of the sword dance in the UK. This took place as an entertainment at Hawk Green Folk Dance Club, one of our local dance clubs, whose organisers were very pleased to host the display as part of their usual club night. They did our visitors proud – and the social dancing went down really well with our all male visitors! The only slight hitch during the evening was when it was discovered that the keys needed to open one of the kit boxes had been left behind. However, a bit of 'brute force and ignorance' rescued the situation and the show

went ahead as planned.

Next morning, with the sun shining brilliantly, everyone was in the city centre for the DoD. We



Boa Nova dancers with their hosts



Boa Nova dancers: first visit to Great Britain

were joined for the day by guests Southport Swords, Harthill Morris Men and the Hebden Bridge Hill Millies.

The Madeiran dancers attracted a lot of interest from the audiences, not least because of the real cutlass

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p.12 type swords with which they dance – and which look particularly fearsome – and the ribboned ‘bishop-like’ mitre hats that are part of their kit.

After a highly successful full day of dancing around the City the event ended with everyone coming together in St Ann’s Square for a much acclaimed massed display, featuring a show case performance from each team. Afterwards everyone decamped to a nearby city centre pub to replace some of the fluid that had been lost in the ‘heat’ of the day.

The programme for the DoD certainly tired the visitors, so Sunday was taken as a leisure day. The visitors decided they’d like to see a bit more of the country so Manchester Morris Men’s fleet of cars journeyed to Liverpool for a pleasurable day of sightseeing.

On Monday they wanted to visit Manchester United’s Theatre of Dreams Stadium where, of course, their hero Madeiran star Cristiano Ronaldo had played for so long. Much buying of souvenirs was done for the folks back home – and of course many photos were taken. And so back to the Airport for the return journey to Madeira, via Lisbon again. This time the travelling was uneventful and as far as we know everyone got home safely.

The DoD was a great success due, in no small part, to our friends from Yorkshire and Southport who added so much to the spectacle and the atmosphere, both for us and our Madeiran visitors. Our thanks go to them for their tremendous support.

Now there’s talk of another visit to Madeira, towards the end of this year. In the meantime we’ll continue to cross swords and the ocean – but via the internet.

*Manchester Morris Men’s Flickr page has more photos plus video of the Boa Nova dancers in action:*

[www.flickr.com/photos/83995240@N00/sets/72157631478814944/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/83995240@N00/sets/72157631478814944/)

*For the digitally challenged, there’s a handy link from the side’s website:*

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

## BENFIELDSIDE IN AUSTRIA

Durham’s hardy veterans, **Benfieldside Morris and Sword**, have been trying a little Alpine trekking. **Keith Gregson** explains.



**Extreme Alpine Morris: Benfieldside at Grossglockner**

In an era of drooping Morris sticks, Benfieldside Morris and Sword from County Durham is still going strong—or strongish. In May, the group, accompanied by Bob Carter from Great Yorkshire Morris and Dave Bennett (proudly self-styled ‘The Benfleet Hoyman’) practised its yodels, donned its lederhosen and headed for the Alps.

The starting point for the trip was the elegant city of Salzburg. Here after what was supposed to be a quiet evening (but which ended with entertaining locals in a bar with traditional tunes and 60s songs) the group linked up with their hosts for a trip round the city and an entertainment in the delightful Mirabell Gardens. The weather was beautiful and the audience appreciative. One man reckoned that if a charge of five euros per photograph had been levied on the Japanese tourists, the group could have paid for everybody’s flights – both ways.

Later in the day, the tour bus which contained a Hungarian marching band, a group of young Hungarian ‘modern dance’ experts and the Morris men headed up a couple of thousand feet into the Alps. Base camp here was a nice hotel on the outskirts of the village of Rauris, a

popular centre for both walking and skiing. On the day after arrival, all boarded the bus for a day-long trip up the stunning Gross Glockner which took all on board up over 8,000 feet. The entire route consists of a toll road and the bus driver had to pay 500 euros (about 10 euros a head) for the privilege of using it. It was worth every cent. There was hardly a cloud in the sky and the views were breath-taking and, on numerous occasions, scary. Benfieldside, despite its creaking gates, made sure the lads did not miss the opportunity of entering the Morris man’s Mile High Club – twice and without



**The Fountainhead? Benfieldside Morris in Mirabell Gardens, Salzburg**



☞ p.13

medicinal support. They even managed it once at a height of over 8,000 feet according to geological guru David Osborne.

After the trip, there was an afternoon performance beside the beautiful shores of the Zell am See in what had, at some time previously, been a performance arena. It was a pity that nobody seemed to know the show was on.

The same could be said of the following day when a procession through Rauris, which is a pretty and quaint village, ended in a Grand Concert on a car park on the outskirts of the village. Yet again, the performance seemed to have escaped the notice of the local press and public in general although as illustrious whistle maker George Nichol noted at the time, the group can rarely have danced in surroundings so magnificent.

Sensing disappointment among the young Hungarian dancers in particular, seasoned veteran Mike Longstaff rallied the troops and the Benfieldside Band (which is essentially the same as the dancers only with instruments) played for an impromptu ceilidh outside the hotel.

In the words of many a local hack over the years 'a good time was had by all'. The young Hungarians picked up the English and American country dances with ease and even had a successful bash at a



Relaxing at Zell am See: Benfieldside Morris and Sword with guests

couple of Morris dances.

The final day saw a spot of sunbathing returning to Salzburg airport for the plane home.

Benfieldside was on good form throughout the trip. Like many groups today, it is more than a Morris team and is set up to amuse and entertain with music and song as well as dance. In terms of pure entertainment nothing can match the impromptu, unrehearsed and solo early ending of 'Sweet Jenny Jones' performed by Brian Pollard. So amused and entertained by this were fellow performers that Benfieldside has already received invitations to two festivals in Hungary, including one in 2014.

The cast for the tour was:

*Mr Michael Longstaff* (Squire, barn dance calling, bodhran and

bones); *Mr Brian Pollard* (bagman, area rep, guitar and vocals); *Mr David Osborne* (bones and geological features); *Mr George Nichol* (whistle, photographs and anecdotes); *Mr Mark Pollard* (fiddle); *Mr Tom Gregson* (flute, guitar and vocals); *Mr Barry Etherington* (concertina, vocals and caustic comments); *Mr Keith Gregson* (whistle, mandolin, guitar, vocals and scribe); with guests *Mr Bob Carter* (fool, bodhran, bladderer and bladdered – literally on one occasion by a vengeful young Hungarian dancer) and *Mr Dave Bennet* (anecdotes and local liaison due to being stationed in Germany on national service as a result of which some of his vocabulary was

**M**orris sides of all stripes, shades and nationalities welcomed in the summer on May Day in time-honoured fashion. This year their combined efforts

## Deep in the Vorest...

**Dan Frooty** salutes deepest Gloucestershire's bosky brethren



Conjuring summer in: Forest of Dean Morris Men on May Hill

bore fruit, and the UK enjoyed a summer of uncharacteristically clement weather. How better to mark this than by this shot of the **Forest of Dean Morris Men** making their contribution on the aptly named May Hill.

The Men also played host to a number of guest sides, including Southport Swords and Mersey Morris Men, at their annual Family Weekend in June. In their usual efficient, fuss-free and comradely way, the Vorest Men gave us all another weekend to remember, and one to add to their forty-plus year tradition of offering the warmest of welcomes to this delightful part of the world.



# Obituaries

## John Stapledon 1923-2013

**John Stapledon**, English concertina player, composer and Life President and founder member of Mersey Morris Men, was born in West Kirby, Wirral. His father, William Olaf, was the author of several works of science fiction, including *Last and First Men* and *Star Maker*. His mother, Agnes, was an energetic EFDSS member and soon introduced her son to folk music and dance. After boarding school in Yorkshire John attended the Royal College of Music where he studied composition (under Ralph Vaughan Williams) and oboe. Wartime service in the Royal Navy intervened, and he narrowly escaped death when his ship hit a mine and split in two. John was

later posted to Sicily where, at a local dance, he met his future wife. He and Sarina wed in April 1946, but their newly married life was interrupted when two weeks later John was moved to England. They didn't see each other again until six months later, when Sarina came to live with John's parents in Caldby. John decided against returning to his studies and set up Dee View Nurseries in 1949, which he worked at well into his seventies. From the 1950's onwards both John and Sarina's life revolved around folk dance and music. John was an increasingly prolific composer of dance tunes; he formed The West Kirby Band in the late fifties and for the next half century was the source of much of its repertoire. His work achieved international renown, with leading choreographers writing dances to many of his compositions. John wore his musical expertise lightly; he was a modest, generous, family man and justly proud of



**Three generations:** John right with Richard and grandson Matthew.

being father and grandfather to two talented practitioners of the Morris. He wrote a number of Morris tunes for the side to which son Richard created dances, and while his music plays on, John's memory will remain ever alive.

**Anthony Foard**

## Martin Westlake 1928-2012



This is **Martin Westlake** as many of us will remember him: dancing with style, grace and restrained vigour; wearing his own distinctive

costume. He had a powerful farmer's build, massive calf muscles and a gentle nature. A founder member of White Horse Morris Men, he also danced out with Bourne River, Winchester and othersides.

Martin was born in Bermondsey, one of five children. In 1938 the family moved to his grandfather's farm at Sandy Balls and Martin was educated at the Quaker boarding school of Sidcot on Mendip. Martin started farming for himself in 1949, adopting what are now referred to as organic methods. He married Valerie in 1954 and they had six children, but not before she overcame the tribulations of courting a Morris man in the 1950s. Martin would drive up from Fordingbridge, pick up Valerie and continue to Stoford for a two hour Morris practice in a room next to the Pelican Inn. However, White Horse was men only, and Valerie was not even allowed in to watch the practice. In the 1950s it wasn't the done thing for a young lady to enter a public house unaccompanied, so she could only sit in the car and read

a book. "It was flipping cold in that car, I can tell you," said Valerie.

Martin involved himself in everything around him. He was President of the Fordingbridge Show Society, Chairman of the Parish Council, Governor of the local schools, Chairman of Sandy Balls Estate and followed his Father and Grandfather by becoming Chieftain of the Order of Woodcraft Chivalry.

He toured with White Horse in Devon and also with Coventry in South Africa and Hong Kong. He ran a country dance club at Godshill and danced jigs as entertainment at Mediaeval Banquets in Salisbury, performing together with the folk legend Dave Williams.

Martin's funeral was in the Quaker style with Morris dancing and even a country dance called by his grandson Rhys. There was a procession to the family grave at Good Friday Hill on the Sandy Balls estate and after the committal a procession led by the White Horse Men back to the house.

**Steven Archer**

## Memories of Ivor Allsop

**Daniel Fox** of **Thaxted Morris Men** and Past Squire of the Morris Ring, recalls words of wisdom, and **Derek Wisbey**, Foreman of **Standon Morris Men**, remembers meeting Ivor in 1979.

Ivor, together with Joyce, were regular visitors to Thaxted for our annual Morris Ring meeting and became good friends with the people they stayed with over the years. I was often asked if they were coming, and when ill-health prevented them attending, their Thaxted friends always asked after them. Joyce and Ivor's straightforward approach to life endeared them to us all.

On a personal level, I shall always remember Ivor giving me very wise advice when I had just been elected to be Squire of The Morris Ring in 1998. He told me first of all to enjoy my two years in office, which I did. He then said that I should aim to have one weekend off in four for my family. He said this in front of my wife and it worked for us. If asked, I always pass this advice on, crediting Ivor as the source. He carried more weight than I did.

DF



The highlight at the end of my first year as an apprentice with Standon Morris Men was being presented with my Standon Eaglet Rosette at our Day of Dance, 8th Sept 1979. Our guests were Ivor (left) and Father Ken (seated), seen here relaxing at The Bell, Standon. That's a younger version of me on the far right — still struggling on thirty-four years later!

KW

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The next issue will look back at meetings of the Morris Ring hosted by Thaxted Morris Men, Dolphin Morris Men, Martlet Sword & Morris Men and Silkeborg Morris Men, as well as the Fools & Beasts Unconvention and Morris 18-30's annual weekend, plus that memorable event organised by *your* own side — assuming someone sends me the raw material. Do feel free to inundate me with pearls of prose and peaches of pictures (not *vice-versa*, please, fond though I am of fruity depictions). The editorial team (*ahem*) will endeavour to do you proud.

Thank you.

**Tony Foard**

**P.S.** My sincere thanks go to **Harry Stevenson**, my predecessor as editor, for a fine job executed over the past years; his support and timely advice as I implement regime change have been invaluable and, typically, generously given. Thanks also are due to **Duncan Broomhead**, that indefatigable *doyen* of the Morris Ring's Photographic Archive, for supplying the photograph of Westminster Morris Men on page 10; expect to see more intriguing images from distant days in future issues. That said, all errors and cunctation are mine own, thank you very much.