



THE *Circular*

*Edited for the Morris Ring by Eddie Dunmore
118 Edgecombe, South Croydon, Surrey CR2 8AD*

Number 37



Benfieldside at Anker

photography: John Frearson

*The Circular is edited & published for the Morris Ring by **Eddie Dunmore**. The opinions expressed*

herein are those of the accredited author alone, & do not constitute a statement of any official policy.

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The Squire

This is the peak time of Feasts and Ales. Before Christmas I greatly enjoyed the **Headington Quarry Feast** where the principal guest, 'Nibs' Matthews, was welcomed as an Honorary Member of the Club. On the eve of his 80th birthday and as the oldest surviving **Past Squire of the Ring (1960-1962)**, I thoroughly enjoyed our chat and hearing his views and experiences.

This was followed by two splendid evenings at the **Green Man's Feast** in Birmingham and the **Mendip Ale** at Wrington. Already this year I have visited **Stafford, Uttoxeter Heart of Oak** and **Winchester Morris Men**. The latter I always note as the "Saturday Night and Sunday Morning" session since no-one seems to go to bed before (3-4)am— and, of course, the menus are famous with Spanish cuisine the choice this year. Who will forget the Squire's (Albert Wilkins) speech to welcome the guests delivered in Spanish with that distinctive Hampshire burr? Most recently the **Lichfield Ale** provided another excellent gathering in the historic Guild Hall. The evening was particularly memorable as it coincided with the publication of 'The Wraggle Taggle Gypsies' by Jack Brown, **Stafford MM**, covering the Lichfield tradition. To mark the occasion Jack was presented with a beautifully bound personal copy as a gift from the Ring in recognition of his contributions to morris dancing over many years.

As the dancing diary fills up it becomes increasingly difficult to fit in Instructionals. The **Jigs**

Instructional at **Sutton Bonnington** run by Bert Cleaver/Dolphin MM and his band of dedicated demonstrators has already taken place (January 19-21). It was particularly pleasing to see the number of young people present and all keen to have a go at the various jigs. (See Peter Brunton's report on pages 12 & 13 in this issue – ED)

There will be a Fieldtown Instructional in the Sutton Coldfield area in September (21-23) run by Bert Cleaver and hosted by **Green Man's Morris and Sword Club**. This will cover all the dances and jigs of the tradition and should provide an excellent introduction for some of the younger and less-experienced dancers. As a counter-balance to these Cotswold events I would like to see a Sword &/or North West Instructional within the Morris calendar. If there is sufficient

interest I will ask around for host/instructor volunteers. Please let me know.

For people who cannot make a weekend commitment, a one-day instructional may be a more feasible and certainly less expensive alternative. As an example, I am delighted that **Coventry M M** in collaboration with John Davies (**Area Rep**) are going to hold an **Ascot-under-Wychwood** instructional, March 10th, and hope this will prove attractive. I recall that **John Tarling (East Rep)/Devils Dyke M M** organised a similar event in 2000.

I followed the correspondence last year regarding the role of the Fool as part of a dancing presentation. I do understand that people have strongly-held views which should be aired and the Newsletter and the Circular provide open forum for opinions of whatever shade. However, while personal views are always welcome, I think it better that these are expressed in general terms rather than focusing on identifiable individuals.

Looking ahead I intend to encourage a really positive contribution by Fools and Animals at Ring functions. Just as we have a 'Ring Musician' to co-ordinate

the music for each meeting I am thinking of having a 'Ring Fool' to carry out a similar role for the Fools and Animals.

Quite a few Sides are now making CDs featuring their music, singing and dancing. This is an excellent way to display their talents, raise funds and have a lot of fun. Steve Adamson has a CD section as part of his 'shop' and, should you want to consider this as an outlet for sales, he asks you to get in touch with him.

The ARM to be hosted by **Dartington M M** for the weekend March 30th-April 1st is approaching. I look forward to my first session in the chair and am reminded that it will be 12 months since being voted as Squire-elect. Maybe it will provoke a stirring of thoughts for possible candidates for the next election!

I am grateful for all the invitations received for Feasts, Ales and Days of Dance and look forward to attending as many as I can. Also thank you for the general correspondence to which I will reply as soon as possible.

Here's to a successful dancing year ahead.

Gerald



This picture, from the 1976 Bedford Day of Dance, was sent to me by Wendy Grant. Who else, apart from Father Kenneth & Bob, can you recognise?

North Wood's Big Day Out



The Dome, 28.x.2000 (with support from Chester & Mayflower)



Dave Robbins

I was born with a condition known as Spina Bifida, which for the particular variant that I have got put simply means in effect I have a vertical broken back. Resulting in the fact, as some of you already know, that I have been confined to a wheelchair since birth – being totally paralysed from the waist. This is due to the fact that soon after conception my spinal column did not form a normal & complete covering around the spinal column. Consequently the nerves at this opening were forced out, along with a certain amount of the fluid that is normally contained partly as a lubricant.

I was operated on soon after my birth. Since then I have had several other operations for various reasons (76 in all). Seven years ago I was extremely fortunate to be offered a kidney transplant (after being on dialysis for 2½ years): however, that's enough of that.

Sometime during May 1978 I was at my local (Ring of Bells, Nailsea), when what I now know as Mendip Morris Men descended on the place. As far as I was concerned, this topped off

a most enjoyable summer's evening with a varied programme of music & dance. Since then I have followed them.

Prior to my transplant I could only really manage to see them when they were dancing at The Ring of Bells, Nailsea or The Blue Flame, West End, due to my health. Since then, of course, my transplant has improved my health no end.

So much so that for the last seven seasons, I have followed them around the far-flung parts of the region & for the past 3 years been extremely fortunate to have been invited to their Ale. I have got to know several of the other sides around, such as Bristol Morris & Chalice Morris. Morris has now become an integral part of my year.

The comradeship & support that I have received from The Mendip Morris for the last 20 years, through the rough times on dialysis as well as now, has been absolutely amazing. I am extremely lucky to have been surrounded by such good men. Thanks lads. I feel really lucky to be associated with the Morris & I sincerely hope that I will be able to continue to do so for a very long time to come. As it is



without exception one of the finest traditions that we have got in this country and long may it go on. So from Adderbury to Bledington & Fieldtown through onto Kirtlington keep on dancing to make sure that these traditions will not wither away to nothingness.

In conclusion all I can honestly say is to Morris Men in all the

sides from wherever you are who are an associated part of the Ring make sure, for the country's sake, that the Ring shall never ever fail & that it goes on from strength to strength. Morris On! – well into the futureD.

ave Robbins
(The Official Knackered
Morris Man of Mendip
& The Ring)

www.mustrad.org.uk

The multiple award winning Internet magazine Musical Traditions - - is probably the only magazine in existence to deal seriously and in depth with traditional music throughout the world.

Unlike other publications, MT does not publish 'editions' but continues to grow in size as new material is added. It currently contains 77 main Articles (including 2 whole books), 23

shorter Enthusiasms articles, around 380 Reviews, the complete Topic Records discography, the Recorded Traditional Music discography, 20 pages of News & Comment, a huge Links directory, over 1,000 photos and almost 800 sound clips.

The text element alone is equal to about 2,500 A4 pages. All of this material (over 85Mb) is available, **free**, to anyone with Internet access, anywhere in the world.

Dear Ring Bagman,

I was amazed as I turned the pages of the current circular to see on page 12 a familiar figure right in the middle of the photo at the foot of the page. The gentleman resplendent with white whiskers and hair, complete with his usual tankard of ale is that well known figure along the south coast of Sussex - Sid Wakeham. The occasion was the Sompting Village Morris Team tour of south Sussex, but the side is not wearing its usual kit, although they are in the correct colours.

Sid is also a member of the Broadwood Morris Men, and has been responsible for exporting many of the "Horsham" tradition dances to Sompting. There are close and cordial relations between the two sides. Often, one or two of their ladies will join Broadwood at apres-Dance music sessions on Thursday evenings.

Also, we were able to persuade another of their lady musicians to play for us when we danced on the Esplanade at Sidmouth earlier this year, as we did not have any of our own musician with us – many thanks to her.

Bob the Bagman,
Broadwood Morris Men

283rd MEETING OF THE MORRIS RING ANKER 25th ANNIVERSARY

NUNEATON, 23rd 25th June 2000

John Frearson



Hartley at Nuneaton Town Centre, Saturday

The 283rd Meeting of the Morris Ring in Nuneaton celebrated Anker's 25th Anniversary. There were three well-filled tours on the Saturday and Mass Shows on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. The Sides present were: Aldbury; Benfieldside; Furness; Green Oak; Hartley; Letchworth; Long Man; Manchester; Men of Wight; Plymouth; Trigg, Woodside, & the hosts.

As the pubs were neither local, nor recommended on a Friday night, a variety of pub games were provided to entertain the men. Long Man appeared in a special edition T-shirt, with an "Anchor" for "Anker" placed in an "interesting" juxtaposition upon their Long Man. A cold

buffet supper was available, with three excellent real ales from the local Church End Brewery (based in an old coffin workshop behind the Griffin Inn in Shustoke, Warwickshire). Such was the quality of these ales that the weekend's allocation was drunk on the first evening, occasioning welcome further trade for the brewery.

The weather on the Saturday was rather dull, with sunny periods and occasional showers. The tours were:

ONE *The Webb Ellis Excursion* called at: Church Lawford; Rugby; Bitteswell; and Wolvey.

TWO *The Ancient Hostelry Tour* went to Market Bosworth; Newton Burgoland; Shackerstone and Sibson.

THREE *The Merevale*

Tour visited. Sibson; Pinwall; Atherstone; Baxterley and Shustoke. The Tours all converged on Bedworth for an afternoon show in the town centre, arriving with impeccable timing. By this time the slight showers of the late afternoon had cleared up. Unfortunately the cool weather seemed to have deterred the good people of Bedworth, and the audience was minimal for an excellent show.

Notable items of the Saturday included: Long Man's refined Quaker; Trigg's distinctive sticking on their Brighton Camp; the Aldbury Fool with an invisible dog muzzled on a lead; the beers at the Frankton Badby Brewery; the Men of Wight's travelling polypin of Ventnor "Golden Bitter" (4%); the Beer Festival at the Alexandra Arms the refreshment stop in Rugby (and the Bagman's "local"); the twelve dancers in the Manchester NorthWest show dances; the blue handkerchiefs of the Plymouth Men to go with their



The Plymouth Sabre Dance

naval rig; Woodside "from the village of Watford!"; and finally Aldbury "dancing in" accompanied by music and singing of the shanty "South Australia" through the whole dance.

As expected, the Hosts, Anker, produced an exceptional standard of dance. One dramatic and tragic moment occurred in their final show dance. Roy Stubbs, the Bagman for the Meeting, partially ruptured his Achilles Tendon. Both sets of



Furness dancing North Skelton

dancers continued undeterred, and a reserve rapidly took up his place then the remainder of the Side dealt with the injured party. He was returned from Hospital well strapped up, and with crutches, in time for the evening events.

The evening Feast had as guests The Worshipful Mayor of Nuneaton & Bedworth and her consort; & the Vicar of All Saints, Chilvers Coton. The menu was Duck Liver and Orange Pate, with Mixed Leaves; Supreme of Chicken with Wine and Herb Gravy, Potatoes and Seasonal Vegetables; Apple Pie and Custard; Coffee and Mints. The Speeches and Toasts were as follows: The Squire proposed the Loyal Toast and Past Squire, Mike Chandler, The Immortal Memory. The Lady Mayor prefaced her welcome with the comment that she knew how Tony Blair had felt addressing the Women's Institute (but that her welcome was very much warmer). The Squire of Anker, Derek Stone, proposed the Toast to the Guests on this 25th Anniversary occasion and the Men sang "Happy Birthday" with gusto. He noted that Anker had joined the Morris Ring in 1980 and danced in at Coventry in 1981. He was the 13th Squire, and that 10 of his predecessors were present. Derek Stone then presented the Ring with an Anker Silver Jubilee, hand painted wine goblet, which the Squire of the Ring, Daniel Fox graciously accepted. A second goblet was presented to the Meeting Bagman, Roy Stubbs in recognition of his excellent organisation and hard work. A surprised Derek Stone and Anker Bagman, Joe Oldaker, were then also presented with Silver Jubilee wine goblets to mark their presence in office during the Jubilee Year. Martin Butler of Letchworth replied on behalf of the Visitors and proposed the Toast of Thanks to the Host Side.

The Squire presented a Staff of Membership to the Squire of Aldbury, who had danced in that afternoon and they opened the singing with "Rolling Home" led by Tim Durrant. Songs followed from Hartley and



Anker at Nuneaton Town Centre, Saturday morning

Benfieldside. Furness provided a monologue. Trigg had not realised that civilising influences would be present in the form of a Lady Mayor and a Vicar, but after sitting in committee produced "Ghost Riders in the Sky" with audience participation with Indian whoops and Cowboy yells; the Mayor and Consort were amused and indeed the quality and timing of the presentation was such that their decorum was possibly even less dignified than the song itself!! Tony Ashley of Anker concluded with "Green Laurels". The tables were then pushed back and three members of the Plantagenet Society Men at Arms in full armour proceeded to fight in single combat with, it seemed, no holds barred; steel shields were bent double by the force of the blows and head butts and kicks were all part of this "Plaisance". Dancing and singing followed. So impressed was the Mayor with the occasion that she did not leave until 11.30pm (her official car having been awaiting her pleasure since 9.30pm!!).

On the Sunday, the Men made their way to Chilvers Coton to attend Church. The four hymns were all accompanied by the Morris band. The weather had meanwhile brightened to give a sunny finish to the proceedings of the weekend. Anker and Benfieldside danced outside the church, before all walked to the Park for a final Massed Show.

Memories of this final show: the sung introduction to Trigg's *Lass of Richmond Hill*; the blues/jazz mouth organ accompaniment to Furness's *North Skelton* – a masterpiece; the Plymouth four man cutlass dance and their Plymouth Black Ship's Rat Surgeon Admiral Morris P. (for Plymouth) Rat (with the appropriate epaulettes for an Admiral of the Fleet, with the additional red stripes for the surgeon). Anker reminded Roy Stubbs of his attention seeking on the previous day in Bedworth by all six men feigning injury at the end of their dance and requesting Roy to enter the fray as substitute!

After the show, Men took lunch (the chicken curry sandwiches

being particularly memorable) at the Heritage Centre. The recreated Victorian class room provided much hilarity with the Plymouth Men as the class. Later the Squire of the Ring was to be awarded a dunce's cap and was called to the front of the class for chastisement by the Bagman who had taken over the teacher's desk for his lunch – the desk contained a suitable instrument!!!

The Final of the Nine Man's Morris competition (an alternative to Church), was postponed for the Massed Show and the final victor was Andrew Jackson of Men of Wight.

The entire weekend went smoothly. A pat on the back for each and every member of Anker, but particularly for The Meeting Bagman, Roy Stubbs, whose attention to detail ensured that all the arrangements under their control, went without a hitch. We thank them all for a splendid weekend.

**John Frearson, Bagman,
The Morris Ring
June 2000**

Correspondence

Dear Eddie,

Cover photograph: Vol. Three No. Eight

The photograph on the cover of the latest edition of *The Morris Dancer* is of The Farnborough Morris dancing outside The Queen Victoria in Shalford. If Ross Kilsby is correct about the date then it must be from the first year that Farnborough Morris danced.

The Farnborough Morris no longer dance but do deserve a mention in the annals of morris history. Amongst their number over the years have been such influential figures as Reg Hall and Roy Dommett. The team danced their own style based loosely on Bledington. When I first learnt the Morris with Farnborough's then Fool, Nick Wadsworth, I was taught on my own for 6 months to learn the basics before attending one of the two annual practices! Since they only danced in one style (like most traditional village sides) they only needed to brush up their dancing before each season. Once you had learned the Farnborough Style you didn't need to go on learning it at weekly practices.

It was a team that was always a pleasure to dance with and I feel very lucky that my introduction to the Morris was through this perhaps unorthodox (but maybe more traditional) team.

Incidentally, the black and white photograph doesn't do justice to the glorious red knee breeches that Farnborough wore! Although, having a large number of scientists from Farnborough dancing with them, the colour scheme was in fact chosen at least in part so that the red breeches and black waistcoats came out as different tones in a black and white photo!

Thank you for putting this picture on the front cover of *The Morris Dancer*.

Best wishes,

Stephen Earwicker

Dear Eddie,

Cover photograph: Vol. Three No. Eight

Since my first letter I have now managed to obtain more information about the cover photograph of the Farnborough Morris from Alan Browning, Farnborough's musician and archivist.

The photograph was in fact taken on 2nd June 1956 (not 1952) on the first tour of Farnborough's second season. The tour that day was of the Surrey villages of Elstead, Puttenham, Compton, Shalford, Womersley, Bramley, Eashing and back to Elstead. The picture is taken from the bottom of the set just after the first corners have crossed in Trunkles. The dancers are: 1. Roy Dommett (nearest the camera), 2. Nick Wadsworth, 3. Barry Caress, 4. Keith Sanders, 5. Brian Stratford, 6. Jim Cairns. Also on the tour, but not in the picture were Don Campbell (in the horse), Dan Dewar (Cakeman) and Alan Browning (Music). The usual musician, Reg Hall, was supposed to be joining them at Shalford Station, but hadn't arrived.

The Farnborough Morris first danced at the Royal Aircraft Establishment Fête on 18th June 1955. They danced all their dances in a style based on Bledington. They danced regularly in the Hampshire & Surrey borders area up until the early 1990s. So far as I know they last danced in public in 1996, having been active for over 40 years. Their kit was distinctive with red knee breeches and black waistcoats a colour combination chosen because it looked good both in black & white and colour photographs!

Best wishes,

Stephen Earwicker



The Bagman in full Swing!

Eddie

I was pleased to see the front cover photograph on the latest Morris dancer contributed by Ross Kilsby a member of my side Cuphill M.M. This claim to fame has generated a greater than normal request for a personal copy by one or two members. They normally just read it and pass it around, then it's placed in the side's archives.

We usually receive at least two copies but this time only one was sent. Could you please forward another two copies of Volume 3 number 8?

Thank you in anticipation

Dave Rush
Cuphill M.M bagman

The Wadard 2000 Conker Championships

As already mentioned in a previous Bagman's Newsletter, the Wadard Winter Ale and World Conker Championship was well attended with representatives from: Benfleet Hoymen; Green Oak; Hartley; Ravensbourne; Saddleworth and Wantsum."

The highlight of the evening was the Conker Championship. The Ring Bagman, John Frearson, progressed to the semi-finals. However, he was soundly beaten by Peter Roberts [Bagman of Wantsum] who, in his turn, lost in the final to **Danny Betts of Green Oak**, who was duly crowned.



The Champion!

Dear Eddie,

A very interesting issue of *'The Morris Dancer'* just received – not yet had time to peruse in detail but a short note about morris and mountaineering caught my eye.

I have often been reminded of the popularity of folk music and song among climbers - Tom

Patey would take his accordion on expeditions, and any climbers bar will contain singers. Many morris sides have climbers/walkers/cavers among its members. White Hart Morris men have always had a strong link with Bromsgrove and Redditch Mountaineering Club, and Cam Valley Morris, I believe, was started by cavers and reputedly once managed a vertical dance while locked off on abseil ropes in Cheddar Gorge.

Further back, my uncle Arthur Reynolds in the 1930's was one of the top rock climbers of his day and put up several routes in the Lake District, including The Crack on Gimmer Crag. He later started the Ludlow Morris Men, who became South Shropshire (his son Garth who still dances with them will probably correct me on this). Arthur's father Edward Reynolds put up first ascents in North Wales and the Cuillins with J M Archer Thompson in the 1900s, but as far as we know did not dance.

I have never reached that sort of standard, but for years climbing was something of an obsession. Several climbing friends were also regulars at Redditch Folk Club, from which grew White Hart Morris men, so I came to folk via climbing. Eventually trying to fit in both mountains and morris became too much, and I concentrated on the dancing. I also put on weight which I attributed to the decrease in expenditure of nervous energy as there didn't seem to be much difference in beer consumption.

The beer provided here at the Blue Anchor is the reason for our sides formation a couple of years ago. A couple of our side are keen walkers, one who is on the wrong side of 60 having managed 170 Munros. For myself, going full circle last summer I took my daughter and her boyfriend climbing on the beautiful granite of west Penwith - life in the old dog etc. Sincerely,

Peter Reynolds
Blue Anchor Morris.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!

The day had arrived! We were off on a town twinning to our opposite numbers in Gagny, Paris on what promised to be a gastronomic and alcoholic weekend of dance. As the Carshalton contingent boarded the bus a horrible smell arrived with them. The cry went up "who's trodden in something?" They all trooped off the bus and Carshalton was treated to the sight of a line of 20 people scraping their shoes on the grass. The driver found a bucket and mop from somewhere and we proceeded, smelling of pine disinfectant. We decided that the dog must have had 8 pints of lager and a mutton vindaloo the night before.

The trip to Dover passed quickly, aide by our usual continuous "loving cup" from various hip flasks, and although someone mentioned it, I assumed that we would not be re-

quired to show passports en route as it had not been necessary on a previous trip. I was wrong! I was kicked off the bus at the dock gates because I had left mine at home. I disconsolately traipsed through Dover's streets to the railway station; a wasted weekend; East Surrey were going to be one short and they would now be cursing my stupidity.

Inevitably, by the time I was on the train home the British Bulldog spirit had surfaced and I resolved to get to Paris, come hell or high water. Immediately on getting off the train in Sutton I rushed to the nearest travel agent and bought a ticket from Gatwick to Charles de Gaulle, Paris, home to pick up my bloody passport, back to the station and down to Gatwick to check in with only minutes to spare. I was on my way again.

Out of Charles de Gaulle and the French were totally indifferent to me AND MY PASSPORT. With my pidgin French I felt that the train journey would be more than a little fraught, all foreigners don't speak perfect English- especially Frenchmen in their own country, so it had to be a taxi. I was dropped off at Gagny station

only about half an hour after the E.T.A. of our coach but there was one snag - I didn't know where the reception was being held. The Squire's mobile phone didn't work in France, and a call to the leader of our hosts who was of course at the reception was no good either, so I went into the station and asked the best looking girl I could find if she knew "ou sont les danseurs folklorique Anglais". She didn't know so, prudently sent me off packing to the local gendarmerie.

After walking for what seemed miles in a rundown housing estate with, it seemed, Mack the Knife hanging about on every corner I found the Gagny Nick - which was closed. Back to the railway station to ask Miss Sexy-Pants if she could phone the cops to see if they knew where "les Anglais" were. They suggested "L'Academie du Musique" and a ticket clerk who was going off duty walked me there, but the concierge said, "No, not here try the theatre". Now the booking clerk, the concierge and I trailed round to the theatre. "Oui" (what a lovely word) "les Anglais sont ici" the manager said.

continued on page 11



Welcome! Aldbury dancing-in at the Anker Ring Meeting (photo:John Frearson)

Where are they now? (episode ix)



A trio of musicians playing at The Carfax, Horsham, on Saturday morning (Tour 5). They are Ernie Hales, Kenneth Loveless, & Roger Nicholls.



A handkerchief dance by Headington Quarry Morris Dancers at The Plough public house, Ilfield, also Saturday morning, Tour 5.



The hobbyhorse of the Martlett Morris Men having an audience with the Mayor of Reigate.

Dear Eddie

Further to the depiction of the Burton-upon-Trent Morris Men & the Thames Valley Morris men dancing at the Hare & Hounds public house, Godstone, on the occasion of the 74th Meeting of the Morris Ring based on Reigate & held on the weekend of 9 - 11 September 1960 (The Morris Dancer, Volume Three, February 1999). On a recent visit to my loft, I came across a

number of photographs I took on that occasion. As these photographs are now over 40 years old, I assume they are now historic & worthy of publication in The Morris Dancer as images of record.

The ten photographs are as follows:

Wassail,

Gordon Ridgewell.



Leonard Bardell dancing the solo jig Old Mother Oxford, to the music of the pipe & tabor being played by Bert Cleaver.

Chipperfield 2000

The photographs on page 19 are all by Gordon Ridgewell. They show, clockwise from the top left:-

- Greensleeves dancing Constant Billy, Sherborne, during the open-air service
- A plethora of the Greensleeves super-numary characters
- The Sunday morning procession arriving at The

- Windmill for the final show of the weekend
- Barnsley Longsword dancing the Haxby Sword Dance
- Chester City performing the Miller of Dee garland dance

Where are they now? (episode ix), continued.



The Benfleet Hoymen, with Morris Sunderland about to strike a rump with his bladder, dancing The Queen's Delight.



Jim Phillips bowing out as Squire of the Ring, having just performed the solo jig Shepherd's Hey to the music of the concertina played by Kenneth



The host side, East Surrey Morris Men, getting down to it during their display of Flowers of Edinburgh, to the music of Martin Jolley on fiddle. Your correspondent Bob Davies can be observed in number six position.



Burton-upon-Trent Morris Men performing the Lichfield double stick dance Ring o' Bells at the massed show in Priory Park, Reigate, on Satur-



Nibs Matthews dancing in as Squire of the Ring with Lumps of Plum Pudding.



Nibs completes his jig & is now Squire of the Ring as he bows to his musician Charlie Williams

The Ridgewell Files: 200101

Dated	Publication	Issue Date	Title	Contents
1.xii.2000	The Sunday Telegraph	16.vii.2000	The lore of supply & demand	Review of AA Dictionary of English Folklore
5.xii.2000	Cambridge Evening News	6.vi.2000	merry men get a warm welcome	photoreport of Thaxted 2000
8.xii.2000	Daily Mail	15.vi.2000	Tapestry travesty	The Dome & a tapestry from Steeple Aston
14.xii.2000	Newmarket Journal	29.vi.2000	Morris men in 250 research boost	Devil=s Dyke & a donation to the Wishbone Trust
22.xii.2000	Herts. & Cambs. Reporter & Buntingford Crow	1.ix.2000	Animal magic at . . .	Offley at Ashwell Show, with photo
27.xii.2000	The Times	2.xi.2000	Banks defiant as he is mugged in own constituency	last para mentions Apig=s bladder on the end of a stick
4.i.2001	The Daily Telegraph Weekend	27.vii.2000	A fête worse than death	General article on morris dancing
8.i.2001	Watford Observer	21.vii.2000	Morris majors	Photo from Greensleeves Chipperfield Weekend
16.i.2001	Hoddesdon & Broxbourne Mercury	1.ix.2000	35,000 enjoy festival	Report includes photo of Chingford dancing
29.i.2001	Saffron Walden Reporter	12.x.2000	Hundreds enjoy steamy affair	Report, with photos of Duxford Morris Men
2.ii.2001	The Guardian	27.xii.2000	Keeping mum. Players offer traditional fare	Reports & photos of the Marshfield Mummers
	The Independent on Sunday	31.xii.2000	Picture of the week: Read all about it	
	The Independent	8.i.2001	Hurrah!	

continued from page 8

Hang on Ray? We weren't supposed to go to the theatre! So I asked him to make sure it was "*les danseurs folklorique Anglais*" (I was getting quite fluent) who were watching the magic show. "Ah! I'd better check" he said (in French) "but have a beer while you're waiting". That seemed a good idea, I'd also get a couple in for my guides. However, during my tortured conversation with the theatre monsieur they had evaporated so I didn't manage to thank them

One beer led to another and another before the manager re-

turned with the inevitable news "it's not them" but "*pas de probleme*" I'm "*cherche*"-ing them down so have another beer. I did.

About an hour later the leader of the French team rushed through the door and it was hugs and kisses all round (the leader was a she). A quick ride to the hall which turned out to be 10 minutes from the railway station and amidst applause and sardonic comments from my lot I was treated to the remains of the evening meal and a large number of drinks. The day didn't seem so bad after all!

Ray Fuller
East Surrey Morris Men



Story on page 14: photos from Duncan Broomhead

THE JIGS INSTRUCTIONAL WEEKEND

19 – 21 JANUARY 2001

Hosts: Dolphin Morris Men

**Location: The Village Hall,
Sutton Bonington,
Nottinghamshire**

Instructors: Bert Cleaver (Greensleeves M.M.)

Geoff Jerram (Winchester M.M.)

Tony Ashley (Anker M.M.)

Your scribe for this week-



Well, I capered this high!

end was busy minding his own business eating supper and sampling the beer when approached by Bert Cleaver & asked if he would like a job. Never one to do work if at all possible, a polite refusal in the form of a frown and "isn't there someone better" resulted in my complete capitulation within ten seconds.

Dolphin are to be congratulated on their running of the weekend, their attention to detail and the quality of the fare. I was particularly intrigued by the recipes pinned over various walls of the kitchen and assumed they had been supplied by Bert Cleaver who, of course, is no stranger to the art of filling peo-

ple with food. Given the sub-arctic temperatures throughout the weekend, the importance of the food cannot be overstated. As one who has been on the working parties at Chipperfield and Sarratt on many occasions, it was a partic-



Dave Shire's Speech

ular pleasure to be on the other side of the counter for once. Being therefore, well able to judge and appreciate the efforts put in by Dolphin and Bert. I was also aware that the instructions sent out by Bert to pack painkillers and ear plugs was not only a portent of things to come but more than justified.



Saturday, 0315 hrs: guess who!

As a Ring Meeting, the weekend was attended by the Squire (Shakespeare) together with representatives from Furness, Handsworth, The King's Morris, Anker, Bristol, King Johns, East Surrey, John O'Gaunt, Ravensbourne, Wath, Thelwall, Harthill, Chanctonbury Ring, Mersey, Winchester and Offley.

Following supper, Geoff Jerram made the usual and totally valid

request for representatives to put aside their usual dancing techniques and seek to reproduce nothing but what was taught. Only in this way could the benefits of instruction be maximised so that individuals and their clubs could make objective judgements as to what to incorporate into their own performances.



Did he say with, or without, feint steps?



Saturday Night (actually afternoon) . . .

With this routine complete, Geoff, ably assisted by Albert Wilkins, also of Winchester Morris Men, launched into the rigours of the Bledington jigs with emphasis on moderate speed and lack of feint steps. On this latter point, the penalties for transgressors were severe. In subsequent sessions, similar penalties applied for Bucknell and Sherborne in particular and for not putting feint steps in the Fieldtown dances. During a breather period, the assembly was entertained by Geoff's shock horror admission that *Lumps of Plum Pudding* was his least favourite jig as the result of Kenneth Loveless once becoming stuck in the groove throughout a complete day of dance and being unable to play anything else regardless of the chosen dance. Good practice though!

With supper thus shaken down, most people retired to the excellent *King's Arms* for a somewhat extended social session. The following kitchen session for the hardest involved whisky and bread pudding. We must have the insides of a rhinoceros.

Saturday morning appeared through half-open eyes with a cup of tea in bed. It seems that some of Greensleeves' better habits are spreading to other clubs. Now, if they could come up with mugs Of course, breakfast followed but then the illusion of a weekend break was shattered by Bert wanting to dance and insisting on our participation. An excellent session

of Fieldtown jigs followed with demonstrations by Bert aided and abetted by Alan Chetwood and Steve Parker from the Greensleeves Morris Men.

To ensure breakfast was fully digested, or maybe not, Tony Ashley and Joe Oldaker from the Anker Morris Men followed the Fieldtown with a session of Oddington. I think it fair to say this tradition was little known to many present, but illustrates one of the benefits of this type of weekend since not only does it enable the representatives to hone their expertise in familiar traditions, but also to receive expert tuition into those less well known. That this session was treated with as much enthusiasm as any other is due in no small part to the quality of the teaching and demonstrations. The sadist who organised the programme (it's tempting to spell it "program" just out of spite) then set Bert on us for the Bucknell jig *Bonnets so Blue*.

Lunch was excellent (not that this is particularly relevant since, after a morning of Fieldtown, Oddington and Bucknell, we could have eaten anything) and followed by Geoff and Albert teaching (dare it be said) the latest version of Bampton. To round off the dancing for the day, Bert with Alan and Steve took us through the Sherborne jigs.

The feast was unique in the scribe's experience as it was impressed on us that arrival before or after 7.30 p.m., by even a mo-

ment, was not an option – and commenced exactly on time. Excellent fare was followed by the four usual toasts as follows:

The Loyal Toast by Martin Morley, Squire of Dolphin Morris Men.

The Immortal Memory by Joe Oldaker of Anker Morris Men.

The Morris Ring by Dave Shires of East Surrey Morris Men

Dolphin Morris Men by Gerald Willey, Squire of the Morris Ring and Shakespeare Morris Men.

At this point it is appropriate to record that seven members of Bristol Morris Men were present and that their numbers included five up-and-coming young men. These younger members realised the team could not meet the Squire's request for a song and instead danced *Highland Mary*, Ascot-under-Wychwood and *Nutting Girl*, Ducklington; the latter to John Kirkpatrick's *Pepper in the Brandy*. Even the absence of a fiddle did not deter them and one was duly borrowed for the occasion. As Mike Whitehead later said of himself and Richard Smith, "*we did what we were told*".

The evening was completed similarly to the previous evening, with another extended party at the King's Arms, & a kitchen session for the hardest involving whisky and cheese

(there being no sign of the bread pudding). We must have the insides of a tough rhinoceros.

Sunday dawned bright and white in the gleam of fresh-falling snow so, after breakfast, we decided to warm up by letting Geoff and Albert teach us the Headington jigs & Bert teach Longborough. I fear my memory is somewhat wanting regarding this session but I believe all went well.

Finally, as we still had some energy left, we used the reprise period before lunch for *The Princess Royal* and *Nutting Girl* from Bampton, *The Princess Royal* from Fieldtown, *Highland Mary* from Oddington, *I'll Go and Enlist for a Sailor* from Sherborne, *Jockey to the Fair* from Headington and *Bonnets so Blue* from Bucknell. Are these now the Ring's favourites for future Ring Meetings?

Finally, I would like to add my personal thanks to Dolphin Morris Men, the teachers and dance demonstrators for a weekend which was both thoroughly enjoyable and useful. As stated earlier, I have first hand experience of the work necessary for such an event and can express nothing but praise for the quality, hard work and good humour shown throughout.

Peter Brunton
East Surrey Morris Men
01 February 2001

*[all photos by
Peter Brunton]*



. . . & Sunday Morning!

YEAR 2000 MEMORIES



These consisted of melodeon lessons and intensive dance instruction.

We were able to provide them with two new melodeons and all the kit and equipment that was required. We wanted the dancers to be able to 'dance out' as a separate set, so concentrated on teaching them just the one dance. The melodeon players would be able to play alongside our regular musicians on the tour, but to allow them benefit fully, they have been loaned instruments for twelve months.

After a lot of hard work and dedication all round, the day of the tour arrived. It was a huge success, the dancing was crisp and spot on, they all looked the part. It was a day that we could all be proud of.

While looking into lottery funding for our Morris 2000 project we came across an article about a Mummery Festival in Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh that is held each December. Our mummery side managed to get themselves an invitation, as guests of the Aughakillymaude Community Mummerys.

Although the festival was smaller than we might have expected, the size and warmth of our welcome was much more than we could have wished for. Aughakillymaude Mummerys wear the distinctive and fantastical straw costumes of the area. They perform a 'Hero Combat' play with the addition of musicians and dancers at the end of it. In addition to a full senior side they were able to turn out a junior side of over 20 performers.

We performed the Alderley Mummerys Play, that was taught to us in 1977 by Alec Barber, one of the old Alderley Mummerys. While we are the first English Mummerys side they had seen they had previously met Leominster Morris Men. Despite ferry cancellations and the eighteen hours it took to get there, it was a most enjoyable weekend. Fascinating for all concerned to compare our similar, yet unique, mummery traditions.

*Duncan Broomhead
(Squire,
Adlington Morris Men)*

As their contribution towards Morris 2000, Adlington Morris Men decided that they wanted to devise a morris based, youth project. Having previously established links within Scouting, we approached our local Scout Council with the idea and got their approval. We then discussed the project with our Local Authority giving details its aims, objectives and costs. We were awarded a lottery grant of £2000, and the hard work commenced.

We held an initial series of six workshops at local Scout Troops where we taught a simplified version of Rigs o' Marlow, to a total of over 130 boys and girls. For those who wanted to form a display team to accompany Adlington on a local morris tour, we had a second series.



Colditz – the Escape!

Famous Castle Survives Third Invasion by Wessex

Morris Men

In 1995 we visited Colditz Castle for the first time when taking part in a dance festival. The following year we were invited back to participate in the celebration of the 950th anniversary of the Castle. That should have been enough for anybody! Incredibly, however, we received an invitation to return once more at the end of September 2000, as part of the tenth anniversary Festival of German Unity and the celebration of the tenth anniversary of Colditz twinning with various towns across Europe. This is the journal of the third invasion.

Friday 29 September did not start well! My dog went AWOL, but I still got to the minibus on time. Then Cliff Skey left his passport and ticket at home, requiring a thirty mile detour to pick them up and including some short cuts that weren't! We still got to Heathrow with plenty of time to spare, but the fates had not yet finished with us! During the change of planes at Frankfurt our bag of sticks went missing. It was returned to us the next day, having gone walkabout to Berlin.

So, after a fairly routine excursion, we arrived at Leipzig and were driven to Colditz by our hosts. We stayed in the local youth hostel, which had been the headquarters of the Gestapo during the war. No trace of their occupancy remains except, perhaps, the beds! Firm were the mattresses, supported by thick plywood sheets with curious messages written on the underside. There are some seriously repressed individuals using youth hostels!

The level of hospitality offered by our hosts was typified by the arrival at the youth hostel of a keg of beer, together with a hand pump. The contents were sampled and pronounced good. We later walked into the centre of Colditz to confirm that the beer in the local bars was also as good as we remembered. The night was warm and we were reminded of the medieval origins of the town as we tasted the aroma of the drains; but more of this later.

After several pints, songs and hours we returned to the hostel and apparently slept with the local mosquitoes, which left us with lumps in the most amazing places. At some stage, in the early hours, Sam Skey was reminded that no matter how long it has been since you last ate diced carrot and sweetcorn, they still appear when you throw up!

Saturday 30th dawned brightish, so after breakfast and a pint or two, we headed for our first gig. This was in the inner courtyard of the Castle, where the prisoners were allowed to exercise. A relatively small audience saw us test out the PA system and destroy the stage! The latter was a platform made up of sections fastened together and levelled by numerous small piles of wood blocks under the joints, edges and corners.

After 20 minutes or so of dancing, pieces of wood were seen squirting out from under the stage and the various sections assumed randomly drunken postures (something familiar there?). When we returned for our second stand, later in the day, the organisers decided that we should dance on the cobbles.

As an interlude between our gigs at the Castle, we were asked to go up to the local secondary school and dance just prior to the prize giving ceremony of the volleyball tournament held between three of the twinned towns represented at the weekend. The hospitality of our hosts showed itself again as bottles of beer were conjured out of nowhere for us. Our minds were taken from the beer by some of the excellent leaping and ball skills exhibited by the young ladies who were competing. My notes become a little shaky at this point – must have been the beer!

Rashly, we decided to dance “The Rose” and I was delegated to find a suitable female for hoisting on the final hey. In the interests of diplomacy, I approached the wife of our main host for the weekend. His wife is blonde, gorgeous and Russian and was not at all sure that she wanted to play. “Get one of the young girls”, she suggested. The sweat broke on my brow and I managed to persuade her that she should do it. After the dance, when she had been roundly and soundly lifted, manhandled and groped by the side, I asked if she understood why I had not wanted to use one of the youngsters. She nodded and smiled, which I think was a good sign!

After the match, the side descended unto the town, wherein a bar was found to be open. Even better (what am I saying?) there were copious supplies of conkers! The Germans, of course, had no knowledge of the game and so England was challenged by England. England, naturally, lost! However, many of the conkers found their way back to the youth hostel and into beds,

pillows, bags, shoes and other uncomfortable places. The noises of the night then included the fall of conkers from under mattresses, sheets and pillows as bodies rotated. But I digress!

Our second stand in the Castle courtyard was a humdinger! We were scheduled towards the end of the afternoon, following various displays of traditional Saxon dancing and – immediately preceding us – a team of Austrian clogclicking-arse-kicking-leatherwearing-axe-bearing schuhplatter dancers who managed not to destroy the stage! We knew that we had to rise to the occasion.

It was one of those moments. The music was brilliant. Everything worked. Everybody got that extra couple of inches off the ground. The stick-clashing was in time to the music, sharp and clean. The stepping was crisp and smooth. The audience of about 300 loved it! Afterwards, Chris Toyne (our senior musician on the tour) said that the experience of playing “British Grenadiers”, at full amplification, in the courtyard of Colditz Castle had made his hair stand on end. What could follow that?

Of course, something did. After an excellent dinner comprising large lumps of roast pig, dumplings and mixed veg., we returned to the Castle courtyard to listen to the Roudnice brass band, which was of professional standard and also contained some very pretty young ladies. The tonguing technique of those in the woodwind section was closely observed!

A live band of a more modern era took over and we decided to

head for the town. Alan Cheeseman paused briefly to partake of the facilities of a passing Portillo (sorry, Portaloo) and it suddenly seemed a good idea to see how Alan might react to a sudden earthquake simulation as several sets of hands rocked the compartment to and fro. Alan, being a Wessex man, took it in his stride, but the screaming from the adjacent cabin indicated that the lady occupant was less than impressed with the knock-on effects of the exercise! She emerged from her confinement both shaken and stirred and was welcomed by hysterical laughter from all directions. We never saw her again.

Eventually we arrived at a bar called "The Rat", where we were recognised by an acquaintance from our last visit, who still remembered the party we had in his workshop four years previously. He is a cabinet-maker and joiner and his workshop is very close to the Castle. The workshop has the unusual distinction of possessing an earth closet that is probably over 300 years old and has never been cleared in that time. Those who have used the facilities tend to remember the experience!

Christophe (for that is his name) was fairly drunk when we met him, but after we retired to his workshop in the company of three crates of beer (that's about 60 pints in real money) he became extremely inebriated, as did we all, particularly the aforesaid Alan Cheeseman! Now, when Alan gets drunk he goes to sleep; on this occasion on a chair in a corner of the workshop. When he sleeps, he sleeps and is very difficult to rouse (if you will pardon the expression). Thus, many unpleasant, picturesque and hilarious things have been inflicted on Alan when in this state. On this occasion, it was sawdust and wood shavings. Several baskets full of the detritus of the workshop were gently and lovingly tipped over Alan's head until he was well covered and the appropriate photographs could be taken for posterity. He eventually woke, divested himself of as

much rubbish as he could and headed for the youth hostel. On the way, while passing through the town square, he decided that he could stand the itching no longer and undressed to shake out his clothes. Further photographs were taken and may be perused for a small fee.

The above was but an interlude in the party, which developed into yet another music and song session, only drawing to a close when Chris Toyne declared that his fingers could do no more. A slow and stately progression back to the youth hostel ensued; which is where the sheep and the Crumpet with the Trumpet enter the story.

Alan Cheeseman, now conscious and curious, was trying to find the local Porn Channel on the TV. At the same time, several of us were chatting to some Germans who had chosen to risk their sanity by staying at the hostel. I cannot remember how the subject of sheep arose, but we spent some while trying to explain why sheep jokes are funny.

One of the Germans was a charming and well-upholstered blonde female. It was thought that she was a member of the brass band and so was christened "the Crumpet with the Trumpet". Sadly, she turned out to be a young politician and the sobriquet had to be changed to the less attractive BFB (Big Fat Blonde). In truth, she was not that large, but the name suited the mood of the moment and we had earlier sung the bawdy version of "Allouette". Eventually the rather tacky porn shows ceased to be funny and we retired to conker-land.

Sunday 1 October we were due to perform in the Castle courtyard at 11 a.m., but instead we were commanded to walk out of Colditz towards Leipzig for 20 minutes, until we came to a restaurant called the Waldhaus. Here, we were informed, we should perform for the twinning delegates from Colditz, Holzwickede (Germany), Ochsenfurt (Germany), St Stefan (Austria), Roudnice (Czechoslovakia), oŁwicz (Po-

land and pronounced Wovitz) and Weymouth. Interminable speeches (in German, Polish and Czech) with translations (into German) occupied forever, but eventually we were asked to dance – for just ten minutes! AAAaaarrggghhhh!

The saving grace of the occasion was the considerable quantity of free beer available and the fact that the Wessex Morris Men were presented with a medal and some books by the representatives of oŁwicz. We suspect that the latter event was caused by the fact that Weymouth neglected to send any delegates to the celebrations and that the Łowicz delegates were unwilling to carry the fairly hefty mementos home with them again!

After walking back to Colditz, and lunch (more pig, but this time in sausages) we took part in the afternoon performance to a somewhat diminished audience. This did not worry us as we were, by now, fully laden with beer, lunch and beer and were looking forward to our tour of the Castle.

Much is being done to preserve the fabric of the Castle, which has not been well-maintained in its' 954 years of existence. Part of the work was necessitated by one of the British prisoners, who decided that he would wage a longer-term war against his incarcerators. In about 1944, he introduced dry rot spores into the attic timbers of the Castle, leading to major refurbishment of the roof timbers during the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s! What a sense of humour!

Many of us had been round the Castle in 1996, at which time it had only recently been cleared of its' previous occupants. These consisted of children (a hospital facility had been occupying half of the accommodation) and local geriatrics who had inhabited the other half. Our guide had been the Curator at that time, who had shown us every nook and cranny then safe to enter (and one or two that weren't). We were in the upper attics of the Castle, enjoying the robust bounce of the floors, when he screamed! Apparently

the floors were only supposed to hold one or two people at a time and there were eight of us jumping up and down on it!

This time, however, our delightful lady guide could only take us to the museum (containing incredibly impressive artefacts manufactured by the prisoners) and some lower parts of the Castle, including some cells and the famous 120 foot tunnel dug by the French that nearly reached the outside, only to be discovered a few feet short of its' objective.

Alan Cheeseman provided yet another diversion. He managed to get himself locked inside the Castle THREE times over the weekend, of which two were on the tour! I think he just likes being brought relief by charming young ladies.

There are only about 6,000 inhabitants of Stadt Colditz (the town) and so the bars seem to take turns to open. We searched the town for one that we had not yet victimised and found a theme Bistro, where the walls were painted with frescos of film stars from the 50s & 60s. Bogart was there, being served a drink by Elvis, while James Dean waited his turn. But sod this, where's the beer? It arrived, followed by the bill, but also by the Mayor of Colditz, who insisted on buying us more beer, so things got progressively sillier until the bar closed at about 11.30 (it was Sunday) and we returned to the porn channel, more beer and conkers back at the hostel.

Monday 2 October dawned wet but cleared up by 10 a.m., at which time we had been commanded to appear before the Mayor at the Town Hall. We found ourselves guests at a reception for the delegates of the twin towns represented (zilch from Weymouth) and listening to more speeches in German, Polish and Czech. There was, however, plenty of free beer! Wessex were then asked to sing!! Following a robustly harmonised "Nightingale" we were pleasantly surprised to find that the various twin town representatives were also asked to per-

form, which they did with considerable credit.

The reception over, we were allowed to visit the clock tower, where the ringing of the hours is accompanied by two figures of rams clashing heads in front of the clock face. Sam Skey managed to confuse the whole town by causing the bell to strike three times at about quarter to eleven!

We finished the tour of the Rat-house with a visit to the council chamber and marriage room, where Alan Cheeseman married me – to the charming P.A. of the Mayor. Consummation of the nuptial had to be delayed because she had work to do (am I missing something here?) but I think I'm on a promise for next time!

A pre-lunch dance, outside the local bank, collected enough to justify a round on the bag, which was deferred until the evening, at which time we were to partake of our usual Monday tour. Lunch was pig sausages of the frankfurter variety and the afternoon was declared free time, some of which was spent shopping, others slept and those with less sense than most sat on the edge of the town fountain, throwing conkers in and trying to splash the young ladies of the town!

Our normal Monday evening tour consists of visits to three pubs. We only got as far as the first bar in the town square, where we danced our usual stand to an audience of four customers. The bar owner then brought us glasses of Schnapps with green apple juice, which went down well (and quickly) so we went in and stayed!

We had to leave the bar temporarily, when asked by the local rozzers to move some of our litter from the pavement. Always happy to cooperate with the law, we went out and removed Cliff Skey, who had consumed an excess of everything and had decided to have a kip. The police were concerned that their nice town might get a bad reputation with drunks lying about in the street!

At about 9 p.m. we were summoned by the Burgomeister (Mayor) who had decided to treat us to a game of skittles. We followed our guide from the Castle tour, who was also the Mayor's sister-in-law, to a sort of drinking-cum-sports club, where they had a ten-pin bowling alley and a skittles alley. The game was not quite English as the skittles were attached to a mechanism by string and would not spin when clobbered by the very heavy rubber composition balls.

The rules of the game could be changed by manipulating a key-board at the throwing end of the alley, so things got somewhat silly when one team was discovered to have seven balls per member, while other team was limited to five! The Dorset Flop method of delivering the balls had not been seen before by the locals, and caused much consternation until the method was explained to them. No-one won, but the Mayor bought lots of beer for us!

A song/music session then ensued, where a full frontal version of "Green Grow the Rushes O!" totally confused our hosts and a Dorset Fourhand Reel nearly caused serious injury when Pip Oxenbury – his blood content now suitably diluted with alcohol – tried to swing me through a pillar. Later, on the way back to the hostel, he tried to headbutt a stone step, during which he scored a bloody nose and sprained wrist.

There must be something in the local water, for Mike Phelan, who is normally the mildest of men, gradually became somewhat aggressive. Someone had borrowed two pairs of Chinese finger cymbals from his personal percussion pack and had not returned them. Consequently, young Michael was to be seen accosting all and sundry, and demanding in serious and stentorian tones, "I – WANT – MY – CYMBALS – BACK!". He also found his Wessex sweat-shirt hanging from a down-pipe in the street on the way back to the hostel, and was somewhat surprised, as he didn't

know he had lost it! As I say, it must be the water!

As the (unwilling) guardian of the side's brain-cell for the weekend, I had the only keys to the hostel doors. This was not seen as a problem by the Wessex Amateur Housebreaking Club, who seemed to be able to find an open window, even when severely affected by the local water. Cliff Skey proved to be an exception, when he allowed a window to fall on him, but he was undamaged. The window was less fortunate, but the manager of the hostel merely shrugged and commented that worse things had happened – he did not elaborate!

Tuesday 3 October was the day of our flight back. We had a good breakfast and tried to finish the beer, but failed. We left it to the hostel manager, who seemed pleased and gave us each a packed lunch – including a bottle of beer! We had never seen so much free beer in our lives before.

Departure brought examples of both German logic and the kindness of the locals. There were not enough seats for us all in the car and people carrier that were available to take us to Leipzig Airport. It was suggested that, if one of us cared to drive, we could borrow a second car and get to the airport that way. The puzzle of how it would return to Colditz after dropping us off was not mentioned. However, a man who lives opposite the hostel (and who may have been keen to see the back of us) owned that (a) he had a people carrier and (b) he would be happy to drive some of us to the airport! Crushed under the load of luggage, we left with invitations to return in ones, twos or as a side whenever we liked. What a lovely town!

Our return flights were almost uneventful, although we did lose our Horse's stick that gets shoved up his neck. It was declared a possible weapon by the security staff and removed from the possession of George Ford, Keeper of Cadbury, our Horse. Happily George, Cadbury and the stick were reunited a week

or so later, when a long parcel arrived at George's home, from Lufthansa.

As usual, we found that we had made the local press. Myself and John Byfleet found ourselves on the front page of the Leipziger Volkzeitung – and without being arrested, too! While I got onto page three (no comment, please) of the Grimma Regional, in a photograph of myself and our new Banner, together with Cornelia "Legs" Kastner, the Director of the Colditz Castle Company and the weekend's favourite fantasy figure.

We have had three superb overseas trips this year and it has been one of our best seasons ever, so where do we go from here? Well, one of our men has a house on Tobago and he is trying to raise enough sponsorship to get 15 of us over there for Carnival Week, in February 2001! According to his wife, the local girls are like Naomi Campbell, but without the attitude, and they give away the rum – they just charge you for the fruit juice and stuff with which you dilute it, to protect your innards. If we go, you'll be told the gory details. Watch this space!

**Patrick Harries
Bagman
Wessex Morris Men**

• continued from page 18

"Mrs Agnew tried to revive Morris Dancing in Farthingstone, kitting her dancers out in full Tudor costume: bonnets, baggy breeches, slashed sleeves, the lot. Under the trees they stare bemusedly out of a yellowing group photograph"

Farthingstone is about 9 km South-east of Daventry (& about 21 km Southwest of Moulton). If any reader feels moved to explore further, I will be more than happy to publish their findings in a future Circular or Morris Dancer.
ED

More Correspondence

Caribbean/Mumming

Dear Eddie

Anyone who wants to follow the trail about Mumming/Morris in Nevis and St Kitts in the West Indies, as set out in Julian Pilling's letter in the last issue, should also read Mrs Ewing & the Textual Origin of the St Kitts Mummies' Play by Peter T. MILLINGTON in Folk-Lore, 107. (1996) pp.77-89. This remarkable piece of analysis and detective-work 'proves' for me at least, that the St Kitts play cannot be earlier than c.1884

**Wasael, Ron
Shuttleworth**

Abram Morris

Abram and a 'special guest' team will be dancing on Saturday 30th June and Sunday 1st July 2001, around Abram, Bickershaw, Hindley and Platt Bridge (Lancashire). The Sunday is the centenary of the last performance by the traditional Abram team. Wigan Council is intending to erect special 'Abram Maypole' road signs before the celebration and we are aiming to do an environmental enhancement scheme at the Morris Dancers Ground. If I have more details in the next couple of weeks I'll let you know as soon as I can.

Michael Jackson

The Morris Café

Dear Eddie

I'd like to draw the following announcement to your attention. It was posted on 10 October to various interested parties, including the MDDL.

I am pleased to announce the opening of a new Morris website. The Morris Cafe is aimed at Characters, Animals, Fools, Etc (hence Cafe -obvious acronym, no?). It is non-Morris-organisation-specific and non-gender-specific - in other words, anyone with an in-

terest in "the peripherals" of Morris is more than welcome.

Rather than try to explain it all here, I'd like to invite everyone to have a look at the site. The URL is <http://themorriscafe.pagehere.com>. The site is young, and it will need lots of nourishing input to grow, so please help.

Also, I'd be grateful if you would pass on the URL to members of your side who might be interested. I will be posting announcements like this in various places, so please excuse me if you get the same information several times. I need hardly say that I'd be grateful for any mention you can make of the site in The Morris Dancer; equally, I'll be happy to carry any news of relevant TMD items you care to send me.

**Cheers,
Sandy**

<http://themorriscafe.pagehere.com>

CI4Switzerland

Dear Eddie

For what it may be worth the enclosed picture is from *Ländermusik* by Rico Peter

(ATVerlag, Stuttgart 1978, for distribution in Switzerland). It may provide a talking point sometime.

**Yours sincerely,
Julian Pilling**

As near as I can translate the caption, the picture shows the Bernese army in front of Lanbegg & Mannenberg. The besiegers are dancing to celebrate the passing of the Plague outbreak of 1349. On the left are two folk-musicians, & above them is one of the Gentlemen City Trumpeters.

ED

Blackmore

bereavement

Dear Eddie

Morris men will be sad to hear of the untimely death, at the age of 49, of **Jeffrey Giddings**: He was a member of the Blackmore Morris Men & of the Chameleonic Morris Men, & was killed in a road accident whilst riding his bicycle on November 16.

News of his death, funeral & wake was reported in the attached report headlined "Morris men's guard of honour at fu-

neral" published in the *Herts & Essex Observer* of 7 December last, on page 14.

**Morris on,
Gordon Ridgewell**

Alsoreceived

Roy Smith, of Leyland Morris Men, has sent me a couple of cuttings.

The first is taken from the January 2001 edition of the *Dalesman*, & is an illustrated article by Arnold Kellett, a past Mayor of Knaresborough. He describes the Knaresborough Millennium Pageant (June 2000) at Knaresborough Castle, when Claro performed a sword dance.

The article then gives extended descriptions of Plough Sunday performances by Goathland & Kirkby Malzeard, followed by a description of the Claro Sword & Morris revival. The article concludes with a graphic account of the near-arrest of the Claro Horse & a plea for new recruits.

The second article comes from the January 2001 edition of the *Saga* magazine, & describes the provenance of a public garden in the village of Farthingstone. The benefactors were Philip & Georgette Agnew & the garden is a memorial to their daughter Joy - hence the garden's name of "Joymead". The family seem to have been singularly unlucky in that all the children of Philip & Georgette predeceased their parents. Philip Agnew had at one time owned "*Punch*", & Georgette had written poetry.

• continued on page 17





Chipperfield 2000

courtesy of Gordon Ridgewell



Editorial: Spring 2001

The English Mumming Play:

An introductory bibliography;

by **Eddie Cass, Michael J. Preston & Paul Smith** (ISBN 0 903515 21 0), FLS Books 2000. £4.50 from the publishers at FLS Books, c/o Warburg Institute, Woburn Square, London WC1H 0AB. A5 booklet, 37 pages including Contents & Index, set in 10/13 pt Goudy.

If your interest in Mumming leads you to attempt to track down what there is in print, then this is the book for you. The bibliography is organised into sections covering England; Early Theatre; Social & Historical Context; Regional; Theoretical Approaches; English/Hero; English/Pace Egg; English/Robin Hood; English/Souling; English/Sword Dance; English/Wooing; Chapbooks; Scotland; Ireland; Newfoundland; Caribbean; Collections; Related Traditions; Film, etc. Our own Ron Shuttleworth gets a mention in the end-pages. If you want a starting-point for a literature survey on the subject, this strikes me as being the best possible investment.

May Day in England:

an introductory bibliography;

by **Roy Judge** (ISBN 0 903515 19 9), 3rd edition 1999. Published jointly by The Folklore Society & Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, £4.50. A5 booklet, 17 pages including Contents & Index, set in 9/13 pt Goudy.

That this slim volume is now in its third edition is a tribute to Roy. I reviewed its predecessor in The Morris Dancer Volume Three Number Four (February 1997). Checking back on my (minor) criticisms then, I am pleased to see that a more

uniform house-style appears to have been adopted, although both works still present authors' with trailing surnames in the body & leading in the Index. However, if you want to know where to start to learn about May Day customs, this is still the book.

The booklist is organised into the following sections: Source; May Songs; Garlanding; Pageants & Maypoles; Local Studies - Castleton, Helston, Ickwell, Knutsford, Magdalen, Minehead, & Padstow; Aspects - Horses, Labour Day, Mary's Day, Robin Hood, Sweeps, & Temperance; Historical Context.

Both these publications have a clearly defined remit & a tightly delineated target audience. The market for the third book received for review seems to this reviewer to be much less easy to describe.

Eight Days Wonder

recorded by **The Scribe** with drawings by **Jane Bouttell** (ISBN 0 948400 95 1), published by the Larks Press, Ordnance Farmhouse, Guist Bottom, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 5PF, £5.00. 75 pages (no Contents or Index), set in 10/13 pt Goudy.

My feeling is that this is probably written for the participants in the quatercentenary celebration of Will Kemp's passage from London to Norwich. There are no photographs & the sketches (one to every five pages) are variable in quality. The narrative is diaristic & seems to be a reasonably graphic account of the event, with Past Squire Tim Sercombe getting a mention. If you took part, you will probably want to buy a copy to see if you feature: it is difficult to see a wider market.

This edition should be available at the ARM. I shall not be in Exeter as Margaret & I will be in Egypt on a study tour, taking in the renewed excavation of Akhenaton's capital, Akhetaten, among other Old & Middle Kingdom sites.

Circular 38 has a planned publication date of 4th June: copy date to meet this schedule is 7th May. If you could let ensure that I get any material for publication by that date, I shall be grateful. Text can be emailed to me at editor@themorrisdancer.org.uk, as can picture files.

Text files should, for preference, be sent as Word or plain text. Picture files should be sent as tiffs or jpegs at a resolution of 150 dpi, remembering that my preferred widths are 13/4 & 31/2 inches. Should you prefer, you can send me typescripts (sin-

gle-spaced, but good quality - please) & photographs, both of which I can scan in.

As North Wood have a Day of Dance planned for the weekend of May 19th, I have at least one article planned. All other contributions will, as ever, be gratefully received.

I hope to have the Morris Dancer website fully refurbished within the next month. This is involving checking the code to ensure that it conforms to the current standard: xhtml 1.0 Transitional. If you have a few minutes spare during your browsing of the web, check out www.themorrisdancer.org.uk & let me have your comments.

In the meantime, I look forward to your contributions, comments & criticisms. Morris on!

Eddie Dunmore
February 2001.



'Very unusual and just right for the occasion'

The Kemp wood-carving: from page 69 of *Eight Days Wonder*