



July 2009
No 59

The Squire

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Westminster Day of Dance 2009



Above: Chester Morris Men start the display in Trafalgar Square

Below: Mike Garland at the Wellington Arms

What a day it was too. Hot in the sunshine, a little cool in the shade. After meeting the assembled guests at The Barley Mow, Winchester Morris Men set off with East Suffolk Morris Men, Monkseaton and Ripley to entertain the crowds on the Embankment before proceeding to our first display in Trafalgar Square. With an excellent p.a. system and announcer, Monkseaton gave a vigorous display of rapper, followed by Winchester, East Suffolk and Ripley, to a large and appreciative crowd.

From Trafalgar Square we ambled along the Strand to the appropriately named Wellington Inn. After a short display, lunch followed.

It was warm in the sunshine, although a cool breeze in the shade kept the dancers on their toes. After a little confusion some of us moved on to the Bell and Compass before all the visiting sides met for a massed display in Trafalgar Square.

There were four tours with visiting sides including Shakespeare, Colchester, Datchet, Chester, Exeter, Jockey, Dolphin, Ravensbourne, White Rose, Thaxted, and Whitchurch. Westminster



Photos: J.J Stevenson

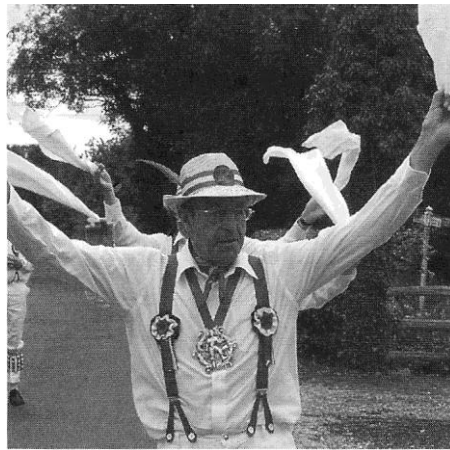
Morris Men yet again attracted the crowds that enjoyed a thoroughly entertaining, unique and varied display of the very best of English Morris Dancing. More photos on pages 14,15.

The Squire's Report

There has been no shortage of things to do and events to attend since my previous report in January.

At the beginning of February I attended the Winchester Feast with Fred Hands, the south east region rep. The food is always interesting at Winchester as each year Albert and his catering crew produce a meal based on a different country's cuisine. This year we were treated to the delicacies of the Lebanon. After Winchester it was on to the Kennet Ale. If Winchester are known for their cuisine then Kennet are equally famous for their port. After the dancing, chairs are drawn up, the singing starts and the port goes round and round and round.....

March started with the ARM. Steve Adamson was warmly thanked for his fifteen years of service and Eddie Worrall was duly confirmed as the new Treasurer. Steve will continue to run the Morris Shop. The following weekend I went to Newcastle upon Tyne for the annual Dancing England Rapper Tournament. (See back page). March was a busy month as the following weekend I attended the Letchworth Ale and curry night. The evening's dancing schedule included all of the dances I have selected for the massed displays at this summer's Morris Ring meetings so all who went are now well prepared! The month ended with the Nottingham Revels, hosted by the Open Morris. Over sixty sides took part including eleven from the Morris Ring. The weather was bitterly cold but mostly dry and everyone I spoke to was enjoying themselves. The Open did a very good job with the organisation and the day proceeded according to plan with ample opportunities to fortify ourselves in the pubs in



between the dance displays.

I spent Easter in Belgium, in the town of Tongeren, dancing with North British. It has become a custom for a sword side to visit Tongeren at Easter and over the past thirteen years nine different sides have visited, some more than once. Tongeren had a sword dance tradition of its own but this has been lost. Seven of the original swords survive and are displayed in the town's medieval tower. Later in April I went up to Horwich for their "Day for St. George". The sides processed in a rather unorganised way through the streets of Horwich with diversions as necessary to take in the apparatus in the children's play ground and any other local attractions! Eventually they all reached the first pub and after a welcome pint, danced on the pavement outside. One of the Horwich men, who shall be nameless, decided that the procession was too far for him to walk and decided to catch the bus. He discovered that he had left his bus pass at home and refusing to pay the fare walked to the pub by a shorter but steeper route. When we arrived we found that he had collapsed at the bar just before buying a round of drinks and had to be taken to hospital in an ambulance. Fortunately nothing was wrong and he joined us again

later in the afternoon.

Dawn on May Day was beautiful (in Kent anyway) and I watched the sunrise from the Coldrum Stones, a prehistoric burial chamber. Hartley have danced there on May Day for many years and we always get a good audience. This year there were about a hundred people in total including sixteen children and two Druids. The Druids use the site before us for their own ceremony. I spent the rest of the May Day weekend with North British at the Hastings Jack in the Green Festival where we were joined by De Michielen, the current sword dance side from Tongeren, who do a dance based on English longsword but they wear a medieval style of costume, have a calling on song which of course nobody but them understands and dance to a Flemish tune. The overall effect is excellent and they were a great hit at the Festival.

May continued with the Westminster day of dance in central London. There were sixteen visiting sides including Chester, Monkseaton and Datchet so we had north west, rapper and longsword and border in addition to Cotswold. It was a wonderful day, dancing in famous places in warm sunshine. The following weekend I ventured up to Northamptonshire for the Moulton Village Festival. I enjoyed the carnival procession with the Maycart. It's like a scaled down version of the Saddleworth rushcart procession except that there is a carriage containing a May Queen rather than a Rushcart with a Saddleworth man on top. It was great dancing outside the church with members of Yateley, King John's and Etcetera.

continued on page 5

Monkseaton: A Retrospective in Pictures



USA 1970

1976



Photos: Courtesy Bryan Jackson and Monkseaton Morris Men, except where stated

Colin Ross (Gold Badge EFDSS this year!), Bryan Jackson, Alan Brown, George Mockler, Keith Hanson; Front - Walter Godson, John Atkinson, John Burgess. This was the first time Monkseaton appeared at the Albert Hall Festival.



*2009 Westminster Day of Dance, Trafalgar Square (Photo H Stevenson)
below: Rapper Weekend 1985*



*Above, New Year 1985
below: Monkseaton Arms 2004 (Photo: H Stevenson)*



"Putting on the style"

You will certainly give away your age if you know which pop song that comes from!

I read about the 18 to 30 group in a recent circular and it's certain they wouldn't have a clue about that line. These young men come from a variety of different Morris clubs and meet up for a weekend of dancing; I suppose to show off their vigour of youthful athleticism as opposed to the staggering about of the aged and infirm Morris men over 30.

I'm sure they have a wonderful time but my mind is troubled by this phenomenon which besides seeming a bit divisive, is certainly going against the spirit of individual club style and performance aspired to by many of the Morris Ring clubs over the years. The Morris Ring came from the vision and ideas of Joseph Needham, a fascinating man I actually met some years ago, and with a little help from his

friends it was born. It blossomed into existence because put simply, many dancers in the thirties were products of the Morris gymnasium training and examination rooms of the EFDSS and some felt strongly it should be put back out onto the streets and village greens of our communities where it belonged. The examination regime was strict in its standards and produced good dancers but all men danced the same and there was little or no allowance for style or performance variation. There was a feeling for change.

Right from the beginning the independence of the Clubs within the Morris Ring was written into the constitution and has continued to be stressed over the past 75 years. I believe it was deliberate in order to encourage them to develop as the important units each with a distinctness and character and importantly to have

a "club style". Non-member clubs sometimes give voice to the myth that the Morris Ring is some kind of superior body and sadly they totally fail to see its real nature. The independence of each club and loyalty of its members to that club above all else is vital to the furtherance of the Morris.

The first Squire of the Morris Ring, Alec Hunter, expressed a vision he had for the future, and wished for a time when team after team would come forward to dance, each with their individual distinctive style and expressive performance. I think this vision has largely been achieved and the Morris is richer for it. It is a fine achievement and a satisfying justification of our efforts over the years.

Dicky

(An occasional piece to whom readers may write nicely to 'Dearest!')

Mersey Morris Men Celebrate 80th Birthday at their hosted Morris Ring Meeting in July 2008



Grace for the Winchester Morris Men's Annual Feast

7th February 2009: Ian Nichols (WinchesterMM)

Qui habet aures audiendi audiat

Cui autem similem aestimabo generationem

Cecinimus vobis et non saltastis

Venit Filius hominis manducans et bibens, et dicunt: ecce homo vorax et potator vini, publicanorum et peccatorum amicus, et iustificata est sapientia a filiis suis

Benedic, Domine, Bona tua quae de largitate sumus sumpturi.

Let us eat.

Let us drink.

Let us dance.

Amen.

In translation:

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

But whereunto shall I liken this generation?

We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced;

The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

Bless, O Lord, these gifts, which from your bounty we are about to receive.

Let us eat.

Let us drink.

Let us dance.

Amen

Inspired by Matthew 11 15 - 20

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

.....the Squire, continued from page 2

In late May I went to the Marlboro' Meadows Morris and Sword and four hundred men attended a Ale in Vermont. My wife's side, Dance Club which feeds dancers wonderful weekend blessed with Kettle Bridge Clogs, were invited into many of the sides in the warm sunshine on both days. and I went with them and spent Boston area. At one venue I saw There will be detailed coverage of the weekend in the company of the three sets of teenage Cotswold this and the rest of the summer's Pinewood's Morris Men whom dancers performing together. These Morris Ring meetings in the next I met last summer. The weekend youngsters have embraced the edition of the Morris Circular-the is organised on similar lines to a English traditions with enormous 60th! Morris Ring meeting except that enthusiasm and commitment and I look forward to meeting up with ladies' sides are included. There they made a great contribution to many more of you at Morris Ring were Cotswold, north west, rapper the happy atmosphere which was meetings, days and weekends of and longsword sides present and evident throughout the weekend. dance and festivals throughout the all of the dancing was to a very May ended with the Thaxted Morris summer. high standard. There were many Ring Meeting, the premier event *(photo courtesy Hartley Morris Men)* in the celebrations to mark our young people dancing which is due in great measure to the Great 75th year. Some thirty four sides

Mersey Morris Men — 315th Meeting of The Morris Ring

The Uttoxeter Perspective
by Mac McCoig

From Merseyside Today:
"Liverpool was settled in 1207, after King John granted a charter for a new, planned town. In 432 St Patrick is said to have sailed from the River Mersey on his mission to Ireland. The first mention of the River Mersey was made in 1007 in a deed from the reign of Ethelread II, the name is Old English from Maere, meaning boundary. In 1207 King John signed a Royal Charter, creating the borough of Liverpool, on Tuesday 28 August 1207." Clearly, nothing much happened until 1928, when the Liverpool Morris Men (now Mersey Morris Men) were formed. I can't remember why, but I had to cry off last year's 'away' Morris Ring Meeting, so I was really looking forward to a weekend of debauchery and dancing in Mersey Land and celebrating the 80th anniversary of the Mersey Men. Although a small TomTom input error got me to Mersea Island in Essex, the Uttoxeter Heart of Oak Morris Men arrived in force at Mostyn House School in the Wirral settlement of Parkgate on Friday 11 July 2008.

The school-pictured below- is one of those creaking Gormenghast sort of places, where Films like 'To Serve Them All My Days' could have been set (or St Trinians). There



Leicester City Morris Men

was even a discrete side entrance with a well-worn doorstep which opened onto the pub next door. A lovely stained glass window depicting Faith, Hope and Charity lit our little dining area, but wisely, Faith and Charity averted their eyes during the Saturday night Feast. The food provided by the School's Catering Staff was excellent and by far the best I have eaten at any Morris Ring Meeting so far, and certainly NOT school dinners.

Saturday morning got off to a fairly brisk start on double-decker buses into Liverpool via the Mersey Tunnel: "That 30-foot-long by 10-foot-wide Inside that monarch of the road, Observer of the Highway Code, That big six-wheeler scarlet-painted London transport diesel-engined 97 horsepower, 97-horsepower omnibus." (F&S)

The four Tours were all walking Tours. I thought this was a great idea. Plenty of pub stops, for them as want 'em and minimal mounting and dismounting - if you'll excuse the expression M'Lady. The only snag — as far as I could tell, was the danger of getting mixed up with the wrong Tour, since Morris Men were snaking

all round the Town in crocodiles. But that's all part of the fun!

Our first stop on the 'RINGO' Tour (I always preferred Lennon myself) was Williamson Square, where Chester City's Big Bass Drum reverberated around the flagstones and offices. The seagulls were raised reluctantly from their rooftop aerie and took revenge by bombing the musicians — fortunately their aim was not good — but left some impressive splats on the pavement. Other stops followed, including the wonderful and awesome Anglican Cathedral forecourt. At 3pm we arrived at the old docks to dance at the Echo Arena — a popular tourist stop and sheltered from the strong winds which had beset us all day -and not just from the beer either. An amusing episode followed in



Manchester Morris Men

which a security jobsworth gave a most convincing performance of Act 2, Scene 4 of Shakespeare's 'Much Ado About Nothing' in which the Night Watch forbids the Morrrys from dauncing for no apparent reason. But it was all sorted out (by ignoring him) and all ended well. Back on the bus and onwards to the Mersey Ferry!

So ferry 'cross the Mersey
'cause this land's the place I love
and here I'll stay
and here I'll stay
Here I'll stay.
(Gerry & the Pacemakers)



.....315th Meeting of The Morris Ring continued



*Mersey Morris Men with
their show dance, above.*

A boat ride down the river with super views of the Wirral and the City. One side (of course) danced on board — I'm jealous — I wish we'd done it! A lovely claim to fame, to have danced on the Mersey Ferry. That even beats Jockey's claim - they have been banned from dancing at Ikea!

Back to school, a rest, a cup of tea and then the Feast.

I have to say, Mersey did a cracking job — it was restricted to 7:30 — 9:30. Not too many or too long speeches, just right! And then out into the night for singing and dancing at the local pubs.

All Photos from Tony Foard, Mersey Morris Men

Utrecht Morris, below



*Kinnerton, below left, and
Dartington, right*



Sunday turned out to be one of those beautiful summer days of light breezes and soft sun. We were taken to Willaston-in-Wirral, Mersey MM's home village, where we processed to Christ Church where we were made most welcome. The dancing was rotated between the village green and the two local pubs: The Nag's Head and the Pollard Inn, all within a few yards of each other. We were briskly shepherded by an allocated MMM and this gave both us and the punters a change of scenery. We finished with a massed display on the village green and a substantial bite to eat in the Village Hall.

All in all a very satisfying weekend with excellent organisation, great company and good food and drink. The only down side to a great weekend was that my old army camp bed, faithful friend of 30 years and many campaigns, decided that enough was enough. A split developed in the canvas through which my butt and the floor became suddenly acquainted.

For Sale: 2nd Hand Camp Bed, repairs needed. Offers please.

Mac McCoig is a member of Uttoxeter Heart of Oak Morris Men



The Morris Ring Circular

July 2009
Issue No 59



Letters To The Editor

*From Alastair Sayles, Archivist,
Leeds Morris Men*

As one of the numerous clubs that formed in the 1950's Leeds Morris men is shortly celebrating its 60th birthday. We are trying to update club archives to reflect the club's history. One of the tasks is updating a membership list covering the whole period. At present we are running to 140+ names (with quite a few gaps in information) but would be really interested to hear from dancers who may have danced with Leeds for a short time or attended the Whit Tours from other teams, particularly during the 1960's -70s. We have records of close association with Cambridge, Colchester, Manchester, St Helens and Durham to mention but a few. The Leeds website has just been updated and carries quite a few pictures which might help jog

memories www.leedsmorris.org.uk.

Thanks for any contributions

Alastair

Alastair.Sayles@goyh.gsi.gov.uk

From Urban 75

Hi Harry

No problem to use the photo, so long as it's credited to urban75.com. I can send a higher resolution file if needed.

Perhaps you might be interested in returning the favour and coming down to dance at my Offline club in Brixton.

It's a monthly free club in Brixton that puts on a wide selection of acts and it's always a heap of fun. The night is free so we can't pay acts but we can make sure you all get some beers!

Take a look at the website and

tell me what you think; www.offlineclub.com.

All the best

Mike

urban75@gmail.com

(Following the Westminster Morris Men Day of Dance, the following link gave some excellent photos and the above letter is an open invitation to join them at their Briton Club. I have include the photo below and duly acknowledge 'urban75.com

http : //www.urban75.org/london/morris-dancers-london.html

Many thanks Mike, ed)

Below

***Winchester Morris Men in
Trafalgar Square, during the
Westminster Day of Dance, 9th
May 2009***

Photo copyright urban75.com





The Morris Ring Circular Editorial



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URGENT

The next Edition of the Morris Circular - the 60th no less - celebrates the 2009 Morris Ring Meetings. The editor pleads and requests as many reports from each Meeting. If you attended any of them please consider writing about your experience. In the Morris Ring's 75th Anniversary year it would be fitting for as many articles as possible recording these events. In order to maximise the colour content - up to eight full pages - the editor would appreciate an abundance of photos.

Upgrade

This edition of The Morris Ring Circular has been upgraded to

gloss. The loss of depth in the photographs on 'plain paper' was evident as were the varying degrees of contrast and brightness. Any comments appreciated.

Layout

At the request of a friendly Morris Dancer resident in Holland, I have noted his comments about layout, headings, column widths and lack of a colophon. His suggestion of attending a day course on graphic design has been ignored, although I understand there is a very attractive 4 week course in four centres- Sydney, Melbourne, Auckland and Phuket. Alas our new Treasurer has gone off the idea, for me to attend anyway. Probably would have

got away with it had the subject of expenses not been front page news.

On the subject of colophon, I leave the readers to do their own homework on that and hope they enjoy a speedy recovery. For my friend in Holland, my contact details are above and always have been. I hope you like the changes.

Morris Dancing

Finally, the Summer season is well under way with the weather to date being good for many events. Thanks to Mersey Morris Men and Mac McCoig for their contribution and apologise that it could not be included in last edition
Enjoy the summer.

Leeds Morris Men

Photographic comparison from the 1950s and 2007



Left, Bramhope, Leeds in the 1950

below, Kettlewell, Whit Monday a couple of years ago.

Norman Peacock appears in both photos



Full contact details for Leeds Morris Men past and present (see letter page 8)

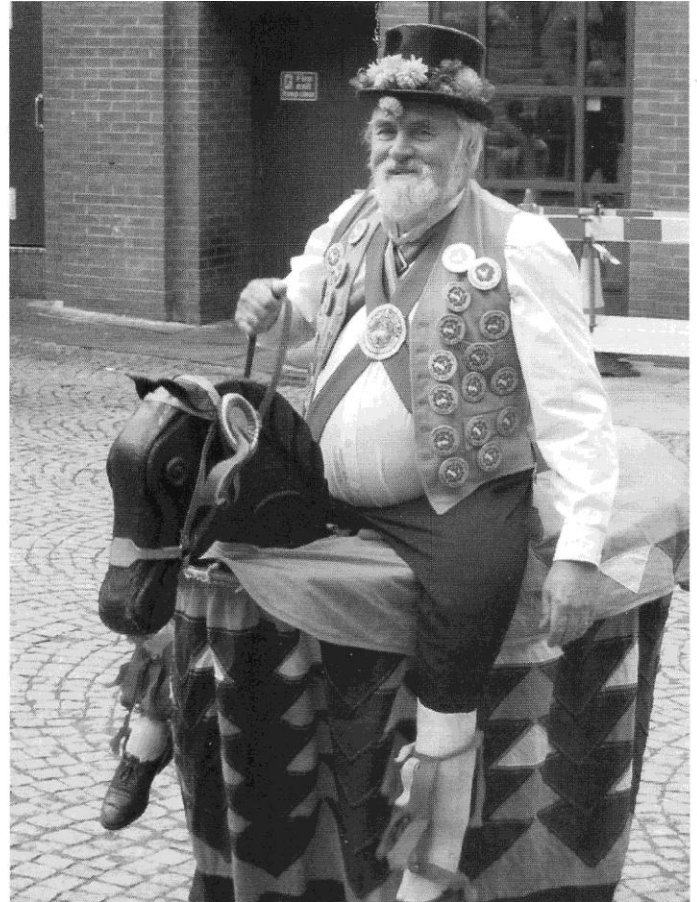
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More Photos from the Mersey Morris Ring Meeting

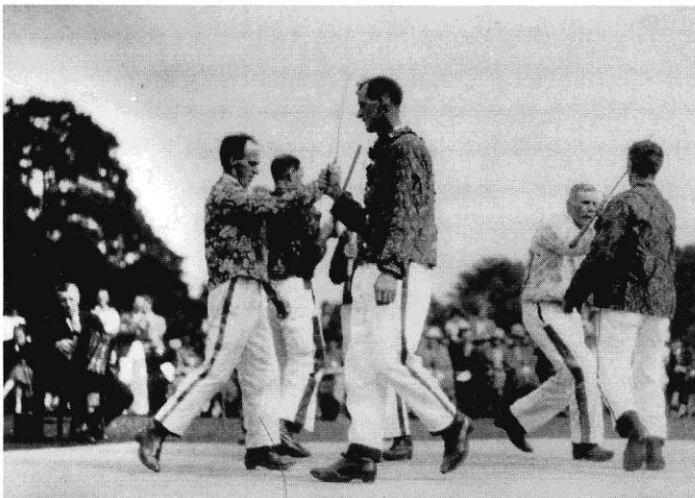


Above, some of the sides represented by their Squire's-Chester, Utrecht, Dartington, Thelwall, Leicester, Mersey, Uttoxeter, the then Squire of The Morris Ring, Paul Reece and another Leicester representative.
Right: Dartington's Horse

Photos: Tony Foard



Grenoside: then & now



Above, 1927 in Buxton, EFDSS Summer School, Morris Ring Archive

Below, at the 5th International Sword Spectacular, York, 2008
 Photo: Steve Mettam, Grenoside





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www.king-johns-morris.org.uk


Woodchurch Morris Men Jig for Victory

by Dave Comley

Despite press speculation that Morris Dancing 'faces extinction', Woodchurch once again have been inundated with invites to dance and sing, having to turn down many stands as the diary was simply too full to accommodate every request. Woodchurch Morris Men dance largely for entertainment and enjoyment, however there is a serious side with thousands of pounds having been raised for charity over the years both through the dancing 'stands', and their traditional Christmas time 'Mummers Plays'.

As has been the custom for many years, the side danced this May Day on the Village Green at 7am, supported as always by over 40 local villagers who enjoyed some home made cider punch. A beautiful May morning, the side began their full-day May Day programme with a wonderful Trunkles before leading straight into one of their most popular dances, the Postman's Knock. Popular musician Tony Eaton played with a glorious elegance and the side, with a full turnout of dancers, didn't disappoint the onlookers. The procedure was halted just for a moment as Squire Geoff Smith announced that newest recruit, Dave Comley, was to receive his Rosettes and this was greeted with kind applause. After the Village Green it was up to The Bonny Cravat for a traditional Full English Breakfast which was very well received, before making the short journey across the road to entertain, as has been routine for many years, a full assembly at Woodchurch Primary School. The weather was so nice that

assembly had been moved outside into the Playground, and the side entertained the children and teachers with a tuneful rendition of Hal and Tow before dancing the Skirmish and Jockey. Then, to much cheering and squeals from the children, Woodchurch Morris's very own Hengist the Horse made his annual appearance. It was a delight to see the children and the adults thoroughly enjoying this traditional entertainment, and without a games consul in sight! Woodchurch Morris then took the train to the seaside town of Broadstairs on the East Kent coast. The glorious May Day weather meant that the crowds had come

out in good number to soak up the first rays of summer sun. Woodchurch danced first to a small audience at The Lord Nelson Pub before moving onto The Neptune's Hall which saw a good crowd of both English and overseas tourist stop to watch as the side danced. Collecting for charity as they went, the hat was duly passed around and the on-lookers were pleased to support. Last year, local Hospice Demelza House and the Kent Air Ambulance enjoyed sizeable donations from Woodchurch Morris — something not lost upon a number of builders who were situated high above the dancers

continued on page 12





Woodchurch Morris Men present;

JIG FOR VICTORY!

an evening of traditional dance, music and song

Supporting Denis Frain's 4 day Pyrenees trek
in aid of the Royal British Legion

at THE BONNY CRAVAT, Woodchurch
FRIDAY 26TH JUNE - 8pm

Superb BBQ

Woodchurch MORRIS Men traditional English dancing

Special Guests - Ooah Kappivvy Ladies MORRIS from Hastings

Traditional Music

Wartime Singalong plus other traditional songs

Fundraising Raffle with fantastic prizes

(Raffle tickets are available from The Woodchurch Post Office, The Model Shop and The Bonny Cravat)

Plenty of fun and frolicsome capers

WE NEED YOUR HELP - HELP US TO HELP DENIS - JIG FOR VICTORY!

Further details - Dave Comley 01233 860861
Learn Morris - call Geoff Smith - 01233 860330
Read about the Woodchurch Morris Men on www.woodchurch-pc.gov.uk

.....Jig for Victory.....

in Harbour Street and who very generously showered notes and coins from the roof-tops in their appreciation of this little bit of tradition.

Onto the seafront itself, and the excellent Tartar Frigate. A Thorley Tavern pub, the Frigate, serves some very good beers and is very much a focal point during Folk Week. Situated opposite the Jetty it was a glorious stage to entertain a very appreciative audience. A good session of dancing under what was now a very warm sun included a 12 man Valentine and a well executed Vandals. With hunger starting to kick-in, the side then began to make their way to their final destination in Broadstairs, the Wrotham Arms, but not before dancing on the Cliff Top to another good crowd outside of a couple of the towering Cliff Top hotels that overlook the sea. The Wrotham Arms is a very 'folk friendly' Shepherd Neame pub just a couple of minutes from Viking



*At the Jig for Victory evening; below
Woodchurch dance on May Day*

Photos: Dave Comley

Bay and this was a good location to cool down and eat, before saying goodbye to Broadstairs with a couple of dances outside.

A very busy May Day ended back at Woodchurch at The Six Bells - a venue at which the side were due to dance just two days later at the Six Bells Beer Festival. In short, a memorable May Day, some good

ales, excellent music and dancing and a good collection for the charity pot. Now it's full steam ahead for a very busy summer!!

Woodchurch bucks the recent trend of insular village folk, and has a community spirit that seems second to none. There are, it is said, more village societies in Woodchurch than in almost any village in the country and the Woodchurch Morris

Men are proud to sit in the middle of this communal brother and sisterhood. So when villager Denis Frain, himself a member of the Woodchurch branch of the Royal British Legion, announced that he was going to embark upon a 5 day trek across the Pyrenees to raise money for the Royal British Legion, the Woodchurch Morris Men literally leapt to his assistance.

The side have single-handedly put together an evening of traditional entertainment at the local Bonny Cravat Pub, and at the same time they have inspired the village to support their man and in particular, the Royal British Legion. The "Jig For Victory" event - named of course after the famous Wartime slogan - began simply as an evening for the Woodchurch Morris Men to dance at the pub and to make a small collection for Denis. However, they were soon joined by Ladies Morris side Oojah Kappivvy from Hastings, and then by top local folk group Crooked Style who agreed to perform free of charge at the event. With the prospect also of a brass band, suddenly the event has taken off into a shining



Jig for Victory

example of togetherness and comradeship and promises to be a gala evening - with a BBQ thrown in for good measure. The side have been collecting Raffle Prizes, and local shops the Post Office, The Model Shop and of course the Bonny Cravat itself have all wholeheartedly volunteered to sell the tickets right up until the 26th June, when the event takes place. Prizes have been donated by Kent County Cricket Club, by KESR, Folkestone Race Course, Beauty Treats Spa at Warehorne, Banyan Retreat, P and O and the Sinden Theatre, Folkestone Racecourse and Biddenden Vineyard. Sporting legend Graham Gooch and comedian Jo Brand have also assisted and The Bonny Cravat's brewery Shepherd Neame have also supported generously. Finally, a donation of a flight in a MUSTANG AIRCRAFT which is currently being auctioned silently at the Bonny Cravat.

The event on 26th June is described as 'an Evening of Traditional Dance, Music and Song' and has grown considerably since the original plan of simply having a Woodchurch Morris Men Stand and collection at the pub.

The event not only caught the mood of the Kent business fraternity who showered the event with over 20 fabulous raffle prizes, but also the villagers of Woodchurch, who came to the event in their hundreds for an evening the likes of which some present on the night said had not been seen in the village for many, many years. The evening began with a meal for Denis Frain and his honoured guests, which had been sponsored by Estate Agent of the Year 2008, Sealeys from Gravesend. Then it was the hosts, Woodchurch Morris Men who



Woodchurch pose in Borough Market

commenced the entertainment on a beautiful summer's evening with a wonderfully varied selection of dancing which was watched by an incredible crowd both from the village and beyond that had gathered in the pub garden to watch the proceedings. Woodchurch Morris Men were joined by Oojah Kappivvy Ladies Morris from Hastings. A smaller side in numbers to the men's side, but never the less a very entertaining set of dances and a good array of musicians. The Bar-B-Que organised by Landlords Geoff and Elaine was in full swing by this time and there was a tremendous community atmosphere as the villagers got whole heartedly into the event, spilling out some twenty deep in the beer-garden. After an hour of traditional Morris dancing and music, including an appearance by Woodchurch Morris' very own Hengist the Horse, a swift break was followed by the rousing communal singing of a twenty-five minute medley of wartime-era songs. The plan had been to sing inside the pub, but the truth was that the crowd had become simply too big for this and thus an 'alfresco' singing session,

with song sheets provided for the audience, was hastily arranged in the centre of the garden. At 10pm, the Grand Raffle took place, drawn by Jan Francis, and at 10.30pm the Silent Auction prize of a flight in a Mustang Aircraft kindly donated by Rob Davies was brought to an end by Squire Geoff Smith and was won by Laura Sears for £450 which all went towards the charity total. Finally, it was the turn of top folk band/entertainers Crooked Style, who had agreed to play free of charge for the night, to allow the audience to take their turn in 'jigging for victory' with a marvellous selection of classic folk, humorous numbers and expert music. The event will have raised over £1000 for the Royal British Legion, which will be presented to Denis Frain upon his return from the Pyrenees, but equally importantly it showed an incredible community spirit still exists amongst the villagers of Woodchurch.

Dave Comley is a member of Woodchurch Morris Men

Westminster Day of Dance 2009



East Suffolk dancer above, at Wellington Arms; Monkseaton Morris, right and Winchester Morris Men below, in Trafalgar Square

Photos: J J Stevenson

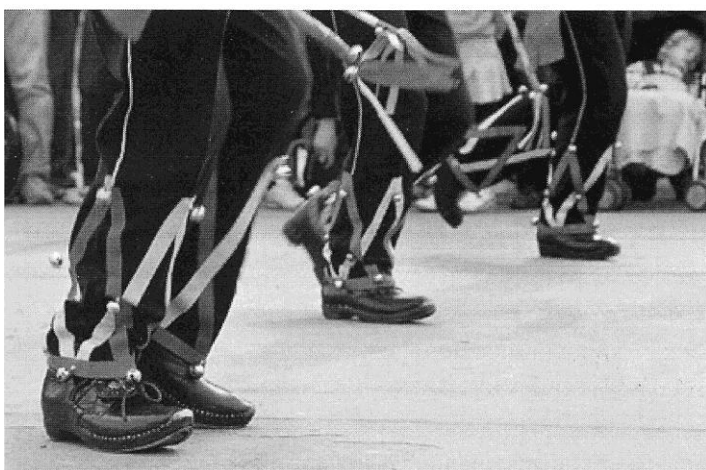
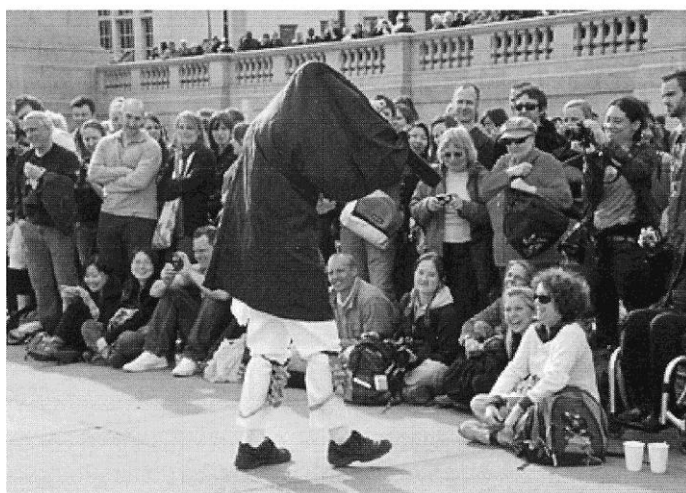


Dolphin dancer, left; Chester and Exeter Musicians above; bells of a Dolphin Man, right

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Westminster Day of Dance 2009



Top left Winchester; above middle, a Westminister Tabard and hat; above The Horse; left, the Chester Morris 'clogs;
 Photos: copyright urban75.com; see letters page 8

Above top: Monkseaton; left middle: Ripley

Photos: J J Stevenson

Dancing England Rapper Tournament 2009

by Brian Tasker

This year the competition took place in Newcastle upon Tyne and was hosted by two of the local sides, the Newcastle Kingsmen and Sallyport, who were celebrating their respective 60th and 40th anniversaries.

The competition was divided into three categories: Premier, Centenary (intermediate) and Open. The Kingsmen won the Premier class again with Black Swan coming second and Sallyport third. The girls of Goarsach from Scotland challenged for the top spot with a powerful display of



there was a special event for sides dancing what are termed "traditional dances". Sallyport beat off competition from Addison, Thrales, Triskele, Whip the Cat and Monkseaton to win this category with a superb performance of the

a fantastic response from the audience and left their Betty, Peter Brown, on a high.

Grenoside provided some variation from rapper by dancing their longsword dance as an exhibition dance during the day and High Spen danced in the evening showcase but did not enter the tournament.

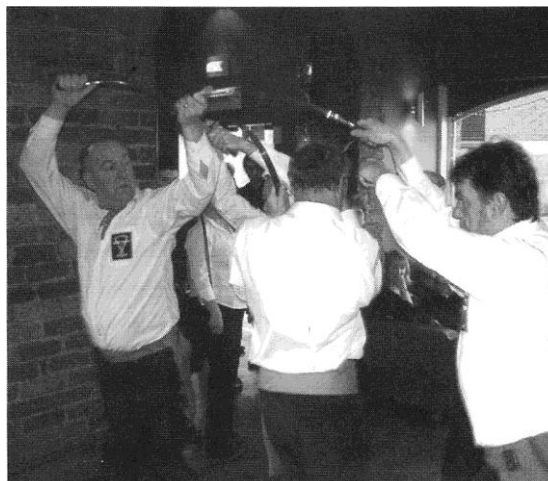
The standard of dancing at Dert gets better every year and the average age of the dancers is going down. That is not to say that older men cannot be competitive. Sallyport have men in their 40's and 50's and the side is dancing better than ever. This is at least partly because they are being challenged by the younger dancers. Dert provides an opportunity to see many of the very best sides and those who enter go home with ideas which will help them improve their own dancing. That is exactly what Candy Rapper did and it paid off for them this year.

Next year the tournament will be in Derby and I very much hope that the Morris Ring will again be well represented.



dancing but could not dislodge the old triumvirate. They came fourth scoring higher than Stone Monkey and Thrales who have been in the top three in previous years. Candy Rapper from Boston won the Centenary class and the Rapper Rascals won the Open class. The Morris Ring was represented in the Open class by Monkseaton, Southport and Faithful City who came 3rd, 5th and 6th respectively. Peter Brown, Monkseaton's Betty, came joint second in the category for the best character. After the main tournament

Swalwell dance. Monkseaton came second with a performance of the North Walbottle dance which drew



PHOTOS

Top: Faithful City

Above, far left: Grenoside

Above, middle:
High Spen

Left: Southport

*Photos :
Brian Tasker*