



The Newsletter - No. 28 – April / May 2003

Greetings,

I thank you for re-electing me as your Bagman at the ARM at Monmouth in March. Someone, somewhere, must want to have a go at the job!!!! This Newsletter will probably reach you in early May – which means it can also enclose the Morris Circular and the Directory and save on envelopes and stamps. Hopefully everyone will have an excellent dancing season – unencumbered by Licence hassles!! Will this be the last?

On that subject, the Squire has been much involved with meetings about the Public Entertainment Licence. Following a meeting at Wigmore Hall, the Morris Organisations and EFDSS obtained a meeting with the Minister responsible, Dr. Kim Howells, to express our concerns – and to offer constructive proposals. He has offered another meeting with his drafting team to try to sort out some of the anomalies. Some concessions and clarifications have been gained, but there is still work to do. It seems we can turn up and dance without a licence – or busk – but if we advertise, it seems that a licence will be required. The Department’s “only £20” [per location] could be very expensive for a 10-spot May Tour.

This mailing includes a note from the Treasurer. It should be **read carefully** as it includes information on the Morris Ring Insurance.

Also enclosed with this mailing are:

- A **Summary** of this Newsletter – as the last page of the Newsletter.
- The new **Directory for 2003 – 2004** [the last page provides the Insurance Certificate].
- **Amendments** to the last Directory, so you know what has changed recently.
- **Booking Forms** for the **Ilmington Instructional** and the **Funding Instructional**.
- A “flier” for the **Morris 18 – 30** weekend in September
- The **Minutes** of the **ARM**; and any other relevant papers [if available].
- Your copy/ies of the **Morris Circular**.

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**Kevin McHale - Crendon**

Kevin McHale, Crendon's original musician, died in Stoke Mandeville hospital on Sunday 9th February. "Kevin was our musician from our beginnings, in 1967, up until a few years ago when, on doctor's orders, he had to give up playing the box. He continued playing guitar and singing up until very recently. Those who knew Kevin will remember him for the very Irish touch he gave to English Morris music which often meant that the dances only lasted half as long and contained twice as many notes as they should have! On tours at home and further afield, Holland and USA come to mind, it wasn't unusual to go into a watering hole only for him to be instantly recognised by some long lost friend or relative. He was a wonderful and unique musician and will be sorely missed by the many people who knew him.

"His funeral was in a packed St. Mary's Church, Long Crendon, on 17th February. **Oxford City** and **Aldbury** were represented and Crendon wore in kit at his family's request. A wake was held after the service in the Eight Bells, Long Crendon. Again at his family's request there were a few dances (without bells) and a few songs - all in all he couldn't have had a better send off!"

[Information: *Pete Summerskill*, Bagman, **Crendon**]

Gordon Sibthorpe – Offley

Gordon Sibthorpe, one of Offley's 'senior' members, died on 4th March, after a long illness. Thankfully he slipped away in his sleep which was a blessing after the problems he had suffered over the past year. Gordon was one of the most enthusiastic dancers and he will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

[Information: *Jack Summers-Glass*, **Offley**]

David Eales - Bathampton

David Eales died on 20th March, at the age of 83. He was born in 1919. David was Squire of **Bathampton** from 1966-1969, Keeper of the Log from 1983-1994 and the spirit of the Red 'Oss from 1969-1989. He also wrote the Side's handbook "The Bathampton Way", which was published in 1994. He will probably, however, be best remembered as the indefatigable Foreman of the side from 1967-1994.

His widow Joyce said that Morris was a pre-eminent part of his life and she wished the Men to play a large part in the funeral. This was on 28th March at the Semington Crematorium. At the family's request, the Side formed a guard of honour and danced behind the coffin as it was carried into the church. There was further dancing outside the crematorium after the service, and back at his home in Bradford-on-Avon.

[Information: *Idris Roker*, **Bathampton**]

Andrew Adams - Traditional Bampton Morris Dancers

Andrew Adams of **Traditional Bampton Morris Dancers** passed away in mid March at the age of 39. His death was completely unexpected, as he had not been ill and there was no sign of a specific illness. What is particularly sad is that his brothers danced with us, including the squire, Lawrence Adams. His family are very strongly connected with the Morris. It is a very small community and naturally has come as a great shock. A private funeral took place on 21st March, and deepest sympathy goes out to his family and friends.

[Information: Nick Locke, TBMD]

A LETTER FROM THE TREASURER

Congratulations to **Isca** for all the hard work they put into an enjoyable and interesting ARM. During the course of the meeting some logistical problems came to light, and we will be reviewing the format of future annual meetings. As a result of discussion at the ARM we will also be reviewing the financing of the ARM to make it more open to all. These reviews will be completed in good time for the Mossley [with Saddleworth] ARM in 2004.

As there is always confusion on the Insurance, I provide answers to some **FAQs** concerning the Morris Ring Insurance, as well as information on Subscriptions and the Morris Shop.

The **Morris Ring Insurance** is divided into three parts: -

a) Third Party Public Liability Insurance [TPPLI]. The premium for this cover forms part of your Side's annual subscription and protects all bone-fide members of your side, team or troupe, of any age, from public liability. The maximum cover is £5,000,000 in respect of any single claim. This is now the standard level of cover demanded by event organisers and local authorities. All public liability claims have an excess of £100 and any claim against the 'Buildings' section of the policy will incur an excess of £250. This would be payable by the insured Side concerned NOT The Morris Ring.

In June 2003 the Morris Federation and the Open Morris will also be parties to the Morris Ring Insurance policy. This is in preparation for the new joint policy, in the name of "The Morris Organisations", which will take effect in January 2004. As well as providing savings in a time of soaring Insurance costs, it is hoped that the new policy will bring all excesses down to £50.00.

A general certificate for this TPPLI cover is to be found on the last page of the Morris Ring Directory. As the Directory is published after the ARM, there is now a gap between this and the policy renewal date at the end of October. If you need to produce evidence of insurance cover for the period November - March, please contact me for an appropriate cover note.

b) Miscellaneous Insurance. This covers all tangible items such as Morris Ring silver and regalia, PA equipment and the Morris Shop stock.

c) Morris Ring Personal Accident Insurance (optional). This cover incurs an individual premium of £1.50 per head. The age range is 16 - 65 years. A list of participants' names and addresses must be provided together with the appropriate additional premium. The opportunity to take up this policy will be made available with the annual subscription notification, prior to the policy's renewal date on 1st November.

Subscriptions: At the ARM I had to call for an increase of £5.00 to the Morris Ring annual subscription [the first increase for some five years]. This is to cover the general rise in the administration costs and the four-fold increase public liability insurance cost. After the case for this rise was fully explained, the Motion was passed unanimously. **REMEMBER:** If you do not pay your Subscription on time, your Insurance Cover may be withheld.

The basic membership/insurance package with one copy of each publication, with effect from 1st November 2003, will be £35.00. Typically, 'Full Members' take three copies of each issue of the morris Circular, and unless otherwise advised this annual subscription will now be £45.00. Other options are available depending how many 'Morris Circular' and/or 'Morris Dancer' magazines your side requires. All will be explained on the subscription notice.

The Morris Shop is now doing very well. I am forever in search of new items to stock. These items must be Morris orientated in order to prevent it becoming a folk shop. If you, or your Side, know of anything that might be of interest, please let me know. We have recently stocked the four Mally's melodeon music books/CD's (one of them is for absolute beginners).

Best wishes, **Stephen Adamson** BFB.

INSTRUCTIONALS

South West and Wales Regional One Day Instructional. Another of these Area Instructionals is planned - the provisional date being **4th October 2003**. The venue likely to be either Bishops Lydeard – the venue of the previous instructional, or possibly Bridgewater College. Information is available from the Area Representative, **Dudley Binding**.

Ilmington Instructional. **Ilmington** are hosting a weekend instructional on **10th – 12th October 2003**. This will enable Men to learn the Ilmington tradition in the style of the current side, in the village where the tradition has been performed over the centuries. An **Application Form** is enclosed with this Newsletter.

Funding Instructional. Initial details of this were given in the last Newsletter. **Stephen Rowley** of **Gloucestershire** is a contemporary artist, as well as a Morris dancer. He recently expounded his thoughts on arts funding and Morris on MDDL. He will be leading an Instructional / Seminar on funding on **Saturday, 25th October 2003**. It will be open to all three Morris Organisations and will cost £10 per head including lunch. An **Application Form** is enclosed with this Newsletter.

Musicians' Instructional. **Clive Du'Mont** writes "... this was postponed due to a lack of confirmed visiting musicians - only 14 paid-up, having stretched the confirmation date for hall hire for a fortnight beyond the owners' wishes, I'm afraid the arithmetic wins on this occasion. At **Mike Chandler's** suggestion, I shall be sweet-talking my **Mendip** colleagues with a view to having another go in November, so more anon. In the meantime thanks to all and in particular to John for his sterling efforts in promoting the event. We'll have better luck next time!"

Jigs Instructional – 2004. This year's event went well, with some 50% of the participants being newcomers. The hall has been booked again for **16th - 18th January 2004**. An Application Form will appear in due course.

ARM 2004.

The **2004** ARM will be hosted by **Mossley** [with support from **Saddleworth**] and will be from **12th – 14th March 2004**. This serves as due notice under Item 14 of the Constitution.

In 2005 it is hoped that Harthill will host the ARM.

OTHER RING EVENTS

This year's **3rd Cotswold Tour** will be on **6th September 2003** – with places limited to 49 men, to ensure no overcrowding and sufficient dancing. The Tour will visit Bledington, Ascot under Wychwood, Ducklington, Sherborne, Longborough, and Oddington. Cost £17 "first come first served" Deposit £5. **David Thompson** on: tradcap@btopenworld.com

OTHER EVENTS

Bob Weddell, Bagman of **Broadwood** notes “On *St George's Day* this year, *Old Harry Mousdell*, a founder member of Broadwood, is organising an open air concert in and around the Carfax Bandstand in the centre of Horsham, West Sussex. He has asked Broadwood, Magog Morris, Stane Steet Morris, Sun Oak Step Cloggers, Hi Jinx Appalachian Cloggers and members of Horsham Folk Club to join him. The event will last from about 8pm to 10pm. This event will follow on from last year's dance out, parts of which were recorded for Radio 4's series on British saints, featuring Ian Hislop (shortly before he "came out" in the British press to admit he enjoyed the English Morris!) All local men are invited to attend - we want as large a crowd as possible - especially in view of Ken Livingstone's answer to my letter last year asking about a St George's procession in London, that in all his years living in London he had never felt there was any popular feeling for such a celebration.”

Gate to Southwell – 7th June 2003 - “In 1980 whilst researching into Morris Dancing in Nottingham, **Bob Hine** of **Dolphin**, discovered that Morris dancers were paid to take the Nottingham borough's contribution to Southwell Minster. The original text refers to the 'ale which they drank at all times'. The tradition was revived with many sides dancing, processing and walking from Nottingham to Southwell, some 23 miles by the old roads. Sides attending are from all traditions including Cotswold, North-west, and Rapper sword, with female and mixed sides as well. (Last year 20 sides and 200 dancers made it!). Today, although many do walk and process the whole way, the majority of sides spend time with dancers and are bussed from pub to pub. The whole thing ends with a procession into Southwell followed by a short service. Then to the Bramley Apple where local breweries in previous years have donated free beer. Buses take everyone back to Nottingham in the early evening. If you are interested in attending or want to know more, contact **Chris Gigg** of **Dolphin** on 0115 9232181.”

Scarborough Fayre Morris Dance Festival - Yorkshire - **27th - 29th June 2003**. Details: Wendy Bostock, Yorkshire Coast Morris, Email: wbstock@mistral.co.uk

Cecil Sharp Centenary Event in Somerset – **20th - 25th August 2003**. On 22nd August 1903 Cecil Sharp noted his first folk song, The Seeds of Love, from John England in Hambridge village in Somerset. It is proposed to hold an International Conference [probably in Taunton] and a centenary celebration in Hambridge, involving the local community in a festival of song and dance. Information from: **David Sutcliffe** (Committee Chairman), The Old Vicarage, Hambridge, Langport, Somerset TA10 0BG Tel: 01460 281205 Email: sutcliffedt@aol.com or by Email from the Bagman.

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. **A flyer is enclosed.**

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

ARM 2003.

In advance of the Minutes, the following formal business was decided at the ARM:

The Bagman, **John Frearson, Bedford**, was re-elected. **Roger Comley [Letchworth]** was elected the Area Representative for the South Midlands Area. No one came forward to take the role in the Eastern Area, and subsequently **Graham Cox, Cambridge**, has been volunteered/appointed. **Anstey** were elected Full Members.

The Motion from **East Kent**, that “The Morris Ring accepts that any member side who wishes to attend any meeting organised by or on behalf of the Ring, is free to bring any musician the side wishes to use.” was defeated. However, there was significant support for the Motion [particularly in the postal poll – the use of which did not have to be considered as it would not have affected the final result]. It was suggested if Sides wished to include their women musicians in a Ring Meeting style weekend, then they should organise such an event. This could be open to all Ring Sides as they wished. The Morris Ring could publicise this [just as it publicises other non-Ring events]. Hopefully, this would provide some measure of enfranchisement for these Sides with women musicians.

Our thanks to **Isca** for a successful ARM Meeting and weekend. **Les Chittleburgh** has made a selection from around 300 photographs taken during the event. These are now on the Isca Website starting at page:- <http://www.isca-morrismen.com/ringarm.htm> There are more pictures on the **Woodside** site, which is linked from the Isca pages. Les Chittleburgh would welcome any photographs covering parts of the Meeting not shown on these pages, or any better quality shots. NB the pictures have been reduced in size for quick down-loading. Larger (90 Kbyte .jpg format) versions are also available by Email.

ANNIVERSARIES

Keith Ashman, Bagman, **Manchester**, has sent a copy of their article which will be published in the local press in April to publicise their activities.

“ 50 Years of North-West clog morris ”

“In 2003, Manchester Morris Men (MMM) celebrate 50 years of dancing the processional clog morris from the north-west of England.

“We will start our summer season as usual, when we process in clogs in the Knutsford Royal May Day procession. This is the 25th year that MMM have danced in the procession, and continues a long-standing tradition of morris dancers at Knutsford.

“Morris dancers first appeared at Knutsford May Day 125 years ago (in 1878) when the Godley Hill Morris Men, from near Hyde, took part in the procession. They were regular visitors to Knutsford, and it is likely that morris teams have taken part in every Knutsford May Day since then.

“While the Godley Hill MM disbanded in the 1930's, MMM collected details of the dance in the early 1950's from local Godley residents who had danced or played for the morris. MMM first danced it to the general public 50 years ago in May 1953, and danced in Knutsford in July that year, as part of a tour of North Cheshire towns. That day finished with the club's first annual feast at the Rose and Crown, Knutsford, and club records state that "at 11.00pm men could still be seen dancing in the glare of car headlights in King Street“.

“MMM base their distinctive costume on that of the Godley Hill MM, but use the colours of Manchester's coat of arms (red, blue and gold) for their sashes.

“At the invitation of the May Day Committee, MMM will dance the complete Godley Hill dance in the arena, at the end of the Knutsford procession, to mark the links that both the Manchester and Knutsford May Day have with the Godley Hill morris.”

MEDIA

Bob Hart, Bagman, **Claro**, sent a newspaper cutting from the local Knaresborough weekly paper, describing their Plough Monday event. They also had a very good write-up and photograph in a prominent place in the Yorkshire Post, a regional daily.

Apparently **Dolphin** should have been on "Barbara" on ITV on 30th March. **Dave Waters** writes "It was postponed in the end - what with the war and all that. It's to be re-scheduled to a later date. Dolphin were asked to take part in a little sketch which was part of an episode of the sit-com "Barbara". In the sketch we were being interviewed whilst dancing for someone's magazine program. We were supposed to get irritated by the interviewer getting in the way. We end up beating the crap out of him. Ho! Ho! I couldn't really see what purpose the sketch was supposed to serve - it didn't have any bearing on the rest of the program. Also, we were supposed to be Cornish dancers, dancing in Yorkshire in May. The reality was that we danced on a Nottinghamshire village green in October, and it rained all day. We spent a lot of time on the catering bus sheltering from the rain and talking to the director and his crew and they did, at least, seem genuinely interested in learning about what we do, and why. Can't say we promoted the morris much though, but I don't think anyone watches Barbara so no harm done!" There's a report of the day's filming on www.dolphin-morris.co.uk

From BBC Gloucestershire WWW Site via Mark Rogers "Printing blunder could lead to new recruits - Morris dancers in the county are expecting new recruits at their dance workshop today following an embarrassing error in the Guildhall's event programme. Instead of reading "Absolute beginners of any sex", the **Lassington Oak** event was billed as "absolute beginners sex welcome"."

NEWS

Correction – Plough Bullockers Tour. **Tony Ashley** of **Anker** writes "Unfortunately your informant on the name of the old man in Sapcote who provided us with information got his name wrong! Harry Bevan has been dead for about five years. The old boy in Sapcote is Owen Brown. Harry Bevan ran the Peckleton Rural Museum from where we borrowed a plough for several years before we bought our own." He also advised that they were "raddled up" and not merely "reddened" An amended Report has been provided for Tony Ashley to give to his informant!!

Correction - Antony Heywood, Helmond writes:- "On page 4 of the Newsletter, **Shag Graetz** refers to **Pinewoods** as "the oldest overseas member of the Morris Ring". This needs qualifying in the light of the list of clubs admitted to membership [1934 to 1940] published in recent Morris Dancer. "De Meihof Morris Mannen" from Holland were admitted at the Thaxted Ring Meeting in 1939. This club no longer exists and has no links with the Helmond Morris Men (founded in 1935 and admitted in 1976) so Shag's assertion would be true if he added the words "still dancing".

Chris Mason, in his alternate guise [pun!!] sends news of **Stourvale Mummers**. "We leapt out upon a startled world about the middle of December, leaving our usual trail of death and destruction (of mince pies) along our usual circuit. Around thirty performances, in a couple of dozen pubs and other places, sixty deaths, what seemed like a great deal too much alicampane and so on. A highlight was the show in the Inn on the Furlong at Ringwood. The pub was full of kids, we stomped in and seized the patch in front of the fire as our "killing ground" and very quickly we had all these little faces peering in at us in wonderment from all the corners of the pub. We didn't get very much money from them, but as a fraction of their pocket money it was pretty good. In general we were very well received everywhere we went -- might be something to do with the big metal swords we flail about with. When the dust settled we found we'd collected £1207 and we've now given it away. So Charlie, a little lad with cerebral palsy, gets a handrail installed to help him down into the back garden to play; Ellie, a ten-year-old with learning disabilities, hearing and visual loss gets a special kind of bike to hurtle about on; and Caitlin, with severe developmental delay, will get a motability vehicle in which her mum can transport her and the other kids in the family."

Idris Roker of **Bathampton** reports on *The Jigs Instructional*, 18th - 20th January, hosted by **Dolphin** at Sutton Bonnington.

“The weekend started as it meant to continue - with good food. The Seafood Pasta Bake followed by fruit salad was a fine way to prepare for **Bert Cleaver's** Fieldtown session. Bert laid down the law from the very beginning: "For the duration of this weekend do things the way I tell you to". This was refined by the other session leaders over the course of the weekend: "Do what I'm telling you, not what I'm showing you" (**Tony Ashley**, Oddington, Saturday morning); "Do what I'm telling you now, not what I told you 10 minutes ago" (**Geoff Jerram**, Bledington, Saturday morning); "Do what I'm telling you, even though these capers are indescribable" (Bert, Sherborne, Saturday afternoon); "Don't do what I told you, because that was all wrong" (**Mike Matthew**, Ascot, Sunday morning).

“When released from the rigours of Fieldtown, everyone streamed down to the Kings Arms where the musicians promptly took over the back end of the lounge and launched into a session. The pub was surprisingly empty at the start. One table was occupied by a few locals who proved unequal to the strain and left after about half an hour. The only other occupants were a rough gathering of men who appeared to have been carousing in the bar all evening. These later turned out to be a group of Winchester men in civvies.

“After returning from the pub, a number of people gravitated to the kitchen where there was bread pudding on offer and quite a lot of leftover pasta bake. Bert, to everyone's surprise, had gone to bed early, but he came within a whisker of being roused again when, as a means of remedying the unexpected lack of port, someone suggested raiding his sleeping bag. Perhaps as a protest against the shortage of port, **Joe Oskiewicz** of Dolphin fomented a plan wherein he single-handedly deposed the Squire and installed himself as the "People's Squire".

“Saturday morning, and the post was delivered to the nearby houses by a post-woman on a bicycle. She eyed the unkempt group taking the air outside the Village Hall with some amusement and finally asked "Morris dancers?". "Yes", someone replied, "would you like to join us"? "No fear!" she rejoined and cycled away as fast as her little legs would take her.

“The first session of the morning was Bledington, led by Geoff Jerram, followed by Oddington, led by Tony Ashley. When lunch time came we were told that the jacket potatoes were putting up an unusual show of resistance, so we were sent off to the pub early. By common consent, everyone took the longer walk to The Anchor and passed a pleasant hour until the call came to say that the jacket potatoes had finally been conquered.

“The first session in the afternoon was Geoff's own version of Bampton, and the final session was the dreaded Sherborne, led by Bert. It took a little while to nail down exactly why the Sherborne session felt different to all the others, but it slowly became clear: there was much more room to dance in than there had been in the previous sessions. Looking around the room, a considerable number of by now familiar faces suddenly weren't there any more. Whereas galleys in the Oddington session usually resulted in kicking at least one other person, galleys in the Sherborne session could be done with reckless flair. Those who did stay for the Sherborne went to The Anchor afterwards with a sense of smug satisfaction.

“The starter at the Feast was Greek Salad with pitta bread, followed by Basque Pork & Beans for the main course and Plum Tart for pudding. The usually predictable ceremony of the after-dinner toasts got off to an entirely unpredictable start. The Squire revealed that, like all great leaders, he kept himself informed of everything that went on in his domain including, in this case, the plot surrounding the "People's Squire". Joe was ordered to the front, where he did his best to look sheepish, but didn't succeed very well. As "People's Squire", he was given the task of asking **Martin Morley**, Squire of Dolphin, to propose the Loyal Toast. "Well", he began, "Martin, will you give the Loyal Toast?" to which the answer came "No, you do it"! (And he did). Afterwards, **BFB** proposed the toast to The Immortal Memory, **Charlie Corcoran** of **Leicester**, The Morris Ring and *The Squire* toasted Dolphin.

“The after-dinner entertainment consisted of a broad miscellany of songs. **Gerald Willey**, Chairman of the Advisory Council, gave a sensitive rendition of "The Keeper". There was also a surprisingly idyllic song about "the rolling downs of Hampshire" from **John Bartlett** of **Victory**, but it later emerged that the lyrics had been toned down in deference to the mixed company. **John Baxter** of **Furness** managed to use William McGonagall's poem "The Tay Bridge Disaster" as the basis for an all-inclusive performance of choral speaking, with everyone taking up the refrain "On the last Sabbath day of 1879 / Which will be remember'd for a very long time".

“**Mersey** began their slot with the announcement that they intended to pilot a scheme to improve law and order by dressing as policemen when on their morris tours. The Squire obligingly modelled the new costume, including a helmet that was a little on the small side. To thank him for his help, Mersey then sang a song about the Squire's childhood days when "Little Cliffie" was kidnapped and taken to sea by a band led by "Steve BfB". When the food ran out, they informed Little Cliffie that they would have to eat him to survive but, fortunately for the Morris Ring, he was saved in the nick of time when land was sighted.

“The Kings Arms was almost deserted when we arrived. One couple, who were probably students, did their best to ignore the swelling numbers of men in strange clothes, but finally fled when one of those strange men grabbed the girl and began to teach her to jive. Musicians and singers kept the bar alive for hours and BfB stole the show with a stunning performance on his whistle.

“Sunday morning began as so many Sunday mornings do - with a head-ache. More accurately, looking at the faces assembled over breakfast, it seemed to begin with about 30 separate head-aches. The main item on the breakfast menu was Bert's incomparable kedgeriee (with scrambled eggs for the faint-stomached). Of course, kedgeriee is not always to everyone's taste - someone tried to compromise by requesting a portion "without fish".

“Everyone cheered up as the morning progressed, but this seemed to be mainly because the threat of Headington had been removed. Headington, the usual Sunday starter, was replaced this year by a joint session of Ascot, led by Mike Matthew, and Longborough, led by Bert. After coffee came the revision session, which is always very humbling as you realise how little you retained from the previous sessions. Never mind - there's always next year.”

The **Ripley** Feast was held on 25th January in the Moseley Street Church Hall. An attendance of some 100 Men included sides or representatives from: **Anker, Anstey, Green Oak, Harthill, Isca, Lincoln & Micklebarrow, Rose and Castle, Saddleworth, St. Albans, and White Rose** [together with their younger men's off-shoot Side, Dog Rose]. “Those arriving early were directed to the Red Lion [a Wetherspoon's pub with a Burn's Night Ale theme], and the proceedings commenced in the hall at 6.30pm for 7.00pm. Guests included the Mayor of Amber Valley, Cllr. Tony Woodings; *Chris Canner*, a member of the original Ripley Side, and the Squire, *Cliff Marchant*, and the Bagman. The Squire declined the top-table and joined the bottom table – this being by tradition reserved for Fools, Animals, and other sundries!! In view of the date, the Burn's Selkirk Grace, accompanied by [Northumbrian?] pipes, preceded the meal. This was of excellent quality [the new caterers being tried out for the Ring Meeting!!], and comprised “Soup avec legumes”; “Boef a la Bourguignon”; and “Pud”. These were accompanied by a selection of six ales from the local Leadmill Brewery. After the meal the of Ripley, Mick Buckley, toasted the Queen. The Squire proposed the Immortal Memory, including all those who have promoted song and dance. A toast of thanks to the Host Side was proposed by Rose and Castle. After a few songs, the tables were cleared for dancing. Among the “cabaret” items were double jigs “I'll go and enlist” from Dog Rose, and an Oddington jig from The Ring Squire, *Cliff Marchant*, and *Joe Oldaker* of Anker, both being accompanied by lady musicians [a new departure at Ripley], *Briony Griffiths* being the very talented young fiddler for Dog Rose, and “*Plum*” *Bignell* [long time musician for **Northampton; Rose & Castle and Brackley**] on melodeon. At about midnight, the barrels being at a low ebb, and some wishing to sleep, the remainder retired to the George until various small hours. In the morning a light breakfast was served, the hall having to be vacated by 9am, and those still in need of sustenance, partook of an English Breakfast at the Talbot [the famous Lillian having recently left her establishment].”

Also on 25th January, the **Uttoxeter** Feast. The Ring Treasurer reports that this was well attended and an excellent event [as of course are the very great majority of Morris events!!!]

Roger Banks [**Woodside**] writes: “31st January 2003. Woodside held another successful evening attended by 50 men from **St. Albans, Towersey, Aldbury, Yateley, Letchworth, Grand Union, & one from Stafford**. Bad weather and transport problems had caused two other sides to cancel. Plenty of dancing and beer, plus the usual Shepherds Pie followed by cheese, biscuits & fruit.”

Chris Mason writes of **Bourne River**: “A few weeks ago an email wafted into my pc from no less a personage than Akela of the Springdale Cub Pack -- enquiring as to whether we did talks or demonstration; and if so, could we go and talk to them. Well we don't, or rather we haven't, but we thought we should, so, last week, Bourne River joined the cubs. We showed them a couple of dances, then taught them the rudiments of Young Collins Oddington. This took a while; there were 26 cubs, so we had to work with two shifts of three sets each shift. As finale we showed them the Upton Stick Dance. Now it happens that our usual style with this is to do the last half of the dance to drums, just drums, nothing but drums. So with as many drums as we could find for the night being walloped by seven or eight of the cubs, and the rest of the pack bashing sticks together we had a pretty impressive orchestra. (Don't tell *Clive Du'Mont* or he'll haul me off for corrective instruction). Anyway, all the kids -- both those with bells and those with woggles -- seemed to enjoy themselves and we hope we've sown some kind of a seed.

Winchester's Annual Feast was held on 1st February at Test Valley School, Stockbridge. They were celebrating 50 years from their foundation in 1953. Sides present or represented included: **Bourne River; Chanctonbury Ring; Dartington; East Surrey; Kennet; King John's; Long Man; Mendip; Ravensbourne; Ripley; Saddleworth; Thaxted; Victory and Winster**. The Bagman and the Treasurer were present as were Past Squires, *Richard Hankinson, Tim Sercombe* and *Gerald Willey* – and of course the Squire of the host side, **Geoff Jerram**.

“As customary there was a national theme to the cuisine, and this year it was Czechoslovakian. There seemed to be a focus on pancakes, omelettes and blinies and the like. The local Cheriton Brewery “Pots Ale” provided liquid sustenance – as did a sample barrel from the new Greenfield Real Ale Brewery [GRAB] founded by a trio from **Saddleworth**.

“After various speeches and toasts, a few songs were sung and then the tables were cleared for dancing. For those who stayed the night, a breakfast was provided the following morning.”

Also on 1st February, the **Leicester** feast, also celebrating a 50th Anniversary. The Squire attended, but no report has yet been forthcoming! It was obviously that good!!!

Bob Draper, Bagman, **Ashdown Forest**, writes that they “... were invited to a workshop run by Sarum Morris in Combe Bissett near Salisbury on the 16th February. They had another side teaching some border (Red Stags); a side teaching some Northwest (Boghoppers and Bushbeaters) and I think they wanted us for some light relief! At least, they wanted us to specifically teach them the Lively Jig from Ilmington (not!) so I assume it was something of a joke. However, five of us went down to teach the 60 or so mixed bods there - both the Jig and also three Wheatley dances. Another local side called Quayside Cloggies were also participating. It was a great day, everyone seemed to have good fun and a fair amount of Badger Champion was imbibed - mainly by us!”

The annual **Lichfield** Ale was on 1st March. Held as usual in the splendid setting of the Guild Hall. Representatives [and a few full Sides] from **Bedford** [the Bagman], **Brackley**, **Chanctonbury Ring** [the Squire], **Chapel-en-le-Frith**, **Coventry**, **Dartington**, **Devil's Dyke**, **Ebor**, **Faithful City**, **Harthill**, **Jockey** [including the Treasurer – and shop], **King John's**, **Letchworth**, **Plymouth**, **Ripley**, **Shakespeare**, **Stafford**, **Thaxted** and **Uttoxeter**. Dancing took place both before and after the traditional vegetable curry [bring your own hard plate] which was served with baked potatoes, baked beans, and onion pickles. The liquid refreshments were from the local Old Cottage Brewery [Oak Ale 4%; Stout 4.7%; Halcyon Daze 5.3%]. At supper time, Jockey set up their fold-away picnic table and the Side donned their eating-out kit of blue striped butcher's aprons!! With a slightly lower attendance this year, the dancing space was more conducive to non-colliding sets!! Plymouth provided a performance of one of their sword dances – sticks being replaced by their naval cutlasses; injuries were minimal and the Treasurer refolded the Insurance Policy with a sigh of relief!!

Letchworth hosted a day of Instruction, ale, curry and a [next day] brewery tour in Henlow on 22nd March. Sides and representatives were present from **Anker, Bedford, Coton, Etcetera, Green Oak, Northampton, and St Albans**. As the event conveniently preceded the Morris Organisations' Annual Joint Meeting on the Sunday at the Bagman's, the Officers invested in tickets for the Saturday evening at indecently short notice. It was a most enjoyable and relaxed evening [possibly as the Instructional had removed some excess energy!!], with excellent home made curries – and beers from the local Potton Brewery [Shambles and Village Bike – both 4.3%] – and for some samples of the Host's Fool's "Caribbean Rum and Coconut". As well as dancing, eating and drinking, the Officers convened an "emergency" sub-committee meeting in the award winning Engineers Arms next door, to check on some of the selection nine real ales. The Treasurer was seen to sink a pint!!

On 29th March, **Winsters** held an open instructional, hoping to recruit more dancers, and introduce the dance to a wider audience. An excellent day was spent by those attending – the Bagman having decided that Winsters was no further from his secondary base in Rugby than going home to Sandy!!

AND FINALLY !!

Email from the Bagman to **Manley**, c.c. the Treasurer "Thanks for the leaflets and your questionnaire. Please remember glossy paper is heavy - the deficiency of 6p on the postage needed a trip to the sorting office and payment of a ransom of 86p to release it. Steve will never forgive you!!!" The Treasurer in response "**HOW MUCH !!!!!!!!!!!**" – "Guess whose 2003 - 2004 subs will be £45.86p. Answers on a postcard to the Squire of the Morris Ring".

Molly Dancer wins £250,000 – "Who wants to be a millionaire" ITV 12th April. It is reported by Mike Lanng [ex Dubai Morris!!] on MDDL, that the second winner, of quarter of a million pounds, was none other than a Seven Champion's Molly Dancer. Who says there is no such thing as luck of the Morris – or Molly!!! Well done – that's quite a few beers!!.

CONCLUSION

Please to keep the News [Gossip and Scandal] flowing and report any changes for the Directory [which will already be out of date!!!]. Updates are available at any time by Email].

The next Newsletter will probably be produced in July, and should include the next Edition of the Circular.

Wassail

John Frearson, Bagman, The Morris Ring

Past Squire of the Morris Ring, **Colin Fleming [Westminster]** died on Thursday, 24th April 2003. He had been in hospital for just a few weeks but diagnosed with untreatable cancer. The Westminster team was able to dance for Colin outside his hospital window on the day before he died, and he was able to meet them and feed the Unicorn one last time.

The Newsletter - No. 28 – April/May 2003 - Summary

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

IN MEMORIAM - *Kevin McHale*, Crendon's original musician, died 9th February. *Gordon Sibthorpe*, an Offley 'senior' member, died on 4th March. *David Eales*, former Squire, **Bathampton** died on 20th March. *Andrew Adams* of **Traditional Bampton Morris Dancers** died in March at the age of 39. *Colin Fleming*, Past Squire, **Westminster**, died on 24th April.

LETTER FROM THE TREASURER - with important information on the Morris Ring Insurance. Also notes on revised Subscription rates and the Morris Shop.

INSTRUCTIONALS - **South West and Wales** - 4th October 2003. **Ilmington** at Ilmington - 10th - 12th October 2003. **Funding Instructional** - 25th October 2003. **Musicians'** - postponed to ?November. **Jigs** - 16th - 18th January 2004.

ARM 2004 - will be hosted by **Mossley** [with **Saddleworth**] - 12th – 14th March 2004.

OTHER EVENTS - 3rd **Cotswold Tour** - 6th September 2003. **Broadwood** event on **St George's Day** in Horsham. **Dolphin's Gate to Southwell** - 7th June 2003. **Scarborough Fayre Morris Dance Festival** - Yorkshire - 27th - 29th June 2003. **Cecil Sharp Centenary Somerset** - 20th - 25th August 2003. **18 - 30 Morris Group** - Oxford - 26th - 28th September 2003. **Pipe and Tabor Festival** - Gloucester - 26th - 28th September 2003.

ARM 2003 - The Bagman, *John Frearson*, **Bedford**, re-elected. *Roger Comley* [**Letchworth**] elected Area Rep. for South Midlands. Rep needed for Eastern Area. **Anstey** elected Full Members. Motion from **East Kent**, defeated, but with some significant support. Thanks to **Isca** for a successful ARM Meeting and weekend.

ANNIVERSARY - **Manchester** celebrate "50 Years of North-West clog morris"

MEDIA - **Claro** Plough Monday in **Knaresborough** paper. **Dolphin** should have been on "Barbara" on ITV. **Lassington Oak's** event billed as "absolute beginners sex welcome".

NEWS and REPORTS - **Stourvale Mummers** collect £1207 for charity. **Bourne River** teach the **Springdale Cub Pack**. **Ashdown Forest** help run a workshop. **Winster** hold an open instructional. Jigs Instructional hosted by **Dolphin**. Feasts and Ales hosted by: **Ripley**; **Uttoxeter**; **Woodside**; **Winchester** [50th Anniversary]; **Leicester** [50th Anniversary]; **Lichfield** and **Letchworth** [with an Instructional].

AND FINALLY - Seven Champion's Molly Dancer wins £250,000 on ITV's "Who wants to be a millionaire".

ALSO IN THE NEWS - **Aldbury**; **Anker**; **Anstey**; **Bathampton**; **Bedford**; **Brackley**; **Bourne River**; **Chanctonbury Ring**; **Chapel-en-le-Frith**; **Coton**; **Coventry**; **Dartington**; **Devil's Dyke**; **Dolphin**; **East Surrey**; **Ebor**; **Etcetera**; **Faithful City**; **Grand Union**; **Green Oak**; **Harthill**; **Isca**; **Jockey**; **Kennet**; **King John's**; **Letchworth**; **Lincoln & Micklebarrow**; **Long Man**; **Mendip**; **Northampton**; **Oxford City**; **Plymouth**; **Ravensbourne**; **Ripley**; **Rose and Castle**; **Saddleworth**; **St. Albans**; **Shakespeare**; **Stafford**; **Towersey**; **Thaxted**; **Victory**; **Uttoxeter**; **White Rose**; **Winster** and **Yateley**.

Wassail

John Frearson, Bagman [still!!!], The Morris Ring