



The Newsletter - No. 24 – July 2002

Greetings,

The dancing season is well under way and two Ring Meetings at Richmond and Thaxted have already come and gone. With five Meetings this summer, a good number of clubs will be involved. This Newsletter has been timed to save postage and coincide with the next issue of the Circular. Many of you will receive it at – or shortly after – the next two Ring Meetings at Ledbury [Silurian] and Bristol.

At the Bristol Ring Meeting, we will have a change of Squire. *Gerald Willey* will dance out and *Cliff Marchant* will dance in. I am sure you will all join me in wishing them both well as they completely change their life styles !!!

Please note the correction to the Treasurer's address: STEVE ADAMSON, 12, FLOCKTON ROAD, **EAST** BOWLING, BRADFORD, WEST YORKSHIRE BD4 7RH. He has discovered that he lives a little further to the right on the map !!!

Also enclosed with this mailing are:

- A **Summary** of this Newsletter – as the last page of the Newsletter.
- As expected - some **Amendments** to the new Directory.
- Your copy/copies of the **Morris Circular**.
- **Booking Forms** for the “**Fools and Animals**” weekend and [possibly] the **Bucknell and Badby** etc. Instructional. Also, information on the **18-30 Weekend** in Oxford.
- The **Minutes** of the **ARM**. [The Minutes of the Advisory Council should be with the next Newsletter. The next Meeting is scheduled for 24th November in Birmingham].

Remember: Unless you pass on the content of this Newsletter to the Men in your Side, the information stops with you. A summary is included on the last sheet.

E-mailed versions of these Newsletters are available on request [ideally as an attached Word document; please order and specify by Email].

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

INSTRUCTIONALS - Forthcoming Instructionals include: -

Longborough and Adderbury Instructional. Due to insufficient early response, this has been **cancelled**. Our thanks to *Jack Brown* for all his preliminary hard work.

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, the **Fools and Animals** are set to convene in Polperro, Cornwall from **11th – 13th October 2002**. The hosts will be a joint **Plymouth** and **Trigg** team. An overseas trip was “too local”. An **application form** is included with this Newsletter.

“Highlights” of **Bucknell, Brackley, Badby and Hinton**, with *John Burke*, **King John's** will be on **8th – 10th November 2002**. It will be at Lockerley Village Hall (north of Romsey). John Burke notes “I intend that the material will include highlights of Badby, Brackley, Hinton and Bucknell. I don't purport to do a "definitive" version of any of these, but the emphasis will be in doing them and drawing out the contrasts and concordances between them. An Application Form will hopefully, be enclosed with this Newsletter. If the form is not present, the Instructional may be in doubt, and will have to be largely organised by Email.

“**Dances that are not often done**”. In response to a request for a meeting, *David Thompson [Ripley]* is running an Instructional Meeting at Ambergate Sports and Social Club, Ambergate on Saturday **16th November 2002**. “We will foregather at 11am; lunch at noon; dancing 1pm 'til late afternoon finish”. Cost £5. Open to men from other areas. Contact David for more details [Email: Thompson_Capers@Tesco.net Tel: 01332 770578].

ARM 2003. *Isca* will host the **ARM** in **2003**. The dates will be **7th – 9th March 2003**. The venue will be Trellech, near Monmouth.

Ideally, in **2004**, the ARM venue should move North – are any Northern Sides interested? – Please contact the Ring Bagman.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - RING MEETINGS – 2002

Late applications may still be considered by **Hartley**. Indeed, they would be delighted to have a couple more Sides. Sides may apply, even if they are already attending another Meeting. Sides wishing to apply should do so **immediately**.

30th Aug - 1st Sept HARTLEY. Contacts below:-

Hartley Morris Men	Terry Heaslip	Terry@heaslip.fsnet.co.uk	01622 871167
[Ring Meeting Bagman] **	15, Henham Gardens, East Peckham, Tonbridge, Kent TN12 5PD		
Hartley Morris Men	Tony Tomlin	Hartleymen@aol.com	01622 685960
[Bagman]	139, Farleigh Hill, Tovil, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6RQ		

**** Please note the NEW BAGMAN for the Hartley Meeting**

OTHER EVENTS

International Traditional Drama Conference. 19th – 21st July 2002, Halifax Hall of Residence, Sheffield University. Details from Eddie Cass. Tel: 0161 881 8640 [or see details on http://www.folkplay.info/TD_Conf_2002.htm].

Gloucester International Pipe and Tabor Festival, 27th - 29th September 2002. Contact **Stephen Rowley** [Gloucestershire] who is the Festival Director [Tel: 01453 763181]

The **18 – 30 Morris Group** [based on a core of “younger” Men from **Icknield Way**] have postponed their Oxford week-end until 25 – 27 October. This will allow more time for notice to reach diaries. This event will be open to all three Morris Organisations, but is for male dancers only [but female musicians will be welcome]. Please advise your younger men who may now be working away, or be at college etc. Note the alternative new Email for **Ben Higgs**: Email: Benjamin.Higgs@bmwgroup.com Tel: 01865 427382. An information / application form is enclosed.

ARCHIVAL MATTERS

Apologies for spelling errors in the item on the **London Rodney** Album. **Les Chittleburgh** [Isca] produced the log / album held by **Vic Street**. **Gordon Ridgewell** also noting the errors, added that as a Member of the Side at that time, he had “photos in the attic”.

ANNIVERSARIES

Saddleworth celebrate their 25th Anniversary [only 3 years late] - see News!!

Kennet celebrate their 45th Anniversary.

Pilgrim celebrate their 30th Anniversary with a weekend bash in mid July.

Green Oak celebrate their 30th Anniversary with an event in early July

THE MEDIA

BBC Radio 4. Ian Hislop is making four programmes on the Patron Saints. As part of this, his producer was looking for Morris involvement on St. George’s Day, and various contact details were provided. The series started at 10.30am on Saturday 22nd June.

Because of the visits made for the above programme, Ian Hislop included the following in his column in the Sunday Telegraph. “Since I seem to be in confessional mode, I will share with you another shameful secret. Not only did I turn down an invitation from the Queen, I accepted one to go and watch some Morris dancing And I rather enjoyed it it was the evening of St. George’s Day, outside a pub called the Green Dragon, and the dancers were an extremely jolly crew. Yes the men had beards and the women were wearing clogs and, yes, there was a great deal of real ale being drunk, but I could not help thinking that for a harmless bunch of enthusiasts they have had a rotten press over the years. I had to walk to the pub via a shopping mall in the centre of Horsham and on the way I bumped into some bored teenagers. “What are you doing in Horsham” they asked. I said I was looking for a pub called the Green Dragon. One girl who was dressed in black, wearing black lipstick and black eye make-up, gestured towards the pub with her bag which was made in the shape of a coffin with a cross on it. She looked terrifying. “That’s the pub,” she said “but I wouldn’t go in there.” I asked why not. Back came her reply: “It’s full of scary-looking morris men”.”

An advertisement for the Observer drugs special stirred up controversy. It featured some vintage film of **Winster** taken by Barry Callaghan. Unfortunately, the final version could have been construed to suggest that Morris Men take drugs. The three Morris Organisations took exception to this and various letters of complaint were submitted.

John Price [St Albans] noted “TV watchers may wish to avoid tuning to "Newsnight" on BBC2, Friday 31st May, as there may be a sighting of St Alban’s Men. Luckily, it's at 10:30 pm, so most of you will be watching Anne Robinson being interviewed on "Friday Night with Jonathan Ross" on BBC1. Filming took place at a street party in St Albans yesterday evening. The cameraman seemed intent on distracting me from my accordion playing by putting his lens about three inches from my left ear for long periods of time. Either he has a lobe fetish, or he prefers to photograph morris men wearing hats rather than those (including SAMM men in dancing mode) who don't. Whatever his motivation, it was clearly wasted footage. The men were dancing very well, after a day of "practising" at the Hertfordshire Show. But without editorial control, who knows which of our mistakes the BBC will chose to screen? The TV people interviewed our Squire, **Gerald Farmer**, at some length. It will be interesting to hear what he said on the subject of Englishness and morris dancing. Incidentally, the front cover of the Hertfordshire Show programme prominently carried a very nice photo of our Squire Elect, **John Seaborn**, in Wheatley mode - looking serious of countenance, yet gay of heart; vigorous yet restrained; a strong man rejoicing in his strength, yet graceful, controlled, and perfectly dignified withal. Verily, he is a true morris man.” - He'll slay you John!!!

Squire Elect, **Cliff Marchant [Chantonbury Ring]** was interviewed on “Is Morris Dancing dying?” on the Today programme on a BBC Radio 4 item on 'All Things British' on 28th May. It discussed a survey that found that morris dancing comes last in a list of things that people regard as essentially English. Shakespeare and the Royal Family were at the top: morris dancing and the Rolling Stones at the bottom! **John Price [St Albans]** said “...at least the item wasn't gratuitously insulting to morris. Plenty of inaccuracies, of course”. An Email of support was received from Stella Bianco of the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers who believes that “... church bells and morris dancing are two of our greatest traditions.”

Morris also featured on the BBC Radio 4 'Making History' programme on 28th May – **John Price** [who must have had a radio day that day!!!] reports that “there was an excellent five minute summary by Professor Alun Howkins on the origins of morris dancing”. **Steve Tunnicliff [Rutland]** noted “... Alun Howkins ... put it all very well in a nutshell and managed to fend off all the old myths.”

NEWS

Letchworth “Instructional and Ale” was mentioned in the last issue. A fuller report is now available from, **Alan Creamer**. “The event was held in Henlow on 23rd March. It was a great success, with representatives from **Bedford, Yateley, St. Albans, Etcetera, Anstey, Anker, Plymouth** and **Peterborough**. The Instructional ‘Dances for Ales’ was well-run by **Steve Cavill** and enjoyed by the participants. There was a surprise guest in the form of **Walter Abson**, first Bagman of the Ring, who is recuperating with his son in the same village. He commented on seeing a ‘shooting’ dance being practised that it was obvious none of the men had ever felt the recoil of a rifle! At the evening Ale, Potton Brewery provided their excellent Shambles (4.3%) and Shannon IPA (3.6%). These went down very well, with the beef casserole and the vegetarian lentil curry. Songs from Anker, Bedford and the home side finished off the meal. Some 19 men survived the overnight camping, and moved to the pub next door for the full English coronary breakfast, followed by an informative visit to the aforementioned Potton Brewery. Next year’s Ale is on 22nd March, book now”

As part of a week of 'Culture & Diversity', held near Chester for 11 to 16 year olds, representatives from **Mersey, Kinnerton & Adlington** combined forces to provide a Morris taster session [on 4th April], teaching a modified version of Rigs o' Marlow.

The **Harthill** Spring Ale and Feast was held on 6th April, at Harthill Village Hall. "Representatives from **Anker; Boar's Head; Green Ginger; Green Man; Isca; Jockey** [Past Squire, **Roy Yarnell**]; **Lord Conyers; Richmond on Swale** and **Ripley**, together with guests the Squire Elect; the Bagman and the Treasurer, Past Squire, **Ivor Allsop**, and Harthill Men past and present. An excellent meal of Soup; Ham, Beef and Turkey and Salads [in profusion]; and Apple Pie or Fruit salad, and Coffee, from efficient local caterers. The meal was helped along with two beers from local brewer Clark's of Wakefield ["City Gent" - 4.2% and "Rams Revenge" - 4.6%]; and two topical seasonal beers: Caledonian "Six Nations" - 4.2% and Wychwood "Hare Raiser" - 4.3%. The Harthill "Old Man", **Derrek Leigh**, with ceremonial silver chain of office, proposed the Loyal Toast after a minute's silence in Memory of HRH Elizabeth, the Queen Mother. The Bagman proposed the Immortal Memory; he craved indulgence to admonish his Hosts for the matter of the loss of his daughter's Morris dancing innocence, that had occurred during a visit the previous year [see Newsletter No. 20]. He then suggested remembering, not only Cecil Sharp and the other collectors, but those Sides who were no more. For example, London Rodney [whose Log had recently come to hand, thanks to **Les Chittleburgh, Isca**, who was present], had been admitted to the Ring at Cecil Sharp House almost exactly 50 years ago. He then proposed the silent toast. The Squire of Harthill, **Glyn Charlesworth**, briefly welcomed the guests, and the Squire Elect, **Cliff Marchant**, replied with equal and commendable brevity. After songs and recitations, the tables were cleared for dancing. The floor being excellent, the dancing, interspersed with songs, jigs and party pieces proceeded until near mid-night. At which time, the Bagman's two daughters, who had come to escort him, and his car, were again "set upon" and reintroduced, or introduced, to "Bonny Green" in the Harthill tradition!! "Oh! you know it", quoth a surprised Harthill Man. "We should do, after watching for 20 years", they replied!!! Their shocked father rushed them home without further ado, before further misfortune could occur!!!"

St. George's Day: On the preceding Saturday 20th April, **Horwich Prize Medal** hosted their 12th "Day for St George". **Duncan Broomhead** [NW Representative] reports: "This is a day for men's North West Morris teams. Ring sides attending were, **Britannia Coconut Dancers, John o' Gaunt, Leyland, Saddleworth** and **Stockport**, they were joined by Rumworth Morris of Bolton, Ripon City and Wrigley Head. There were some modifications to the day imposed by the 'authorities'. The processions finished earlier than usual because police cover could not be provided due to a local Premiership Football match but the biggest change was that Bolton Council hit them with a massive £300 bill for a temporary Road Closure order. On hearing about the Council's charge, Horwich Rotary Club and Bury Irwell Vale Rotary Club made substantial donations to **Horwich** which, with a contribution from **Saddleworth**, virtually covered the charge! Despite all these initial difficulties, the day was once again a great success."

On the actual day, April 23rd, a number of Sides were out. **John Price**, Bagman of **St Albans**, reports that they joined Whitethorn, **Grand Union** and **Woodside** at The Three Horseshoes, Letchmore Heath, Hertfordshire. **Bedford** were at a local pub to support its event [and very nearly persuaded Ian Hislop and BBC4 radio programme to come and record something for a programme on the Saint – see Media above.]

Blackheath were out on Easter Monday to maintain Easter traditions in the Greenwich area.

Saddleworth celebrated their 25th Anniversary with a Feast on 27th April [only three years late!!]. Representatives were present from **Adlington** [the newly elected NW Area Rep, **Duncan Broomhead**]; **Bedford** [The Bagman]; **Chanctonbury Ring** [The Squire Elect, **Cliff Marchant**]; **Green Oak; John O'Gaunt** [including a new man **Rod Aston**, in shock having been thrust into kit after only four weeks - it is not all quite like this Rod!!!]; **Kennet; King John's; Letchworth; Moulton** [incl. Past Squire, **Barry Care**]; **Rose and Castle; Shakespeare** [incl. Past Bagman, **Tony Parsons**]; **Winchester** [incl. Past Squire, **Geoff Jerram**]; and Wriggly Head.

Due time was allowed, allegedly to take tea to recover from the rigours of the journey. However, with Saddleworth's own Brewer, *Peter Percival*'s fine brews available, including the flavoursome [full of Cascade hops] Jubilee [4.4%], we never did find the tea!!! The Feast followed in due time: Mushroom Soup [aka Cream of Vegetable]; Roast Beef; Apple Crumble, and Cheese. *Peter Livesley* [**John O'Gaunt**] toasted The Queen in her guise as the Duke of Lancashire. *Richard Hankinson* [Squire / Bagman / Musician and most else of **Saddleworth**] proposed the toast to the Guests. *Barry Care*, Past Squire / **Moulton**, responded. The guest were then called upon to provide entertainment – and did most capably, until the tables were cleared for dancing. Saddleworth, in soft shoe mode, out of respect to the floor presented several dances, as did Winchester and various mixed NW Sides. *Barry Care* and son, *Simon Care* danced a Bampton Princess Royal Double Jig. Wriggly Head danced and continued uninterrupted despite one man's britches falling off – fortunately Cecil Sharp never did get to Saddleworth to collect such things!! Singing continued to a very late hour, breakfast was provided the next morning [unfortunately other Morris committees called this correspondent South before that time!!]

MAY DAY

“**Anstey** join **Packington** at Breedon on the Hill at dawn and again in the evening (~6pm) at The Bull and Lion in Packington.” *Phil Preen* [**Anstey**] writes “Well it was spitting with rain at 4:30 this morning on the way to Breedon on the hill, but it stopped when we arrived. It was very dark and a bit windy, and lots of black clouds although they did start to clear when we started dancing. We didn't really get to see a good sunrise, as it was a bit too cloudy. However, as soon as we stopped dancing the clouds all disappeared. By the time we retired to the Three Horseshoes for a hearty breakfast and a pint of Pedigree the sun was shining brightly.” “I believe **Leicester** will also be out in the morning at Bradgate Park, although they start late - about 7:00am.”

Chris Benson writes “You may like to know that **Greensleeves** appeared on a live TV show on CBBC, the BBC children's digital TV channel on May Day, on a programme called Xchange. We performed a cut-down version of Brighton Camp (Eynsham) which gave us the chance to hoist the presenter into air. This enabled us to respond to the inevitable suggestion that morris is not "cool" with the riposte that, while it may not be cool, you do get to pick up beautiful women. We appeared alongside some Bhangra dancers. Viewers were asked to vote on which dance they wanted to see the presenters doing at the end. We lost - but only just (51% to 49%). We suspected a fix, as we did not rehearse the scenario in which we won, but they assured us all was above board and that about 250 people voted. Probably not too many people involved with morris watched the programme - had they done so, they might have been amused to notice that a certain pipe-and-tabor man had forgotten his breeches and was skulking at the back wearing distinctly non-regulation jeans! Difficult to judge the value. A quickfire programme and light-hearted, but certainly not the piss-take some had feared.”

Norman Stanfield [**Vancouver**] notes “The morris community in Vancouver will be gathering at 5:15 on the brow of a hill over-looking a vast bay sided by mountains dusted with snow on their peaks. The bay was named English Bay by the English explorer George Vancouver in 1792 (a bit more than 200 years ago). He says in his journal that "This beautiful country reminds us of Scotland and looks ideal for British Settlement". The community will gather garlands and nuts of flowers, and hoist a bougette on a Maypole in the whipping Pacific wind, to the sound of May carols. (There will also be morris dancing; otherwise, as I was told, why in the world would morris dancers want to go?)”

Stephen Rowley reports that **Gloucestershire** were up on Painswick Beacon with a very select band of onlookers to welcome in the summer-o. A small patch of cloud in an otherwise clear sky obscured the actual sunrise, but five minutes later golden sun flooded the scene.

Towersey danced at Towersey crossroads, near Thame, Oxon, at 5.25am (precisely).

Pete Thomas of **East Kent** included this Press Report from the Kentish Express on the MDDL "Traditional greeting for summer sun. Through the driving rain and thick mist could be heard the beat of a drum, the clash of clubs and the primeval screams of men about to do battle. Soon one, then two, then a dozen ghostly spectres, regally bedecked in ribbons, bells and medieval costumes could be seen. The white horse head on their crimson tabards installed fear and awe in the unsuspecting strangers who climbed the North Downs to the menacingly named Devil's Kneading Trough high above Wye. Leading the gathering was a man and a woman of obvious high rank, as indicated by the weighty chains of precious metal and stones slung low over their shoulders. But this was no war party preparing for a raid on the sleeping residents of the scattered villages of Brook and Wye nestling below the escarpment. It was the East Kent Morris Men preparing to welcome the dawning of the new Sun on Mayday at 5.27 am. The weather was appalling which meant only a handful of hardy onlookers braved the elements to observe the traditional ritual. Among them were Ashford's Mayor and Mayoress Cllr Les and Jane Lawrie, who were upholding the tradition stretching back far into the last Millennium. Dancing, music and frivolity followed and May Blossom was handed to the women present to ensure fertility. As soon as the drumbeat stopped and supporters departed for normal life, the sun shone and blue sky appeared. Another summer had been born." Pete writes "I haven't yet worked out what the bloke who wrote this was on, but I put it down to the fact that in common with everyone else who turned up he got soaked to the skin. We have been dancing in and around Wye for the last 49 years...."

Sandy Glover [St Albans] thought "It scarcely seems worth mentioning that St Albans Morris Men will dance, as usual, at 6am in the City centre, so I don't suppose anyone will" However, in the event, as John Price wrote: "In a rather special little section of the dancing this morning, in front of the Mayor and Mayoress of St Albans, two **Ancient Men** celebrated anniversaries. **Charles Whitlock** danced the jig "Old Mother Oxford" (Headington) to commemorate the 50th anniversary of his first May Morning appearance: I played for him, to commemorate my 40th. People applauded Sandy Glover's announcement of these facts, so I now know how the Queen Mum felt - being congratulated for simply "going on!", he also noted that "... we have (thanks to Sandy Glover's wife, Pam) a photo of **Charles Whitlock** and **Edward Bennett** dancing opposite each other - Charles celebrating his 50th May Day and Edward (11 years old) celebrating his first."

Steve Tunnicliff notes **Rutland** were in Uppingham Market Place for 5.15 a.m.

Ben Higgs [Icknield Way] reports that "Oxford on May Morning was fantastic". Apparently the Squire, **Gerald Willey**, "... slipped in with **Ilmington**, it was hard to spot him as a random normal dancer!" **Gerard Robinson** wrote: "**Oxford University** and **Oxford City** were joined by sides from Adderbury, **Charlbury**, **Crendon**, **Icknield Way**, **Ilmington**, & Rogue Morris to dance in Radcliffe Square (Oxford) and thereabouts from around 6:15am. Of the various traditions associated with this day and the morris, perhaps a few are worth mentioning here: 1) Collections are never taken by the morris. This is because in 1923, when the local branch of EFDS formally inaugurated dancing on May 1, they gave it "as a free gift to the City, in gratitude for the long and lovely survival here of the May-Day celebrations". 2) Since **Len Bardwell** died, Oxford Men have never danced jigs on May 1. 3) The first dance is always 'Bonny Green', Bucknell by **Oxford University** around Jack-in-the-Green in Radcliffe Square. The dance stands have been modified somewhat due to the fact we are no longer permitted to dance on the steps of the New Bodleian Library. It's not actually a set of steps but rather a raised platform that is ideal for dancing on. This has resulted in displays now taking place in Radcliffe Square, (outside the University Church until the bells drown out the morris music), beneath the 'Bridge of Sighs' (Hertford College), outside the White Horse, Broad Street and finally outside St John's College in St. Giles. After this, we head for St. Edmund Hall for breakfast around 9am. A short final display from the remaining dancers on the roof of the SCR concludes dancing in the City. OUMM & OCMM go on to St Ebbe's primary school to dance for and with the pupils, but this only occurs on days the school is open, i.e. not weekends or when May 1 is a Monday and therefore a bank/public holiday."

Alan Barber reports on **Mersey's** dancing at dawn with the ladies of Mockbeggar by Thor's Stone on the Wirral again as usual (traditional after more than 10 years??). His daily reports to MDDL have been freely edited!!!

"This year we will be joined by civic dignitaries as there is some sort of Viking celebration planned. Two local mayors, the deputy major of Trondheim (that's in Norway), somebody from Iceland, up to 20 primary school kids in Viking costume ... and somebody planning to blow a Viking horn from the top of the stone to annoy the neighbours.

"We get to meet the Vikings for a bit of r&p (do they still rape and pillage?) at the Irby Mill. I guess that will help them recognise us at 04:45 when we have our kit on. They seemed very pleasant and we persuaded the deputy mayor(ess) of Trondheim to re-present the bronze medals we fluked at DERT this year, before ending off the dancing spot with a run through our one and only Rapper dance - we're getting there, much less blood this time. After the guests departed, we retired indoors for a music and song spot, aided by a supply of beer courtesy of the landlord.

"It was pouring down as we arrived at the car park at the bottom of Thurstaston Hill. Traffic was unusually heavy for 04:30 and we were following a police car. "Must be a bit of security for all the civic dignitaries" I thought. (We have the Mayor of Wirral, Mayor of Parkgate & Neston and Mayor of Trondheim coming today with some local Viking society to celebrate 1100 years without a raid on this part of the coast).

"I was wrong, the police had no idea what was going on and blocked the entrance to the car park quite effectively whilst trying to find out - the traffic backed up and blocked the neighbouring A road. Curiosity satisfied, the police left and the traffic began to sort itself out. I grabbed the last few inches of parking space and others began parking along the road. Not bad to say we normally only get the proverbial man and a dog in the audience. We had a Radio Merseyside reporter with a microphone and at least two gentlemen of the press - plus an audience of thousands (well must have been 30-40). The tailgate of my estate provided a bit of cover for the addition of bells and baldricks and the Morris magic began to work. The rain slowed and then stopped!

"We got everybody up the hill with a minimum of mishaps and managed our 'traditional' signposts plus other dances, interspersed with North West clog from Mockbeggar. The speech about the Vikings was short, the horn blowing not too intrusive and the local primary school children amused themselves amongst the rocks wearing horned helmets, cloaks and chasing one another with swords and axes.

"Back in the car park and the two men who had sloped off without doing much dancing had the bacon cooking for breakfast. This was shared with those foolhardy enough to have come out and watched on such an unpromising morning. A good time was, I think, had by all and maybe we will get a few more spectators next year when we are again a Viking-free zone – and thanks to the two cooks!"

Lawrie Hodges, Wadard, writes, "Whiskey and rum are provided on our May-Day morning! for spectators as well as performers. What we might need tomorrow is a large windbreak, a barn or a marquee judging by the weather outlook. For the last couple of years, the village tea-rooms near where we dance have opened for breakfast. We, and our 'nuts', are fairly well organised."

"May Day jokers added to the Long Man" "The Long Man of Wilmington has become, ahem, the Longer Man. Jokers have drawn a 20ft manhood on the famous chalk-etched figure on the steep slopes of Windover Hill on the Downs. The knee-length appendage was discovered when a 14-strong band of morris dancers performed their May Day dance. The episode sparked a whodunit riddle, with members of **Long Man** insisting it was not them. Squire **Norman Hopson** said: "We first noticed it after our first dance but it had nothing to do with us. It has certainly raised a few laughs." The local paper reported that "... drivers were doing double takes as they travelled past the Long Man on the busy A27 towards Brighton. The origins of the Long Man, whose faceless outline stands 235ft-high clutching two staves, remain a mystery. Rumours have abounded that the Long Man acts as a fertility aid, with stories about women falling pregnant after making love on him."

Following **Isca**'s traditional May morning performance in Caerleon Amphitheatre on 1st May, an Article "Fun with bells on!" was published in the South Wales Argus. It can be seen at <http://homepage.virgin.net/les.chittleburgh/funwith.htm>

Japes aka **Jean-Paul Lecrivain** [**Helier**] writes: "... The Jersey Lilies and **Helier** had a sunny day here in the Island of Jersey; we had a glorious day and were even found dancing on the beach at 7:45 am, on our second dance spots of twelve. The local tradition is for us to dance in all of our parishes, which does make for a long day, regardless of that we all enjoyed our selves."

Bob Draper of **Ashdown Forest** reports "Up before dawn again, and the weather looking none too great! Start dancing at Gills Lap, the highest point of Ashdown Forest, at 5:30am in light rain, along with our local colleagues Shalesbrook Morris. Claims of "it's just a clearing up shower" largely ignored, but then by 6am, the sun is out and everyone is looking a lot happier! An audience of about 60 is well down on last year, when we got 200+. Then we've never really understood why they're there in any case. I mean, we've got an excuse, but really! The Men adjourn to the Bagman's for a full English and a few games on a couple of his pinball machines, then on to the first of today's schools, Imberhorne Lower School. Apparently, we are the year 7 PE lesson today! It all seems to go down pretty well, and our call for volunteers to learn a dance finds us trying to teach Wheatley Shepherd's Hey to a motley mixture of 40 or so boys and girls, with varying degrees of success. Retire to nurse vocal cords. Next stop Chailey Heritage, a residential and day school for handicapped children. Find we've been conned into THREE separate dance stands, for pre-school, juniors and seniors. Ah well, at least there's free tea and biscuits. We'll do anything for a ginger nut, or so I've been told. Again, children and teachers are all very appreciative. On to lunch, beer and birthday celebrations at Philpots Manor School – the School was founded on May 1st 26 years ago, and it's also the founder's birthday, which fits in very well. We collect another quotable quote for our programmes - "They're well old and ugly" from one young lass who will remain anonymous. Still, she joins in our teach-in and enjoys herself immensely after all. Next stop, we are to "dance-in" and bless the garden for a local Earth Healer in Uckfield. Free beer and sandwiches, sun shining strongly, looks like it's worked again then. Very surreal..... Finally, back to Ashurstwood for our final pub stand of the day, the Maypole. Rejoined by Shalesbrook for the evening stand, we wow the villagers as usual. Despite the chill in the air, a large proportion of the village turn out to watch our "traditional" last stand of Mayday. We dance in the road, and they move cones in and out to stop the traffic for us. Very accommodating."

Duncan Broomhead reports on Knutsford Royal May Day. "In the procession this year there were four Morris sides, **Leyland**, **Manchester**, Ringheye Morris of Moberley and **Adlington**. The roads are closed to traffic at 1.30 pm and the procession starts at 2.00. The route starts in the centre of the town and snakes its way through the narrow streets ending at The Heath, one of the large open spaces on the outskirts of Knutsford. The procession moves at a steady walking pace and takes about 20 minutes to pass by. The streets are packed shoulder to shoulder with thousands of enthusiastic and vocal onlookers. In the procession there are in excess of 300 costumed schoolchildren on foot, numerous horse drawn vehicles, brass bands and Morris sides. All the Morris sides get cheered as they dance along and any set pieces are always applauded and cheered. It takes about an hour and a half to cover the distance from the start to the finish, a hard slog for both dancers and musicians, but extremely rewarding. The other three sides attending this year dance 'North West' while we danced our own single step processional dance. All of us, in our own way, helping to maintain Knutsford's long and illustrious link with the Morris".

Paul Woods [**Bristol**] records, "Acksherly, we were feeling our age by the end of the day; and though we danced in eight separate venues between sunrise and (after) sunset - including 4 schools, 1 almshouse, 1 old folks' home and a pub - we only clocked up a total of 63 dances, which would have been unthinkable for us a few years ago, especially on such a fine sunny day. I think we must be getting old. However, we're off to naughty Cornwall now to dance up, if not a storm, at least a breeze, over the holiday weekend."

Charlie Corcoran advises “**Leicester** were on East Midlands Today [BBC] on 1st May at lunch and teatime - filmed near “Old John” [a folly built on a hill in Bradgate Park] at 7am in morning - with an interview with **John Bentham** about the Morris and with my son about young people joining or not.”

Lawrie Hodges, Bagman, **Wadard**, notes “We were in Rochester on Saturday [4th May] together with our guests, De Speleman Klein Brabant, a Flemish Folk dance group. They, and we, performed at the opening.” **Monty Montague** [Yateley] also noted “YMM were also in attendance at the Festival for the first time this year albeit dancing only on the Saturday”.

The first Ring Meeting of the season, hosted by **Richmond on Swale** should feature in the Morris Circular. The weather was idyllic and a good time was had by all. Sides present: **Anstey; Claro; Green Oak; Greensleeves; Men of Wight; Mendip; Monkseaton; Oakworth Village;** and **Thaxted**, as well as the hosts **Richmond on Swale**.

John of Gaunt and **Leyland** were dancing [in inclement weather] at the Accrington Folk Festival on Saturday 18th May. **Bacup** were expected on the following day.

Bob Draper, Bagman, notes that **Ashdown Forest** were also out that day. “2002 is Ashdown Forest's 30th Anniversary year, and on 18th May, we held a Day of Dance in celebration. Joined by other local sides, we started the day at the Brambletye Hotel in Forest Row. Then by double-decker bus to East Grinstead to dance in the High Street at Noon, before partaking of lunch at The Ship Hotel. On to Standen House, a local National Trust property, for an afternoon stand. Our bus takes branches down galore on the narrow roads on the way there, leaving the upper deck looking like a compost heap! But our driver is a cheerful soul who is roundly applauded by the driver of a single-decker going the other way - he just cannot believe we made it! Having braved cloud, wind and cool conditions thus far, the sun finally comes out, and Standen is a beautiful spot for dancing, with broad views over the Weald to the South Downs. Having partaken of tea and biccies, it's back on the bus and return to Forest Row to Tablehurst, a local community farm, to finish the day at their Open Day event, complete with a number of polypins of Harvey's Best and Armada Ales. From the feedback that I've had, a good time was had by all.”

John Elkins reports on **Thames Valley's** 50th Anniversary Dinner. Thames Valley celebrated their 50th anniversary with a dinner at the Claygate Village Hall on 18th May, in the presence of the Squire of the Ring; Thames Valley's President, **Jim Brooks**, John Cole the broadcaster and friend of TVMM, **Roy Dommett**, another long time friend of the club, and their partners. About 100 members past and present, and friends, including representatives of **East Surrey, Spring Grove, and Yateley**, were there for an evening of reminiscence, eating and drinking, a few speeches, an extended slide show of photographs covering the last 50 years, and a little music.

John Price [St Albans] writes “St Albans did a Street Party on the evening of 25th May. Although this was not on the Jubilee Weekend, the usual Union Jacks and St. George's flags/bunting were in evidence. A really nice local community event, with all ages participating and welcoming the Morris men as celebrity entertainers! We had been dancing all day at the Herts Show, and the reception from the community was sufficient to give us the lift we needed to put on yet another respectable show.”

Bob Draper, also reports that on 26th May:- “**Ashdown Forest** were privileged to be invited to dance at the Celebration Gathering in memory of **Barton Worthington**, who died in December 2001 aged 96.

“For those who do not know, Barton Worthington was an early member of **Cambridge** back in the mid-twenties, and also a founding member of The Round, the Cambridge University folk association. He was born at Standen House in East Grinstead, and when he retired took up residence at a farm on the edge of Ashdown Forest. Barton was a founding father of the science of ecology, and worked extensively in East Africa. Guests came from around the world to the celebration of his life at the behest of Harriet, his second wife. We performed a number of Bucknell dances together with a smattering of Wheatley and Stanton Harcourt to a very appreciative audience, in a sunny interlude between the heavy and thundery showers - the first time I've ever danced on claret rather than bitter! We were also honoured when Harriet passed on to us three music manuscript books that Barton had used to collect tunes and dances during early outings of Cambridge to the Cotswolds in about 1926. We will analyse these before finding a more appropriate home for them.”

PERFORMING RIGHTS AND COPYRIGHT - NON TRADITIONAL TUNES

There are potential Copyright and Performing Rights problems in UK if Morris dances are performed to non-traditional sources of music. Whilst perhaps a lesser problem for the Morris Ring, we have probably all danced, from time to time, to alternative tunes. Past Squire, **Roy Yarnell**, is well known for his “Jamaica Farewell” tune for the Bampton or Oddington “Highland Mary” dance. As this Newsletter goes to Press, the three Morris Organisations should have concluded negotiations with the Performing Rights Society.

Having heard of an initiative by the Morris Federation's President [John Bacon], at the last Morris Federation AGM, it was suggested by the Morris Ring that this could usefully be expanded to cover all three Morris Organisations. John Bacon has now negotiated a collective license with the Performing Rights Society. This will cover all the UK member clubs of the three UK Morris Organisations, for their occasional use of non-traditional tunes in the public performance context, whether for dancing, or après Morris. It also means that venues do not have to keep a record of music played, as it is already licensed. The [modest] annual fee will be divided pro-rata on a number of clubs basis. The Ring contribution will not lead to any increase in subscriptions!!!

This should provide a very useful insurance against any embarrassing inquiries if non-traditional tunes are used. Our thanks to John Bacon and the Morris Federation.

IN CONCLUSION

The next Newsletter will probably be produced in September. It should include the next Edition of the Morris Circular. It will also {hopefully} include details of next years Ring Meetings – yes, time moves on!!

Wassail

John Frearson,
Bagman, The Morris Ring

The Newsletter - No. 24 - July 2002 - Summary

Ask your Bagman to show you / provide a copy of the full Newsletter.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS - **Longborough and Adderbury** - 27th – 29th September 2002. **Fools and Animals** - 11th – 13th October 2002. “**Highlights**” of **Bucknell, Brackley, Badby and Hinton**, 8th – 10th November 2002. “**Dances that are not often done**” - 16th November 2002. **REMEMBER** - **ARM 2003**. 7th – 9th March 2003. Trellech, Monmouth.

OTHER EVENTS - **Banbury Hobby Horse Festival**, 29th – 30th June 2002. **International Traditional Drama Conference**, 19th – 21st July 2002. **Gloucester International Pipe and Tabor Festival**, 27th - 29th September 2002. **18 – 30 Morris Group**, Oxford weekend *NOW* 25 – 27 October.

ANNIVERSARIES - **Saddleworth** “25th Anniversary” [late!!] - **Kennet** 45th Anniversary.

THE MEDIA – Comments from Ian Hislop - Problems with a TV advert featuring **Winsters** - **St Albans** on Newsnight - the Squire Elect, *Cliff Marchant*, on the Today programme.

NEWS - **John of Gaunt, Leyland** and **Britannia Coconut Dancers** of Bacup at the Accrington Folk Festival. Ale/Instructional by **Letchworth**. Morris taster by **Mersey, Kinnerton & Adlington**. **Harthill** Spring Ale and Feast. **Horwich** Prize Medal "Day for St George". St. George's Day with: **Bedford, Blackheath, Grand Union, St Albans, and Woodside**. **Saddleworth** 25th Anniversary Feast [only three years late!!].

MAY DAY - **Anstey** join **Packington** at Breedon on the Hill - **Leicester** on East Midlands Today [BBC] at Bradgate Park - **Greensleeves** live on CBBC, the BBC children's digital TV - Gloucestershire up on Painswick Beacon - **East Kent** at the Devil's Kneading Trough - **St Albans** in the city centre - **Rutland** in Uppingham Market Place - **Mersey** at Thor's Stone on the Wirral - **Oxford University** and **Oxford City** with **Charlbury, Crendon, Icknield Way** and **Ilmington** [including Ring Squire, *Gerald Willey*] in Radcliffe Square, Oxford - **Towersey** at Towersey crossroads, Oxon - Whiskey and rum provided for **Wadard - Vancouver** over-looking English Bay - **Long Man** at an [extended] Long Man of Wilmington!! - **Helier**, a sunny day on the Island of Jersey - **Bristol**, at eight venues between sunrise and (after) sunset - **Isca** in Caerleon Amphitheatre - **Leyland, Manchester** and **Adlington** at Knutsford Royal May Day. **Ashdown Forest** out all day. **Wadard** and **Yateley** at Rochester Sweeps Festival - First Ring Meeting of the season hosted by **Richmond on Swale**.

Also mentions of: **Anker; Anstey; Boar's Head; Claro; Green Ginger; Green Man; Green Oak; Greensleeves; Isca; Jockey; Kennet; King John's; Lord Conyers; Men of Wight; Mendip; Monkseaton; Moulton; Oakworth Village; Ripley; Rose and Castle;; Saddleworth; Shakespeare; Stockport; Thaxted** and **Winchester**.

PERFORMING RIGHTS AND COPYRIGHT - NON TRADITIONAL TUNES - A collective license has been negotiated to cover all the UK member for their occasional use of non-traditional tunes in the public performance context.

Wassail

John Frearson, Bagman, The Morris Ring