



# THE MORRIS RING Circular

November 2007  
No 55

## 'What could go Wrong?' or How we missed Stafford

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by *Iain Davison*

"The one we never got to"  
So, watching a bit of Quincy on the TV waiting for Chris Farr to arrive to my house (in Newton Abbot) from Plymouth, which he did at about 2pm Friday, then loaded up my car with his gear, swapped the cars around on the drive and set off towards Exeter to pick up Tim Sercombe. Even taking a wrong route (through lack of concentration) through Exeter we arrived at Tim's in good time as the traffic was pretty clear — a rare thing in Exeter, particularly on a Friday afternoon. We loaded Tim's gear and off we set to Brewed at about 3pm Friday. It being so sunny, warm and dry, Chris and I were sporting shorts. The road was clear, the sun was shining, and we're off to Brewed, what could go wrong? Listening to the traffic reports, we were soon to discover that there were particular problems on the M5 north of Bristol. After a group discussion, we decided to take a detour over the Severn Bridge, into S Wales, up towards Ross-on-Wye, then up the M50 and back onto the M5. The road was clear, the sun was shining, and we're off to Brewed, what could go wrong? Travelling along the M50 we came to an abrupt halt and it started to rain, absolutely pour



Cheltenham 7pm 20th July 2007

Photo Robin Wells, Datington Morris

*Below, somewhere in Stalls, 21 July 2007 photo SMM*  
down. After half an hour or so — they (whoever "they" are) we were wondering what the unscrewed/unbolted some of the hold-up was. Eventually we were to discover that the M5 had been shut, just shut! Our Squire (Brian Stone) phoned Tim had made several hours towards Ross (a suggestion before). At about 10.15pm on Friday evening, we on our way again (even though we didn't have time to finish playing the guess the time game). The road was clear, the sun was gone, it had stopped raining, and we're off to Brewed, what could go wrong? Taking a wrong-turn at the roundabout, I ended up heading towards Ross, which it was agreed we should continue to do, so we could get some fish'n' chips (I did have Tim in the car and who am I to argue?). Well isn't Ross nice? Never been there before! Chip shop was closing so we had one portion of chips

(continued on page 14)



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## Squire's Report

As the summer season of dancing comes to a close and the autumn ales begin, it is customary to take stock of the state of our dancing, our bodies and our performances overall and look toward the AGMs and the practice season to remedy any shortcomings, try out new ideas traditions and dances, elect new officers and praise those who have made a significant contribution to our successes and to donate the wooden spoon to those who have not. The summer season started early and most spectacularly with the highly successful April Joint Morris Organisations Birmingham showcase, event in full sunshine, taking over the public spaces, art gallery, library, cathedral precinct and the Bull Ring Shopping Centre. With its positive spotlight on youth and the future of the Morris, and most ably hosted by Jockey, assisted by Green Man and other local sides, this event exceeded all the expectations of the organisers and attracted 555 members of the Morris to take part. Among these Crestwood School, the Dartington Boys' side, Adlington Mummers, Bristol, Bampton, Moulton, Horwich, Berkshire Bedlams and Windsor, to name just some of the sides who delighted the crowds. This focus on youth and the future was made a feature of the Morris Ring Meetings from the fine jig performances by members of the Care dynasty of Moulton at the Thaxted meeting; through members of Icknield Way, Bristol and 18-30 at Ripley; the Burkes of Winchester, who practically walked on water to arrive at Stafford in time for the main show on Sunday and performed a double jig to Geoff Jerram's accompaniment. (Geoff nonchalantly arrived by narrow boat a day early en route to Saddleworth) and finally members of the Garland family from East Suffolk at the Tonbridge meeting. Whatever the weather threw at us over the summer, the sun came out at just the right moment for the main shows and the true spirit of the Morris was rewarded. At Stafford the biblical deluge prompted some heroic acts and practically elevated our hosts to the sainthood as they provided beer and hot food between four and five in the morning to the smiling amphibians of Trigg and Chalice who emerged as if off the ark. They were led respectively by the arkangel himself, jolly Roger-all-hands-to-the-pump Hancock still clutching his St Piran self-writing waterproof Cornish army penknife with single propeller blade, his reserve paddle and a red self-inflating survival bag, and Captain Webbfeet Cross the Weston-super-merman, resplendent in waterproof wedding attire and a Mae West. Known affectionately as bobbing Bob to his local lifeboat crew and Porlock to the Oddfellows, he led his men with that customary, I'll get through whatever the cost, whatever the weather mentality, which is legendary. What grit! They had been bobbing around for most of the night like survivors of the Titanic, partially submerged at Tewkesbury, where the M5 services became the new confluence of the Severn and Avon and Upton and other Border Morris communities became engulfed by a new inland sea. It would be a gesture of great generosity if we could repay our indebtedness in some way to those communities who have provided us with their dances when some of them have lost so much. As for our part we have made refunds to those men who set off, but were physically prevented from reaching the Stafford Meeting because of the severity of the conditions and

were either marooned where they were or had to turn back. Despite all the heroism, the hard work by individuals and teams and their successes over a difficult summer that I have witnessed, it has been the teams pulling together and the community spirit and camaraderie that has won through every time. Nowhere was this more evident than amongst the Ripley men from their greeting on arrival and at breakfast to the closing song



sung by all the Ripley men in a circle for a job well done when the guests had gone and all the clearing up was complete. That bond will help them in their mourning the cruel loss of their star fool and roving ambassador, John Butler, who was so tragically killed in a motorway traffic accident shortly after the Ripley Ring Meeting. All our support and best wishes from the wider family of the Morris goes out to the Ripley men and John's family, as it does to John Burke, who performed the jig with his son at Stafford, and is slowly recovering in hospital after being very ill with pneumonia. We trust that you make a speedy and full recovery. At the mid point of office I too am looking forward to what there is still left to do and am mindful of who is to take over the torch and carry on this work as we move towards the election of my successor. To date there are five prospective candidates hovering behind parapets within a seventy mile radius of London. It would be great to think that there were also the same number from

around the Newcastle, Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds or Sheffield areas, who have the vision and drive to take us forward. Please, bring your best men forward. The work still to be done is to improve standards and reinforce a positive image of the Morris so that we can take it forward as an enduring, dynamic cultural force able to respond and reinvent itself to the demands and times in which we find ourselves. Above all we need to recruit and have a programme of training youngsters so that by 2012 we are able to be at our peak and most vital for the spotlight of the London Olympics and the nationwide Cultural Olympiad that begins its lead-up to the games with the closing ceremony at Beijing on 24th August 2008. Local authorities already have designated Olympic Officers in place to give support and Regional Olympic Officers are about to be appointed. We need to take the initiative and start preparing and training those youngsters that are to perform. The series of Morris Ring Meetings and regional Joint Morris Organisations events planned in the lead up to 2012 will be the platform for promoting our worth. Each side and regional rep has a role in contacting their local Olympic representative to assist in the training of dancers and planning imaginative regional events where the Morris can be put on the cultural map. Never have the conditions been more right and the need greater for a revival and renaissance of the Morris as an expression of the people and our national culture. The people's games where the strength of dance, sport, combat and competition within the various regions of these islands were shaped and evolved seem to be a perfect model forus to showcase our art. Paul Reece

# Kennet and Ickniel United in Marriage!

by Sem Seaborne and Chris Hutchinson

This year Kennet Morris Men celebrate their 50th year. Plans are in hand to celebrate this momentous occasion in style with a weekend of dance at the end of September and a record breaking attempt to dance and drink in 50 pubs along the Kennet & Avon Canal between Bath and Reading. More details of these events will no doubt follow in due course.

A year or so after Kennet's formation in 1957 a team of lads at Ickniel School in Wantage, just down the road west from Reading, were congregating into what was to become Ickniel Way Morris Men in 1959. Throughout the history of the two teams there have been many notable gatherings. One in particular was a day of dance in Goring-on-Thames in the late 60's where photographs of the event were published in the Encyclopaedia "Man Myth & Magic" and photographs from the same event were famously turned into a morris Jig Saw Puzzle marketed nationally by Waddingtons.

The sides have also had mutually supportive members. The long serving Ian Dunmur of Kennet played for IWMM in the early days and Joe Marns



*Respective Fathers of Bride & Groom dancing Sweet Jenny Jones (and below, left)*

(Foreman of IWMM for over 20 years) was an occasional member of Kennet and played for them on occasions. Today there are 3 men who are members/honorary members of both sides.

The teams have pretty well managed to meet up at least once a year (usually at The Bell in Aldworth for a riotous session) and also at Ales, Ring Meetings, Rushcarting, etc. However, nothing can surpass the event of the 14th April when the two teams were, at last, united in marriage.

No, it wasn't one of those Civil Ceremony things!

Alastair (generally known as Ali) Hutchinson (of Kennet), son of Chris & Ruth Hutchinson ( a Kennet man for 32 Years and Fleet Lady

for 21 years), married Sarah Foster, daughter of Martin Foster the present Squire of Ickniel Way MM. Sarah has been an active supporter of IWMM since she was 12 and has probably seen the team dance more times than many of the actual members, turning out to watch on May Mornings, Days of Dance, Mummer's Plays, etc. Alastair has been dancing with Kennet since he was 7, and leaving his native Yateley to go to University in Loughborough, promptly kept his performing skills in shape by dancing with Man Friday, contact with whom led to also dancing with Anstey, Green Oak and Leicester.

During Ali's time in Leicestershire he met the current Ickniel Bagman Graham Hubbard, and when he returned to Berkshire to work for Railtrack he naturally started coming to IWMM events as well as Kennet. The meeting of Ali and Graham sowed the seed for the Morris 18-30 Group, one of the more significant developments as far as the future of the morris goes. For Alastair far more significant was meeting his future wife through that same contact.

So, on a gloriously sunny April day, with the Prunus in full bloom, Ickniel and Kennet men gathered in the Brewery

Tap in Abingdon and thence to the Baptist Church across the road to welcome the wedding guests with a few dances. The Ickniel musicians played the guests into the church where the ceremony included a moving rendition of Lavender's Blue from the Kennet MM Quire and Bread & Fishes from Ickniel musos.

Guests attending from other morris teams included Leeds, Leicester, Datchet, Man Friday, Packington, Fleet, Anstey, and Shinfield Shambles. After photograph's etc. the formal wedding guests went off to do the customary thing, but Ickniel and Kennet went to do what they do best — i.e. to the Cherry Tree and The North Star in Steventon to eat, drink and dance.

The Bride and Groom led a procession down the Steventon "Causeway" to the village hall where true to the joint principles of the day the ceilidh was delivered 50/50 by the Kennet Ceilidh Band and The Mad Hatters (IWMM) with calling from Dave Tindall (Kennet) and Pete North from Adderbury Morris.

A cracking day was had by all, and with anniversaries coming up Kennet & Ickniel will be sinking a few more pints between them but the wedding of Sarah and Ali will take some beating as a morris event.

Sam Seaborne is a member of Ickniel Morris Men and Chris Hutchinson is a member of Kennet Morris Men

Photos : Bill Martin & John Holmes (Kennet)

*Third Photo on next page....*





## The Wedding Couple Celebrate with members of Icknield and Kennet

### How we missed Stafford part two

*by Robin Wells*

Just to let you know what happened on our way to the Stafford Morris Ring Meeting — Steve, Brian and I set off from South Brent at 3pm on Friday afternoon. We ran into very heavy traffic on the M5 just north of the junction with the M4 and spent a further 2-3 hours to reach Gloucester, had a meal at 7pm ish and spent a further 2 hours getting out of Gloucester. We then crossed over the motorway using back roads and encountering numerous floods) as we believed the Cheltenham area to be less congested with traffic — a further 2-3 hours was spend travelling towards Evesham in an attempt to get around the flooded area — we

tried all possible back roads, and kept hitting flooded rivers that were impassable. We gave up at about midnight and slept in the car in the Evesham area until 5am when we had a phonecall from Martin Jones (travelling with Ken). We agreed it was pointless trying to continue our journey north as all roads seemed to be flooded and we headed back to meet up with Ken, Martin, Steve T and Jo at Cirencester for breakfast at 7am before going home to dry out.

Robin Wells is a of member of Dartington Morris

### How I nearly missed Stafford part three

*by Clive Du'Mont*

I was to attend the Stafford Morris Ring Meeting with Whitchurch and left my home near Bristol at 3pm on Friday. By 6.30 I'd reached M5 J11 A and left the motorway for want of a minute or two's change of view and pace, only to find my expected route back onto the M5 blocked by an accident, which led me to head toward Cheltenham. There, after negotiating an 8 mile roller-coaster-like stretch of the A46 where every dip declared a foot-deep flood, I enjoyed a pint of good ale followed by a delightful pile of hot chips with cod roe before exploring routes out of the town to the

North. Every single one was either closed or blocked solid with near stationery traffic, so I headed - that is, crawled - west along the A40 and re-joined the M5 at J11. (Attached pic shows the delights the Cheltenhamians were obliged to endure.) That would have been at about 7.30pm. The next four-and-a-quarter hours was largely spent staving off insanity by listening to recordings of the last couple of days' worth of Radio 4 and BB7 programmes, interspersed with bouts on the concertina and playing with the electric seat adjusters. Progress consisted of repeated 50 yard bursts of motoring movement punctuated by 10-minute breaks with the engine off and the lights out. At a quarter-to-



twelve, having spurted up the nearside lane at an average speed of three-and-a-half miles per hour I reached the slip road to Strensham Services, which was well-flooded and sporting two cars up to their chins in the River M5, and which proved to be the bottleneck that had served to all-but-prevent anyone escaping from the south-west. The highways patrol people and police were permitting vehicles through on the outside lane one at a time (see pic) and happily after that I had a clear run through to Stafford, arriving at about 1.15 a.m. I was one of the lucky ones. From J11 north I'd noted that the traffic had become increasingly sluggish

on the previously free-running south-bound carriageway and it wasn't long before the vehicles' lights were going out and people were either walking off to find warmth and safety wherever they could or simply settling down for the night where they sat. I saw at least two bundles of cars that had managed to run into each other at what must have been near-zero miles per hour and were strewn across the carriageway at odd angles with distraught drivers and passengers wandering about in apparent despair. Several times ambulances and fire appliances were seen struggling through the crowded traffic lanes trying,

no doubt, to reach 999 victims who'd suffered heart attacks or to rescue families with young babies, or what-have-you. Meanwhile, back on the Northbound stretch, there was the sadly usual collection of impatient idiots skipping up the hard shoulder and, from about a mile before the Strensham Services exit, there were dozens of heavy goods and other vehicles parked up with several people evidently walking to the Services in the hope of respite. The Services, however, had been closed, so they had to walk back again. The rain didn't stop at all.

at the earlier venues on the tour that Whitchurch were on, it was a very enjoyable event. We ended up at a beer festival which served to shoo any wet-weather-blues away and the food at breakfast, lunch and the Feast was well above average for these events with quantity easily matching quality. A new benchmark, perhaps? The dancing and music was up to its usual standard (interpret that as you will!) and, I hope, a good time was had by all! Many thanks to Stafford MM for an excellent effort in very trying circumstances ... and too for the freely offered pint when I arrived!

As for the Morris Ring Meeting, apart from a lack of audiences



Stafford Morris Ring Meeting, featuring Stafford Morris Men above and a mixed side below

-photos above SMM and below Eliza Austen



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## Letters To The Editor

From Dave Reeves

So, you want to be a Bagman?

As a regular Simpsons watcher I spotted that Bart was writing out "Bagman is not a legitimate career choice" on the blackboard as his punishment at the beginning of one episode. This seemed a little strange so I contacted a friend in the USA and asked whether the term 'Bagman' had some particular significance over there. He replied: "A bagman is a criminal who collects payoff money, gambling debts and so on for an illegal organization."

Dave Reeves  
Green Man's Morris & Sword Club

From Julian Whybra

Dear Editor,

For the attention of all fellow Fools! My side recently performed for a private booking locally. When I turned up in full motley I noticed that the organiser kept her distance from me, avoided eye contact, and didn't speak to me (had my reputation gone before me?); wherever I was in the room, she would be on the opposite side of the hall. Midway through the performance I had reason to ask her something on behalf of the side. I sensed her physical discomfort at my approach but she then explained herself. She suffered from coulrophobia - fear of clowns - and the fear was not just of clowns' faces but extended to foolish

costume. She'd had it since childhood and was now in her thirties. She apologised but continued to keep her distance for the whole time I was there. So, advice to other Fools should you encounter similar phobics. Don't try to charm, don't try to swamp with friendly overtones and 'Foolish' behaviour, don't persist in talking to the person hoping the irrational feeling will go away. It won't, that's why it's irrational. Just get on with the performance, ignore the person, try not to be too much to the fore, and be the first to leave. This was the first time I'd encountered coulrophobia in thirty odd years of dancing and it made me feel distinctly uncomfortable.

Julian Whybra  
Fool, Mayflower Morris Men,  
Billericay, Essex



Important attendees at Stafford Ring Meeting above, below and right

## THE MORRIS DANCER

Member sides will be aware that in recent years 'The Morris Dancer' has failed to appear. I am happy to announce its rebirth in an exciting way.

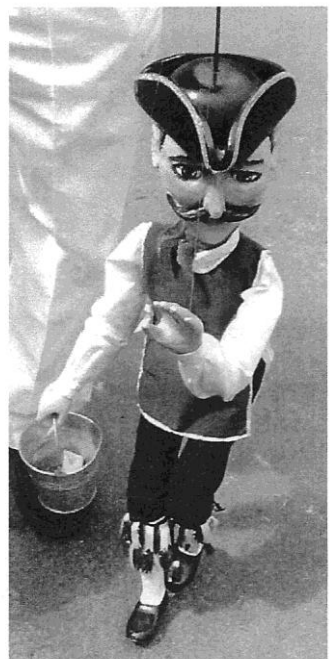
The plan is that each Morris Dancer will have as a theme a regional variant of the morns. Alongside this each holder of the Archive will be asked to make available an account of their recent activity and some aspect of the collection that they hold. The intention is to produce a quality journal of which the Morris Ring can be truly proud. The editorial brief is that The Morris Dancer will become an important vehicle of academic excellence; it will become a worthy flagship journal of the Morris Ring.

As ever the success of this will depend on people who are prepared to contribute articles. Please take this as a call for articles. In the first instance contributors are invited to offer a brief outline and to seek a copy of Notes For Contributors and a response from the Editor. Through this approach it is hoped to encourage many more people to contribute because contributions will be able to be worked up into something of real value. Don't be shy if you have an idea for an article please feel free to put forward your ideas even if they are only in embryonic form because they can, given the expertise of The Morris Ring be worked up into something of value to the Morris Ring membership. The next edition

will appear in January 2008 and the editor looks forward to receiving possible outlines of contributions in good time.

I believe that given the above we will again have a publication of which we will be proud. To contact the Editor, in the first instance please send an email [themorrisdancer@tradcap.com](mailto:themorrisdancer@tradcap.com) Other contact details are:

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# The Morris Ring Circular Editorial



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The contents of this issue is again down to the usual suspects. I am extremely grateful to these writers and would urge other morris men to consider writing articles for inclusion.

I am indebted to Clive Du'Mont for his article on The Morris Ring's Musicians' Instructional. I attended this weekend for the first time, having recently taken to learning the Anglo Concertina. The weekend did not teach me to play the instrument any better and I did not expect it to; I did learn an awful lot about playing for morns and playing in a 'band' for morris. Having been a morris dancer

for 30 years, I also began to understand how important it is to appreciate the musician as an integral part of the morris dance set. As a dancer we perhaps take the musicians for granted. I would recommend any musician to attend this instructional and indeed dancers too. The weekend was run by Clive Du'Mont and Mike Chandler and hosted by the Whitchurch Men who provided the dancers. It was dedicated to Jim Catterall, and for Clive it was an emotional weekend. His plea elsewhere in this edition for new blood to take over the mantel and run the teaching is well founded: there must be amongst us someone

to take up the challenge and I am sure Mike is a willing guide to that man.

A big thanks to Peter Copley, bagman of Stafford Morris, who sent me 700 plus photos taken by guest sides-with presented disposable cameras. However, time prevented a complete sort through but all unattributed photos on pages 12-15, and elsewhere are by Peter Copley and John Cobert and . I am told that the weekend was excellent although hampered by some dreadful weather. This prevented me and three colleagues attending. Three of us from Winchester took 6 or so hours to travel 42 miles to Harwell, just south of Didcot,

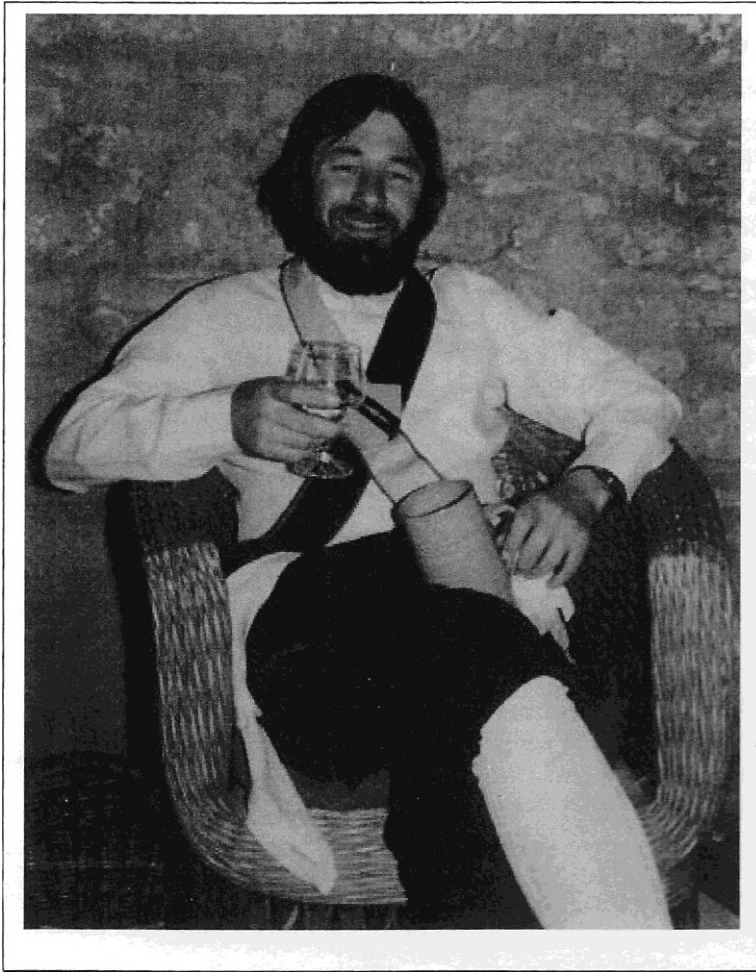
where we were diverted off the A34. In the end, with information that the A40 was flooded, our expectations of a weekend of dance had ceased and we returned to Winchester somewhat disappointed. I half thought I would get up early and drive to Staffordshire on Saturday morning, but weather forecasts and TV pictures painted a still bleak outlook. From what I have heard Safford Morris Men did a fantastic job under very difficult circumstances.

(nb please note my new email address above)

Next copy date 31/01/08



# James Michael McCaffery



throwing of Wellington and he was involved with the Sister Cities project linking Durham UK with Durham, North Carolina. Many of you will have attended Morris Ring meetings organised jointly by Jim & Leo Nugent in Richmond in recent years. Jim's career saw him continue working in special education heading a unit for students at Derwentside College. After taking early retirement he returned to his love of history as an education officer with the Fulling Mill Museum in Durham thrilling children countywide with tales of Tudor pranksters, ancient toilet paper and the content of Roman sausages. Many people young and old were enthralled by what Jim could do with a few balloons!

His other spare hours in the day were spent working with the Chinese community in Durham establishing CANER (Chinese Association North East Region) and helping to develop the now flourishing Chinese School.

His love of The Times, reading (especially the Sharpe series) and all films featuring John Wayne, sustained Jim through the times when he was most unwell. On the 7th of July 2007 he passed away peacefully in hospital after a lifelong battle with diabetes.

When he returned to Durham with his family in 1983, he continued dancing with The Rams and later with Richmondshire Morris Men who later amalgamated with Swaledale to form Richmond on Swale Morris Men and, shunning convention, with the mixed team he established with Eileen: Kern Morris. His Morris years saw him establishing links with other dancers in Europe and America

James was born in Durham on the 22nd of June 1947 to Margaret and Lawrence McCaffery he was the eldest of seven boys. James Michael McCaffery was born into a brave new world of hope and independence battling the threat of cold war.

He coped with diabetes from the age of four and a half and

his secondary years saw him traveling one and a half hours each way on two buses, to get to Darlington Grammar School - travel time was allegedly used for homework! In 1965 he went to Hopwood Teacher Training College in Liverpool to study the running of coffee bars, booking bands and wellie hoying. (the competitive





# Jim Catterall: Requiem Mass

## 14th June 2007



by Gordon Ridgewell

On Thursday June 14th under threatening skies, morris men from far and near made haste to that magnificent church of St John the Baptist, Our Lady

many 'sides, bringing colour to this celebration of Jim's life. The Vicar of Thaxted conducted the service; Leonard Pepper assisted. The opening hymn. was Lord of the Dance. Paul Reece and Maggie Catterall delivered eulogies and, following the Hymn - Be Thou My Vision, O Lord of My Heart — Thaxted Morris Men performed Sturch's Piece from Ilmington.

Before the final rousing hymn Praise My Soul The King of Heaven, Jake Walker played Dark Island; Cambridge Crofters sang Life of Man; Geoff Jerram, accompanying himself on concertina, gave a moving rendition of the folk song 'The Banks of Claudy'. Immediately after the service the funeral procession with Thaxted Morris Men carrying the Abbots Bromley horns made its way down Bolford Street to the parish burial ground. In steady rain accompanied by the rumbling of thunder Jim was laid to rest with Thaxted Morris Men with Horns raised forming, a guard of honour by the graveside, as depicted by the photograph. Afterwards we adjourned to Market Cross for refreshments with Maggie and family to

reminisce about the eventful life of Jim as the heavens opened and the rain came down like stair rods.

Clubs represented included Bedford, Cambridge, Durham Rams, East Suffolk, Letchworth, Monkseaton, Newcastle, Offley, Standon, Westminster, Whitchurch and

This is a must for all budding morris musicians and which the Morris Ring may well wish to consider bring out as a separate publication to the memory of Jim and to act as aide-memoir and inspiration for morris musicians present and future



& St Laurence dominating that picturesque town of Thaxted to pay their last respects to Jim Catterall.

A large congregation assembled for Requiem Mass with morris costumes from



Winchester.

Let us remember Jim for his spirited playing of the melodeon and indeed his authoritative two-part article 'Playing for the Dance' published in 1987, in issue numbers 11 and 12 of the Morris Ring Circular.

# Musicians' Instructionals Time for Change

by Clive Du'Mont

On 4 June 2007 the Morris Ring lost one of its most well-respected and dedicated members when Jim Catterall died at his home following the meeting of the Morris Ring hosted by his home club in Thaxted. In the early 1970's Jim and Mike Chandler of Whitchurch Morris Men held the first of what became a long string

of various instruments from Morris clubs both within and outside of the Morris Ring have benefited from the insight and practical pointers that Jim and Mike were able to impart; and at individual, club and



of instructionals aimed Morris Ring levels the benefit ***The attendees listening intently. Below, Clive recording Geoff Jerram with Mike Chandler in attendance***

specifically at helping Morris musicians appreciate the musical needs of the dance and develop their personal skills in delivering their best performance. A second key purpose was to attempt to improve coordination amongst musicians who assemble for massed dances at Morris Ring Meetings and so improve the quality of sound produced by these disparate and unrehearsed "bands". Possibly two or three hundred

has been notable and much appreciated. An emphasis on the differing demands of the various Traditions along with an analytical explanation of how the music can be made to signal to and, indeed, dramatically affect the actions of dancers has also served to help reinforce the historical significance of the dances performed as well as improve the quality of the performances themselves. The preparation of musicians

return - some several times over - grew, a need arose for something different to be laid on and so separate sessions for these "advanced" or "seasoned" players were eventually introduced. Allan Jarvis of Leeds Morris Men, Martlets' Mark Everson and Mike Howley of Men of Wight have each helped those who needed their periodic "fix" to explore the making of Morris music beyond the basics delved into by Jim and Mike. Whilst not held every year, but rather at intervals when it was felt there was a tangible need, the event was initially staged at Cecil Sharp House, then in Moulton, Northamptonshire, and from the mid 1980's to the early 1990's at Wilstone in Hertfordshire when those attending were also invited to attend Whitchurch Morris Men's annual Autumn Feast. There was then a hiatus of a few years that had naturally arisen as the number of "fresh" musicians wishing to attend had fallen off somewhat and the tutors felt themselves, of course - could do with a rest! In 2000, my pals in Mendip Morris Men and I took up the baton and we persuaded Jim and Mike back into' harness once more, holding an instructional at

Banwell in Somerset. A second Banwell event in 2003 was followed in 2004 at Thaxted in Essex, where Jim and his wife Maggie coordinated the hospitality (all who attended will ever remember the four-course Cordon Bleu Feast, and no mistake!), supported by Thaxted Morris Men, who provided dancers for the musicians to play for. In 2006 plans were laid for a weekend in February this year, but this was postponed when the funeral of Thaxted dancer, Peter Lawrence, fell on the same Saturday. Whitchurch Morris Men, who were to host the event once again, then offered to have it coincide once again with their Autumn Feast, and so arrangements were put in hand for the weekend of 9-11 November 2007. Following Jim's sudden and all-too-premature death in June, Mike and I determined that we should go ahead with our plans, as Jim would



***Some of the Musicians***

Photo: Ian Bust



doubtless have wished us to, though it was abundantly obvious that without Jim the path forward would be far from simple or easy. Nonetheless, I undertook to prepare a package to reflect the key points that Jim had honed over the years, whilst Mike would call on his vast experience as a Morris musician, dancer and

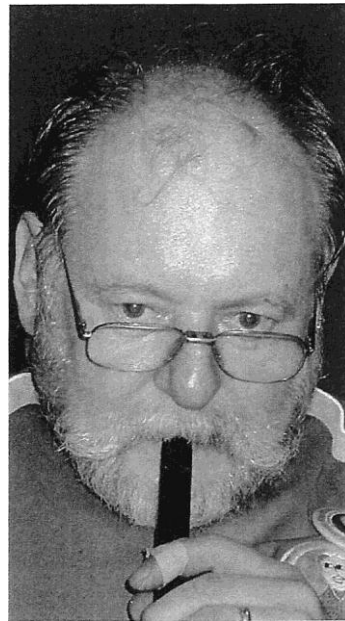
doubtless have wished us to, though it was abundantly obvious that without Jim the path forward would be far from simple or easy. Nonetheless, I undertook to prepare a package to reflect the key points that Jim had honed over the years, whilst Mike would call on his vast experience as a Morris musician, dancer and





Jim's fellow tutor to help fill in any gaps and provide practical illustrations and guidance. Maggie was fully supportive of our intention and kindly gave me copies of Jim's prompt sheets and the articles he had prepared for the Morris Ring Circular in 1987, whilst Peter Rollason of Whitchurch MM set-to to prepare DVD copies of the video recordings he had made of the 1987 Instructional held at Wilstone. Armed with this material along with information gleaned from video footage of the 2000 and 2003 events kindly supplied by Roger Waddington of Mendip Morris Men, a PowerPoint package emerged that featured no fewer than 14 video clips of Jim explaining essential points in his own inimitable manner and illustrating them via the splendid playing of his melodeon. Whilst no special arrangement was made this time for "seasoned" players, a handful nonetheless attended and so were served with a new

affected. This received a less-than-ideal package. In a nutshell, we lack - and indeed miss - the spontaneity and skill of Jim's talks and, especially, his facility to instantly be able to recognise, analyse and demonstrate the many facets of playing for the Morris, whether as part of a planned exposé of the art or in response to questions arising. Discussion as to how best to expand and develop these weekends has long been a standard feature, yet although some changes have been made over the years, by-and-large the format has remained the same and, despite it's evident effectiveness, there are doubtless other ways by which the necessary messages can be put across and individual's skills developed. As is so often the case these days throughout our Morris activities, there were more greying heads present this year than youthful ones; and there are any number of older Morris Ring members who have "good ideas" (though not necessarily the desire or time to pursue them). Jim was in his twenties when he and Mike initiated these instructional.



*Clive Du'Mont*

be done to improve poly-player performances. (Maybe others will have views and suggestions they'd care to offer via the Circular on this?) Those attending have

generously expressed their appreciation of the weekend several saying that they will look forward to the next one Alas, this raises something of a dilemma, for, as I noted during the closing session, my own skills are essentially limited to the simple presentation of the factual material and, in spite of Mike's continued enthusiasm and willingness to give his support, and even with the clips of Jim to help with further explanation and illustration, a best we can now only deliver

Is it not now time that another "youngster" was found to take over and make them yet more relevant to the playing of younger musicians and of the Morris music of today? Could that person be you or one of your club's members? Mike and I both feel that in deference to the successes of the past; to help maintain the progression of those who have attended thus far; and also in memory of Jim, who did so much to encourage a deeper appreciation of our music, some measure of continuity

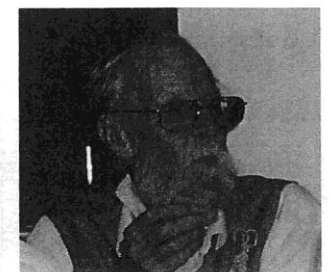
should be retained and so we are willing to continue to support this venture as it moves forward. We would also, though, very much welcome any offers or ideas that might usefully serve to enable these instructionals not only to continue, but to be enhanced and so offer many more musicians the spring-board to help them benefit in ways that are relevant to their needs along with those of the Morris of today and the future. (Offers, thoughts and suggestions can be discussed with Mike or Clive when you see them around at Morris events, or sent by email to [cdumont@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:cdumont@blueyonder.co.uk) ) The main handout at the Musicians' Instructionals is a pair of articles that Jim Catterall prepared for the Morris Circular in 1987 and which are still entirely relevant to our dancing needs today. A refurbished .pdf copy of this work can be found in the "Files" section on the The Morris Ring Google Group website

*Photos Harry Stevenson except where stated. Below is a side dancing Orange in Bloom (Photo:Ian Bush) The photos top and bottom are attending musicians or Squires or cooks.*

*Left, a pride of Whitchurch Men*

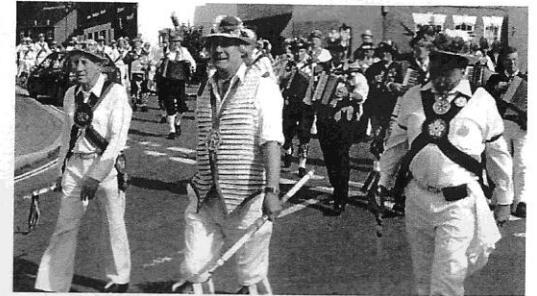
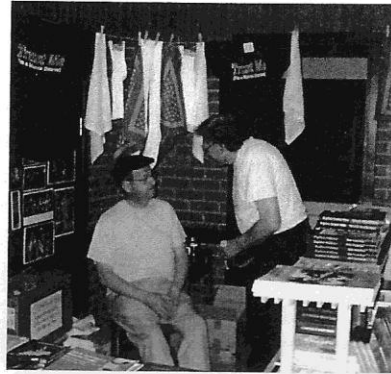


challenge: to explore how multiple musicians - an almost ubiquitous arrangement in Morris performances these days - can work together to make music that enhances rather than detracts from the quality of the dance performance. This "experiment" resulted in a fine rendition of Young Collins Bledington, where each player contributed only as much as was needed to produce a pleasant sound with the necessary signals to the dancers not adversely





# Stafford Morris (W)Ring Meeting Photo Album 1



# Stafford (W) Ring Meeting Photo Album 2





and two savaloy between us. Chris, once again, broke out his alcohol free beers (I was so grateful he'd brought them, else we'd have had nowt to drink for hours). Feeling fully refreshed, we jumped back into the car at about 11pm Friday night with an alternative route planned. The road was clear, it was dark but dry, and we're off to Brewed, what could go wrong? I don't really know what happened over the next two hours, it has long since been a blur - one of those memories I guess you just blot out. Well, we headed towards somewhere but the road was closed, so we headed towards somewhere else but that road was closed. The traffic announcements were so long and detailed each one was taking over 10 minutes, literally. Every town we wanted to go near was "cut off". Every road we went down was "closed" or "flooded" or both but with no sign, so you just had to "test" it and reverse back out. Chris showed great patience and fantastic navigational skills but it was no use, the net was closing, we were in Herefordshire and there was no way out! Or was there? After going passed Leominster Chris found a route which looked like it might just work ARGHHHHHHH we found a sign "road closed", so close..... It was about lam Saturday morning by now and I cracked up with hysterical laughter. I proposed kipping down for the night but didn't really want to be defeated in so doing. We were only about 40 miles away as the crow flies, about an hour's drive, if we could just get out of Herefordshire! Cunningly, Chris suggested a quick left on a back road and we'd be on our way. I took the left on the back road feeling encouraged until "FLOOD". So we backed up and took a right down another back road off this back road. A little fatigued (I'd been at the wheel for nearly 12 hours by now), it being very dark, (we were

in the middle of nowhere) and my driving ability diminishing, we hit another pool of water - only a little too fast this time and it was a little too deep. We could tell this when the water whooshed over the bonnet and windscreen and the car conked out and water came in through the back sills. She wouldn't go no matter how many times I turned the key. Chris swiftly jumped out in order to push it out of the water. I joined him. We kicked off our shoes - good job we were wearing shorts - and plunged into the thigh deep water, Tim choosing to steer. The road was flooded, it was dark and wet, the car was broke and we're going nowhere, what could go wrong? After pushing the car up the lane so that it was out of the water, we treated ourselves to another alcohol free beer and woke up our mobile phones, so that we could call the AA and get going. I couldn't imagine they would be busy. Three phones, two networks, no coverage. At 1.30am Saturday morning, we opened the sleeping bags and settled down for the night. The road was flooded, it was dark and wet, the car was broke and we're off to nowhere, what could go wrong? "Tap-tap-tap" on the window AT 4AM!!! "Can you move your car please?" how I didn't say something rude, obvious and sarcastic I don't know. I guess my brain was on under-drive. So again, Chris and I



*Steensham Service*

jumped out to give the man a hand to push my car into the very edge of the lane so he could get his 4X4 passed (why do we all hate them?) and Tim steered. The road was flooded,



*Somewhere else in Staffordshire, 21st July 2007*

Photo SMM

it was dark and wet, the car was broke and we're going nowhere, what could go wrong? By 7.30 am Saturday morning, Chris and Tim had signals on their phones (how does that work?). Hooray! Chris got through to the AA after 40 mins and then got cut off! (NB the freephone number wasn't free from a mobile and charged him for the time he was waiting for the call to be answered!). Then a truck tried to get passed but couldn't as he was slipping on the chewed up grass verge where several other vehicles had passed us during the night. Then a fire-engine with flashing blue lights turned up behind the truck. Problem solved, they jumped out, we pushed my car up the lane to where it widened (Tim chose to steer) and that was that. We knocked on the door of the nearest dwelling, explained our predicament to "Samantha" who invited us in and gave us a cup of tea and let us use her phone

car was broke and we're off to nowhere but the AA man's coming, what could go wrong? So we stood around beside the car feeling rather hungry, particularly Chris who only had a few chips the previous night. He decided to head to the nearest shop — about a mile away. Before too long he had returned. Unfortunately, a local farmer on a tractor had told Chris that the water was chest deep (to which Tim remarked that would be over his head) further down the road. Undeterred, Chris set off in a different direction towards another shop. As Tim and I were standing by the car an old dear named Julie came passed walking her dog and after some conversation, she invited us in for a cup of tea but to give her 10mins to sort the dog. I recall that she had spoken to Chris and he knew where she was and that we would be there but not how this happened. Anyway, Tim and I went round and had a cup of tea and a good old chat, and she felt sorry for us that we'd slept in the car when she had such a big place. After a while, we thanked her for the tea and left. The road was flooded, it was clear and bright, the car was broke but the AA man's coming, what could go wrong? Upon our return to the car, we met Chris, who had managed to get a lift to and from Leominster, do some shopping at Morrison's and been to a café. So we started munching on pork-pies, sandwiches and beer with alcohol in it. Being about noon, being fed, having

Photo Robin Wells, Dartington Morris to ring the AA. They would be there within 4 hours they said, ie before 1pm Saturday afternoon. We thanked Sam for the tea and left. The road was flooded, it was clear, the



a beer and the AA about to turn up, things were looking up and we'd at least make the feast at Brewed and perhaps the end of a tour, or just find a pub. But then .....Chris' phone rang. It was the AA. There was now up to a 12 hour wait. As it was about 12.30pm Saturday, this meant they wouldn't be turning up until lam Sunday morning. The road was flooded, it was clear and bright, the car was broke and we're not off to Brewed, what could go wrong? Another local couple, who had passed us and chatted both departing and returning in their 4x4, asked us to come in for a cup of tea. Now, we were a little fatigued and a little chilly and damp by this time, so when we entered to a soft couch and log-fire and a hot cup of tea, it felt like absolute luxury. Whilst talking rugby to our host (he was a rugby coach from Wales) I looked across to see that Tim had nodded off. Then I turned sideways to see that Chris had followed suit. A little embarrassed, I just kept talking until they had both woken up. His wife then rang round to see if she could find us any accommodation but everywhere was booked and they were off to a wedding that evening. We talked of going to the pub in the village — about 2 miles down the road — and our host offered to drive us. We declined his offer because

we all felt like we could do with a walk and we'd nothing else to do anyway. On leaving, we went back round to the old dear's Julie and asked her if we could take her to the pub for a meal and could we kip on her floor the night. She was a little taken aback but agreed to let us stay. She'd already made eating plans so didn't come to the pub. We told her we'd be back about 8pm and we set off on foot for the pub. The road was flooded, it was clear and bright, the car was broke and we're not off to Brewed, what else could go wrong? The pub was fairly deserted at 5pm on Saturday afternoon when we arrived. Food was being served from 6pm. We had some ale, ordered some steak, had some more ale, eat the steak, had some more ale and left about 8.15pm Saturday evening. By 9pmish, we were back at Julie's and Tim and I sorted where we would be sleeping, I used the bathroom and we were sitting down in her front room when Chris came in to tell us the AA man had arrived! The very nice man from the AA took out the glow-plugs from the engine, (it's a diesel) and turned the engine over and water sprayed out of it like a fountain. He put the plugs back in and turned her over but there was still water getting in. So, he undid the glow-plugs and sprayed

the water out again. Realising there was a connecting hose where water might have got in, he undid it then pushed it up to its connection for a moment as the turning engine sucked some water in, but not too much, and then took it away. He repeated this several times and then finally put everything back together and all was sorted. This sounds simple but took about an hour, so it was about 10.30pm Saturday night when he left. We now had two choices, to bed down at Julie's and go home in the morning, or to go home straight away. Because it hadn't rained all day and much of the flood-water had subsided I was of the mind that it would be better to go home immediately as there would be little traffic and if we stayed over and it rained again overnight, we'd be back to square one. Chris and Tim were both concerned for my ability to drive after having had little sleep the night before and several ales in the pub that evening. Fortunately, I regularly drive long distances/hours with my job so I felt aware of my limitations. I told them that if I felt tired, I'd just pull up and we could bed down again. Reassured by this, we set off for home at about 11pm Saturday night. The road was clear, it wasn't raining, the car was fixed and we're off home, what could go wrong?

Although the waters had subsided somewhat, many towns were still cut off and roads closed. We decided to navigate by satnav and just let her (Sarah that is — Sarah Satnav) re-route us each time we came across a closed road. There were no traffic reports at this time. We zigzagged about through Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. I remember going through Malvern and near to Upton-on-Severn. Eventually we came out at Gloucester and got onto the now open and clear M5. Chris staying awake to keep me company and keep me awake, Tim nodded off after about 5 mins in the car (although I found out later that Tim and Chris had had a discussion about who would stay awake to keep me awake and had decided Tim would!) Due to the cross-country driving before getting onto the M5, we didn't arrive in Exeter to drop Tim off until 3.30am Sunday morning. Chris and I got back to mine, in Newton Abbot at about 4am Sunday morning. Chris then jumped in his car to drive back to Plymouth; I guess he'd have arrived home at about 4.45am Sunday morning. The journey was over, the car was fixed and we'd got back home safely. Phew!  
Iain Davison is Bagman, Dartington Morris



Photos Left, above & right by guest sides with disposable

## ...and finally some more from Stafford Ring Meeting



### Cultural Olympiad Creative Programmers appointed

Details of the eight regional Creative Programmers for the four year nation wide Cultural Olympiad starting 24th August 2008 and leading up to the Games proper in 2012 have been released and these are available on [www.culture.gov.uk/Reference\\_library/Press\\_notices/archive\\_2007/dcms109\\_07.h](http://www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Press_notices/archive_2007/dcms109_07.h) These should be able to offer assistance in the co-ordination of regional and city based events in addition to your local authority designated Olympic officer who may be able to assist

with training individuals and staging local events in towns and cities. It is imperative in order to raise the profile and the development of the Morris for the next generation that a programme of training young and new members should be incorporated into any plans that sides and regional reps wish to consider. Besides events for the 2008 Liverpool City of Culture, which each of the Morris Organisations are involved in, our own 75th anniversary events built round the Morris Ring Meetings for 2009 and the Olympic Morris

Ring Meetings for 2012, the Joint Morris Organisations are already planning annual large scale events starting in Nottingham in 2009. A 2012 Border Morris event centered on Much Wenlock involving West Midlands area sides and at Bodmin with South West sides that builds on the historic 'games' held in these locations could be another Olympic focus worth planning for on a regional basis.

The Creative Programmers for the regions are:

East: Liz Hughes  
East Midlands: Paul Brookes  
North East: Lorna Fulton  
North West: Deborah Lander  
South East: Caterina Loriggio  
South West: Richard Crowe  
Yorkshire: Tessa Gordziejko  
West Midlands: Paul Keynes

Best of luck. Please contact me and your regional rep if you encounter any problems or wish to discuss proposals.

Paul Reece