



The Newsletter - No. 29 – July / August 2003

Greetings,

First, some good news. After much work on PEL, we seem to have an exemption for Morris Dancing which will not have to be licensed. This does not seem to apply to mumming and the situation for other music only events is still far from clear. Until the 11th hour dancing was not exempted - now it seems that anything with dancing is exempt. Our thanks to all those who have been involved thus far, and particularly John Bacon of the Morris Federation and the EFDSS team. The work is far from finished, as we need to ensure that the drafting of the guidance notes [and the licence application form] are adequate. Various information [not the final verdict] is given on Pages 8 and 9, and **John Burke** provides some comment and suggests that “... large chunks of the Bill are either unworkable in practice or will lead to numerous tedious and expensive challenges”.

This mailing includes a further note from the Treasurer. It should be **read carefully** as it includes further information on the Morris Ring Insurance, and indeed other matters.

I am also pleased to note that, following my early departure from the **Thaxted** Ring Meeting, rumours of my demise were greatly exaggerated!!! Heart and lungs appear healthy, and it may have been a cracked rib, or a strained or pulled muscle that incapacitated me for the Sunday. My thanks to **Bob Cross** of **Chalice** for acting as “Squire’s Runner” and scribe during the Sunday show, and to Helen Cross for missing out on watching the Sunday events, and driving me, and my car, home and then helping to sort out the trip to hospital.

Also enclosed with this mailing are:

- **Amendments** to the new Directory, they keep coming in!!
- Your copy/ies of the **Morris Circular**.

I hope to have the **Minutes** of the **ARM** ready for the next Newsletter.

Wassail

John Frearson, Bagman, The Morris Ring

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***Colin Fleming – Past Squire - Westminster***

Past Squire of the Morris Ring, **Colin Fleming** [Westminster] died at 12.30am on Thursday, 24th April 2003. Colin had been in hospital for three weeks following a spurious diagnosis of gallstones and emphysema, and was diagnosed with untreatable cancer. He was aware that he had a limited time, and he accepted it stoically. He was very philosophical about what was happening, sad but resigned. It was a blessing for Colin that the illness did not linger long.

He was 64 and was due to retire in August, although he has not been working seriously for almost a year. He had been in France working on the family house only five weeks earlier. 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.

This has been a tremendous blow for Westminster, especially in the team's 50th year. The team's position as one of the foremost exponents of Cotswold Morris owed so much to Colin's teaching and example as a superb dancer. Throughout these 50 years, Colin's influence on the team has been immeasurable, as Squire, Foreman and guiding spirit. Others were able to share in the team's good fortune when he became Squire of the Morris Ring in 1972.

A green funeral took place on Thursday 1st May at 10.45am at Oak Field Wood, Wrabness, Essex. Donations can be made to the Essex Wildlife Trust.

Our sympathies go to his wife Anne, and daughters, Lorna, Jane and Rose

There is a fuller appreciation in the Morris Circular. There will be a memorial service for Colin Fleming at 2:00pm on 20th September 2003. It will be held at Thaxted church. Morris Men are invited to wear kit if they wish. Some informal dancing is likely after the service. [Further information from **Mitch Hursley**, Bagman, **Westminster**, 35, Windsor Road, Godmanchester, Cambs. PE29 2DD. Home: 01480 414975; Work: 01767 677360; Fax: 01767679930; Cell: 07774247060; Email: bagman@westminstermorris.org].

[Information: Anne Fleming; and **Michael Hursey**, Westminster]

Malcolm Reid – West Somerset

Malcolm Reid of the **West Somerset** died on 22 April (aged 78) from a cerebral haemorrhage. Malcolm was one of our lead musicians from 1965 until 2001. Since then he helped us out at times of need. His funeral was on 2nd May at Taunton Crematorium.

[Information: **Malcolm Appleton**, West Somerset]

George Aird - Abingdon

George Aird, a vice-president of the Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers died in late May. Most would have recalled him as a jovial Scotsman, presiding at the counting of the votes for the Election of the Mayor of Ock Street. The funeral was on 5 / 6th June and ATMD turned out in force to see him off.

[Information: **Ian White**, Abingdon]

Humphrey Morton – St. Albans

Humphrey Morton, was born in St Albans in 1913 and died on Easter Day. Humphrey was a founder member of **St Albans** in 1930 and was still dancing in 1969; he then moved to Northampton but would occasionally turn up to dance; he later moved to Plymouth. He lived in the house where he was born until 1970; and there are still neighbours who were his contemporaries. Humphrey's house had a large pipe-organ built into the fabric and when he played it the experience was shared by the whole neighbourhood! He was always eccentric but sadly this slid into confusion when he became old. He never married and is survived by his twin sister and a younger brother. It may not be common knowledge that Humphrey was the man who devised the format of current day Ring Meetings, i.e. Friday Ale, Saturday tours and Sunday church parade. The St Albans Ring Meeting in 1949 was the first one post WWII, and was organised by Humphrey on that pattern. Prior to the war, Ring Meetings were mainly instructionals with a short tour on Saturday afternoon.

[Information: **Brian Bending** and **John Price**, St Albans]

Harry De Caux

Harry de Caux, a well loved and respected musician in the morris and folk world, passed away peacefully in his sleep in the early hours of Thursday 19th June after several years of failing health. Harry was 93 and living in Caerleon.

Harry was a brilliant musician, who was very active in the morris world. He had been musician for **Thaxted**, and was associated with **London Rodney**, **Stafford**, **Rumford** and **Kemp's Men**, plus several other sides. In his last few years he was a valued member of **Isca**. He was also very active with country and international dance groups and travelled widely with both his music and with his desire to help other musicians to learn. Harry was very knowledgeable and one of the most generous people you could hope to meet.

The funeral was on Wednesday 25th June at the Gwent Crematorium in Croesyceiliog, Cwmbran. At his widow Dorothy's request, the funeral was low key and not in kit. Any donations can be made to the St. David's Foundation which Harry did so much to support in recent years. Also at Dorothy's request, a short piece on Harry's life will be published later.

[Information: **Geoff Walker**, Bagman, **Thaxted** and **Les Chittleburgh**, Squire, **Isca**]

Les Hyde - formerly Beaux of London City

Les Hyde, “ a real character and a stalwart of **Beaux of London City**, and for a while, their only musician, died recently. He was also well known at the Sidmouth Festival having attended since the 1950's, and being one of the “Middle Bar Singers”.

[Information: **Steve Rowley**, former Squire, **Beaux**; Gerry Milne, Folk London]

Mrs. A Garland. We are very saddened to hear of the unexpected death of the wife of **Adam Garland** [East Suffolk] on Friday 4th July. Adam's father, **Mike Garland** writes “It was very sudden. She was diagnosed with a very aggressive cancer and was dead within the week. Adam has two children (aged 4 and 5) and is obviously getting lots of help from the family (Cynthia is now a "mum" again!), but also from East Suffolk who've been wonderful. We'll all make sure that he still has enough free time to annoy other Morris teams from time to time.

A MEMO FROM THE TREASURER.

INSURANCE -- Good news!! The long awaited transformation of our insurance has at last taken place. With effect of 18th June 2003, all three Morris Clubs (Morris Federation, Morris Ring & Open Morris) will be covered by the same Insurance Policy. Our mutual broker, Mr Michael Stimpson, will shortly be preparing a FAQ and answer sheet in time for the next Morris Ring newsletter.

Worry ye not! None of the above need affect you. The 'The Resume of Liability Cover', on page 36 of the Morris Ring Directory, remains valid until 26th October 2003. If you need to produce proof of insurance cover for the period between that date and the 2004 directory publication, please get in touch.

CEILIDHS -- One of the most recently asked insurance question is, "Our Morris side is organising a Ceilidh. Do we have public liability insurance for this event?" The answers are:

YES..... if you are hosting the occasion as part of a Morris event for Morris people and the Morris musicians are providing the music. This includes ales, feasts, instructionals and Ring Meetings etc.

NO..... if you are selling tickets to the general public and hiring a professional Ceilidh Band. Public liability insurance for such an event can be provided on request but will incur a single additional premium of £25 (plus insurance tax). If this is the case, please contact me as early as possible and we will get it sorted.

The safest way is, if in doubt.....ask.

NEW MORRIS DISPLAY STANDS -- The Morris Ring has just taken possession of three new display stands. The old ones will continue to be used, where appropriate. The latest displays have the advantage of being lighter, smaller, portable, and overall more convenient to transport and erect. Each stand measures 2'7"(wide) x 7' (high).

These are principally intended for use prior to Morris meetings and to assist in the publicity and advertising of that meeting in the immediate proximity of a future show (shop windows, banks, libraries etc). Many thanks to **Ron Yates** of **Saddleworth** for organising this acquisition. If you would like to make use of this equipment, please contact Ron (Tel: 01457 870475).

THE MORRIS SHOP -- The five latest additions are:

- 1) CD ROM ~ **ABC FOR MORRIS** by *Philip Taylor* (**Lord Conyers**). This computer music program allows you to play, print, transpose or edit the music from the 'Hand Book of Morris Dances' by Lionel Bacon. You can even add your own tunes. Full installation instructions included. £10.00 [*Review by John Price on page 7 of this Newsletter*]
- 2) BOOK ~ **CURIOUS CUSTOMS & FESTIVALS** by Martin Green. A guide to local customs and festivals throughout England and Wales. A5 Paperback £7.95
- 3) CD **SING UP THE SUN** by **Hartley**. A celebration of Hartley dancing & singing for 50 years. £10.00
- 4) CD **VINCENT STREET** by **Sydney Morrismen**. The latest offering from The Wheeze and Suck Band. £10.00
- 5) CD **THE ABBOTTS BROMLEY HORN DANCE** by *Jake Walker* [**Thaxted**]. It's that haunting tune, plus 4 excellent sample tracks incorporating the group 'Penradin'. £6.00

Best wishes, *Steve 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 Bridgwater 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** was enclosed with the last 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** was enclosed with the last Newsletter.

Musicians' Instructional. this event, hosted by Mendip has been rescheduled for **21st - 23rd November 2003**. *Clive Du'Mont* has already advised those who were interested in the earlier date. A revised Application for was enclosed as a Stop Press insertion, with the last newsletter. Further copies available from the Bagman if mislaid.

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 held at Mossley from **12th – 14th March 2004**. This serves as due notice under Item 14 of the Constitution. The hall is booked, with meeting, eating and sleeping all in one venue. The Treasurer has attended a planning meeting and visited the hall, to confirm the arrangements on behalf of The Morris Ring. The cost of the business part of the Meeting will be met by Morris Ring funds. The **ARM Bagman (Mossley) is Roy Blick**, 77, Springfield Road, Droylsden, Manchester M43 7RD. Tel: 0161 292 3794 Email: **RoyBlick@lineone.net** .

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

RING MEETINGS – 2004

Uttoxeter Heart of Oak / Abbots Bromley Meeting. **July 16th - 18th 2004** Venue - Abbots Bromley, based at the School of S. Mary and S. Anne. Numbers - 180 men max. Accommodation - School dormitories (real beds!). No camping or caravanning facilities. Cost – “We expect to hold the cost to around £60 per man”. Contact: *Geoff Morgan*, **Uttoxeter Heart of Oak**.

Fuller details of all the Meetings and a booking form with the next Newsletter.

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

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.

NEW DANCES

At last autumn's meeting of the Advisory Council (24th November 2002), Lionel Bacon's “Black Book” came under consideration. Conversion into an electronic form was viewed as a long term project and it was generally agreed to continue text publication without change. There was discussion about the preservation of “new” (modern or made-up) dances that have emerged as part of the on-going tradition of the Morris. Our proposal is that, in the first instance, we should simply collect these dances all together. This would form the basis of a separate Collection that would go into the Ring Archives. At a later date, this Collection could be published and made available to a wider audience. *John Tarling, Exeter*, has kindly agreed to receive and collate any new dances that Sides may wish to “put on record”. Hard copy is acceptable but an electronic version (e-mail or floppy disk in Word) would be easier to handle and much preferred. It would be helpful to include the following documentation:

- i) some background e.g., started in [“in memory of”etc., etc.]
- ii) dance notation in the Black Book format
- iii) accompanying music
- iv) any preference for Ring Archive storage only
- v) any preference FOR/AGAINST any subsequent publication

Please contact: *John Tarling* at: 41, Woodbury Park Axminster Devon EX13 5RA.
Tel: 01297 34804 E-mail : dancefolk.john_t@virgin.net

WHAT IS ABC? – A REVIEW OF *PHILIP TAYLOR's CD by John Price, St Albans*

The ABC notation is a way of writing music using the standard characters on a computer keyboard - so a line of music could read something like this:

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dff cee|def gfe|dff cee|dfe dBA|dff cee|def gfe|faf gfe|1 dfe dBA:|2 dfe dcB||
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Like symbols in the familiar "tadpoles and telegraph wires" notation, the length and pitch of each note are indicated in the notation. Information about the format is available on the ABC Home Page: <http://www.gre.ac.uk/~c.walshaw/abc/>

ABC is designed to be easily readable by human musicians (with practice), but a big strength is that it is easy for cheap/free computer programs to play through computer speakers. There is a wide range of programs available to do this, and also programs that will convert ABC to a conventional music staff.

Lots of tunes have been coded up in ABC since it started over ten years ago, but until now there hasn't been a substantial body of morris tunes available.

What is "ABC for Morris"?

Firstly, it contains the ABC notations for the tunes in Bacon. These seem pretty accurate, though diligent searching will find the odd incorrect note.

Secondly it contains ABC music programs which allow the notation to be played through external speakers, as well as to be represented in tadpoles and telegraph wires. (The latter is printable but it doesn't print properly for me.) "ABC for Morris" also tells you how to get a freeware program to play through an internal speaker.

I have been able to play the CD's ABC notations on my existing program, ABCMus2, though they seem to be twice the speed if I do that. (ABC programs let you adjust the playback speed at will, so this is not a problem.)

There's a facility for editing tunes and writing your own tunes – using either direct entry of ABC notation or via a diagram of a piano keyboard. These don't have to be morris tunes, of course!!

The author says he produced "ABC for Morris" because he finds it easier to play the tunes from the notation in Bacon if he's heard them. I would think this applies to a number of us untrained musicians, and the CD is very helpful in this.

There are two options - play tunes or play dance. I didn't find an explanation of this (but it could be there somewhere). I presume "play dance" plays the right numbers of repeats for the standard dance.

There is a search facility that lets you find tunes by searching for a word - I found "Castlering", for example - or you can browse through the folders, which are organised by tradition. All straightforward.

Setting up the programme is a little fiddly but is well described in a printed insert.

Once I'd followed the strict set-up instructions, I tried to use it intuitively rather than consult the built-in help manual. I found it relatively easy to do simple things with that approach, even though I have very limited experience of using ABC.

* You do not have to understand ABC notation to use "ABC for Morris" for playing the provided tunes: however, there is substantial help text about the composition/editing facilities.

* The production of the packaging/descriptive material is clearly not of a polished professional standard, but it serves its purpose. I state that as a fact, not a criticism.

Philip Taylor [Lord Conyers] says that it took him a year to produce, and it involved a number of people in testing. I can imagine the hard work involved, don't begrudge him [or the Morris Shop] ten pounds a copy for that.

THE PEL - HAVE WE WON??

John Burke has forwarded a summary - in part for the headline - by Poppleston Allen, who undertake licensed trade training.

4th July 2003 -- MORRIS DANCERS DISRUPT PING PONG!

Bizarre though it may seem, it looks as though a Government concession in respect of Morris Dancers finally ensured that the game of Parliamentary ping pong ceased and the Licensing Bill will become Law prior to the summer recess.

Yesterday the Lords accepted a revised Government amendment which removed the last remaining issue relating to the live music exemption. This means that the Bill will go back to the Commons next Tuesday as a simple formality. There are no outstanding disagreements which could prevent the Bill becoming Law. It remains to be seen whether this will give sufficient time for the Government to publish the Guidance and allow local authorities to begin formal consultation on their policies. If this happens then the first appointed day which triggers applications for the grandfathering of existing licences could still be January 2004.

Essentially the Lords approved the Commons amendment which has the effect of introducing a capacity limit in the Bill for the first time. An application will still need to be made for a premises licence authorising the provision of music entertainment. But where the premises have a permitted capacity of not more than 200 persons and the entertainment will take place between 8.00am and 12 Midnight then it will not be possible to impose conditions on the licence which relate to public nuisance eg sound proofing. The right is qualified in so far as the music must be un-amplified and no other regulated entertainment must be taking place at the same time. The Government has also conceded that there will be a full scale review of the impact of the Bill on entertainment provision some 6-12 months after the end of the transitional period. If the Bill is then perceived to have had an unintended and disproportionate negative effect on the provision of live music the Government is committed to modify the Bill. DCMS will also convene a forum of performers, venue operators, local authorities etc to discuss these issues.

So where do Morris Dancers come in? Well, the provision of entertainment or its facilities for a performance of Morris Dancing or any dancing of a similar nature including un-amplified live music as part of the performance is not to be regarded as licenseable under the Act.

There were two statistics that emerged during the course of the debate which are of particular interest. The first relates to public safety where the Government reported the statistic that in 2001 there were over 1,500 fires in pubs and clubs in England and Wales. The second statistic? Well there are over 14,000 morris men in the country. Lord Redesdale said "some people will express the view that that is quite a scary thought!"

The Bill now says at 62L Schedule 1, page 112, line 12, **"Morris dancing etc.**

The provision of any entertainment or entertainment facilities is not to be regarded as the provision of regulated entertainment for the purposes of this Act to the extent that it consists of the provision of—

- (a) a performance of morris dancing or any dancing of a similar nature or a performance of unamplified, live music as an integral part of such a performance, or
- (b) facilities for enabling persons to take part in entertainment of a description falling within paragraph (a)."

As *John Burke* reads it, dramatic performances (including mummers' plays) will still require licensing, as they do now in any place (to which the public have access) under the Theatres Act 1968.

He judges that long sword, rapper, molly, border, north-west, cotswold, step clog, country dancing and any other styles of traditional dance as a performance (rather than a social dance, such as a barn dance or what is often referred to in England as a ceilidh or in Wales as a Twmpath) will be exempt from licensing control. The law on collections still remains as in his guidance note at http://homepage.ntlworld.com/john_burke/collections/index.htm

The message to licensees who accept mummers/guises/soulers/pace-egggers in their premises, must be "tick the box" and get it licensed. Remember that the first appointed day (probably after 1st January 2004) is just a call for applications for premises and personal licences - the legislation will not be in force until the second appointed day (at least June 2004, probably January 2005) so nothing will change until then.

However, John Burke notes that "... in the wider context, the horlicks is that large chunks of the Bill are either unworkable in practice or will lead to numerous tedious and expensive challenges. The Bill is not a choate whole - it is a collection of often unrelated and illogical bits, held together with sticky tape. The principle of the "one stop shop" is good, but the drafting gets 0/10! No one involved in the drafting has ever, so far as I can see, had any practical day to day experience of how licensing systems operate. The Government have admitted that they will need to review it 12 months after implementation and (Tessa Jowell) that it would have been better if it had been submitted for pre-legislative scrutiny."

ANNIVERSARIES

Long Man celebrate their silver Anniversary this year. They were formed in 1978.

Roger Cartwright, who was present at Thaxted this year was born on 2nd June 1923. He celebrated his 80th birthday on the day following the Thaxted Meeting.

MEDIA

The Easter Saturday – 19th April – performance by the **Bacup "Nutters"** featured in "Fancy a Taste of the Unusual" calendar of events in the March/April edition of "Wetherspoon News".

Richard Fowler, Bagman of **White Rose** notes that Dog Rose (a young offshoot side from White Rose) appeared on 'Later With Jools Holland' (BBC2) with their musician Bryony Griffiths, and guesting Eliza Carthy. White Rose themselves are due to appear on a new comedy programme 'Just for Laughs' which started on Saturday 31st May at 6pm on BBC1 and runs for 6 weeks ("I don't know which one we will be in as yet"). "Our contribution was to pursue hapless citizens of Leeds around Millennium Square early on a Saturday morning - at a given signal we shot out and danced a version of Hey Diddle Diss (Bledington) around unsuspecting individuals who either bolted for it, froze in disbelief or joined in! - Talk about the sublime to the ridiculous!"

NEWS

The Saturday after St. George's Day – and the Saturday before May Day saw Morris activity a-plenty. The Squire was at **Horwich**, for their day for St. George. **Chalice** had their Feast; **King John's**, a day of dance; and **Cambridge**, their Spring tour.

Anker were out, that same day, dancing in the villages threatened by the proposed Rugby Airport. They had press coverage and a picture in the local paper the day before – and two more photographers appeared to cover the story during their first spot in Rugby.

MAY MORNING EVENTS

Sandy Glover, writes that **St Albans** got their season off to a good start at 6.00am on 1st May in the city centre. “The weather was fine at 5:45, but there was obviously rain about, since the rising sun caused a magnificent rainbow to come to earth (apparently) just behind the Old Town Hall. A small but select crowd, including the Mayor, Cllr Keith Stammers, saw a slightly damp performance, but we managed the complete programme without getting seriously rained on. We were joined by a friend from **Icknield Way**, a welcome addition to our dancers. Towards the end, we were pounced on by a cameraman from the US ABC network, who was "just passing" through the town. If anyone catches a mention of "quaint old English customs" on their news, I'd like to know about it.”

Phil Preen, Everards Original **Anstey** Morrismen, writes “Just got back from dancing at Breedon On The Hill with chaps from **Packington**, **Anstey** and **Leicester**. Beautiful sunrise over East Midlands Airport at about a quarter past five and excellent breakfast in the Three Horseshoes at around quarter past six. Carlton Television were filming, so hopefully we should be on the Central News broadcast at five to eleven and again on the evening news at six O'Clock.” Apparently **Leicester** dance by Old John in Bradgate Park, but they don't start until 7 O'Clock, so a few of their hardier members come along to Breedon-on-the-hill first. Unfortunately they miss breakfast in Breedon, but I believe they usually have a small barrel of beer at Old John. Dancing resumed in Packington in the evening from 6pm at the Bull & Lion.”

Rutland were on at 6.30pm on BBC1 East Midlands. The spot also included an interview with *Charlie Corcoran* of **Leicester** and shots of “Phil, Goody and Bob” from **Anstey** in good voice, inter alia. Rutland started their day in Uppingham Market Place at 5.15am.

It was remarked on MDDL that the East Midlands sides were “...earlier risers than those slug-a-beds in **St Albans**” – what would they have thought of **Bedford**, for which fortunates, by some quirk of latitude, dawn at Ickwell Maypole is even later at 6.30am!!!

Steve Rowley of Gloucestershire notes that they “... performed their annual 'Black Panther Safari' on Painswick Beacon at Sunrise (05.39 BST). Not that we saw the Sun until 05.58 when it peeked out briefly through a chink in the clouds. A few dances were performed by a few dancers and even fewer musicians, watched only by very few morris wives. We carried on in the gathering gloom until Bonny Green at 06.21, before hot legging it to the Falcon in Painswick and a slap-up breakfast. We waved across the Severn Vale to our friends dancing atop May Hill, but could not tell if they saw us. Highly unlikely, because it looked as though they were suffering a very nasty squall at the time. The lack of numbers these latter years is slightly worrying. Ever since one of our number saw a 'Big Cat' on his way down from the summit after the dawn dance a couple of years ago, dancers have been disappearing. We had 11 people at the summit, but only 10 in the pub. Has anyone seen our horse?”

Keith Leech on MDDL commented that there was a nice piece about **East Kent's** May Day on BBC Kent / Sussex TV, and no snide comments from the anchor man either.

Steve Cuneo reported that **Wyvern Jubilee** and Treacle Eater Clog were on Ham Hill near Yeovil.

Graham Baldwin wrote that **Vancouver** and Tiddley Cove Morris were out-and-about, as usual, May morning. There are photographs on their web-site.

From the BBC Gloucestershire web-site – “Revellers who got up at an unearthly hour to see May morning dawn at May Hill were rewarded with a rainbow and brilliant sunshine as morris dancers took part in age-old celebrations to mark the beginning of summer. ... And the dancers of **Lassington Oak**, **Forest of Dean** and the England's Glory Ladies Morris danced in the dawn.”

Lawrence Hodges, Wadard, reported – “Wadard define sunrise on May-Day as 5.32 am, in the interests of local standardisation (it saves us having to check the almanac each year.) We processed from the main road (round a corner and hidden from the audience) over the narrow stone bridge by the ford to our usual dancing spot by the ford at Eynsford. Our Master of Ceremonies (Keith Ford), was already there and introduced us to the audience, who already knew us anyway - about 95 this year by my quick count. The dancing started with Laudnum Bunches, which might be becoming another custom/tradition/habit for this occasion. It was followed by the duck race, the 'dawn chorus'. Weather to begin with was fine and mild. In the distance however, and coming nearer, clouds and a rainbow were threatening. They held off until we arrived at and had to run for our home pub, The Wheatsheaf – for beer, breakfast and music. At nine-fifteen we started by hired bus on our tour, beginning at Our Lady of Hartley School, where one of our members is head-teacher. Then to Langefel School. At each of these we danced in the school Hall because of now torrential rain outside. The antics of our MC, 'Old Tom' (the horse) and our Fool (or Cultural Attaché) created an audience reaction which shook the rafters and made most of the musical accompaniment redundant. The bus went on to /The Grapes/ on the north bank of the Thames and thence to a pub in the Borough where it was so comfortable and welcoming that somehow the tour stopped until it was time to go home.”

Lester Bailey reports on his activities [and hence those of his several teams!!!] “05:30 Got up 06:15 Played for **Aldbury** (my current team) at Aldbury at the official Aldbury sunrise of 06:15 (Excuse is that Aldbury village is under the shadow of the Chilterns and the sun really does not appear until 06:15 in the village). 07:30 Red Lion, Coleshill for breakfast and beer played for **Grand Union Morris** (my previous team) then tunes in the bar and more beer. 12:00 Red Lion, Little Missenden played for Grand Union and for **Woodside**, more beer and dancing until 15:00. 19:00 - 23:00 playing for **Thames Valley** (my first team) at a gig in central London for the Artist's Rifles, who turned out to be the 21st SAS Regiment for their English evening (even more beer). 01:30 Went to bed. Back at work 07:00 Tuesday slightly the worse for wear.”

MORE NEWS

John Price, St Albans noted that “**Westminster** had a splendid 50th Anniversary Day of Dance in London on 10th May. Photographs of the dancing in Trafalgar Square can be seen at <http://www.ukstudentlife.com/Ideas/Album/MorrisDancing.htm>. Some nice shots of many aspects of the event, and also some of the bums of St Albans.”

The **Moulton** Festival ran from 16th - 18th May and featured the **Britannia Coconut Dancers** of Bacup, **Saddleworth, White Rose, King John's, Etcetera, Icknield Way, Rose and Castle** and **Leyland**. The Cup Final meant that some of the afternoon events were curtailed as the supporters could not be eased out from in front of the pub TV. The same Saturday saw **North Wood's** Day of Dance – there is a Report in the Morris Circular.

Vancouver were in action on 18th May, celebrating the Victoria Day weekend on the west coast of Canada. See <http://www.vancouvermorrismen.org/StewartFarm03/>.

Steve Tunnicliff, Rutland writes “I've been doing morris with the kids at our village school since last October when I was asked to do a session with them in Health and Exercise Week (or something like that). Foolishly (?) I remarked that if any of them wanted to do a bit more, we could perhaps do so after school. I was a bit astounded when some 36 of them (remember this is a village school with a role of about 100 or so) expressed an interest. Since then we have had a half hour session each week alternating between the younger and older groups. Only two have dropped out and the kids came and danced at Belvoir Castle over the bank holiday weekend. The thing is that Fast Eddy “had” to do morris but these kids have chosen to do it. They may not continue when they go to high school, but with luck they may rediscover it when they get a bit older. So far no Health and Safety problems, but I thought I might try them with Skirmishes this week, so that may all change.”

Norman Hopson writes “To celebrate our silver anniversary - **Long Man** were formed in 1978 - and our association with Harveys since completing the inaugural Harvey Hop in 1990, we decided to revisit the Hop. When the idea was first mooted late in 2002, we had not realised that the estate now numbered 44 houses, when completing the first Hop there were 35 houses and we danced at them all in a single day between opening time and closing time. So, how were we to cover five counties and a trip to London?

Peter White and I met with Miles Jenner [the Harvey’s brewer] back in January to discuss how we could cover the estate; bearing in mind 44 stands is a great deal more than some Morris sides do in a year. However, we still wanted to keep some of our regular stands.

We couldn’t get round in a day, or a weekend or even a bank holiday weekend, so we needed to split the pubs into manageable tours. Simple maths says 44 pubs equal eleven tours of 4 venues. We couldn’t attempt long tours on our normal dancing out night of Friday; we couldn’t tie up every Saturday, so a compromise has been reached whereby we stay local, well reasonably local, on a Friday evening and travel the South East on a couple of Saturdays and Spring Bank Holiday. The trip to The Royal Oak in London will be on a Friday for the lunchtime drinkers and the trip into my home county of Berkshire is also a lunchtime stand but on a Sunday in September.

We started our Silver Hop at the Terminus in April after dancing on Eastbourne Seafront for the Mayor of Eastbourne’s Open Day. On Easter Monday we visited The Grenadier and The Kings Head in Hailsham. On May Day we started at The Trevor Arms in Glynde and ended the day’s dancing in Polegate at The Dinkum. On our first Friday evening out we danced for a small crowd at The Bulls Head, Boreham Street, but attracted a good audience at The Red Lion at Stone Cross.

On a wet Bank Holiday Friday evening we toured Eastbourne, starting at The Lamb in the drizzle, before moving onto The Hurst, where we ousted the pool table to make an area to dance in the bar. A young lady volunteered to collect for us and cajoled the locals into parting with just over £60, not a bad start. From Old Town we went townwards to The Victoria where we received an amazing welcome on a wet and windy night. Again we danced inside, under the chandeliers, “keep your stick down” was the cry. The whole pub joined in and we collected a staggering £115. Our evening was complete when at The Arlington we danced and then played “Toad in the Hole”, and of course were afforded the usual warm welcome.

The Spring Bank Holiday Monday tour started in West Sussex, visiting The Swan at Midhurst and the White Hart in Arundel. Then back into Brighton & Hove, where we were up against the play-off for the Premier League at The Eclipse and danced at half time in the Gallery at The Lord Nelson, another superb collection of over £70. At The Mitre in Baker Street we met up with Miles Jenner, Harvey’s Head Brewer, and another good-hearted bunch of locals.

On the last Friday in May we headed northwards to Tunbridge Wells to visit The Crystal Palace, then along to the Brecknock Arms, runners up in the 2002 Harveys Floral Competition, in Bells Yew Green and onto Hook Green to dance in the dark at The Elephant Head.

I mentioned a couple of good collections, but our thanks go to all Harveys’ tenants and Customers for their overwhelming generosity. We are collecting for the Hospice movement and are looking to raise £1000. At the end of May, having visited just 19 pubs we have collected over £700. Thank you and cheers.”

East Surrey made their traditional visit to Rye and neighbouring parts of Kent and East Sussex over the last full weekend in May. They were joined by **Greensleeves** and **Bedford**.

John Price, St Albans, say that he has “... put a few photographs of the Thaxted Ring Meeting on our website at <http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/jprice/samm/2003.htm> Several of them are of our Saturday tour with **Silurian**, **Dolphin** and **Colchester**, but there are a couple at the end which give an overall view of the scene in front of The Guildhall for the evening massed dancing. This is only the second time I’ve been to the Thaxted event. I’m astounded that it continues to attract such a large audience after all these years. I’m equally astounded that it attracts such a wide age range in the audience, and that everyone of every age tries really hard to keep quiet for the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance - which I still find a very atmospheric performance. It was good to see Roger Cartwright

(Juggler Meadow?) and Ken Kearns (Binghamton) at the meeting, they were formally welcomed at The Feast.” John Price’s full Report and photographs are in the Morris Circular.

The **Ripley** Ring Meeting [13th – 15th June] was based on a construction site in the village hall in Ashover in Derbyshire. It is more fully reported in the Morris Circular. Suffice to say that little things like no doors on the hall – and little or no power - did not deter Ripley and a grand time was had by all. The Bagman was impressed by the wide range of beers provided at the hall by their local Leadmills Brewery, and that the final pub of the tour was hosting a beer festival!!

The Election and Chairing of the Mayor of Ock Street in Abingdon took place on 21st June, on one of the hottest days of the year. “**Abingdon** were out in good strength with plenty of younger and probationary lads. Due to accidents and other misfortunes, the only guest Side during the day was **Bedford** [including the Ring Bagman]. The additional dancing on a hot day with only six dancers available, made for an energetic – but enjoyable – day. An **East Surrey** observer, **Tony Harber**, with kit to hand in his bicycle pannier was roped in as 6th man for several dances!! In the early evening **Oxford University** were able to take over as Guest Side. Their number included **John Forrest**, author of the History of Morris Dancing, who had flown over for the weekend to join his side. **Stuart Jackson** was re-elected mayor with 43 votes. [Runners up: **Leslie Argyle** - 35; **Roger Cox** - 34 and **Rod James** - 27]. The Mayor of Abingdon, Councillor Hilary Green, for the first time for many years also a resident of Ock Street, was much in evidence and arrived in the morning with the Town Crier. Her Consort who was bearing an elegant plastic bag, filled with cans of ale for the already dehydrating dancers.”

Martin “Shag” Graetz, Bagman of **Pinewoods**, made a brief sortie to the UK. He managed to fit in an evening watching **Bedford** at the Wheatsheaf, Bow Brickhill on 25th June;

Some time ago there was an appeal for funds to help restore the “Morris Dancers’ Ground” at Abram. On 28th June, for their official day of dancing, Abram Morris Dancers were able to dance on grass, around a Maypole. The official opening was by the Mayor of Wigan, and the Bagman [coincidentally in the area] was able to represent the Morris Ring. Geoff Hughes, Leader of Abram, wrote “The ground has once again been fenced around (for the first time in over 100 years), grassed over and a Maypole erected. During the renovation the original maypole socket was discovered and this will hold the new maypole this weekend. Many teams and individuals sent messages of support when we first drew up plans for the renovation - some even sent money! Without their support, together with considerable financial help from Wigan Council and the Shell Better Britain Campaign this historic site would still be unrecognisable. Full details at http://www.abram-morris-dancers.org.uk/morris_dancers_ground.htm ”

Morris Animals were out on the streets of Banbury, for the fourth year running on 5th July, for the Banbury Hobby Horse Festival, or “Banbury Beasts” as it is better known. “Morris Ring Beasts that were more readily identified included **Yateley**’s horse; **Bedford**’s Eagle; **Bristol**’s Horse; **Trigg**’s Horse, Trigger, and **White Hart**’s Hart, as well as those from the other Morris Organisations and horses and dragons various with no morris connections whatever. There were also Beasts associated with various play traditions: a “Gloucestershire Broad Cow” with the Gloucestershire Wassailers [with **Gwilym Davies** of **Gloucestershire**]; Kent [Whitstable] Hoodeners; a Llantrisant Mari Lwyd [a Welsh skull horse]; **Harthill** out in strength, with their play and a Tup; and **Darlington Mummers**, with a Tup, a skull horse from Yorkshire, and a "rude" Wooing Horse. In the early evening the event moved to Adderbury where a scratch Morris side of animal drivers and others joined the Adderbury Morris Men and Clerical Error [a mixed border side] in a show outside the Bell.”

CONCLUSION

Please to keep the News flowing and report any changes for the Directory. The next Newsletter should be produced in October, and include the next Edition of the Circular.