

Number 45



Morris Futures: Matthew Culf

A Dartington member showing "a maturing style with his solo jig" outside Winchester Cathedral

in the Saturday afternoon mini-show. See pages 4-6 for John Frearson's report on the

Winchester Meeting, & a selection of his photographs.



Gentlemen:

AS ever, it has been a very busy summer visiting sides all over the country. In addition, there has been the need to react to the Government's Public Entertainment Licence legislation, & to produce a new Morris Ring brochure.

The previous Circular, Number 44, included events up to the Ripley Ring Meeting: glorious weather, beautiful scenery, & scaffold poles around the dining hall. Ripley worked miracles to get the Centre ready -well done, lads. I then visited Oakworth for their Weekend, a train journey that had me zigzagging across England, unlike the steam train journey on the Howarth railway.

The Benfieldside Ring Meeting took me to Durham for the first time. I found my way into the Shakespeare Head, only to discover that all the toilets were blocked, & the landlord looking for a plumber. I never said a word! The meeting was based at Durham College, with the Feast in the Great Hall. I was expecting a white owl to appear, or Harry Potter to turn up. It was another very enjoyable weekend.

Despite the rain, & yet more rain, I had a great time at the Martlets' 50th Anniversary day at Chichester. At the Feast in the evening, our wives were able to join us. Saddleworth was noteworthy for the fine weather (where was the liquid sunshine?), & the change of route for the Rushcart. September saw the Winchester Meeting (ably hosted by the Winchester men who are experts at Feasts), then Norfolk with Kings Mor-

ris, & Thaxted for Colin Fleming's Memorial. This last was well attended, finishing with dancing outside the church by HQMD, Thaxted, East Suffolk (a double jig), & Westminster. I met up with Jockey for their Feast somewhere in Birmingham - I always get lost there. Last weekend found me in Peterborough on Saturday, enjoying a boat trip along the River Nene, dancing on a pontoon (a precarious thing to do): Sunday was a dash over to Much Wenlock for the AGM of the Morris Federation.

Here I have to make a point of detailing the joint efforts, made & still being made, by the three morris organisations to limit the negative effects of the Public Entertainment Licensing Bill. John Bacon (MF President), & myself have been working together to put our case to the government. We have been very much helped by Lord Redesdale, who invited us to the House of Lords to discuss the practicalities of laying on a "showcase" for the morris. The event will take place in Trafalgar Square on Sunday November 2nd. The Federation will have 20 sides representing their 400 or so members, the Morris Ring will have 12 sides representing our 200+ Members & Associates, & the Open Morris will contribute 10 sides.

Although we have achieved some success, in that a clause has been inserted into the Bill specifically excluding morris dancing from its provisions, much more needs to be done to gain similar exemption for activities such as mumming & the performance of live (possibly unamplified) music. I would like to thank all the sides that

DOUGLAS KENNEDY MEMORIAL FUND

Is your club performing abroad in 2004? The Douglas Kennedy Fund might be able to help with your travelling expenses with a modest, but useful, grant.

Douglas Director of the EFDSS from 1924 and the longest serving Squire of the Ring. The Fund was established in his memory by the National Council of the EFDSS on his death at the age of 94

Further details from the **Clerk to the Trustees, Bob Parker 40 Nightingale Rd., Hampton Mdx, TW12 3HZ**

Final applications must be with the Trustees by 31st February 04

have asked to join us in Trafalgar Square: I have tried to ensure that as many traditions as possible will be represented. The major lack at the moment is Rapper, & I appreciate that for the likes of Horwich (for example), bringing a team down to London would be a major financial commitment.

The event promises to be positive publicity for morris of all sorts, & I hope that we can continue to work together to promote the music & dance on a united front. There are differences of opinion about how the morris should be portrayed, but we in the Morris Ring must accept that we are not the only organisation: in fact we are now a smaller organisation. We have history & tradition behind us, & individual members willing to demonstrate & teach the dances; Past Squire Bert Cleaver, for example, has given Fieldtown instructionals to MF sides. Actions like this can only raise the general standards of Banc'

Another factor that has to be admitted is that for many Ring sides, ageing is becoming a major factor. Thaxted are becoming concerned that their survival beyond the next ten years is problematic, as is my own side (&, I'm sure, many more). I would like all sides to consider whether you can put on a genuine "show" dance - we need to be honest with ourselves here - or have age, lack of fitness, & damaged knees finally caught

up with us? Surely, no Squire wants to say to any side "Sorry: not good enough".

Another ongoing project that could benefit from November 2nd is "Morris Futures". If the display in Trafalgar Square goes well enough, & generates sufficient positive reaction from the general public, it could easily be used as a template for further shows around the country. Being able to tap a larger pool of talent should enable us, in concert with the other organisations, to organise, promote, & stage a series of "Showcases": think how much that will help to raise general awareness of traditional dance & music!

In the months ahead there are Ales & Feasts, nominations for the next Squire, & in the New Year, the Annual Representatives' Meeting (hosted by Saddleworth & Mossley). I would like to see a majority of the member sides represented at that Meeting.

Next Tuesday, I shall be in London to meet with the DCMS, & that weekend (10-12th October) at Rutland. I look forward to meeting many of you during the winter months, at Ales & Feasts, & to give thanks for support at Trafalgar Square. Let all of us in the fellowship of the morris look to the future with a positive attitude.

*Cliff Marchant,
Squire of the Morris Ring.*

Les Cloches, les Cloches!

'Mesdames et messieurs, bon soir. Nous sommes les danseurs morris de Woodside, de la petite belle village de Watford. Morris est une traditionnelle et très très ancienne danse folklorique, pour les hommes anglais'

THUS began the Woodside Men's (from Watford *) entertainment for a visiting French choir from Provence. Woodside were approached by the Aeolian Singers of Hemel Hempstead to provide a traditional English evening for them & their visitors.

At first thought, we had wondered what 150 non-folkies would make of the Morris version of 'English tradition' but we soon discovered that we cheered the natives up no end, convincing them that there still is a living tradition out there. In case our efforts spark a few ideas for similar events, here's what we did.

The evening began at the picturesque Boot pub in Sarratt, with dancing in the garden, whilst the French visitors sheltered from the burning Hertfordshire sun (true!) under the shade of the weeping willow trees. Here Woodside performed a set of dances, including *Lads a' Bunchum* (Adderbury), *Step & Fetch 'er* (Bampton), *Vandals of Hammerwich* (Litchfield) & the



Captain Lamos' Skirmish

Woodside dance *Duke of Marlborough's Request* to a well known tune subverted by the colonials!

Everybody then adjourned to the Village Hall (yes, the same one used by Woodside for their annual Winter Ale, last Friday in January) to continue with the English festivities. We began with Woodside leading the audience in the Grange song of good fellowship *Let union be in all our minds* (or *Que l'union soit dans tous nos esprits* if you must know). A traditional English meal followed, including cottage pie, followed by apple pie & summer pudding. All this great English food was washed down with (naturally, not warm) Eng-

lish ale, actually the excellent 'Side Pocket for a Toad' (**) from the local Tring Brewery, & jugs of Pimms.

Between courses Woodside danced a short show, while navigating the smallish stage, particularly challenging as we danced on with *Hey Diddle Dis* (Bledington). This was followed by *Banks of the Dee* (Fieldtown) & another Woodside dance (*Captain Lamo's Skirmish*), before inviting as many as would (or could fit on the stage) to a final Bonny Green. Naturally, the two musical directors were picked on & were joined by brave volunteers from both choirs.

After the meal, Woodside, led by Geoff Roberts (in excellent voice after all that 'Side Pocket') sang a number of traditional chorus songs, including *Pleasant & Delightful*, *Country Life*,

The Nightingale, *Wild Mountain Thyme & Rolling Home*. With two, by now well-lubricated choirs, the choruses almost lifted the roof & the singing was still going on as Woodside took their leave.

Of course, some of this was a new challenge for Woodside, especially as we don't normally take on choir-loads of experienced singers (ie they work from the dots!), but it was a great experience & it's always nice to have a few extra satisfied customers. As for our audience, some of the natives apparently got more exposure to their folk culture than they'd had in their lives before et les Francais can now cope with the concept that un homme can put les fleurs in son chapeau et still be taken sérieusement!

David Lang, Squire



Bonny Green

(*) Woodside MM, who were founded in 1957, can be contacted at woodsidemm@onetel.net.uk or viewed on www.mymores.com/woodside.

(**) *Side Pocket for a Toad* - An old Hertfordshire saying which alludes to 'the uselessness of anything'. Although the saying has now sadly passed into disuse, the brewery is mounting a campaign to restore this old expression to its rightful place in popular parlance.

THE MORRIS RING – 297th MEETING

WINCHESTER RING MEETING

WINCHESTER

THE 297th Meeting of the Morris Ring was hosted by Winchester Morris Men, who were celebrating their 50th Anniversary. The Meeting was based at The Test Valley School, Stockbridge.

17 Sides, plus the host Side, some 200 men, attended the Meeting. Those present were: Aldbury, Coventry, Dartington, Dolphin, Foresters, Hartley, King John's, Long Man, Martlet, Ravensbourne, Taunton Wantsum, & Whitchurch & Deane, Thaxted, Trigg, Victory, Wantsum, & Whitchurch &

5th - 7th September 2003

representatives from Chalice & East Surrey; as well as the hosts Winchester.

There were five tours[two walking tours of Winchester, & three bus tours] on the Saturday & a "Squire's Tour" that visited all of these. There was an informal Massed Show by the two Winchester Tours on Saturday afternoon & the main Massed Show on Sunday morning after a service in Winchester Cathedral. A printed Programme, illustrated with photographs outlined the details of the tours.



Taunton Deane: Old Woman Tossed Up

Friday 5th September 2003

The Friday evening rendezvous was the Test Valley School. Men were asked not to appear before 7.00pm, & a list of possible refreshment venues had been provided. On arrival, Men were allocated sleeping quarters & details of the Tours & arrange-

ments were given out. Men then unloaded their kit into the various classrooms, & depending on their arrival time, took supper or a pre-supper beer.

Supper was served from 8.00 - 9.30pm. This was excellently catered, as were all the meals for

the Meeting, by the "Bert Cleaver / Greensleeves Catering Corporation", whose efforts throughout the weekend were much appreciated. This supper proved a suitable foundation for the more liquid proceedings that followed!

Various informal dancing & singing took place in the hall, & there was much catching up with old friends.



Whitchurch Dancing Skirmish

Saturday 6th September 2003

Somewhat damp after rain in the night, but then brightened up. After a sub-stancial breakfast, the Sides boarded their coaches. The weather for the Saturday tours although starting damp, was warm, & after the occasional showers early in the day brightened to a fine sunny day.

Two walking Tours visited the historic town of Winchester, & three coach Tours visited some of the local towns & a range of villages in the area. The Squire's Tour, driven by the Winchester Squire's gallant wife visited each of the tours.

The Winchester tours took in Kingsgate; Chambers Court in Winchester College; the Buttercross, the Cathedral Precincts; the St. John's Almshouses & the great hall of the Castle.

The three coach Tours visited the New Forest, the various Wallops [Over, Middle & Nether] & the Test Valley; & the "Watercross" railway line. They encompassed the towns of Romsey, Andover & Alresford, & many smaller villages & their attractive pubs, & tourist venues such as Mottisfont Abbey & The Museum of Army Flying, Middle Wallop

The Squire's Tour visited all five tours, finishing in Winchester to allow the Squire to MC a small show for two Tours at the Cathedral War Memorial.

The more memorable dances observed during the day included: -Coventry's Ampleforth at the Almshouses to a hummed accompaniment [as their fool & musician was also dancing. This was very effective & produced applause from the Men as well as the general public. Matthew Culf [Dartington] showed a maturing style with his solo jig outside the Cathedral in the afternoon mini-show (*this edition's cover picture*); & King John's, who provided a contrast with North-West dances, but would



have to revert to Cotswold on the grass for the Sunday show.

At the Wallops Tour lunch spot, Gerald Willey persuaded his fellow Past Squire, & Winchester's present Squire, Geoff Jerram to join in a Valentines, together with the current Squire, Cliff Marchant, in clogs having been dancing North-West with King John's, the Bagman, Area Representative, Mike Austen, & our guest John Bacon, President of the Morris Federation, in borrowed bells. (*for this motley crew, see the top of this page*)

The return of the Tours was staggered [their arrival, not the state of the Men! 1] to allow tea to be taken from 4.45pm to 6.00pm, with rest & recuperation from 6.00pm to 7.30pm.

The Feast was scheduled for 7.45pm. The tables in the school hall were finely dressed with napkins in the Winchester colours, Menu Cards with a colour photograph of Lionel Bacon on the reverse & an engraved commemorative pint glass for each man.

The Guests at the Feast were the Mayor of Winchester, Councillor Mrs. Jean Hammerton with her Escort, Mr. Donald Hammerton; & Mr. John Bacon, President of the Morris Federation. The remainder of

the Top Table comprised: - The Squire, Cliff Marchant; The Bagman, John Frearson & The Treasurer, Steve Adamson; the Squire of Winchester, Geoff Jerram [Past Squire of the Morris Ring]; Michael McNamara MBE, Founder Member of Winchester & Harry Stevenson, Bagman for the Meeting.

The Reverend Leonard Pepper [Whitchurch] said the Grace. The Feast that followed included Terrine of Four Cheeses with Orange & Apricot Chutney; Mouton Rouge [a lamb casserole] with potatoes & seasonal & braised vegetables; Yoghurt & Mango Ice with sun-dried Apricots; Cheese & Biscuits; & Coffee.

The Speeches & Toasts followed: Michael McNamara, proposed the Loyal Toast. Peter Davy, Martlets, proposed The Immortal Memory. The Squire of the Morris Ring, Cliff Marchant, proposed the toast to "The City of Winchester" & Cllr. Mrs Jean Hammerton replied. The Squire of Winchester, Geoff Jerram proposed the health of the Guests. He thanked the Bagman for the Meeting, Harry Stevenson, who had made it all work by his benevolent dictatorship. He then asked Winchester to drink the health of the guests. John Millar Squire of King John's made the

Reply & the Toast to the Host Side.

The Squire also introduced John Bacon, President of the Morris Federation, & thanked him for all the work that he had done in achieving the exemption for Morris dancing from the Public Entertainments Licensing bill. John Bacon then said a few words & outlined what had been achieved & what still had to be achieved.

The Squire then asked the Men to thank the caterers, & as time was moving on, proposed that some songs should be sung. A selection of songs, music & recitative followed & included:- Victory who sang "Nine fathoms of water & six feet of mud"; & Trigg - "a polite song" out of respect for the honoured guest. A recitation was provided by **King John's & Bob Cross [Chalice]** sang one of Sharp's songs, collected in Priddy, "Rose Bud in June". All the items were of a notably high quality.

After the singing, the hall was cleared, & as it was by then past normal closing time, the entourage remained in the hall for further dancing, singing & general conviviality.

continued on page 6

Sydney Morris Men at the 25th Festival of the Winds:

Bondi, 14 September 2003



Most of the side for the Day

Jim. Mick and JR are missing in action

THE 25th international kite festival, known as the Festival of the Winds, took place on Sunday 14 September at Bondi Beach - and once again Sydney Morris Men danced throughout the day. Such is the splendour, energy and versatility of this crowd-pleasing group of itinerant ale-drinkers that SMM have

been booked to dance at EVERY festival in the event's history — yes, all 25.

The SMM were graced with the presence of three of the Adelaide Morris Men who were able to add considerably to the tone of the occasion. With this number of dancers, the Men were able to dance through the

three hour spot without too many breaks (Morris Dancing is actually hard physical work which is why so many refreshments are required to sustain the performance levels).

The repertoire for the day included 8-man Lichfield dances, 4-man jigs, 6-man Cotswold set



All in!

dances and solo jigs - the Side even managed to produce two sets performing the same dance simultaneously.



Vandals of Hammerwich - a favourite Lichfield dance with an entertaining (complex!) hey.

continued from page 5

Sunday 7th September 2003

Breakfast was again taken in generous but somewhat less leisured style on the Sunday morning. Men had to be packed up and out of the School by 9.45am at the latest, and then travelled by car into Winchester.

The Men formed up for two Processions, from each end of the pedestrianised High Street, and were required to be ready to set off at 10.40am for a procession towards the Cathedral. The two processions were due to meet at the Cathedral door - but as other Services were still in progress, the two processions joined forces in the Cathedral precincts and when the way was

clear, processed together through the West Door into the cathedral for the 11.15am Morning Sung Eucharist Service.

During the processional hymn, the Squires, having processed behind the choir and clergy, presented their staffs at the altar. The Squire of The Morris Ring, Cliff Marchant, read the First Lesson. The Sermon was given by The Revd. Canon Colin Deedes. There was no Offertory Dance, but the Offertory Hymn, was the Morris Ring's old favourite "I Danced in the Morning" being accompanied, less usually, by full organ rather than a Morris Band. During the

last hymn, the staffs were collected from the altar, and the Squires again joined the recessing procession of choir and clergy.

A Massed Display then took place in the Cathedral Grounds, to the South of the Cathedral, adjacent to The Deanery. This started at 12.45pm and finished at 2.10pm, thus allowing all the Sides to provide a show dance as well as taking part in some massed dances. As the show progressed, the Sides that had performed made their way to lunch in the Cathedral Refectory. When they had finished lunch, they either return to watch the end of the show or

went to the Vine or The Eclipse, for refreshment. After some final good-byes the Men dispersed in an orderly manner. The entire weekend went smoothly. A pat on the back for each and every member of Winchester, but particularly for The Meeting Bagman, Harry Stevenson, whose attention to detail ensured that all the arrangements, went without a hitch.

*John Frearson
Bagman - The Morris Ring*

September 2003

1 Pun taken from Winchester Website with permission!!

Lithuanians come to East Suffolk



IN July last year while squir-
ring a Chameleonic Morris
trip to Klaipeda, Lithuania, I
took the brave step of responding
to a question from our hosts
*"when will you invite us to
perform in England"* — after
looking around the room for
some guidance, my response was
"OK, next year". The host group
in question was Kuisui Ainiiai —
we had first met them on the
Chameleonic trip to the Baltica
festival held in Estonia in 2001
and they had subsequently in-
vited Chameleonic to attend their
festival in Klaipeda.

Having given a positive re-
sponse it fell upon East Suffolk
to take on the challenge to bring
Kuisui Ainiiai to England. The
logic of this being that
Chameleonic members are
spread far and wide, but a num-
ber of East Suffolk Men are reg-
ular Chameleonic travellers and
East Suffolk has the numbers to
accommodate a large group of
visitors to these shores.

Klaipeda is a major port on the
Baltic and it transpired that
much of its business is done
with the Port of Ipswich, East
Suffolk's hometown. It also
transpired that Ipswich was to
hold a Cultural Festival in July
2003 and I was also, until re-
cently, a Director at Ipswich

Borough Council, all very con-
venient!

So after countless e-mails be-
tween England And Lithuania
(how did we cope before the
'net') the trip was arranged.
Kuisui Ainiiai arrived in Eng-
land on 9th July in what was to
turn out to be the hottest week
of the year. Some members of
East Suffolk travelled across to
Calais to meet them - to ensure
that there were no customs diffi-
culties, & also to stock up with
booze for the week - but assisted
by correspondence from the
Council our worries proved to
be unnecessary; Kuisui Ainiiai
literally sailed through passport
control.

We broke the journey back to
Suffolk with a stop-off at Can-
terbury where our guests gave
an impromptu singing display
outside the Cathedral on what
turned out to be university
graduation day. Eventually we
arrived in Suffolk at 5.30 to sort
out host accommodation and to
retire (somewhat early) for the
night. The impact of the two
and a half day coach journey
was telling on our visitors!!

The next day an almost full
week's programme of perfor-
mances commenced. The first
three days centred in and
around Ipswich as part of

Ipswich's **'IP-art festival'**, per-
forming in the town centre, the
port area, the schools, & the
BT Research centre. There was
also a lunch with The Mayor of
Ipswich, Penny Breakwell,
who had recently met the
Lithuanian ambassador and
who was greeted by two
traditional songs from Kuisui

On Sunday 'Kuisui Ainiiai' gave
an wonderful emo-
tion -draining performance in the
small mediaeval church in
Crowfield and this was followed
by an excellent performance at
the Museum Of East Anglian
Life, ably supported by East
Suffolk who performed
Cotswold & Rapper Sword - and
also donned their winter Border
kit to add spice to the event.
Monday was reserved for a tour-
ist trip to London - 33 of our
guests leaving Suffolk and 33 re-
turning (no mean feat!) —vis-
iting the Tower area,
Westminster/Buckingham Pal-
ace, & other London sights.

Tuesday was reserved for the
seaside trip, which included
swimming at Thorpness in the
morning (the sea was warmer
than I have ever known!). The
afternoon venue was
Southwold, where more swim-
ming took place, and the day
was rounded off with singing
and dancing on the pier.

As you might gather, there were
many highlights during the
week but the communal eve-
nings stick out as memorable



events - a music and dance session at the Hare and Hounds, East Bergholt; a Lithuanian hospitality night at David Tydeman's; a barbeque at Dick Thornborrow's; garden games night at Steve Cole's; and to conclude the week, the farewell 'do' at Dick's- all of these events making the most of glorious evenings and intermixed by singing and dancing (even Daniel Fox, Past Squire of the Ring, managed to gate-crash the farewell do as he was visiting Lawrie Aitkens, past Thaxted man, on that day)

As for other benefits, our wives and partners proudly display their amber jewellery and members of the side were presented with gifts ranging from chocolate to Lithuanian liqueurs (lots of it!).

On Wednesday 16th, `Kuisui Ainiai' left at 7.30 a.m. for their two and a half day trek across



Europe to the Baltic coast They had blessed us and the people of Suffolk with their singing and dancing - a week of enjoyment that I would not have missed for

the world. East Suffolk Morris Men have been very fortunate to play host to this wonderful group of people!

Mike Palmer, East Suffolk MM
(Sometimes Squire, Chameleonic Morris)
mpalm@crickets11freeserve.co.uk

The Durham Mass Show,Sunday 12. 15 pm

MASSED	Banks of the Dee	Fieldtown	H
Benfieldside/Durham Rams	Beaux of London City	Badby	S
Stafford	Abnalls	Lichfield	S
Offley	Dearest Dickey;	Fieldtown	H
Exeter	Constant Billy	Ilmington	S
Boar's Head	Signposts	Fieldtown	H
Bedford		Preston [processional-on]	
Colne		North-West	
MASSED	Young Collins	Bledington	H
Gloucestershire	Constant Billy	Sherborne	H
Rutland	Shepherd's Hey	Wheatley	H
Letchworth	Highland Mary	Oddington	H
Harrogate	Knaresborough Over	Long Sword	
Wath upon Dearne	the Water to Charlie	Bledington	H
Durham Rams	Hemsteels	Rapper	
Shakespeare	Princess Royal	Bideford	H
ManchesterMossley		North West	
Benfieldside	Bluebells of Scotland	Adderbury	S
Massed	Bonny Green	Bampton	H

THE MORRIS RING - 296th MEETING

BENFIELDSIDE [40th ANNIVERSARY] RING MEETING

DURHAM 11th - 13th July 2003

This Report comprises an expansion of various notes, and other source material. In particular, it includes [with permission] extracts and edited material from Alan Dandy's Report in Stafford's Newsletter "Knot Life"

THERE were four tours on the Saturday and a "Squire's Tour" visited all of these. There was a Feast on Saturday evening and the main

Mass Show on Sunday morning after the church service

The Sides present were: Bedford; Boar's Head; Claro Sword; Durham Rams; Exeter; Gloucestershire; Letchworth; Manchester; Offley; Rutland; Shakespeare; Stafford; Stockton; Wath upon Dearne, as well as two representatives from Thaxted and the hosts Benfieldside.

Friday 11th July 2003

The Friday evening rendezvous was the Durham School, and the reception was open from 6.00pm. On arrival, Men were issued with various documentation. Sleeping quarters were allocated and details of the Tours given out. Men were then directed to the various school boarding houses in the neighbourhood, where they unloaded their kit. Accommodation, mostly three to a room was highly respectable with BEDS, duvet, towel and soap provided; and plentiful hot showers, all just off the main campus.

Depending on their arrival time, the Men took supper or had a drink, the bar being open from 7.00pm. Ale was of high quality and plentiful at £1.50/pint. Ales included Mordue's "Five Bridges" [3.8%]; The Big Lamp Brewer's, "Big Lamp Bitter" [3.9%] and "Sunny Daze" [3.6%].

Supper — an excellent buffet of cold meats and salad, followed by dessert — was served from 7.30pm in the Luce Theatre, the main hall being in use for a Masonic event. This proved a suitable foundation for any



The Treasurer exhibiting his "Little Willy"

more liquid proceedings that followed!

Some braver Men then dispersed into Durham to visit the pubs. Stafford report that the town was "unfortunately rather dirty and noisy with young lager louts. Some concessions may be in order however as there had been 'celebration' during the day and again on the Saturday with a Miner's Gala". A Stafford man didn't complain of "being 'attacked' by one of the more 'friendly' young ladies - TWICE - on the way out and on the way back!" Stafford also mention that "eventually a calm hostelry was found at The Elm Tree". Some Bedford men moved on to a "night club" - discussions later with a younger local brought forth the comment "they let anyone in there"!! For those back at the school, the chat, singing and an occasional dance continued until the early hours.



The host side performing Adderbury "Bluebells of Scotland" during the Sunday Display

SATURDAY dawned fine and a substantial full fried breakfast was partaken before buses set out for the day's activity. The weather for the Saturday tours was hot. A Programme in Benfieldside's striking orange colour outlined the four Tours, which visited the main towns and a range of villages in the area. The Squire's Tour, visited each of the tours.

The venues included:-

Tour A — The Angel of the North; Gateshead; South Shields with lunch at "The Riverside" Mill Dam, South Shields and "The Grotto" at Marsden

Tour B — visited Sedgfield and Darlington with lunch at "The Bay Horse", Ravensworth. In the afternoon they visited Staindrop and Raby Castle. Bedford performed their North-West dances at one location in Darlington, when with the arrival of the Bagman on the Squire's Tour, they had sufficient dancers. They were also able to visit the excellent Number 22 pub.

Tour C — including Stafford with musical accompaniment

by Roy Yarnell. They visited Bishop Auckland, Market Place; Escomb Village; Staindrop and Romalldkirk, where they took lunch at "The Kirk Inn". In the afternoon they visited the Bowes Museum and then Barnard Castle. Stafford have provided a Report on this Tour, to give a flavour of the day "*Quite a bit of travel around the South of the county, during a very pleasant summer's day with a clear blue sky from early morning. Appreciative audiences, fine hostilities and a showing of the northern countryside that could match anything found in the south.*"

Market Place Bishop's Auckland, where the Ring Squire's tour arrived and five from Wath joined the Squire for Idbury Hill Bledington. Escomb village had the Saxon Inn and a Saxon Church to look round. At Staindrop they were in direct competition with the annual Dog and Pet Show - Knotty [Stafford's Horse] was not too impressed at not getting a rosette! Ale was not close hence a long walked back to the Royal Oak as the Morris performance waited for the completion of the presentation of the trophies".

Tour D — visited The Metro Centre; "The Potter's Wheel" at

Sunnyside; and took lunch at "Wardles Bridge Inn" at Holmeside. The afternoon included a visit to the Beamish Museum. As the Tour had been classified as staff, to obtain free entry, this meant they were not allowed to enter and drink in the pub [and as the Squire's Tour had arrived to see the dancing, losing the Bagman the opportunity to "tick" an interesting ale!!!] - they then refreshed themselves at the nearby "Beamish Mary Inn".

One rare moment of Child Magic is recorded from Staindrop: - John Edwards on 'Knotty', the centre of interest for many children throughout the afternoon, had attracted the singular attention of a girl of about 6 or 7 years with accompanying parents and younger brother. Through some excellent finger-work from John, she really couldn't work out whether his ferret was real or not. Turning to Knotty she said, "But he's wood". Knotty reacted sharply and we pointed out that his tongue was moving, so he must be real. "No", she said "he's working the string". "No" we said,

"it's by pulling his tail". She pulled the tail, but was not fast enough to the front to see anything. "You've got to be fast" said John, "he's very clever" - She looked at Knotty, totally bewildered, part of her saying, "I'm old enough to know he's wood", the other half, young enough to think "but maybe I'm wrong". The expression on her face was sheer magic, a moment of innocence which her mother, sitting on the grass just in front of us, maybe caught on camera.

LUNCH — Pie, mushy peas & new spuds — at Romalldkirk and, for most, a pint of Black Sheep at the Kirk Inn followed some quick dancing. The service was excellent, some meals arriving before the men - but NO PUDs! The afternoon cultural spot-The Bowes Museum — Home of the late Queen Mother, styled as a French Chateau. Finally a spot in the 'Centre of the Road', Barnard's Castle.

The tours returned in good time to allow time for the Men to ready themselves for the Feast. This was held in the main Hall of Durham School. Rows of



Offley, with a friend, dancing in the Sunday Display

commemorative boards and heraldic shields in the high hall of ancient oak beams testified to the rank of the school, high among the top educational establishments of the land. Prose, Art, Geography, History and Science mix with Military and Scholastic achievement. Solemn listings of Headmasters set the beginnings of formal education on the site, back in the early part of the 16th century

It seemed right and proper therefore for the Top Table at Feast be 'piped' in with traditional Northumbrian Pipes

The Guests at the Feast were Clive Richards, the Financial Manager of the School, and the Revd. Canon David Whittington OBE, Diocesan Director of Education and Canon of Durham, who was to take the Sunday Service. Also on the Top Table among others, the Ring Officers and Brian Pollard of Benfieldside.

The Grace was said by The Revd Whittington: — *"Lord, Let us not be likened unto Cornflakes, Dry and over processed, but let us be instead like porridge, Warm, natural, and full of wholesome goodness. Amen"*

The Feast that followed comprised Tomato Soup; Roast Beef

and Yorkshire Pudding with roast and boiled potatoes, green beans and baton carrots; Sticky Toffee pudding with ice cream and toffee sauce; Cheese and Biscuits; and Coffee

The Speeches and Toasts followed: Chris Wagstaff proposed the Loyal Toast. Brian Padgett of Stockton, proposed The Immortal Memory. Brian Pollard, proposed "The Guests". In contrast to the formal surrounding, he illustrated the character of the Northumbrian, starting his formal dialogue after the feast with an important announcement for Tour C, that the winner of the competition at Staindrop that afternoon was Kevin the Cat! He remembered various key dates in the Side's history, and thanked the many people who had assisted with the organisation of the weekend. He then asked Benfieldside to drink the health of their guests. Bob Carter, Squire of Boar's Head, made the Reply and the Toast to the Host Side

On returning to the School that afternoon, it had been noted that there was Wedding Reception in progress in a marquee on the lawns. The entertainment after the evening's Feast was held, in part, against a background of fireworks from the wedding party.

EARLY morning brought more blue skies and the promise of a repeat hot summer's day. Breakfast was followed by a climb up what appeared to be the side of a small mountain to the School Chapel for 10.00am morning service. The Service was conducted with sympathy for the dance, good hymns, (but not always the best known tune!), and a sensitive sermon. Gloucestershire presented a fine spectacle of stepping and high handkerchiefs in dancing 'Staines Morris' from Longborough.

A procession and mass show were to follow later. There was a short break until the men gathered outside the Fighting Cocks

just North of the high stone Milburngate bridge. There was some delay as an earlier open-air church service in the Market Place was running late. After a musical interlude, the procession finally set off to process up the very steep Silver Street to the Market Square. In spite of the cobblestones, the processional dance worked quite well as the original tramway had been 'flagged' with smooth stone, providing two parallel paths, some five foot apart. The Procession finally "Winster"-ed into the Market Place for the Massed Show at about 12.15, followed by Bedford in North-West kit, dancing in with the Ashton Processional.



Durham Rams showing Hemsteels Rapper in the Sunday Display

Exeter produced a "Constable from Barnstaple"; Stockton, a fiddle solo; Letchworth, "Whilst the gamekeepers lie sleeping"; Les Skinner of Bedford sang "The devil and the Feathery Wife", and Wath, "The Rose of Allendale". John Colbert of Stafford led the only real opposition to the fireworks, with the loudest chorus "Ale, ale, Served up in Pewter ...". Later, Gloucestershire sang "Back and Sides go Bare" and

Claro performed a duet on the whistle/pipes.

Dancing and conversation started slowly as most had given their all during the very hot day, for the most part in the 80's, if not higher. Dancing started around 11.00pm with William and Nancy and activities continued at least until 1.00am.

Sunday 13th July

Of particular note was the precision of Durham Rams in the Hemsteels Rapper, rotating and stepping to show several Rapper sword patterns; the costume and inter-dance of Offley's Green Man; the presentation and poise of the "Signposts" by Boar's Head, holding just that little bit extra; and the ceremonial precision of the Bidford danced by Shakespeare. The gallantry award should perhaps go to those dancing the longer processional and set North-West dances on paving stones slippery with sweat in temperatures in the 80's!!

After the show, at about 1.40pm, Men made their way back to the School Hall for lunch. This was

again a buffet with cold meats and salad, and was accompanied by the last of the beer. As the show had started, and thus finished late, those who had lingered in the pubs on their way back, found that the school had efficiently cleared the remaining food. After some final packing the Men dispersed in an orderly manner, to return home under continuing extremely hot conditions.

The entire weekend went smoothly. A pat on the back for each and every member of Benfieldside, but particularly for indefatigable Bagman for the Meeting, Brian Pollard, for excellent organisation and camaraderie second to none.

*John Frearson: Bagman, The Morris Ring
25 July 2003*

Malcolm Reid

died 22.iv.2003, aged 78

MALCOLM was born in Peterborough on 16th January 1925, the youngest son of a large family. His father was a Railway Inspector, & the family found themselves in Peterborough when he was transferred there. Malcolm attended Kings School for Boys & matriculated at 16. It was during this time that he first met his future wife, Gwen, on his walk to & from school.

On leaving school, Malcolm followed his father into "the Railway", but hated the job. As soon as he was old enough, & with the War in progress, he joined the Fleet Air Arm: despite being colour-blind, he was shipped off to the United States for pilot training. On gaining his wings, he returned to England before being sent to Australia to help in the defence against the Japanese. He was posted close to Sydney for training (& training others), in readiness for the attack that never materialised. He flew a plane under Sydney Harbour Bridge, but was later faced a court-martial for a low flight over an Australian girl friend's house that resulted in the plane crash-landing in a ditch.

Returning to England at the end of the War, Malcolm decided not to return to the dreaded railway, & consequentially accepted the Government offer to retrain as a teacher. Richard & Gwen having reunited, they were married on Boxing Day 1946 & honeymooned in Guildford, where Gwen managed to damage a hotel table with her travelling iron. At the end of teacher training, Malcolm & Gwen toured the countryside on an old BSA motorcycle, deciding where to settle down to start his teaching career. They eventually chose Wiveliscombe (Somerset), where he taught at "Old Wivey School" before it was transformed into a Secondary Modern School.

They lived at two different locations before moving to Langley

Marsh, & Birch Tree Cottage. This purchase cost them £1300, for a run-down cottage much in need of modernisation & refurbishment, most of which was done by Malcolm. He continued to be a handy man, willing to have a go at most things for the rest of his life. When the new Wivey School was opened, Malcolm was appointed its Music Master.

There are some wonderful stories involving Malcolm, one of which concerns a wardrobe (or similar item of furniture) made by Malcolm in the school's woodwork room. Tying the piece to the roof of his car (the motorcycle/sidecar combination having been upgraded), Malcolm drove home, & straight into the garage (built by him), completely forgetting the construction on the roof. This, of course, occasioned remedial DIY repairs to car, garage & construction! This love of DIY survived his children leaving the family home to start their own - it gave him extra opportunities for practising his talents.

It was no surprise to learn that one evening, some years ago, Malcolm set out from home with the intention of joining the Church choir. On arrival, he en-

tered the room where the Town Band were practising, & joined them. He eventually became a member of the Church choir, the Madrigal Group, the Recorder Club, & the local Town Twinning Association. Most of these activities exercised his

love of music, & he was Conductor of the Town Band for 25 years before progressing to the E-flat Bass!

Professionally, he was always actively involved in the school's musical productions: in their productions of "Oliver", he took on the role of Bill Sykes, & his daughter Lynne played Nancy. A colleague at school had started a School Morris Team: this colleague also introduced Bob Cross to the morris, & contributed to the formation of Chalice MM (but that's another story). Wiveliscombe School Morris needed a musician - who better than the Music Master? He taught himself to play the piano accordion, & subsequently found himself not only musician, but also i/c transport.

As this boy's team developed, they had need of a "morris instructor", & this resulted in the team & Malcolm joining West Somerset MM for their practice evenings at Halsway Manor. West Somerset were short of a musician, so Malcolm found himself assuming yet another role.

He developed a liking for theapprès-dance singing sessions, & also became a visitor to retirement homes where he would accompany the singing of music hall & war-time songs, as well as singing some of his favourite folk-songs. There are songs which we still think of as "Malcolm's songs".

Malcolm learnt to ski at the age of 68, loved sledging when snow was on the ground, & enjoyed gardening. He even attempted sailing & surfboarding in Cornwall. In their later years, he & Gwen travelled extensively.

It was relatively recently that Malcolm reduced his commitment to West Somerset, so that he could "extend" his other interests & activities. However, at times of need, Malcolm could still be relied upon to turn out, with his accordion, to play for the dance. He was never quite able to retire completely from the morris.

It is impossible to quantify exactly Malcolm's contribution to the morris, & folk, & to West Somerset MM in particular. His willingness to help, & his enthusiasm for everything in which he was involved, was legendary. He leaves us, his survivors, with an enduring debt of gratitude.

Malcolm is survived by his wife, Gwen, & their four children & grandchildren. I would like to thank Chris Reid (Mendip Morris Men, & one of Malcolm's sons) for the help that the family has given me in compiling this appreciation of Malcolm.

Dudley S. Binding.

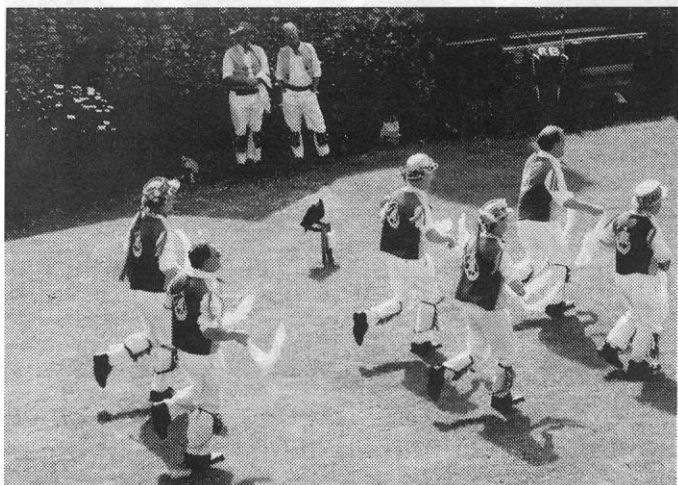


Chanctonbury's 50th Birthday

THE early morning of 5th of July found me trusting, against all the evidence, that Network Rail could get me into Haywards Heath close enough to the advertised time to meet my lift to the starting point of Chanctonbury's

celebration. As it turned out, on this occasion the timetable was not a work of fiction, & I joined the overnight participants as they prepared for their public.

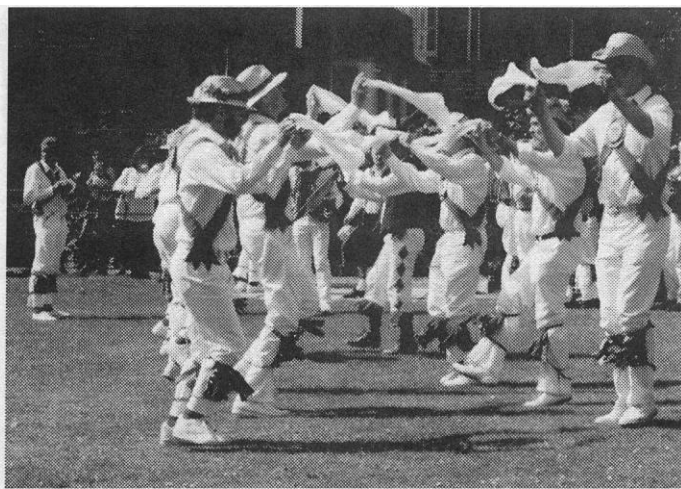
The coach had some difficulty negotiating the turns out of



East Suffolk at the Gun Garden; Highland Mary



Peterboro' (mainly), at the Gun Gardens; Lads a Bunchum



Chanctonbury at the Gun Garden

moved on to an unannounced stop at the John Harvey Tavern for fluid replacement.

The next stop was The Sloop at Scaynes Hill, which was also the lunch stop. The highlight here was the forced participation of any non-morris customers in a demonstration dance. This went off surprisingly well, & seemed to be enjoyed by absolutely everybody. All too soon we were herded back into the coach for the transition to the next scheduled stop, at Shef-

field Park Station on the Bluebell Railway

After a session of dancing outside the Bessemer Arms, we were ushered on to a train for the short ride to Horsted Keynes. This stop proved, unfortunately, to be dry, so we were restricted to non-alcoholic thirst-quenchers. Nonetheless, dances were performed for the benefit of the railway enthusiast public — that is, those of them that weren't more concerned with the acquisition of tickets

Haywards Heath, but we made it to the first stop, Lewes, where we disembarked at the foot of a precipitous ascent to Lewes Castle & an almost equally precipitous descent to the Gun Garden. Having entertained ourselves, & a handful of stalwart CRMM groupies, we



Peterboro' (with help from Chanctonbury) outside the John Harvey Tavern; Black Joke (Adderbury)



Chanctonbury at the Bessemer Arms

for that evening's concert (by some group whose name escapes me, but was obviously significant even to some of our party). Having exhausted the possibilities of Horsted Keynes



Thaxted dancing Brackley at Horsted Keynes

the rolling stock of the Bluebell Railway was once again enjoyed for the return journey to Sheffield Park. After a final dance by our hosts, it was back to the coach for the last public show of the day at Newick.



The Royal Oak, Newick: guess which one is Chantelle

Among the spectators joining us at the Royal Oak was a budding artist who had turned up with her family to watch the show. Your editor was pressed into service as a photographer to ensure that a group shot, with Chantelle as the centre of attention, was taken to commemorate the occasion. A copy of this photograph was duly sent to the farm where the family lived.

Eventually it was time to board the coach again, for the return to Haywards Heath, & the Feast. This, prepared by the distaff side of Chanctonbury, was of high quality & much enjoyed. Unfortunately, I had to cut my presence short to take advantage of a lift back to the railway station, which enabled me to be at home at a reasonable hour (it was late enough for the service to be on time). I thoroughly enjoyed my day with Chanctonbury (not forgetting

East Suffolk, Peterborough & Thaxted, who also contributed significantly to an enjoyable experience). My thanks go in particular to the two drivers who ensured that I made it there & back without complications, & to the kitchen detail who provided the necessary sustenance when the dancing was over.

Eddie Dunmore

the three morris organisations,



The lunchtime Master Class (for as many as will) at The Sloop Inn, Scaynes Hill

Editorial

BECAUSE of pressure on my time, & the usual deadlines for ARM nominations, proposals, etc., this edition is necessarily somewhat truncated. Gordon Ridgewell's many followers will be disappointed that the Ridgewell Files are missing, so I apologise to him & to other would-be contributors for the absences.

The most important item in this edition arises from the pending legislation contained in the Public Entertainment Licensing Bill. The national officers of

in concert with the EFDSS, have been putting in the hours to mitigate some of the Bill's more draconian provisions. Luckily, their efforts have attracted the support of enough politicians, notably Lord Redesdale, to have had an ef-

fect. There may be some murmuring about the inclusion of the Federation & the Open Morris but, as the ancient aphorism has it, "*If we don't hang together, we will be hanged separately*". That there is more yet to be done is painfully obvious, with the Musicians' Union most obviously left out in the cold.

copy date will be 15th March 2004. At the time of writing, the only copy so far received for The Morris Dancer Volume Three Number Eleven is an article held over from last year. If nothing else turns up between now & 15th December, I shall have to recycle some of the high spots from previous years.

Until then, I hope that your practices are productive, & that the Ales & Feasts you host or visit are enjoyable. If you can make it to Trafalgar Square on November 2nd, please do. Even if you are not selected to dance, stewards & proselytisers will be necessary.

Eddie Dunmore

November 2nd promises to be an unmissable opportunity to broadcast a message to the population at large. If we can display the best examples of morris, no matter where from, our case will have been strengthened. A full report will be in Circular 46, for which the

New Dances

AT the recent meeting of the Advisory Council 24th November 2002) Lionel Bacon's "Black Book" came under consideration. Conversion into an electronic form was viewed as a long term project and it was generally agreed to continue text publication without change. But there was discussion about the preservation of "new" (modern, made/up) dances that have emerged as part of the on-going tradition of the Morris.

Our proposal is that, in the first instance, we should simply collect these dances all together. They would form the basis of a separate Collection that would go into the Ring Archives. At a later date, this Collection could be published and made avail-

able to a wider audience. **John Tarling**, Exeter MM, has kindly agreed to receive and collate any new dances which Sides may wish to put on record.

Hard copy is acceptable but an electronic version (e-mail or floppy disk in Word would be easier to handle and much preferred. It would be helpful to include the following documentation:

- i some background e.g., started in memory etc., etc.
- ii dance notation in the Black Book format
- iii accompanying music
- iv stated preference for Ring Archive storage only
- v stated preference FOR/AGAINST any subsequent publication

Contact John Tarling at:
41, Woodbury Park Axminster Devon EX13 5RA
Tel No: (01297) 34804
[E-mail: dancefolk.john_t@virgin.net](mailto:dancefolk.john_t@virgin.net)



*Four fools at the Winchester Meeting:
photo from Peter Contrastano*

SPECIAL OFFER!

MORRIS DANCERS & ROSE QUEENS

compiled by Johnny Haslett

A UNIQUE REFERENCE AND SOURCE BOOK

This is a definitive work about the sociology of Lancashire at the end of the nineteenth century. Carnivals and Galas that took place in West Lancashire, as the century drew to its close, have been meticulously researched, together with details of all the accompanying morris dancing activity. Selected newspaper reportage from the time, giving a unique perspective on the lives of the ordinary people, is used to paint an amazing picture of the communities of the region as a whole.

Johnny Haslett has put together a brilliant anthology, giving a fascinating insight into life in late Victorian Lancashire; how local inhabitants entertained themselves before the age of mass media; how their community spirit remained strong, regardless of the economic and political climate that prevailed.

Here we have morris dancing teams that travelled distances to perform in towns beyond the county limits, teams that couldn't afford to move about and stayed near home. Morris dancers who were influenced by the dancing of other teams or who started up in a town or village following a visit from dancers of another town. Benefactors who invested in their local team. It's all here.

Then there are letters from ordinary people who witnessed the many lifeboat and charity processions and attended the local Carnivals. People who supported their local dancers like football supporters of today. They were passionate enough to write to their local papers and share experiences via a public medium.

Morris Dancers & Rose Queens will be published in November/December 2003 by **Carnegie Publishing Ltd of Lancaster**, who specialise in the publication of books of special and local interest. To reserve your copy, simply complete the order form below and return it with your remittance to the address shown. If you wish to be included in a List of Subscribers in the front of the book, all you need to do is send your order so that it will be received before 31 October 2003.

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