

the MORRIS RING  
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FOUNDED 1934

# THE MORRIS RING *Circular*

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

Number 41



## Present & Future Relaxed

**T**his photograph from John Frearson was taken during the Sunday display in Richmond Town Square, at the Richmond on Swale Ring Meeting (report, pages 3 — 5 ). Regular features include The Squire (current & -elect), page 2; Correspondence, page 8; the Ridgewell Files, pages 9 & 10; & finally, the Editorial on page 16. In addition there is an expanded account of the golden dancing jubilee of John Burgess & Len Bendall on page 5; an account of East Suffolk's foreign travels on

page 6, & a somewhat more exotic travelogue from the Outside Capering Crew on page 7. Page 10 includes a portrait of Rutland by a famous artist, & page 11 features an excerpt from Past Squire Ivor Allsop's Commendation on the occasion of the award of the EFDSS Gold Gold Badge to Trevor Stone. Reviewed on page 12 are 'Grandson of Morris On', the CD of the ESMR Ring Meeting Feast, & 'an introduction to the english mummers' play'. On page 13 you will find notice of

the imminently available CD of Circulars 31 — 40, news from Mrs Casey about Sidmouth & Towersey, & a short review of 'Fowlers Troop ...' booklet by Sarah Crofts.

Finally, pages 14 & 15 contain a selection of images from the 2002 Thaxted Ring Meeting (a full report should be carried in MRC 42), supplied by Bagman John Frearson.

I hope you enjoy the read: if you have any comment to make, please let me know.

*Eddie Dunmore*



# The Squire

**T**hese are the last months of my stint in Office & I cannot believe how quickly the two years have passed by. In the Morris calendar we are at the start of the dancing season after an enjoyable round of Ales & Feasts.

Back in March I went to the Lichfield Ale which is always a stirring evening in the glorious setting of the Guild Hall. There was much dancing with many visiting Sides & it was a particular pleasure to meet the Ebor MM & the young lads dancing with Sweyn's Ey MM. Next the Shakespeare MM Feast, which was 'home territory' for me, & a chance to be with my own Side. Then over to The Netherlands for a weekend as the guest of the Helmond MM who were celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the birth of their founder, Theo Driessen. The Thaxted MM & an assortment of past Ring officers were also there as guests, so it proved to be a memorable trip.

To Old Windsor to speak at the Rotary Club Dinner on St George's Day; perhaps the time that every morris man fears is approaching e.g., when it is easier to talk about the traditions of Longborough & Sherborne as opposed to dancing them. May Day morning: up very early to travel to Oxford with the Ilmington MM. It was a beautiful clear morning & at exactly 6 am the Choristers broke into the Latin Te Deum from the top of the Magdalen College Tower. Afterwards dancing at selected spots with our hosts the Oxford City MM & other visiting Sides followed by breakfast & then back to Ilmington to dance in the village. A long but memorable day.

The first Ring Meeting of the year at Richmond, Yorkshire was hosted by Richmond on Swale MM with Jim McCaffery

as organising Bagman. Not only was the weather perfect but everything else seemed to fall into place. Who can forget that glorious scenery of the Dales? The massed Show on the Sunday morning after the Church Service was full of colour & contrast; the dancing was good, the presentation positive & I would single out Monkseaton MM for a magnificent display of rapper sword & Green Oak MM for their novel 'Vessel Cupping'. More recently my wife & I attended the Thames Valley MM Celebratory Dinner for their 50th Anniversary. It was a great evening with many former members of the Side returning for the festivities & to reminisce.

From my diary I look forward to: the Thaxted Ring Meeting (June 7-9), the West Somerset MM weekend of dance (June 28-30), the Green Oak MM 30th Anniversary weekend (July 5-7), the Silurian Ring Meeting (July 19-21) & then my finale at the Bristol Ring Meeting (July 26-28).

The ARM (March 1-3) proved an interesting get-together: the Stafford MM with Alan Dandy at the helm were superb hosts & deserve a huge 'thank you' for all their hard work & organisation. The Minutes will be circulated shortly with much to ponder. One clear decision: Cliff Marchant, Chanctonbury Ring MM was elected as the next (32nd) Squire of the Ring. My congratulations to him & best wishes for an enjoyable & successful term of Office.

A word of encouragement to the other two candidates, Bob Cross & Bob Pierce: you must consider standing next time around; remember, "if at first you don't succeed, try, try, & try again". After much discussion we now have a working model

for the Area divisions & their Representatives. Some Areas have expanded a little, e.g. South West & Wales, under the stewardship of Dudley Binding, but there now seems to be a reasonable distribution to comply with the wishes & geographical location of Members.

Perhaps the one item that aroused feelings the most concerned the 'Promotion of the Morris'. This was no accident as I had earmarked it as the central item for open & genuine debate. The three Morris organisations along with EFDSS are working together to promote the dancing & the public image of the Morris. Daniel Fox who is the Ring representative at the Joint meetings summarised the progress to date & what is intended for the future for this imaginative venture. Strong feelings emerged during the lively discussion, some positive and, equally, some negative & it was a good session for an airing of views. Being there at the outset, I feel strongly that the ground work under way within & between the organisations is vital, & must be continued & developed. As a footnote, the idea emerged at a meeting of the three organisations, 20th August 2000 at John Frearson's house where we were enjoying a pleasant Summer's day chatting in the garden. As the very new



Being asked to write a few words for the Circular gives me the chance to thank the Sides that elected me to be the next Squire, I look forward to dancing in at the Bristol Ring Meeting.

Since being elected I have been to a number of Ales & Feasts, also the Richmond on Swale Ring Meeting. A beautiful part of the country made even better by the good weather. The encouragement I have received from the sides I met or has been sent by email & the post is greatly appreciated. But I would like to know why ex Squires shake your hand laugh & ask if I

Ring Squire I recall saying, "there is no great mileage in division & dissent between us" & that seemed a good place to start. Quite simply, there is one product, the morris, we all cherish; there is only one audience & the general public out there is not interested in bickering or schisms between us...real or imagined — & yes, I shall say again: the best advertisement that we in the Ring can provide for the Morris is a polished & positive display of our dances of whatever the style/tradition wherever we go. Anything less is not acceptable.

Squires are transitory. Now I go with good grace to my next job as Chairman of the Advisory Council. As well as the advisory role, I am looking forward to continuing my interest in the question of Associate / Full membership thereby encouraging as many Sides as possible to become fully involved in the Ring. It is a great honour & privilege to be Squire of the Ring. Two wonderful years...and how sensible the founder members were in setting a fixed term.

I am grateful to all those people within the Morris who have given me help, advice & who have supported me & gone along with my idiosyncrasies. Enjoy your dancing & continue to flourish.

Gerald

have a photograph of my wife as a reminder?

My first Ring Meeting as Squire will be at Hartley in August, something I look forward to, and during the autumn & winter I will be busy attending the instructionals & the Fools & Beasts Unconventional. Thank you to all the sides hosting the weekends, please support them & if you any suggestions regarding the instructionals please let me know. I will also be contacting the Area Reps with regard to promoting the Morris; I would like to know what is being done in their part of the country.

I look forward to meeting more of you on my journeys across the Shires; I want to hear your views on the future of the Morris.



# RICHMOND on SWALE 10th - 12th May 2002



*Richmond-on-Swale dancing at The King's Arms, Askrigg*

**T**he 289th Meeting of the Morris Ring was based at various locations in Richmond including the Catholic Hall; the Scout Hall; the Methodist Hall and the YMCA Hall. The main evening venue was the Black Lion, which also provided breakfasts, and also catered for the Feast, which was held in the Town Hall. The Meeting was supported by Richmond Town Council and Richmondshire

District Council, and sponsored by The Village Brewer.

There were three tours on the Saturday with informal Shows before and after lunch at the Saturday lunch spot in Reeth, where the three tours came together. The main Mass Show was on Sunday morning after a Procession from the church. 9 Sides, plus the host Side, some 120 men, attended the Meeting. Those present were: Anstey;



*Claro Sword at the Sunday Show in Richmond*

Claro;; Green Oak;; Greensleeves; Men of Wight; Mendip; Monkseaton; Oakworth Village; and Thaxted, as well as the hosts Richmond on Swale.

## *Friday 10th May 2002*

**T**he Friday evening rendezvous was the Catholic Church Hall. Men were issued with various documentation and a map of the town. Sleeping quarters were allocated and details of the Tours given out. Men then unloaded kit at their various accommodations and then made their way either to collect beverage various, prior to supper, or direct to the Fish and Chip shop to exchange their supper vouchers for a generous portion of said combustibles. This proved an excellent foun

just before midnight when the assemblage were "locked in". Singing and music had progressively taken over all three bars, and the hard core was ushered out at about 1.00am (ish)!

## *Saturday 11th May 2002*

**S**aturday dawned fine and sunny, and after a substantial breakfast at the Black Lion, the Sides embussed. The weather for the Saturday tours [and indeed for the whole week-end] was idyllic. The three leisurely tours visited a range of villages in the Dales, including Bainbridge, Askrigg, Low Row, Reeth, Gunnerside, Middleham, Leyburn and Langthwaite. The Ring Officers were split among the Tours. All three tours converged on Reeth for lunch, with one Side



*Anstey dancing at Reeth (Saturday lunch spot)*

dation for the more liquid proceedings that followed!

The public house selection had been increased this year by the opening, a few days before, of a new Weatherspoon's establishment. For those who did not mind mixing with the younger set, this provided the best quality beers in town [until the Feast that is!!!]. The main centre after the chip supper was the Black Lion, which had a late extension. The road served as an additional drinking space until

from each bus being dispersed to each of the three pubs facing the Green to ensure a social mix and spread the load as each bus arrived. An informal show was danced before lunch [each Side dancing before eating], and again after lunch. There was a new paved stage on the Green, which provided an ideal spot for these shows. The weather being ideal, there was a good audience [which included the Chair of the Open Morris, on holiday in the area].





*Monkseaton at The Punchbowl, Low Row*

It was good to see two sword sides at the Meeting, Claro, and Monkseaton, the latter changing kit between dances as they displayed both Rapper and various Longsword dances. The audience at Reeth [and no doubt elsewhere] was treated to the enthusiastic activity of the Oakworth Village Fool, Moss Ambrose.

The tours returned to Richmond at about 5.00pm to allow time at leisure before the Feast. Some took the opportunity to visit the Castle [as in fortress not pub!!].

The Feast was held in the Town Hall. The guests were The Mayor of Richmond, Mr Tom Burrows, with his wife Mrs Valerie Burrows. The Ring Officers present included the Squire, Gerald Willey; the Squire Elect, Cliff Marchant,

the Bagman, John Frearson and the Treasurer, Steve Adamson. Past Squires, Daniel Fox and Mike Chandler; Past Bagman, Tony Parsons, and the Squire of Richmond on Swale, Andrew Bishop completed the top-table. The menu was Mediterranean Fruit Cocktail; Lamb and Dumpling Extravaganza [or Vegetarian likewise] with Potatoes and Seasonal Vegetables; Apple Pie and Custard; Cheese and Biscuits; and Coffee and Mints. These were lubricated by two blends of beers [allegedly at 4.2%] brewed by Hambleton of Thirsk for the Village Brewer and entitled "Richmond Morris Special Bitter"; and an "Evolution Ale" [4.0%] from the Darwin Brewery of Sunderland. The Speeches and Toasts followed: The Loyal Toast was proposed in whisky — donated



*Green Oak Vessel Cupping at the Sunday Show*

by grateful pubs. The Mayor of Richmond said a few words of welcome and a greater number in relating a few humorous tales! The Squire of Richmond on Swale, Andrew Bishop welcomed the visitors, and in due course their health was drunk. The Squire then spoke. Two years before, as Squire Elect, when proposing the Immortal Memory, he had included some reference to the many sheep [this was " ... a "mistake" — but he will learn ..."] quoted the then Squire, as a chorus of baa-ing followed!] Building on this precedent, he mentioned that he was glad to see the sheep back on the hills — as "he loved sheep". There was much applause!!! After various news items, he wished the Squire

Black Lion, where there was dancing outside the pub until about midnight, whereupon all were locked in, to provide further singing and music until a late hour.

## *Sunday 12th May 2002*

**B**reakfast was again taken in the Black Lion. Afterwards, those so wishing, attended the Parish Eucharist at the St Francis Xavier's RC Church. During the first hymn, the Squires presented their staffs at the altar. The Squire of the Ring read the second Lesson.

After the Service, as time was short, three dances were presented for the congregation,



*Oakworth Village at Reeth*

Elect every success when he took over.

There were songs from Mendip "The Doggie Doggie Do" and from Greensleeves. The Treasurer, Steve Adamson played a pair of tunes on his whistle; before doing so, he thanked everyone who had sent messages of support after the fire at his flat. Thaxted's Simon Richie sang Nobby Hall; and then Monkseaton's Brian Jackson performed in virtuoso style upon the fiddle, accompanied by a colleague on melodeon.

Before the men departed, the Top Table and a representative of each Side, made their way to the stairwell to sing The Beautiful Swale, Richmond-on-Swale's Anthem this being a tradition introduced by the Host Side. The entourage then dispersed into Richmond and toward the

outside the church by the Host Side, Richmond-on-Swale; Oakworth Village; and Thaxted.

The Men then formed up for a procession into the town led by the Squire, the Bagman and the Squire of Richmond-on-Swale. The Squire Elect joined the musicians. The Winsters Processional was danced from the church and down to the Market Square. The Mass Show started soon afterwards at about 11.30am. Each Side provided a show dance, as well as taking part in three massed dances and Bonny Green.

Items of note from the show: the energy and enthusiasm of the Sides from Anstey and Oakworth Village; the seven man Rapper Sword dance from North Walbottle, danced by Monkseaton; and the rarely seen [at least not since the



Chipping Campden Ring Meeting] "Vessel Cupping", presented by Green Oak, which featured the construction of a plough, as well as a dance from the East Riding of Yorkshire. After the show, the Men made their way to the Town Hall for lunch. This was a buffet and accompanied by the remainder of the beer from the Saturday Feast. The Men then dispersed in an orderly manner.

The entire weekend went smoothly. A pat on the back for much hard work by Richmond on Swale, and particularly for their Meeting Bagman, the tireless Jim McCaffery, [and his chief barker, Leo Nugent] whose attention to detail ensured that all the arrangements went without a hitch. We thank them all for providing a splendid weekend - and how did they manage the sunshine throughout?

**John Frearson**  
*Bagman, The Morris Ring*  
15 May 2002

# John Burgess & Len Bendall



**J**ust after Christmas 1951 Len Bendall, a sixth-former from Warminster, and John Burgess, from Westbury, home for the holiday from a teaching post in Harrow, were persuaded by Bill Bush, one of the White Horse Morris Men, to have a go at Morris Dancing. Bill laid on a special practice for them with some White Horse men: it must have gone well because that be-

ginning led to a lifelong commitment to the Morris.

Both men joined White Horse, although John, living in Harrow in term time, also joined St Albans Morris Men where he first met Bert Cleaver. Len, soon to go to college in Bristol to study pharmacy, also did some dancing with Jack Williams and the University Morris team. John returned to Westbury in July 1953 and became a regular member of White Horse. After two or three years he succeeded the legendary Roger Pinnegar as Squire.

Len's time alternated between college and practical experience at a pharmacy in Westbury, and so he was able to keep up his membership of White Horse until he was called up for National Service. No Morris in Cyprus, unfortunately, nor subsequently during the 18-month spell working in London, but a return to Warminster in 1961 saw him rejoining White Horse, and when John was appointed to a headship at Yatton near Clevedon, in June 1965, Len took over as Squire.

But not for long! By a remarkable coincidence Len bought a pharmacy in 1965 at Wrington - three miles from Yatton! Len joined the Mendip team early in 1966 and, after a few months settling into his new post, John also joined.

Both, 50 years on from that first practice, are active members of Mendip Morris - Len still dancing, fooling and collecting; John now a very occasional dancer but a regular musician. Both in their time at Mendip have been Squire, Foreman and Bagman and both yield to no one in their enthusiasm for Morris and all it stands for.

The Mendip Morris Men always dance on Boxing Day, and 2001 was no exception.

At the second show at Congresbury, with a crowd of 150 or more watching, Len and John celebrated their 50th Anniversary by dancing the jig "None So Pretty" from Field Town. The crowd applauded and that should have been it, but it wasn't. Peter Higgs, the Foreman, had commissioned two suitably engraved medals to mark the occasion and Doug Schofield, the present Squire, presented them to the two dancers. Peter had made the presentation the climax of the show and with a final "Bonny Green Garters" we danced off and into the pub. It was a great occasion for both men and also for Mendip Morris. There can't be many teams with two active members who can, between them, boast a hundred years of Morris dancing.

## Editor's Note

*This item appeared, in brief, in Circular 40. As the relevant text became available, & one of the plates was not used, I thought the occasion could do with an expanded account.*

**ED**





# EAST SUFFOLK TAKE 'VANDALS' TO VENICE



**F**ollowing successful visits to Berlin (2000) and Prague (2001), East Suffolk Morris Men chose Venice as the venue for their early season trip this year. Eleven members set off from Stansted on February 28th and a further eight joined them on Friday 1st March. On Friday the advanced party researched some bars, checked out dance

squares to appreciative audiences, one disappointing feature was that the Authorities banned live music in St Mark's Square but, undaunted, David Tydeman performed Fieldtown jig to his own whistling, perhaps the first such performance in the square. The day ended with a meal in one of Venice's numerous restaurants and



spots, and even performed some dancing. In the evening we met the new arrivals and danced them in at the famous 'Harry's Bar' near to St. Mark's Square. On Saturday the whole side performed in several of Venice's

some more dancing outside the Flying Dutchman bar which sold a wicked dark beer at 8% gravity, don't ask me where this is, getting lost in Venice is easier than falling off yer bike!!

On Sunday the decision was to visit Murano, an island in the Venetian lagoon which is famous for its glass blowing factories. This perhaps was the highlight of the long weekend, the weather was glorious and we found a great dance spot outside restaurant bar called Busa (not boozer!) The sun shone, the outside diners applauded the dancing, the landlord provided two flagons of bubbly white

seeing and we took our late afternoon flights back to Stansted. Accommodation?... well this was also a resounding success... the Hostel we used was situated within easy reach of St Mark's and the northern shoreline and at £12 per night (including breakfast) was a real bargain!

Venice had proved to be an ideal venue for the Morris and somewhere that will be difficult to



wine and an appreciative observer from the flat above the bar presented us with a warm tray of lasagne and another bottle of wine. The interest and friendship from the watching Italians was striking. After our performances we investigated the rest of the island, some of us visiting the glass showrooms where the most stunning piece was a glass mandolin of awe-inspiring beauty and costing a meagre £5500. We met up again at another canal side bar drank some more and performed a range of dances in brilliant sunshine. Returning to Venice on a number 42 ferry boat we finished up in another restaurant where we dined on beer, wine, fantastic pizzas and liqueurs (courtesy of the house) all for £12!

Monday morning was taken up with shopping and more sight-

better. Squire for the trip was Des Herring, who supervised events to every one's satisfaction.

*Mike Palmer, Bagman.*





## *The Outside Capering Crew has just returned from performing at a traditional British fete - in the United Arab Emirates.*

**Simon** Pipe, one of The Crew's four dancers, looks back in bewilderment.

We have known peculiar experiences during the brief career of The Outside Capering Crew, but morris dancing on the edge of the desert counts among the more surreal. The other-worldliness of the thing was compounded by the appearance of the bagpipe band booked alongside us at Great British Day in Dubai: the pipers were all locals, marching splendidly in Arab robes. You had to watch. The Crew had been invited out

mittee member who suggested it, was a New Zealander who had never seen morris dancing. They tried to warn her.

We had doubts ourselves when stories appeared in the local press, hailing us as the star attraction. It didn't help that Great British Day clashed with the opening of the Dubai Shopping Festival, whose headline act was staying at our hotel. Shaggy, we were told by an awestruck daughter over the phone, was bigger than Michael Jackson. No, we wouldn't get his autograph unless he asked for ours



to provide a traditional English touch at Dubai's annual celebration of British culture. Only after the event did some members of the organising committee admit they'd had doubts about flying a bunch of hard-drinking nutters all that way (though actually, we're not like that). Julie-Ann, the com-

mittee member who suggested it, was a New Zealander who had never seen morris dancing. They tried to warn her.

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horses - getting them on the plane was fun. The music's thrilling (I can say that, because I don't play a note). But really, we simply confirmed what others knew, that an audience will nearly always be much more responsive overseas than at a village fete. And morris is great for engaging with spectators who may be more used to seeing visiting performers on a stage, aloof and remote.

People were appreciative, too. British Airways gave us five free flights (we paid for the other) and we had four nights in pala-

Actually, we worked hard, readily agreeing to extra commitments. One was a teaching session at an international school; afterwards, we were told that any number of the private schools would happily have paid us to do our stuff. We would have been offered an afternoon's sailing instead, but we'd already booked an evening at a faux Bedouin camp, at which musician Lawrence Wright bought Arab robes and became Lawrence of Arabia (though not a pillar of wisdom).

We're now keen to do more for-



tial rooms provided without charge by Dubai's newest five-star hotel, the Fairmont. We swam at dawn and midnight in the rooftop pool, and dined for free at another five-star hotel. All this, in return for a single afternoon's dancing - and yet people kept thanking us for coming.

If I have a complaint it's that we had to share rooms with our horses, but at least the beds were wide. On one evening, the whole side snuggled under the duvet. That's the other thing about these trips: they're very good for team bonding.

eign trips. With only seven performers and a varied repertoire, we reckon we offer good value. We have talked of putting together a small company of performers to offer even wider variety — perhaps rapper, clogging and even circus skills. Another option would be to join forces with another side, to build up a full-length stage show. Offers are welcome.

Our next gig, however, is somewhat less exotic, though it does provide a great opening line for The Crew's website: Just back from Dubai... next stop, Cleethorpes.



# Correspondence

## From: Bob Hobley, East Surrey MM

(website coordinator)

26.ix.2001

Dear Eddie,

A couple of things following on from letters in the Circular no.

38.

1. Len Bardwell, one time Bagman (1926 to 1939) & musician of East Surrey. In some notes that Geoff Metcalfe produced, in 1988, of his memories of ESMM he wrote of Len, "A great enthusiast for the Morris, if not the world's best dancer. He was the prime mover in getting the 1937 tour going; this was breaking new ground as, apart from Thaxted and the Travelling Morris, it was unheard of to take Morris to the public in this way. He also played concertina, which was our only regular music".

I am also told by John Maloney of Exeter MM that Len was the grandfather of the novelist Martin Amis and the father-in-law of Kingsley Amis. He is believed to be the inspiration/origination of the character Professor Ned Welch in "Lucky Jim".

2. Pictures of ESMM and Ravensbourne MM in 1950. A further picture of the 1950 tour, featuring the then ESMM Squire - Bob Ash - doing a jig, can be seen on our website ([www.esmm.org.uk](http://www.esmm.org.uk)) under the link entitled "officers". The site also has a number of other old photographs including one going back to the late 1920s and one of Len Bardwell and Willie Ganniford on the first ESMM tour in 1937.

Regards

## From Julian Pilling.

16.iii.2002

Dear Eddie,

Your defence of Georgina Boyes on the question of Rolf Gardiner's involvement in the formation of the Ring is commendable chivalry, but I do feel that the consequent disparagement of Walter Abson's defi-

nite statement as against Robert Saunders' list of names is to be regretted.

Certainly it helps to have more evidence & in the lack of this your argument at every turn seems like that of a Massachusetts District Attorney. It appears to me that you have unnecessarily slighted a senior former officer of the Ring; equally I am sure that this would not have been your intention but regrettably it reads that way.

With good wishes,

## From a reader

(name & address supplied)

23. iv.2002

Dear Editor,

What is going on?

I've just read issue 40 of the Circular. On the front page is a photo of children dancing with Green Man. There are girls dancing. The article says 'Let's hope ... that some of them will feel moved to participate as adults'. Did Green Man tell the children and their teachers that only boys will be allowed to dance or play music in Ring sides? Did they check whether the school's equal opportunities policy tallied with theirs and the Ring's?

The Pursuit of Happiness Tour shows photos of women's sides in the US, speaks of St Albans hosting a woman's side. So it's OK abroad, especially after 11 September but not at Ring dos? Gloucestershire Morris went to Spain where 'four delightful young ladies' had been recruited to help a morris side through a rocky patch. So it's OK if they're delightful young ladies and a side is going through a rocky patch?

There are several other photos and reports of mixed dancing in this edition.

Why is the Ring promoting mixed activities in the Ring Circular as 'Good Things' but banning it elsewhere? I don't think these contradictory values would survive in a modern place of work.

You may wish to raise the following points with your member sides:

Sides may need to consider how honest they are being with children they are teaching and their teachers to avoid creating false expectations.

Sides may also wish to check whether the side's principles are not in contravention of the equal opportunities policy of the place where they are teaching.

Local authorities do not use venues that discriminate against the disabled by not providing disabled access. Ring sides might find they cannot be booked by or dance on the land of local authorities because they contravene equal opportunities rules.

Yours sincerely,

## From Walter Abson

First Bagman of the Ring

4.v.2002

I am grateful to Gordon Ridgewell for his article in the last Circular, no. 40, in which he drew attention to my letter in English Dance and Song Vol. 59 no. 3, but I regret that you appear to question my statement that Roif Gardiner played no part in the formation of the Morris Ring. It may be useful to clarify what Gardiner actually did in relation to the morris in those days.

In 1924, at the end of his student days in Cambridge, he and Arthur Heifer organised a morris tour in the Cotswolds for a group of men who had danced together in Cambridge. This was the first tour of its kind. In 1926 and 1928 Gardiner and Heifer organised tours in Germany on a broader basis, giving displays of morris, country dancing and singing. These were the last tours in which Gardiner took part. In 1927 he acquired Gore Farm in Dorset, and began his work on the afforestation of a large area of scrub upland. This, followed by his marriage, the conversion of the old water mill at Springhead

and his increasing musical activities gave him little time for the morris and sword. He usually attended the annual meeting of the Cambridge Morris Men, but he had no other regular contact with the club. He did not, however, come to the annual meeting in April 1933 and it was during that year and early in 1934 that the concept of the Morris Ring was developed, and he took no part in those discussions. He came to the 10th annual meeting on 14 April 1934, but this was after the constitution on the Ring had been drafted, and shortly before the Ring's formation was announced at the Thaxted gathering on 3rd June. It seems most probable that this Cambridge meeting was the first that Gardiner had heard of the Morris Ring. He did not attend any further annual meetings of the Cambridge Morris Men, nor did he attend the inaugural meeting of the Morris Ring on 20th October 1934. The first time he came to a Ring meeting was at Thaxted in 1936. A Springhead side was admitted to membership of the Ring at the Cecil Sharp House meeting on 13th March 1937. Gardiner came to the Kettering meeting in September 1937 and to the Cecil Sharp House meeting on 12th March 1938, where he is on record as having spoken on the morris in relation to particular occasions of the year. He came to the September 1938 meeting at Stow on the Wold, but did not attend any further Ring meetings before the war.

There was a total of 19 meetings of the Morris Ring between the inaugural meeting in 1934 and the cessation of Ring activities in 1940. Gardiner attended only five.

He played no part in the formation of the Morris Ring and statements about "chief theoretician" and "moving spirit" are entirely unjustified.



# The Ridgewell Files

Date posted	Publication	Issue date	Title of Article	Author	Synopsis
15.ii.02	Daily Express	4.11.02	Is this what our children must call white pride?	Paul Broster	morris included as part of "an English stereotype" & photo
14.iii.02	D. Telegraph: Correspondence	9.ii.02 16.ii.02	Morris majors Morris manifest	Dr I Salisbury Neal Rollason	responses to an earlier letter (2.ii.02)
20.iii.02	Daily Mail Daily Telegraph Times Sun Sun	20.i.02 20.i.02 20.i.02 20.i.02 21.i.02	Sorry Accountant says sorry ... How a new-year reveller ... Sorry ... Ad shame Howard ...	staff reporter S. O'Neill S. de Bruxelles C. Pharo C. Pharo	Records of a New Year celebration in Cardiff that was over-enthusiastic
2.w02	Independent	8.i.02	Morris dancing & violence: the perfect blend	Miles Kington	A single mention in the article provoked this headline
10.iv.02	Lancashire Evening Telegraph	5.iii.02	Bottom line is: We need a seamstress	Vicky Carlin	Wrigley Head Morris of Darwen need new huggers
11.iv.02	Daily Telegraph	13.iii.02	Correspondence: Minority interests, Country pursuits, Countryside alliance, Man's worst friend	S. Palmer (Dorset) B. Street (Bromley) C. Arrow (Derbys) G. Leeson (Bromley)	A series initiated by a suggestion that morris should be banned, in preference to hunting
16.iv.02	Private Eye	8-21.iii.02			THAT spell-checker insert in TMD Vol. 3, No 9
17.iv.02	Times	26.iii.02	Colour Blind	Leader	Pantomime, morris dancing & the Royal Family as national foibles
19.iv.02	Times Magazine	30.iii.02	News of the World	Stephen Burgen	morris & medieval squires & wenches seen as attempted evocation of "long-moribund traditions"
22.iv.02	Bury Times	29.iii.02	Pace-egggers bring the spring sunshine	staff reporter	Account of Bury Pace-Eggers outing
25.iv.02	Lancashire Evening Telegraph	4.iv.02	Morris men are fully 'unformed'	Julian Pilling	Reference to cartoon in edition of 5.iii.02 (see above, 6th entry)
26.w02	Hebden Bridge Times	5.i	Pace Egg is popular Easter treat	Norman Masters	Account of Pace-Egging in Calder Valley by High School students
29.w02	Cotswold Journal	21.ii.02	Tributes to the whistling man	Phil Sunderland	An obituary for the Chipping Campden Fool, Norman Morrey
1.v.02	Rossendale Free Press	5.iv.02	See you all next year	Kerry McQuade	Bacup Consortium's Festival, with the Britannia Coconutters as a centrepiece
3.v.02	Morpeth Herald	11.w.02	Dancing in the streets ... and a celebration of the new-look Carlisle Park	staff reporter	Two pages given to reports of the 35th Northumbrian Gathering, including a performance by Addison Rapper Dancers
7.v.02	Times Weekend	27.iv.02		Lucy Pinney	"No fighting" instruction to unnamed morris side
27.v.02	Times	1.v.02	If it's it's not group this or group that ...	Alan Coren	Supposed "dreadful experience after joining a Wiltshire dancing society".
28.v.02	The Dalesman	2.v.02	Sidelights on Yorkshire Life	Mack	Cartoon re appropriate dress



## The Ridgewell Files (continued)

Date posted	Publication	Issue date	Title of Article	Author	Synopsis
28.v.02	The Dalesman	2.v.02	Sidelights on Yorkshire Life	Mack	Cartoon re appropriate dress
28.v.02	Sun	2.v.02	Chalky has a 45ft willy	staff reptrter	Long Man of Wilmington "improved" by unknown 'vandals'
30.v.02	Western Morning News	2 v 02	Sunshine & crowds for Obby Oss festivity	Paul Berger	May Day in Padstow
5.vi.02	Sun	3.v.02		Dave Gaskill	Morris dancers (& Maypole) as deterrents to Anti-globalisation protests
6.vi.02	Knutsford Guardian	8.v.02	Knutsford's Royal Celebrations	Shelley Smith, Nick Jones & Goeff Statham	Report mentions "many morris troupes": photo of a brace of musicians (melodeon & anglo).
7.vi.02	Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamstead & Tring Herald Express	9.v.02	May's the time for us	staff reporter	Aldbury's May morning outing, together with a print of their homepage
10.vi.02	Biggleswade Chronicle	10.v.02	Festival to brighten day a dreary	staff reporter	Ickwell May Festival, with Bedford, Fine Companions, & Heartsease Sweep & Milkmaids
11.vi.02	Hertfordshire Mercury	10.v.02	May Day call lets the crowds make merry	staff reporter	Standon's May Day, with Standon, Standon Green & the May Queen
12.vi.02	Yorkshire Post	13.v.02	Dancers delight Dales	staff reporter	photos by Jim Moran & text re Richmondshire Ring Meeting
13.vi.02	Hertfordshire Mercury	17.v.02	Correction	anon.	Standon May Day
14.vi.02	West Sussex County Times	17.v.02	Dancing in the street	staff reporter	Horsham's Annual Day of Dance
18.vi.02	Holme Valley Express	17.v.02	Folk flocking in	Karen Grattage	photos by Malcolm Howarth, & text, for Holmfirth's 24th Annual Folk Festival

## Rutland in Water Colour?

The attached picture has been painted by George Large, RI, RBA. He has recently moved to Uppingham & has discovered Morris Dancing through me. He plans to do a series of paintings based on the Rutland Morris in watercolour & oil. His intention is that they will be of our Mummers play, Border (this one) & Cotswold. He is a very eminent modern painter who knew Stanley Spencer, Bernard Leach etc. He is currently Archivist of the Royal Institute of Watercolour

Painters (RI). His paintings sell for thousands in London Galleries. This one is going into an exhibition at the Goldmark Gallery, Uppingham later in the year. It is a huge honour to be immortalised by him in this manner as there are only 50 members of the RI worldwide. They are very fussy about who they let in.

If you want any more blurb I will be happy to oblige.

Regards,

*Marc Oxley,  
Rutland MM.*





# Trevor Stone:

## Gold Badge Citation

It was whilst working in Bradford that he joined, for a short while, Boars Head Morris Men and his folk activities began. 1975 saw him as a member of the Spen Valley Longsword Team, where he became Captain. He was active in the West Yorkshire District of the EFDSS, holding various offices and organising many events of this thriving district, joining the production team for Tykes News in 1976 and contributing to it until he left the area in 1980. All the while he was attending the Whitby Folk Festival and broadening his knowledge and dance experience under the watchful eye of Kathy Mitchell, before becoming one of the organising group for the 1980-2 festivals. In 1977 after one such workshop a dozen or so people met in Ampleforth. *"There was a little informal dancing, a workshop in a lay-by and plenty of socialising"* was how Trevor described it. In 1979 he published the first edition of his booklet *'rattle up, my boys'* in which he acknowledged his debt to Kathy. It was also in September 1979 that he organised the first of what was to become a series of Longsword Weekends. This one was based at Hutton-le-Hole in the heart of Ryedale where eight teams turned up and performed a variety of Sword Dances, had an excellent time and a good reception from the villagers. The Ryedale Folk Museum was presented with a panel of photographs of Longsword and other Folk events which had been sponsored by the West Yorkshire District of the Society. The 2nd edition of *'rattle up, my boys'* appeared in 1980. This was an enlarged and partly re-written publication, but it still contained all the ideas that Trevor had had. By now he was

also teaching longsword at a number of festivals, Sidmouth from 1978, Eastbourne, Whitby and Holmfirth, where he was the event organiser from 1979 - 1980. At these festivals Trevor was able to put over many of his ideas about how the dance should be performed.

Trevor moved to Sale, Cheshire in 1980 to continue his career, joining the British Mail Order Group as the Controller of Publications. He immediately became active in the Manchester District, being a member of the District Committee and the editor of Buzz, the district folk magazine. In 1985 he set up his own very successful company, Direct Mail and Marketing. Organising the two Malton Sword Weekends had proved evermore difficult to do at long range, so he handed over the organisation to Mike Cook, who willingly took on the job and organised the next two, the first in Malton and the second based in Goathland. Trevor was able to attend these and enjoy them, finding time for taking photographs and video of the participating teams and being able to socialise with them — something which he had found difficult when organising the event. He had long contemplated having a magazine devoted solely to the Longsword Dance in its widest sense, to carry on the work begun in his book *'rattle up, my boys'*. The first issue of the new magazine entitled *'Rattle Up, My Boys'* (What else!) appeared in June 1987. It is still going strong. The pages have been filled with articles about longsword from all over the world, with interviews with such legendary figures as Father Damien Webb, of Ampleforth, George Peterson, of Papa Stour and Joe Brown B.E.M and Gold

Badge holder, who taught so many of the Whitby lads to perform the Sleights Sword Dance, with contributions from many of this country's Sword Team members and other contributions from abroad.

He organised the next two Sword Dance Weekends in Malton: each larger than its predecessor. It was at the first of these Malton weekends that he met Lange Wapper for the first time. This proved to be a propitious meeting for both Trevor and the leader of Lange Wapper, Renaat Van Craenenbroeck. It was through Renaat that Trevor became interested in the wider field of sword dance encompassing the whole of Europe. Together they travelled all over the continent, from Spain, through France, Germany, Italy to the Eastern European states particularly to Czechoslovakia where they saw two local sword dances. As well as Europe Trevor travelled, in 1992, to the New York Sword Ale. These visits abroad culminated in the 1st International Sword Spectacular in Scarborough in 1996.

Renaat had been contemplating having an International Sword Event in Antwerp in the early 1990's but had difficulty in raising money to fund the event. It was in 1996 that Trevor took on the responsibility for trying to organise the event in this country. The first venue fell through but Trevor was not daunted. He found another in Scarborough where, for the first time since 1935, there was an international gathering of teams from all over Europe and from the North Americas, with the help of Renaat, who was able, through his European contacts, to get some Continental Sword Teams and a few friends. Trevor organised a truly remarkable event

with teams from Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, France, Spain, Canada and the USA, together with twenty-six teams from this country. There were tours, dance workshops, an academic conference, and still time for informal gatherings scattered at various venues around the town. As I said, a truly remarkable feat.

Trevor had found organising the International Sword Spectacular very difficult since he was still living in Sale and so the 2nd International Sword Spectacular was handed to a small committee and once again Trevor was able to enjoy the sights and sounds of the event. With the Millennium Trevor was once again part of the organising team for the 3rd International Sword Spectacular. This time being the Chairman for the academic conference which took place on the Saturday and Sunday mornings of Spectacular. He was responsible for getting the papers that had been given published and sent out.

### Editor's Note

*For those of you who are not members of the EFDSS, this is an edited extract from the citation delivered by Past Squire Ivor Alsop at the 2001 EFDSS AGM Awards Ceremony. I am indebted to Gordon Ridgewell for ensuring that I received a copy.*

ED



# Reviews

## Grandson of MORRIS ON



Various Artists - Produced by Ashley Hutchings

I would hazard a guess that the Morris community splits into two distinct camps when considering the "Morris On" series. In the 'pro' corner are those who believe it to be the best thing since sliced bread, facing the 'antis' who find any connection between "Morris On", in its various incarnations, & morris somewhat tenuous. I have to confess that I fall into the second category: I found the

original (vinyl) "Morris On" to be self-indulgent & occasionally toe-curlingly pretentious. "Grandson of Morris On", the current offering, is very much a member of the same family. In other words, if you loved its predecessors, this one will be on your 'must have list'. Looking at my notes, I find mentions of "heavy electric bass", "unnecessary drums", "a ponderous performance of Sweet Jenny

Jones". For Glorishears, I have "a bit like The Piano, with string accompaniment".

I have to say that the musicianship on display is obviously talented: Simon Care knows how to play for the morris, & shows it. I would have preferred to hear him play the Badby set without the backing band which provoked my note of "again — intrusive & heavy beat". My difficulty is rooted in my attitude to morris music: I believe that Cotswold morris is best performed to a single musician who can respond to the dynamics of the dance & dancers. Ensembles of musicians tend to respond only to themselves.

Perhaps my reaction was tempered by the fact that Bob Davies gave me a copy of the East Surrey Ring Meeting CD on our journey to the ARM.

This (amateur) production contains 20 tracks recorded during the post-Feast entertainment. Technically, it doesn't compare with GOMO, having been recorded on Ray Fuller's domestic recording equipment. The musicianship on display is more variable, but the outstanding property of all the performers is their total lack of self-consciousness.

So there you are: if you are a devotee of the 'Morris On' series, 'Grandson of Morris On' will have a space reserved for it on your shelves. You will not be disappointed. My personal attitude is perhaps best summed up in my response to 'This is the morris, My Friend' - "oh no it isn't". 'Grandson of Morris On' can be obtained from Talking Elephant of 8 Martin Dene, Bexleyheath DA6 8NA (020 8301 2828, or [talkelephant@aol.com](mailto:talkelephant@aol.com)) for £12.99 + 0.50p p. & p.

The East Surrey CD can be obtained from Ray Fuller (020 8642 6796) for £2.00 + p. & p.

**Eddie Dunmore**



## introduction to the **english mummers' play**

This 122 page book, printed on matte art paper (which makes reading easier), is written by Eddie Cass & Steve Roud & published by the efdss. It is laid out in 5 sections: History, Mummers & Performance, Guide to Performance, Sources, & Texts (with acknowledgements). Sadly, there is no index: although one has to admit that the provision of one would constitute a major task.

I can honestly recommend this book to anyone interested in the plays, whatever their level of knowledge. The first two sections, occupying 44 pages are worth buying on their own. 'Fertility rite' adherents will find little support, but the his-

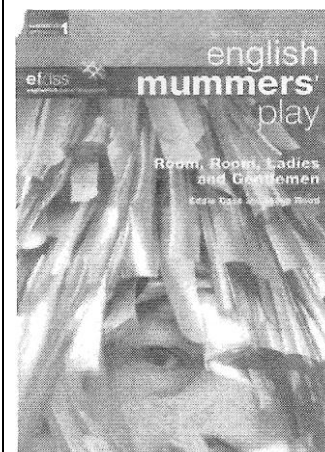
tory & sociology are discussed objectively & dispassionately. Section 3 is aimed particularly at encouraging performances in schools, with suggestions for modification to suit local needs & preferences. 'Casting', though brief, has some informed suggestions, & 'Performance' & 'Props' are replete with sound advice. Section 4, 'Sources of Information' contains a good selection of the relevant organisations, including our own Ron Shuttleworth. The texts in Section 5 start with a Lincolnshire play (from the Opie Collection), continues via Surrey, Yorkshire (twice), County Durham, Lancashire, a Chapbook text, & Cheshire be-

fore concluding with a Robin Hood play from Gloucestershire published by Tiddy. The final text is a Pace-egging song from Lancashire.

There really is a surfeit of high-quality material here, not only for schools looking for something to enliven their Christmas Fairs or whatever, but also for anyone wanting to have a valuable resource to support a general interest in mumming. All I can say is: buy it! The cost, from the Mail Order department at Cecil Sharp House, is £12.95 + £1.50 p. & p. For a further £3.50, purchasers can also acquire 'The English Mumming Play: an introduc-

tory bibliography' (FLS Books).

**Eddie Dunmore**





# Morris Ring Circulars 31-40

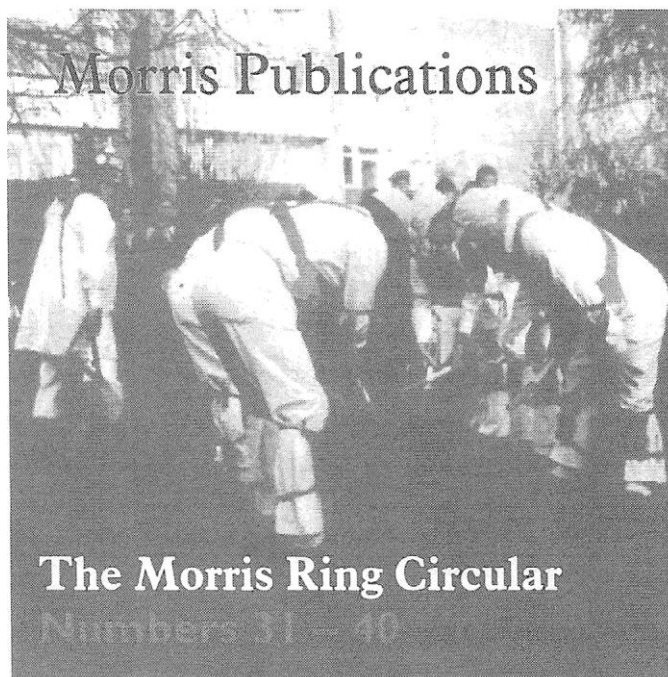
(Spring 1998 — Spring 2002)

**B**y the time this Circular gets to you, its readership, the preceding 10 editions will be available on CD. They have been converted to Adobe Acrobat format (\*.pdf), & will come complete with a dynamically-linked Contents list.

For easier access, a copy of the most recent version of Acrobat Reader will be included on the CD for you to download. The Contents list will allow you to

go direct to the page containing an article by clicking on its reference in the list. For those of you with your own copy of Acrobat (not just the Reader), there will be an index allowing you to locate every instance of your search word or phrase.

Copies of the CD can be obtained from the editorial address for £5.00 + £1.50 p. + p. Please make cheques payable to "Morris Publications".



## Festival News

### The news from Mrs Casey

**F**irst of all, for those of you who may not know, Mrs Casey has moved. They can now be found at the Festival Office, PO box 296, Matlock, Derby. DE4 3XU. Their 'phone numbers are 016 2976 0888 (vox), & 016 2976 0777 (fax).

### Sidmouth

The Sidmouth International Festival will be happening from 2nd — 9th August, with Season tickets held at last year's prices until 31st July. Topping the list of the 'specials' is Rolf Harris & his Band (yes, that Rolf Harris). Also featured is the premiere performance of 'Grandson of Morris On' (reviewed on the facing page), with Ashley Hutchings, Simon Care, Stroud Morris & other performers from the CD. World music features strongly, culminating in 'The Night of the Dragons' as the final show. There will also be a "unique concert" at the BBC Radio 2 Concert Marquee involving Martin Wyndham-Read, the Copper Family & John Kirkpatrick. There is even "An Afternoon without George Kipper".

Morris sides attending include the Britannia Coco-nut Dancers, Hammersmith, Newcastle Kingsmen, Orion Longsword (from Boston, Mass.), Pig Dyke Molly, Three Spires, Windsor Morris (as seen on TV) & Witchmen. Morris Sunday will include the 'traditional' procession from the Arena to the sea front for massed dancing on the Esplanade at lunchtime. The Box Office can be phoned at 016 2976 0123, or e-mailed at [info@sidmouthfestival.com](mailto:info@sidmouthfestival.com).

### Towersey

**F**rom its origin in 1965 as a one-day fund-raiser, Towersey now offers five days running up to August Bank Holiday. Whole-Festival camping is on offer for £12. In addition to the concert musicians, the Arena will feature the Sheffield City Giants, Lei Aloha from Polynesia, Seven Champions, Black Swan Rapper & Bampton. For information, either use the contact numbers for Mrs Casey or e-mail [frances@mrscasey.co.uk](mailto:frances@mrscasey.co.uk).

### Fowlers Troop & the Deptford Jack in the Green

**T**his unassuming publication, consisting of five pages of text & a plate of the Thankful Sturdee photograph of ca. 1900, has been compiled by Sarah Crofts of Greenwich University (& Dacre Morris). I would guess that its primary purpose is as a fund-raiser when

the current Fowlers Troop are out & about.

For a total cost of £2.00 (inclusive of p. & p.), you can own a personal copy of an illumination of a bit of local history. If you would like to acquire a copy, contact Sarah at [S.J.Crofts@gre.ac.uk](mailto:S.J.Crofts@gre.ac.uk)

Eddie Dunmore



A selection of Past Squires on display at the A.R.M.





*Standon dancing Wheatley "Rigs of Marlow" at Stebbing*



*Chipping Campden's "Stick Dance" at Stansted, Dog & Duck*



*"Bonny Green" at Stansted, led by the Management*

# Thaxted



*Ilmington dancing "Maid of the Mill" in the evening show*



*The Management in charge of the Saturday evening show*





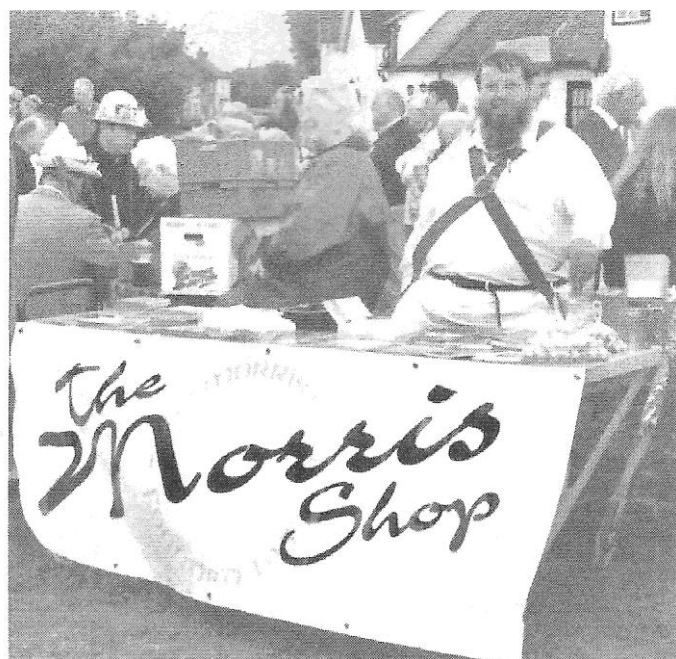
*Trigg dancing "Bodmin Riding" as the Offertory Dance during Sunday morning service*



*Helmond dancing Fieldtown "Balance the Straw"*

# 2002

The original photographs were taken by Bagman of the Ring John Frearson. The details selected for inclusion were chosen by the editor.

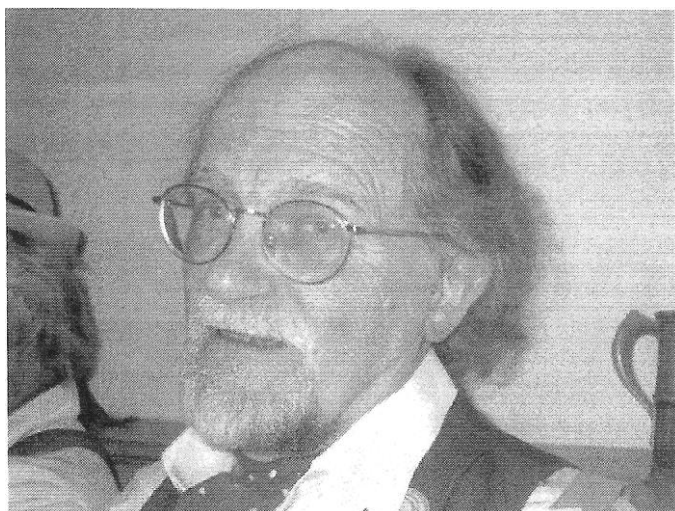


*The Treasurer sets out his stall with a helper*



*The Thaxted "Grandfathers" show how it should be done*





*This photo of your editor was taken by Past Squire Tim Sercombe at the 2002 Annual Representatives Meeting, after the Feast.*

Looking forward to the benchmark of receiving my "Freedom Pass", I was in a contemplative mood for the Annual Representatives' Meeting. Among the points for consideration was that I took over The Morris Dancer after Ewart had completed seven years of editorship: the realisation that 2002 saw the commencement of my eighteenth as editor gave me pause for thought.

I had originally suggested to Margaret that I would probably retire when I achieved pensionable age: it now occurred to me that I should have shared this thought with a wider audience. However, I did agree that I would definitely not serve beyond the completion of my twentieth year in office. When I stood up to deliver my report to the Representatives at the ARM, that is what I said.

In any relay race, the important thing is to be prepared for the baton hand-over, & that is now in hand. I persuaded the Advisory Council that I should acquire an external (scsi) hard disk on which I could store all pc-compatible files so that my successor has easy access to them (that the paper archive is included in the hand-over is a given condition). On that hard disk, I am in the process on converting all my Ventura files into Adobe Acrobat files, so that the next editor can access them (Ventura is still supported by Corel, but no new version has

been released this past five years).

From the outset, I kept as much preparation as possible "in-house", in the interests of minimising costs to the subscription-payers. This has occasionally resulted in infelicities, because of the impossibility of one pair of eyes picking up all the literals, but it has given some of my readership an enjoyable pastime. Being responsible for every aspect up to camera-ready copy has meant that there is only one location of responsibility — me.

Any volunteer for the post will need to be aware that the current publishing schedule does impose a demanding timetable which has to be fitted around everyday domestic imperatives. I was fortunate in that I was offered, & accepted, early retirement very shortly after I had taken on responsibility for the Circular; in the absence of that, it might be more practicable to envisage a publications team taking over, so that individual responsibilities are less demanding. I would suggest that any interested party should get in touch with me, in the first instance, for an exploratory chat. Sooner rather than later would be good, & before the end of next year anyway, as I would envisage an orderly transfer of responsibility via a period of working in tandem.

I wonder why Julian considers a Massachusetts District Attor-

# Editorial

ney to be a simile for disreputable argument (p. 8). The point that I was trying to make is that good history does not depend on a collection of secondary & tertiary sources, or on single recollections. I also attempted, obviously unsuccessfully, to suggest that Gordon's use of "impeccable" should have been "unimpeachable". If Walter thought that I was in any way doubting his version or impugning his credibility as a witness, then I apologise, because that was not my intention. I accept, as I said (MRC 41, p. 17, cols. 3,4) that Georgina's definition is, at the very least, overstated. I would also concede that, if she was aware of the correspondence in ED&S, the con-

trary view should have been acknowledged. However, the rest of Georgina's article needs reading, as does the correspondence in ED&S.

That this edition is a little late is almost inevitable, & it was only finalised this last weekend with the downloading of John Frearson's photos of the 2002 Thaxted Meeting. The next issue (No. 42) will be published in October, so copy for inclusion should reach me by mid-September (please note that I shall be on holiday for the first two weeks of September).

Morris on!

*Eddie Dunmore.*



*This young Adonis was captured in action in 1954, at a time when both he & I were still students. An appropriate caption (with correct identification) that tickles the editorial fancy will receive a bottle of LE XV DU PRESIDENT from the Editorial cellar.*

*Thanks to Sean Goddard for the discovery*