My photograph shows Horwich Prize Medal dancing to an almost capacity crowd, under initially adverse weather conditions, early in the Trafalgar Square bash. Despite this unpromising start to the day, dancing went on until late afternoon, by which time the bright sunshine was dazzling; the downside was that the wind had freshened, and turned the fountains into horizontal rain for anyone within range. The event featured teams from all three national organisations, & dancers of all abilities & styles. The consensus that I was able to gather indicated a thoroughly enjoyable event, & some enthusiasm for a repeat performance. More pictures & a summary can be found on page 3.
Greetings from the Squire Elect

Hello everyone. I did think that after the ARM things would sort of go back to normal - it seems I was wrong! I would like to thank all the clubs that voted for me and especially Winchester Morris Men for supporting me. Can I also thanky everyone as well who has telephoned, emailed and written with words of congratulations and encouragement. I would also like to acknowledge Mossley and Saddleworth for their excellent organisation of the

ARM and the more than warm welcome that they gave everyone. I consider myself very lucky to have been accepted as Squire of the Morris Ring but I must make mention of Paul Reece from Thaxted Morris Men - we only really met when he became a candidate and I have come to enjoy his company and respect his views.

Soon we will be into a new dancing season and already my diary is pretty full and I sincerely look forward to attending various events around the country and meeting as many of you as possible. Obviously I realise that there are many dancers and musicians I have yet to meet and I apologise in advance if I get your name wrong - please put me right at the time. I do look forward to dancing in at Abbots Bromley in July but more than anything I look forward to "doing my bit" for the Morris Ring. In our morris clubs we find fellowship, belonging, a sense of purpose and friends who are there for you in times of sadness - this is part of the great joy for me in being a morris man.

In finishing, I must mention the Chalice Morris Men for their support during the last couple of years when my head has been "above the parapet" and for their never ending jokes at my expense! I wish you all the best of luck in your endeavours (whatever they are) and look forward to hearing news and especially look forward to being able to support you where and when I can.

Good luck.

Bob Cross, Squire Elect
Public Entertainment
2nd November 2003

An early view of damp Pigsty

King johns' North-west side dancing for Nelson

Westminster MM on home territory

Yateley MM making a splash
The weather was so un-promising that I wore full waterproofs for the journey into central London. The heavens opened as we walked into the Square, and for too long there were stair-rods of wintry rain. The Square was already crowded, with most of the public sheltering in the porch of the National Gallery, but some brave souls (notably Hammersmith) ignored the downpour and danced. Luckily the weather improved through the day, in that the rain stopped and the sun came out. However, the wind freshened, and in the lee of the fountains the rain was now horizontal. There were old friends to greet, and new ones to be introduced to. The dancing was, as always, of variable quality, but enough was good enough to make the whole experience thoroughly worthwhile. Squire Cliff tried to keep everyone on schedule by waving his clipboard, conceding gracefully to the cheerful anarchy of the occasion.

A thoroughly enjoyable day.

Eddie Dunmore.
The Three Morris Organisations
Trafalgar Square, November 2003

I
t was approximately two years ago when we first learned of the impending enactment of the Public Entertainment License Act 2003. The ramifications of this were going to annihilate the music and entertainment industry as it has stood in this country for centuries. Initially the advice was to write to our MPs, sign petitions and generally kick up as much fuss as possible. This was all very good at the time but, in real terms, was going to get us absolutely nowhere.

For some time, the heads of the three Morris organisations have been meeting annually to discuss and coordinate various joint projects. It was at one of these meetings, in John Frearson’s (Morris Ring Bagman) living room, that we realised that we would have to pull together on this one. We would need a principle campaign coordinator; the silence was deafening! It was then proposed that John Bacon would be our man. A short time later he agreed to this appointment by virtue of the fact that he was the one that displayed least resistance. John immediately set to work to involve the EFDS and the Musician’s Union in a consolidated frontal attack on Westminster...we started as three, and then we were five.

The 2nd April 2003 saw the first of several meetings between the five organisations and the Department of Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) in the House of Commons Offices. As a result of John and Clifford’s monthly meetings, it became obvious that the entire DCMS personnel were in serious need of some basic education regarding our cultural history, folklore and traditions.

Over on the West coast, West Somerset Morris Men were out and about when they managed to hijack Mr Ian Lidell-Granger, their Member of Parliament for the Bridgewater area. After a mutual session of carole bending it was agreed that the three organisations would organise a display of Morris Dancing in Parliament Square in the very near future. On Monday 16th June, the Morris Organisations’ scratch team was assembled and ready to perform on the Green. At that event, the PEL Act Green Paper was well heeled into the turf dancing area (see Circular 44, P 16). This was all very high profile with plenty of media and the House of Commons ‘Great and Good’ looking on, just what we needed. The day was nicely wrapped up with a beer on the Commons Terrace...a perfect end to a perfect day.

The DCMS meetings continued until the 8th June when, at last, the following was added to the Bill prior to it being passed by the House of Commons on that same day, “the provision of entertainment or entertainment facilities is not to be regarded as provision of regulated entertainment for the purposes of this Act to the extent that it consists of the provision of (a) a performance of Morris dancing or any dancing of a similar nature or the performance of unamplified, live music as an integral part of such a performance, or (b) facilities for enabling persons to take part in entertainment of a description falling within paragraph (a)”

EUREKA! This was a ‘first’ in the history of all three Morris Organisations. The united front had succeeded in influencing the bureaucratic legislative machinery of our Parliament. Unfortunately our phenomenal success is not yet complete due to the remaining problems with various forms of live music and the amplification of performances. It was the existence of these remaining anomalies that caused the Musicians Union and EFDS to part company with this task force. We are three again.

In order to both acknowledge and publicise our success it was decided to organise the ‘Three Organisations’ massed display of Morris Dance in Trafalgar Square. Then the nightmare started: more meetings with the London authorities. Also to be sorted was the public liability insurance, stewards, a public announcement system, first aid provision, performance licences etc, etc. During this time the clock was ticking away with only eight weeks to go. All was going well until four days before ‘T’ Day. We still did not have a single performance permit to our name. Without this, it would be red faces all around and not a lot happening in the Square. With only days to go, Cliff made a few frantic telephone calls and returned to the Trafalgar Square Offices to bang on a few doors. At the end of the day a very happy Square returned home to Brighton with the required documentation. This was immediately followed by the pleasurable task of informing everyone that all systems were GO!

Sunday, 2nd of November dawned wet and windy... AND IT WAS PERSISTING! At 9.00am I was sitting in the car at the foot of Nelson’s Column and turned to my co-pilot for the day, Mr John Crowther, saying, “It’s not going to happen you know.” Then the Square began to fill with Morris people. Most came prepared and presented a wondrous display of multi-coloured umbrellas. It was at this time that I decided that the Morris Shop was staying warm and dry in the back of the car. The PA man thought the same about his expensive equipment. Eleven o’clock saw the first dance being performed by Hammersmith (Aqua) Morris Men. Soon after, regardless of the conditions, others followed and the show was on. Mid-day saw the bulk of the performers arriving. The sun also decided to put in an appearance and fortunately remained for the rest of the day.

The Square hosted five separate dance spots that were kept fully occupied by 51 Morris sides (MF= 25, MR=15, OM=11) from all of the three Morris Organisations. Yes - all three organisations. This was another ‘first’ for 2003. Then the word was circulated that everyone would gather on the steps at 1.00pm for a group photograph. After a bit of jockeying for a prime spot, the flash bulbs went into rapid mode and the moment was captured for eternity.

The reveley (not the rain) persisted until the pre-arranged home time of 4.00 o’clock. It can only be said that the atmosphere during the entire event was euphoric. As the departures and farewells commenced, cries of “We must all do this again,” could be heard from all directions.

Thankfully, this year has seen the beginning of the three Morris Organisations working together after many years of division. None of us can afford to allow any degree of obstruction to this advancing momentum. No one is advocating any form of amalgamation, or hidden agenda, between the big three organisations. It has always been mutually acknowledged that we each have our own ways and traditions, and long may these continue. But in many things, there is nothing to be lost in the three of us working together for the future and furtherance of the Morris.

Heartiest congratulations to John Bacon (MF), Cliff Marchant (MR) and Chris Hall (OM), for making all of the above happen.

Stephen Adamson BFB Treasurer, the Morris Ring
On a Cold & Frosty Night...

On a cold and frosty night
when the fire burns bright,
you can sit in your old armchair.

SO runs the old song, and that's what 15 Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men and over 75 members of the public should have been doing on Saturday 3 January, except they weren't. Instead, they were all at Old Mill Farm, Bolney, wearing wellies and cold weather clothes performing the custom of Apple Howling.

Apple Howling is an ancient and most curious custom and is well documented throughout the cider growing areas of England, from Kent to Hereford. The earliest reference in Sussex dates from 5 January 1656, when Giles Moore, the Rector of Horsted Keynes records in his diary that the Howling Boys came and he gave them six-pence. Historically, groups of men (or boys) would assemble in the orchard: chants and songs would be sung, toast or buns would be placed in the tree and cider poured over the trunk or roots and a great noise made (usually accompanied by shot-guns). All this helps to improve the apple crop.

The Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men first performed this ancient ceremony in January 1967 at Tendring, Magham Down in East Sussex, followed by a ceilidh in the New Hall. The compare for that evening was Harry Mousdell.

In 1977, the ceremony was again revived, this time nearer to Chanctonbury Ring. Furner's Farm at Henfield was used, and in recent years it has been held at Old Mill Farm, Bolney.

We all met at the Farm at 18:00. Lit flaming torches, and then proceeded down the lane to the Apple Orchard and surrounded the oldest, mature tree. The same tree is used each year, this year apples are still on the tree so a 'proper job' was performed last year!

Doug Parrott, the MC for the evening led us in the traditional chant:

Here’s to thee old apple tree.
May’st thou bud.
May’st thou bough.
Hats full! Caps full!
Bushel bushel bags full!
Sacks full! Barns full!

And our pockets full too!
Hurrah!

Cider was then poured over the trunk of the tree, and a spicy wassail cake placed in a bough, so that robins and other birds may have food and drink during the cold winter.

Another chant:
Stand fast root. Bear well tip.
God send us a howling crop.
Every twig, apples big!
Every bough, apples enow!
Hurrah!

To encourage growth for the forthcoming season, a number of young volunteers came forward, and with twigs and sticks gave the trunk of the tree a good whacking.

Doug announced the Wassail Song, and Paul Setford led the 'Chanctonbury Ring Choir' into the well known song:

Wassail and Wassail
All over the town.
Our cap it is white
And our ale it is brown...

Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men performed some morris dances, including Constant Billy and the Christmas Dance.

A gunshot was fired, and the whole crowd erupted into a Hullabaloo — traditionally anything that made a noise was used: football rattles, pots and pans, and even blowing down a piece of gas pipe! Today, it is much more civilised: drums,
whistles and tambourines being used. Another gunshot. All was quiet.

Three cheers were given for the Apple Orchard, and another for the farmer, Mr Stevens, in the hope that we may return next year.

All retired back to the farm, where spicy wassail cake and cider (or apple juice for the drivers?) was provided for all.

Along with more dances from the Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men. Later in the evening, all was rounded off by more drinking and music at the Royal Oak, Wineham.

Note. The word *enow* in this context may be a local corruption of the words even now = *e'now*, which became *enow*, to rhyme with *bough*. Or it could be the plural of *enough*. Either way, Apple Howling increases the crop!

## The Morris Dancers

I saw the morris dancers
Upon the village green,
The fiddler a tune was playing
In tune with a tambourine.
Their bells were merrily ringing
As they danced to a rhythmic beat,
Their hankies gaily waving
As they clapped and stamped their feet.
They looked so pleased and joyful
As I watched them with delight.
Turning to their partners,
First to left, then right.

For moment I then wondered
As I surveyed this scene sublime,
Twas as if I'd somehow managed
To turn back the hands of time.
Away from violence and wars
From crowds that demonstrate
To a world where folks once found a cause
To sing and celebrate.

My daydreams then were shattered,
The music went quite dead,
These sounds so sweet were drowned by
An aircraft overhead.
I turned to wander down the lane
Where the river peacefully ran,
But my thoughts were so distressing
At the "progrss" made by man.

Betty Taylor

Tony Foxworthy thought I (and, by extension, my readers), might be interested in this snippet lifted from *The pages of This England* (Winter 2003 edition). He also mentioned that a broadcast of BBC2’s Top of The Pops had included a "pop version of some well-known classical pieces", and the pictures they used included the Helston Furry Dance and Bampton Morris’ *inky Wells playing and dancing a jig*.

ED

## An Introduction for the Morris Ring:

SO what do I say? "Young, Debonair, Fit...?" Yes; I know; all in my dreams! So who am I? Well, Trefor Owen, and as of January 1st this year, the new President of the Morris Federation. Currently I dance with the Seven Champions Molly Dancers, Boojum Rapper, Mr Fox and the Flag and Bone Gang! And in my spare time...

My background in Dance began when I was at College in Hull and went down to the local folk club and got to know Green Ginger Morris and Sword as they were. Much as I would like to blame it all on them, I can’t as I found I had been exposed to Morris as a child when my parents took me to visit my uncle in Chorley and we watched some Carnival morris. So it was in the recesses of my memory all the time. After moving back to Liverpool, I became involved in the revival of Horwich Prize Medal Morris, and indeed I found some newspaper cuttings in a box the other day with a photo from 1976... yes those were the hairstyles then!!

So why did I stand for the Presidency? The Power? The Kudos? The Self- Gratification? Hopefully none of these, but possibly a deeply held passion for Traditional Dance.

Maybe I want to put something back in for all the fun the Dance has given me over the years. Certainly I want to support the Dance in anyway I can. I am deeply committed to Standards and Quality of Performance, and will do all I can to further these attributes in teams.

Do I wish the Ring, Open Morris and the Federation to be closer together? Well there have been issues that affect all of us as dancers and we must present a united front to these matters or we will be subsumed into the mire and forgotten. Just think of the consequences if we had not all worked together over the new Licensing virago?"

So yes, all the Dance Organisations must work together on issues of mutual interest but I do accept that variety is the spice of life and everyone has an equal right to hold any view regarding the Dance. I do not intend to push any view of mine on anyone else, but I do hold strongly to my own perceptions of how we must progress to survive!

As the President of the Federation I have been invited to the ARM in Mossley in March and greatly look forward to meeting many of you there, old friends in many cases and maybe some new?

Cheers!
White Rose Morris Men: 50th Anniversary Weekend

26-28 September 2003

To celebrate our 50th Anniversary, White Rose hosted a weekend of dancing and entertainment at Bradley Wood (West Yorkshire scout camp site) in Huddersfield. A total of 23 sides attended including a number from the Morris Ring: Leeds, Rutland, Northampton, Isca, Hexham, Devil's Dyke, East Suffolk, Britannia Coconut Dancers, Ripley and White Rose.

Other sides present were: Kirtlington, Redborne, Dog Rose, Crook, Rivington, Queen's Oak, Mortimers Sergeant, Musgrave's, Hexhamshire Lasses, Buttercross Belles, Shrewsbury, Persephone and Ryknild Raddle. And one representative each from Woodside, Boar's Head (our very own Ring Treasurer, Steve) and Peterborough (well done to John Crickey for driving all the way up from the Soke after their day of dance and arriving in time for our evening ceilidh!).

On Saturday — after a bracing night under canvas for most of us - 6 coach tours carrying around 280 dancers and musicians travelled throughout the surrounding towns, countryside and moorland and danced for bemused but appreciative onlookers on a lovely, warm autumn day. In the evening, after a 3-course meal, a ceilidh was held featuring our musician Nick and his band, English Rebellion (with caller Sheila Mainwaring) with show dancing by White Rose and Dog Rose during an intermission. Congratulations to all who donned 50s dress, particularly the chap with knotted head hanky, Fair Isle pullover, pipe, deckchair, cricket bat and Radio Times (the latter two genuine 1953 items).

Special thanks must go to our scouting hosts who prepared all the food and ran the bar (fully 20 barrels of real ale and cider were polished off). Their splendid breakfasts (including proper porridge and treacle) will be talked about for many a long year! Interestingly, Morris music and dancing workshops are being organised for early next year at the same venue following an enthusiastic request for tuition from the scouts - who knows, we might even pick up a few, much needed, new members.

All in all, a thoroughly enjoyable weekend and definitely one to be repeated in 50 years’ time!

Richard Fowler, Bagman
WHITE ROSE

Roger Venables (1934-2003),
Green Man's Morris & Sword

The news of Roger’s death after being involved in a road accident on Saturday, 22nd November in Leicestershire came as a great shock to all members of Green Man. Only the previous week he had sat at top table at our annual feast and was playing his accordion with the other musicians for the dancing before and after the meal.

Roger was greatly committed to Green Man. He and I didn't meet up at Green Man until after his National Service demobilisation in 1959. He was Squire of the club when we were presented with our staff of office by Jim Phillips at the Reigate Ring Meeting after we had danced into the Moms Ring at Ludlow the previous year. During those early years of Green Man (when we were all young and fit), Roger was in the team that danced at the Mansion House in Dublin on two successive years, the Killkenny Beer Festival, Bergamo in northern Italy and Erbach in Germany. He always insisted in a high quality of the dance and the general appearance of the whole team as a unit. They were great days. Many of us married during the early sixties (our wives were our partners in the Annual Birmingham Festivals and accompanied us as the “Green Man Dancers” on some of the foreign trips.

During those early days when musicians were hard to come by, Roger sensed the difficulty of having live music at our many displays and took to playing an accordion. From then on we relied heavily on Roger’s playing as well as dancing. When his elder brother, John, became Squire of the Ring in the early 70s, Roger and other members of the Club gave valuable support over the next two years.

Green Man were present each year for at least one of the many Ring Meetings at this time. The Venables families eventually moved back to Burgh-le-Marsh in Lincolnshire to where the family had grown up and were keen to show the Green Man style of dancing to the locals. Weekend festivals and dancing displays at the local church fete were organised with great proficiency by both Roger and John. Many of our friends in the Ring still talk about the Foreman’s weekend which was held in the village hall in Burgh that happened during John’s two-year reign.

Roger’s involvement was greatly curtailed when he and Brenda embarked on a new life in 1989. Roger took a new job helping the tenants run Gunby Hall, a National Trust property near Burgh-le-Marsh. We occasionally saw them at Ladies Night and the Greenhill Bower, Lichfield where Roger would help in the distribution of the beer to the Dancers at the halfway “break” during the procession.

Six years ago Roger suffered an aortic aneurysm and thanks to prompt surgery, good nursing and Brenda’s care he returned to health. Early retirement followed a year later to Burgh and for the past four years we saw him at Green Man Feasts and with Brenda at the Bower and various wedding anniversaries including their own in May.

Roger is survived by his wife Brenda, their children Helen, Graham, Tony and Hayley (daughter-in-law) and grandson Jake.

Colin Spencer.
It started with a badge

I have been a member of Mayflower since 1986 and over the subsequent years have built up a collection of badges, which are distributed about my Fools kit (readers please note, donations gratefully received).

Earlier this year I attended Standon Ale and saw someone wearing a Britannia Coconut Badge. I duly contacted Joe Healy their sec and requested to purchase one for my own collection.

The badge duly arrived with the promise of a special centenary badge when available. I phoned my thanks to Joe and promised a Mayflower 30 year badge, which also was in production. Joe's badge arrived first, with details that there were to be centenary celebrations on Saturday 6th September. By pure chance I had pre-booked those dates as holiday and so I decided I would make the journey to see the Nutters in action. Later that same week I had some kind of mental flash which led me to believe that Abbots Bromley performed on the Monday; my daughter checked the internet and indeed confirmed that to be true. It was then a matter of frantic phone calls to arrange accommodation.

I duly travelled from Billericay to Bacup on the Friday and, browsing around the town, met my first Nutter (Ronnie) when I purchased a postcard from his shop. We chatted at length and then in the evening I finally met Joe, his lovely wife Lynne, and other Nutters: Tom (Joes brother), Dick (The leader), and other members. We had a drink, decorated the hall for the following day's Ceilidh and Joe mentioned to Dick that I had a Fools kit in the car. Without hesitation I was invited to wear it and "join in" the fun. I offered to carry a collecting box to justify my position, which was readily accepted.

Next day I met further Nutters: Martin, Ken and others, who I regret I do not have names for. Saddlerow, with whom I was last with on a Forest of Dean weekend 11 years ago, were there, as were Handssworth Long Sword (whom I had never seen perform — excellent!), Bradshaw Mummers, who were hilarious; and there was Camden Clog from London who are, what do you call them? Oh yes, girls! They were great and I think with their dancing and warm smiles set many a man's heart rate up. There was also a champion Mother and Daughter clog act whose name I didn't catch, but they did a stunning display, both solo and duo.

It was a wonderful afternoon and evening of celebration and going round with my box I was able to see the heartfelt affection the locals have for the Nutters. Even during a couple of short showers of rain the audience didn't dwindle. The next morning, after breakfast, I popped round to Joe's to say my goodbyes to him and Lynne, with the hope that I will see them again - possibly at Trafalgar Square on November 2nd.

I made the pleasant trip to Abbots Bromley where I duly arranged an early breakfast to be able to see the horns collected from the church. Although I had seen photos of the horn dance, the sheer size of the horns astounded me. The next surprise was the pace that the dancers perform at. I am ex-Army, but their pace was like that of light infantry. A crowd of us duly followed the route and at one spot I cautiously asked a dancer whether I could have a photo taken holding a set of horns. I think that I expected to be told that I was unworthy of such an honour, but, no, the horns were readily given to me. At the next venue Richard Keen of Thames Valley Morris spotted my Mayflower sweatshirt and introduced himself; we then spent most of the rest of the day together. At the next venue the owner of the house where they were dancing said she would want 2 male volunteers to take part in the dance and Richard and I almost fell over each other seizing the opportunity. During the course of the day we met Steve Rowley of Gloucester and John Edwards of Stafford with whom I attended Fools and Beasts UnConvention. My one regret over the whole weekend was that I declined the invitation to join Stafford in "William and Nancy" because I didn't feel my legs were up to it. Richard and I went to the church, saw the returned horns, and joined in the service. We then shook hands and went our separate ways agreeing that "Jim'll Fix It" couldn't have done a better job! I got home after a 600 mile trip and told my wife that I had enjoyed a wonderful weekend; treated with nothing but warm friendship throughout, not only by dancers but families likewise. I consider I was privileged to have been part of it all, and as I said in the beginning, it started with a badge.

Tony Motley Squire, Mayflower Morris Men
Manchester in Malta

Opportunities to dance outside of the UK are always a delight to receive, and invariably turn out to be tremendous occasions. Those dancers who participate, apart from enjoying the opportunity to perform for an enthusiastic foreign audience, also collect long lasting memories and some excellent materials for the club archive/scrapbook. Manchester Morris Men have found this to be true from previous dancing excursions enjoyed in Sweden, France, Belgium and Germany and now, in October last year, Malta. Invitations to some of these events came from local organisers, whilst others were planned by MMM ‘country’ members working in some highly attractive European cities. Our trip to Malta in October fell into both categories.

One of our club members, George Clapton, (ex Jockey), is currently resident in Malta assisting the Maltese Government to ready themselves for entry into the EU. The Maltese have a great affection for the English and so it wasn't too long before George was proposing that the club paid him a visit.

After choosing the weekend of 4/5th October 2003 for the tour, an unexpected bonus was discovered: that weekend was also the date of the Birgu Festival, a spectacular biennial festival celebrating Malta’s oldest maritime city of Birgu, or Vittoriosa as it has been known since successfully withstanding the Great Siege of 1565. On realizing this, George made contact with the Festival organisers and ‘offered our services’ — which were warmly accepted. Teams of folk dancers from Portugal and Italy were already confirmed performers, and so the organisers quickly changed their promotional materials, adding Manchester Morris Men to their festival web site.

Leaving a gloomy Manchester on Friday 3 October, we arrived three hours later in Malta in a temperature over 30° C! “This is going to be a warm one!” was the general forecast for the weekend, and later events, and humidity, confirmed this to be an understatement. Our accommodation was with George, in his rented villa, that proved to be a wonderfully spacious building, easily coping with the 10 of us making the trip. As an added bonus, it was located just across the road from the ‘Couvre Porte’ one of the main gateway entrances into Birgu.

Friday afternoon was spent acclimatising and looking around Birgu, before our evening visit to the wine cellars of Marsovin — one of Malta’s leading wine producers — for a tasting of around a dozen of their wines. Very enjoyable!

Saturday morning, after a warm up session, saw our first performance as part of the festival. This took place in Victory Square in Birgu where, in temperatures again in the 30s, we performed both Cotswold and North West processional dances, sharing the occasion with both the Portuguese and Italian country dance teams. It was astounding how many English people in the audience came across saying how pleased they were to see us and to thank us for our dancing. Many were on holiday, others resident on the Island.

After the show and a boat trip across the Grand Harbour to Valetta in two of the colourful traditional ‘luzzu’, a leisurely lunch was followed by dancing for ourselves in the Upper Barrakka Gardens and outside the Cathedral. After a much needed beer break, it was time for a relaxing swim and free time. Dinner on Saturday evening was in Birgu at an open-air restaurant in a medieval square next to the ‘Couvre Porte’ where, after a good meal, we danced for the other diners, before involving them in some
general dancing and singing. What an unexpected delight it was to be eating and dancing outside on an October evening!

Sunday had one of the highlights of the festival - the Grand Master's pageant entitled 'The Joyous Celebrations of the Victory of the Great Siege 1565'. After the pageant we danced Cotswold and North West professional in Victory Square - once again at lunchtime in the heat! Sunday afternoon was free for men to collect their strength before the Sunday evening onslaught at the Maltese 'Octoberfest', organised by Lowenbrau at their brewery in Malta. This was a totally packed event with sideshows, attractions and stages for concerts, all set out in the grounds of the brewery. We danced in amongst the crowds and again were surrounded by English speaking folks wanting to chat - for which we were grateful, as the evening was remarkably warm and humid! At the end of a very warm, humid and alcoholic evening we returned, dripping wet, to George's.

On Monday, a non-dancing day, the organisers of the Birgu Festival had very kindly arranged and paid for us to be given a guided tour of the old Maltese Capital of Mdina, and neighbouring Rabat. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the tour and we returned in good time to make our way to the airport for a late afternoon departure for Manchester.

A thoroughly enjoyable four days was had by all with good dancing and appreciative crowds. It was hot - but it made a change from the wet of Manchester! We're all looking forward to what might happen in 2005 the next time Malta holds its Birgu Festival.

David Doolin, Manchester Morris Men

Spring 2004 page 11
The Saga of Jonathan & the Hat

This story is a parable about team spirit, and being able to trust yourfellows; perhaps. The occasion was the 1993 Yorkshire Tour of the Rutland Morris Men, and the location was Tunnel End, Marsden, West Yorkshire. For reasons which have not been explained, the Rutland Black Topper went for a swim. Obviously, such a prized symbol of membership & office could not be abandoned to a watery grave without a rescue effort being made. After some discussion, and having been assured that a towel and dry clothing were to hand, Jonathan Unna volunteered to retrieve the hat.

It was fortunate that a photographer was on hand to capture the drama of the moment. The first, large, photograph shows the moment when the team are anxiously watching the hat, wondering whether it can stay afloat long enough for the rescue to be made. To its right is a long-distance shot of the unfortunate hat, obviously waterlogged, and seemingly doomed to a watery grave. The narrow format plate in the left-hand column shows the moment of triumph, with Jonathan courageously grasping the hat prior to helping it back to safety. The final picture is somewhat ambiguous. A cynical mind might just believe that Jonathan is being fended off, but I am assured that he was given a hero’s welcome. However, it has to be admitted that the promise of a towel and dry clothing turned out to be somewhat optimistic.

I am grateful to Dave Caswell for first apprising me of this dramatic episode during the Yorkshire Tour, and to Davey Vincent for the accompanying photographs. I am assured that both Jonathan and the hat have recovered from their immersion with no observable ill-effects.

ED

Dave Caswell, in The Hat, 12th October
50th Sidmouth International Festival

Join the Gold Rush!

For the last 50 years, the seaside town of Sidmouth in Devon has come alive with the sound of music, dance and song during Sidmouth International Festival and 2004 is the Golden Jubilee of this landmark event. Running from 30 July - 6 August, the preparations are well underway to make this one to remember. Alongside a great line-up there will be special events to mark the Golden Jubilee and get all visitors in the Festival party mood. Look out for old favourites and new shows put together especially for Sidmouth. A full list of artists confirmed so far can be found at www.sidmouthfestival.com

Just confirmed are Kate Rusby & John McCusker, two award-winning stars of the acoustic music scene who will join the celebrations with a whole host special guests to be announced soon. England's favourite award winning folk family are joining together for a Watson Family Special with Norma Waterson, Martin Carthy, Eliza Carthy, a rare appearance from Mike Waterson and many other family members. To celebrate the Golden Jubilee there is a series of “Across the Generations” Concerts featuring many major artists including a Chipolatas special show with Taffy Thomas plus other famous family gatherings.

The Festival spreads into venues throughout the town where there is 8 full days of concerts, dances and workshops to choose from. At the Radio 2 Concert Stage Ham Marquee enjoy headline acts including singer, songwritere and guitarist extraordinaire Ralph McTell; superb Irish group Dana; Basque Country phenomenon Kepa Junker; with his band and captivating duo John Tams & Barry Coops. Tony Bonn & Roy Bailey perform 'The Writing on the Wall' which won BBC Radio 2’s “Best Live Act” in 2003. Plus outstanding American singer, songwritere and guitarist Chris Smither; a cappella super group Coops Boyes & Simpson; the one and only Sid Kipper and a long overdue return for the well loved Australian family the Fagans.

Dance the Festival away at the Festival Dance House with top bands including Oyster Ceilidh Band with special guests, BELLOWhead - the Spiers and Boden Big Band and BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards nominees Whapweasel. Celebrate at Golden Jubilee Ceilidhs with Festival favourites Flowers & Frolics and the Old Swan Band including a special historic line-up. Don’t miss 1980’s ceilidh legends Tiger MOTH who have reformed only for 2004. Social dancers are in for a treat with a full programme of dances and workshops including Chris Hinkie and Gene Murrow from the USA, Colin Hume plus many guest callers invited to help celebrate 50 years of Sidmouth Dance. As well as top concerts, the Arena Theatre, a 5,000 seater open-air amphitheatre is the home to the ever popular World of Dance shows. Artists confirmed so far include the amazing Tibetan monks from Tashi Lhunpo Monastery; Ensemble Halychny from Ukraine; Ensemble Kasava from the Czech Republic and Festival Favourites Black Umfolosi 5. For something closer to home catch local East Devon sensations Kagemusha TALKO or the British Coco-nut Dancers of Bacup whose traditional dances are not to be forgotten. We are still talking to groups from Peru, France and Sicily and expect confirmations shortly.

Shooting Roots, the Festival’s youth programme celebrates its 10th birthday this year. Choose from workshops in music & song, dance or theatre leading to Shows at the end of the week plus sessions, concerts and special events. The Children’s Festival theme this year is ‘Jewellery, Rings & Sparkly Things’. There will be a full programme bursting with craft activities, fun and games, workshops and much more. Further information on these can be found on the website at www.sidmouthfestival.com.

The Festival provides plenty of opportunity to get more involved through its top quality workshops (classes) throughout the week. There are plenty of chances to have a go at dance styles from around the world including European, African, Irish Set, Appalachian, Dutch, Cajun and English Morris. Sing your heart out at Festival Choir with Sandra Kerr or try Voice Work with Chris Coe. Instrumental workshops include Festival Big Band, Taiko drumming, fiddle, melodeon, guitar and percussion. Or join the Tibetan group to learn more about the mysterious mountain traditions.

A Season ticket for the whole week or selected days is the easiest way to see the Festival. It is your passport to ALL events but if you can only pop in and out of workshops then we offer a Workshop Season ticket. These come in books of 5 for you to do with as you wish, use all 5 for yourself or share amongst your friends We have continued our extended range of Season ticket Family Packages so it is even easier for the whole family to come and help us celebrate our Golden Jubilee.

Information on tickets (including discounts available on Season tickets), campsites and accommodation are available now. For more details contact the Festival Office, PO Box 296, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3XU.

Box Office: 01629 827010
info@sidmouthfestival.com
www.sidmouthfestival.com

Hexham Morrismen: MORRIS STANDARDS

Dear Editor

This is the time of year that we review the highs and lows of last season and make plans for next year. There is (quite rightly) some debate within the Morris movement about how we maintain standards. However, most of us agree that we should avoid giving ammunition to those members of the public who are all too ready to mock morris dancing. In this regard, two events last summer caused concern to a number of dance sides and festival organisers. Both involved unscheduled performances by ‘ad hoc’ dance teams. Neither did anything to enhance the reputation of Cotswold Morris. We witnessed both, and have been encouraged by a number of people to raise this matter openly.

The first event, at Sidmouth Festival, involved ‘Motley Morris’. Not the established border side of the same name, but a random group of dancers who were not even in kit and who had clearly made little or no effort to standardise their dancing. Nevertheless, they danced at an official performance spot alongside invited teams, from England and overseas. Sidmouth calls itself First Amongst Festivals and has a justified reputation at home and abroad. Consequently, members of the public, and international dance teams, could assume that the cheerful shambles of Motley Morris rep-

Continued on page 14
From page 13

resents an acceptable standard for English traditional dance reinforcing the poor public image of Morris dancing.

Although their stunt backfired, at least Motley were well-meaning. the same cannot be said of 'Scratch Morris' who disrupted another excellent festival at Whitby. In past years their stunts at Whitby have included 'gatecrashing' the 1999 dance finale photo (which was meant to be used as the millennium programme front cover), and offending many by starting to carry a mock coffin in the parade. This year, they invaded the parade, barricaded and at tempted to trip dancers from another team, and 'gatecrashed' the finale at the Bandstand after being explicitly told by the dance coordinator not to perform there. They had clearly deliberately set out to annoy Organisers and performers alike.

There is a long history of fooling in Morris and the best teams (Great Western, Windsor etc) can hardly be accused of lacking humour. Their comedy, however, is an adjunct to the dance. The clown on the high wire is the best acrobat, not someone larking about and bringing the show into disrepute. As the squire of one team said to us there are enough people taking the mickey out of Morris dancing without Morris dancers doing it. Every experienced Morris Fool knows that there is a fine line between being funny and silly. This stuff is well the wrong side of the line.

There may be a debate about the value of such performances on aesthetic or historical grounds. After all, some of these folks are experienced dancers. They may genuinely believe that what others regard as their tatty kit and their erratic dancing are representations of the anarchic, anti-authority spirit of the "real" Morris tradition. We should try to avoid becoming embroiled in a sterile internal wrangle, and think instead about what the public might want to see. Roy Dommett wisely observed (albeit in a different context) that what matters is not so much what dancers think, but whether they perform what the audience enjoys watching. Judging by the hostile reception they received from the crowd at Whitby, Scratch Morris still have a good deal to learn about pleasing audiences. Be that as it may, their habit of wilfully disrupting performances by booked teams at public dance events is wholly unforgivable.

Best wishes

Roger Kennington (Squire)

---

From John Jenkyn

Dear Eddie

DO you, or any of your readers, have any information about the origins of the dance/tune 'Orange in Bloom'? I, like other men I have asked have always assumed that it has something to do with William of Orange. I was, therefore, intrigued to see in 'The Farmers Weekly' of 26 September 2003, a paragraph about the forthcoming sale of Oranges Farm near Sherborne, Glos. Does the farm have any connection with the dance, and do either of them have any association with the said monarch?

Yours sincerely,

John Jenkyn

---

From David Jackson,
The King's Morris

Dear Eddie,

Further to Mike Heaney's article "Observations on early images of Morris dancers" (Morris Dancer, Vol. 3, No. 11), I thought that the enclosed article from "Woodworker" magazine (August 1983) would be of interest. The illustrated article deals with a set of figures carved by Erasmus Grasser, described as Munich's most important woodcarver of the late Gothic period. The set of Morris dancers were commissioned for Munich's Town Hall, a lavish building which had only just been completed, in 1480. 10 of the original 16 figures survive, and are now in Munich city museum. As the text states, the fool, the maiden and the musician are three of the six missing Grasser figures, but the dancers seem to show a close affinity to the Van Meckenem engraving.

Yours sincerely,

David Jackson
From Oakham, we were taken by coach to the Cuckoo, at Wing, for the second pitch of Rutland Water. One of the dancing spots was the grandly-named Whitwell Harbour: a jetty on Rutland Water. Once again, a thoroughly enjoyable weekend; for which, many thanks to the excellent Rutland team. 

Eddie Dunmore.

These photos are a very small sample from another weekend in the enjoyable company of Rutland Morris and their guests. Once again, I enjoyed the comforts of the Fox at Exton while the remainder of North Wood toughed it out, indoor camping in the village Hall. However, they trooped over to the pub for breakfast, after which a contingent went on expedition to Melton Mowbray to stock up on pork pies and other delicacies.

A notable addition to the North Wood contingent this year was our newest recruit, who may be familiar to some of you. He can be seen just behind Paul B & Taylor in the top left frame. This pair of comedians the day. Here a massed Banks of the Dee was danced, at our newest member's insistence. From Wing we were driven to the Bewicke Arms, to dance beside a memorial cross. Lunch was enjoyable, & the session was enlivened by a competition to construct a statue with the large-size Lego that was available. After lunch, a visit to East Carlton Park Museum gave Paul an opportunity to hide himself inside a large cast iron pipe.

Eventually we returned to Exton, and a Feast made memorable by the retiring Squire becoming extremely tired and emotional. We also treated one of the landladies of the Fox & Hounds to a hoist to commemorate our visit. Sunday morning breakfast was held at the Coun-
Editorial

THIS edition comes with a I owe a debt of gratitude, more than usually ab for maintaining good humour throughout the process. Assuming that we do manage to make the May launch, I would welcome first reactions for the new Circular (Number 47), typesetting early July.

The ramifications of the Public Entertainment Licensing Act are still slowly making themselves evident. I am currently in the process of making contact with my local authority (the London Borough of Croydon), in the hope of exerting some influence over the terms of the Act’s local implementation. I would suggest that it might be an idea for every side to do the same thing, as the devil will be in the detail of the local bye-laws. Do remember, though, that any contact will have to be co-ordinated centrally; which may mean that Cliff continues his sterling work in this area.

An extra that comes with editorial is to receive publications from the MF and the Open Morris. The MF’s Directory 2004 has just arrived, and I note that their membership is now 335 clubs (give or take, depending on the accuracy of my count). The most recent totals for the Morris Ring show 163 Full Members and 43 Associate Members, a grand total of 206 sides. My impression is that the Ring has been suffering a slow erosion of membership over recent years, having achieved a zenith in its eventual survival or otherwise. Your views, as ever, will be welcomed (particularly if they originate outside the set of “usual suspects”).

Finally, I would suggest that the Editorial is where that functionality has the opportunity to display personal opinions (and prejudices, even). With a planned three Circulars/year, I would estimate that my editorial responsibilities are the equivalent of at least one month per year of full-time employment. Any aspirant successor will need to be aware of this, if both publications are kept as a single responsibility. As I mentioned above, copy date for the next Circular is scheduled for the first week of July; until then, enjoy your dancing.

Eddie Dunmore.

Ted Purver

LAST month I received some sad news, which may not have reached the wider morris world. I knew, and liked Ted, having first met him when he acted as Recorder for Advisory Council meetings (in the days when they were still being held in London). I have attached the relevant parts of the letter below.

Dear Mr Dunmore

My late uncle, Ted Purver, of Coulsdon, was a keen Morris man. Sadly, he passed away last August. At his funeral, a lady who was with her husband asked me to save any Morris memorabilia amongst his effects. Unfortunately, I can’t remember the name of the lady. I believe that she was from Cambridgeshire.

I found some Morris papers, plus a stick and cross-over straps worn over the upper body (sorry, but I don’t know their correct name). As I don’t know how to trace the lady who wanted these effects, I thought I would ask for your help. Perhaps you would be able to track down the lady and gentleman. If not, would you like them? Regarding volume, the papers would fit (tightly) in two carrier bags.

I have suggested that the lady could send them to me as an interim solution. If the Cambridge couple could contact me, I will then pass on Ted’s memorabilia to them. My guess is that it will consist primarily of Ted’s Travelling Morris kit and, perhaps, some of his archive. Whatever the truth of the matter, could interested parties please get in touch?

Eddie Dunmore.