



Abbots Bromley dance at the Abbots Bromley Meeting

The Sunday morning snow included a very special treat for the big crowd, and also for all the dancers present. The horns were brought from the church, and we were given a command performance. The icing on the cake was that Past Squire Daniel Fox was invited to join in the second (or was it third?) Display of the Horn Dance.

An invitation was extended to Daniel to return to Abbots Bromley to take part in their scheduled display in September. Perhaps a report on this event will appear in Circular 49, under the new editor.

The weekend, like all weekends, had its highs and its lows. The Saturday lunch, purportedly a unique local delicacy, seemed to me to be a crêpe

that had an egg & bacon filling rather than the typical French choices. On the other hand, some of us were lucky enough to be introduced to Patrick Lichfield at Shugborough Hall (he and I briefly discussed the economic benefits of digital photography). On Sunday morning, Adrian Wedgwood introduced me to Bill Tidy, who was kind enough to produce a cartoon specifically for this issue (see page 7).

Circular 49 will have a new editor; I would like to thank you all for tolerating me for so long. I wish my successor well, and as much enjoyment as I have had over the years.

Morris on!

Eddie Dunmore.



The Squire

Although now we are back into the practice season there is still quite a bit of dancing to do outside as it were. Since I danced in at the Abbots Bromley Ring Meeting in July it seems never a weekend goes by without some dancing, albeit the only two weekends I had free my better half convinced me that at long last I ought to lay the kitchen floor - for those of you who have been following the saga this is now put to rest.

The weekend following my dancing in was spent at the Standon 50th Anniversary weekend. Derek Wisbey and the Standon men organised what I consider to be a model weekend of dance. All the teams dancing have had long standing relationships with Standon and I rather felt like a new kid on the block but the atmosphere of the weekend, the venues and food I consider to be worthy of one of those weekends that you will always remember. Well done, Standon.

The next weekend I found myself on was the annual bash with Foresters (Nottingham) and my own club, Chalice, on

our patch down at Bleadon in Somerset. This was a wonderful weekend spent with old friends and I must admit by the end of the weekend I was really relaxing into the office of Squire. However neither my own club, nor Foresters, would let me get away with being the 'boss' as it were. The weather was almost too fantastic but we coped as best we could.

The latter part of August found me at Saddleworth for the 30th Rushcart weekend. This was my second time at Saddleworth - the last was in 1986 - but even though I have never been a regular attendee, unlike many of you, the warmth of welcome and the sheer spectacle of the event was quite amazing. I must pay tribute to Saddleworth for their determination in keeping up such a fine standard of organisation and it goes without saying such a fine standard of dancing.

Because of a prior commitment I had previously declined the invitation from Monkseaton to their weekend of dance in early September. Fortunately for me my prior en-

agement was cancelled and I was able to get on the phone and speak to Andrew Morris of Monkseaton and beg a place. He said they would then be doubly honoured as the immediate past Squire, Cliff, was also attending. I was very sad when I heard that Cliff had taken a fall, was concussed and suffering headaches and could not go (he is much better now I'm glad to say). Again the organisation of this weekend was exemplary. Apart from the wind (weather type I mean) the whole event was superb from start to finish and all those who danced at this weekend can be justifiably proud of their dancing and music.

All of the above may seem as though everything in the garden is wonderful but we all know differently and no matter what event I have been on I am constantly made aware of club fears for the future. One thing that occurs to me is because we have "so much on" recruitment is very often left to hoping that you can attract new members from the crowd. In these days of people working such long hours commitment to a group or society is becoming more difficult. Whatever organisation you meet or speak with, it could be the local bell ringers or a local choir, they all have one thing in common - a lack of new and younger members. We must, as I have said before, stay positive and optimistic. I know that the Morris Ring and therefore your

clubs will turn the corner. This is not to say that I haven't had some very sad discussions with members of clubs who fear that their team is due to fold soon. Optimism alone cannot help them and it will be the greatest sadness for me to see any club have to hand in its staff.

It occurs to me though that perhaps during the winter season clubs looking for new recruits, and I'm sure that's all of us, should set aside practice sessions especially for new recruits. Perhaps after a stint of very hard publicity drives this could be on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon rather than an evening practice session. Daytime taster sessions may attract men rather than turning up cold in the dark. Maybe you have tried this approach - did it work? I look forward to hearing from clubs who have tried or are trying new ways to recruit. If you've been successful let us in on the secret.

Finally, I look forward to meeting more of you during the winter Feasts and Ales and I thank you all again for the support I have been receiving especially from the Bagman and Treasurer, can I also thank publicly those wives, partners and families who have welcomed me into their homes during these last few months. Thank you.

Wassai4

The Squire



The past Squire

Gentlemen,

LAST July each side received, with the Bagman's newsletter, a note from the Squire regarding the setting up

of a working party to look at where the Morris Ring might be in 10/20 years time. Your ideas were asked for: how we could promote the dancing traditions, and encourage new member-

ship? The request was that you should get them to the Squire by the end of September — so far Bob has received three!!!

On my journeys around the country I have heard many of you give your views on the Ring, so put pen to paper, or email Bob now — we want to hear from you, the sides

Since I danced out as Squire in July I have had a less hectic two months, enjoying going out and dancing with my own side on a Wednesday evening. Chanctonbury Ring recently held a North West workshop

open to both sexes which was very successful. We even gained some new (male) members. So there are men out there, wanting to join the Morris! Try doing the same, or contact a side near you and have a joint effort; you have the next six months of the practice season to try something.

I hope you all have an enjoyable practice season and that your foreman/captain keeps you off the ground'.

Wassail,

Cliff Marchant.

Kennet Morris Men visit Ferrette Morris Men

The village of Ferrette is situated inconspicuously between the Jura and Voges mountains in Alsace at a point where travellers from France made their way through a gorge, down a rocky ridge and out into the Rhine Valley. It has been popular with visitors since pre-historic times — whoever had the better army took it over - including the Swedish army. The present castle is in ruins even though its owner is the Prince of Monaco. In recent years the invaders have been foreigners who work in Basel but find it too expensive to live in Switzerland. Some of these invaders have included ex morris men from England including Peter Sandbach (Kennet), Mark Howes (Gibbet and Lagabag) and John Hare (Thames Valley). The latest, and, judging by local press reports, most fearsome invaders of all were the Kennet Morris Men, their wives and friends who descended on Ferrette for a long weekend between 18th and 23rd June (*Photo 1, right*).

On Saturday the two sides danced in Basel (*Ferrette MM, below*) where an arts festival was taking place. We danced in the shadow of the biggest inflatable sex toy we've ever seen - a 50 foot high female nude. There was

also a public convenience made of one-way mirrors. Outsiders couldn't see in but the person inside could see out and had a 360 degree panorama of everything going on in the street around them.

"Towers" of beer were ordered at the Fischerstube, our first morning break. If a large group turns up at the bar, and are not sure how much they are going to drink, they order a "tower". Standing about 5 ft high the towers are unusual even by local standards. They are transparent columns are filled with five litres of beer. They are stood on a table and the beer is drawn off into as many glasses as necessary from a tap at the bottom.

Lunch for some consisted of the biggest sausages ever seen (*Photo top left, page 4*). They were definitely filling. Throughout the rest of the weekend, however, if anyone saying they were hungry would be offered the remains of an uneaten sausage from a pocket or a handbag.

Shoes hurting? Simply dance barefoot as Peter Jones (Kennet and Cup Hill) did in Basel's Barfussplatz - literally "bare foot place" - a square outside a church once run by an order of bare footed monks (*Photo bottom left, page 4*).



In the evening we finished at an Irish pub. The coach to take us back to Ferrette failed to turn up. Its driver had

become lost in Basel. No problem! We just waited for the blue flashing lights as the police escorted him to the rendezvous point only a few minutes late. Regrettably he got lost again on the way out of Basel too.

The Sunday saw us visit wine producers in Germany and France as well as a restaurant with curious mirrors which enabled the ladies to see into the gent's and the gents to see into the ladie's. Is the town square in Eguisheim (France) too big to dance in, Sir? No problem! Just do Monks March in a wine press (*Photo top right, page 4*). An attempt to do it in a nearby disused well failed.

On the Monday we performed at the local infant/junior school and it's time to tell you about Ferrette's animal, add a personal note and a few thoughts on how we, as morris men, engage our audiences. The





emblem of Ferrette is a carp and this has been adopted as the side's animal. They have paid a lot of money for a large, gilded, one. Ferrette are, however, a small side and at various times during the weekend found themselves short of men. Kennet dancers were therefore, from time to time, volunteered to go into the carp. It takes two men to mount the carp on its animator's shoulders, after which it is bolted in position. From inside the wearer can appreciate the view of Europe that the captain of a mini submarine would

have. Apparently I animated the carp quite well and actually enjoyed it. By the end of the weekend you can guess what I kept getting volunteered for. Regrettably, Ferrette is only a small village and there are not many opportunities to hide away and change secretly in and out of a 6ft long submarine so the children got to find out who was in the carp. Not only did they find out who was in the carp but they all wanted to be his friend! Have a look at the group photograph taken at the junior school. (Photo middle right). Are the children looking at the camera?

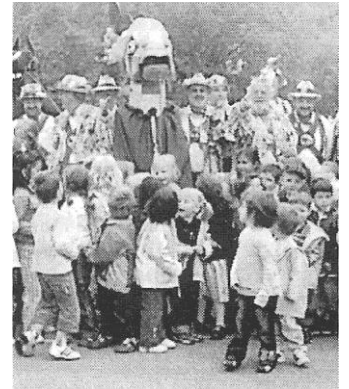
I have a nightmare of being surrounded by children all talking at once. My worst nightmare is of being surrounded by children all talking at once in a language I don't quite understand. I was besieged. How did I escape? After a little thought I started to ask them all in turn, in French, what their names were and how old they were. Calm was restored in an instant. Some of the girls names were really nice but and I am pleased to say that before long, they were all



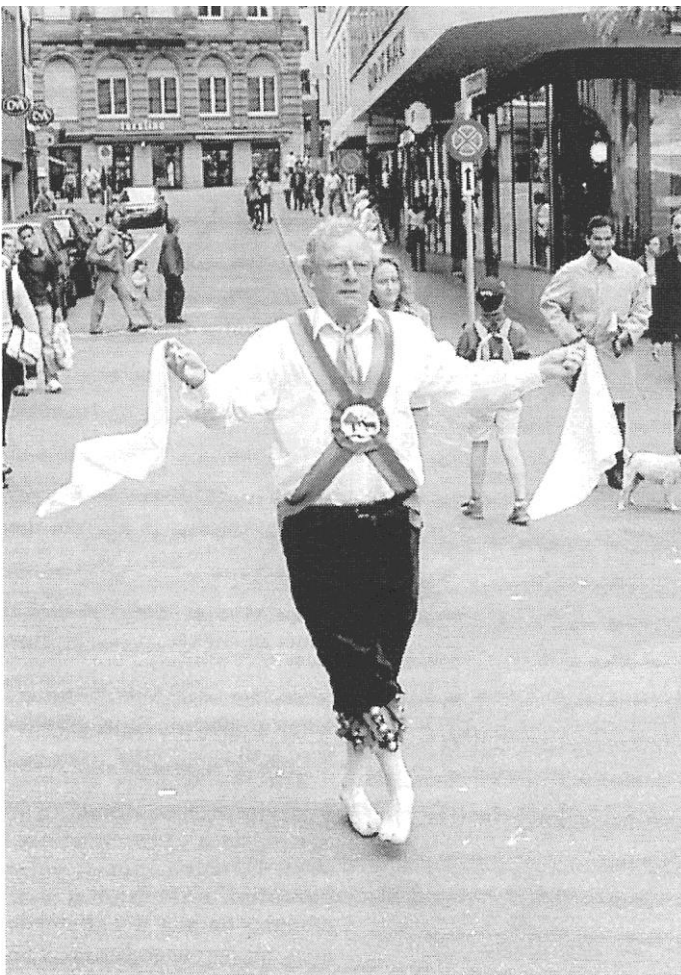
called back into school. It didn't end there though. By definition, when we go abroad we are strangers - so much so that many people are afraid of travelling. At the music festival in the village that evening, however, I was greeted by young children as an old friend. Not only were large numbers of children pleased to see me but they dragged their parents, brothers and sisters up to meet me and, if I was dressed as the carp, would insist that I crouched down so that they could all stroke it. Constantly getting up and down with a carp the size of a submarine my shoulders at my age is no mean feat!

Also at the village music festival was a gifted 13 year old musician called Johann Mazuy. He could play morris dance tunes faultlessly on what I believe were the Breton pipes. He had never met morris men before but could accompany our dances solo. (Photo bottom right)

At half past twelve that night there was a small earthquake. Mature members of the party upstairs in bed in the hotel and trying to get some sleep noticed it. Younger members of the party downstairs in the bar performing "Kenny the Kangaroo - garoo - garoo", falling through the stage and trying to keep everyone awake, failed to notice it. The earthquake was independently witnessed by the most mature members of the party who had left village to stay in a remote gite in order to try to get some sleep.



CHRIS HUTCHINSON



Stroud International Pipe and Tabor Festival, June 2004

The international Pipe and Tabor festival moved this year from Gloucester, where it was founded in 1999, to nearby Stroud. Although the town does not offer the historical pipe and tabor museum collections, or a Cathedral containing superb taborer sculptures, it did provide a far more congenial setting for the taborers to perform supported by Gloucestershire Morris Men, Ragged and Old Morris, and Rose Moresk.

This year our focus was on music for dance - with bells on! Guest artist, Angel Vallverdu from Catalunya, introduced us to the music for the Bal de Bastons (stick dances), and an-

other group of Catalan musicians (Rafel Mitjans, Teresa Soller, Francesc Pons) described the dance and music of the Bal de Cascovells (Pellet Bells). Both of these had strong similarities to English Morris.

The Pipe and Tabor timeline was strengthened in the 900 - 1100 AD zone with a paper by Helen Leaf, who has discovered that around 100 pipes exist previously unnoticed in museum collections around the country. Rose Moresk delivered workshops on dancing and playing for the Moresk, and Bill Tuck helped us pick up the basics or playing for renaissance dance.



David Wright

The narrow streets, the bars and halls of Stroud, rang to the sound of the massed taborers in the big dub, and the finale brought together English and Catalan music in a hugely enjoyable session. Next year's festival will be in Stroud, dates TBD. Please look out for announcements on www.pipeandtabor.org

The festival is supported by Gloucestershire Morris Men, GlosFolk and Stroud District Council.

Stephen Rowley

Flabiolaires

Saddleworth Morris Men at the Mezinárodní Folkdomi Festival Pilsen 2004 (8th International Folklore Festival - Pilsen 2004) in the Czech Republic

10th to 14th June 2004



Thursday 10 June. The weekend started on Thursday morning with 24 men arriving at Manchester International Airport to check in for the 10.40 BMIBaby flight to Prague. We were met at Prague Airport by Peter and Eva, two members of 'Jiskra' one of the local dance groups in the Pilsen area, and travelled by coach to Pilsen in the company of 'Ferguson', a quartet of musicians from Sweden.

After a meal we changed into kit, fresh flowers for our hats having been ordered in advance, for a performance in a local school hall in the company of 'Metelák' (Pilsen), Karousel (Russia), Ferguson and Saddleworth where, due to the limited space, the Lordsmere Longsword was performed followed by a sixteen man Greenfield on the forecourt of the school.

The accommodation left a little to be desired as we were billeted in a hostel next to a chemical works but an extended stay in one of the local hostels allowed at least some sleep.

Friday 11 June. In the morning we packed, dressed and left

our accommodation. Breakfast was provided in the dining room of the University following which there were two performances in the Arts Theatre, again in the company of Ferguson and Karousel. For the first show Saddleworth danced North West but the wooden block flooring very quickly got slippery and so for the second show we again got out the swords and danced on stage. Later, we danced North West on a large paved area in front of the main block.

Later in the morning, we were taken to the delightful village of Vrcen for an outdoor performance in front of the village children in the company of Ferguson. Saddleworth performed the Greenfield and Dobcross before Ferguson played two Swedish folk tunes. Then Saddleworth danced the Denshaw, finishing with the Diggle followed by Ferguson playing two more Swedish tunes. All the performers were then taken to the local bar for lunch and a few beers as guests of the village.

Back in Pilsen we checked into the Hotel Roudna, an excel-

lent family run hotel five minutes walking distance from the Square of the Republic. Between 7.00p.m. and 9.00 p.m. there was a concert on a stage in 'U Branky' (a large square) where Saddleworth danced on a programme which included Jiskra 1958 (Pilsen), Ferguson, Ostravica (Czech Rep.) Orobico (Italy), Schmerlitz, (Germany) & Karousel (Russia).

In the evening there was a gathering of group leaders where myself and Dave Biggs (Foreman) represented Saddleworth and exchanged gifts with Michaela Vondrackova, the festival President.

Saturday 12 June. On Saturday our first performance was at 1.15 p.m. on the main stage in the Square of the Republic for the 'Historical Weekend' where we danced Uppermill. Just to make us feel at home, the heavens opened for a heavy rain shower. During our first dance we found that the two halves of the stage rocked in different directions so our second dance was in front of the stage at ground level; a sixteen man Greenfield. At 2.00 p.m. there was a procession through the

city ending in the Square of the Republic at 2.45 p.m. followed at 3.00 p.m. by a performance on the stage in U Branky. This lasted until 5.00 p.m. This was to be a vocal performance for Czech Radio! The final show was again in U Branky between 7.30 & 9.00 p.m. followed by a party for all the performers in the hall of the Students Halls of Residence.

Sunday 13 June. On Sunday morning, a tour of the Pilsner Urquell Brewery had been arranged. There's no point going to Pilsen, home of Pilsner Beer, and not going to see where it's made, now is there? The final booked performance was on the 'Gala Programme' on stage in the Elektra Cinema where we danced Diggle. I understand this was also covered by Czech Radio (?).

In the evening, the hotel chef prepared a Czech meal following which we watched England throw away a one goal lead to the French.

Monday 14 June. We left Monday morning for a whistle stop tour of Prague on the way back to the airport. It was a very full weekend with many high-



Continued from previous page

lights. One of the best memories was of the reaction and hospitality of the people in Vrcen.

The Russians were, initially, very remote however, on Saturday evening I got into a conversation with their interpreter and choreographer. They knew the British as a singing nation but knew nothing of our national dance and were astounded that the collection and performance of the Morris is largely kept up at the expense of the performers. They asked who provides the costumes and pays

for our travel and couldn't believe it when we answered, "We do". Karousel are students at an academy of performing arts and are funded by local and national government. I suspect most of the other dancing groups are similarly assisted; the Swedes however were professional musicians but enjoyed a jam session with the Saddleworth musicians on Saturday evening.

The beer ranged in price from 15 Kr to 30 Kr (30p to 60p) per half litre! We tried to spend all our money and failed miserably.

Richard Hankinson

The Circular Cartoon

LONG before the Uttoxeter Ring Meeting Adrian, (Wedgwood) emailed me to let me know that he had arranged for specific personalities to be at some of the weekend's venues. One of these was Patrick Lichfield (see the top right photograph on page 10) at Shugborough Hall. The other special guest was Bill Tidy, who would turn up at Abbots Bromley on Sunday.

Sure enough, Adrian interrupted my photo-session on

Sunday morning to introduce me to Bill Tidy and his wife. They were both courteous and ready to spend time talking to a recently-introduced total stranger. Bill agreed to my request for a cartoon to grace this, my final edition.

The original is soon to be proudly displayed, framed, on the wall of Schloss Noels Dunmore. This job does have perks, after all!

Eddie Dunmore.



Saturday 17th September: Coopers Square, Burton; Mayflower

Coopers Square, Burton; Ilmington

The Abbots Bromley Ring Meeting: a photo-diary



Carsington Water Visitors' Centre; Manchester & friend



Carsington Water Visitors' Centre; Dartington



Carsington Water Visitors' Centre; Letchworth & friend

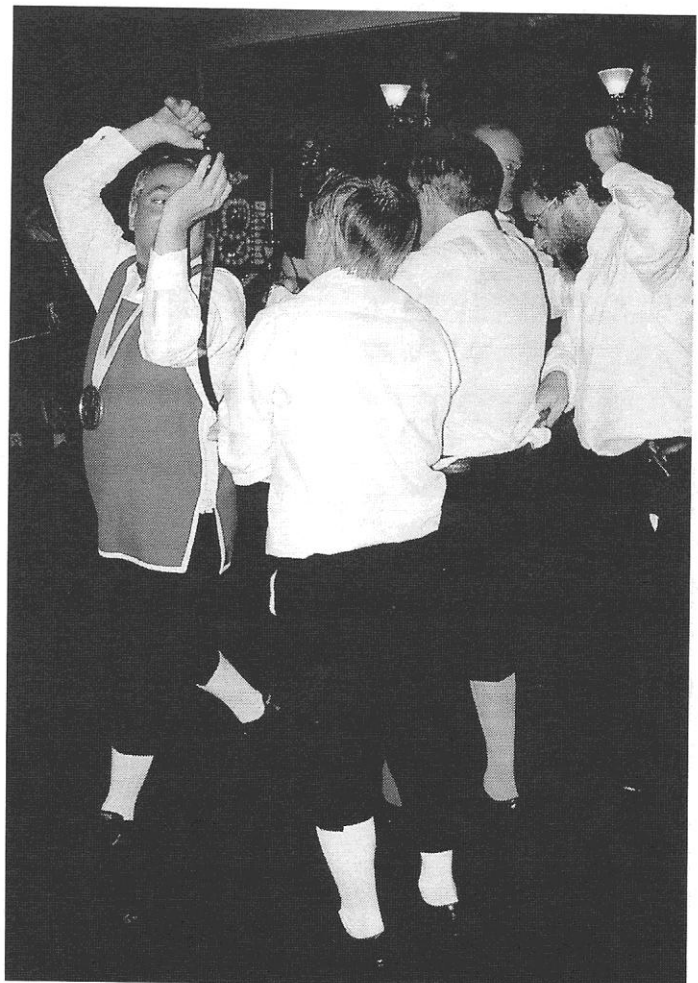
The photographs on these two pages were taken before lunch on Saturday.



Carsington Water Visitors' Centre; Stafford



Carsington Water Visitors' Centre; Manchester (again)

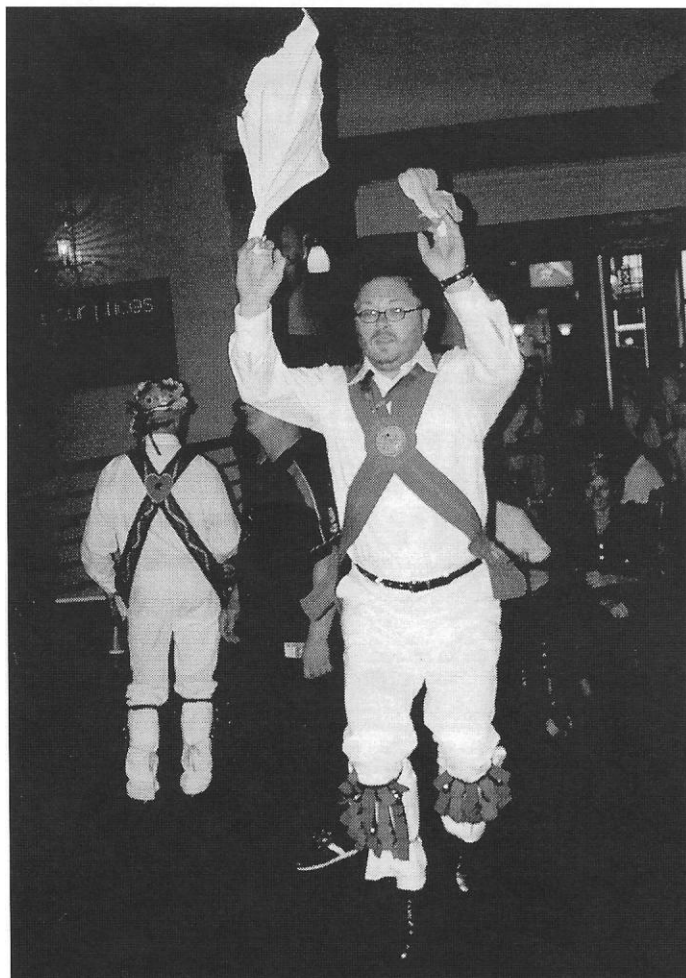


The Hogshead, Hanley; Boars Head dancing Rapper



The Hogshead, Hanley; Kinnerton dancing Ladies' Pleasure

More photographs from Saturday afternoon



Hanley, The Hogshead; Bob Cross dancing Princess Royal



Shugborough Hall; Patrick Lichfield in conversation with the hosts & the management



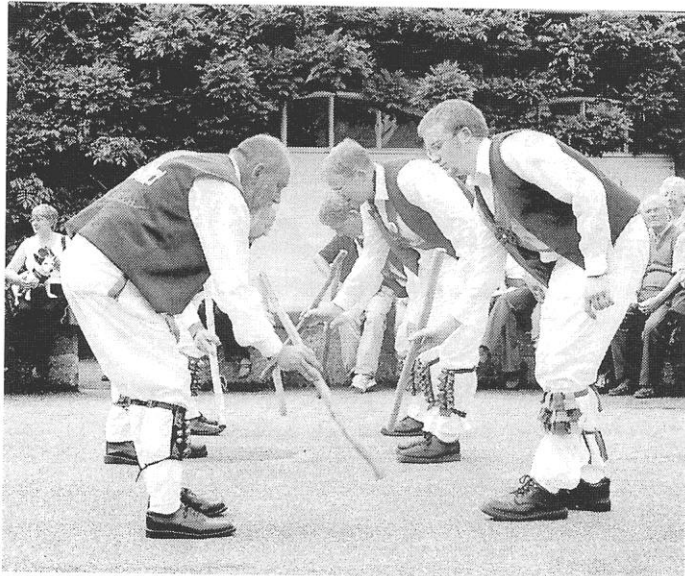
Shugborough Hall; Shakespeare



Shugborough Hall; Wadard



Uttoxeter; Chanctonbury Ring



Shugborough Hall; Whitchurch



Uttoxeter; Shakespeare



Uttoxeter; Winchester



Uttoxeter; Chalice



Abbots Bromley; the Feast



Abbots Bromley, Sunday morning; the Star of the Show



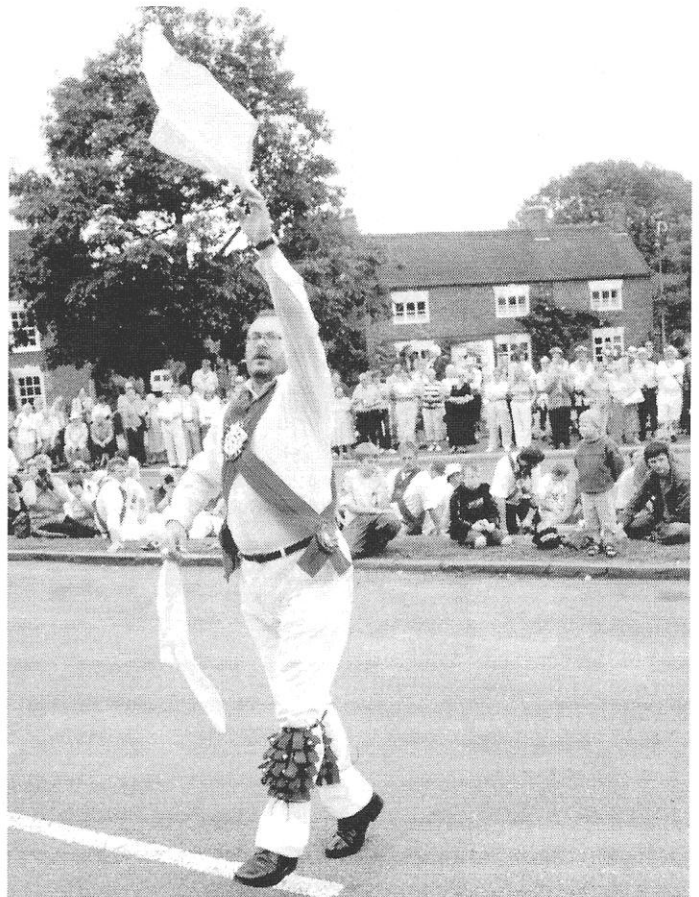
Abbots Bromley, Sunday; Chanctonbury



Abbots Bromley, Sunday; Cliff's jig



Abbots Bromley, Sunday; Chalice



Abbots Bromley, Sunday; Bob's jig

Correspondence

Those of you who are avid followers of Ridgwelliana will have suffered from withdrawal symptoms for some time now. I can only apologise for having left you bereft of satisfaction for too long. The two items included here are vintage Ridgwell, and should be savoured as such.

From Gordon Ridgwell

Dear Eddie,

In the programme for the 2004 Thaxted Ring Meeting, it was stated that "the Morris Ring was formed in 1934 as a direct result of a meeting held in Thaxted the previous year by six founder clubs". Yet where is the evidence for such a meeting at Thaxted in 1933? Both Walter Abson and Bob Ross, in their articles on the foundation of the Morris Ring, published in the 2003 issue of *The Morris Dancer*, state that the first meeting to discuss such a proposal took place on 2nd November 1933, when the Cambridge Morris Men held a meeting in Joseph Needham's room in Gonville & Caius College.

If indeed there was an earlier meeting in Thaxted, then I look forward to evidence being produced to support this. If not, then I suggest that all reference to a 1933 meeting at Thaxted is deleted from the 2005 Thaxted Ring Meeting programme.

Wassail,

Gordon Ridgwell.

From Alan Seymour

Dear Eddie,

As both a morris dancer, and a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Plasterers of the City of London, I couldn't resist this old packed at a recent collectors' fair. I'll let you know if I find that it is still available.

Best wishes,

Alan Seymour [Leader, Colne Royal MM]

Ps. Pity about the water damage.

From Gordon Ridgwell

Dear Eddie,

In the programme for the recent Utttoxeter Meeting of the Morris Ring, we are informed that the 33rd Squire of the Morris Ring will 'dance in' at Abbots Bromley on Sunday 18th July. According to my arithmetic, Bob Cross danced in as the 32nd Squire.

Could it be that Richard Callender was incorrectly counted in? Richard, although elected to the post of Squire, died suddenly of a heart attack on 8th November 1949, and did not take up office.

Richard Callender was 56 when he died and, with his strong leadership, brought great vitality to the folk-dance revival.

Let us cherish his memory by recalling this obituary of him published in *The Times* on 12th November 1949, p.7:—

Mr. R. M. CALLENDER *Mr. Richard Callender, who died suddenly in London on November 8, was a notable figure in the revival of English traditional dances. He had for many years led the national demonstration team of the English Folk Dance Society, and in many European cities as far apart as Helsinki and Venice had captained the English morris and sword dance teams at international gatherings with conspicuous ability both as leader and as dancer. Of fine physique, he had enlisted in the Army as a boy and during the 1914-18 war had become a reg-*

imentally early age. Commissioned in the field, he fought in the Salonika and Palestine campaigns, was twice mentioned in dispatches, and was awarded the M. C. After the war he took up physical training for educational authorities in London and continued to teach till his premature death at the age of 56. He met Cecil Sharp at a summer vacation school and became an immediate convert to folk dancing, which he also taught, notably at Morley College, where he was on the staff for 21 years.

Wassail,

Gordon Ridgwell

From Terry Heaslip

Dear Eddie,

Firstly may I thank you for the coverage you gave to our activities this year.

However, I must take you up on your comments about lunch. I was not on the Larkins tour so I am unable to comment on the quality but the quantity and content were as agreed between myself and the landlord.

A substantial lunch has always been provided to guests of our Ales and second helpings (when offered) are never refused. Our brief to the landlords is to provide a drinking man's meal but this has never affected any of the dancers' ability to polish off the 3 course Feast we provide in the evening. You have to take into account that following full English breakfast the dancers are treated to several free samples during our customary brewery visit before even get-

ting to the first pub of the morning. By lunchtime they are hungry and still manage a bun with afternoon tea before tackling the evening mass display at a home brew pub where aperitifs are taken. We treat our guests as we would wish to be treated and expect, as do our guests, a substantial lunch to counter the effects of alcohol in order that we might sample as many of the excellent ales that may be on offer without undue effects. A man with a full belly and a pint (or two) of beer will sing to his heart's content, then on leaving the pub he will have an abundance of goodwill and energy fit to dance for his Queen and country. Sufficient time should always be allowed for lunches to be digested and bodies relaxed before expecting men to move on and dance otherwise they will be prone to an attack of lethargy later in the afternoon.

Best wishes,

Terry [Squire of Hartley MM]

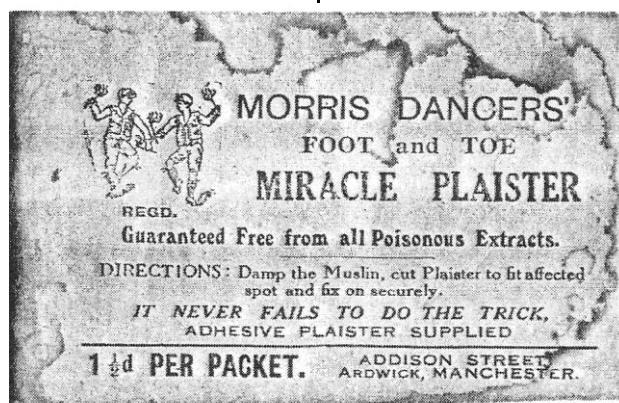
LIVERYMAN OF THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF PLAISTERERS, LONDON



Alan J. Seymour

PLAIN & ORNAMENTAL PLASTERER

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Standon's Golden Jubilee

The photographs are from Gordon Ridgewell. He writes that he took them to supplement the set taken by Bagman John Frearson.

He adds "I might add that I was there on the 24th July 1954, when it all started!"

He enclosed a copy of the programme for this Anniversary Event, which told recipients that Standon gave their first public performance on the lawns of the Old Vicarage, Standon, which has long since disappeared.

Standon's black eaglet badge was apparently taken from the tomb of John Field, who died in 1477, and is buried in St Mary's Church Standon.

Their leaflet also suggests that the earliest recorded performance of the morris was in 1466, which passes up the opportunity to link our origins with the original of Shakespeare's Sir John Falstaff. I notice that pagan origins are still being claimed - the 19th Century anthropologists have a lot to answer for!

Eddie Dunmore.



Langley Lower Green; a static "Signposts" by Helier & interloper



*The Woodman, Nuthampsted;
Thaxted dancing Black Joke. Ilmington*



The Catherine Wheel, Albury; Helier dancing with sticks

The last Eddietorial

SOMETIMES I find nit-picking irritating, so I hope you will forgive me if I take issue with the content of Gordon Ridgewell's second letter. It has been a biennial production, and I feel that my final editorial is as good a time as any to challenge its content. To choose a much grander analogy, when George V died, in 1937, his oldest son assumed the throne as Edward VIII. Because of his personal choices, the government of the day persuaded him to abdicate, whereupon he was succeeded by his brother, George VI. Should a future Edward become King, he will be labelled Edward IX, even though Edward VIII never got to a coronation. I would suggest that the same principle applies

to the numbering system for Squires of the Morris Ring. Richard Callender was elected Squire: surely that's the crucial decision. It strikes me, personally, as somewhat pettifoggish to deny him a place in the record because he had the misfortune to die before he danced in.

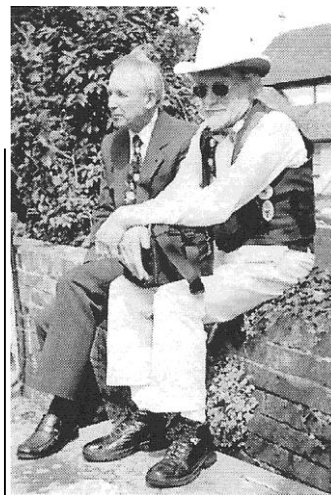
The first issue of the Morris Ring Circular under my editorship was published in March 1992, after the then Squire, Mike Chandler, told me that he would like me to take over from Dave Berryman. I'm not sure that I was aware then that I would still be producing it thirteen years later, albeit as my final edition. That first edition was produced with the help of Fleet Street Publisher running on an Atari STE with 4MB of

memory. FSP was the first proper desktop publishing programme that I had acquired; up until then, I had used a German typesetter written for the same machine.

In fact, it was only eighteen months later that I reluctantly exchanged the Atari for an early PC running Windows 3.1, although this was fitted with an emulator card that allowed me to continue using the Atari software. Fleet Street Publisher came from a subsidiary of the Daily Mirror, and all too soon I had to locate a replacement. Financial constraints led me to choose Corel Ventura, with which I have stayed ever since. I detail this information, because the alternative to desktop publishing would have been prohibitively expensive; the downside has been that only a single pair of eyes does the proofreading, which has meant that the occasional typos have got through (including the infamous "Carpenter's Anus"). Pagination has varied from an initial 8 up to 24, with this edition's 16 comfortably in mid-range.

In the early days, FSP's default resolution for illustrations was a meagre 72 dots/inch, which had to be manually reset for every plate. Camera-ready proofs were printed out, on the best printer that I could afford, for the printer to make the plates in the correct imposition. Affordable laser printers enabled one improvement in overall print quality: converting typesetter files to Adobe Acrobat format, enabling my printer to generate the printing plates automatically enabled another.

What have been the highlights? I suppose the most personally gratifying was the invitation to the HQMD Centenary celebration on Boxing Day 1999; it was also poignant, with hindsight, because it was the last time that Roy Judge and Bob Grant were present at the same event. Four and a half years previously, three other iconic figures had left us, Joseph Needham, Father Loveless, and Arnold Woodley. Of course,



*This photograph of two ageing gents sitting on the Abbots Bromley Church wall was taken by **Jon Wilmhurst** of North Wood Morris*

there have been happier occasions to remember: three that spring to mind are, firstly, the naming of "The Morris Dancer" on St George's Day 1994, secondly, dancing on College Green and lunching on the House of Commons Terrace in June 2003, and then the culmination in Trafalgar Square on November 2nd last, when even the stair-rods of rain couldn't dampen our spirits.

It has always been fascinating to read accounts of foreign visits, anniversaries and other occasions of note. I hope that you will continue to send your narratives to my successor(s). Please remember that manuscript submissions are a pain, as they have to be manually typed into a word-processor or read into a voice-recognition converter: please try to supply typescripts. Illustrations need to be at a resolution of 300 dots/inch for adequate reproduction: unless you have broadband, posting is best, either of original prints or CDs of picture files.

But now it's time to hand the baton on. I hope the new editor will derive as much enjoyment as I've had. In the main, you have been wonderfully tolerant of my foibles and shortcomings; I hope you extend that courtesy to my successor. Thank you all for your consideration and patience.

Morris on!

Eddie Dunmore, Editor,
The Morris Ring
Circular 1992-2004



*Abbots Bromley, Sunday 18th July 2004; **Helen Manning** (aged 93). A member of the local EFDSS group since the late 1940s, Helen was a crucial figure in the early days of The Men of Mercia (founded in 1951 by her late husband). The Men of Mercia ceased in 1995, and were the team from whom the late Jack Hutchinson learnt his morris. Jack Hutchinson founded today's Uttoxeter MM.*