

the morris ring
founded 1934

THE Circular

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Number 35



100 Years on!

This was the scene in Horwood Close just after 11.00 am on 26th December 1899.

The Headington Quarry Morris Dancers are re-enacting *that* meeting, exactly 100 years after the event, dressed in a replica of

the kit worn in 1899. The opening dance of the set, as it was a century earlier, was "Bean Setting".

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The Squire

The Morris Ring has a new Squire - Gerald Willey - elected at the ARM on April 1st. Congratulations to him and commiserations to Bob Pearce and Cliff Marchant. I hope that, like Gerald, they will try again. Gerald will dance in at the Chalice Ring Meeting in July.

My thanks to Ripley Morris Men for organising and hosting an excellent weekend. As well as the meeting itself, we were able to hear Derek Schofield's excellent presentation on the life and music of William Kimber. I highly recommend the CD - ABSOLUTELY CLASSIC THE MUSIC OF WILLIAM KIMBER - published by EFDSS and available from The Morris Ring Mail Order Shop. We were also treated to a presentation by Ron Shuttleworth, Keeper of the Mumming Archive, illustrated by a performance by Ripley of their mumming play.

The minutes of the ARM will be circulated shortly. It was a well attended meeting and included full discussion of two issues - revision of the areas, which is to be looked at again, and the Morris Ring's stance on women musicians, otherwise known as Daniel's can of worms. The debate was lively, reasonable and reasoned. It will no doubt be debated again. The outcome is up to the member sides of The Morris Ring. It is understood that some sides survive because they have a female musician. Everyone accepts that it is the dance that is important but there is also the view widely held that the musician is an integral part of the dance. What is important is the performance.

So this will be my farewell as the Squire of The Morris Ring and gives me a chance to reflect on the past two years and to look

forward to my two years as Chairman of The Advisory Council.

When I was elected Squire in 1998, it was not until someone pointed it out to me that I realised I would be Squire on the occasion of the centenary of Cecil Sharp's meeting with Headington Quarry Morris Dancers and at the end of one and the beginning of another millennium. [If, like me, you believe that the 20th century ends on 31/12/2000, then that last sentence should only refer to the end of one millennium]. It was of course the centenary of Boxing Day 1899 that was the highlight of my term of office. This is reported on elsewhere in the Morris Circular. All that I need to say here is that it was a privilege to be the guest of HQMD on December 26 1999 and to hear Nibs Matthews (Squire of The Morris Ring 1960-62) propose the health of HQMD.

I have a great many people to thank for allowing me the privilege of being Squire of The Morris Ring for the past two years - the members of The Morris Ring who elected me in the first place and then proceeded to invite me to ales, feasts, days and weekends of dance, as well as the sides who organised Ring meetings. It has been fun and I look forward to the next two years working with Gerald in my new capacity as Chairman of the Advisory Council.

As I write this there are still four months to go before I dance out. I look forward to your company at the four Ring meetings this summer and at days and weekends of dance.

Continue to flourish

*Daniel Fox
Squire of The Morris Ring*

The Castleton Garland

on 29th May at approximately 6.00 pm
at Castleton, Derbyshire.

The Castleton Garland is an important event in the English folklore calendar. It consists of the Garland King and his consort leading a procession of Morris dancers through the streets of Castleton on the evening of May 29th - Oakapple Day. This was the day on which the monarchy was restored with Charles II after the Commonwealth of Oliver Cromwell. Our King rides on horseback, wearing a beautiful Stuart uniform but you can hardly see this because he is buried down to the waist in a great "beehive" shape of flowers - the Garland itself. Old people used to say that this represented "Charles hiding in the oak tree" (at Boscobel after the Battle of Worcester in 1651) but folklorists now think that the custom is a great deal older and that what we see now is a relic from an ancient Pagan fertility rite.

The Garland is thought by some authors to be a surviving form of the "Green Man" figure, which represents the growth of crops and all living things in the new season. The Consort is played by a young woman, also wearing a Stuart outfit and riding side-saddle but until 1955 this part was always played by a man.

This is a tradition which has adapted and reformed with new ideas over the centuries. The bell ringers used to organise the proceedings, the earliest written account being in 1749 when the churchwardens "Paid for an iron rod to hang up ye ringers garland...£0.0.8d." The morris dance was performed by the men and the ringers "used to

dance themselves and throw pieces of oak up". Miss Eyre, however; recalled "old women with clogs and shawls" joining in later on. As long ago as 1901, the music was referred to as "the old original tune - Rowty Tow" and is quite similar to those at Tideswell, Winster and even Helston in Cornwall - this could have given rise to the tradition that the tin miners brought it with them when they came up here to go lead mining. The dance steps were noted down by the celebrated folklorist, Cecil Sharp in 1913.

The maypole was only introduced early this century, when they also had uniformed outriders. Gone too are the men sweeping the road with besoms to clear the road of people for the procession to pass. The saddest loss, however; was the man-woman figure which was replaced in 1955 with the more glamorous lady Consort. The original was anything but glamorous and "was given to making coarse remarks" but was absolutely central to the folklore. It is to be hoped that he/she is reintroduced some day, before it passes from living memory and is lost forever: there is a good display about the garland in the excellent village museum in the Chapel opposite Castleton Garage.

This year sees the reappearance of one of the most mysterious figures of the Garland - the 'Lady'. Until 1955, this was played by a man dressed as a woman riding side-saddle on a farm horse.

In 1955, a female consort was chosen for the Garland King. This year, all three will ride together in the procession.

SO DANIEL OPENED THE CAN O' WORMS!

At the 1999 Annual Reps. Meeting, Ring Squire Daniel Fox opened up what he described as a can of worms. It proved so to be. Battered, and dented, not a recently discovered can - it's been out before, - *women in the camp*. Daniel bravely set the pace by saying he was prepared to 'bite the bullet' but wisely with-held his personal views.

One of the many reasons this topic returns to 'haunt' organisations is that they fail to put a clear case for either side and as a result fail to find a solution even marginally attractive to either. Putting the lid back on, is often regarded as an achievement in itself, but the ostrich technique has a poor record of solving problems, they usually return when you least want to confront them. Those brave enough to confront them directly are allowed to choose the timing, seizing the higher odds for an eventual win which is well within grasp, even if the MCC didn't

So what's the argument - As any Morris man knows, the ambience of a totally male environment is something special, one of the few remaining pillars of traditional social order upon which the very tapestry of human society has rested for centuries. It has served homo sapiens well over centuries, in debate, judgment and execution, in general life, at play and at war, uninhibited by panic and sentimentality. The atmosphere which exists within such an environment is utterly destroyed by the female presence. That's said without any disrespect to the ladies, albeit a venomous contempt of those, born to either sex, who are 'not so sure', and within whose ranks lurk some of the worst carriers of the disease called "the equal society". It would be a tragedy to remove this spirit from the spectrum of human society, to deprive future male generations of the experience, and both sexes of the benefits, but there are those, some unwittingly,

who would do so, under the guise perhaps, of inevitability, or what they may limply call 'progress'. Without that, the ritual male dance, the exactitude, strength, and presence, augmented as it is by the colour, costume and sound, is worth preservation in its own right and cannot be equalled and by the female dancer, or worse, mixed sides, however precise the stepping, however well presented. Those who pretend otherwise do so with neither a real perception of Morris and what they are in danger of destroying nor a genuine search for the acceptable alternative. That a shortage of musicians is forcing sides to consider lady musicians is an invisible herring (that's a red one that's impossible to see!), and one 'hooked and gaffed' with many far less contentious solutions.

Look closer at the real facts. Young lads, plunge like lemmings into the lager-vat, brewed from marketing's promise of young lasses. Between youth and the early thirties, the accelerated pace of change and uncertainty of modern life, forge a life-style incapable of sustaining the continuity of any tradition. Indeed unreliable structural material for anything let alone the morris. For evidence look no further than the generated apathy, directed as it is, not just at tradition but at everyone and everything.

Be that as it may, that is the raw material available, vast natural reserves of rampant cultural ignorance, and it is absolutely essential that we learn to work with it, around it and in spite of it. Try to change it and you're looking straight down the barrel of the multi-million pound 'marketing industry'. But whilst the options are still open, let's choose something with more favourable odds. A more mature 'quarry' would see what we are trying to preserve and that it is just a small part of what they need to survive to the prime and get that little extra from life. But by that time, say the 35/40 upwards the image must be clear,

positioned by a carefully planned strategy. A major problem is that because the character called the fool is well known, applying some of his vast reserve of natural ignorance, 'Joe Public' thinks we are all fools. That needs changing both at national and local levels. The Morris Dance should be brought up to the levels of other activities with the 'male' aspects as just part of it. Starting with the younger people, through Morris in schools, demonstrating at every opportunity the art-form and the tradition. Every side I know works with young people, most realising that they are most likely going to be lost for a time in later years. But the contribution is vital, not least of which because it presents that essential positive image at the sensitive early stage and The Morris Ring should be seen to be at the very the front, promoting, stimulating and congratulating successes. If any bouquets are being handed out they should be to sides like Ripley MM for their school's training pack, for their 'catering event' shown on BBC TV and the many others who go into schools to teach a few steps and perhaps some music. The fuller image, of the Morris at dance, in all its colour, must be constantly present as the backcloth. But it cannot be left at local level, it must be national. We must be pro-active, with some serious planning to create a programme of public awareness, the traditions should not change but modern technology must be added. For example, light sponsorship on a national level needs serious consideration - and probably not Breweries, whose interest may be mis-constructed. Many sides detect the undercurrent of public interest bordering on admiration for the male Morris Dance which needs cultivation, so that the public could say "what's that woman doing - I thought it was a male fertility dance!" Currently we are light years behind our Welsh and Scottish dance counterparts.

Within The Ring, there is some material but little outside.

An up-date of the 'Black Book' material with a more modern approach both in presentation and instructional technique although now late, would be a fine target for Sharp's Centenary. With the exception of the AS colour booklet, however there's little in the public domain. Books and magazines on everything from Origami, Carp Fishing, and Lacrosse to Wall-paper, Tarot and Yeast can be found in the local newsagent's but nothing on Morris. In fact last time I asked at the library for a book on Morris she said "And what year is it Sir?" There are plenty of ideas about from individual sides and certainly enough talent within the Ring in both the dance and the presentational technology to enter the millennium at a pace. - And there's opportunity not least in the current high profile of "The Dome".

Consider also the additional strategies which might be employed. Just as The Morris is not unique to the problems, it is not unique in trying to preserve our English heritage. There are several parallel organisations, also carrying this burden. Most however do not have the extra responsibility of preserving the 'uniquely male environment', but some within dance, perhaps for example in Garland dance, or Ladies' Clog exhibit best when exclusively female. Because I'm not Ring Squire I can 'nail my colours to the mast' and say mixed and ladies' Morris may be politically correct, but an unnatural bastardised contortion of a genuine and traditional all English culture

Modern decorum rightly insists that early schooling is uni-sexed, but that's not aimed at killing off such as the male Morris, and there are no rules that insist it should continue mixed. For the years between compulsory education and 'thirty-something', most men would hope for, and enlightened thinkers would expect, a certain amount of integrated dance.

● Continued on page 7

Belchamp in a State!



Our plane landed at Philadelphia Airport on the afternoon of 23rd Oct, and as soon as we cleared immigration and customs we met up with Roger Green ('Betsy') and his wife; Roger is an old friend from Hageneth Morris Men who now lives in Norway. Then we were on our way to the welcome party arranged by Handsome Molly and Millstone River Morris. This was an early Thanksgiving meal and went on late into the night, until, shattered and jet lagged, we were whisked away by our hosts. The next day we toured Princeton, NJ with our afore-mentioned hosts, a small contingent of Squashed Beetle Morris from Kentucky, and our old pal and ex-pat Ian Cropton, who also joined us for the day. We went on a walking tour around Princeton stopping off at the Triumph Bar for one or two beers. The city is lovely and we managed to surprise a wedding party having their photographs taken, by getting in on the photos ourselves and dancing for the bride and groom. A visit to dance at an apple orchard which was extremely busy selling pumpkins, and then the day was topped off by a visit to The Ship in Milford where we took over most of the pub

and its restaurant for the night.



Monday 25th we went to New York, ably guided by Curtis, one of our hosts, and a big thank you is also due to Yonina Gordon who sorted out the permit for us to dance on Liberty Island. The weather was fantastic and the hundreds of people on the ferry across to the Island had no idea what lay in store for them. We spent about 90 min there then moved back to Battery Park where we found a good spot to dance, competing against several gentlemen selling "genuine" Rolex Watches out of suitcases! The day was rounded off by visiting the top of the World Trade Center to watch the sun set over New York, a sight never to be forgotten.

The following morning we bade a fond farewell to our hosts and left the Princeton area to make the long drive to Danvers, near Salem MA, just outside Boston. Wednesday was a day for most people to relax and do some sight seeing. Some of us had intended to go whale watching during the afternoon, but unfortunately hurricanes hanging around out to sea meant that the sea was too rough. During the morning I applied for permits to dance in Lexington and Concord on the following day. Lexington refused permission for us to dance there, "Not enough time to process the paper work", although Concord

On Thursday 28th we decided to go on to Lexington anyway and just walk around in kit as our way of protesting at the bureaucracy. This proved to be a very successful stop indeed, as so many people asked who and what we were, and some even followed us to the next spot in Concord. Whilst in Lexington, we were all astonished when one motorist sounded her horn, called us over and asked, "Are you the guys that I saw in Thaxted 2 years ago?", such an amazing coincidence proved to be quite a talking point for the remainder of the week. We moved on to Concord, where we had permission to dance at North Bridge, (to the Brits that read this, the American Revolution started here) and also at the visitors centre. Then, on to our final destination of the day, Sudbury, MA. The officials there gave us instant permission to dance outside the Town Hall, much to the amusement of passing drivers. We took lots of photos to show the Mayor back in Sudbury, Suffolk, after which a short stay at the local Wayside Inn for refreshments was required, then back to our motel for a well earned rest.

On Friday morning our transport was supplied by The Haunted Happenings committee, and we were picked up from our motel in a genuine school bus and delivered to our first dance spot in Salem, Salem Common, where we attracted



our first huge crowd of the day. There was a large contingent of children who greeted the dancing with great enthusiasm and who tried their hands (& feet) with great gusto!! The crowds at each of the other dance spots around the town were no less enthusiastic, often bewildered at first, but they all seemed to enjoy themselves immensely. We all certainly did. During the day most of the lads managed to discover Salem Beer Works, a micro-brewery and one of the best pubs in Salem, where exuberant customers paid for the beer for as long as the singing and playing went on. We stayed in and around Salem until late into the evening, and whilst waiting for our school bus to arrive and take us back to the mo-

tel, a news reporter from Boston's Channel 5 TV station turned up and asked if they could film us dancing. Of course we thought long and hard about whether we should do it or not, and 5 seconds later the dance was called. I was then asked for a short interview and we saw the results on the 11 o/c news that night.

As had all the other days of our trip, Saturday dawned bright and sunny to see us all packing our cases and eager to do some last minute sightseeing and shopping before catching our 'planes home. After an uneventful flight which did have a somewhat worrying start, "This 747 is being retired tomorrow and so this is this aircraft's last



flight", our coach duly brought us home to The Cherry Tree Inn, Belchamp St. Paul, at 10 am this morning, tired, jet lagged and not at all keen to start work first thing tomorrow morning.

This trip would not have been such a roaring success without all the help and enthusiasm that I got from Bob and Sue Dupre, Mary Zikos, Curtis Hoberman and everyone else in both Handsome Molly and Millstone River Morris; Yonina Gordon for her help and advice in sorting out Liberty Island and Ian Cropton and his daughter's

school for the loan of the sousaphone.

Most thanks of course go to The Belchamp Morris Ceilidh Band, and to the dancers of Belchamp Morris who worked hard over the last two years to raise the partial subsidy that each Belchamp man got, and to every single member of Belchamp Morris Men and Deja Vu who, along with some of their partners, saved up their money, went on the trip and made it such a good crack.

Brian Bird
31/10/99



Book Review.

Lancashire Bonds, Alan & Les Bond (Landy Publishing, £4.00) ISBN 1-87289-548-4

I am a committed lover of, and occasional writer of, but as a dyed-in-the-wool Southern Softie I must confess that this collection left

me pretty much cold. Dialect poems, such as the majority of this collection, have limited appeal (unless you're

Robbie Burns) outside a 40-mile radius of home turf.

The seven poems which recycle old jokes are amusing enough

but I found the "Pride of Lancashire" poetry too full of 'thee's, 'thou's and 'nowt's to be enjoyable for a non-Lancy.

Members of the Lancashire Independence Party & ex-pats only, I'm afraid.

Wrigley's Writings, Bernard Wrigley (Landy Publishing, £4.00) ISBN 1-87289-549-2

Bernard Wrigley, on the other hand, entertains and amuses consistently through this collection of songs & poems. Although Bernard also rehashes some old jokes, his treatment seems titer-worthy.

This is a funny man whose lyrics stand apart from the tunes. One song I recognised from the 1999 Fools' & Animals' Weekend and I feel sure that several would augment many a morris side's repertory.

If you fancy something to liven up your side's stock of songs & recitations you could do much worse than talk your Bagman into coughing up £4.00 for a team copy (for £4 our Bagman would want a recording deal &

hit single). There are clear traces of the lunacy which is a requirement for being part of the Ken Campbell Roadshow and a Northern pride which doesn't make you yearn for their independence. Enjoy!

Paul Beaumont.

Morris on the Move



David playing 'Go and enlist' for Russ and Richard before the Mayor of Taunton.

When your mayor accords you the honour of inviting you to participate in a venture, and when that same mayor also happens to be a friend and Morris man, there is no way of refusing. Thus it was that two musicians and two dancers from three different Morris sides agreed to undertake a joint venture to raise money to fund the transport of a new church organ from Northampton, where it was made, to Honiton in Devon where it was to be installed in St Paul's Church.

Richard Howe, current Mayor of Honiton, a local resident, church trustee and a member of **Greensleeves Morris Men**, had the idea to recreate the spirit of Will Kemp's journey in 1600 between London and Norwich, by undertaking a

sponsored dance journey along the route that the new organ was to take. On this occasion however it was decided that twelve stops along the one hundred and eighty mile route would be quite sufficient, and that the intervening miles would be undertaken by motor car. Local resident Russ Palmer, the foreman of **Exeter Morris Men** also just happened to be the church architect, and so was an obvious choice as a companion dancer – advancing years dictating there be mutual support. David Rabson, a long serving member of **Cambridge Morris Men**, **The Travelling Morrice** and **Taunton Deane Morris Men**, and Tony Wiggins, a veteran of **Taunton Deane Morris Men**, provided the music, playing respectively pipe and tabor and melodeon. John Mingay, the Honiton's church organist, acted as group photographer and archivist and Richard's son,

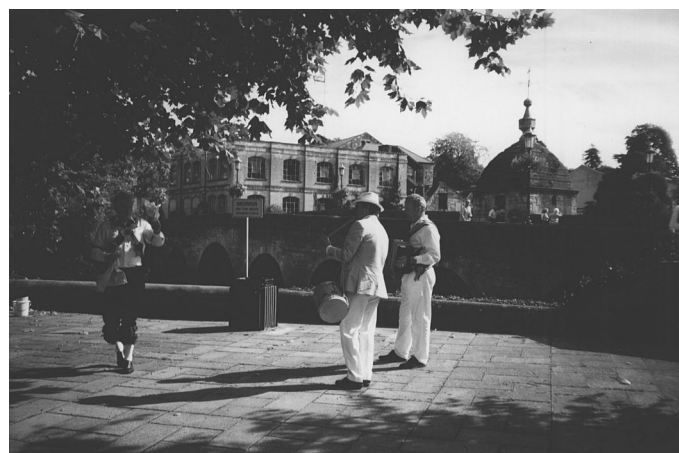
Mike Howe accepted the post of 'gofer' with great grace.

The journey, and the dancing, started at the factory premises of Kenneth Tickell, where the new organ was being fine tuned. Here we were lucky to escape unscathed when one of our number referred to a highly skilled cabinet maker as a 'chippy'! An inauspicious start with an audience of one, but an ideal opportunity for John to practise a few favourites. Having dragged John away it was off to Buckingham for a spot in front of the old gaol, and then to

you too", we thought. At least there was quite a crowd in front of the Sheldonian, multinational, cosmopolitan and somewhat puzzled of nature. Wantage has a fine town square on which we had planned to dance but unfortunately we had not reckoned with the fair being in town. We were forced aside onto a cobbled and uneven surface outside the Bear Hotel, where we all felt slightly out of place in the midst of the noise and bustle, the dancers in particular having difficulty dancing a jig to the thumping high decibel base notes of a 'pop' fa-



The high point of the trip; 'Shepherd's Hey' on Glastonbury Tor.



An idyllic spot at Bradford on Avon.

the dreaming spires of Oxford, a beautiful city, but not the easiest place in which to leave a motor vehicle for a short while on a busy Saturday – "sorry sir, you can't park there" "Baldricks to

yourite. Marlborough was better, the local open air market on 'our' dance site had just closed and all was peace and quiet. Thereafter we repaired to a local campsite for rest and re-



The Mayor of Honiton, 'grace and dignity withal'.

cuperation, before enjoying our 'feast' at the village inn.

Fully refreshed and enthusiastic the next morning after a good night's rest, we repaired to Lacock. This beautifully preserved village, owned by The National Trust is rightly popular with tourists; but not at 9.30am on a Sunday morning. We had the place to ourselves, but at least we were able to par-

take of a suitably sized breakfast to fortify us for the remainder of the tour. Bradford on Avon was a delight, splendid weather and an ideal dancing place right next to the town bridge, and no problem with parking either. It's not easy to find places for three vehicles and be on time at each venue! The city of Wells is known nationally for its cathedral, a majestic building in a wonderful setting. What a pity we had to wait for nearly an hour for a simple lunch at a nearby town inn. The highlight as well as the high point of the tour was a stop on top of Glastonbury Tor. A short rest was certainly necessary here before dancing commenced, it is a long pull up from the road to the summit, but the view alone is worth it. A sentiment shared by the many families who had gone there to enjoy a little peace and quiet. Both they and the resident new age travellers were somewhat startled to encounter Morris Men here, the local cows more so! Our penultimate stop was in the town centre at Taunton, where the mayor of that county town was kind

enough to meet and greet us and also to make a donation to our fund, then it was on into Devon and our final performance at Honiton. Processing down the main street we turned into the church grounds to a burst of applause from quite a significant crowd – by our standards at least. A few final jigs, some words of congratulation, photographs taken by the local Press, a cup of tea and a biscuit and it was all over.

Was it worth it? Well about £1500 was raised by sponsorship and an additional £50 was collected on the journey, more than enough to fund the transport. We accomplished what we set out to do, and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves as well. A good cause, great fellowship, loads of laughs and lots of memories, what more could one ask? We were on time at each venue too, is this a record for a Morris tour?

Tony Wiggins.



Early morning in Lacock. Tony playing for 'Nutting Girl'

* *Continued from page 3*
During this period high quality professional material of enlightenment, education, and for a few, training must be available, within the public domain, and nationally led. The picture will then clearly show male Morris, female Clog and Garland (or whatever) and mixed Folk and Country dance. Those searching within the traditions for natural integration will then go for Folk/Country dance, or even – 'God forbid' – line-dancing, but a degree of migration to less 'agreeable' quarters must be expected. As he approaches maturity however, some of the male population may then turn to true Morris as the realisation of what it is, dawns on him.

Our task is therefore clear, namely to ensure the options are there, with male Morris Dance dominant, that they are well presented, and user friendly. Further there is then a need to identify the parallel organisations and create strong working

links with them both at national and local level. Many sides already work with local ladies' Clog & Garland sides, and Folk dance, several within individual families. The assignment thereafter lies in better communication, better PR etc., done in harmony with other organisations especially ladies' sides – organisations as respected equals, not just somewhere to 'dump' the unwanted. Groups can then work together or separately as the opportunities arise, knowing that planned programmes are available for potential new members. Together is easier, more efficient, a better image and we have a firm direction for those of either sex whose interest in the dance heritage is genuine. Most of all the activity needs to be seen to be done and done well. It's not an easy task, but do not under-estimate the potency of our position.

If we wanted to, we could change to be as the Open Morris or the Feds: they can't become

the Ring. They currently offer an alternative which seems more attractive, but we can offer all that and add that something extra that they can't! Tradition and quality are on our side, not their's. But there are plenty out there and opportunity to get through to them: communication couldn't be easier. The Morris must move with the times, I repeat, not change the traditions but add the technologies. We know our target audience, men between 35 and 130, the Open Morris and the Feds are shooting at the wider target, with a resultant dilution of effect.

Many ladies respect and want male Morris, we should respect the traditions best presented by others. The high ground is there for the seizure. But after all that, let's not be arrogant, the future probably has a place for all, and the arrogant will be the lesser

So Daniel kicked over the 'can o worms' and we applaud

him for that, now let's stand back, and from rational discussion take some decisions based on a clear understanding of what we are trying to preserve, where we want to go and how to get there; not on mis-guided beliefs, either of an unavoidable outcome or the inevitability of future political 'correctness'. Then let's plan and take action. That we don't have a lot of money, nor spare time, should not prevent us from presenting a professional image.

If what then ensues offers continuation of the pure tradition of male English Morris, we may yet avoid the truly inevitable alternative of a divided Morris Ring! But if it does divide rest assured I'll be with the traditionalists, because I think what we have is worth saving, for a far wider audience than just present day Morris men

Alan Dandy

(A personal view, not necessarily that of Stafford Morris Men, collectively or individually)

Benfieldside become Banska boys

July 1999.

The more countries you dance in, the better your pedigree and the more chance of being invited to other nice places – or so the theory goes! Thus the Benfieldside Morris & Sword Dancers, famed in Russia, Sweden, Belgium, France, Germany and the USA (well, not the USA really – we thought of going there once and it sort of slipped in!) decided to visit Durham's twin city of Banska' Bystrica in central Slovakia.

The trip, (which also included a couple of days dancing at a festival in Tübingen in Bavaria) was part of a general "cultural" visit with jugglers and singers. The journey out took two and a half days by coach and gave us rich pickings en route. A few figures on the ferry and handkerchief-less handkerchief dances at every comfort stop allowed us to add Holland, Germany (now available as a swap), Austria and the North Sea to our foreign conquests.

After settling into our digs at the university Hall of Residence, we were invited to represent the whole "mission" by dancing for the Deputy Mayoress in the Council Chambers. Here, in the Chambers, which would put many similar buildings in Britain to shame, we performed "Valentine" and "Young Collins". Both were very well received both by the Mayoress and our interpreter for the day (who also happened to be the Cultural Attaché to the British Council – a good contact!

Later in the day, when it was cooler (not!) we were asked to entertain around the bars and cafés. After a couple of sessions we decided to settle down for

the evening at an alfresco jazz café. Although totally lathered by now, we suddenly realised that a large audience had gathered, attracted by our strange garb. "Men's gotta do what men's gotta do", so we stood up and danced four dances off the belt. As we only had seven dancers and one musician, this proved to be a "right knacker" (for the older members in particular). Three of the dances



The Banska Boys

were big, showy ones and the fourth a very fast rapper. The response was fantastic and made all the pain worthwhile. The Slovaks swept us up and deposited us in the basement bar of a nightclub (beer at 7 litres to the £) until a taxi took us back to the hall at about 2 am.

The 10 o'clock practice was postponed until midday! Then we rehearsed for an afternoon show which we shared with the jugglers and singers and which lasted for five hours. Even two dances without a break proved energy sapping – but we did well on the photographic front with large numbers wanting their photographs taken with us. After the performance we were in-



The "fast rapper" outside The Gold Pheasant

vited to dine with the Deputy Mayoress at a local restaurant. The first part of the meal was potato & garlic soup served inside a hollowed-out loaf of bread. It tasted very pleasant

but, like vindaloo, had a habit of creeping up on you at five in the morning.

Our final day saw us moving from bar to bar and restaurant to restaurant at the rate of two

dances to a glass of beer. we ended the day performing with the jazz band outside a café and with a gipsy band inside – a memorable end to a wonderful visit! If you want to know more, ask a Benfieldside man about the true nature of "skodas", "obchodny doms", "banksas" and Barry's magic pouch!

Our special thanks must go to Joy Grenyer, Durham County International Exchange Officer, who made the whole trip possible and was the perfect host.

Keith Gregson.



*Bluebells of Scotland, Adderbury
Main Square, Banska Bystrica*

Report on Sherborne Instructional '99

Bearing in mind that everyone had been given a map one cannot but admire the number of ways men found of getting to Sutton Bonnington for the Sherborne Instructional weekend held October 1st – 3rd under the technical authority of Mr Bert Cleaver and incomparable hostelry of Dolphin Morris Men. The Village Hall, hidden down a narrow lane, provided hostel for: sixteen searching to improve Sherborne technique (from Black Jokers, Bathampton, Handsworth, Furness, Mersey, Packington, Stafford, Wath & Winchester); eight or nine well practised in it, (Greensleeves); One Bert Cleaver, head cook, Foreman Instructor, time-keeper and Reveille Sergeant; and ten to twelve who didn't mind what was going on provided the meal times were kept to, (Dolphin) – actually several were seen partaking of the instructional between food prep. duties, serving and washing up.

The very excellent cuisine & impeccable organisation, a combination of Dolphin men and Bert Cleaver, and Bert's ability to fit in more Sherborne dances than most believed existed, detailing the steps, hands, balance, timing, music, discharge duties of executive head chef and still be in the pub every time anyone else walked in, shows his immeasurable ability, energy, culinary skills, sheer knowledge of the Sherborne Morris tradition and more than a little administrative proficiency. Not forgetting, as Bert would be first to admit, the local knowledge and sous-chefery of Dolphin men, and the support of Greensleeves in the form of demonstration, coupled with not just a little assistance in the galley. Of course at the base end of the weekend was none other than our very own and now slimline (relative and generous interpretation), Ring Treasurer Steve Adamson, who was so exhausted merely watching what

was going on Saturday morning he had to lie down for the whole afternoon.

Starting Friday evening after an introductory pint of Kimberley Ale, and dinner of soup, chicken & mushroom pie etc. etc. etc. Sherborne's unique stepping was rehearsed followed by detailed Constant Billy and Alison's Fancy, another double stick dance created by Bert to meet two needs. The first was to create a Morris tune with known copyright, the second to add another stick dance to the tradition, to improve choice. Saturday's sessions repeated Friday evening's & then covered the rest of the tradition with detailed explanations of each step and hand movement as and when needed. Dances included (not in order!) Young Collins, Cuckoos Nest, Old Woman Tossed up in a Blanket, Trunkles, Lads a-Bunchun, Orange in Bloom, Monks March, How dye do (Swaggering Boney), Blue eyed Stranger (the side-step dance), jigs Princess Royal, and Jockey to the Fair, and double jigs Highland Mary, Ill go & Enlist, and My Lord Sherborne's. Saturday Lunch, taken somewhere in the middle was Soup and Pasta & Bolognese sauce. The latter jigs were saved until the first Sunday session, the second session was a Bert Cleaver special of "Once again from the Top" - Once through every dance/jig covered over the weekend! Several were recorded as AWL during this final session, - people responsible take note, neither mental or physical exhaustion, alcohol or food surplus nor a long way home will be taken as excuse, brownie points will be lost!!

The Kings Head, with variegated array of photographs of recent-past Royalty, also boasted several birds (feathered variety & caged), and a formidable collection of half pint tankards from the days when ale was sold by the jug for home consumption, and tankards loaned out for the night. As half-pints however they were redundant for the Morris week-

end, as for some pub-local was the whole event. A couple occupying a small table strategically central to the whole bar, and joined half way through the Saturday evening by a third gent, managed a marathon task of endurance for over two hours, not only ignoring everything around them, but keeping straight-faced conversation throughout as Bert, parking his drink on their table and knocking over a bottle of tonic, then beat to quarters on pipe & tabor at a volume only Bert can raise. All this not more than eighteen inches from the afore-mentioned gent's left eardrum and raising song which engulfed the whole bar including the landlord and other pub-local's tackling the mentally strenuous exertion of fives 'n threes. Their only other detectable movement throughout their dogged ordeal was when they knocked over a bottle of beer themselves, probably in sympathy with Bert's tonic. The landlord's reaction was more to the expected standards with fine ale & spirits, an ever-elastic timing and cordial joining-in on the choruses. The session was reported to finish some time after midnight, the author having retired just before.

The menu for the Saturday night Feast was Pate, Pork in a prune sauce with Roast potatoes, broccoli & green beans, followed by Plum & Apple crumble with cream, Cheese & Biscuits, Coffee & Mints. The Loyal Toast by Chris Grigg of Dolphin MM, The Immortal Memory by Harry Stevenson of Winchester, The Morris Ring by Idris Roker of Bathampton, proceeded a very splendid session of song beginning with Stafford's Peter Morgan.

It should not go unrecorded that Ivor Allsop spent the weekend taking video/audio records of the event, particularly the demonstrations by Greensleeves, and offered early unedited copies to participants at minimal cost. On behalf of present and future students, our sincere thanks: on behalf, I'm sure of all who took part, our

warm thanks to Bert and the Back-Up Team, for an excellent weekend with real purpose, particularly the advancement and embellishment of one of the finest traditions of English Morris – Sherborne

*Alan Dandy
(Stafford MM)*

Obituary: Tom Camp

TOM CAMP, who died on 3rd November 1999 aged 83, was a member of the Bishop's Stortford & Thorley Morris Men (admitted to the Morris Ring in May 1935), a side long since disbanded.

Tom was with the side when they danced for William Kimber at Bampton on Whit Monday 1939 following his lament at not being able to field a Headington Quarry side for Whitsun as HQMD had, at that time, lapsed. (For a reference to this, see pp. 33-4 of the booklet accompanying "Absolutely Classic")

Two photographs of the Bishop's Stortford & Thorley Morris Men dancing at Bampton on that occasion were published in Christina Holes "English Folklore" (1940). These two photographs from the Oxford Mail appear as illustrations 45 & 47.

Tom was also a long-serving member of the choir and the bell-ringers at the church of St James the Great, Thorley. As a member of the EFDSS, Tom danced at the Albert Hall show several times, representing Hertfordshire in the 1930s & 1940s.

Information supplied by Gordon Ridgewell

Leicester by Wessex



*Photographs from
Michael Phelan,
Wessex Morris Men's Publicity
Officer*

(Clockwise, from top left)

- Leicester MM Musician
(name not given)
- WMM dancing Sweet Jenny
Jones
- Leicester MM supporting a
spectator.
- Manchester MM

All these pictures were taken
outside the Bull's Head at
Markfield



Maypole, Portugal Place reopened in June 1965. Cambridge Morris Men perform

Where are they now? (2)

from Gordon Ridgewell



Further to the 1960 vintage photograph of the Burton-on-Trent Morris Men, published in *The Morris Dancer*, Volume Three Number Six (February 1999), how about this 1965 vintage photograph of the Cambridge Morris Men – where are they now?

I came across this photograph when, on an Autumnal visit to the fair city of Cambridge, I dropped into the head offices of the local evening newspaper, the *Cambridge Evening News*, at Milton. Whilst scanning the most recent issues of that journal I found, in the issue for 9th September 1999, a double-page feature at pages 24-25 (see the thumbnail: ED). The article was a look back at hostilities in Cambridge that have been lost and gained, by local historian Mike Petty.

One of the four photographs (above) illustrating the piece was of Cambridge Morris men performing in front of The Maypole public house in Portugal Place on the occasion of its reopening in June 1965. The side are seen dancing to the music of the pipe & tabor being played by the bowler-hatted past Bagman of the Morris Ring, Russell Wortley, who died on 8th January 1980 – where are the rest of this side of CMM now?

Wassail,

Gordon Ridgewell

The Ridgewell Files

3.xii.1999



7.i.2000

Source: The Independent, 30.viii.1999, p 10
Title: Great Railway Fiascos
Featured Team: not stated

27.i.2000



Source: Newcastle Evening Chronicle, 24.iii.1995, p 9

Title: Get on down, rappers!

Featured team: High Spen Blue Diamonds

12.i.2000



Source:

Cambridge Evening News, 30.viii.1999

Title: The rural side of dancing

Featured team: Coton Village Morris Men

10.xii.1999



Source: Cambridge Evening News, 3.v.1999, p 11

Title: King's return to Palace House for heritage festival

Featured team: Devil's Dyke

20.i.2000



Source: The Guardian, 7.ix.1999 p 8

Title: On the horns of history

Featured team: A b b o t s Bromley

22.xii.1999



Source: Yorkshire Post, 26.v.1999

Title: Sword dancers seek new members to avoid chop

Featured team: West Riding Longswordsmen

Source: The Times Weekend, 2.x.1999

Title: Centuries of growth

Featured team: B a m p t o n (1947) Illustration previously published in The British Heritage (1948) p 275

Source: Royston & Buntingford Mercury, 3.ix.1999

Featured team: Offley (with ex-Squire Mike Chandler)

4.ii.2000



10.ii.2000

3.iii.2000



Source: H e m p s t e a d , Berkhamsted & Tring Gazette, 20.x.1999
Title: Morris men's TV date is all part of game
Featured team: Aldbury

18.ii.2000



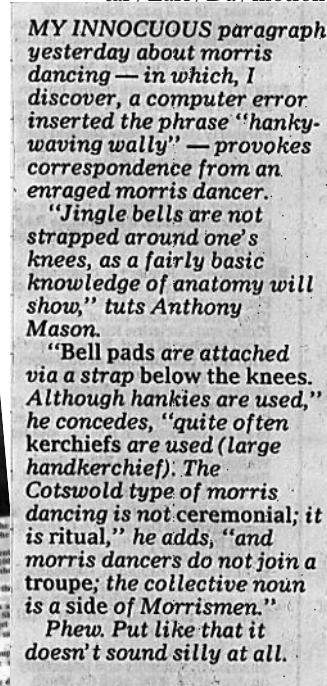
Source: Herts & Essex Observer, 11.xi.1999 p 14
Title: Kate reaches milestone
Featured team: Thaxted (with centenarian ex-musician Kate Butters)

25.ii.2000

Source: The Sunday Telegraph, 2.i.2000 p 7
Title: How we spent a day and night with Auntie
Featured team: none ("an oriental Morris dance"???)



Source: The Daily Telegraph, 13.i.2000 p 25 (Peterborough)
Title: Hell's bells
Featured team: unknown - photo of anonymous dancer as padding to sneer against Bob Russell's Parliamentary Early Day motion



Source: Evening Standard, 1.xi.1999 p 27
Title: Stick dance will be the talk of the Dome... with bells on
Featured team: The three National Organisations - article about morris dancing at the Dome (??)

Boxing Day with Headington Quarry Morris Dancers

The WILLIAM KIMBER / CECIL SHARP CENTENARY LUNCHEON

Guests

Nibs Matthews, Daniel Fox, Rev. Bob Nichols, Dr. Mary Nichols, Mr & Mrs John Warland, John & Alison Jewitt, Richard & Valerie King, Mrs. Alison Wilson, Mr & Mrs Richard Wilson, Mrs. Stephanie Meeson, Ron Smedley, Bob Parker, Vic & Brenda Godrich, Derek Schofield & Rachel Tay-

lor, Jim Gordon, Bill & Barbara Kinsman, Mr. & Mrs. John Treen, Jim Hayward, Harry & Gillian Fell, Ken & Eira Skivyer, Brian & Ann Wooby, Roy & Betty Judge, Eddie & Margaret Dunmore, Mike Heaney, Michael Black, Colin & Ann Fleming, John & Carol Hutson and Cliff Gurl

MEMBERS of HQMD

Anthony Parsons & Helen O'Sullivan, Terry & Jane Phipps, Bob & Janet Turrell, Tony & Alleen Morris, John Graham & Norma Stallard, Bob & Wendy Grant, Peter & Marjorie Davies, Terry & Jackie Mills, Francis & Pat Parsons, Roger & Anita Phillips, Malcolm & Jean

Price, Pete & Josephine Scudder, Chris & Sarah Kimber-Nickelson, Robin & Carol Ainley, Rupert Ainley, Eddie & Maureen Whitehouse, David Rendell, Adam Wheeler, Ian & Marion Sheppard, Will & Sheila Partridge and Ben Crabb and partner.

Editor's Note

As you may gather from my photographs, the weather during the dancing was fine and sunny, if a little chilly. Margaret & I collected Roy & Betty Judge from Hither Green and drove to the Grant residence in Headington. There we were made welcome by Bob & Wendy before being driven to Horwood Close by Bob's son. There we found all the usual suspects (see the Guest List above) and a heartening number of locals. There was a brisk trade in HQMD Centenary memorabilia encouraged by p.a. announcements. The team kitted itself out in the baldrics & caps of 1899 and the show began. The opening dance was "Bean Setting" as it was then and it was followed by "Country Gardens". When the 1899 program had been completed, the dancers assumed current kit and carried on. Even the weather was cooperating, the morning being fine & sunny,

even if chilly: the rain held off until the last dance. The lunch was being held in the Bowls Club pavilion, just around the corner, and started with a complimentary sherry. The food was good and wine was provided: the Headington hospitality was as good as ever. The speeches were interesting, with John Graham providing his usual contribution of humour and Bob Grant once again demonstrating his abiding interest in historical detail (his speech is reproduced on pages 14 & 15). I must record my thanks to HQMD for inviting me to their celebration and for their effort in making the whole occasion so enjoyable. My particular thanks go to Bob & Wendy Grant for their hospitality and for filling-in the gaps in my memory when it came to recording the details of the day. As a once-in-a-lifetime event, I don't think it could have been bettered.

Eddie Dunmore

Boxing Day with Headington Quarry MorrisDancers

Bean Setting at Horwood Close: Under Starter's Orders



Musician, Peter Scudder (playing William's concertina); Fool, Mal Price; No 1 & Foreman, Roger Phillips (son of Past Squire Jim Phillips); No 2, Anthony Morris; No 3 (partly hidden), Bob Turrell; No 4, Francis Parsons; No 5, Peter Davies; No 6, Terry Phipps.

Not only are the side wearing the 1899 costume, they were all (save the Fool) taught their dancing by William Kimber at school some 47 years ago and all still dancing (just!)

However, for those of you who possess neither or who are unaware of these historic events, here is a very brief run-up to today 100 years ago.

In 1887 Headington Quarry stop dancing at "their last great occasion", a fete held to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee.

In 1898 the Oxford Don and antiquary, Percy Manning, revives Headington Quarry and they rehearse and prepare for a concert given by Manning and Counsellor Taphouse on March 13th 1899 at the Corn Exchange in Oxford. This is warmly received and attracts much attention.

Easter 1899: William Kimber meets Mrs Birch whilst working on her "new" house, Sandfield Cottage and he tells her of the local morris.

At Whitsun 1899, and at her invitation, HQMD call and dance for Mrs Birch on their way to perform at the traditional Oddfellows Lodge fete held on the Britannia pub field, literally across the road from Sandfield Cottage.

Boxing Day 1899: The team call again and are seen by Cecil Sharp staying at the cottage for Christmas with his family and his mother-in-law Mrs Birch. Cecil Sharp invites William to return the next day in order to note down the tunes. With the hint of coins of the realm being proffered for his trouble you

The Centenary Celebration Lunch

26th December 1999

Editor's Note: This is Bob's speech from his "salient notes" & recollection, sent to me as a typescript: for this, and for his

hospitality, he has my profound gratitude!

I was going to propose after all that (the preceding speeches) that we took a short break of say 100 years whilst I re-write these notes. From a number of perspectives I can tell you that I am grateful to be here and I also count it a great privilege to be with you on such a unique occasion.

I do not propose to talk for long, I think that by now the events of 100 years ago are well documented and recorded and I believe that Terry (our Bagman) has with him copies of my monogram "When Punch met Merry" which deals with the circumstances of that pivotal meeting, together with the brochure written by John Graham which deals with the modern post-war history of our Club.



Country Gardens being danced by the same team as on page 14, this time with No 5 (Pete Davies) hidden.

may be assured that he was there prompt and early!

None of this appears to have attracted the attention of the local press, but in Jackson's Oxford Journal a little item appears on page 9 and I quote "A party of morris dancers paid Witney a visit on Saturday and proved a great attraction in the streets". This was Eynsham morris of course, out begging as usual. This cannot be denied: Mike Heaney of Eynsham dug out this snippet for me and he is here sat on my right and not denying a word of it!

Another item appears on page 8 concerning the Headington Workhouse — this was a grim building standing near to the A40 roundabout. I quote "Everything possible was done for the comfort and enjoyment of the inmates. Breakfast, at which a larger supply of bread and butter than usual was served, was first partaken of after which there was a service . . . an ample supply of Christmas cheer was at the disposal of the inmates: roast beef, potatoes, plum pudding, a pint of beer or coffee, oranges, an ounce of tobacco for the men, and snuff, oranges and sweets for the women. The hall had been decorated on a most elaborate scale thanks to the energy of the respective master and matron". I shall be more than surprised if I am the only Quarry soul here who knows the refrain "And the pompous Workhouse master as he strode about the halls, cried 'A Merry Christmas inmates', and the

inmates answered 'B...s!' This Union Workhouse was but three quarters of a mile from here, up the London Road, and curiously was the last place that Cecil Sharp collected a folk song — a version of 'Three Maids A-milking' from an old lady inmate (unfortunately we do not have a note of her name).

At the same time, the police in Jericho (a suburb of Oxford) had to separate two fighting drunks outside of a pub that had attracted a large crowd of on-lookers. A close parallel occurred here in the Quarry, Boxing Day circa 1960's. At the Chequers I had just freshly slain King George and laid him out for the Doctor's ministrations, when straight through the set walked Willy Williams, an old school pal of mine, determined to secure his lunch time pint. With a sniff and air of disdain he said "Still fighting outside of pubs I see Granty" and strode on. So what's new?

There are still some serious bits of research to do. Mrs Birch died in 1902 and, in the preamble to her Will, the Administrators of her Marriage Settlement to Captain Priestly Birch include a Lieutenant Colonel John Ireland Blackburne. A Blackburne family owned Sandfield Cottage to the end and there may be some sort of connection. The circumstances of Mrs Birch's arrival in Oxford from Somerset have never been explained and it is possible that

the imminent release of the Census Returns might shed some light upon the matter. Of perhaps greater interest is her stipulation in her Will that, and I quote, "I wish all my letters and papers to be burnt, excepting my diaries". I wonder what became of them and what they recorded of that Christmas of 1899?

Finally, all morris dancers should be grateful to the industry and authoritative research that two great historians have contributed to our understanding of the morris scene and they are Dr Roy Judge and Mike Heaney — I am delighted that both of them are here today. I have had much help from them but my own work in comparison to theirs is perhaps a mere trivial touching-in of some fading colours of the fabric of the tale.

We are today a unique assembly, including those who knew and were taught their morris by William and members of his family: regrettably his sole surviving daughter, Sophie, is unable to be with us today. I am sure that you would like to join me in sending her our very best wishes: of us all she is probably one of the very few who knew Cecil Sharp.

So, as the century goes out with the same intensely wild weather



Peter Scudder playing William Kimber's concertina (bequeathed to Bob Grant by Past Squire Kenneth Loveless)

that heralded it in and our Club is again led by one of its youngest members: William was 27 when he met Cecil Sharp and Anthony — well, he looks a lot younger than me! — there is nothing more for me to say except "Vivat! Headington Quarry Morris Dancers."



Christopher Kimber-Nickelson dancing Old Mother Oxford to the playing of John Graham. Chris is William's great-grandson, being the son of Julie who is Fred Kimber's daughter

MERRY'S MIRROR

A partnered jig, Headington Style, being a whimsical re-

flection on the 100 years since C# first met William "Merry" Kimber.



Dedicated to Morris Dancers everywhere by an 'informed bystander'.

Note: The music is to be played in the usual "A" "B" sequence with tempo comodo for the Capers, (i.e. 4 Bars of "A" at half speed and then normal speed) and with a rallentando for the closing bars when playing the "A- last time" music as indicated on the score.

The dance instructions are given for the 'foreman's' side – his partner opposite is to exactly mirror his movements, thus if foreman say, sidesteps right then partner will sidestep left. The jig commences with the dancers starting on the outside foot. Headington style crossback steps are used – foreman right foot behind first. The pair (or pairs) stand facing the musician or presence. At the end of the Foot Up the pair turn in to face each other to start the mirroring sequences.

- OTY
- Foot Up (twice).
- Side step Down for one bar) then dance on spot and follow with x-backs.

- Side step Up, dance on spot with x-backs
- Foot Down (turn inwards) dance on spot with x-backs
- Foot Up (turn inwards) dance on spot etc.

Add your own distinctive or invented figure as your "hall-mark" or merely repeat the side step sequences.

Capers as in "Trunkles" – foreman l.r.tog.r., 4 lots of Capers, dance on the spot, follow with x-backs.

Whilst still facing partner, hand clapping as in "Shepherd's Hey" (last sequence) with exaggerated sweeping salute and bow starting from forehead and to touch hands with partner at end of movement.

Foot up, resume facing the presence and at end, dance out with 4 PC and a throw up.

I am indebted to the Oxford City Morris Men for the initial trialling of this jig with great style and pannahe on the 28. 4. 1999. led by their musician and Squire, Alison Jewitt and dancers Jon Jewitt, Ted Smale, John Purves and Roger Jenkins.

BAD HAIR DAY (OR THE TALE OF THE NINETEEN STICKS)

The century had not started well for me. January was a vicious circle of every ailment going the rounds; I had paid several hundred pounds for an unnecessary car service and at home the tumble drier, central heating motor and vacuum cleaner had packed up in quick succession.

Wednesday, 2nd February started with my BT shares dropping £2.14 each and Pam, my wife, going down with yet another bug. To help her, I decided to pick up the hoover from the repairers (I'm an old softie at heart!) and as it was a sunny day I chose also to go and cut some morris sticks. Armed with a pruning saw and chopper – and the repaired hoover – I set off for

an ash grove I knew on the North Downs near Shere.

When I got there, I drove off the narrow road onto the bridle path and soon I had cut 19 good staves. My trial started when I needed to back out of the bridle path to the road. My tyres spun without gripping. Not a problem! I would go down the track a wee way and turn round. This meant going downhill about 100 yards but that wouldn't matter. (Oh yes it would!)

When I finally managed to turn round I was in a much steeper part of the wood and in trying to drive forward I was actually going backwards until I ended up off the path and against a young tree. Game set and match? No way! I'll get out. So, with my 12-inch pruning

saw (blunt) I proceeded to attack the 5-inch tree trunk.

It was at this time that my confidence started to evaporate, but after about 20 minutes of sweat and swearwords it came down to enable me to back onto the track again where I reversed further down to a level dry spot in order to have a good charge at the hill. I charged; and skidded to a halt, wheels spinning. My confidence evaporated along with my beautiful day feelings. Defeated, I staggered back to the road to find a friendly farmer, and tractor, to haul me out.

In this part of Surrey the word "FARM" no longer means that the owner thereof dirties himself on the land. Much less would he dream of putting his

mandatory 4WD into an "off road" condition. So, the first two farms that I visited produced no help, or even knowledge of a real farm nearby; my feelings towards the stockbrokers of Surrey were not benign!

Now desperate, I thumbed a lift from a local, a Scotsman who kindly drove me to couple of farms in the valley – both silent. Finally after two false starts, I finished up at a garage in Gomshall, about 2 miles away, where the owner said he would extricate me with his Range Rover for £30 (+ VAT). As I only had a fiver on me, I had to ring home to get details of my "flexible fried" and suitably debited we set off.

(continued on page 17)

ON THE ART OF PAINTING NATIONAL FIGURES



On 18th of June this year (*the year in question was 1999: ED*), armed with brushes, Sandtex and a poly-pin of Harvey's bitter, The Long Man Morris Men painted their namesake, The Long Man of Wilmington. Jim Edmonds, one of our side, has maintained a long interest in

the figure, and was the prime mover behind the scheme.

Standing some two hundred and forty feet high on the face of Windover Hill at Wilmington, East Sussex, the figure was originally cut into the chalk, at an unknown date. In time, the turf grew back over the outline, and

he was not 'discovered' again until the 17th century. During the 19th Century the chalk outline was overlaid with yellow-coloured stones; in the late 1960's these were overlaid with some 770 concrete blocks, each about two feet high and nine inches wide.

After consultation with the Sussex Archaeological Society and East Sussex County Council, we set about tarding him up. It took one of our ex-members three hours to strim around the figure, and about four hours in all to brush the blocks down and give them a coat of white paint, kindly donated by C Brewer & Sons.

We all know how difficult it is to stir the interest of the media when it comes to Morris Dancing – what a difference in this case! The hill was practically crawling with radio Reporters, local paper photographers, and a lone cameraman from Southern News Extra, who was rendered speechless after lugging his heavy equipment to the lower slopes of the figure. I think we featured on every radio station

with the exception of Classic FM! (Oh, and a page on Teletext and Ceefax)

On the day, the weather was beautiful and the completed figure really stood out against the green of the South Downs, fresh and visible for miles.

We were too knackered to dance in celebration afterwards, but as well as doing something that will give pleasure to others, we gained a lot of good, positive publicity for Morris Dancing in general.

*Stuart Walker
Bagman, Long Man
Morris Men*



BAD HAIR DAY

(continued from page 16)

We had not got far down the track before my rescuer decided he should turn and try the outward journey before starting the tow. He got stuck! We had to do a lot of "brush wood carpeting" before he could make his escape leaving my poor little car once more alone in the woods. Back at base he 'phoned round but couldn't raise the "heavy mob" before it became dark so I had to take a train home.

Clapped out, car-less and caked with mud I was a sorry sight. Pam was, I think, more concerned about the fate of her Hoover than the car. I couldn't eat and spent an almost sleepless night. When I did sleep, I dreamed of the car abandoned like a babe in the woods, and how it was being vandalised before help could arrive. The following morning, early, I 'phoned the garage for news and was told that they had rescued her the previous night as the rescue wagon, which itself got

bogged down for a time, was equipped with floodlights. It had taken 2 hours and the extra cost would be £80 (+VAT). My morris-mate, Alan Hayward, drove me back to re-unite me with my baby. Filthy but undamaged, after a quick power-hose job she was back to normal. As a consolation I was told that my rescuer had pulled out 4 or 5 cars from there last year - proving that there are more mugs than me around.

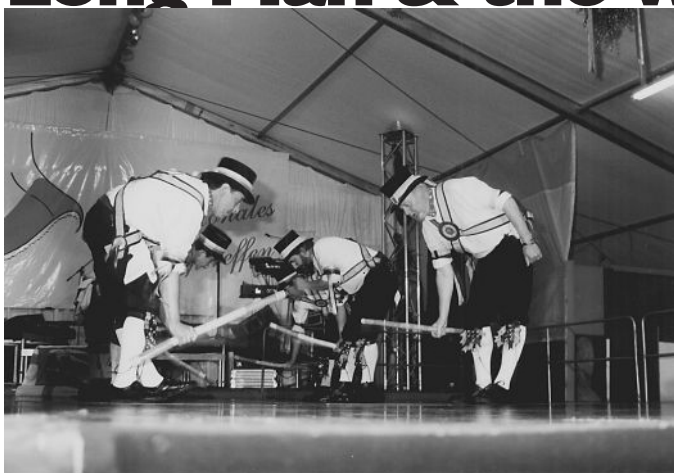
If there is a moral to this story it is..... "when you find yourself in something brown and sticky, don't go charging further in".

The only reaction from my club was mirth: does anyone want to buy some stout ash morris sticks at cost, only £6.80 each (no VAT)?

Bob Davies

(ex) Stick Gatherer
– East Surrey Morris Men

Long Man & the Winzertanzgruppe



In May 1999, the Long Man Morris Men took their third trip to Germany, attending an International Dance Festival in Klusserath, a small, neat village on the banks of the river Mosel, not too far from Luxembourg. We attended in 1993, 1997 and this year, and have been warmly welcomed on each occasion.

This is a famous wine-producing area, and steep hills rise sharply behind the village, covered in vines. Klusserath has a 'Winzertanzgruppe' (Vintner's Dance Group) and they organise the festival bi-annually. Dance teams from all over Europe (and beyond) are invited; this year there were sides from Denmark, Switzerland (two, one a 'yodeling choir!') Portugal, Poland, Belgium (they did an interesting 7-man Longsword dance with displayed lock) Lettland (Latvia) Austria and Argentina, as well as Long Man and the local side. Accommodation is indoor camping at the local junior school, and meals are provided – the only cost involved to us was travel.

An enormous marquee houses most of the entertainment – at a rough guess, it would easily hold 1500 people. Stalls selling wine and beer, and a sort of 'Chip und Wurst' waggon keep thirst and hunger at bay (beer takes second place to wine here!) Seating is on narrow benches at trestle tables, performers at the front, audience at the back!

Each side has about 15 minutes to display on the Satur-



day night, and this takes place on a stage at one end of the tent. The stage is fairly roomy and well sprung, and high quality PA is provided. We found that there was a tendency for the stage to 'take over' our dancing, and made everyone want to 'stamp' more than usual. Needless to say, we were utterly unlike any of the other sides present, and managed to generate a considerable amount of noise, despite being far fewer in number. We danced Black Joker (Bledington), The Quaker (Bampton), Jockey to the Fair (Brackley) and two of our own Wilmington dances. The majority of the other dancers had never seen Morris Dancing before, and were most taken by it. We have been a success on all three occasions, and hope to be invited again.

The other 'set-piece' is a procession around the village on the Sunday afternoon, and as well as the invited teams, there are representatives from all the other neighbouring villages, mostly vintner's groups. We found it very difficult to display our processional talents adequately, as people would insist on approaching us with bottles of wine – we in turn felt obliged to stop and relieve them of their burden!

The marquee also hosts late night discos, and on the Sunday night, a live rock band. This brings in a different audi-

end on any of the three occasions we have attended!

We have tended to go and dance at a pub on the Sunday evening – on our first trip we thought it polite to ask, and this was greeted with amazement – 'why do you wish to dance at a pub?' – 'Because it's what we do!' Consultation with the said pub brought forth permission, and we have been there on every trip. The hospitality that we received each time can only be described as overwhelming – would that it happened in England occasionally!

Other delights include wine tasting at local vintners, with, of course, the opportunity to purchase, and visiting the nearest large town, Trier. The area was settled by the Romans, and boasts the 'Porta Negra', the Black Gate, a magnificent Roman gatehouse. The town itself boasts a wealth of fine sixteenth century houses, painted in delicate pastel shades, many with ornate painted statues.

It is always good to spread the gospel beyond these shores, and we shall be ready to undertake more missionary work should the opportunity arise – Nirvana will be reached the day Harvey's Brewery take a space in the marquee!

Stuart Walker



An Easy Way To Produce Printed Copies Of Tunes

David Thompson

As some of you will know, I have been working on a project to make the music of the Folk Dance Tunes and their notation more readily available in an acceptable form that will not infringe copyright. I will describe what I have found to be a quick and workable solution to this problem. It is I believe a system that is very suitable for the notation of morris tunes in particular and folk music in general.

I found on the cover-mount CD Roms that come with magazines like PC Format several music programs. Most require you to drag a shape of the necessary length on to a staff, a task I found very difficult. I eventually hit upon a program called *Music Assistant* where you picked up a note which you dropped on a staff. This I found more satisfactory even if rather time consuming. A full version of the program, in which you can change the key, is about £12 and it will give you harmonic notation as well that could be adapted to the melodeon.

One day whilst browsing the web I looked up the website of Manchester Morris Men – those champions, when I first saw them in the mid 70's they put a wonderful display just like it should be done not a pale shadow. Tucked away in their Archive page I found the ABC Music Notation which can be used to make a simple text file that can be imported into Music Assistant to give printed music notation in a few minutes: what's more those people who only play by ear can listen to the program play the tune so that this could be a vehicle for learning new unfamiliar tunes.

How to get started

Remember that more information is available elsewhere. I will give a template that can be used to put the notation into, an edited form of the system, and some examples that could be imported into Music Assistant. The packages which support abc notation can be found at the following sites:

*MelodyAssistant

<http://www.myriad-online.com/index.htm> is a full-scale shareware score editor that speaks abc. It can print, play and even create guitar tablature and runs on both PCs and Macs.

*MusicEase

<http://www.musicase.com> is a full-featured Windows based editor which imports abc and *SongWright* files. Edits, transposes, prints and plays. New features include automatic conversion to tablature, automatic addition of chord fret diagrams, and general MIDI instrument support. Also available from the same site is the *Digital Tradition Folksong Player*.

X %Music reference number
T: %Tune name
C: %Tune composer
Q: ¼=120 %Tempo
K: %Key
M: %Meter
%End of file

X: - a number you give to the tune

T: - tune title. (the T: field can also be used within a tune to name parts of a tune - in this case it should come before any key or meter changes).

K: - key; the key signature should be specified with a capital letter.

L: - default note length; i.e. L:1/4 - quarter note, L:1/8 - eighth note, L:1/16 - sixteenth, L:1/32 - thirty-second. The default note length is also set automatically by the meter field M: (see below).

M: - meter; apart from the normal meters, e.g. M:6/8 or M:4/4.

P: - parts; can be used in the header to state the order in which the tune parts are played, i.e. P:ABABCD, and then inside the tune to mark each part, i.e. P:A or P:B. Q - tempo; can be used to specify the notes per minute, e.g. if the default note length is an eighth note then Q:120 or Q:C=120 is 120 eighth notes per minute.

abc TUNE NOTATION

The letters are used to represent notes:-

C=middle C,
c=third line space C:
ledger line notes below middle C are CAPITALS;
above middle C the notes are capitals until SECOND line a which is lower case
above g first space above the staff is a' etc. and by extension, the notes C, D, E, F, a' and b' are available. Notes can be modified in length (see below).

Rests: Rests are generated with a 'z' and can be modified in length in exactly the same way as notes can.

Note lengths: (Note that throughout this document note lengths are referred as sixteenth, eighth, etc). The commonly used equivalents are:
sixteenth note = semi-quaver,
eighth = quaver,
quarter = crotchet and
half = minim.

Each meter automatically sets a default note length and a single letter in the range A-G, a-g will generate a note of this length.

For example, In 3/4 the default note length is an eighth note and so the input DEF represents 3 eighth notes.

The default note length can be calculated by computing the meter as a decimal; if it is less than 0.75 the default is a sixteenth note, otherwise it is an eighth note.

For example,
2/4 = 0.5, so the default note length is a sixteenth note, while 4/4 = 1.0 or 6/8 = 0.75, so the default is an eighth note. Common time and cut time (M:C and M:C|) have an eighth note as default.

Notes of differing lengths can be obtained by simply putting a multiplier after the letter. Thus, in 2/4, A or A1 is a sixteenth note,
A2 an eighth note,
A3 a dotted eighth note,
A4 a quarter note,
A6 a dotted quarter note,
A8 a half note,
A12 a dotted half note;
in 3/4, A is an eighth note,
A2 a quarter note,
A3 a dotted quarter note,
A4 a half note, ...

To get shorter notes, either divide them - e.g. in 3/4, A/2 is a sixteenth note, A/4 is a thirty-second note - or change the default note length with the L: field. Alternatively, if the music has a broken rhythm, e.g. dotted eighth note/sixteenth note pairs, use broken rhythm markers (see below). Note that A/ is shorthand for A/2.

Broken rhythms

A common occurrence in traditional music is the use of a dotted or broken rhythm. For example, hornpipes, strathspeys and certain morris jigs all have dotted eighth notes fol-

lowed by sixteenth notes as well as vice-versa in the case of strathspeys. To support this abc notation uses a > to mean 'the previous note is dotted, the next note halved'

and < to mean 'the previous note is halved, the next dotted'. Thus the following lines all mean the same thing (the third version is recommended):

L:1/16

a3b cd3 a2b2c2d2

L:1/8

a3/2b/2 c/2d3/2 abcd

L:1/8

a>b<cabcd

Duplets, triplets, quadruplets, etc.

These can be simply coded with the notation:- (2ab for a duplet, (3abc for a triplet or (4abcd for a quadruplet, etc., up to (9.

The musical meanings are:

(2 2 notes in the time of 3

(3 3 notes in the time of 2

(4 4 notes in the time of 3

Beams

To group notes together under one beam they should be grouped together without spaces. Thus in 2/4, A2BC will produce an eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes under one beam whilst A2 B C will produce the same notes separated. The beam slopes and the choice of upper or lower staffs are generated automatically.

Repeat/bar symbols

Bar line symbols are generated as follows:

| bar line

|] thin-thick double bar line

|] thin-thin double bar line

[| thick-thin double bar line

:: left repeat

|: right repeat

:: left-right repeat

First and second repeats

First and second repeats can be generated with the symbols [1 and [2, e.g.

faf gfe|[1 dfe dBA:[2 d2e dcB|].

When adjacent to bar lines, these can be shortened to |1 and :|2, but with regard to spaces | [1 is legal, | 1 is not.

Accidentals

The symbols ^ = and _ are used (before a note) to generate respectively a sharp natural or flat.

Changing key,

meter, and

default note

length mid-tune

To change key, meter, or default note length, simply put in a new line with a K: M: or L: field, e.g. e d | c e c A B 2 e d | c A c A E2ed | cecAB2ed | c2A2A2: | K:G

A B | c d e c B c d B | A B A F GFE2 | cdec BcdB | c2A2 A2: |

To do this without generating a new line of music, put a \ at the end of the first line, i.e. E2E EFE|E2E EFG|\ M:9/8 A2G F2E D2|]

Ties and slurs

You can tie two notes together either across or within a bar with a - symbol, e.g. abc-|cba or abc-cba. More general slurs can be put in with () symbols. Thus (DEFG) puts a slur over the four notes. Spaces within a slur are OK, e.g. (D E F G), but the openbracket should come immediately before a note (and its accents/accidentals, etc.) and the close bracket should come immediately after a note (and its octave marker or length). Thus (=b c'2) is OK but (=b c'2) is not.

Gracings

Grace notes can be written by enclosing them in curly braces, {}. Grace notes have no time value and so expressions such as {a2} or {ab} are not legal.

Accents

Staccato marks (a small dot above or below the note head)

can be generated by a dot before the note, i.e. a staccato triplet is written as (3.a.b.c

For fiddlers, the letters u and v can be used to denote up-bow and down-bow, e.g. vAuBvA

Order of symbols

The order of symbols for one note is <guitar chords>, <accents> (e.g. roll, staccato marker or up/downbow), <accidental>, <note>, <octave>, <note length>, i.e. ~ ^ c'3 or even "Gm7"v.=G,2

Tie symbols, - should come immediately after a note group but may be followed by a space, i.e. =G,2- . Open and close chord symbols, [], should enclose entire note sequences (except for guitar chords), i.e. "C"[CEGc] or "Gm7"[.=G, ^ c'] and open and close slur symbols, (), should do likewise, i.e. "Gm7"(v.=G,2~ ^ c'2)

Comments

A % symbol will cause the remainder of any input line to be ignored.

Line breaking and justification

Generally one line of abc notation will produce one line of music, although if the music is too long it will overflow onto the next line. This can look very effective, but it can also completely ruin ties across bar lines, for example. You can counteract this by breaking the line of abc notation. If, however, you wish to use two lines of input to generate one line of music then simply put a \ at the end of the first line. This is also useful for changing meter or key in the middle of a line of music.

With most packages lines of music are right-justified. However, where this is not the case, a * at the end of each line of abc notation will force a right-justified line-break.

SOME EXAMPLES

X:957 %Music

T:957 Belle Isles March %Tune name

C:Mr Stagg Hammersmith %Tune composer

I:5th July 1906 %Tune infos

Q:1/4=120 %Tempo

K:F

M:4/4 %Meter

F F3/2A/ G2 G3/2B/ | A2 f3/2d/

c3 B | AcAF GBGE | F2

F3/2F/ F4 :: cdcB A2 A2 | BcBA

G2 G2 | cdcB A2 A2

| BcBA G2 G2

| F2 F3/2A/ G2 G3/2B/ | A2

f3/2d/ c3 B | AcAF GBGE | F2

F3/2F/ F4 :| %End of file

X:1250 %Music

T:1250 Swaggering Boney %Tune

name C:John Mason Stow on

the Wold %Tune composer

I:27th march 1907 %Tune infos

Q:1/4=120 %Tempo

K:D M:6/8 %Meter

A2 A FED | FGA BcB |(A3A2)

A | dcd Bed |

c B c d3 z5 | c2 e e2 A | e2 A A2 F

| G2 B B2 F |

GEF G3 | FGA D3 | FGA E3

| FGA Bcd | cBc d3 ||

%End of file X:1252

%Music T:1252 Black Joker

%Tune name C:John Mason

%Tune composer I:

%Tune infos Q:1/4=120

%Tempo K:G M:4/4

%Meter D2

GG FG | AB A A2 G | G2 dd cB

| AcBA GF | GAB E2 E | D E F

G2 :| D2 cB AG | Bc d e2 e |

M:3/8 %Meter d3/4 z3/4 z3/2 |

M:6/8

%Meter G2 G Bcd | e2 e d3 | c2 c

B2 B | AG A A2 G | G2 d dcB

| AcB AGF | GAB E2 E | D E F

G2 || z6 ||

%End of file X:1307

%Music T:1307 Sherborne Jig

%Tune name C:William

Hathaway

%Tune composer I:Cheltenham

4th April 1907

%Tune infos Q:1/4=120

%Tempo K:A M:6/8

%Meter Aed c3/2B/A | Aed

c3/2B/A | f2 e fga | cdB A2 A |

Aed c3/2B/A | Aed c3/2B/A | f2 e

fga | cdB A2 z :: M:3/4

%Meter (3:2:1e(3:2:1f(3:2:1g z4

| a2 g2 f2 | e3 d c2 | M:4/4

%Meter de f2 e2 d2 | c3 B A2

(3:2:1e(3:2:1f(3:2:1g | M:3/4

%Meter a2 g2 f2 | e3 d c2 | M:4/4

%Meter de fe d2 B2 | M:3/4

%Meter A4 z2 :|

%End of file

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Eddie,

In your editorial (*Circular* 34. ED), the photo of you dancing re-kindled memories: not of you, but the pub in the background.

The "Royal Standard" was a beer-only back street pub where I first took up the past time of "elbow bending". Then the vogue (with a 10.00 p.m. closing time) was for frenzied drinking with dire results. After 6 or 7 swift pints of Page & Overton's mild and bitter, "Get it down boy, it'll do yer good" became "Get it up boy, you'll feel better"!

So far as the time to give up dancing goes, I can't comment from experience as my knees gave out before my legs did. However, I would suggest that the answer must be – "as long as the side NEEDS YOU." After all, there are dances where you don't need to leap a foot off the ground with your bum sticking out. Anyway, arms give much more expression than the feet. I have found though that there is life after your dancing days are done. If you enjoy the "apres dance" and comradeship – as I know you do – one can always help on the admin and collect-

ing side and, particularly, in steering charged up young men into a more elegant way of expressing their craft.

Noon on Boxing Day will be a significant time for us. We will particularly remember all the (old) men of the villages in the Cotswolds who showed Cecil Sharp their dances when all was so very nearly lost to us.

Wassail

Bob Davies

Bagman, East Surrey Morris Men

Dear Eddie,

Green Oak catch them young!

Two-and-a-half year old Macallister Cameron from Doncaster decided he wanted to be a morris dancer after watching the local side perform in the town centre. As practice times for the side are after his bedtime, he has taken a "correspondence course via a video of Green Oak at Hotton Pagnell. Despite the puzzled look at the stick dance (large photo), he has mastered such arcane arts as the Bledington

hooklegs (small photo) and Bampton capers.

Unfortunately, his family are moving to the Bradford area, so he is unlikely to wear the full Green Oak kit. However, Boar's Head may find that they have acquired an injection of young blood!



ROYAL OAK FOLK

Station Street, Lewes,
East Sussex

Royal Oak Refurbishment.

Have you heard the one about the builders who delayed the start of their work? You have? Well, you are hearing it again with the story of the Royal Oak Refurbishment.

The latest information is that the alterations will now take place until AUGUST. August would suit us just fine as it coincides with our annual closure but don't hold your breath! And please check this space on the website.

Current Programme.

MAY

4th Chris Foster

11th Open Night

18th

Jim and Georgina Boyes

25th Mike Gulston

VILLAGE MUSIC PROJECT EVENT.

We are running a special event on the Saturday afternoon of 29th April from 1.30 - 5.00 pm and are very pleased to be able to

welcome John Adams to talk about the VILLAGE MUSIC PROJECT and to introduce us to some of the tunes.

John Adams of the University of Salford is involved in a massive and fascinating project to uncover and publish English dance tunes from a great variety of manuscript and early published sources. The work is leading him to make some interesting and unexpected conclusions about the sources and nature of the music that was danced to in towns and villages in England over the last three centuries. The work is gradually being made freely and readily available by being "rough published" on the Internet. John will be outlining the approach and the work in the first part of the afternoon and then there will be an opportunity to play through a varied selection of a few of the thousands of tunes that he has uncovered. Bring your instruments to join in and play this glorious music; fiddles, recorders, clarinets, flutes, concertinas, melodeons, whistles, whatever. All are welcome. Music will be provided. Mary Humphreys' very skilful piano playing will accompany the melody instruments.

The format of the afternoon will be the talk (roughly 1.30 - 3.00pm) followed by a short interval and then the tunes until 5pm.

If you would like to find out more about John's work you can read the article in the March 2000 edition of "fROOTS" magazine on John Adams and the Village Music Project and you can visit the projects website at:-

<http://www.salford.ac.uk/media/research/vmpaims.htm>

Email:-

tinvic@globalnet.co.uk

Email:- folk@brighton.co.uk

ROYAL OAK FOLK

WEBSITE:-<http://www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~tinvic>

[globalnet.co.uk/~tinvic](http://www.globalnet.co.uk/~tinvic)

SUSSEX FOLK GUIDE

WEBSITE:-<http://whatson.brighton.co.uk/folk>

<http://whatson.brighton.co.uk/folk>

Vic & Tina Smith



Fools and Animals, 1999

By Mike Wilkinson (Fule, Dolphin Morris Men)

The Good, the Bad – and all of ‘em Ugly

Wath upon Dearne, bright jewel in the crown of Yorkshire’s rolling countryside, was the venue for the 1999 meeting of Fools and Beasts, known as the United Fools’ Union. The Red Lion at Wath is our spiritual home, and we meet there every second year, holding the meeting around the country in the years in between.

The Union was formed about 20 years ago, partly in response to moves to restrict or ban Fools at some Ring events because of alleged bad behaviour. The Union met this threat in two ways: by speaking up for Fools when necessary, and by encouraging Fools and Beasts to think about their performance, and to follow a basic (unwritten) code of conduct. Sadly, this was still relevant 20 years later as we had to address some serious points raised in a recent Bagman’s newsletter concerning the persistently unacceptable behaviour of one particular Fool at the 1999 Thaxted Ring Meeting.

Fools and Beasts are essential parts of the Morris tradition. Trying to exclude them from a Morris event is like trying to exclude drummers from a jazz festival. Bad Fools or bad drummers are noisy and distracting, but good Fools or good drummers are part of what it’s all about. The answer is to encourage the good, and to help the bad to improve. Unfortunately, the Fool in question has reacted badly to polite requests to moderate his behaviour, and he has caused offence to other dancers and the public on a number of occasions. He has resisted encouragement to attend Fools’ Union meetings, so all we could do was disown him! This is a pity for all concerned, as a bad Fool reflects badly on all Fools, and, more importantly, gives the public a bad

impression of the Morris in general.

Part of the Fool’s role is to be a breaker of taboo. The Fool can behave in a way which be socially unacceptable in other circumstances. I believe that the Fool performs an important function in this respect, by drawing a distinction between mere social taboos (talking to strangers, standing out from the crowd, and so on) and more important social rules like not causing serious embarrassment or offence. For the duration of the Morris show, a good Fool can help people to relax their inhibitions, and enjoy themselves. The Fool’s licence to behave in this way is by the consent of the dancers and the crowd. It is not his by right, and it can be withdrawn at any time. A costume and bladder does not give a Fool free rein simply to behave badly.

Other issues discussed at the weekend included the importance of the Fool being a competent and versatile dancer. Although there are some Fools who do their job very well, whilst being unable to dance for genuine reasons (“It’s my knees, Doctor...”) generally speaking, Fools should be sufficiently competent that they can fit into any dance in their side’s repertoire at short notice. The Fool may be called on at any time to make up numbers, or to replace an injured dancer (“It’s my *knees* too, Doctor...”). The Fool is part of the Morris team, not someone who tags along in a funny costume.

Leading on from this, we discussed what we call *dancing number 7* - that is, improvising a 7th position in a dance, or dancing into and out of the set. This is an important part of the Morris tradition, although some sides are not keen on it. Missing it out altogether short changes the Fool or Beast as well as the audience. We

spent a couple of hours working on the ways of dancing number 7 without upsetting the side, emphasising the importance of practising, and getting the side used to the Fool’s presence in the set. Half way through a show dance is the wrong time to find that something doesn’t work! The side clearly has the ultimate right of veto, but there should be a place for dancing number 7 in every show, even if it is only in one dance.

Roger Comley, of Letchworth, ran a workshop on preparing bladders. The Beasts and vegetarians went elsewhere to discuss the role of the Beast! Over recent years, Beasts seem to have multiplied and diversified, and have also become more active participants in the show. It was good to see some new Beast masters taking a keen interest in how to perform effectively, whilst remaining within the Morris tradition. With so many outside influences, it is always tempting for Fools and Beasts to go off at a tangent, so there was a lot to discuss here.

Paul Davenport came as a special guest to demonstrate and explain the use of masks and disguise (yes... a face painting workshop!). Paul led a workshop on the same subject at the first ever Fools’ weekend, 20 odd years ago, which must say something about our innate respect for tradition! How we laughed when Gordon couldn’t remove the greasepaint!

More and more sides are travelling abroad, either on tour, or to perform at festivals. Peter Contrastano led a session on the special problems of performing to foreign audiences. Suggestions ranged from never making a six-point sword lock in an Arab country to using “flash cards” to communicate. On the whole, speaking loudly and slowly and

saying, “Savvy?” at the end of sentences was universally agreed to be the best strategy.

Over the weekend, we discussed a wide range of subjects, and I hope that everyone learned something, whether they were novices or hardy perennials. It wasn’t all work, though. We had a short dance out on the Saturday evening, followed by an excellent feast. We were booked into the Red Lion as “residents” so licensing hours were not a problem, and the singing, dancing and music went on until after 3:00 a.m. on both nights. The Sunday morning (“the graveyard shift”) included a compilation video of old Fools and Beasts starting from the days of silent black and white film. It was timed so that the sound started about half way through the video, and the bright colours a bit later, coinciding nicely with the gradual recovery of those who were hung over.

Bagmen and Squires reading this: does your side have a Fool, Beast, Betsy, Green Man, Tommy, or other character who might benefit from the chance to share ideas with others? Do you have an apprentice or trainee Fool or Beast (etc.) who needs to learn the rudiments? We know that many people who attend these weekends only find out about it by chance because the message never gets to them through the “proper channels”. Details of the weekend are always circulated well in advance, like any other instructional weekend. Please, make sure that the information gets to those who need it.

Finally, thanks to Eric Pressley of Wath upon Dearne Morris Men for organising it all; to Bert for the music; to Geoff and Mary of the Red Lion for their unsurpassed hospitality; Ivor for the camera work; and to everyone who helped to make this very special weekend work so well.

Three Hymns and a Carol.

The Cross and the Thorn: Written to the tune 'The Rose' (Fieldtown).

Witness: Written to the tune 'Banbury Bill'.

Trinity: Written to the tune 'Trunkles' (Fieldtown). Alternative tune: Trunkles (Bledington)

The Bower Carol: Written to the tune 'Vandalls of Hammerwich'. Alternative tune: The Bower.

Somewhen, in the far long ago and Mike Chandler was Squire, we sat in company as partners at the cribbage board. This was the Saturday night and Sunday morning wind down to a pleasant day at a Whitchurch MM week-end. I suppose we should confess that brandy and malt whisky played a part. Sometime after Two a.m., and probably before Four, the honorable Squire declared himself for bed. He was due to lead a rehearsal of 'Lord of the Dance', again, in church at nine a.m. and he happened to comment that he wished there were hymns to 'proper' Morris tunes. We sympathised. There was a pause. A cheerful voice from one of the company declared, "Ron 'I write you one'". So I did; and then another three. It wasn't easy.

In November 1993, I sent copies of all four to Mike Chandler, then Chairman of the Advisory Committee, formally assigning the Performing Rights to the

Morris Ring. I sent them to Mike mainly because he had suggested the need for them while he was Squire. I also sent him copies by registered post with the intention, if the package remained un-opened, it would act as a legal buffer should one be required on any future occasion. Mike assures me that this documentation was passed into the Archive.

Originally I had suggested to Mike that, should any of the hymns be published, the author's name should be quite simply be given as 'A member of a Ring side'. The intention was that they should be available if people wanted something different at church services at Ring Meetings and the other like events. I must admit that I was a little dismayed when my name appeared in 1996 Thaxted service sheets at the head of 'The Cross and The Thorn'. Even the main body of the Durham Rams didn't know up till then. I suppose that I had hoped that the Ring might publish the words (and possibly musical arrangements) in the Ring Circular. I



Durham Rams dancing "Inside Out" from the Hamsteels dance on the same occasion as above. Both photographs © Brian Ings

felt it inappropriate to push for this and still try to retain anonymity. Even now, I feel uncomfortable with the idea.

During October 1999 I received a number of requests for the words to 'The Cross and the Thorn' and, surprisingly, 'The Bower Carol' and for my permission to use them. All came from groups outside of the Ring. The word is out. Some-one seems to like them so here they are.

The tunes are substantially those given in the Black Book,

only slightly bent to be made singable. There are various alternative words available. The key signatures are suggested because they put the melody line within comfortable reach of the enthusiastic but untrained singer. I always reckoned that hymn tunes should rarely go past D as a top note anyway. If they ever get as far as a church service, I have little doubt that there will be a number of organists with nervous breakdowns from trying to compete with lusty male voices singing their own version of the tune.

Full S.A.T.B./piano score arrangements for all five tunes (Two for 'Trinity') are available, at a reasonable rate, through:

**Ron Straghan,
Captain:
Durham Rams**

13 Middleham Road,
Newton Hall,
Durham DH1 5QH

Or, for details, Email:
captain@durhamrams.ndo.org

Editor's Note: this piece from Ron gives an account the genesis of the content of the pull-out that you will have found in the centre pages



Durham Rams dancing Brighton Camp at Durham market place during their performance on Marie Curie Cancer Care Day, 18th March 2000

Editorial

For various reasons I made the journey to the ARM by rail: it was uneventful apart from the journey home which found me sharing the trip with homeward-bound Millwall supporters. Be that as it may, I had a very pleasant surprise on arriving at Derby Station when I discovered that my chauffeur to the meeting was Past Bagman Chas Arnold. Chas & I had a very amicable working relationship during his tenure of office and I very much regretted his dropping out of sight when he resigned. Still, he assured me that he has started dancing again (as has his wife). We has a pleasant rummage through shared memories on the transit from station to St Benedict's School. I am very grateful to Ripley, and in particular to Mick Buckley, for their organisation which ensured that I was met from the train and returned to the station in good time for the journey back to London.

The meeting itself produced no major surprises and the proposal to increase subscriptions went through almost without demur. In fact, it was decided to make the level of subscription a standard agenda item at the Annual Meeting. Gerald Willey is the new Squire Elect and will dance in at the Bridgewater Ring Meeting, as Daniel remarks in his valedictory page. Next year's ARM will be hosted

by Dartington so we'll all be going West.

Just as I was putting this Editorial together, I got a 'phone call from Cliff Marchant of Chanctonbury Ring. Cliff, as you know came second to Gerald Willey in the election for Squire. Cliff was overwhelmed at the amount of support for his candidature, which far exceeded his expectations. He would like to thank all the sides that voted for him, and to apologise to all the men who contacted him directly after the meeting to wish him well and who urged him to stand again. He apologises for the fact that, in the emotion of the moment, he is unable to recall every well-wisher but he is profoundly grateful for the good wishes.

You will have noticed by now that "Three Hymns & a Carol" have been included as an insert in this Circular. Having originally considered including them as pages within the body, mature reflection indicated that they might be better as a pull-out supplement. This arrangement allows detachment should you wish to photocopy them for use, without leaving an incomplete copy.

When I stood up to present my report on Publications, I included a gripe. Not being a copy-typist, I make no claim to any possession of keyboard skills. Most articles submitted

for publication either come as attachments to an email (my preference, provided that it's plain text: Word 6 is acceptable, too) or as typescripts. These latter I can put in my scanner and convert to text via an OCR program which is quite good at laser printing but occasionally has difficulty with faint inkjet or impact printers hitting an old ribbon. What the program cannot do is to convert handwriting into text-files: there may be a neural network application out there somewhere that can but I would guess that it is beyond my resources and probably beyond the Ring's. So please remember that I'm an amateur too and, if you can, send articles for publication as typescripts as good-quality print (single spacing is fine). For illustrations, I can scan photo-prints and later this year I hope to have a slide/negative scanner that will mean I can process that sort of original. If you have your own scanner, you can send picture files (on disk or as attachments), preferably at 150 dpi, remembering that a single-column width is 10 picas (1.67 inches or 42.3 mm) and a double column is 21 picas (3½ inches or 89 mm) in width.

One of the topics that Bagman John & I discussed, during our transit to Barnsley for the Archive Group meeting earlier this month, was the frequency & content of mail-drops. It occurred to us that the Bagman's Newsletter might be slimmed

down if some of its more newsy content was transferred to the Circular, particularly if publication of the latter was triannual rather than biannual. The present schedule is for Spring (April/May) and Autumn (September/October) publication, with The Morris Dancer fitting in around the turn of the year. Increasing the annual frequency could result in the following model: Spring Circular; publication 2nd March, copy date 19th January; Summer Circular; publication 1st June, copy date 20th April; Autumn Circular; publication 1st September, copy date 20th July; the Morris Dancer; publication date 30th November, copy date 19th October. The lead time of six weeks between copy date & publication is about the minimum that we could realistically achieve, given that Bagman John & I have to arrange a joint mailing that is mutually convenient (unless we are prepared to allow costs to spiral upwards). Please let John or me know your views so that we can reach an informed judgement.

That about wraps it up for this edition: the next Circular should be dropping through your letterboxes in late September/ early October. If you have any descriptions of your dancing season, or of the strange & unusual, that you would like to share with your dancing peers, could you ensure that it reaches me by the end of August, please. If you would like to have a face to face discussion of a topic of interest, I shall be at Bampton & Headington Quarry on Spring Bank Holiday and possibly at Thaxted the following weekend. In July I shall be at the Chalice Ring Meeting with North Wood. As Chalice have been so hospitable and accepted all the applicants, that weekend should be enjoyable and a good opportunity for sociable conversation. Enjoy your dancing and may your bags exceed your expectations.

Morris on!
Eddie Dunmore

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