



The Newsletter - No. 26 – December 2002

Greetings,

Firstly, a message from the Squire, *Cliff Marchant*, “I would like to wish all Sides a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year”.

From the Treasurer, *Steve Adamson* - the same - and did you remember to pay your subscription? The **Subscription Form** for 2003 was with the last Newsletter – spare copies from the Bagman. You should have paid by now to avoid the £10 late payment penalty.

You will be aware that I am now redundant [and wondering how I ever had time to do the day job as well!!]. Fortunately, I already have some part time work and consultancy to keep me going. Meanwhile, please use the **RingBagman@TheMorrisRing.org** for Email communications. My thanks to all who sent messages of support. A typical example from *Patrick Harries*, of **Wessex** said “ ... my best wishes in these hard times. Thankfully we're not yet reduced to busking a la **Headington**, Boxing Day 1899!” - I will let you all know!!!

Note the date for the **ARM** is still **7th - 9th March 2002** --- see enclosed **Booking Form**.

Also enclosed with this mailing are:

- A **Summary** of this Newsletter – as the last page of the Newsletter.
- As expected - **Amendments** to the Directory [collated with Newsletter].
- A **Booking Form** for the **ARM** at Monmouth.
- A **Booking Form** for the **Musician's Instructional**.
- The Squire's chosen **Mass Dances** for use at Ring Meetings in 2003.
- Hard copy confirmation of your **Ring Meeting** acceptance or otherwise.
- For its Members – Minutes of the Advisory Council Meeting.

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].

IN MEMORIAM

Harry Fisher

Harry Fisher, former squire of **Mayflower** died on Tuesday 22nd October 2002. He was cremated on Friday, 1st November, at Corbets Tey Crematorium, Upminster at 4pm. Harry had many friends in the folk dance world. [Information from *Geoff Douglas*, Bagman, **Mayflower**]

Siward Glaister

Siward Glaister, who had just been confirmed as President of **Thames Valley**, died in early November and was cremated on Monday 2nd December at Woking Crematorium at 10.00 a.m. Siward's friends from the Morris world were invited to come along in kit and help give him a good send-off. There was a gathering afterwards at All Saints Church Hall, Woodham Lane, Woodham, Surrey.

JM "Shag" Graetz of **Pinewoods** Emailed "That is terrible news. Not only were Siward and Jen Glaister marvellous hosts to Pinewoods on our visit in 1992, when we stayed at their cottage in Fownhope, but they also graciously allowed me to stay at their home for two weeks after that. I last saw Siward at Thaxted in 1999. He was having a brutal time getting around, but seemed otherwise in good health and spirits. Please convey my condolences to Jen; I will write separately as well."

[Information from *John Elkins*, Squire and Bagman, **Thames Valley**, and *Shag Graetz* of **Pinewoods**]

SUBSCRIPTIONS and TREASURER'S MATTERS

Did you remember to send off your subscriptions? If not, this requires your **URGENT** attention. The late payment surcharge will by now apply, but not "sending the money" means your Insurance may be at risk.

There has been a very substantial rise in our Third Party Liability premiums this year. Not only have rates risen, but the Insurers, whilst giving £5Million cover, felt this was an unlikely risk and had only charged for £2Million. This year we have a "double" rise from under £1000 to just over £2500. As the same Insurer covers all three Morris Organisations, there are potentially substantial savings from a combined Policy. The Morris Ring and the Morris Federation are already actioning a combined Policy. We hope that the Open Morris will join the scheme when their policy comes up for renewal in June, and they see the enormous rise in premium. We will receive reimbursement for our existing policy, and will then pay out for our part of the new policy. The Insurance period will remain October - October.

The new Policy title will be in the name of: **THE MORRIS ORGANISATIONS**. The new terms of "Trade or Business" are: **MORRIS/FOLK DANCING & MUMMING PERFORMERS**.

GUINNESS RECORD

As this Newsletter goes to Press, it has been confirmed that the Morris team organised by Golden Star Morris of Norwich have had their world record attempt accepted by Guinness World Records and they are now the world record holder for a marathon type distance Morris dance. Morris Ring participants included *David Marr* of **Coventry**. The Ring Bagman was the independent referee for the Morris content of the event.

INSTRUCTIONALS

Jigs – 2003. 17th – 19th January 2003. Sutton Bonnington – hosted by **Dolphin**. Once again the infatigable **Bert Cleaver** and his team offer their antidote to PCB (Post Christmas Blues/Belly). A Booking Form was included with the last Newsletter. A few places remained, at press date. Contact Bert Cleaver for current situation – Tel: 01226 241551.

Musicians' Instructional. *Clive Du'Mont* advises that this will run from **21st – 23rd February 2003**. It will be hosted by **Mendip** and Instructors will include: **Mike Chandler (Whitchurch)**; **Jim Catterell (Thaxted)**; **Mike Howley (Men of Wight)**; and **Geoff King (Mendip)**. Information from: Clive Du'Mont, 21 Langthorn Close, Frampton Cotterell, Bristol, BS36 2JH. Email: cdumont@blueyonder.co.uk (*preferred*) or Tel: 01454 773895. An Application Form is included with this Newsletter.

ARM 2003.

Isca will host the Meeting. Despite some uncertainties, the dates remain **7th – 9th March 2003**. The venue has been changed however, because of staff changes at the original school. The venue will now be the Bridges Community Centre, Monmouth with overnight accommodation [and showers] in the function room of the Monmouth Rugby Club, five minutes walk away. **A Booking Form is included with this mailing.**

Under Item 15 of the Constitution “Nominations for the positions of the Officers, ..” [The Bagman is due for election or re-election] “.. and the Elected Members of the Advisory Council ..” [The Northern; The North Midlands; and The South Midlands Area Representatives are due for election or re-election] “.. proposed alterations to the Constitution and formal resolutions for discussion at the Annual Meeting of Club Representatives shall be received by the Bagman at least three months before the Meeting.” This means, effectively, they should have been in by the end of November [or at least 8th December].

It is noted that **Steve Parker**, the Area Representative for the South Midlands has now moved to Devon, and has thus stood down. A new candidate will be required. Sides in the Area have been notified, and candidates should have been proposed by 8th December. If more than one candidate is proposed by that closing date, then a ballot will be held. As we understand the precedents, if no candidate/s have been put forward by that date, any proposals between then and the consideration of the item at the Area Meeting at the AGM, will be considered, and voted upon by those at that Area Representatives Meeting.

I would note that the Bagman, being due for re-election, is however, still quite prepared to step down and hand over the post to any other interested candidate; ~~indeed, I may have to stand down if pressures of work continue as at present!!!~~ How quickly things can change !! – But I am still busy, but still willing to hand over !!!

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

AWARDS

Doc Rowe, folklore collector extraordinaire, has been awarded a Doctorate by Sheffield University for his work in the field of vernacular folklore – well done Doc Doc.

RING MEETINGS – 2003

The current status of four Ring Meetings for 2003, is as follows:

30th May - 1st June ... **THAXTED - STILL PLACES AVAILABLE**
 13th - 15th June **RIPLEY - [camping] - NEAR FULL.**
 11th - 13th July **BENFIELDSIDE - FULL**
 5th - 7th September **WINCHESTER - FULL**

An Application Form was included with the last Newsletter. Sides will have been informed by Email of their success or otherwise. Confirmatory letters should be with this mailing, except for any Sides without Email who will have received their letters at that time.

OTHER EVENTS

Dolphin announce that “The Gate to Southwell” will be held on **7th June 2003**. Details from **Chris Gigg**, [chris@gigg22.freemove.co.uk]

Paul “Monty” Montague of **Yateley** is organising the dancing for the **Caversham Charity Folk Festival – Friday, 20th – Sunday, 22nd June, 2003**. He writes “I am sure that you will be aware of this small folk festival that has over the past 9 years raised over £40,000 pounds for charity ... The event is based around the Thameside Promenade at Caversham Bridge, Reading and includes camping/catering facilities, real ale bar, concerts, workshops, children's events, musical river cruises, dance tours & displays. Having agreed to help organise the dance at the Festival, I invite you to perform on either Saturday 21st or Sunday 22nd June 2003 or indeed both days. Please consider this worthy cause as you plan your programme for the year. I look forward to hearing from as many dance sides as possible.” E-mail: monty@yateleymm.freemove.co.uk. Tel/fax: 012766 20817

The **Saddleworth** Rushcart Secretary, **John Brooks** writes: “The **Saddleworth Rushcart 2003** will take place over the Bank Holiday weekend of **22nd - 24th August 2003**. Applications are particularly welcome from sides who have never been to Rushcart, or have not attended for some years.” If you want your side to attend this excellent weekend please contact John Brooks, at 58, Stoneswood Road, Delph, Saddleworth OL3 5DY. Tel: 01457 876198. Email: JOHN.BROOKS@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

18 – 30 Morris Group. Following their success this year, they have already suggested a date for next year’s meeting [again in Oxford] from **26th – 28th September 2003**. They anticipate Leicester in 2004. Contact: **Ben Higgs**: ben_the_juggler@hotmail.com.

Pipe and Tabor Festival, Blackfriars, Gloucester. **26th – 28th September 2003**. Details to follow. Contact: **Stephen Rowley**: Tel:- 01453 763181 E-mail: steve@artension.com.

ANNIVERSARIES

Joe Healey, Secretary for **The Britannia Coconut Dancers** of Bacup reminds us that they will celebrate their Centenary in 2003. The present team of Coconut Dancers was formed in the Britannia Workmen’s Club in 1903. Joe writes “... it goes without saying our Easter Saturday event will be extra special ! ”

ARCHIVAL MATTERS

www.britishpathe.com allows you to search virtually the complete archive of Pathe newsreels, view them gratis (in reduced definition) on your PC screen, download the files for viewing again gratis and even buy VHS copies at moderate prices. A number of Morris, Sword Dance, Mumming and other folk related subjects are included.

FUNDING

Stephen Rowley of **Gloucestershire** is a contemporary artist, and a Morris dancer. He recently expounded his thoughts on arts funding and Morris on MDDL.

“Arts funding in the UK is generally for extending and developing professional contemporary practice - keeping the cutting edge moving forward. Heritage funding supports re-investigation of past culture, and some elements of traditions. Community funding supports activities that develop community spirit. By and large Morris not qualify for Arts funding. It is not an issue of funding Unmade Beds and not Morris - Morris does not come into the frame. There are traditional dancers and dance teams that do get funding - because they are professionals: if you are a professional Morris dancer, then there are possible routes through the Arts funding maze. English traditional dance was explicitly excluded from the remit of the Arts Council. However, English Traditional dance is considered a healthy activity and provision is made under the Sports Council. EFDSS has made use of this access to funds for many years and encourages others to do the same. I have funded Morris projects through this route. Heritage funding has become much more flexible recently - I suggest that people look at the Local Heritage Initiative (Heritage Lottery Fund) for small grants for local tradition based projects such as Morris. If you are planning to do this - please contact me, I can help. There are many sources of Community Funding - all geared towards things that help communities work better. Dance and music often feature in these projects. There is funding out there for Morris - people need to be more aware of how to go for it and why. I regularly get funding for traditional arts projects. The most recent project on Mummers in schools has attracted over £60,000 so far.”

Steve Rowley would be willing to lead an Instructional / Seminar on funding for the Morris Organisations, some time next year. Any one interested should contact the Bagman, so that the level of interest can be judged. A possible date is being worked on at present.

MISC. – FOR SALE - ETC.

Tony Tomlin, Bagman, **Hartley** has available - 2 No Golden Jubilee Hartley Ring Meeting T-shirts, both size XL at £10 including postage. Do you wish that you had bought one? Ring Tony on 01622 685960 and reserve one, then send him a cheque.

Can any Sides help **Dave Walters** [Dave.Walters@nottingham.ac.uk] of **Dolphin** who is trying to identify other Sides with red / green baldricks “ red with green edges, in proportions shown on pictures on our web site <http://www.dolphin-morris.co.uk/>. We're looking to buy new material but don't really need the sort of quantity most suppliers have as a minimum order. I know there are a few with similar colours and maybe someone would be prepared to share an order”.

Steve Parker [stepping down as South Midlands Area Representative] has moved to Devon – and is running a Hotel. For those wishing to contact him, or to stay there [at reasonable rates], his address: Kayden House Hotel, 3 - 5, High Street, North Tawton, Devon EX20 2HF. Tel: 01837 82242. Email: parker_sl@lineone.net

MEDIA

A review of Peter Ackroyd's new book, "Albion: The Origins of the English Imagination" in the Sunday Times "Culture" section on 6th October 2002, was illustrated by a fine colour photograph of **Ewell St Mary** on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral in London. The caption was "The pull of nostalgia: Morris dancers outside St Paul's cathedral" [*The review is near unintelligible, I wonder what the book is all about?!!! JF*].

[Information from *Sandy Glover, St. Albans*; and *Alan Jefferies, Greensleeves*]

Paul Draper wrote: "Did anyone else see **Albion** on "Never Mind the Buzzcocks" on Monday night? [11th November].

On 17th November 2002, Channel 4 had a repeat showing of "Postmodern Pastimes" – and Scotsman, **Ken Hamilton** [**Oakworth**, presently **Kennet**], shared his passion for the Morris.

"Home Truths" on BBC Radio 4 [Saturday 23rd November] included a letter from **Paul Woods** of **Bristol** about his attempts to find appropriate materials for his new kit. Apparently he asked the lady sales assistant "Where could he get felt" !!

Peter Stephens and **Alan Dandy** of **Stafford** were "on air" Folk Talk on Sunday night 24th November, from Radio Shropshire (linked with Hereford & Staffordshire) about Peter's 50 years with the Morris. Alan writes "Just in case any **Jockey** men heard and want to know the truth behind the remarks about Jockey Morris. In light conversation with presenter Genevieve Tudor before the programme, we were scanning the Stafford log books Peter had brought along and came across the report of Jockey stealing Stafford sticks in 1958 - Peter added that they had taken a number of things over the years (and later that most had been returned - eventually) ... but only after my comment that "Jockey were the "**Pickfords of the Morris Ring**" - *they'd lift & carry anything*". On air however, Genevieve said to Peter "now what were those scurrilous things you were saying about Jockey Morris, leaving Peter no option but to repeat them!! Apart from that he behaved himself quite well ! (A recording is available for use in evidence - only on behalf of the defence)."

NEWS

The second "annual" Cotswold tour, to dance our dances in their original villages, was carried out by Sides from the North and North Midlands areas of the Morris Ring, under the direction of David Thompson. It took place on 14th September. Sides from **Bedford**, **Ripley** and **Thaxted**, together with representatives various and the Squire and Bagman took part.

"The tour commenced with dancing in Banbury, and then visited and danced at the cross-roads in Bucknell [where as per the notes beer was taken "from a barrel set up on the green" – three of them actually. A quick stop in Hinton [where the pub had just closed down – the barrels came out again!], then Brackley [for lunch], Wheatley [where the publican provided another lunch – free].

"Somewhat late therefore, the tour arrived at Headington, for the high spot of the day, to see the patient **Headington Quarry** Men dancing in their own village, outside the Mason's Arms. They also provided a guided tour to the church and the graves of **William Kimber** and Past Squire, **Jim Phillips**. They forgave those Sides "attempting" to dance "Headington" - apparently they saw three dances "completely different from anything we do" !!!

"The final spot was in Adderbury, followed by supper. A great day out – and once again thanks to "Tommo" for his organisation and Ripley for bringing the beer."

NB Next year's Cotswold Tour will be on 6th September 2003 – Places limited to 49 men.

A visit to Rippon by the Bagman to attend the Morris Federation AGM weekend [20th - 22nd September]. “Also present in other guises, Ring Archivist, **Chris Metherell [High Spen]** providing some excellent melodeon for another very proficient young Rapper Side “Short Circuit” and **Claro** musician, **John Page**, likewise doing a sterling job with another local Side. Notable performances also from the Berkshire Bedlams [with a five-four time, heel and toe, Fieldtown style dance] and the Redbornestoke, with their own tradition, and Barrie Goodman’s sung accompaniment of “On the Union, Stafford and Birmingham Canal” for one show dance. There was a visit from the traditional Rippon “Hornblower” to the evening ceilidh to report that the horn had been duly blown and then to blow for the Mayor [a horn has been blown every night since 956AD at 9pm in Rippon Market Place]. The Hornblower [or at least the Deputy, Deputy Hornblower] proved to be **Jim Vauvert**, former Foreman and Fool for **Lincoln** [now **Lincoln and Mickelbarrow**]. He recalled various events including the Ring 50th in Birmingham and had tales of Past Squire, **Father Ken...**”

Paul Montague of **Yateley** writes “We held another splendid Day of Dance - our 26th annual one! - last Saturday, 21st September. We attracted six visiting sides **Icknield Way**, **Green Man's**, **Monkseaton**, **Moulton**, **Saddleworth** and **Spring Grove**. Two tours travelled by coach either north or south along the A3. Brooklands Museum proved very popular on the north tour; the south tour ventured as far down as Queen Elizabeth's Country Park nr Petersfield before both converged on the award winning Hog's Back Brewery in the afternoon. After a brief respite for tea back at Yateley a varied massed display went ahead outside the Dog & Partridge in front of a large & appreciative audience in the warm evening sunshine. Saddleworth dancing Diggle & Dobcross, Monkseaton (Ampleforth Longsword & the North Walbottle Rapper with **Pete Brown** featuring as Betsy) and two young Moulton lads, **Robert & Andrew**, dancing the Bampton jig Princess Royal were the undoubted stars of the show. Plaudits as well as the applause was loud and frequent and some stalwarts in the audience thought it the best display to date. In the evening the sides adjourned back to the Yateley practice hall for the Ale where further dancing, music and song kept the tempo up until most literally dropped.” The date for our 27th annual Day of Dance in 2003 has been set for Saturday, 20th September; interested parties please note this date.

A collation of reports on **St. Albans**’s Day-of-Dance on Saturday 28th September 2002. **Sandy Glover** wrote, “In short, it was an excellent day. We had two (smallish) massed shows, and two tours on vintage buses ... gave us the opportunity to dance at good local pubs and places of interest. Lunch and Tea were included on tour. The dancing from all our visitors was outstanding ... so thank you to **Coventry**, East Saxon Sword, **Etcetera**, **Letchworth**, **Ripley** and **Whitchurch**, not forgetting our solo representative from **Westminster**, and **Cliff Marchant**, the Squire of the Ring. Many would, I suspect, have been surprised ... by the variety of dance styles and interpretation among what are all long-established, all-male sides. No "dull uniformity" here. The day was rounded off by a genuine feast of a Feast, prepared and served by the staff of the Chapter House Refectory at St. Albans Abbey. Great food, a few short and apposite speeches, some singing and music, and yet more dancing. Beer, cider and soft drinks were provided in the price. The cost was £25, or the price of about 10 - 12 drinks in a pub hereabouts. Good value? Most certainly, and all achieved by hard work and careful planning by **John Price** and **Brian Bending**, our outgoing and incoming squires, and other members of the club. All I had to do was come home from holiday and walk straight into it!” **John Price** mentioned additionally “Having danced at over fifty different venues since the beginning of May, **St Albans** concluded a busy season ... The day started with displays by 60 dancers in Civic Square, before dispersing to entertain customers and staff at a number of pubs in the centre of St Albans. For their afternoon dancing, the men climbed on to two vintage buses and danced in places of interest, including The Mosquito Museum, Hatfield House and Harpenden Village Centre, as well as a retirement home, and pubs in Harpenden, Sandridge, Amwell, Tyttenhanger and Colney Heath. The final dancing spot was at The Fighting Cocks, when the retiring Squire of St Albans, **Gerald Farmer**, after a two-year term of service which celebrated his 50 years continuous membership of the Club, handed over his chain of office to **John Seaborn**. Overall, feedback from our guests has been excellent ... and we were blessed with good weather throughout. The Herts Advertiser, carried a photo of the massed show, with a good, factual article and only a very slightly unfortunate headline "Morris men dance their last" which actually meant "their last for the current season".”

Roy Battersby, ex-squire of **Manchester** reports on their Day of Dance at Macclesfield and Tatton Park on Saturday 28th September 2002, with **Stockport** and **Ilmington**. “The men foregathered at 'The Ship' at Styal on a beautiful late summer morning. The Ilmington men had come the furthest, so the shop across the way did a brisk trade in bacon sandwiches. Stockport came gang handed as always with their resident orchestra and near filled the car park. Roger Bryant, the bagman for the day, was meeting and greeting everybody. Time to go, our petite and elegant lady coach driver welcomed us aboard on our way to Macclesfield. The first dance site was Market Square, which was excellent. Manchester danced first with as many as 13 men on occasions. We were however dwarfed by the massed band plus tambourines, which gave a rhythmic and sensuous dance routine reminiscent of an Eartha Kitt backing trio. John Alexander and Roger danced marvellously with the Ilmington men all day, and had obviously been imbued with their rustic style by the end of the day. Stockport looked and sounded magnificent in their finery and it was interesting to compare their way of dancing to own. After an excellent buffet lunch with some rousing singing and playing, it was back to Market Square. David Doolin and Roy Battersby could not resist joining the backing trio on tambourines. David has got the bruises to prove it. Then it was back on the bus to Tatton Park. This was an excellent dance spot and many photographs were taken, reminiscent of our 50th anniversary at the same spot. We completed the show with country dancing, giving the crowd the chance to dance, including an appreciative gaggle of Brownies. The day was rounded off, back at The Ship, with an evening of wine, women and song and monologues and playing and dancing.” Photographs should be available on Manchester’s web pages.

Ian Macfarlane and **Ian Morrison** of **Green Ginger** write: “You might be interested in the report of our Day of Dance, [sponsored by Hull City Council] on 28th September 2002, in which the following sides also took part:- **Harthill**; Buttercross Belles; Three Shires Ladies; Beverley Garland; Green Ginger Garland.” “Six sides in all performed for shoppers and visitors in Hull's city centre and old town. The weather was kind, mostly overcast but warm and many appreciative shoppers stopped to watch at each of three sites. During the morning there were continuous performances at Trinity Square and visits to Victoria Square and the Pier / Nelson Street. After lunch at one or other of the venues supporting the day (King's Ale House, Café 10½, the Kingston and Bob Carver's), the afternoon followed a similar pattern, and concluded with the teams meeting and performing in Trinity Square. Many thanks are due to Mike for all the time and hard work he put into organising the day and here's hoping that, if **Green Ginger** do another one next year, it will be an even bigger success.” Photographs at:- <http://www.maceng.karoo.net/GGM/RPT/Report19.html>

A plethora of Ales, Feasts and Days of Dance on 5th October: - **Barnsley**; **Bedford**; **Jockey**; and **Rutland** were all running events.

A good day at **Bedford** - with **Green Man** and Grand Union Rapper, showing that small can be beautiful. A gentle tour of town and pubs, and a lunchtime show and session in the Bedford Beer Festival. The food at the Feast was exceptional. Ring Squire, **Cliff Marchant**, arrived in time for the last [and best] pub and the Feast, having attended the Harvey's Old Ale with his own Side in the morning!!! At the Feast, Bedford’s recently retired, but long serving and long suffering Musician and Foreman, **Roger Nicholls**, was presented with Honorary Life Membership, an honour that is not frequently bestowed. He was also given a pair of engraved wineglasses. He mentioned that he was introduced to the Morris by **David Rendell** of **Headington Quarry**, and later was lent an accordion. [For those not aware, he re-formed a **Brackley Side** whilst teaching in the school there, and his “Orange and Blue” band later recorded LPs for the EFDSS.]

Jockey had a good day, although thoughts were of **Ray “Moose” Cope** and arrangements for his funeral [see last issue and below].

Rutland Feast, 5th -6th October - *Mike Mathew* of **Coventry** writes: “**Rutland** do it again! How do they keep giving us such splendid ‘feasts’? Their ‘feast’, centred on Exton Village Hall, consisted of a feast and a day and a half of dancing in beautiful country. This year’s theme was ‘breweries’. No less than six breweries lie within a ten mile radius of Exton! Admittedly, they are micro-breweries and some are a yard or two inside South Lincolnshire, but no complaints about size or geography were heard. The Morris Ring was represented by its newest Past Squire, *Gerald Willey*, its Publications Officer, *Eddie Dunmore*, and the Northern Area Representative, *Stuart Bator*. Guests came from **Northwood, Devil’s Dyke, Anstey, Green Oak, White Rose, Shakespeare, Letchworth, Harthill, Coventry** and **Peterborough**. The Saturday tour took us to Stamford, the Willoughby Arms at Little Bytham, the Blue Cow Inn at South Witham, the Grainstore at Oakham and the Noel Arms at Langham. The Willoughby Arms provided a superb lunch and deserves awards for its quality of food, to match the awards for the beer from its attached Newby Wyke Brewery. The feast provided informality, excellent food and a great deal of dancing. Sunday took us to the Barnsdale Lodge Hotel, with its good audience, and the Exeter Arms at Barrowden. Much dancing had been promised over the weekend by our very sociable hosts and they certainly drove us very hard indeed. When the final Bonny Green Garters made its lengthy progress around the village pond at Barrowden, the ranks became rapidly somewhat depleted! Perhaps this depletion resulted from the amount of dancing done previously, but far be it from me, an abstainer, to suggest that several men possibly took the theme of the ‘feast’ too much to heart!! Thank you Rutland for your excellently organised weekend and friendly hospitality.”

Whilst no Funeral will ever be joyous, that of **Jockey’s Ray “Moose” Cope** would have warmed his heart. The funeral was on 11th October at Worcester Crematorium, and not only were they standing in the aisles, they were standing in the doorways and the entrance halls!!! Some 300 people turned out to pay their respects and to join in the celebration buffet and “ceilidh” afterwards. **Jockey** and **Green Man** were very well represented [indeed the former probably fielded enough for three sides]. Other Sides represented included **Southport Sword** [one of his former Sides]; **Anker; Bedford; Coventry; East Suffolk** and **White Hart**. Individuals included Past Squires, *Nibs Matthews; Ray King; Mike Garland* and *Roy Yarnell*; and, representing the Morris Ring, the Bagman.

As mentioned in the last Newsletter, the Fools and Animals convened in Polperro, Cornwall from 11th – 13th October 2002. The hosts being **Plymouth** and **Trigg**. Excellent publicity with a large photograph on the back page of the Times “Weekend” section on the Saturday with the Trigg Fool and Horse on a cliff-top. The caption read: “Fools and horses only: *John Richards* (The Fool) and *Robert Chisman* (Trigger), from the Morris Group of Bodmin, practise for the National Fools and Beasts Unconvention in Cornwall this week, starting in Bodmin and ending in Polperro.” Squire, *Cliff Marchant* and Past Squire, *Tim Sercombe*, were also present. *Steve Rowley* commented “Excellent publicity for an excellent weekend. The photo is just one result of the planning that Trigger (*Robert Chisman*) put into the event. He sent a press release e-mail to a friend in the local Chamber of Trade. She tidied it up and sent it out to some local papers and a couple of press agencies. One of the agencies (APEX) called back within 5 minutes. The Instructional weekend was very well planned and ran smoothly. A great tour on Saturday, with **Trigg** and **Plymouth**, then a feast at the Holiday Park where we were staying. During the proceedings *Roger Comley* was “officially” handed on to *Cliff Marchant* as his personal fool. Various new members of the Illustrious Order were presented with badges. The fine weather of Saturday was replaced by the drenching rain, which flooded the instructional room on Sunday Morning, but we moved to the ballroom and continued. Fortunately, the Sunday dance spot was programmed for an indoor performance at Plymouth Aquarium. The weekend was tinged with sadness, with the Funeral of *Ray “Moose” Cope* on the Friday. Robert and the hosting teams deserve many thanks for their hard work.”

Writing of a proposed donation by **Yateley** to the three Morris Organisations to promote the Morris, **Paul Montague** noted "... this is part of the £2002 that we are giving away, mainly to charity, in this Jubilee year. We are presenting several organisations with similar sums at our Christmas party. ... You will recollect that our programme was themed around the Jubilee this year with many venues having a 'Royal' connection! Next year, with Farnborough just down the road, we will attempt a 'Flying/Aircraft' theme, for the centenary of the Wright Brothers' flight."

The **18 – 30 Morris Group** [based on "younger" Men from **Icknield Way**] held their inaugural meeting in Oxford from 25th - 27th October. Main organiser, **Ben Higgs**, writes "Well the 18-30 weekend has been and gone. I don't think it could have gone any better. A couple of guys said it was better than any Ring Meeting they'd been on. [*I say, steady! – Ed.*] We collected loads so no need for any bailing out. [*OK Steve – relax !!!*] A website will be up soon and a bank account is now open. We are here to stay now. A lot of talk about next year's event, which will be much bigger and better. Next year it will still be in Oxford, with Leicester keen to host it after that."

SW & Wales Area Representative, **Dudley Binding**, organised a well supported Instructional hosted by **West Somerset** at Bishops Lydeard on 26th October. He writes "We explored "Old and New Bledington" with **Andy Wilson** [WSMM] and music from Past Squire, **Mike Chandler**, **Edwin Spring** [also WSMM] and **Gareth John** [Isca]. Clubs represented: **Bristol**, **Chalice**, **Dartington**, **Exeter**, **Isca**, **Sweyn's Ey**, WSMM and **Wyvern Jubilee**. Lunch was taken at the Lethbridge Arms [where for the Bagman's information the Ales were excellent!!]".

Tony Poulter [Past Squire of **Gloucestershire**] writes – "In July this year, an urgent e-mail request was sent from RSM Andy Simpson of the 16th Regiment Royal Artillery, serving with the U.N. in Nicosia, Cyprus, to Mark Rogers of Stroud Morris asking if he could find a Morris Dance teacher/musician to go out and teach eight Sergeants from the Sergeants' Mess at Ledra Palace Hotel (the Army quarters, in the centre of the UN Buffer Zone in Nicosia) to perform a Morris Dance or two at a prestigious cocktail party for delegations/ambassadors from the other serving UN countries. After a little trawl around Mark found me and passed the message on. After re-organising my life and my diary, I was able to accept and duly went out to Nicosia (complete with 200 bells and my melodeon). Over the next three days I was able to purchase, beg, borrow or requisition, sufficient items to dress the 8 *volunteers*, and teach them three dances (including Bonny Green). The performance was quite spectacular, and I've since been back out for two further big occasions, namely the 'Cyprus Medal' presentation ceremony (we danced for the evening party afterwards, and UN day on the 20th of October, where 7000 people from the Turkish North and the Greek South, all came together for a day of peace in the grounds of Ledra Palace. The day featured joint community singers and dancers, musicians, bands, and of course **the 16th Reg't Royal Artillery London and Invicta Morris Men** (what a mouthful!) who got the biggest cheer of the day. Dancing for peace could just catch on!"

Mike Mathew, **Coventry** reports on **Green Man's** 25th Anniversary Feast. "Green Man, fresh from their splendid sword display at the Bristol Ring Meeting, held their Annual Feast and 25th Anniversary at St Michael's Church Hall, Boldmere, Sutton Coldfield, on Saturday, 16th November, 2002. Green Man feasts never have large numbers of men attending and those present are quite well known to each other. This makes these feasts particularly attractive. There was plenty of dancing for those that wished to, or were still capable of it. Mike Mathew, the sole representative from Coventry, was asked for the first dance choice, being known as a keen dancer. His choice of Longborough's Swaggering Boney, for devilment, was universally rejected! The newest ex-Ring Squire, **Gerald Willey**, was present and danced a double jig, Jockey to the Fair from Ascot-under-Wychwood, with Mike Mathew. The food, prepared by Green Man, was excellent. Two real ales were provided, Enville Ale [4.5%] and Cottage, Golden Arrow [4.5%]. The writer is not qualified to comment on their quality, as he is one of that rare breed, a teetotal Morris man! They were drunk with enthusiasm by the other men, which does suggest high quality. Green Man were, as ever, excellent hosts and we wish them many more anniversary years. I look forward to being invited to their 50th Anniversary, although I doubt whether I will be suggesting Swaggering Boney as the first, or any, dance then!"

Also on 16th November, **Headington Quarry's** Ale and Feast. “Those attending included Sides from **Bedford, Icknield Way** and **Long Crendon**, and representatives from **Bampton, Oxford** and **Yateley**. The Squire and Bagman were present, together with Past Squire, *Nibs Matthews*; also *Ron Smedley* [who has just been awarded a BAFTA for his “lifetime work in TV”]. After a few excellent beers in the [much improved] Mason’s Arms, there was an hour of dancing before the Feast. This started with a sung verse of “All good gifts” as the Grace, at the suggestion of the Rev. Tom Honey. Soup, was followed by an excellent cold buffet; sweets and cheese. After the various [brief] speeches and toasts, the Bagman presented the Squire of Headington with a enlarged group photograph of the Headington Men and visitors on the “Cotswold Tour” to the village. The Squires of Headington danced out and in respectively with a double Jig. After a few songs, there were a few more dances, including a double Jig from the Bampton representatives, and another [I’ll Go and Enlist] from *Ben Higgs* and another of the younger Icknield Way Men.”

AND FINALLY !!

Keith Ashman, of **Manchester** provided a “sign of the times” – “You may be interested in an advert I saw in my local "Knutsford Guardian" last week. In the Classified section, there was an advert that started as follows:- "The Morris Dancer is due to close for a major redevelopment" Was this an ex-squire who was retiring and having a makeover, I wondered? No. Later on in the advert, it went on to state that "we are looking to recruit new team members". Neither was it recruiting new dancers. It seems that the Morris Dancer in question is a pub in Kelsall (a village on the way to Chester, and only 3 miles from Manley.) The pub is being redeveloped and will re-open as a pub/restaurant later this month, and was advertising for bar staff and chefs. Unfortunately, the pub is also changing its name to The Olive Tree Bar. Which is strange, as there are no olive trees in Cheshire (to my knowledge), but there is a Morris team in the vicinity! As an aside, I wonder how many pubs with the name "Morris Dancer" are still left? And how many still have dancing outside them?"

Phil Preen, **Anstey**, during some exchanges on MDDL regarding the expansion of the abbreviations in the Black Book, suggested the following – think about them!! :-

OY = The audience is still in the bar	FU = It is time to start dancing
FD = My mistake, it is not time to start	HR = Several pints have been consumed
WR = Several more pints have been consumed	DF = Admirable physique
HH = A weak shout	WH = A strong shout
CO = Move to the pub across the road	BB = Retire behind pub for more practice

IN CONCLUSION

As ever, please to keep the News [Gossip and Scandal] flowing in and, as usual, report any changes for the Directory [which is available at any time, in its latest form, by Email].

The next Newsletter will probably be produced in the New Year, and should include the next Edition of “The Morris Dancer”.

Meanwhile, a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous [well we can all wish!] New Year to you all, with much Dancing and Mumming and good cheer.

Wassail

John Frearson,
Bagman, The Morris Ring

The Newsletter - No. 26 – December 2002 - Summary

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

IN MEMORIAM - *Harry Fisher*, former Squire of **Mayflower**. *Siward Glaister*, President of **Thames Valley**.

TREASURER'S MATTERS – Subscriptions should have been sent or your Insurance may be at risk. A joint Insurance for the Morris Organisations is being set up to reduce our increased premiums.

GUINNESS RECORD - A team organised by Golden Star of Norwich have had their world record Morris distance attempt accepted by Guinness World Records. *David Marr* of **Coventry** in the team.

FORTHCOMING INSTRUCTIONALS - **Jigs – 2003**, 17th – 19th January 2003, Sutton Bonnington, hosted by **Dolphin**. **Musicians' Instructional**, 21st - 23rd February 2003, hosted by **Mendip**. An Instructional on "**Grants and Funding**" is proposed for next year.

ARM 2003 - **Isca** will host the Meeting. Despite uncertainties, the dates are still **7th - 9th March 2003**. The venue will now be Monmouth. Nominations and Motions for debate should be in by now.

RING MEETINGS 2003 – Most are full – there is still space at **Thaxted**.

OTHER EVENTS - "**The Gate to Southwell**", 7th June 2003. **Caversham Charity Folk Festival**, 20th - 22nd June 2003. **Saddleworth Rushcart**, Bank Holiday weekend 22nd - 24th August 2003. **18 - 30 Morris Group** [again in Oxford], 26th – 28th September 2003. **Pipe and Tabor Festival**, Gloucester, 26th - 28th September 2003.

ANNIVERSARIES - The **Britannia Coconut Dancers** celebrate their Centenary in 2003.

FOR SALE etc. - Golden Jubilee **Hartley** Ring Meeting T-shirts. *Steve Parker* has a Hotel in Devon

MEDIA - **Ewell St Mary** in the Sunday Times. **Albion** on "Never Mind the Buzzcocks". *Ken Hamilton* [Oakworth, presently **Kennet**] on "Postmodern Pastimes" Channel 4. *Paul Woods* [Bristol] on "Home Truths", BBC Radio 4. *Peter Stephens & Alan Dandy* [Stafford] on Folk Talk, Radio Shropshire. **Trigg's Fool and Horse** photographed in the Times "Weekend" section.

NEWS - **Headington Quarry** are highlight of second "annual" Cotswold tour. Ring Representatives at Morris Federation AGM weekend. Days of Dance hosted by **Yateley**, **St. Albans**, **Manchester**, **Green Ginger**, **Barnsley**, **Bedford** and **Rutland**. Feasts at **Jockey**, **Green Man** [25th Anniversary] and **Headington Quarry**. Fools and Animals hosted by **Trigg** and **Plymouth**. The 18 – 30 Morris Group weekend. Instructional with **West Somerset**. Charity donations by **Yateley**. *Ron Smedley* awarded a BAFTA "lifetime" award and *Doc Rowe* a Doctorate from Sheffield. *Tony Poulter* [Gloucestershire] teaches the 16th Reg't Royal Artillery London and Invicta Morris Men in Cyprus.

ALSO IN THE NEWS - **Anker**, **Anstey**, **Bampton**, **Bedford**, **Brackley**, **Bristol**, **Chalice**, **Claro**, **Coventry**, **Dartington**, **Devil's Dyke**, **East Suffolk**, **Etcetera**, **Exeter**, **Green Man**, **Green Oak**, **Harthill**, **High Spen**, **Icknield Way**, **Ilmington**, **Isca**, **Letchworth**, **Lincoln** and **Mickelbarrow**, **Long Crendon**, **Manchester**, **Monkseaton**, **Moulton**, **Northwood**, **Oxford**, **Peterborough**, **Ripley**, **Saddleworth**, **Shakespeare**, **Spring Grove**, **Stockport**, **Sweyn's Ey**, **Thaxted**, **Westminster**, **Whitchurch**, **White Hart**, **White Rose**, **Wyvern Jubilee** and **Yateley**

A very happy Christmas and prosperous New Year, with successful dancing and Mumming, to you all from the Squire, Treasurer and Bagman.

Wassail

John Frearson, Bagman, The Morris Ring