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The Newsletter No.60 ARM Special Feb. 2009

Welcome to Longslade Community College, Birstall for the Morris Ring ARM 2007.

 Please respect the fact that this is a non-smoking building 

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Morris in the Media. Following our December Press Release (described as “disgraceful”; “ill-advised” and “naïve” by my *friends* in the Morris world) we have attracted an inordinate amount of publicity. Whilst some has been very negative – concentrating upon *extinction* and *embarrassment* – many sides have turned the attention to gain some very positive publicity for themselves.

There has been so much, in fact, that I am spoilt for choice as to what to include so instead I am printing, with both authors permissions, a comment by Roger Kennington, who dances with Hexham MM, that appeared on the MDDL website and a wonderful song that was written and performed by Paul Goodfellow of Everards Original Anstey Morris Men at the Rilpey Morris Men’s recent Ale Feast’

“Never have we seen so much publicity! I note that there are a few awkward folks like Magnus Linklater in the Times but a couple of articles where journalists have gone along to practices have generated some very respectful pieces. The guy that was on with Charlie Corcoran on BBC’s PM programme was really great.

My work is such that we end up having to field very difficult media pressure at times. In the end life goes on and it is what happens week in and week out on the ground that matters.

It is great that there are young dancers and some very good young teams. It is what the public SEE FOR THEMSELVES that matters.... and they will now take more notice and look with a more critical eye. If they see fit energetic people dancing with style and attitude, they will be impressed.

Unfortunately a lot of what they see is unmitigated cr**. Unfit, no attention to technique (even the simple stuff .. lines .. stepping, head up, .. feet off the floor etc). Old blokes who think they can go in the pub at 11 am and still put on a good show (they can’t!). Border sides that are big on shouting but seem to have mastered the art of walking to music instead of stepping. To quote John Kirkpatrick ‘it breaks your heart’. Bad dancing will do more to generate a poor image of Morris than any snidey journalists.

The answer is in our own hands and can be described in three words: Standards, standards, standards. “
Roger Kennington Dancer with **Hexham Morrismen**

Young Colin

In the year of twenty twenty-nine or so it is foretold
The Morris dance will disappear cos we’ll all be too old
So let’s recruit our acned youth while they are still in school
Make battering bums with bladders now the height of English cool.

Our image it will have to change from being fuddy-duddy
To sporting latest techno chic in trainers and a hoodie
No pewter belted tankards then with which to wet your throttle
But take a glug, of ice cold Bud, but drink it from the bottle.

Past dancing on a village green beneath a shady tree
Will be replaced by shopping malls near 'Buy one get one free'.
Musicians too will learn tunes new required for the future
From MP3's or Nanopods downloaded from computer.

No more pin badges or beer towels sewn onto Morris clothes
Our only bling, a Morris ring, worn tightly through the nose.
The baldrics then will soon be gone through youthful evolution
A tee-shirt worn with arms all torn with slogan 'Revolution'.

Our hand pulled beer will disappear, we'll all be drinking lager.
No more tours to Mons or Lourdes by courtesy of Saga.
But just one week on an island Greek or even Ayia Napa
The tour was great, the sex first rate, the dancing didn't matter.

The beer guts too will soon be few, our side, they will be slimmer
But sponsorship will then be lost from Stannah and from Zimmer.
No Morris bells, no battered hats, no sticks or pristine hankies
But dance a rap with baseball cap embroidered 'New York Yankees'.

In twenty year we'll disappear from the streets of our great nation.
But don't despair we'll still be there on Nintendo Wii Play Station.
Yes Morris dancing will exist and youth must play its part
But what's that sound from underground, a spinning Cecil Sharp?

Paul Goodfellow; Everards Original Anstey Morris Men

Housekeeping for the Morris Ring ARM Weekend

- ❁ **Reception / Information** All visitors are required to sign in at the Reception table in the main entrance area. You will be given this information along with any ordered *Kemp's Jig* and *Meal Tickets*. If you have any problems concerning accommodation, housekeeping or the local area throughout the weekend this is your first point of reference – or simply ask one of the Leicester Men.
- ❁ **Parking** Cars etc must only be parked in designated areas – they must not be left on the roundabout, internal access roads (Fire Regulations.) or round the back of the main building (reserved for catering and other staff).
- ❁ **Fire Alarm** You will recognize it if there is a Fire Alarm – it is a deafening howling siren. If this goes off we must evacuate the building and congregate on the car park near the roundabout (top of the main drive). Please do not attempt to re-enter the building until you are told that it is safe so to do by the Fire Service.

- ✿ **Security** We are taking this extremely seriously. Even though it is a semi-rural site we are employing a security guard for the majority of the weekend. He will monitor the cars and generally keep an eye on what is a large site. You still have to take sensible responsibility for your personal possessions and report anything or anybody suspicious to the Reception Desk.
- ✿ **BAR** Should you require to purchase beer the bar is just on your right as you go into the Main Hall. It will be open at appropriate times.
- ✿ **Meals** All meals, except the Feast, will be taken in the New Hall – which is along the corridor past the Bar and serving hatches, at or between the times on the timetable. (*Meal Tickets* will be required)
- ✿ **Accommodation** This is in classrooms on the two floors up the stairs from the main entrance. We can only use those classrooms that are labelled – please do not attempt to enter any other rooms – these may be alarmed.
- ✿ **Toilets** There are toilets off the main entrance area and on the first floor. Use both Gents and Ladies – except those clearly marked “for Ladies use” . Please report any ‘problems’ with these facilities to any Leicester man so that we can get them sorted a.s.a.p.
- ✿ **Showers** There are showers available for our use. These are along the corridor that runs through the Main Hall, turn LEFT at the end of the corridor and the showers are on your right. PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO TURN RIGHT AT THIS POINT AS THE AREA WILL BE ALARMED.

🚫 Please respect the fact that this is a non-smoking building 🚫

Message from the Squire



The ARM is a great occasion. With representatives from so many sides present it is an opportunity to keep in touch with friends, some of whom you may not have seen since the last ARM. It is also the time to meet new people and compare experiences and exchange ideas. If you have not already done so, fill in the form and come!

I would like to thank all of the people who work in so many different ways to make the Morris Ring the organisation it is. At this time I would like especially to thank Charlie and the Leicester Morris Men for their work in hosting this year's ARM.

Brian Tasker

The Joint Morris Organisations Showcase Event; Nottingham Revels

Every two years the three Morris dancing organisations, The Morris Ring, The Morris Federation and the Open Morris, hold a joint Day of Dance in a UK city. After the very successful 2007 event in Birmingham, the next JMO Day of Dance will be held in Nottingham, and will be co-ordinated by Lady Bay Revellers and co-hosted with other local teams, on Saturday 28th March 2009.

We expect some 40 teams to attend the day, which will be a colourful and spectacular display of all the various styles of this traditional form of English Dance, set amongst the historic and bustling city centre of Nottingham.

Dancing will begin at about 10.00am and continue throughout the day at numerous locations around the city, with a lively finale of a massed Morris dance display with all the teams together late Saturday afternoon.

Further information on www.ladybayrevellersmorris.org.uk/jmo_2009.htm from early March including directions, local eating houses and pubs, the timetable for the day and the list of participating teams.

Ten sides have agreed to represent the Morris Ring: (Dolphin; Anstey Everards; Jockey; Ripley; Winster; Coventry; Leicester; Standon; Foresters & Lord Conyers) but there are still a couple of spaces so if even at this late stage if your side is interesting in taking part please contact Brian Tasker as a matter of urgency.

Norfolk Morris Man Honoured

The Advertiser (Norwich Local Paper) Thursday, January 1, 2009

New Year honours for Norwich Morris dancer

HE is the grand old man of the Norfolk folk music scene and is determined to keep the ancient tunes and traditions alive for future generations. Now, Norris Winstone - affectionately known as Win - has been made an MBE for services to folk music and dance in the county.

At 95, Mr Winstone still plays the melodian with the Norwich-based Kemp's Men morris dancing team, one of the many groups he has helped found since he moved to Norwich from London in the 1930s. He taught morris dancing to his pupils at Nelson Street School and at George White and still gives regular lessons.

"I play regularly. We only have one Wednesday off a year," he said.

"I will never give up. The day I do will be when I can't move my fingers anymore."

Speaking of the honour, he said: "I am very surprised. I'm not the only person who is trying to make sure that our traditions and songs live on. There are a lot of other people

involved and this is really dedicated to them."

City councillor Bert Bremner, who is part of the Kemp's Men team, said: "Win is such great company. Even now he will get up and show us a step or two and until recently he toured all over the country with us.

"A while back we played at the Great Hospital in Norwich and one of the elderly residents saw Win and said, 'He used to be my teacher' - now that's saying something."

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Music for Massed Dancing. Norris Winstone prompted Brian Tasker, Squire of the Morris Ring, and Mike Chandler to re-issue some guidelines for 'massed musicians' :

Mike's Guidelines for massed musicians for massed dances

1. Know the tune and the key. A massed band is no place to learn or improve. You put everybody else off.
2. Know the leader. Don't go into a leaderless band - it can turn into a musical rabble.
3. Playing. Watch and follow the leader not the dancers - that is the leader's job. Play staccato, play very lightly on the bass side, percussion also. Don't drown the leader and don't push him along.
4. Tempo etc. Ignore your own side. You are playing to an average which may be slower or faster than your usual tempo. Do not embellish the tune with fancy notes and trills.
5. Starting / Stopping Suggest the leader plays OTY solo. Band joins in on foot up altogether. Finish on the last note. Cut dead. No country dance finish / honour your partners - we don't do this in Morris.

Massed Dances: Selected by Brian Tasker, Squire of the Morris Ring
Bacon Black Book page numbers and **Letchworth CD** track numbers as promised

Fieldtown:

- The Valentine Letchworth CD N/A Bacon N/A
- Banks of the Dee Track 13 Letchworth CD No. 11 $\frac{1}{2}A(AB)^2(AC)^2$ Bacon p.155

Adderbury:

- Shepherds Hey Track 14 Letchworth CD No. 1 Ch WkR, Fu HC Bacon p.016
- Lads a Bunchum Track 11 Letchworth CD No. 1 Ch, WkR, Fu Bacon p.007

Bledington:

- William & Nancy Track 16 Letchworth CD No.1 $\frac{1}{2}A$ OY; finish on WH Bacon p.082

Bampton:

- Banbury Bill Letchworth CD N/A Bacon p.043
- Bobbing Around Letchworth CD N/A Bacon p.038

Headington:

- Constant Billy Tracks 3&4 Letchworth CD No. 4 $\frac{1}{2}A(AB)$ Bacon p.175&176
- Laudnum Bunches Track 1 Letchworth CD No. 5 $\frac{1}{2}A(AB^3)^2(AC^3)^2$ Bacon p.179

Bucknell:

- Queens Delight (*Short*) Track 17 Letchworth CD No. 6 $\frac{1}{2}A(AB^3)^4(AC^3)^2$ Bacon p.117



Amplified Music. In case there is any confusion the exemption for Morris Dance from the licensing regulations assume that it is with unamplified music.



The was one of the topics on the agenda when the Officers of the Morris Ring met with our counterparts in the Morris Federation and Open Morris on 1st February. The advice would appear simple - if anyone plans to organise an event that involves amplified music then they must ensure that the location is covered by a "Public Entertainments Licence" or if not a "Temporary



Events Notice" must be obtained - either by the 'owner' of the venue or the organiser. As a consequence of this we have to advise sides hosting a meeting of the Morris Ring that if we (in practice 'they') intend to use amplified music for massed displays they must ensure that the location is covered by a "Public Entertainments Licence" or if not they must obtain a

"Temporary Events Notice".



Morris 18-30 provides a network for young Morris Men. Its primary activity is to organise an annual weekend, hosted by a Morris Ring side, to which all young Morris Men are invited. Morris 18-30 also seeks to represent the views

of all young Morris Men. The aim is to encourage a group of energetic young men who, whilst representing their own local teams, can dance together to push the Morris Ring into the future.

The Annual Morris 18-30 Weekend began in 2002 and is hosted by a different Morris side around October each year. The host side are encouraged to help the youngsters as much as possible towards the weekend (with food, beer, best dancing spots etc.) but have little input to dancing, playing, singing and drinking. Men attending the Morris 18-30 weekend proudly wear their local side's kit, and hopefully will be inspired to go back and recruit young blood to their own teams. Hopefully in years to come there will be enough youngsters around to enable full sides to attend the Morris 18-30 Weekend.

This year, 2009, we decided it was time to head North again so Pete, of Pontefract, has been given the tankard and will show us Pontefract and Wakefield for 2009!!

www.morris1830.org Dan Corcoran 18-30 Morris





Sonny Townsend dancing a jig with Arnold Woodley outside The Talbot in Bampton

Thomas Albert (Son) Townsend 1914-2008 RIP

Son Townsend was the last living link to Bampton Morris past and his death really does mark the end of an era. He first danced in 1925 aged just 11 as his birthday was the 24th May. Many of the old team were closely related to each other. Young Sonner's family connections went back some 200 years. His grandfather was Thomas Porlock, one of three brothers who danced in the last half of the 19th Century. Thomas was married to Elizabeth, sister of Harry Radband, one time team Squire and she was aunt to William 'Jinky' Wells, who most dancers have heard of. He was a close friend of Arnold Woodley and was the clown for Arnold's team for many years, keeping up the dancing until well into his eighties.

Barry Care Moulton Morris Men

Francis George Shergold: Morris dancer, born 31 January 1919; died 27 November 2008

"Francis Shergold, who has died aged 89, was the former squire and president of Bampton Traditional Morris Men, whose single-minded dedication helped to preserve morris dancing in Oxfordshire villages, and bring it to a wide and appreciative audience through concerts and folk festivals all over Britain" A fitting tribute by Derek Schofield in the The Guardian, Tuesday 13 January 2009
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/jan/13/obituary-francis-shergold>



Annual Representatives' Meeting Plus

Friday 6th to Sunday 8th March 2009

Longslade Community College, Wanlip Lane, Birstall LE4 4GH

Deadline extended. It is not too late to apply to attend the ARM. Please complete the form in Newsletter No. 59 and return it to Ian Hubbard with full payment, payable to Leicester Morrismen, by 21st February 2009. Confirmation and directions will be sent to the contact named unless otherwise specified.

In an attempt to attract a wider participation in this central plank of our organisation the Advisory Council suggested that we combine the important business element of the weekend with some instructionals. Not with the intention of showing how things ought to be done but to give participants the opportunity to see and learn one interpretation. We unashamedly want to lure more people to attend the event to both introduce them to our democratic processes and to help keep the costs down as economies of scale work

with this as with any other meeting. As previously explained men can attend only for the instructional elements and attend the ARM if they so wish, or attend only the ARM joining the instructional element if they so wish. All in all we hope that the combined event will remain the pleasant sociable weekend surrounding the ARM as has become the recent tradition.

We hope there will be a strong representation for the weekend by the various specialist **Morris Ring Archivists** with examples of their collections on display. Their individual reports will have been circulated prior to the weekend so there will be ample opportunity to informally as well as formally ask questions, make suggestions and offer help in this important area.

Programme for the Weekend

Friday evening:

17.00	School Reception opens.	
18.30 - 22.00	Food available	New Hall
21.00 -	Kemp's Jig	Main hall

In addition to the usual mixture of informal conversation, with opportunities for dancing, singing and drinking, we have arranged the added attraction of a special performance at 9.00pm by Chris Harris of his highly acclaimed, multi-award winning one-man show *Kemp's Jig*. *This is being opened to any and all of the local sides, partners, etc. by prior booking.*



Kemp's Jig tells of one man's Morris Dance from London to Norwich. A true story worthy of the Guinness Book of Records.



Will Kemp, a purveyor of "mad jests and merry jigs", was a famous Elizabethan actor and a shareholder with Shakespeare in the Company of the Lord Chamberlain's Men. It is probable that many of the Bard's comic roles were written with Kemp in mind. Touchstone, Dogberry and Launcelot Gobbo were brought to life for the first time in Kemp's person. Besides his fame as Shakespeare's clown, he achieved renown for his Morris Dancing. He performed the remarkable feat of dancing from London to Norwich, a distance of 125 miles, in nine days. He later recorded this journey in his book, *Kemps Nine Daies Wonder*, on which the show is based.

Kemp's Jig has been seen at the Royal National Theatre, the Royal National Shakespeare Company, on television, heard on the radio and seen in 50 countries throughout the world thanks to the many international festivals visited and the British Council.

Saturday

7.30 – 8.30 Breakfast New Hall

9.00 - 10.30 Instructionals Session 1

These are cumulative with participants attending all three sessions.

Longsword New Hall

Barry Evans of Castleford Longsword will be teaching the Escrick dance. This is an opportunity for those who have never danced longsword before to find out what the tradition is all about.

I Imington Luther King Centre

Paul Bryan of I Imington MM teaching how the current I Imington team perform their tradition.

Musicians Conference Room

Discussion & Practical sessions, facilitated by Clive DuMont, of Mendip MM based around the theme of how to make Massed music for the Morris danceable.

Session 1 Playing in Massed Bands – how to avoid “mush” at Ring Meetings

10.30 – 11.00 Coffee break

11.00 – 12.00 Instructionals Session 2

Longsword Main Foyer

I Imington Luther King Centre

Musicians Conference Room

Session 2 Poly Players – exploring how multiple musicians might add to the dance rather than detract from it

12.15 – 1.00 Buffet lunch New Hall

13.15 – 16.30 Annual Reps. Meeting Main Hall

16.30 – 17.00 Tea break

17.00 – 18.15 Instructionals Session 3

Longsword New Hall

I Imington Luther King Centre

Musicians Top of Main Hall

Session 3 Ad hoc in response to individuals' wishes on the day, otherwise more of each of Sessions 1 & 2

Advisory Council Meeting. Conference Room

19.00 - FEAST (followed by informal dancing/singing)

With invited guests to mark our 75th Anniversary from the Morris Federation; the Open Morris and the EFDSS

Sunday

8.00 – 9.00 Breakfast & departure



Men of Wight singer ANDREW JACKSON at the 312 Tunbridge 'Geoff Metcalf' Morris Ring Meeting

Photo: Steve Adamson

ARM AGENDA

Saturday 7th March 2009 at 1.15pm

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Minutes of the last Meeting - held on 1st March 2008
These are on Google Group and copies of these and the Morris Ring Constitution will be available at the meeting.
3. Matters arising from the Minutes.
4. Squire's Report

At the feast at the Dartington Morris Ring Meeting in September last year I promised that I would: represent all branches of the Morris, encourage participation, work to improve standards and do my best to enhance the reputation of the Morris.

All of these aims come together in the most important issue facing us all: the future of the Morris and of the Morris Ring in the 21st century. Many of us came into the Morris in the 1960's and 1970's. There is nothing surprising about this. Consider the social environment in which we lived at that time: we listened to Bob Dylan on record, we watched Captain Pugwash on the television and some were members of CND and marched in the cause of nuclear disarmament. The folk song clubs were full of young people seeking a meaning in life. It is not surprising that the Morris appealed to them and they joined in droves. Today some optimists say that the tide is turning in our favour again. Well, perhaps, but the social conditions are different and recruitment is going to continue to be extremely difficult. We are a sub culture, not a mainstream culture, and those who join us do so in that knowledge.

Many of us have danced through our 20's, our 30's, our 40's, our 50's and now our 60's. How much longer can we go on? The answer is obvious: not very much longer. It is unlikely that our recruitment will be sufficient to fill our diminishing ranks and some Morris Ring sides will fold in the next ten years.

Soon after I became Squire I presented a paper to the Advisory Council which addressed this issue. I suggested that one way of increasing participation would be to give the host sides at Morris Ring meetings the right to decide whether or not they were prepared to accept women musicians on equal terms with the men. Potentially this would encourage many non participating sides to re-engage with the Morris Ring and a number of associates would apply for membership. I was surprised by the level of opposition this raised among the past Squires on the Advisory Council. Interestingly, all the Area Reps who responded were very much in favour of my proposal. I considered the arguments put forward by the past Squires and concluded that the strongest was that it might split the Morris Ring and we could end up with fewer sides attending Morris Ring meetings rather than more. I think that this is unlikely but

as Squire I decided that it was a risk that I could not afford to take. The effect of the proposed change would extend far beyond Morris Ring meetings as such: it would change the way in which the Morris Ring is perceived by a sizeable number of our members and associates.

Change may or may not come about at some time in the future. In the meantime we have to consider how we are to address the issue of our falling membership. The older we get the more difficult it is going to be for us to attract young dancers. For our ageing sides I feel that the only realistic option for recruitment is to target other mature men by all the means at our disposal: advertising, direct approach and promoting the image of the Morris in a way that will appeal to potential recruits.

In early January, Charlie's press release certainly stirred things up. My initial reaction was negative because it upset and annoyed some of our own clubs and threatened to damage our relationship with clubs belonging to the Morris Federation and the Open Morris. Fortunately it became a major news story in the press and on radio and TV. Many interviews were given promoting a very upbeat image of the Morris and I believe that the value of this publicity more than offset the initial damage. In general I think that the radio interviews projected the best image as it was us presenting our case whereas the newspaper reports presented just what the journalist chose to write and this often harped back to the original press release and our stereotypical image. It was, however, a lesson in public relations. After discussing the issue with the other two organisations we have all agreed that in future any Press Releases concerning matters of interest to us all will be copied to the other organisations prior to issue.

The new film "Morris: a life with bells on", has come at a good time and will build on the current wave of publicity but the publicity itself will not do our recruitment for us. We must seize the opportunity and go out and actively recruit new members. We may find that the heightened level of public interest increases our audiences this summer.

Looking forward, beyond the next ten years or so, the future must rest with a new generation of dancers. Young vibrant sides who dance with energy and enthusiasm are the only way forward. For some time now Paul Reece has been promoting the four year Cultural Olympiad leading up to the 2012 London Olympic Games. Paul's vision, and I quote from his Outgoing Squire's Report in the October 2008 Morris Ring Circular, is to: "Train up new crack, regionally based, young teams to perform, demonstrate, recruit and deliver with energy and panache at important events regionally and nationally." This task is to be undertaken by the three Morris organisations working together, not by the Morris Ring on its own. It is a worthy aim and I am sure that we all support it, but don't underestimate the tremendous amount of work which will be required for it to become a reality.

It is important to understand that any new sides which are created may be girls or mixed sides and many of them will not stand the test of time. Any adult sides which arise in the future as a result of these initiatives may join the Morris Federation or the Open Morris rather than the Morris Ring. We must also understand that new sides of young people may take a different view of the Morris than that bequeathed to us by Cecil Sharp and the other collectors. The Morris has started to evolve again in recent years with new dances, new tunes and new kit but this is nothing compared with what can and should be expected from a completely new generation of dancers.

Brian Tasker Squire of the Morris Ring

6. Bagman's Report

I want to start my report with my thanks to Paul, Steve and more recently Brian for their support. We live in interesting times, as is clear from the various other reports to be presented and discussed at the ARM, but our ability to work as a team has been central to our successes.

I will indeed miss the help and support of Steve – especially our very early morning or late night conversations.

The Newsletter continues to be the biggest part of my role. Each side (and any subscribing individual) still receives a printed copy – now in A5 to save postage costs – but it has a wider electronic readership. Thanks here to John Mayer for his establishing the Google Group to which all Bagmen and quite a few others have signed up. This saves people having their inbox jammed as the Newsletter arrives. Still more access the Newsletter via the Morris Ring website. Again a big Thank You to John Mayer – especially as each edition takes him hours to translate into whatever format the cyberspace of webdom requires.

A huge number of sides have applied to attend the Morris Ring Meetings this year and allocating sides to meetings is probably the most unpleasant part of my role. To that end I need to make a couple of points:

- Ultimately the final choice is up to the Host side
- Sides which have hosted a recent Morris Ring meeting are deemed to have priority
- 'First applied - first placed' cannot work – as host sides so frequently have private friendships / arrangements with particular sides even though this is not 'fair'.
- It would be extremely unfair to make judgements based upon whether a side has or has not made a second choice so I don't.

I really appreciate the tolerance and understanding of our 2009 Host Bagmen and of the Bagmen of applying sides. I now need to entreat people to get their deposits paid and in the unfortunate event of people having to back out to inform the hosts as soon as possible.

Our Membership records are as up-to-date as you, the membership, allow it to be. With Steve's very active assistance (translated – he has done most of the work) our contact information is stored as an excel spreadsheet that is available to all Bagmen upon request. This includes the names and contact details of Bagmen (their address, phone number and email address as a minimum) plus, in most cases, a second / alternative contact. This can be anyone whom the individual side decides is appropriate. We use this contact in case we cannot get hold of the Bagman and as a recipient of emails that are considered so important we want a back-up in case the Bagman is on holiday. Please can I entreat you all to keep me informed of any changes in Officer and / or their contact information. Just as I repeatedly nag Bagmen that their side will not know what is going on in the outside world of the Morris Ring if they don't share the Newsletter, The Circular and the Morris Dancer with their sides I can I remind you to ask your bagman if you don't hear anything!

By the way - recent losses include Albion MM; Lutterworth MM; Colne Royal and Blue Anchor.

Finally, we used to produce a **Morris Ring Directory** which was instantly out of date but this is now a spreadsheet. We then printed a **Morris Ring Handbook**. This included the Constitution of the Morris Ring, lists of Member and Associate Clubs, past Officers, etc. and initially all of the other information previously contained in the Ring Directory *with the exception of contact details*. With all sides now having at least one email contact I have assumed they also have access to the internet and therefore both our website and our Google Group. These, or an email to myself, provides almost instant access to all of our various documents so the Handbook is obsolete - thus saving acres of trees and the danger of referring to an 'old version' of something. Most of the other information historically included is either obsolete (I received no supporting pleas to retain any of the suppliers we historically supported) or are more usefully available from our Web site or elsewhere on the internet.

Finally, the Morris Ring, is your umbrella organisation representing 206 independent members and associate sides. We are as strong or as weak as you the membership. Our three publications, archive and meetings need the support of all of our members. From my Bagman's point of view I need your news and information for your Newsletter and I need sides to apply to host and attend our Morris Ring Meetings and instructionals. If you as the membership don't like what we are doing, what is being written or how we organise things then you have the power to change things by getting involved.

7. **Treasurer's Report** - including proposed subscriptions for next year

Report to follow

8. **Comments and Questions relating to Archival Reports**

a. Chair of Archive Committee

Dick Shilton

Report to follow

b. Paper.

Chris Metherell

For the purposes of this meeting perhaps a "stocktake" would be useful.

The paper archive presently consists of approximately 8,500 listed items. These range from single sheets of paper to an item comprising a file of many hundreds of related sheets. All save about 1,000 are catalogued and indexed on the Archive Database. Additionally held are a few score physical items (costumes mainly). The archive is stored in standard acid free archive boxes. Stacked two high they would occupy about 30m of shelf space. Approximately the first 3,500 items have been photocopied, where appropriate, as a safety copy, some of which is held by John Frearson.

The Archive Database is a custom-designed system to allow the cataloguing and indexing (using a keyword system) of items held. At present in addition to the main archive, the system is synchronised (more or less) with the Sword Archive.

Of course there are always several boxes of material waiting to be accessioned

The content is, for historical reasons, extremely variable, but can be split up as follows:-

- * Original papers relating to the Ring as a body - Squire's and Bagman's papers, minutes of meetings, and so forth;

- Original papers relating to Ring publications – paperwork for the early issues of the Morris Dancer, directories etc.
- Original papers relating to Ring meetings.
- Papers relating to individual clubs – very variable in content – usually initial admission papers, some runs of club newsletters, annual programmes etc. A small number of clubs have deposited their archive when the team folded up – eg Benfleet and Thanet.
- Copies of published works – journals, magazines and some newspaper articles.
- Photocopies of a vast range of material – journal articles, book extracts, newspaper reports etc and copies of the MS collections of others (some on microfilm).

It can be seen from the above, very brief resume, that the Archive is in fact a combined archive and library!

As you will all know, in the long term, it will not be possible for the Archive to remain at my house in Newcastle. Although I have no problem accessing the Archive at present, I no longer live at the house and cannot deal with the Archive on a day to day basis.

I thus propose the following issues for discussion:-

- Where should the Archive be housed?
- Could it be “pruned” of material duplicated elsewhere prior to being re-housed?
- Is scanning of a pruned archive feasible, and if so, where would the electronic copies be held?
- If the Archive were to go to (say) a public repository, what would be the role of the Archivist? Should it continue to be me?
- What should happen to the database?

There have been various discussions over the past decades as to where and how our archive material might be best stored and preserved whilst maintaining reasonable access for all interested parties. In recent months we have been talking to the managers of the Essex Record Office and what follows is my report on our meeting on 2nd February 2009. I am reporting this in some detail to allow the wider membership to appreciate and discuss both the problems and potential of and for the archive.

Film and Video Issues

I hope I will be excused for providing a separate report on these matters, rather than including them in the main Archive report, however it seems to me that the considerations are perhaps different.

The Archive holdings of film and video (and indeed audio tapes) covers a wide spectrum of film of varying formats and quality, through video (some now unplayable as formats have changed) to modern DVDs. Much is unique, in that the Ring hold the master

copies, but equally much consists of duplicates and copies of originals held by others. In some cases the situation of the original is known, however in many cases what appears to be duplicated or copy may now be the only extant version. In most cases the position is unknown.

The issue here is not particularly one of storage, as the volume is much smaller than the main paper archive. The main problem is one of access. It is easy to copy paper items, not so easy to copy film and video.

As many will know, on the death of Barry Callaghan I took over his film production company, Garland Films, and with it all his equipment. I thus have complete editing and copying facilities available. However editing and compiling into DVD format is a time consuming process. Garland Films is a not-for-profit company.

Production of a film catalogue will, I feel, substantially increase the demands made on the film archive. For example, the re-mastering and distribution of just two Garland Films productions has resulted in sales of almost 50 copies through the Morris Shop. Once archive material is known to be available the position is likely to snowball.

Again I put the following forward for discussion:-

- If an up to date catalogue is made available, how should we service the likely demand for copies?
- Is the production of "tidied-up" DVDs felt to be appropriate, and if so, who is going to produce them?
- If this is to be Garland Films (and I am more than happy for that to be the case) what financial arrangements would be appropriate, and is my position as Archivist then untenable. As a guide, to produce a saleable DVD of any substance takes at least 40-50 hours or work. Some much, much more. Straightforward copying (which usually involves some enhancement and editing) takes about 3-4 hours. Garland Films sells products through the Morris Ring Shop at 40% discount - normally DVDs sell at £10.00 for which I charge the Shop £6.00. Straightforward copying (which usually involves some enhancement and editing) takes about 3-4 hours.

In any event, what should happen to the original masters - they urgently need storage in a proper facility.

We have made some progress in looking for a permanent home for the Archive. We had a meeting, organised by Paul Reece at the Essex record Office in Chelmsford on Jan 30th. This was fruitful, but they could not take the whole Archive, and we would need a 'local' connection. Fortunately we have this with Thaxted. What follows are some suggestions and my comments:

The general impression I received from the meeting was that, in general, albeit with some caveats, the ERO would be interested in housing the Ring Archive.

1. We could, if we wished, deposit our archive on a loan basis rather than as a gift. This would enable a designated officer to remove items at will. Perhaps because they are required for an exhibition, or because they are items which we hold on trust and which now need to be returned.
2. The ERO clearly have excellent facilities for users, for paper, photographic and film/video material. They are able to provide copies at cost, and would not, if we so wished, make any charge for reproduction of items for use in publication, as do so many university libraries and other institutions. (But see the caveat below as regard film/video).
3. The ERO would catalogue items onto their own computer system, which is linked to the national Archive Hub, thus gaining for the Ring a national perspective for it's Archive.

However, from our discussions the following issues arose. I append my views as to how those issues can be sensibly dealt with.

1. The ERO would not, for reasons of policy and space, take photocopies of papers, the originals of which were available elsewhere. Examples from the Archive would be the Cecil Sharp MSS, the Karpeles MSS, copies of papers and articles from journal, extracts from printed works and so forth.

On the face of it, this seems a major problem. The Archive was, originally, built up to provide the user with a wide range of resources from disparate depositories, all easily available in one place. Many of these copies were sponsored by member clubs or individuals. The collection of copies is a substantial and valuable resource, and to dissipate it, or dispose of it, would be a major issue. However, an easy solution is to hand. Photocopies lend themselves to scanning as ably demonstrated by Ron Shuttleworth. It would be eminently possible to scan the copies and make these available on CD-ROM as required. Indeed I apprehend that it may even be possible to persuade the ERO to keep an electronic version as a resource for users. This would of course take time. However it is, in my view, an elegant solution.

2. The ERO would not wish to take even the original Ring paper collection en bloc without weeding.

Again this seems problematic. However, in fact I consider this to be an illusory difficulty. I already substantially weed the papers I am given, removing those of no historic value. Orders for the "Black Book" are an obvious example. I am satisfied from my discussions as we were being shown round the facility, when I had a chance to talk in a less formal setting with the archivists, that there exists a high degree of flexibility. We will clearly need to educate them as to the importance of specific documents or groups of documents. There will have to be give and take on both sides, however, as the process of deposit progresses, I believe that an understanding will develop.

3. The ERO will not take costumes.

Undoubtedly a problem. However the amount of costume material is small, perhaps half a dozen boxed at present. Could these perhaps go to a separate depository? Or even housed with those items which we would perhaps not want, in any event to send to the ERO, such as the staffs of defunct clubs or the Log Books?

4. The ERO were concerned that they were an Essex organisation and that they were being asked to take on what is, in reality, a national archive. This is problem which we have come across before.

We were able to stress the Thaxted connection, and I also note that the majority of founder members of the Ring came either from Essex or nearby. We could stress this. Additionally, Paul Reece is well aware of the problem and is prepared, if I understand him correctly, to ensure that local work is undertaken to ameliorate this difficulty. Not least by inviting the appropriate politicians to the 75th Anniversary feast!

5. We did not discuss in any detail the issue of runs of Ring Publications.

When the search rooms were viewed it was clear that the ERO has a substantial collection of reference works to assist researchers. I am sure that they could be persuaded to take our runs of The Morris Dancer, The Circular and The Newsletter. In any event, the two former are held as part of the Sword Dance Archive and the issue of their fate will not, I hope, be a problem for a very long time! We could also perhaps offer to provide one or two standard works for their library shelves – the Forrest book springs immediately to mind.

6. The ERO would not commit themselves to future deposits. This applies to the Mumming and Sword Archives, additional material created after deposit (for example minutes and so forth), and also to any material gifted to the Ring.

No depository is going to bind itself to take whatever we give them in the future. Although this is of course an issue, it will arise, I am sure, wherever we go. It is, in effect, a drawback of letting the Archive out of our hands per se, not a problem associated with the ERO in particular.

7. The video/film copying facilities were fairly rudimentary. The ERO is able to provide DVD copies, but not high quality digital copies.

It is hoped that by the time the deposit is made, all the Ring's film/video holdings will have been digitised. With my Garland Films hat on, I am happy to hold the digital masters (they will easily fit into one archive box) and to provide copies on an "at cost" basis as required. At least for the foreseeable future.

8. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to download our catalogue and indexing information onto their system. The Archive database is an immensely powerful resource and losing it would be a major blow.

We have, it has to be said, not yet talked to their technical staff in this respect. The problem may not be as bad as it appears. However assuming that no technical solution can be found, we could perhaps solve the problem in reverse. Once the ERO cataloguing has been undertaken, their catalogue references could be appended to the Archive database, making it possible for searchers to continue to use the database as a finding aid. It does however mean that making the database available in some form over the Internet is necessary. Internet links are available to every user at the ERO.

I hope that the above will be of some assistance as we feel our way through the issues.

An approach has also been made to the Museum of English Rural Life at Reading University, again this looks helpful. Also preliminary enquiries have also been made to

apply for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund if we can come up with a project for housing the Archive.

c. Photographic

Duncan Broomhead

It has been a busy and productive year for the Photographic Archive, cataloguing and identifying the backlog of vintage photographs continues at a steady pace, new material continues to arrive and steady stream of enquiries have been dealt with.

I continue to buy vintage Morris photographs and postcard on eBay and would like to thank the members of The Ring who have sent me scans of the vintage photographs they have also come across.

As part of the Ring's 75th year I have supplied a large selection of photographs that span the full history of The Ring. During this process, a number of gaps were identified in the archive and I would like to thank those sides and individuals who have supplied photographs to plug these gaps.

I have had a fruitful year working on the North West Morris photographs, with a lot of help in identification from both the Manchester Morris Men's Archivist and Johnny Haslett, who, by the way is busily working on his next anthology on morris dancing in Lancashire.

Other members and ex members of The Morris Ring Archive Group have continued to be a great help during the past year both in providing new material and identifying existing material.

Enquiries have been many and diverse, ranging from Family History enquiries about ex dancers, request from the continent plus Ring sides and individual members wanting background photographs on a particular tradition or archive material for talks and web sites.

I turn around enquiries as quickly as I can, this can range from just a few minutes up to 40 man hours depending on the size and range of the request.

Keep sending your photographs in; be they vintage or new, originals or scans, on DVD or actual photographs, they are all gratefully received.

d. Mumming.

Ron Shuttleworth

Last year I told you that I had started digitising my records using the scanner at a friend's office. For technical reasons this arrangement went pear-shaped and for several frustrating months I was unable to proceed. Eventually the Archive provided me with an efficient commercial scanner to keep at home, and I have been able to press on.

I have now completed about half the task in volume, although the remaining half is likely to be a lot slower and messier. The benefits are already apparent as I can now provide enquirers with pdf-s of material by e-mail and share copies with other Ring archivists whose interests overlap with mine.

In grateful collaboration with Chris Little of the Traditional Drama Research Group, the database has continued to be refined and expanded.

I thank all those who have contributed material during the year, and draw your attention to my usual offering of surplus items, from which you are invited to help yourselves.

Some of you may know of the spectacular English fool's costume that has recently appeared for sale in a New York gallery. For those who haven't, I have put up a picture. In spite of the hat, the true date and provenance are not certain, although a Bellerby fool is a best guess. This was sold in January, with an asking-price of thirty-five thousand dollars!



Why is this important? Because you or someone you know may have well-made and visually striking costumes of past or present use, and need to be aware of their possible value, now or in the future.

Such items should be - must be - treated seriously as potential assets, stored properly in archive-quality packaging and deposited in a safe and properly recorded location.

e. Sword

Ivor Allsop

The Contents of the Sword Dance Archive

It was a long time ago that I last did a summary of what the Sword Dance Archive held in trust for you all to consult whenever you wished so I make no apology for regaling you with the contents of the archive this year.

At the last tally there were some 8500 items in the Sword Dance Archive, it must be said that not all these relate to sword dancing or sword dance teams; some are of a Ring nature, minutes, circulars, ephemera, books and pamphlets etc., plus correspondence and memorabilia from my time as squire.

There are:

- 455 books pamphlets etc., on 6 8ft shelves. These include bound copies of a full set of the Morris Dancer; Sharp's Country Books, Morris Books and Sword Books plus a bound copy of the first edition of Vols. 1, 2 and 3 of the Morris Books; bound copies of the Morris Circulars from their inception; bound copies of Rattle up, My boys whilst Trevor Stone was the editor.
- In 33 box files 14 1/2"x 9 1/2"x 3" containing various papers (photocopies and originals) appertaining to the Morris Ring, the Morris Ring Archive; Cecil Sharp/Maud Karpeles Folkwords (in 4 volumes) photocopies of Sharp's Field Notebooks from 1910 to 1913; photocopies of Sharp's Sword-dance postcards, letters and Norman Peacock's summary;
- Sword-dance Folders containing all that I have been able to find appertaining to all the known Longsword Dances and many of the Rapper-sword Dances there is a box of relevant newspaper cuttings; Bill Cassie's Collection of words and photographs; the South

Yorkshire Sword-dances thesis outline of Cindy Sughrue; relevant papers and newspaper articles on the North-west Morris from Pruw Boswell.

- 99 8mm/Hi8/Digi8 films in 17 drawers (7"x 4 1/2"x 3") in three cabinets (11"x 11"x 8") films are of all aspects of the Morris and Sword and one or two mumming plays. Some have been transcribed on to VHS tapes and are deposited in Newcastle with Chris.
- We have 50 VHS tapes of Morris, Sword and Mumming, some are commercial tapes others have been sent to us by teams and/or individuals, *I don't know whether these are duplicates or not of some of those held by Chri*, and People have begun sending us copies of DVDs.
- There are a number of sound cassettes, also in drawers, consisting of both professional and amateur recordings of Ring Meetings, Advisory Council etc. occupying 10 drawers as above.
- Journals of the Folklore Society going back to 1883 and up to 1992 occupy 6ft. of a shelf, unfortunately it is not a complete set, single journals are missing.
- Journals of the Folk Song Society begin with Number 11 in 1907 and end with Number 34 in 1930 but again this is not a full set of journals
- Journals of the EFDS and EFDSS are bound into volumes; this is a full set of journals beginning in 1914 and is still continuing to be added to.
- EFDS News 16 parts out of 47, this is added to on an as and when basis. This was the forerunner of English Dance and Song, of which we have some copies going back 1939, these occupy about 2ft. of shelving in the various sizes that have been adopted for E.D. & S over the years and are still being added to, again, unfortunately this is not a complete set, at least three years are missing from the demise of E.F.D.S News and the earliest E.D. & S we have. *I think that we should make an appeal via the Circular to try and fill in the gaps in these publications.*

Apart from my own stuff some of which has been accessioned but not catalogued I am pretty well up to date with the cataloguing; filing is another kettle of fish however and that is the next job.

The archive holds copies of the doctoral theses of Chris Bearman (The English Folk Movement), Tom Brown (English Vernacular Performing Arts in the Later Twentieth Century) and Cindy Sughrue (Continuity, Conflict and Change: A Contextual and Comparative Study of Three South Yorkshire Longsword Teams) but the authors permission must be granted before they can be consulted.

Here are four extended studies, which all developed from queries to the archive, Rolf Gardiner and the formation of the Ring, started in 1997, this was brought about by the totally erroneous assertion by Georgina Boyes in her book *The Imagined Village* pub: 1993 and compounded in *Step Change* pub: 2001 that Gardiner had been the founding guru of the Morris Ring; The Gatty's of Ecclesfield, South Yorkshire which was started in September 2000 and was prompted by a query on the Grenoside Sword Dance; Sharp's Postcards and Letters appertaining to the collection of sword-dances prepared in November 2000 and prompted by a request as to why he was only asking parishes to the east of the old A1 road; finally Richard Callender, the Squire who never took up office which was started in July 2005 after an argument about the numbering of Squires, some people thought he should not have been included.

To make it easier to know what is in the sword-dance part of the archive there are a couple of indices, one on the Longsword and the other on the Rapper. These are available as attachments to e-mails (my computer skills won't let me put them on-line) free, gratis and for nothing; should you require them on a CD this can be done but at a cost of £5.00; should you require hard copy this can also be done but at a cost of £7.50. All these prices included p & p. There is a further index in preparation for the Video part of the archive, this will take some time to prepare but hopefully by midsummer it will be complete.

Earlier on I suggested that an appeal should be made to fill in the gaps in the various runs of publications, this is it.

E.F.D.S News Vols. i and ii – January 1921 to December 1929

Vol. iii	Part 3 – September 1931	Vol. iv	Part 1
	Part 8		Part 2
	Part 9		Part 3
	Part 10		Part 5
			Part 6
			Part 8
			Part 9

English Dance & Song

Vol. i – all	1937	Vol. x	No. 4	1948
Vol. ii – all	1938	Vol. 54	No. 2	1992
Vol. iii Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1939	Vol. 55 – all		1993
Vol. iv – all	1940	Vol. 56 – all		1994
Vol. v Nos. 1,2,3	1941	Vol. 58	No. 3	1996
Vol. vii	No. 5	Vol. 61	Nos. 3 & 4	1999
	1943	Vol. 62	No. 2	2000

Journal of the Folk Song Society

Vol. I – all	1899 – 1904	Vol. vii	No. 26	1922
Vol. ii – all	1905 – 1906	Vol. vii	Nos. 28 – 30	1924 – 1926
Vol. iii	No. 10	Vol. viii	Nos. 31 – 33	1927 – 1929
Vol. v	No. 20	Vol. viii	No. 35	1931
Vol. vi – all	1918			

f. New Dance Collator No report - Post vacant.

g. Keeper of the Ring Logbooks and Scrapbook Keith Francis

Keith indicated at the last ARM that he would like to step-down as Logbook Keeper. In the absence of any firm expression of interest he has thankfully agreed to carry on for another year while a successor is sought for 2010. He is willing to carry on as Scrapbook Keeper for a while longer.

Logbooks. Logbook 9 will be available at ARM. Logbooks 1-6 and 8 are held by the Morris Ring Bagman. Archival Officer, Chris Metherell, has the minute books.

Scrapbooks. Scrapbooks will be available ARM. My main concern is copying of scrapbooks as the ones on display are the only copies. This is a matter which needs the attention of the Archival Group.



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The Newsletter No.60 ARM Special Pt 2 Feb. 2009

1. Publication Officers Reports

i. Editor The Morris Circular Harry Stevenson

Three issues published since last ARM

1. Content diminishing: two of the last 3 issues only 16 pages, usually 20
2. Thank you to all the contributors
3. If you haven't contributed please consider doing so

If possible please send copy by email to trunkleshs@btinternet.com

4. Ignore the stupid brackets

5. If possible please let me have a description of each photograph, a date and copyright holder (usually the photographer)

6. Photographs can be sent by email, CD, DVD or posted

ii. Editor Morris Dancer Dave Thompson

No report submitted

2. a. Overseas Bagman's Report John Maher

The job description, perhaps, out to be as an **Area Rep for Overseas Morris sides**, also to help with contacts for Morris sides with other dance groups and individuals from outside UK. I try to help UK Morris men travelling abroad. Festivals are also part of the remit in that I pass information on as I hear about these.

The overseas Morris sides currently listed as Morris Ring members and associates are: Helier (Channel Islands); Helmond & Utrecht (Netherlands); Pinewoods (USA); Silkeborg (Denmark); Vancouver (Canada); Adelaide (Australia). I'm sad to have to report that Sydney Morris Men have ceased to dance, although John Milce has agreed to act as a contact when necessary. Adelaide Morris Men are still a strong side – I met them a couple of years ago.

We have renewed our membership with CIOFF - Conseil International des Organisations de Festivals de Folklore et d'Art Traditionnels. CIOFF festivals are organised all over the world, and membership enables Morris sides to apply to attend these. The details are on our web site at: <http://www.themorrisring.org/CIOFF/index.html>

Another group organising festivals are IOV: <http://www.iovworld.org/> despite not being a member, they continue to send me information, some of this includes festivals.

A third contact point for festivals is the Yahoo World Folklore Group at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/World_Folklore/ this is run by Ahmet Akarsu from Nicosia, North Cyprus. "The principal idea (since may 2002) is to give a chance to folk dance/music groups and festivals to find each other much more easily." Current membership is 1271, so this is a powerful way to contact other dance groups and organisations.

Invitations from various groups and festivals are shown at <http://www.themorrisring.org/festivals.html> The 2009 list has 9 festivals at present: Peru

(Arequipa), Turkey (Pismaniye), Spain (Ronda), Equador (Ibarra), Turkey (Tarsus American School), Macedonia (Ohrid), India (Punjab), Turkey (Ozdere), and Hungary (County Wandering).

There are a number of other international organisations listed on our web site see my **OSB.page** at <http://www.themorrisring.org/Osb.html>

b. Webmaster's Report John Maher

themorrisring: I'm sure that all our members know that we have a web site! Our internet name should be on **all** our publications and letters. It is also reasonable to expect that our member and associate clubs have the link on their web sites. This is not the case at present. The name **themorrisring** is registered both internationally and nationally as **themorrisring.org**, **themorrisring.org.uk** and **themorrisring.co.uk**. These names are the Morris Ring's trademark on the Internet.

The link <http://www.themorrisring.org> takes you to all three of these names – they sit on top of each other! The Morris Ring pays for registration of these three names, and with them goes 150MB of web space and 15GB traffic per month. Our ISP is Orpheus Internet; <http://www.orpheusinternet.co.uk/> The .org name is also administered via Webtapestry, <http://www.webtapestry.net/>

Currently we use about 20MB and the traffic (accesses to the site) is not heavy, though in the recent 'extinction spat' the site was heavily accessed – maybe 20,000 hits!

Updating: I try to keep the site up-to-date, both for information and write-up. That is the html correct and within web (W3C) standards. This is a problem which requires almost daily attention, and when Charlie's Newsletter arrives a full day's work (he's worth it!). If you have trouble with reading the site, find errors of fact, or have any other problems then please contact me (not Charlie). (Use the Firefox browser rather than the I.E. browser)

Site items

- **Morris news** on the home page – I'm always looking for news items – please send any that you think have a wide interest.
- **Charlie's Newsletters** appear as quickly as I can convert them from MS Word into html. There is a backlist of newsletters to June/July 2005.
- I put the **Flash slide show** back onto the home page, so if you have some pictures (preferably 300px wide by 450px high) I can show them.
- We have an improved **Google search** page for our site; it is also set up to scan for Morris videos and pictures.
- **Silos** – a series of links at the bottom of the home page in case you don't like (can't see) the menu.
- The **menu** only has two levels; a green arrow references the second.
- The **site map** *should* show all the pages on our site.
- **Side contact details** – please check that I have these up-to-date; **we do not show email addresses** on the member and associate contact pages, only web sites, contact names and their phone and/or mobile numbers. Other emails are (JavaScript) encoded to make them a little safer from spam engines.

Site Content

- I'm very aware that we need to be careful what we say on the site. The obituaries that appeared over the Christmas and New Year, sad though they were, did encourage some journalists to point to the age of our individual members. Being 75 years old has its downside.
- I hope that the '**Morris Ring**' has replaced all references on the site to the '**Ring**'.
- **Adobe PDF files:** I don't use these unless absolutely necessary, and then only for short documents. They can be very large and most of the ones I see are not easily searchable. A few people may well want a complete list of e.g. all our Morris Ring meetings, a

particular group of photos, etc., but most people using the site will want more specific information. If/when PDF become fully indexed (searchable) I might reconsider this opinion. I regard PDF as a way of hiding information!

New directions

- **Google maps:** I'm investigating the use of Google maps to show Morris tours and the positions of all Morris Ring sides in the country (world!). If you send me the latitude and longitude of where you practice, I can put this onto a map (like that in the old Directory). I think that a Google map version of Sidefinder would be preferable – it works for the mummies.
- **Note that I am not the contact for Sidefinder,** Graham Taylor of the Federation is responsible for keeping it up-to-date.
- **Morris Ring History:** can you add anything about your side to this section? Specifically the section on side histories where there are a number of gaps. See: http://www.themorrisring.org/Ring_History.htm
- **Our 75th:** I am trying to promote the writing of a 2009 web version of Arthur Peck's 1949 booklet "Fifty Years of Morris Dancing, 1899-1949" which is now at http://www.themorrisring.org/fifty_years/index.html. I would like to discuss this project at the ARM.
- **The Morris Tradition:** I'm still looking for more translations - Italian and a Nordic language would be useful.
- **Future Site.** At some stage the Morris Ring could move its web information over onto a database-backed system (PHP/MySQL or similar). This would enable us to start putting publications and the archive online under our own name. The ideal would be to have a database onto which the various people concerned could put their information: those in the archive group; those involved with publications; those involved with publicity; the webmaster; individual Morris Ring sides; etc. The trick would be to make it easy and safe for all the different interests to put the information in and to change it if necessary, and without having to know much about writing files apart from using a simple editor program. I would like to discuss the technicalities of this item at the ARM.

Side name registrations: If you have registered a name for your side then make sure that you don't lose it by failing to renew the name! I see many name web sites disappear, often over taken by someone who wants money to buy the name back. It is also a good plan to ensure that the details for the site – with whom it is registered, when the registration needs renewal, and passwords for editing are also kept by the side officers.

The Morris Ring Google Group.

Seems to be working fairly well though I still get questions and comments from men who find it difficult to use. I try to help! Please note that Charlie Corcoran is not the person to send comments to about such problems, they come to me or to Steve Adamson who has agreed to remain as a Manager for the Group.

Morris Ring Web Editor: John Maher john.maher@mac.com

3. Election / Ratification of Area Representatives.

Those due for three yearly re-election (*No other nominations received*)

Area Rep.: North	Stuart Bater
Area Rep.: North Midlands	David Thompson
Area Rep.: South Midlands	Roger Comley

4. Area Representatives' Reports

- a. North West David Loughlin No report submitted
- b. Northern. Stuart Bater



The overall impression is one of new people being attracted, not as many as we would like, but, enough to keep us going. Everyone is still enjoying the dance.

I have been asked to raise an issue regarding Ring Meetings and the mechanism of how teams are “selected.” The received wisdom is one of “first come, first served,” however, this has certainly not been the case with the Bathampton meeting, one team will be unable to attend a Ring meeting in 2009 due to having made other arrangements when assuming that their early booking would be adequate.

Another side (who booked early and did not succeed) has decided not to send any members to the ARM due to being very upset by the present “selection” process. An overview of the selection procedure would probably be appreciated by all members, to put the present situation into perspective, also, to hopefully circumvent a repeat of this unfortunate incident.



Barnsley Longsword Dancers: Two new members, the side is stronger than in the past with a more “stable” team. A very local, low key approach. Attended the Shepley Folk Festival for the first time. Also danced at the Grenoside Traipse in the evening gathering. Tours with White Rose & Wath on Dearne MM.

*Grenoside on their Traipse January 2008
Photo by Stuart Bater*

CHAPEL – en – le – FRITH MORRIS MEN: Held an “open night” which attracted one new member. Have hosted a day of dance in Buxton annually in July for over twenty years. Attended a week end of dance at Conway, the Conway week end has been resurrected by Southport Sword and Whaley Bridge, after The Conway team became defunct. An annual dance out with White Rose, and various other mixed & women’s sides.

Chewitwell Mummers: Six men in total, they perform the St. Georges play the week before Christmas to twelfth night. Members out of Claro / Great Yorkshire.& the now defunct Boars Head M M.

Great Yorkshire Morris: Attended the Saltaire Day of Dance. They dance Cotswold, Rapper & Longsword including the Flamborough dance. Will be attending the Thaxted Ring meeting in 2009.

Grimsby Morris Men: No new people, however, the side are” keeping their heads above water,” and have a full calendar for 2009. Including a trip abroad to Seelze in Germany, also, even better a trip to the Cleethorpes Folk Festival. They are regular visitors to the Brigg Fiddle fest. & Gainsborough Folk Fest. Also often out with the Lincoln M M. Individuals attend the Durham Folk party.

Leeds Morris Men: Practise in a Six Form College, which means recruits only stay for a limited time, the sides core numbers are steady and while they sometimes struggle they can always put up a side for practise and dance outs. They dance out every week in Leeds, especially now that Brigade (in the centre of Leeds) has been pedestrianised. They have hosted a Yorkshire Dales tour every year for over fifty years. Have done a women’s workshop on Fieldtown in Hebden Bridge. Among the highlights of the year were visits to Whitchurch & the Lobster Potties festival.

Each year the current squire organises a “Squires Tour week end.” which sounds a wonderful idea which I shall suggest to the squire of Harthill! Tours for 2009 include a Sussex tour and a trip to Bruges.

Ebor Morris Men: Over the past year and a bit, they have recruited two new men, both under twenty years old. Dance mainly in Yorkshire, and organise the annual York traditional week end of dance, invited teams so far include Incognito & Powder keg.

The local council are very helpful with the organising of the week end by ensuring dance spots are clear, helping with the procession and camping.

Photo by Stuart Bater

Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers: We have gained four new members, all under twenty, they are learning the dance well. January, I attended the Jigs (there must be faster ways of committing suicide) Instructional. We were invited to dance with Grenoside sword on their annual Traipse around the village, unfortunately we were unable to raise a side for the day, however we were able to dance at the evening session. Newcastle Kings men accompanied Grenoside, including a dance in the local ladies hairdressing salon! May saw us dancing at the 5th International Sword Spectacular in York, a stunning week end. In June we attended our first Gate to Southwell, and danced inside the awe inspiring minster. August, we danced at the annual Bradfield Traditional Singing Week end, this has become a regular spot.



In October four of us attended the Sword Dance Union Tournament (purely as observers/members as Handsworth do not take part in competitions). In October 2009 H T S D are hosting the S D U Tournament in Sheffield, and will perform our show dance Handsworth.

Harthill Morris Men: In early May we had a day at the seaside, we went to Cleethorpes with Three Shires Ladies Clog. Later in May we attended the Bolsover Food Fair, and had a wonderful time, including raising a Police woman. In July, we attended the Whitchurch Ring Meeting, we got there with no trouble, however, some sides i.e. Exeter had to turn back due to the floods, whilst others were still arriving at 2am, a very enjoyable meeting was had by all. In August we had our annual trip into Derbyshire via Chesterfield then onto Eyam.

One of the best weekend meets was in September when we were invited to Monkseaton, along with Redcar Sword and Saddleworth, a very memorable time. Also in September we went up to Croft on Tees, (Teeside) to celebrate a close friends birthday who dance with Richmond on Swale.

Lincoln & Micklebarrow Morris Men: No new members, "limping along" with six men and a muso. but, still enjoying the dance. Attended the Abingdon "Mayor of Ock St." week end, and thoroughly enjoyed it. Danced at an old folks home, unfortunately they had no music, so, they hummed the tune, then tried an I pod , however, the tunes were different from the dance tunes with B music where A should be and slows in the wrong places etc, the old folks enjoyed it enormously. Will be attending the Hartley Morris Ring Meeting in 2009.

Green Oak Morris Men Of Doncaster: Numbers are holding up within the side although the condition of knees etc is restricting some members to doing alternate dances in sets etc - the actual numbers being 10 dancers and 2 musicians. Recently we have seen the return of one of our former dancers and had another turn out to perform on two occasions but work commitments prevent him attending practice. Our repertoire is still based on those dances we have relied upon for several years but we are introducing some new one – including our version of the Adelaide Morris "South Australia" which has somehow ended up as "Donkey Riding" in Doncaster and have just begun to work on the Kirklington tradition again after a gap of many years.

Over summer we danced out every Wednesday at venues in and around Doncaster, even risking crossing the county line to visit North Lincolnshire and North Yorkshire. Tried and

trusted venues were the norm but we have found a couple of new places where we were made welcome and the crowd appeared to enjoy the show.

We again had far more enquiries to perform than we could accept but did dance at some local events and at the Thorner Beer Festival with Castleford Longsword, and had a very successful afternoon at the "Scarborough Arms" Beer Festival in Tickhill with large crowds and glorious weather.

We have regular representation at Feasts and weekends of Dance and appear to be on the mailing list of several sides when they organise events, (and had one member at the Thaxted Ring Meeting) and so some of our members are very adept at dancing with other sides – we thank them for adopting us at these events.

The side has also built up a good relationship with the local Scout District (of 29 groups) and have done "tutorial" sessions with several Cub Packs and even had a morning at a local pre-school nursery -try teaching 24 under four years olds to dance!!

For the 2009 season we already have bookings for local galas and fairs and are performing at an International gathering of the Round Table and hope to be able to accept some of the invitations from other sides which we have already received. We will be taking part in the Doncaster "BIG FREEZE" event on the weekend of the A.G.M. hence our apologies for this year – we feel that the publicity we may get from this will balance out missing the meeting.

Our alter egos, the Doncaster Mummers, were out in December doing an evening tour and performing at a local Edwardian Christmas event.

Spenn Valley Longsword Dancers: No new dancers. Their main day is Boxing day, when they dance mainly North Skelton & Helmsley. Regular visitors to the Moor & Coast Festival, also, an annual visit to Cleckheaton. Occasionally lend some of the team to Goathland when they are short of men. John Browell (Bagman) passed onto me an interesting lead for an article on the Bellaby dance, in the EFDSS magazine for September. They will be attending the Moor & Coast Festival in 2009.

White Rose Morris Men: A young side, six members under twenty five, plus four under thirty. Dance out at Towsey Festival every year. A female reporter from the Daily Telegraph has been in touch with the side and now is coming to watch them dance out.

WATH upon DEARNE: Two new members, plus another two possible men, there are between sixteen and eighteen men on the books, and usually 10 - 12 at practise. Attended Chipperfield and will be attending Bathampton in 2009. The annual event is the Wath Festival, which Wath M M have run for 36 years, they take in three or four of the "big houses" and collect for local charities. For the first time they put on a sword play, St George during the festival. The day of dance is the "Pretty Villages Tour" around the area. A visit to Goathland is due in 2009. Another first is a walking tour – Lupe Cali- where females can run through the Roman style! Sounds fun.

AND FINALLY

Castleford Longsword Dancers: A Morris Ring meeting not to be missed. Hosted by Castleford & Leeds MM 10th–12th Sept. 2010. Brian Tasker, our current Squire will dance out during this meeting. Based at Thorpe Willerby, near Selby, for approx. 120 men with a cost of not greater than £55 per man. Outdoor camping, there is limited indoor camping. On Friday afternoon there will be a Longsword instructional in the local primary school. On Saturday there will be tours around York and the lunch spot is Elvington Air Museum, where all teams will dance and on Sunday there will be a visit to Selby Abbey.

With apologies for inaccuracies due to not listening when you were talking to me, bad phone line, cat jumping on my knee, wife and / or daughter shouting at me or even inebriation.

c. North East. Brian Pollard

Benfieldside Morris and Sword Dancers continue to meet regularly with a turnout of eight men on practice nights. The 2008 dancing season was very successful with a programme of dancing out round the pubs and inns of the county mainly to appreciative audiences and usually followed by enjoyable music and song sessions. The highlight of the year must be the visit to Hungary (a party of twelve!) to take part in establishing the European Folkdance Net in Szolnok – enjoyable but very hard work having to be choreographed by a Hungarian Artistic Dance Director for the gala show – so much more formal than the usual somewhat ad hoc performance! Have a look at www.folkdancenet.eu Benfieldside mucking about in fountains, Szolnok, Hungary.



Durham Rams continue with viable practices and have concentrated on rapper dance tours of the locale as well as staging successful shows in Durham City and organising their annual Weardale Tour. They enjoyed visits to Whitchurch and Thaxted.

Stockton Morris Men practise regularly with a reasonable turnout and have been involved in projects to promote a number of local initiatives, in Darlington town centre particularly.

Richmond on Swale Morris Men have also enjoyed well attended practice nights throughout the year with eight to ten regular dancers and taken the dance to the people with regular dance outs and music sessions as well as their very successful “Dale Ale” tour of Swaledale and Wensleydale. They have also formed a spin off singing group that is enjoying some success.

Generally, as far as I know, sides continue to enjoy their dancing enthusiastically, although with minimum numbers. Several joint endeavours involving Stockton, Durham Rams and Benfieldside have enjoyed some success and allowed us to fulfil bookings that otherwise would have been turned down. Recruitment is still a problem, particularly of young men – none of the teams here – except The Rams who have eleven year old Chris Straughan to bring their average age down – have any dancers below the age of twenty. Hopefully we will feel some benefit in the recent flurry of press interest in The Morris. Brian Padgett and Paul Wesson, squire and bagman of Stockton Morris Men, were interviewed by a reporter from Radio Tees, the local BBC station, and were pleased that the interview was handled sympathetically and positively. Our local Sunday paper, The Sunday Sun, had a centre fold spread about the “dying” tradition on January 11th this year which features Chris and his granddad. The reporter dealt sympathetically with his subject. See www.sundaysun.co.uk I have no reported developments towards the Cultural Olympiad but there certainly seems to be an interest in being involved in such a project



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The Newsletter No.60 ARM Special Pt. 3 Feb. 2009

i. South East.

Fred Hands

The Clubs within the South East area are still some of the most active within the Morris Ring, with the majority of the full member sides regularly attending Ring Meetings. Eight South East clubs were represented at the Dartington Ring Meeting, South East clubs have also regularly hosted Ring Meetings, Seven Ring meetings and one ARM since 2000, and one planned meeting cancelled due to lack of support.

Men of Wight & Hartley are hosting Ring Meetings this year, & Northwood are planning a meeting for 2010.

Recruiting has been varied during this Winter. Many clubs have had no success at all with recruiting. Some clubs have held specific recruiting events with varying degrees of success East Surrey continued from where they started last year with a recruiting day in Sutton High St but were unsuccessful this time. Ravensbourne and Hartley also held specific events that were successful. Hartley recruited 3 but only one, a past dancer has stayed and is now dancing. Ravensbourne managed to recruit 2 promising new members. Victory MM, have managed to recruit about 8 new young dancers in the 18-30 age group, so far five have stayed the course and are doing well with a range of traditions. They are just about to get them all fitted out for kit. This happened through their regular monthly singing sessions. Overall South East clubs have managed to recruit about 24 new dancers 14 in the 18-30 age group and 10 older men also 7 past or retired dancers have been recruited, when they have moved into new areas upon retirement.

There are two clubs in the area which are very strong with membership of about 30 East Surrey and Chactonbury Ring. Broadwood have about 25 and the majority of the clubs have an active membership between 10 and 20 members. New associate member, Cinque Ports Morris, have 9 members but have only been formed just over a year. 2 other clubs, associate members Buckland Shag, and Full member Cup Hill are struggling with only 8 active members.

The majority of South East clubs feel that the recent publicity surrounding the Morris is a good thing and has produced a positive response resulting in several newspaper radio and TV interviews. Reporters have attended several clubs practice evenings joined in the dance and produced positive reports as a result. Conversely King John's had a very negative experience when a dancing session arranged for about 8-10, 14 –16 year old boys was

cancelled after one of the boy's Father, having seen the Bagman's TV interview, pulled his son out of the group and most of the others boys followed.

During the past year I have attended days of dance hosted by Broadwood, & Northwood MM, East Surrey's 50th tour of Kent and East Sussex, where a presentation was made to Bob Davis who had organised the previous 49 tours. I have also attended Hartley's Weekend of dance, Wantsum's Hop Hoodening The Annual White Star Tour, and most recently the Annual Winchester feast.

Broadstairs Folk Festival takes place during the 2nd week of August. Hartley MM regularly attend, and dance and Sing all week with any guests from other Morris Ring sides who wish to join them. Last year, they were joined by members of Wadard, Broadwood, Victory & Ravensbourne. Wantsum MM are also always in attendance throughout the festival running the festival office and last year running an Illmington instructional, which I attended.

Noteable events for the forthcoming season are:

- Hartley Ring Meeting
- Men of Wight RM - where spaces are still available
- Cup Hill MM 40th Anniversary a day of dance is planned
- Ewell St Mary 30th Anniversary a day of dance is planned
- Northwood, Martlett & Blackheath MM are also planning day's of dance.

1. Elections for Morris Ring Officers:

a. **Bagman** Current incumbent is willing to stand again- no other nominations have been received

b. **Treasurer** In light of the late vacancy following the resignation of Steve BfB Adamson we have received one nomination: Eddie Worrall of Saddleworth Morrismen - supported by Moulton MM.

Candidate: Eddie Worrall Side: Saddleworth MM
Nominating Side: Moulton MM

Biographical Sketch

I took up Morris in my mid 20s in 1996, as a Cotswold dancer with Green Oak MM of Doncaster, my home town side. I grew up watching my bother dance with them and looking back, it was just a matter of time before I joined!

I moved to Saddleworth in 2000 following a relocation with work and joined Saddleworth MM as a dancer and musician. I spent 2 years as Treasurer, involving the financial aspects of the side and also the Rushcart weekend. This included budgeting, preparation of accounts and Banking. The largest project the side undertook during my time as Treasurer was the replacement of the aging Rushcart.

I have spent the last 4 years as Rushcart Secretary following on from my time as



Treasurer. This involves the organisation and planning for the Rushcart Weekend both within the side and local community and ensuring our 20+ guest sides have all the information they need for the weekend. I am due to retire fully from this post after the 2009 'Cart, following our AGM last year and will be training up my replacement over the Summer. No doubt you will be hearing from him.

Away from Morris, I work full time as a Solicitor in Huddersfield and live in Uppermill with my partner Carolyn. Although work may limit the time I have to get around the country, I know from my time as Rushcart Secretary that a Work/Life/Morris balance is achievable without any of them suffering.

Eddie Worrall

Nomination for the position of Treasurer of The Morris Ring

Moulton Morris Men are delighted to nominate Eddie Worrall of Saddleworth Morris Men for the position of Ring Treasurer.

We have known Eddie for many years as a competent dancer with Saddleworth Morris Men, who have been close friends with Moulton Morris for well over thirty years. We also know Eddie as the extremely efficient secretary of the Saddleworth Rushcart weekend, a daunting task he has competently carried out for the past four years and also we can point to his experience as the treasurer for two years before that. Eddie is also a very pleasant chap who gets on well with others and has an obvious dedication to the Morris. He is fortunate to be supported in the decision to allow his name to be put forward, not only by his partner but also the lads of Saddleworth Morris.

We recommend Eddie as an excellent candidate and have confidence he will do the job really well.

2. **Future Programme.** See list at the back of this Newsletter

- a. Morris Ring Meetings - 2009 and beyond.
- b. Instructionals.

We are always looking for sides willing to Host Morris Ring Meetings, ARMs and Instructionals - might your side volunteer?

3. **Date and Venue of Next Meeting.**

4. **A.O.B.**

- i. **The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts** *Report from Robert Chisman Convener & Scrivener*
The 2008 Unconvention was hosted last October by Stafford Morris Men - many, many thanks to them. It was well attended by Fools and Beasts from all three Morris Organisations. There was the usual mix of workshops, Saturday tour visiting Rugeley, Lichfield and the National Arboretum, and after the General Meeting on Sunday we finished off with more dancing at The Greyhound at Colton. The Saturday Feast was accompanied by, it seemed, a bottle of Jack's home made wine for each delegate!
Julian Kohler (Fool, Plymouth MM) brought along a guest, Dave Folley, who introduced himself as an artist who wanted to paint something different, so after bumping into Plymouth Morris dancing on Plymouth last May Day decided to study Morris Dancing.

He seemed to take loads of pictures, and has since produced paintings of Plymouth men, and four featuring the Unconvention of Fools and Beasts - one of Trigger doing a jig, one of Max Haynes, one of John Jenner, and one of Ashley's Rise. He has just finished exhibiting at Tavistock, and has a studio in Plymouth - for more details visit his website www.folley.eu

Subjects discussed in the AGM section of the Unconvention included the draft constitution, Child Protection Policy, Membership amongst others. Full report will be circulated to members via e-mail newsletter in the near future – hopefully by the time this report is read.



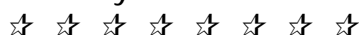
Next year's Unconvention will be hosted on 23-25th October 2009 by Utrecht Morris Men and planning is well in advance. Copies of the brochure which Utrecht have provided are available at the ARM. (Further details and with an application form later in this Newsletter.) Please will all attendees at this meeting take these papers back to your sides, and try and persuade your Fool and/or Beast to attend.

Pete De Courcy has agreed to collate a list of all past and present members, so please let him (e-mail pete_de_c@ntlworld.com) or me (triggertrotter@aol.com) have your details if you are, or wish to be, a member of the Order, so that we can contact you, and include you on the mailing list.

Finally, you may remember we held a "competition" for a new design for a badge for members of the Illustrious Order. In the end, it was rather a combined effort choosing a design at the 2007 ARM Unconvention at Wyvern, based on the images from the Betley window. I hope to get these produced for launch at Utrecht, with a choice of enamel badges for around £3 each and fabric (depending on size) for around £4 each.

- ii. **Musicians' Instructional 2008** - This, sadly, had to be cancelled at the last minute due to a lack of support. A further event will be organised for later this year – date and venue to be confirmed. We are looking for likely hosts for future Musicians' Instructional's. It would be good if we can ring the changes around the country and have a "5-year plan". At last year's ARM and via the Newsletter and Circular, as I recall, I appealed for some younger blood to come forward with a view to taking over the MI's and perhaps inject some updated ideas. No-one has; though the request still stands.
Clive duMont
- iii. **Morris Movie Magic** - This project is dead! My appeal at last year's ARM for individuals with relevant production, organisational and communication skills to come forward to drive the thing forward met with a zero response. Neither has there been any further communication on the M3 website amongst those who had previously expressed an interest. Given the recent national publicity and also the ongoing debate over "Morris – A life with bells on", perhaps there might now be someone sufficiently stimulated to give it a go, for want of a nudge in the right direction, so I'm happy to repeat the appeal this year. The website is still there, so if anyone is interested they could use that as their base platform, if they wished to. Clive duMont
- iv. Any other AOB – by prior agreement with the Squire

The Meeting of the Morris Ring Advisory Council will follow the ARM.





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The Newsletter No.60 ARM Special Pt 4 Feb. 2009



EFDSS News

The Mary Neal Project and English Folk Dance and Song Society present...

"The aim is to have no spectators, but to have everybody present joining in the dancing" (Mary Neal, 1910)

100 years ago Mary Neal got people dancing. An instigating spirit behind the English folk song and dance revival, her pioneering work with the Somerstown sewing girls and children of the Espérance Club has been overlooked - until now. For the last three years, her great, great niece, Lucy Neal, on inheriting Mary's personal papers, has travelled from Kings Cross to Thaxted, Abingdon, Littlehampton, Birmingham and New York to find out more about the legacy of Mary Neal and the great Espérance experiment.

Cultural Olympiad Update Planning events to pool and develop ideas for the various regional Cultural Olympiads across the country for the next four years will be taking place over the next few months. The **East Midlands** kick off with a free event planned for 4th March 10:30-16:00 in Leicester where Tessa Jowell and Bill Morris will be in attendance. Paul Brookes at paulbrookes@emd.org.uk is the region's Creative Programmer for the Cultural Olympiad and organiser of the event. An idea already floated by Paul is of an annual Cultural Olympiad showcase day across the country, similar to the successful launch day last September.



Traditional Dance Initiative - East was set up to promote projects involving the training of young people in traditional dance and performances as part of the Cultural Olympiad. Following initial discussions with Liz Hughes, Creative Programmer for the East our first project is ready to be launched.

The Childrens Festival, the brainchild of East Suffolk Morris Men, has under the direction of Dick Thornborrow for their 50th anniversary been taken on as part of this year's Ipswich Arts Festival and together with the DanceEast sponsored Spiegeltent, a travelling circus style dance hall, that will move through Suffolk to north East Essex over the Summer. Opportunities are being provided for sides or individuals to teach Morris, Molly, Sword and East Anglian Step in the Spiegeltent during the Summer. Any side or individual interested in performing, demonstrating and teaching should contact either Paul Reece mazre@tiscali.co.uk or Dick Thornborrow dick.thornborrow@btconnect.com for further details. This model may prove a useful platform for the delivery of traditional dance in other regions and is being submitted for the Cultural Olympiad 'Inspire mark'.

Paul Reece

John Gasson Jig Competition This is held every year at the Sidmouth Folk Festival and is organised in memory of John Gasson, who was tragically killed on his way to Sidmouth Festival in 1987. John was himself a fine jig dancer. Whether dancing or playing, his personal standards were high, and raising the general standard of display dancing was something very dear to him. Hopefully, this competition has helped this aim during the last twenty years, and will further enhance the standard of Morris jig dancing in years to come.

Roy Yarnell danced in the competition (we think when he was the Morris Ring Squire), but details and photos are rare. We have a photo of Roy dancing a jig, but it was taken by me at Halsway! Can anyone supply any photos, (videos) or memories that can be added to the site. I also encourage Morris Ring men to enter the competition!

See: <http://www.johngassonjig.org.uk/>

John Maher : john.maher@mac.com

Goathland Plough Stots Plough Tour 17th January 2009



Every year the Plough Stots tour the village of Goathland dancing outside people's houses, in their gardens, on the road and outside pubs. They are a village side and are welcomed wherever they go, often with whisky or rum which is used by the dancers to keep out the cold and wind of the North Yorkshire Moors in January.

The day starts in the Reading Room in Goathland, which is the Plough Stots base and museum. There are three separate sides: the boys, the young men and the older men. The plough is brought down from the shelf and they all process down the road to the village shops for the first dance. The sides then separate to dance in as many places as

possible during the day. At dusk they arrive at the Birch Hall Inn at Beck Hole for the last dances of the day.

By 7.30pm they had changed out of their dancing kit and donned smart suits for the annual dinner. This is a popular event in the village and is supported by the village people as the Plough Stots are an essential part of the village culture. Every year they invite a guest of honour and I was privileged to be chosen this year and gave the after dinner speech.

The dancers have always been residents of the village and neighbourhood and there has never been a problem raising a side for a local event. However, they often have difficulty raising a side if they wish to travel. A few dancers from elsewhere have now joined so perhaps we will be seeing more of the Plough Stots in future.

Brian Tasker Squire of the Morris Ring

Fools and Animals unconvention 23rd - 25th of October 2009

Hosted by Utrecht Henning Koefod (Fool, Utrecht MM) has provided brochures detailing accommodation etc - and the price of the stay, at 70 euros, which in October translated to £55. We have set the total price for the weekend at £65 sterling, but this may fluctuate depending on the exchange rate.

Utrecht is a quaint city in the centre of the Netherlands famous for its canals and bridges and of course the tallest church tower of the Netherlands, the Dom tower, as depicted in our emblem. The Eastern side of Utrecht is lined with fortresses to keep the rest of Europe out, called the Dutch Water Fortifications (Hollandse Waterlinie). This is where you will be staying.

The Utrecht Morris Men have been dancing since 1979 and regularly cross the channel to dance in England. I am informed that Henning Koefod, their fool is hosting the weekend, and that the rest of the Utrecht Morris Men are only organising it. So do come and join us under the processional maypole. Naturally fools and animals of all breeds, races, colours and genders are welcome. The number of guests is limited to 40 due to the size of the accommodation.

Accommodation: There are beds, blankets and sheets available at the fortress so no need to bring your own sleeping gear. You will be sleeping in two, three or four person bedrooms. All you need to bring is a tankard, your costume and a clean set of undies, please!

A towel will come in handy as there are plenty of showers.

Cost, application and programme for the weekend: The weekend will cost 70 euro's (approx. £55 pounds – see above) this includes all meals and comfy box-spring mattresses. Visit the website for further information but we can already reveal that

the programme will be comparable to previous years, starting with a supper on Friday evening and ending with a lunch on Sunday midday (allowing you time to get home).
Travel Schiphol airport is 30 minutes by train from Utrecht Central Station. Do not hesitate to contact Utrecht MM if you have any questions regarding public transport. For those coming by car, there are crossings from Harwich to Hook of Holland, Newcastle to IJmuiden, but also from Dover to Dunkerque and Calais.

unconvention2009@utrechtmorris.nl

www.utrechtmorris.nl/unconvention2009

New Green King brew: Morris Mayhem

The spicy, fruity Morris Mayhem ale will be available throughout the month of May.

"It would be a crying shame to see Morris Dancing disappear particularly since their activities so often revolve around the pub," says Greene King's head brewer John Bexon. "So, we're joining in the crusade to raise awareness of this quirky British pastime and brewing the new beer as a tribute to those who participate in it. Pubs up and down the country can use it to salute the skills, nimbleness -and indeed the courage - of those who entertain local crowds with their jangling paraphernalia, their whole gips, back-to-backs and cross overs. I hope our new ale helps raise the profile of Morris dancing and encourages more, and younger people, to join in the merriment.



"And since Morris Men themselves are known to enjoy the odd pint now and again, we're looking forward to seeing them in our pubs raising a pint of their very own tribute ale."

Sephton Candlestick: An up-date. Many of you will have noticed that the Sephton Candlestick, which has become a regular feature on the top table at all meetings of the Morris Ring, has been looking rather sorry for itself in recent years. "...the Sephton Candlestickwas presented to the (Morris) Ring in memory of Seph by his daughter, Mrs Lee" (The Morris dancer, Vol 1 No.7).



Hartley MM have paid to have had the base of the candlestick repaired and the inscribed plate re-attached. The silver plating proved to be OK and with a professional clean they look as good as new.

This is just part of the 'possessions of the Morris Ring' as they were described in The Morris Dancer Vol 1. No. 3, where it says:

"The stands upon which the Squire's Staff of Office rests at Feast, with the case, were given by the Manchester Morris men in 1971. The candlestick, holding candles in the host club's colours at feast, was given in memory of Percy Sephton, a Hartley Bagman. The carrying cases for that, and for the eleven Cecil Sharp

morris and sword books, in a lovely binding, were made in (the then) Squire of the (Morris) Ring Alan Brown's school's woodwork room."

'MORRIS: A LIFE WITH BELLS ON', A Film Review

Like the scene of the Cerne Abbas Giant at the beginning of the film much of what you would recognise as the truth, naked or otherwise, concerning the real Morris, its music and its vital dancing is sadly missing and what is left is a castrated joker, a parody and pastiche that not always quietly and subtly does a hatchet job on the Morris, its beliefs and institutions. Even Bampton comes in for the cheap humour. As a comedy the first 20 minutes is amusing, but as a satire it is very weak and quickly grows tiresome as the documentary style, lack of storyline, convincing plot or anything resembling Morris dancing is served up with all the usual stereotypes and prejudices.

The affected hero's 'rustication' from the Morris Circle for bringing in outside cultural elements into the dancing and his subsequent flight to California where Morris and Mollywood and a love interest finally saps the film of any lingering credibility that it may have had. Derek Jacobi in the cameo role of Squire of the Morris Circle is certainly not anybody that I recognise, but others may disagree. This film might amuse the ignorant and the newcomer to the Morris who has not sufficiently progressed with their dancing and what Morris is all about and who is in to 'Carry On' films, but that would be an insult to the 'Carry On' films.

Interest in this film has been phenomenal and the local distribution company that have put the film on in the South West are showing it to full houses. When reading the hype and seeing the preview clips the film promises much, but delivers very little that is positive or rewarding. It is likely to reinforce all those views of the Morris that we have been successfully striving to change. A general release would set us back several years and make the claw back even harder. The fact that the same person wrote, starred and directed this film suggests that the Morris has at some time done him a great disservice, for the not so hidden agenda of this film is to knock the Morris and Morris dancers at every turn.

Paul Reece

<p>Meetings of the Morris Ring 2009 Sides have already been informed and asked to pay a deposit of £25 per man to the host club by the end of February (Day men a deposit of £5 please.)</p>

GOOD EASTER MOLLY: Back to our roots Good Easter Molly Gang, modelled on the traditional Little Downham side that stopped dancing in the early 1930s, revisited Little Downham as guests for the second year running of Ouse Washes on their Fenland tour.

Celebrating their 25th year Good Easter Molly Gang were sporting their 'The Last Straw' ASBO badges, following their life-time ban in 2006 from attending the Whittlesea Straw Bear Festival by the organising committee. This year the committee prevented 250 school children who had been taught the Molly by members of Ouse Washes from performing at Whittlesea.



This is the picture of Black Bank crossing near Little Downham Cambridgeshire where Joseph Needham had to stop for the Harwich to Liverpool boat train in 1933 where the idea came to him of the Morris Ring.
Photo by Paul Reece

What started off as a largely Fenland Molly festival with Good Easter Molly and others has grown into a festival where its roots and identity have been largely ignored and the Molly marginalised at this traditional time of Molly activities. An alternative Straw Bear event at nearby Ramsey as part of widespread Plough Monday activities has already rekindled the spirit of what such occasions should be about.

Pride in these local traditions and the celebration and regeneration of our indigenous regional dance traditions should be paramount as regional identity and culture are just



those forceful qualities that should be at the forefront of any showcase events that purport to represent the region be it the Straw Bear Festival or events planned for this region's four year Cultural Olympiad.

To deny children the chance to perform their local traditional dance styles is like a parent suffocating its child. It is a bad enough act, but when done by a figure that close, it is an evil that strikes the heart of all of us that perform and promote these traditions and teach them to the young as their heritage.

Enlightened education authorities who support the teaching of these dances in their schools should be sending a clear message to the festival organisers and authorities who strangle new growth with red tape and make the renaissance in Molly and East Anglia Step dancing become something that should be suppressed and kept off the street and away from the public gaze.

While at Little Downham I made a diversion to the nearby Black Bank level crossing as Joseph Needham had done on his way into Little Downham from Littleport in 1933, following the collection of the Little Downham Molly dances. It was while waiting at the level crossing for the Harwich to Liverpool boat train to pass that the idea of the Morris Ring came to him. The rest they say is history. Paul Reece

Conclusion:

Future Morris Ring Meetings: We are always looking for sides to host ARMs and host Ring Meetings – you will see the gaps in our advance calendar. If your side might be interested in hosting a Ring Meeting to mark an anniversary or simply for the hell of it I can let you have a set of *guidelines* so that you have some idea of what you are letting yourself in for. We are especially keen to get at least one meeting each year in the northern part of the country!

Thanks

On behalf of the Officers of the Morris Ring I would like to record my thanks to the people who have helped to make this ARM Weekend possible:

- The Principal, staff and Governors of Longslade Community College for allowing us to use the place – especially Lyndsay, Nigel and his catering team and Brian the Site Manager and his team.
- Barry Evans, Paul Bryan and Clive DuMont for running /facilitating the Instructionals
- Paul and Daxsha, of Vin IV, one of the best real pubs in Leicester – for supplying the beer.
- Ian Hubbard, who was bagman for the meeting, and the rest of Leicester Morrismen – for agreeing to act as Hosts

Charlie

Bagman of the Morris Ring

Future Dates:

2009 THE MORRIS RING'S 75th ANNIVERSARY

28th March Nottingham Revels - JMO event Hosted by the Open Morris.
29th May- 31st May 317 Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting
12th -14 June 318 Hartley Morris Ring Meeting
24th - 26th July 319 Exeter Morris Ring Meeting
21st - 23rd Aug. 320 Men of Wight's 5th Morris Ring Meeting
4th -6th Sept 321 Bathampton MM Morris Ring Meeting

2010

22nd -24th Jan Jigs Instructional 2010. Sutton Bonington



Jigs Instructional 2008
Photo by Stuart Bater

5th -7th March (?) ARM Hosted by TBA
30th April - 2nd May Helmond MM's 75 anniversary Morris Ring Meeting
4th June - 6th June Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting
? July Croydon (Northwood) Morris Ring Meeting
10th-12th Sept Castleford Longsword Ring Meeting

2011

4th - 6th March (?) ARM Hosted By TBA
3rd June ~ 5th June Thaxted "Centenary" Morris Ring Meeting
TBA..... Bristol 60th Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting

2012

3rd ~ 5th March (?) ARM Hosted by TBA
25th~27th May Chipping Campden Cotswold Olympic Morris Ring Meeting
1st June ~ 3rd June Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting
27th ~ 29th July Hartley 60th Anniversary Morris Ring Meeting

2013

? March ARM Hosted by TBA
31st May - 02nd June Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting
? Dolphin Morris Men

The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts
Fools and Animals Unconvention, Utrecht, Netherlands
Hosted by Utrecht Morris
23-25 October 2009

Open to all Fools, Beasts and Morris Characters from any team from the Ring, Open or Federation.

Please see separate brochure from Utrecht Morris Men for more information!

**NB Due to alterations in currency exchange rates, 70 euros is currently £65 (Jan 2009)
If this rate alters significantly by October 2009, there may be a further charge – or refund!**

Application Form Side / Team:.....

Delegate:1).....Fool/Beast/Other.....

Delegate 2)..... Fool/Beast/Other.....

Address for correspondence.....

.....:

Tel :Day:..... Eve:.....

e-mail.....

Any Special Dietary needs.....

We anticipate having further applicants, if places available.

Return this form with cheque for the full amount (£65 pp) payable to "The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts" to

Robert Chisman, Fools and Beasts Convener,

Robert's Pharmacy, The Coombes, Polperro, Cornwall, PL13 2RG

Tel: 01503 272250 (day) 01503 272437 (eve); E-mail: triggertrötter1@aol.com

If you would like a copy of Utrecht's brochure, please contact Robert Chisman