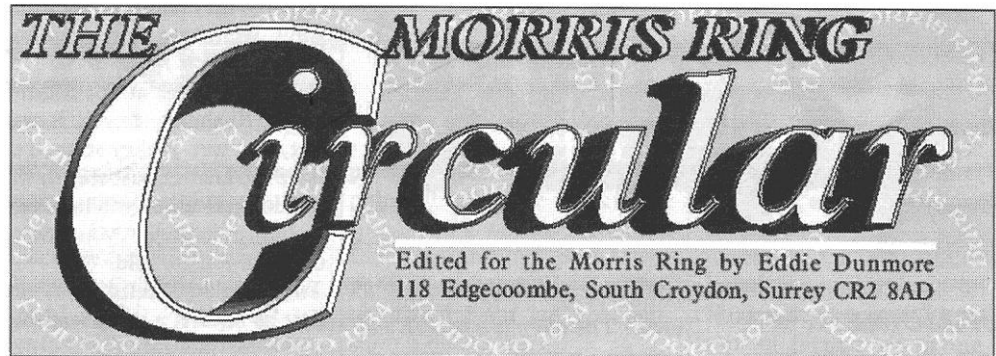


the MORRIS RING
FOUNDED 1934



Number 42



What came next?

The Squire

Gentlemen,

Since writing a few words as Squire elect in the last Circular, I have had a very busy summer. Thaxted Ring Meeting is always enjoyable, meeting old friends, & trying to convince Steve Adamson that the apple he is eating is really a cheeseburger!! I was also invited to the Mayor Making at Abingdon, my first visit, & one that I will always remember..

Silurian Ring Meeting was exciting due to the fact that the chauffeur for the Official Tour of the dancing spots was their very own rally driver. I am told there is some really beautiful

countryside in the Ledbury area!! The town is a superb setting for a meeting & Silurian always have the weekend running smoothly: a good time was had by all.

The following weekend was the Bristol Ring Meeting where I danced in. I must give my thanks here to Gerald, John & Steve for their words of wisdom & encouragement. I would also like to say "Well Done, Gerald" on his term of office, especially for his hard work persuading Associate Sides to become full members. I hope more will follow. One of the highlights of the meeting, for me, was seeing five young lads in Bristol kit dancing



This came next!

ing a jig, they really put on a fine show. Well done lads, well done Bristol Morris Men.

In August I was at the Saddleworth Rushcart, & yes, it was wet, wet, wet. Jockey seemed to have the answer, just stay in the pub longer! When you have two ex squires in the kit, you have to do what you are told.

The Hartley Meeting was my first as Squire, a steep learning curve for me, but the Hartley lads had every thing under control. The Ring Bagman was as organised as ever, & with Mike Chandler looking after the musicians, my job was made easier. The use of vintage buses made the weekend even more enjoyable: "Plenty of room on top!" was the weekend's slogan.

On the Saturday we were all shocked to hear that Roy Taylor of Mayflower had suffered a heart attack after dancing. Sadly Roy passed away a week later; a great loss to Mayflower & to us all.

I was a guest at Winchester's Day of Dance — what a fine city for a walking tour. At the informal feast I managed to thank "Westminster" for a smashing day! After calling "Wantsum" — "Wadard" & "Winchester" — "Westminster", I am not doing any more "W"s. Last weekend I joined the Cotswold Tour, organised by Dave Thompson. Starting at Banbury & finishing at Adderbury, it was a great day out.

Promotion of Music Dance.

What I have noticed, during my journeys during this summer, is that very little information is shared by sides. Especially when it comes to promoting our traditions.

Who is working with or contacting schools or youth organisations? Not just about the dancing, but promoting Mummers Plays? Who is encouraging the playing of our tunes? Do you contact the Open or Federation sides in your area? We can all work together with this; please let your area rep know what you are doing. I can then get some idea of what is or isn't happening. We need to look around & see what can be done: not sit idly by waiting for something to happen.

Instructionals

Do please support the Instructional weekends, especially if you have new dancers. The Jigs weekend is a great way to improve dancing style. You really do learn a great deal.

I do hope that you have a successful practice season, injury free! Next summer we can maintain a high standard, dance honestly, & with pride. My best wishes to you all.

Cliff

All-male Morris none by 2010?

continued from page 3

there must be something to be learnt from line dancing for the benefit of the Morris: it is mixed, it is simple, it is nationally-organised, with meetings all over the place. There are probably other points people closer to line dancing can describe, with enthusiasm; where is that enthusiasm in the Morris? Where are those people?

If the Queen's Jubilee, (a once in a lifetime event for most of us), the Millennium (you remember, that load of New Year fireworks and the damp squibs at Greenwich and in your computer), and the World Cup Football (was it only the quartet

finals?) could not stir up the coals of patriotism to a greater extent than waving a few St George's Crosses, then what hope the Morris in 2010?

John Brightwell.

Squire, Yateley Morris Men
September 02

Editor's Note

My editing has been restricted to excising the numbering, which spread the article over two full pages. I also did some cutting & pasting of John's text to give a more (to me) logical flow. Responses will be featured in Circular 43, for which the copy date is early March 2003

All-male Morris gone by 2010?

Food for thought from Yateley Morris

There are no new adult male members joining the vast majority of clubs; the few newcomers seen are generally circulating members of other sides, moving for business relocation, or just for a change (that must say something!) and occasionally a son of an existing dancer/musician — who usually quits when he is 12 or 13 years old, and Morris is "uncool". The average age of Ring sides is about 50, and there is no new demographic boom to replace those who are now reaching the end of their public-display dancing years. As viewed at ARM and Ring meetings, the Ring comprises an eclectic and eccentric bunch of men, mostly grey-haired, pot-bellied and bearded — great if you like that sort of thing, but it is not mainstream public entertainment. The age of Ring sides is a great barrier to entry for most young men — why would a fit young twenty-something want to give up his football/cricket/tennis/golf/rugby/squash to put in the practice to learn the Morris, with a bunch of men old enough to be his father? Other sports all have the ability to fit in with or around work, and golf & tennis etc are often seen as extensions of work - there are no corporate brownie points in being a Morris man! You may be remembered, but not necessarily for the best reason.

Even if an older, forty-something comes along and expresses an interest, what teaching facilities are there, how is he welcomed, trained, retained?? The fitness of 40+ year olds is suspect, even without beer-bellies, and men no longer caper as well, as high, or in time with music and each other, (sticking in particular), so the standard of performance is falling; the public is not thrilled, excited, amazed by the dancing, no matter how good the music is

(and it generally is), nor how much humour and fun is put in by Fools, Foremen, and Beasts. Most sides are self-financing i.e. the costs of running the club, providing kit, transport to events and to practice, are all (or almost all) paid out of the members' pockets. While that goes for all of the sports above (most of which will be a lot more costly than Morris membership), Morris sets itself out to be an entertainment for the public, and at a professional standard, for which a charge is usually made, or at least the hat is put around for voluntary contributions.

A bare handful of the (many) pubs we visit give anything to the Morris, and with beer at approaching £2.60 a pint, and drink-drive laws being observed, the fun of a night out with the (middle-aged) lads is distinctly failing. The existing Morris men are paying more for fuel, running costs, travel by whatever means to any venue, and are getting less enjoyment, and less appreciation from a diminishing public. Men are out of pocket and feel that the level of public appreciation is too low to reward their winter practice. Morris as street entertainment is being restricted by imposition of Byelaws making drinking (or even carrying a tankard with beer in, from pub to pub) a criminal offence; a part-filled tankard in the car between pubs could be another item leading to Police action.

The number of pubs where any "regulars" exist who might appreciate the Morris is decreasing - witness the rise of the restaurant chain pub, where the members of the public are rooted to their seats and will not form any participating part of an audience. The progress of commercialisation of the "local" pub is instrumental in the shift away from live entertainment; the juke box may have become in fact rather less common, but the omnipresent TV is even more of an attention killer, and Morris cannot com-

pete with it. The number of pubs where there is suitable space, and a welcome from the Landlord and any part of the public for a "music session" (after dancing our last spot outside) is on the wane.

Advance local publicity is hard work, or it is ineffective; communities do not gather at their "local" any more, so a couple of posters and programmes there will hit only a couple of dozen punters, a handful of whom may watch (if there's nothing on TV). Men are noticing that the only audiences are often those generated by members themselves — family and work friends, and a very few dedicated "camp followers" or Regulars, who are perhaps entranced by the "whole Morris Thing", and too old or unfit to dance, but just can't get enough of the spectacle.

The failure or breakdown of community identity as a whole perhaps predicts failure of local Morris sides; no-one cares, except perhaps a few on the Town-twinning committee, who will have difficulty pairing a Hungarian/German/French folk dance troupe with an English one.... the Caledonian or Irish or West Indian communities can probably meet the call. The Music licence laws are going the same way, and we all risk punishment, or the Landlord risks a fine, if we perform in a pub without a licence for music - and the copyright / Performing Rights issues are another nightmare waiting to stop us singing or playing anything which may be "protected".

Technology is a double-edged sword, and while we may benefit from email circulars from the Ring, and within clubs, exhorting men to turn out to make a good show at this, and the next week's venues, the silver surfer, (50+) spends significant hours per week at the silver screen, and will neither be drawn out to the pub (as audience) or encouraged to learn the dance.

Street collections (ostensibly for charity) are tolerated outside

pubs, but for bigger events (Day of Dance, etc) licences, local authority and Police approvals are necessary in many towns - legislation is bearing down on the Morris, and we ignore it only at risk of further alienating the law-abiding public.

Litigious public are at risk from flying Beasts, broken sticks, over-exuberant (and out of control) Morris men (this sounds like fun, but it isn't), and it is only a matter of time before the Ring's insurance is tested and found wanting.

The less the Morris is performed in public the less willing will the public be to accept it as part of the English tradition. The public perception of Morris is at or close to an all-time low, as portrayed by the numerous (sometimes quite witty) "digs" by the likes of Rowan Atkinson (as Blackadder). When did you last see or hear a genuinely (and not tongue in cheek) positive media appreciation of the Morris?

As the number of good, reliable, professional Morris sides diminishes, so the demand (from school and village fete organisers, WI, Town's Women's Guilds and the like) increases for those few sides in a locality. They are then over-taxed, and injuries become an issue, the absence of a proper "close season" tells, and membership/enjoyment levels decline — a vicious circle (or Rounds?).

There are almost certainly more people line-dancing (male and female) than involved in Morris today, from a standing start only a few years ago; it seems it was easy to learn, good exercise (you can do it even if significantly overweight), you can wear fancy costumes, and perform in public...mostly indoors, out of our nasty English summer. You could take it up with your wife or girlfriend (and Sid and Jolene on the Archers probably had a shot at it too?). While not advocating dumbing down to an American lowest common denominator,

continued on page 2

Grandson of Morris On, Sidmouth, 2002

from Paul Montague, Yateley
Morris

Like so many purists in folk land morris circles, our Editor, Eddie Dunmore, seems to have lost the plot when reviewing GOMO in the Morris Ring Circular No 41. Both are living traditions and, as such, are liable to change, so when the doyen of the folk rock movement, Ashley Hutchings, embraced English morris tunes there were bound to be 'heavy electric bass' and drums. Morris On was at the vanguard of the folk rock movement; it was not morris music for dancing but morris music for the masses and as a best selling album was successful in bringing traditional English morris tunes to a far wider audience than ever before.

Having established my credentials in the 'pro' corner, let me review the concert 'Grandson of Morris On' at Sidmouth this year where a substantive audience of like-minded souls gathered in the Main Arena on the Monday evening. We were not to be disappointed, although when Ashley appeared all in white to MC the evening, I began to wonder if it was going to be as self-adulatory as I find so much of his work to be. It certainly was not and he did a splendid job in blending the music of the album with five live morris acts.

The tone of the evening was set wonderfully by the overture from Mat Green and Andy Turner who delightfully adapted from leading an earlier session in the Arena Bar to presenting on stage their 30 minute medley of tunes for concertina and fiddle.

First up, after the introductory Blue Eyed Stranger and Curly Headed Ploughboy from the

band with vocals from Judy Dunlop and an excellent guitar riff by Roger Colbert, were the Britannia Coconut Dancers of Bacup. The Nutters were impeccable within the constraints of the stage performing one of their garland dances as well as their Nut dance and in so doing bemused many in the audience who hadn't been to their 'Meet the team' session the previous day.

But by far the loudest applause of the evening was reserved for the 'set' by family Care. Not Barry, on this occasion, who was merely an onlooker (albeit a proud one!) and chauffeur for the day, but Simon, a co-instigator of GOMO, who delighted us with his melodeon playing with a medley of morris tunes

Eddie would have been delighted that it was a solo performance), before playing Princess Royal for his sons, Robert and Andrew, aged 11 & 9 years respectively, who danced the Bampton jig with vigour and panache in their Moulton kit. It brought the house down!

It seemed fitting that Simon should be have been honoured in this way as on the album, as well as on the stage that night, he kept the morris element firmly to the forefront with, not only his with his firsthand insight and undoubted knowledge, but also his accomplished musicianship. In his Albion Band days the final engineered product never really allowed his playing or instrument to flourish but in GOMO this is definitely not the case and his melodeon is the lead instrument in so many of the tunes.

The first half of the evening was brought to a close by John 'Legs' Kirkpatrick and Martin 'It'll be in tune' Carthy playing separately and then in tandem.

Later we were treated to further delights of the border team 'Witchmen' and their 10 piece band, rapper from the Newcastle Kingsmen as well as cotswold from the Stroud Morris Dancers. All the teams displayed their dances extremely well. Another highlight was the duo of girls, Tracy Seelig and Sue Graham, from the Outside Capering Crew, winners of the double jig competition this year who rounded off the dancing for the evening with another virtuoso and veritably vertical rendition of their jig, Old Molly Oxford. Further fine solo musicianship was performed on the keyboard by John Shepherd with his Bumpus o'Stretton and Glorishers, but as Eddie says in his review of the album, the Guv'nor can always be relied upon to assemble a great line-up of top musicians.

The concert was greatly appreciated by the audience that night who were witness to a truly spectacular event. As Ashley Hutchings acknowledged the last 30 years have seen an increasing role of the female gender in the morris move-

ment. The show reflected this and was enhanced by it. On this evidence, roll on GGOMO, I say!

Monty

Editor's Note

If I can quote Barry Norman, "all honest criticism is legitimate". I find Monty's suggestion that I have "lost the plot" a trifle insulting, & overly partisan. The fact that I don't have the same enthusiasm for a production that he obviously likes enormously does not constitute a personal criticism of him.

I personally find amplified rhythm sections unattractive for two reasons, one physical, the other aesthetic. Damaged hearing, the result of 17 years in noisy industrial environments, means that sound envelopes with sharp leading edges (a property, particularly, of percussion instruments) is physically painful. For my aesthetic critique, I would refer him, & all of you, to the third paragraph of my Review (page 12, Circular 41)



The Leaders of the Procession: Bristol, 28.vii.2002

Another Viewpoint on Grandson of Morris On

From: "Simon Care"
melodeonplayer@
hotmail.com

To: editor@themorris-
dancer.org.uk

Sent: Wednesday, July 31, 2002
 8:04 AM

Subject: Grandson Of
Morris on (for Publica-
tion)

Hi Eddie

Hope I'm not speaking out of line here, but have to comment on your recent review of said album.

I am in total agreement about your comments regarding solo musicians playing for the Morris, however I feel you have missed the point. Morris On and the subsequent albums were recorded to reflect the fun and enjoyment associated with the Morris. It was at no point ever intended to be a "Letchworth Tape"!

The use of Morris music as a form of entertainment has always been important to me, especially the pub sessions after Morris events. Morris On helped to push on "The Revival" in the seventies, and as such, is now celebrating how the Morris has moved on since. The Third Generation of those Revival sides are now dancing the Morris, and I personally feel that The Morris Ring has not quite kept abreast of the times. Unfortunately, your comments only helped to reinforce those views.

Cheers

Simon Care

From: "Eddie Dun-
more"

eddietor@lineone.net

To: "Simon Care"
melodeonplayer@
hotmail.com

Subject: Re: Grandson
Of Morris on

Date: 31 July 2002 20:33

Greetings, Simon, & thank you for the thoughts. It will be published, without editing, in MRC No 42 (due to be mailed out Oct/Nov this year). Given your inheritance, I find it quite surprising that you should refer (as so many critics do) to "the Ring" as if it were some sort of monolithic organisation. If you study the Ring's Constitution, you'll find that it is best described as a confederation (pace the origins of the American Civil War). As I remember, the only condition that is imposed is that "the Morris Ring is an Association of men's clubs".

By all means take issue with me if you have differences with my opinion, but don't assume that it represents anything more than my own personal viewpoint. My musical tastes are very much for Early & Baroque music, & I find the large orchestras of the Classical & Romantic eras somewhat overpowering. I enjoy world music, particularly South African township jazz: Margaret & I were early followers of Ladysmith Black

Mambazo, at least contemporaneously with Paul Simon. Another favourite was Mahlatini (with the Mahotella Queens), who now, sadly, is no longer with us.

My dislikes include music that owes more to the sound stage than it does to the musician(s), & anything that relies on a heavy thumping beat to beat its audience into submission. As I suggested in my review, GOMO will appeal to those who welcomed its previous incarnations: I still find it pretentious. This doesn't mean I'm writing you off as a musician, it means that my preference is to listen to your music in the context of you as an informed musician playing for & with a responsive morris side. I guess I am out of date in some respects, but then, as an accredited holder of a Freedom Pass, I could be held to be entitled.

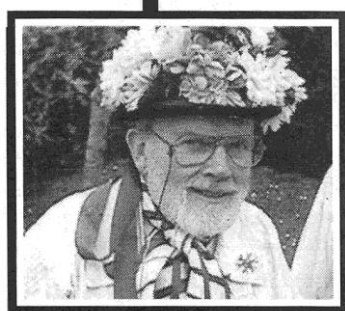
Best wishes (give my regards to Barry & Mollie),

Eddie.

Moose Cope of Jockey Morris

Ray 'Moose' Cope of Jockey Morris died on the night of Saturday 28th September 2002. He had been suffering with non-Hodgkins lymphoma for some months. He first contracted it some 7 years ago & was treated successfully, but at Easter it returned & was already in an advanced stage when it was detected. He had been on borrowed time ever since. In the end, his heart gave way, which was a blessing for him but a shock for his family & all his friends.

He will be very much missed as a dancer, musician, fool & a great friend, by the many people in the morris & folk worlds who



had come to know him over the years. By the time you read this, his funeral will have taken place at Worcester Crematorium (11th October).

Steve Holder of Jockey recalls, "Moose was a founder member of Jockey, & was still very active in the club, more than 50 years on. His

enthusiasm, influence & knowledge will be greatly missed".

His daughter, Judith, writes, "He was the best teacher of dancing ever. He just had such a good way to put things across to anyone. As a caller, he was loved by the experts & complete beginners. He has run dances for disabled people & learnt instructions in foreign languages, as the occasion demanded. He knew over 300 songs. He ran the Hobbyhorse club in Birmingham for many years. He was a man to whom the past was very important but, as evidenced by his participation on the Net, he always kept up with technology. He even invented the skateboard, he just didn't bother patenting it! He played Father

Christmas every year & the children always thought he must be the genuine article as he had his own snow white beard. He played Beelzebub every year in the Boxing Day Mummers Play. He danced, as you know, with Jockey, but he had also taught & danced with Southport Sword."

Moose also helped to establish Birmingham Traditional Music Club and, in recent years, ran longsword & rapper workshops for Worcestershire Folk &, edited their programme of events. Anyone wanting to pay their personal tribute to Moose may do so via Jockey's web page at <http://freespace.virgin.neesteve.holderlindex.htm>

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SEPTEMBER 2002

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F) 19th Cent Musicians Nol: James Longshaw

G) 19th Cent Musicians No2 & 3: Eddie & Richard Butler

H) 19th Cent Musicians No4: John Potter.

I) William 'Old Mettle' Castle.

J) Eight shorter articles.

K) About the Author

ALL PRICES PLUS PACKAGE & POSTAGE

Three Saddleworth men have opened a micro brewery! They are **Pete Percival** (formerly of Saddleworth Brewery until he was made redundant in July), **Mark Atherton** (the newest Saddleworth man), and **Richard Hankinson**. Trading under the name of **Greenfield Real Ale Brewery** (Tel: 014 5787 9789), the new 5-barrel plant (200 gallons) will be in production by the end of October.

The beers will all be named after places of local interest and the first one will probably be "**Bill's O'Jack's**" at 4%. Bill's O' Jack's was the nickname for the Moorcock Inn at Bin Green, Greenfield where, in 1832, there was a double murder which remains unsolved. The grave containing the murder victims may still be seen in Saddleworth Churchyard. So, for any feast or ale over the winter period, they will be only too pleased to supply the beverage. Preferential rates will be given to Ring member clubs!

Now we can organise a p*** up in a brewery!

Cheers, Richard



Cane Royal dancing at the 2002 Abingdon Mayor Making

The 291st Meeting of the Morris Ring

Host Side: Silurian Border Morris

19th - 21st July 2002, at John Masefield School, Ledbury

Sides present were: Bedford; Boar's Head; Castleford Longsword; Dartington; East Surrey; Foresters; Harthill; Letchworth; Long Man; Moulton; Offley; St. Albans; Stafford, with representatives from Thaxted; as well as the hosts. There were four tours on the Saturday and a "Squire's Tour" visited all of these. There was an informal Mass Show on Saturday evening after the Feast and the main Mass Show on Sunday morning after church. On arrival, Men were issued with various documentation, including a guide to the town pubs and to the beers likely to be available. Sleeping quarters were allocated and details of the Tours given out. Men then unloaded, and depending on the time, walked into town for a drink or had supper.



East Surrey dancing White Ladies Aston at the Red Lion, WinlodeS

Friday 19th July 2002

An excellent supper was provided from 7.00pm until late and was a suitable foundation for the more liquid proceedings that followed. A Beer Token could be exchanged for a pint of the Wye Valley Brewery's Bitter [labelled "Bright Morris Men"]

which caused some incredulity!!]

Men then dispersed to the town pubs. The Horseshoes [also hosting the All-Tech Balloon team [G-BXSX] from the Balloon Festival in near by Eastnor Park!!], the Talbot, and the Prince of Wales proved popular

— as did the Royal Oak. Indeed, the Oak seemed to outstay most - and was conveniently on the way back to the school and bed. Singing continued there until about midnight. For some of those returning to the School for the night, there was a whiskey tasting, organised by East

Surrey, and involving some of Bedford. The Ring Bagman's contribution of a half bottle of Southern Comfort from the local off-licence was felt to lack class, but it disappeared never the less!!

Saturday 20th July 2002

Saturday dawned fine and after a substantial breakfast, the Sides embussed. The weather for the Saturday tours [and indeed for the whole weekend] was generally fair, with sunny spells [and only occasional showers - when Bedford danced!!]

Two alternative programme hand-outs "Something for the Weekend" and the more sober "291st Meeting of the Morris Ring" both included fine graphics and outlined the tours. A blown up version of the Programme and the Ring display boards were on display in a window of the Tourist Office in the town centre. Further marketing of the event had included a colour [but mainly Black and

White!!] photograph of Silurian and an article in the Malvern Gazette & Ledbury Reporter. The four tours - named the "Ross Roam", the "Marcie Debauch", the "Hereford Hop" and the "Severn Sortie" - visited the main towns and a range of villages in the area. The Squire's Tour, driven "briskly" [and occasionally in the wrong direction!] by a Scottish member of the host Side, visited each of the tours.

Notable dances observed during the day included: Long Man with their Wilmington tradition; Castleford Sword performing various figures from Escrick; and East Surrey a gentle "White Ladies Aston" with long sticks. Bedford performed



Moulton dancing Banbury Bill at the Greyhound, Eldersfield

their North-West dances at one quiet location ["we need the practice"], and it rained on them in true North-West style!!!. The tours returned at about 5.00pm to allow time for the Men to ready themselves for the Feast at 7.00pm.

The beer had been decanted into generously sized containers, decorated with a selection of posed Black and White photographs of the Host Side, and captions such as "Alcohol Free drinkers — please use Diesel [sic] Pump" and "Sandwich Bar White Bread Only".

The menu was Yorkshire Pudding with Vegetable Soup; Roast Pork and Seasonal Vegetables. The stuffing finally appeared after Bedford became frustrated by its aroma from the ovens, and tipped off the caterers as to its presence!! This was

followed by Apple Pie and Custard, Cheese and Biscuits and Coffee.

The Speeches and Toasts followed: The Squire, Gerald Willey, proposed the Loyal Toast. The Squire Elect, Cliff Marchant, proposed The Immortal Memory. The Squire of Silurian, Keith Francis, who it transpired was also the Deputy Mayor of Ledbury, as well as being a Past Bagman, proposed the health of the Guests. He felt that Silurian must be gluttons for punishment, to hold another Ring Meeting only three years after the previous one in 1999. However, it was an ego trip, he wanted a Meeting whilst he was still Squire!! He thanked his Bagman, Roger Page, who had made it all work. He was pleased that Bedford and East Surrey had returned for a second [and



Dartington dancing on Dymock Green (close to the Beaufort Arms)



Castleford dancing Escrick on Sunday



Bedford dancing Colne on Sunday (but who was driving the camera?)

third] Meeting respectively, that was a good sign. Boar's Head and Stafford [and Bedford] had been at Silurian's first Ring Meeting in 1980. He recognised that Silurian may not always "flavour of the month" and recalled the instance when they almost caused an international incident by nearly drowning the Ilmington horse in Denmark. He then asked Silurian to drink the health of the guests.

Lionel Harper of Dartington made the Reply and the Toast to the Host Side. He had first met Silurian at the Ludlow Ring Meeting, when David Welti danced out and Ivor Alsop danced in; Barry Care had been Treasurer and Mike Garland the Bagman. They had collected their staff, and whilst out with Silurian, lost their own musician!! On that occasion a certain Dave Jones talked of an old musician at Much Wenlock — and thus Silurian in its Border mode, as it is now known, was on its way to being formed. He asked the guests to drink to the Host Side, Silurian.

As time was moving on, there was time for only two songs before the entourage dispersed into Ledbury for evening Show: Long Man sang "South Australia" and East Surrey provided "Rochester".

The evening show was fairly informal and took place under the Market House. The show was not formally recorded, but items recalled:

Letchworth's Hieroglyphics [named thus because it is danced to a tune called "Rossetta"] in the Headington style. St Albans's Mrs. Casey, in the Ascot style [with a noteworthy "into line" figure] and East Surrey's Lichfield style "Jenny Lind". Boar's Head danced rapper and then a four-man dance to the tune of the carol, "In the bleak midwinter". Bedford danced "Jockey to the Fair" as a set dance in the Ducklington style. The show finished at about 10.30pm and the Men then dispersed to the pubs to make music and sing or whatever, until fairly late hours. There was a continuing programme of dancing in the main street until gone 11.00pm. featuring Long Man

and Letchworth. They were joined for one dance by the Ring Bagman, who was thus delayed on his way to the Oak, which again proved to be the stayer, remaining open until about Midnight

Sunday 21st July 2002

After another generous breakfast, the Men formed up for a procession to the Parish Church of St. Michael and All Angels, for the Morning Eucharist Service. The Men processed in through the West Door. During the processional hymn, the Squires presented their staffs at the altar. They then took up seats in the Lay Stalls.

The Past Bagman, Squire of Silurian and Deputy Mayor, Keith Francis and The Squire of the Morris Ring, Gerald Willey, read lessons. The Sermon by The Revd. Howard Nichols was excellent and included thoughts on why "Pagan" Morris was most suitable in Church. [A copy of the text of his Sermon is available from the Bagman]. The Offertory Dance was presented by Silurian, who performed a selection of their Border dances. The Offertory Hymn, "I danced in the Morning" followed, accompanied by the Morris Band.

After the Service, the Men reassembled for a procession into the town. Most danced the Winster Processional from the church and down the High



Boar's Head dancing Shepherds' Hey (a slimline Treasurer providing the music), on Sunday

Street. They were followed by Bedford dancing a North-West Ashton Processional and then by Silurian processing in their own Border style, using the Much Wenlock dance.

The Men assembled outside the Market House for the Mass Show. As the Police had failed to cordon the area, and as cars were still parked, the show spread

over the adjacent road. The Ledbury Town Crier, William Turberfield, rang his bell and made appropriate introductions before the Squire took over to MC the show. The time available allowed all the Sides to provide a show dance as well as taking part in some massed dances.

As usual there were a number of Morris persons in mufti, watching the show. Mary Evans [now Whitehouse] was musician for Green Man from 1955 to 1967. The Bagman was able to re-introduce Janet Whittlestone [Bedford's Founder's, Tommy Northern, daughter] to a former Bedford Squire, Alan Adamson [visiting his daughter in the town]. They had last met at Past Squire's, David Welti, folk dance group in Biddenham, Bedford in the early 1950s!! Pru Boswell [now Harper] was able to compliment Bedford on their North-West Morris "the only proper Morris" !!

After the show, Men made their way back to the School Hall for lunch. For those who had not yet purchased them, there was the opportunity to obtain a

"rag" or "tatter" inscribed "Si-LuRiaN RiNG meetiNG LedBURy juLy 02 - 1969 - 2002" for attaching [by the small brass safety pin provided] to their rag coat or other kit. The entire weekend ran smoothly. A pat on the back for each and every member of Silurian, but particularly for The Meeting Bagman, Roger Page, whose attention to detail again ensured that all the arrangements under their control, went without a hitch. Also notable were the efforts of their Squire [the ex Ring Bagman— and Deputy Mayor!!] Keith Francis, who was everywhere keeping an avuncular eye. We thank them all for providing a splendid weekend — and how did they manage the fine weather when it mattered !!!

In the Report of the 1999 Ledbury Meeting it was asked "Can we look forward to a repeat of this event for Silurian's 35th or 40th Anniversary? Why waste all that planning." — In the event Silurian repeated it ahead of those Anniversaries, and the question can be asked again!!!

John Frearson



Stafford dancing rapper on Sunday

292nd Meeting of the Morris Ring

Host Side: Bristol Morris Men

26th - 28th July 2002, at Ashton Gate School

The Sides present were: Chalice; Chanctonbury Ring [feast and Sunday]; Dolphin; Faithful City; Green Man; Jockey; Mersey; North Wood; Ripley; Rutland; Shake

spere; Standon; Thelwell; Uttoxeter; Wadard; West Somerset and Wyvern Jubilee, in addition to the hosts Bristol. There were also representatives from Thaxted; and Past Squires

Tim Sercombe [Dartington]; Mike Chandler [Thaxted]; Geoff Jerram [Winchester] and Roy Yarnell [with Jockey], and Past Bagman, Tony Parsons [with Shakespeare].

There were six tours and a "Squire's Tour" on the Saturday, and a Mass Show, after a service at the Cathedral, on Sunday morning.

Friday 26th July 2002

The Reception and bar opened at 7.00pm, and food was available until fairly late.

Most spent the Friday evening at the school, as the hosts had provided a selection of excellent

ales. Two of the beers were local, but were supplemented by two barrels from the Maldon Brewery in Essex, "Dark Horse Stout" [4.0%] and "Old Butt Ale" [3.8%] and had been brewed specially for the Meeting. The beers were named respectively for the Bristol animal, and the Side's propensity to bare seasonally, a certain part of their anatomy. The brewer, Nigel Farmer, is a country member of Bristol, and the proprietor of the brewery, which is currently his garage!

The buffet supper comprised curry or a vegetarian alternative, with ample supplies of salads. After supper, informal dancing took place in the hall. Bristol [in kit] danced during any lull in the general activity. Some Sides provided an impromptu show dance, among the general massed dancing. Rutland "showed" most, stripping to shorts or slacks to dance one number. Cribbage and carousing in the hall carried on until a late hour.



The Host Side starts the public display, Saturday a.m.

Saturday 27th July 2002

The weather on the Saturday was very warm, although there was some minor drizzle first thing. After a substantial breakfast, the six Tours embussed and set off into Bristol or to the wilds of Somerset. The Squire's tour visited three Tours at the morning and the others during the afternoon. Notable dances seen during the day: too many to mention but included: Thelwell's Jubilee Hill in the Moulton tradition and Bristol's "Pig in the Midden", with the No. 4 in the centre of the set, sticking with each man in turn. Their alter egos, Bristol Sword, danced

Newbiggin. The Tours all returned to the school at about 5.00pm to allow time for a rest before the Feast.

The top table included: - The Squire, Gerald Willey; the Bagman, John Frearson; the Treasurer, Steve Adamson; the Squire Elect, Cliff Marchant; the Squire of Bristol, Mike Whitehead; the Meeting Squire, Nigel Cooke; the Bristol Bagman, Paul Woods; and Past Squires, Geoff Jerram, Tim Sercombe and Mike Chandler. The Guest was Chris Harris, well known for his performances of his play, "Kemp's Jig."



Ripley dance Laudnum Bunches at the Broadwood Shopping Centre



Rutland dancing for the coach & a LandRover at Nailsea

The menu was Tomato and Red Pepper Soup, with Italian Bread; Beef Borguignon, with New Potatoes, Broccoli Florrets and Baton Carrots [there was a Mushroom Stroganoff alternative]; Italian Chocolate Roulade; Cheese and Biscuits; and Coffee and Mints.

The Speeches and Toasts followed: The Squire asked Past Squire, Mike Chandler to propose the Loyal Toast. The Bagman, John Frearson, then proposed The Immortal Memory. He recalled the discovery of Sharp by the Headington Men in 1899, and was pleased that Headington were represented [by their Bagman, Will Partridge, who having been in Chalice kit all day, now appeared in the Bristol kit of the mid 1970s]. He noted the connection of the area with Sharp, and suggested Men should also remember individuals of im-

portance to their own Sides. Bristol would remember Erik Ilott, the last Bristol Shantyman who left to Bristol [and to Earlsdon, who had danced at his son's wedding] a sum of money for an annual Day of Dancing. He also felt it appropriate at this time of changeover, to remember Past Squires who all gave so much to the Ring — and was pleased to see so many present. Their number would be swelled that day by one who had become well known for the idiosyncratic names he bestowed on Sides. Winchester had been likened to Mr Kipling's Tarts - "Exceedingly Good" and Dartington had become his

meeting should have been the year before. They now celebrated their 51st Year. The Men sang Happy Birthday. He thanked particularly, Fred Gilroy-Taylor, the Bagman for the Meeting, and main organiser for the weekend. He then asked Bristol to toast the guests. The Squire then rose to speak and to thank Bristol and praised their "bare essentials" noting that they had a penchant for exposing themselves [particularly on their Christmas greetings cards]. They were also known for their European visiting and were good ambassadors for the Morris. It was he said, time to go. It had been an honour to



Shakespeare dancing Banbury Bill at Portishead Flower Show: Ring Squire Gerald Willey at Number 3

"Devon Dumplings". Anstey had produced a button badge commemorating their title, which would not be repeated!!! The Squire then introduced Chris Harris, the guest Speaker. Since 1976, Chris had been performing a one-man show called "Kemp's Jig", based upon Kemp's exploits when dancing from London to Norwich in 1600. The show had been performed in 57 countries. It was very refreshing to hear someone, who was not a Morris man as such, to speak about Morris Dancing so eloquently and with such enthusiasm.

Nigel Cooke, the Squire for the Meeting, thanked Chris Harris and noted that the 10 yearly

look after the Morris Ring. He had been pleased to have four Traditional Sides become Full Members. He thanked the Officers for their help, and Mike Chandler for assistance musical — and indeed all musicians and the Fools and Animals, who he felt were undervalued.

Having made his valedictory speech, the Incumbent Squire then handed over the Regalia - the Badge, Chain and Tankard - to the Squire Elect.

The incoming Squire, Cliff Marchant was pleased to be able to say thank you on everyone's behalf. He then presented his predecessor with an engraved tankard and his Past-Squire's medal — with its ribbon in



The hooligan element at Portishead: North Wood's Upton-upon-Severn



Wheatley Trunkles by Bristol at Portishead Flower Show

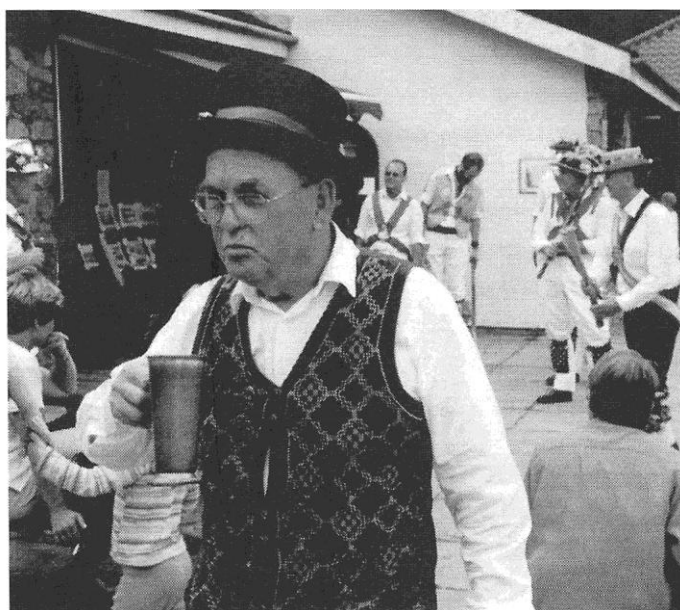
Shakespeare's red, yellow and black. It was a change he said "from Academic to Carsey Mechanic!!" He hoped to be able to promote the music and dance of the country and the Morris, and everyone needed to work together on this.

Meanwhile, Chanctonbury had circulated their Loving Cup, to the confusion of the Top Table, and once the formal speeches were over, the winner of the Dolphin Sweepstake was announced. Bets had been laid on the total time for the formal proceedings and speeches. "50p a shot, winner takes all." Times from 10 minutes 15 seconds to 41 minutes were wagered — the winner is unknown, but the betting sheet was saved for the Archive!!.

The New Squire, as his first duty, introduced the singing. Bob Cross [Chalice] sang "God Speed the Plough". Ripley's Fool, John Butler, led "Glory Alleluia", and for North Wood, Steve Taylor, & Eddie Dunmore, sang "The Cutty Wren"; Chanctonbury had arrived to support their Fool as the new Squire, and sang "Sussex by the Sea", in a version celebrating their Fool's accession!! Shakespeare provided the monologue, "The Battle of Hastings". The final song was from Past Squire, Geoff Jerram, who sang Ralph Vaughn Williams's arrangement of "The Apple Tree".



Chew Valley Lake: Faithful City's Ilmington Jubilee



Dolphin & friends discussing Jenny Lind (Lichfield style)

The formal proceedings finished; there was informal dancing in the hall until midnight.

Sunday 27th July 2002

The weather on Sunday was hot and sunny for the finale of the proceedings of the week end. After breakfast, the Men drove into Bristol and parked at the City of Bristol College. They walked to the Bordeaux Quay and with time to spare, coffee and soft drinks were taken at the Harbour Festival stalls and bar and brief promenades were made. The Procession formed up at about 11.20am and the Men danced up to the Cathedral, for a brief service at 11.30am.

During the service, the Squires Staffs were presented at the altar as customary. The first lesson was read by the retiring Squire of the Ring and the second, by the Squire of Bristol. After the service, Bristol provided three show dances outside for the assembled throng. The first was their Ascot, "Pepper and the Brandy"; then a jig for five "Ilott's Praise" excellently presented by their younger members. This dance was named for the late Erik Ilott, Shantyman



Eynsham March Past, featuring The Bristol Dancing Band & a volunteer: Millennium Square

and their Honorary Member The dance, to the music "I'll go and enlist" was in the Bledington style. They finished with "The Quinton", [in Oddington style to a Bampton "Quaker" tune] a dance named after the pub of that name.

The Men walk down to the nearby Millennium Square which was the setting for the main massed show. Towards the end of the show the formal change over of Squires took

place with each dancing a Jig and also dancing with their own Side. Gerald Willey danced out with "Princess Royal", Longborough. Two sets from his Side, Shakespeare, with their Bidford tradition, danced a "Processional on", and then the retiring Squire joined them in "Old Woman Tossed Up"; they process off, and "took him back to the real world". Chanctonbury Ring then danced "Lollypop Ladies", from their own tradition. They were joined by their Fool, Cliff Marchant who would later be left behind, to dance in as the new Squire of the Ring with "Highland Mary", Oddington, to general acclaim.

The Host Side, Bristol, then completed the show

"March Past" from Eynsham. This was spectacularly danced with two sides of dancers and a dancing side of Musicians, who, as did the dancers, lifted a maiden at the end of the dance. Two "extra" musicians meanwhile carried the tune. A mass Bonny Green Garters followed to conclude the show.

After the show, Men made their way back to the City of Bristol College for a late lunch. An other well run Meeting. Congratulations to each and every member of Bristol, but particularly for The Meeting Bagman, Fred Giltroy-Taylor, whose attention to detail ensured that all the arrangements went without a hitch. We thank them all for providing a splendid weekend.

John Frearson



Upton-upon-Severn by West Somerset ('Bob Cross): Chipping Sodbury and it's Goodbye from him...Gerald dances out with Shakespeare Morris



The 293rd Meeting of the Morris Ring

Host side: Hartley Morris Men

*30th August - 1st September 2002,
at Wrotham School*



BFB finds a special friend to play Ball with!

Friday 30th August 2002

The Meeting was overshadowed by the tragic collapse of Roy Taylor of Mayflower, at the morning spot in Rochester. Sadly he did not recover consciousness. He was later transferred to his home hospital, but was unable to sustain life without the use of the life support system. He passed away peacefully on Wednesday night, 11th September 2002. He was 64, and leaves a wife (Diana) and two sons.

At about 7.00pm, there was a first introduction to the vintage bus fleet operated by Members of the North Kent Vehicle Preservation Group. These were to provide transport over the

weekend. Busses were available to transport the Men into the village of Wrotham, where they could partake at four pubs - although the Rose and Crown appeared to be the centre of gravity. Singing was the main feature, with Hartley and Victory vying for supremacy in an epic of vocal entertainment. Busses returned men to the School from 10.00pm for a light supper, of bread and stews various. This, together with earlier sandwiches, providing a suitable foundation for further liquid proceedings from the Beer Festival in the Courtyard. There was various talk and further song. A number made an

The Member Sides present, besides the hosts, were: Broadwood; Chanctonbury Ring; Colchester; Exeter; Kennet; Martlet; Mayflower; Ravensbourne; Rumford; Victory; Wantsum; Wadard; Associate Members, Woodchurch.. There was a fine representation of Past Officers and others including: Past Squires: Geoff Jerram [Winchester]; Tim Sercombe [Dartington]; Roy Yarnell [Jockey]; Barry Care [Moulton]; Mike Chandler [Whitchurch]; Past Bagman, Keith Francis; The Squire of Thaxted, Paul Reece; and Roger Comley [Fool - Letchworth].

On arrival, Men were issued with various documentation, including a fine booklet outlining the Meeting. Sleeping quarters were allocated and details of the Tours given out. The Men were able to partake of a splendid selection of eight real ales in a veritable Beer Festival set up in the courtyard. Sandwiches were available at a nominal cost, to stave off the pangs of hunger, as supper was to be served much later in the evening.

There were four tours on the Saturday and a "Squire's Tour" which visited all four during the morning, all being transported in vintage buses. There was a Mass Show on Saturday afternoon in Gravesend and less formal shows at Ightham Mote on Sunday morning for non-churchgoers, and, for all, in Wrotham Square outside the church on Sunday morning after the church service.



I'm in charge!



Nutting Girl by Chanctonbury at Luddesdown

earlier departure to bed, whilst hardy souls sang until the [not so] early hours.

Saturday 31st August 2002

Saturday dawned fine and after a substantial breakfast, the Sides embussed on the fleet of vintage coaches. The weather for the Saturday tours [and indeed for the whole weekend] was generally sunny and indeed at times hot.

The four Tours visited the Darenth Valley; the Medway Valley; the Hoo Peninsular and North West Kent respectively. The Ring Officers [together with the Hartley Officers, and various unattached Past Squires] visited them all during the morning. The tours converged on Gravesend at about 3.45pm to allow the Men to form up to process through the town to the Fort Gardens in preparation for the Massed Show. The show finished at about 5.15 pm, and the Men were able to return to the School, or spend a while in the adjacent Crown and Thistle



Sweet Jenny Jones at The Anchor & Hope, Ash: Hartley showing how to do it

pub, which also had a fine selection of real Ales, including a special "Hartley Morris Mild". The final bus left the pub in time to prepare for the Feast,

which was scheduled as 7.00pm for 7.30pm.

On entering the Hall, men found that each place was enriched by a limited edition commemorative bottle of "Hartley Ale". In welcoming the Men, the Squire, Cliff Marchant, noted that the Morris Ring's candlestick that graced the table, was the "Sephton Candlestick" that had been presented by Hartley in memory of Percy Sephton. He felt it appropriate therefore to step down from his normal duty and to invite the Squire of Hartley to light the candles with the candle from the previous Ring meeting at Bristol.

There was one official Guest, Christopher Capon, Chairman of Kent County Council. In addition, the Top Table comprised: - The Squire, Cliff Marchant; the Bagman, John Frearson and the Treasurer, Steve Adamson; the Squire of Hartley, Brian Heathfield; their Bagman, Tony Tomlin, and their Foreman, David Hughesman. Past Squires, Mike Chandler and Tim Sercombe, completed the table.

The menu was Prawn cocktail; Roast Beef, Yorkshire Pudding, Seasonal Vegetables and Gravy, which latter was nearly "passed off" to the Bagman as a jug of "Old Ruby Dark Ale" until he

realised he had been had!!!. Pesto stuffed Mushrooms was the vegetarian option. Summer Fruit Cup and Cheese and Biscuits followed.

During the meal a "slide show", produced on CD by the Hartley Foreman, David Hughesman, was projected on a screen to the rear of the hall; a year by year selection of highlights [and a postscript of embarrassing moments] was shown to the acclamation of all!!! A copy of the CD was presented to the Morris Ring for the photograph Archive.

The Speeches and Toasts followed: The Bagman, John Frearson, proposed the Loyal Toast. The South East Area Representative, Mike Austen [Wantsum], proposed The Immortal Memory. As a foreman, he felt it should be remembered that Sharp did not only collect the dances - that was, of course, important - but he also taught those dances. The Guest, Christopher Capon, then spoke briefly to welcome the visitors to Kent. The Squire of Hartley, Brian Heathfield, proposed and asked Hartley to drink to the health of the guests. Harry Mousdell of Broadwood made the Reply and gave a brief history of the early days of the Hartley Side. He then asked the



These foolish things: "Do I need a urologist for help with my bladder?"

guests to rise and drink to their hosts, Hartley.

Time was moving on, and the Squire called for songs. "Ramskyte" [a Victory four part harmony group] opened the singing; they gave a rendering of "Out of Egypt". Kennet sang "To be a Pharmacist" in the style of Farmers Boy. Broadwood sang "It's England for Me/In England's Pleasant Land". Woodchurch sang of the Sheep Market in Ashford "No room in the pen, it's full of Morris Men!!" Ravensbourne's Squire sang, "Bring us in Good Ale" and Mike Nicholson

bought the proceedings to a close with "When all Men Sing". The standard of the singing was remarkable, and probably one of the best post-Feast session for some time.

There was a choice for the remainder of the evening. Singers [the majority] were bussed to the village and the delights of the Rose and Crown. A smaller group, still keen to dance was bussed to the Plough at Basted to give a late show. Some remained at the school, and enjoyed the free beer from the rapidly decreasing stock!!



A Rose amongst the thorns: Kennet outside the church on Sunday

Sunday 1st September 2002

Breakfast was again taken in generous style. The Men

Hartley, who performed The Banks of the Dee [without bells



The Broadwood Conker Championship dance: Tinsley Ring

were embussed at 10.00am, for a choice of venue. Those not attending church danced at Ightham Mote, a local National Trust property.

The church party was transported to the Parish Church of St. George, in Wrotham, for the 11.30am Morning Service. The Men entered through the West Door, and the Squires processed behind the choir to present their staffs at the altar. They then took up seats at the front of the congregation. During the service, the vicar prayed for the two members of Exeter who had died in the past week, and also for Roy Taylor of Mayflower, who was by then in hospital following his collapse.

The Squire of Hartley, Brian Heathfield and The Squire of the Morris Ring, Cliff Marchant, read lessons. The Offertory Dance was presented by

or hats to emphasise the beauty of the dance]. The Hymn, "The

Lord of the Dance" was accompanied by the Morris Band. After the Service, the Men were able to join the congregation for tea and coffee, and look at the church. There was time to collect a pint from the adjacent pub - or the Rose and Crown. The Morris Shop had been set up in the square by the Treasurer, and did a lively trade.

The Men then assembled outside the church, in Wrotham Square for an informal Mass Show, which started at 12.30pm prompt and was conducted largely by the Bagman. The time allowed all the Sides to provide a show dance as well as taking part in some massed dances. The show finished at about 1.25pm. Thereafter, the Men made their way to the Village Hall for lunch. This comprised a buffet and was

accompanied by what little was left of the beer. After lunch, the men either dispersed direct or were bussed back to the school to collect their cars and depart. The entire weekend went smoothly. A pat on the back for each and every member of Hartley, but particularly for The Meeting Bagman, Terry Heaslip, whose attention to detail ensured that all the arrangements, went without a hitch. His efforts were the more notable as he only took over at the start of the year, the previous appointee having moved on. We thank Hartley for providing a splendid weekend - and how did they manage the fine weather !!! It has been suggested that a further Meeting should be held for Hartley's 60th Anniversary in 2012!

John Frearson



Victory, with a brace of Hartley masochists, show Old Thanger at the Sunday Show

The TRADITIONAL ILMINGTON MORRIS



This is Doris: she was first registered in May 1971

I have been a 'Morris' enthusiast now for more than 30 years... as a dancer and musician with The Traditional Ilmington Morris Men. An interest which has quite naturally turned towards the vehicular one which also has traditional associations with England's fine heritage.

It was some 18 months ago that I had the thought that I would like to be able to travel in pursuit of my Morris Dancing pastime in a Morris vehicle. My son, 13 year old Jonathon, was becoming established as a dancer with the Ilmington men, it was appropriate to become drawn to the Morris Minor. So the search began for a model in good condition for Jon and me to transform into our 'Morris-Morris Chariot'!

We decided that a van would be most suitable, as this would lend itself to being 'sign written' for the purpose. An established Morris Minor enthusiast friend of mine, Dave Woodward (of Ebrington — Westminster MM please note!), was tasked with looking out for any likely examples. This he duly spotted within the pages of the Morris Minor Owners Club magazine, last September. It was to be found to be in good running or-

der and fairly locally owned near Enstone in Oxfordshire. She, or "Doris" as Jon and I now call her (named after my Great Aunt Doris Bennett, of Chipping Campden, who always used to travel around the Cotswolds in her son David's Morris van) had in fact been re-sprayed blue in colour. Just the shade of blue that would match the colours of the Ilmington Morris side, which are blue and yellow-gold. Dave had given his well proven expert

opinion on the state of the vehicle 'as seen' and it was decided almost instantaneously to make an offer to secure the deal.

The van was originally registered in May 1971 and I was to become the 12th owner. Fairly standard throughout with some very professional re-panelling having been carried out, Jon and I set about 'tidying' Doris into a condition that would be presentable for the start of the 2002 dancing season. Whilst the external paintwork had been

done to a high standard the inside was decidedly tatty-looking. The original 'commercial' beige/brown colour was too dark so we stripped out all of the trim — which partially needed replacing —, and had the inside re-sprayed BLMC 'Whitehall-Beige' (which is really a light grey colour).

The load space floor panels had rusted through so I did a temporary repair — pending the availability of new panels later this year. I had obtained a heavy gauge aluminium panel from which I cut two floor panels. These I attached on top of the rusted originals (which were now 'rust arrested' by my treatment) with self-tapping screws. The rusted out holes being sealed around with silicone sealant to form a sandwich when screwing down the 'patch-panels'. Fortunately the load-bearing sections are still reasonably sound, therefore the 'patch-panels' will see me through the next MOT if necessary.

It has been a satisfying exercise to replace some of trims with new as this has smartened up the vehicle considerably whilst retaining the original manufacturers style of parts.



TIMM & Doris at The Red Lion, Ilmington, 3rd June 2002

or a MINOR MORRIS ARTICLE

Mechanically everything is functioning well - except for the brakes. The master cylinder was leaking and in need of replacement. Despite studying my 'Technical Tips' manual (a 2001 Birthday present) this was classed as 'too difficult' a task to cut my teeth on to reintroduce me to DIY car mechanics, so the local garage came to the rescue. However the next part of the refurbishment will be to overhaul the engine and electrics: that will be Jon and me!

The final touch was to have the sign writing done. I considered

Morris clubs artwork with my father back in the 1970's so I had the planned designs set quite firmly in my mind. The results of Pete's endeavours were unbelievably marvellous! as can be seen from the photograph.

So "Doris" is fit to go out! And she did so on St George's day, 23rd April 2002, for the first time. In the fine company of the Adderbury Village Morris Men and the Shakespeare Mummings. Outings will continue according to the Morris dancing programme and of course, Morris Minor events. Work will also continue on fitting the van out



Doris with the Ilmington Hobby Horse (Peter), Paul & Jonathan

having decals made for easy application - this was ruled out adamantly at a family board meeting, as being 'un-traditional' — so I had to find an artist. Another friend of mine, Peter the rider of the Hobby Horse (which incidentally was made in 1899 for the Morris side at the instigation of **Sam Bennett**, a famous Ilmington fiddler) had previously engaged the professional services of a man from Stratford-Upon-Avon. This gentleman (another Pete) had in fact completed the sign writing on the 'Guide Friday' open top double-deckers that many visitors to Stratford will have seen roaming the town. I had been instrumental in designing the

for carrying the various accoutrements needed; namely musical instruments, hobby horse, sticks, broom, collecting box, optic (for Gammel Dansk) etc. Of course the engine will now at first receive a full overhaul in the full "traditional" spirit of the project.

**Paul Bryan
Bagman and Musician, TIMM**

The Traditional Ilmington Morris Men are the last remaining traditional village Morris dancers in the County of Warwickshire. Their historical line reaches back more than 300 years. This year they have been invited to take up full member-



A rear view of Doris (top-shelf material)

ship of the Morris Ring, which they did in June, at the Thaxted meeting. The Ilmington side may be seen in the villages around the North Cotswolds and South Warwickshire on most Wednes-

day evenings during the Summer months-(and in Ilmington village hall September through March) for more details contact the 'Bagman' Tel. 01608 662167.



Doris at The George Inn, Lower Brailes, on Saint Georges Day

The Ridgewell Files

Posted	Publication	Issue Date	Title	Author	Synopsis
25.vi.02	Northampton Chronicle	21.v.02	Morris dancers 'rain' supreme	Tony Hardacre	Moulton May Queen Festival, with photos of the May Cart & Moulton Morris. Guests included <i>"King John's Morris from Saddleworth"</i> !
27.vi.02	The Times	25.v.02	Morris men? Pah...	Heather Nicolson	Preparations for street party: <i>'haughtily dismissive that I'd left it so late...'</i>
4.vii.02	The Independent	27.v.02	Song & dance	Anon	Photo of Kirtlington Lamb Ale Festival: <i>"Keeping a 400-year-old tradition alive..."</i>
26.vii.02	Essex Life	June	Morris men at Thaxted	Gordon Ridgewell	trail for Thaxted 2002: it won the prize for "Letter of the Month"!
29.vii.02	The Times	3.vi.02	Britain prepares for party...	Claire McDonald	The Golden Jubilee, again: Combe Martin, Devon, has morris dancers!
30.vii.02	Cotswold Journal	6.vi.02	Dover returns... Magick night for the games	Anon	Account of the 2002 Dover's Hill Olympics & Scuttlebrook Wake: no mention of morris.
31.vii.02	Saffron Walden Weekly News	13.vi.02	Morris men bring dance...	Anon	Photo-feature on Thaxted 2002: recognisable sides include Plymouth, Stafford, Standon, Thaxted & Trigg
1.viii.02	Abingdon Herald	20.vi.02	'Second mayor' elected	Anon	Account of the 2002 Abingdon Ock Street Mayor Making, with photo of Stuart Jackson being chaired
2.viii.02	St Albans Review	26.vi.02	City marks St Alban's Day	Anon	Celebration that included Wicket Brood morris
8.viii.02	News of the World	30.vi.02	NoW Investigates	Magher Mahmoud/ Amanda Evans	Crack cocaine in Blandford Forum, London, etc., with gratuitous photo of (Adelaide) morris dancers
8.viii.02	Heckmondwike Herald	5.vii.02	Carnival time on our streets...	Anon	Cleckheaton Folk Festival, including Coventry Mummers, Bradshaw Mummers, Ryburn Longsword & Instep
16.viii.02	Scarborough Guardian	12.vii.02	Folk fest brought town to life	Jo Haywood	Cleckheaton again: this time with photo of "hatless & anonymous morris side" (GR)
20.viii.02	The Bucks Herald	17.vii.02	Haddenham	Christina Jeffery	Tour by Haddenham Morris, Haddenham Hoofers, Towersey, Cry Havoc & Rogue Morris
30.viii.02	Malvern Gazette &...	19.vii.02	Ringling reminder...	Carl Stringer	Trail for Silurian Ring Meeting , with colour photo of the usual (blacked-up) suspects

Posted	Publication	Issue Date	Title	Author	Synopsis
3.ix.02	Westmorland Gazette	19.vii.02	Friendly festival...	Anon	Furness Traditional Folklore weekend, with mention of "Morris, swird & clog dancers", & a photo of the Agarmeles morns musician
5.ix.02	Leighton Buzzard Observer	23.vii.02	Village Link: Cheddington	Jose Cockrem	Cheddington Summer Fete, with Aldbury Morris (photo included)
6.ix.02	Malvern Gazette &...	26.vii.02	Letter: "Morris dancing was a real treat"	Helen Welch	Headed by photo of Past Bagman Keith Francis
11.ix.02	Weekend Post (Bristol)	27.vii.02	Festival of dance	Kevin Emery	Trail for harbour festival & Bristol Ring Meeting: photo of Paul Woods from Seven magazine
12.ix.02	Evening Post (S. Glos.)	29.vii.02	Summer's here &...	Anon	Account of visit by sides to Thornbury, Chipping Sodbury, etc. Photo of musician Ken Wilson
13.ix.02	Evening Post (Greater Bristol)	30.vii.02	Scenes from the quay of life	Anon	Account of the harbour festival: photo of Bristol dancing at St Augustine's Parade & account of reporter Olivier Vergnault's steep learning curve
17.ix.02	Western Morning News	5.viii.02	Rolf steals limelight...	Esther Shaw	Sidmouthnia^{City} with photo of Britan, nut Dancers
18.ix.02	Bridlington Free Press	8.viii.02	Sword dancers gather	Anon	Lange Wapper, from Antwerp, join Flamborough Sword at Flamborough: with photos
19.ix.02	Isle of Thanet Gazette	16.viii.02	Fantastic Folk week...	Anon	Photos of two hooden horses, anonymous female side, anonymous male side, mixed band & garland dancers in torchlight procession & Motley dancer



Not The Ridgewell Files

I am indebted to Roger Comley of Letchworth for this illustration. It appeared in the Biggleswade Chronicle of July 26th this year. The plate was part of a series entitled "school scrapbook", probably inspired by friendsreunited.com The academic gentleman on the left of the phalanx of females was z friend of many years, & those of you who are more or less contemporary with me will remember him well. Younger readers should consult their seniors. Another item missed by Gordon was sent to me by Alan Seymour, Leader of Colne Royal (featured elsewhere in this is sue). His discovery came from Scotland on Sunday (31.iii.2002), & carried the

headline "Morris-dancers banished as fun proved a step too far". Apparently Motherwell had not been performing too well in the Scottish football stakes recently. Some Dundee fans dressed themselves as morris dancers in an attempt to bring some light relief to an otherwise dismal season. The authorities, both private security & the boys in blue, threw them out of the ground shortly after kick-off.

I am also indebted to Roy Smith of Leyland for excerpts from the Folk Magazine that he edits, Lancashire Wakes. In addition to information about local sides, there is an article about Old Mettle (a 19th Century character in Adderbury)

Rutland Feast Weekend. 5-6.x.2002



White Oak dancing at the first stop in Stamford, Lincolnshire

Number One Son & I got off the train at Oakham, spot on schedule, at ten past six on the evening of Friday 4th. The Rutland contingent were due to turn up some time after 9 pm to take us to Rutland, so we had plenty of time to get a meal. It never happened, as The Grainstore is next door to the station. The North Wood super-navigator arrived just in time for a drink before the Rutland delegation came to lead us on to Exton. Once there, I booked into The Fox & Hounds, & all of us either carried on, or commenced drinking. At some time after ten (my sense of time was a smidgen hazy by this time), the remainder of North Wood turned up. We were so busy socialising that we all missed the excitement of a punch-up in the pool-room. Because I was booked-in I was in conversation with the management, after everyone else had gone home or to the village hall, when the Rutland Constabulary turned up in force to take statements. Notwithstanding the excitement & alcohol intake, I woke up refreshed at my

normal time of 7 o'clock the following morning. After putting

away an indulgence of a full English breakfast, I went over to the village hall to wake up the rest of North Wood. Once a majority had regained consciousness, I was asked about breakfast in The Fox & Hounds as an alternative to a trip to Melton: I agreed to negotiate on their behalf, in the event, successfully.

By 9.30, other participants were arriving, & North Wood conducted a PR exercise by dancing Banbury Bill for the joint landladies, & ensuring that one of them was hoisted: she was thrilled! Then it was time for the coach to be boarded, & Stamford to be invaded in search of a bag. This was the only 'commercial' pitch of the whole weekend. All the other sites, except one, would be micro-breweries.

The first establishment was The Willughby Arms, Little Bytham (still in Lincs.). Our stay lasted for two hours, during which time a lunch of Chicken Chasseur with fresh vegetables



Rutland Morris dancing at The Blue Cow Inn, South Witham



One of the Breakfast dances: featuring a very new Past Squire

was enjoyed by us all. Sometime after 2 pm, we were at The Blue Cow Inn, South Witham (still over the border), to sample their brew. Then it was time for a return to Oakham, & The Grainstore, before visiting The Noel Arms, Langham. This was the pub without its own brew-

ery, but convenient for a memorial trip to the housing estate on the site of the old Ruddles brewery.

The coach dropped us back in Exton to prepare for the Feast: the consensus was that this was best done in The Fox & Hounds with singing. Eventually I retrieved my bottle of "Le 15 du President" & one of the current chez Dunmore house wine "Puerta del Cadrillo" to ensure that I was adequately provisioned for the Feast (the top table enjoyed "Le 15"). The only formality of the Feast was the Annual "Global Warming Award", after which the dancing continued until late.

After an early breakfast for us Fox & Hounds residents, we joined the others at the Barnsdale Lodge Hotel where the others were enjoying theirs. After a display of dancing to ensure that any still-sleeping residents were awake, we left for the Barnsdale Country Club & its enthusiastic audience. Then it was on to our final pitch of the weekend, The Exeter Arms at Barrowden. The weekend finale

was a "Bonny Green" around Barrowden duckpond, from which some of us absented ourselves, led by Rutland. Then it was time for goodbyes all round, & into the car. Our journey home was uninterrupted until we got to South Norwood just as Selhurst Park was emptying. However, as it was a Wimbledon home match against Ipswich (75

even the weather was good! My own personal thanks are due to Jonathan Unna & Marc Oxley for their response to my queries. I remembered to warn Barry that the CD I will be sending him cannot be played on an audio CD player. I would like to record my appreciation of the efforts of the whole Rutland side in ensuring that the week-



North Wood & Green Oak combine forces at Barnsdale Country Club

home supporters turned up), we weren't unduly inconvenienced.

It was a weekend that measured up to our expectations & more:

end was so thoroughly enjoyable: wonderful!

Eddie Dunmore



A musicianly conference at The Willoughby Arms, Little Bytham



The North Wood Betsy dances her/his first jig: Lumps of Plum Pudding

Editorial

This edition of The Circular, the last of 2002, contains some controversial discussion points. The Page 3(!) prediction of the demise of exclusively male morris sides within the next 10 or so years should fuel argument & debate that can be disseminated via this publication. My review of The Grandson of Morris On has occasioned two communications from an alternative viewpoint: what is your opinion? The typesetting of Number 42 chimed with the Rutland Feast Weekend: hence my decision to delay its despatch to my printer so that an illustrated report could be included. The Rutland weekend has always been a pleasant experience, with the minor exception of the first time I attended & slept on a camp-bed in the foyer of the village hall. My sleep was regularly interrupted by individuals answering the call of nature & with the best of intentions, shaking me as they passed to see if I was still amongst the quick. Since I have been able to book into The Fox & Hounds in Exton (now under new management), my repose has been uninterrupted & my enjoyment of the event enhanced. This year's event was no exception, the Saturday tour was relaxed & enjoyable, & a beer drinker's delight

in that three micro-breweries were visited. The weekend finished at another pub that brews its own. From my point of view, I was satisfied by the fact that not one of them served me anything but an acceptable red wine.

I am sorry that so few entries were received for the caption competition. The two that correctly identified the musician concerned included captions that didn't even make me wince, so I'm afraid that the editorial store of "Le 15 du President" will remain uncompromised for a bit longer.

By the time you receive this, I shall be starting to think about The Morris Dancer, Volume Three Number 10. It is my intention to initiate typesetting in the second week of December. If you have any material that you would think should be included, please ensure that I receive it before that date. Word or Wordpro documents are fine for copy: illustrations are best sent as full colour jpegs at 300 dpi (which allows me flexibility in cropping to fit) or as the original photographs which will be scanned & returned.

Have a fruitful practice season, & may your AGMs be short & uncontroversial. Morris on!

Eddie Dunmore

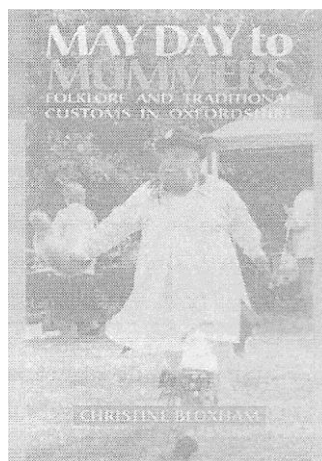


Rutland, with Roger Comley, in front of that duckpond at Barrowden

Photo Credits

page 5	Steve Holder
pages 7 — 10	John Frearson
pages 11 — 15	Eddie Dunmore
pages 15 — 17	John Frearson
page 19	Paul Bryan
page 20	submitted by Roger Comley, Letchworth
pages 21 — 24	Eddie Dunmore

Review May Day to Mummers



If your nearest & dearest cares for you, s/he will buy this for you as a present if you haven't already bought it for yourself. It's a nicely produced perfect bound paperback in 10 x 7 format. The cover has a full colour illustration of a dancer in a feathered brown bowler & white smock, white knee-breeches & brown boots, with what looks like a whole fox, let alone the brush, in his right hand. does anyone know him?

The author is Christine Bloxham, described as 'a former assistant keeper of antiquities at the Oxfordshire Museum'. She got my attention in her Acknowledgements that she had been inspired during her time at Scunthorpe Museum by her acquaintance with Ethel Rudkin, the doyenne of Lincolnshire folklore. Christina Hole was another influence, who passed her Oxfordshire notes on when she died. With that pedigree, my expectations were high.

The basic organisation of the book is calendric, from "The

Return of the Light" to "The Twelve Days of Christmas". I would guess that most of you, like me, will focus on "Whit Hunts & Whitsun Ales", "Morris Dancing", & "Mock Mayors", with "Mummers Plays" close behind. Plates include photos of Oxford City, Bampton (Shergold & Woodley sides, the latter featuring our own Barry care on page 152), Kirtlington, the Hemmings of Abingdon, William Castle of Adderbury, HQMD (with a photo of John Graham's wedding -Bob Grant in Number One spot), & Gloucester City. Mumming sides include Abingdon & Headington, again well illustrated. As a bonus, the texts of three mumming plays are included: Islip, Westcott Barton, & "An Oxfordshire Christmas Miracle Play".

On page 220, there is a plate whose description features "Loftus Sword". The dance is Cotswold stick by a side in grey toppers, crossed sashes of different colours & grey trousers: there does appear to be a sword dancer spectator, though.

This small criticism aside, I would reckon that for most of us, it will take reading & re-reading over at least five years before its depths have been fully plumbed. At £12.99, direct from the publisher (*Jon Carpenter Publishing, Alder House, Market Street Charlbury, Oxon OX7 3PH*), my opinion is that this is the best bargain you'll find this year.

Eddie Dunmore