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The Newsletter No.61 July 2009

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Greetings All

It has been four months since the last Newsletter (No 60 ARM Special) because I have received no NEWS to share with you. I need you to let me have your news to pass on as I am certain that you don't really want to simply read about what Leicester Morrismen have been doing! But I will share with you that Leicester MM was one of the sides privileged to represent the MR amongst sixty or so sides from across the Joint Morris Organisations at our JMO Showcase Event, the Nottingham Revels, in March. Co-ordinated by Lady Bay Revellers of the Open Morris, and co-hosted with other local teams, it saw 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. Other MR sides present were Dolphin; Anstey Everards; Jockey; Ripley; Coventry; Standon; Adlington; Harthill; Foresters & Lord Conyers.

Leicester MM have had fabulous weekends in the Dales with the Leeds MM; at the Thaxted meeting of the MR where we saw Great Yorkshire Morris; Winsters Morris and Bacup Nutters all 'dance in' and receive their MR Staffs of membership; in the Forest with the Forest of Dean MM Family Weekend (always a delightfully laid back event) and the 16th Potty Morris & Folk Festival in Sherringham as guests of the Lobster Potties.

I will also report that one side returned home from the Thaxted weekend with a bag of sticks that are not theirs, as our stickman lost ours, so if it is you, please can we have our sticks back!

It is so long ago that I suspect that you have forgotten all about it but the ARM as a big success - to judge by the positive comments made on the Sunday and from the emails received in the following few days. The intention was to make it special to mark the 75th Anniversary of the MR in the hope that we might attract more sides to send representatives - especially younger ones. Chris Harris' *Kemp's Jig* was a hit, as was the workshop he put on for Performing Arts students in the afternoon - unfortunately the local media were not interested in youngsters getting involved because it was good news and not in the least bit sensational.

A big public **thank you** to Barry Evans of Castleford Longsword for his workshop on the Escrick Longsword dance; to Paul Bryan of Ilmington MM for

his sessions teaching how the current Ilmington team perform their tradition and to Clive DuMont, of Mendip MM, for leading the discussion and Practical sessions, considering how to make Massed music for the Morris danceable. These workshops were clearly a popular innovation and if you have ideas about what we might offer in the future, especially if you or your side would like to lead the sessions, please get in touch with me.

The publication of the majority of Reports in prior to the meeting meant that not only was it easier for me to minute but sides had the opportunity to read and digest the information, and prepare questions for their representatives to ask in advance - rather than being talked to for hours and going away with lots of '*If only I had thought to ask.....*'. Sadly we did not receive, and still have not received, reports from some of the areas.

As you can see in the Minutes of the ARM, in light of the late vacancy following the resignation of Steve BfB Adamson, Eddie Worrall of Saddleworth MM was confirmed as Treasurer. This is initially for 12 months - not as a probationary period but to get the electoral routine back in kilter. Eddie started with Green Oak MM in his home town of Doncaster, and in 2000 when his work took him North he joined Saddleworth MM as a dancer and musician. He has been Rushcart Secretary for the last four years following time as their treasurer. Eddie has hit the ground running - he needed to as BfB is an awesome act to follow. As I made clear in my report, Steve, along with Paul Reece and before him Bob Cross, have made my job as Bagman possible. Steve firmly asked that no fuss or presentations be made but he was a real team player and his contribution to the MR over his many years as Treasurer must not be underestimated. I remain as your Bagman as there were no other candidates.

To clarify: the term in office for all MR Officers is for two years, with Treasurer and Bagman being eligible for re-election:

| | |
|-----------|----------|
| Squire | ARM 2010 |
| Treasurer | ARM 2010 |
| Bagman | ARM 2011 |

I would like to point everyone to the various **Archive Reports** in the minutes of the ARM. A great deal of individual time and MR funding has been invested in our various archives. Some of the materials held are unique but in the wider

perspective they form part of an astounding resource along with the contents of the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library with the EFDSS at Cecil Sharp House and the archives of the other two Morris Organisations. Please spread the word that this wealth of material is there to be used, to be referred to. The MR is about the living tradition and our archive is there to inform the living and not to simply commemorate the dead. Cecil Sharp, Mary Neale and the rest were not museum curators.

John Maher suggested in his report that he would be more accurately described as **Area Rep for Overseas Morris sides** (rather than 'Overseas Bagman'). No-one at the meeting argued so unless I am deluged with contrary comments I will apply this descriptive change in the future. Again I remind you that John offers help to Morris sides looking for overseas contacts with other dance groups, festivals and individuals and he is a useful source of information for any side planning an overseas trip. Even if he hasn't been there himself there is a good chance that he will know a sided who have.

A few points arising from Newsletter No 60:

- **MORRIS: A LIFE WITH BELLS ON.** The film seems to have disappeared without trace.
- Over the past few weeks I have seen several sides still using **Amplified Music** casually in the street. This might sound petty but there must not be any confusion: the exemption for Morris Dance from the licensing regulations assumes that it is with unamplified music. The advice is 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".

Paul Reece (Thaxted MM) reports that where numbers attending an event, performers plus audience, are likely to be large, e.g. 499 plus, then a Premises License to cover every aspect of traditional dance and folk performance amplified or not, mumming, folk plays valid for one year and renewable is the answer. This is what they have in place at Thaxted and cost

them £100 the cheapest rate plus the cost of the public notice advertised in the local press, which can be more expensive than the license.

- Many more sides than usual applied to attend the **2009 MR Meetings** and it was a difficult and at times acrimonious task. It is always unfortunate when a side cannot attend the meeting of their choice -To explain how the decisions were made I printed the following in Newsletter No 60:
 - Ultimately the final choice is up to the Host side
 - Sides which have hosted a recent MR 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 appreciated the tolerance and understanding of our 2009 Host Bagmen and of the Bagmen of applying sides. It is unfortunate that some 'successful' sides then did not pay their deposits and backed out - leaving host sides in danger of not balancing their budgets due to unfilled places and sides who wanted these places unable to change revised plans at short notice.

Our **Membership records** are no longer up-to-date! I have only received notification of half a dozen changes since the ARM and this is historically an unnaturally low number. Please remember that our records can only be as accurate as you, the membership, allow. Sadly, if your side has not notified me of changes in your club's contact details you are unlikely to be reading this and so will not know.

The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts This year's Unconvention will be on 23-25th October 2009 hosted by Utrecht Morris Men. Further details and application form from Robert Chisman; MR Website & Google Group site.

Pete De Courcy is collateing a list of all past and present members, so please let him (e-mail pete_de_c@ntlworld.com) or me (triggertroutter@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.

Robert Chisman

Messages from the Squire:

1. **Antony Gormley's fourth plinth, Trafalgar Square** Fancy turning yourself into a work of art? Antony Gormley is giving 2,400 people the chance to spend an hour alone on the Trafalgar Square plinth. It has been suggested that the plinth could be used for solo jig dancing. If you are interested follow this link for more information: <http://www.london.gov.uk/fourthplinth/plinth/gormley.jsp>

Applicants will be selected at random. The only conditions are that what you do must be legal and last for one hour. Musicians would not be allowed on the plinth so would have to play from the base. It's an interesting idea and could generate some publicity.

2. **MR 75th Anniversary Youth Fund** We have a fund for the past, the Archive Fund, but no fund specifically for the future. Important though the past is, we must ensure that we have a future as well. The MR officers have been discussing the possibility of establishing a new fund to be used specifically for youth projects. The fund would be derived from members contributions which would be sought in the same way as contributions to the archive fund: that is as a voluntary additional subscription paid with the annual subscription. In addition if a side folds some of the surplus funds could be passed as a 'bequest' to the fund.

Our idea is to help sides with members between the ages of nine years and nineteen years. Being a specific fund, members could contribute or not depending on whether or not they supported the purposes for which the fund would be used. The potential costs the fund might subsidise include dancing kit; instruction; travelling to specific events and possibly even a contribution towards the cost of musical instruments. Any project would have to involve a MR side but could be initiated by an outside organisation such as a scout group or youth club. The MR officers would judge each application on its merits and decide whether or not to make a grant. All relevant information provided in the application would be considered including alternative sources of funding available.

Please let me know what your side thinks about this idea. Would you be prepared to support it? Can you contribute any further ideas to help us

formulate a suitable scheme? Our 75th Anniversary would seem to be an appropriate occasion to look to the future and do everything we can to ensure that there will be a new generation of dancers around to celebrate the MR's 100th anniversary in 2034. Brian Tasker, Squire of the MR



Treasurer's Notes: Eddie Worrall of Saddleworth Morrismen
Firstly, I'd like to thank all who have wished me well in taking on the role of MR Treasurer and to pass on my best wishes and thanks to Steve Adamson my immediate predecessor. Having been in this post for only a few months now, I can appreciate just how hard he has worked over the years!

We are now firmly in the swing of a busy dance season and I look forward to meeting with many of you in the coming months.

Looking slightly further ahead, membership renewal for 2009/2010 is coming up in the Autumn. One of the initiatives Steve started a while ago is payment of subs by standing order. Many sides have taken the step of setting this up and it has made the task of renewal much easier to manage. If your side has not taken the plunge yet, please consider this, as it will not only help administration, but also ensure that your ever important Public Liability cover will not lapse.

If you would like to move over to paying subs by standing order, please contact me to receive you sides unique payment codes to identify the payments in the account.

In the mean time, enjoy the summer!

Eddie Worrall MR Treasurer

Morris Ring Shop Keepers Ramblings: As the Morris Ring and The Morris Ring Shop are currently living in very interesting times, it will not have escaped your eyes and ears that there have been a few changes of late. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have assisted and supported me during my term as your elected Treasurer. For the most part it has been a total joy and pleasure and for the lesser part.....well, that's life. Lots of very good friends made and many fond memories of the same.

The Morris Ring rumour squad have recently been hard at it. For the sake of clarity and to make matters abundantly clear, on the 7th January 2009 I resigned as your elected treasurer and keeper of your Morris Ring Shop. It was only after further negotiations with Charlie (Bgm) and Eddie (Trs in waiting) that I agreed to resume as keeper and guardian of your Morris Ring Shop. You may have observed that I refer to your mobile emporium as 'The Morris Ring Shop' and not 'The Morris Shop'. This serves to make it abundantly clear where it belongs and where it is staying. Where do things go from here? Further discussions and decisions will be made after the 12th September 2010..... so stay tuned!

I am delighted with the fact that Eddie Worrall of Saddleworth Morris Men has decided to accept the challenge in defending your financial interests by ensuring that not too greater percentage of your valuable subscriptions get splashed against the wall (Eddie made me clean that last sentence up). I know that Charlie & Eddie will make a great Morris Ring team in looking after your present and future administrative and fiscal interests. All hail our civil service!

So, what's new? Yes, your Morris Ring Shop continues to flourish and is forever seeking out anything 'MORRIS' orientated, produced or published. To this end, please see the Morris Ring 'centre fold' in this newsletter. Please remember that you are all my eye's and ear's. If you spy or hear of anything that you believe might be of interest to me, please do get in touch. My thanks go to Ron Shuttleworth for pointing me in the direction of 'The Kent Hooden Horse' publication.

I am pleased to report that, at great expense, we are once again totally restocked with our beloved Morris bells.

| | |
|--------|--------------------------------------|
| 7/8" | (qty 6,300) Brassed Bells @ 33p each |
| 1" | (qty 6,800) Brassed Bells @ 37p each |
| 1 1/8" | (qty 7,000) Brassed Bells @ 45p each |
| 1 1/4" | (qty 1,050) Brassed Bells @ 58p each |

Where will your Morris Ring Shop be during 2009? My intended itinerary is as follows (unless you know different):

23rd June (Sun) Greensleeves MM (Chipperfield)

| | |
|---|---|
| 17 th -19 th July | Great Yorkshire Morris (Raskelf) |
| 23 rd Aug (Sun) | Saddleworth MM Rushcart (Church Inn) |
| 5 th -6 th Sept | York Festival of Traditional Dance (Ebor MM) |
| 7 th Sept (Mon) | Abbots Bromley Horn Dance |
| 3 rd Oct (Sat) | Jockey Morris Men's BIG 60 th Birthday |
| 18 th Dec (Fri) | Mendip Morris Men's Ale (Wrington) |

I hope to see as many as will whilst out and about. Keep your peckers up and your ganders down.

Steve BFB, The Morris Ring Shop



EFDSS News

To find out what's on at Cecil Sharp House and beyond this July from the English Folk Dance and Song Society...

www.efdss.org / info@efdss.org / 020 7485 2206



So... what's it all about then? 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. 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 team around October each year. The host side are encouraged to help 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 should 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. It's for any type of Morris, though mostly Cotswold dancers turn up. It would be great to see others there to dance, play or just for the crack. There is time and space for scratch

rapper/N.W./border etc. teams to practise show dances as well as us Cotswold lot. It's all very informal and relaxed. Don't worry about turning up by yourself - everybody else is in the same boat and so you get chatting to everyone quickly - especially after a few beers.

This year, **2009 Pontefract and Wakefield**

www.morris1830.org Dan Corcoran 18-30 Morris

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. 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.

I encourage MR men to enter the competition! See: <http://www.johngassonjig.org.uk/>

Museum of British Folklore website.

<http://www.museumofbritishfolklore.co.uk/>

'In Britain in the 21st century, there exists a rich, living tradition of annual folk festivals and traditional rituals, many of which have existed for hundreds of years while others are relatively new. It is therefore a surprising fact that there exists no properly funded centre in Britain to research and celebrate our native traditions and vernacular arts. It is my aim, that over the next few years, such an institution will exist, which will address this situation.'

Follow the web link to find out about this project. Simon Costin 2009

Bob Russell ,MP for Colchester and guest of honour at the Thaxted MR Meeting, has tabled a parliamentary early day motion EDM 1560 (01.06.2009)



75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MORRIS RING



Signatories: Russell, Bob; Bottomley, Peter; Hopkins, Kelvin; Jones, Lynne

That this House congratulates The Morris Ring on its 75th anniversary, celebrated from 29 to 31 May 2009 with a Ring Meeting held at Thaxted in Essex, which was attended by more than 400 Morris Men from 33 different sides; recognises with appreciation that the Morris Ring plays a major role in promoting England's traditional male folk dance; regrets however, that Arts Council England considers it more important to support contemporary Latin American art than England's traditional folk song and dance culture; and calls on the Government, through the Departments of Culture, Media and Sport and Children, Schools and Families, to ensure that England's traditional folk culture is promoted in the same way as the devolved administrations of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland promote their respective folk culture in their countries.

EDM 1560 (01.06.2009).

Paul Reece, Squire of Thaxted MM and Chair of MR Advisory Council said:
"I have thanked Bob for his continued support and have briefed him on several issues which he is happy to support us on."

Morris and the Olympics Update

The South West Region Cultural Olympiad is organising an annual **Music/Dance Weekend** for the last weekend in September, which they intend to grow in the lead up to 2012 and climaxing with the opening ceremony at the water sport venue in Weymouth.



The **South West** is the first region after much canvassing that has specifically requested Morris involvement. Planning is already underway and assistance is sought from sides, teachers, schools and particularly youth sides in the region to be involved in training up and demonstrating to youngsters. EFDSS are going to designate this region as a pilot scheme for tuition and work in schools and the other Morris Organisations are supporting the initiative to grow the next

generation of the Morris in the South West. This is an opportunity that non of us can afford to miss.

Enthusiasm has started to spill over into the **South East Region** which along with the remainder of the regions is focussing on the last weekend in July (Exeter Ring Meeting 2009) to put together an annual **Open Weekend** in the regions in the lead up to 2012. Those interested will need to register, but the notice time for this July makes it almost impossible for this year giving you plenty of time to plan something special and different for July 2010, 2011 and 2012.

The **East** with its 'Spectacular Dancing Tent' sponsored by Dance East is being booked up for the Summer any sides or teachers interested in being involved see the 'Ip Art' piece on the Morris Ring Webpage.

A meeting of the **East Midlands** Cultural Olympiad had Morris representation and several sides are at the planning stage of getting involved.

Morris representation was also made at meetings in the **West Midlands** where the huge 'People Dancing' project is to take place over the next few years lead up to the Olympics to bring dance to people and places not usually associated with dance. This surely is an opportunity for sides with imagination and a sense of adventure to go where nobody has gone before.

Other community projects are in the pipeline where contact has been made concerning Morris involvement. This would be especially welcome where traditional dances are or were once part of the community scene. The **North West, North East and Yorkshire** are regions where this must be particularly true and should have a tremendous potential for involvement.

Further information and guidance on getting involved can be obtained from me at: mazre@tiscali.co.uk

Paul Reece, Chair of MR Advisory Council

Daily Mail 2nd July 2009 Paul Sims' article warranted this headline: **Morris dancers banned from primary school after plan to 'black up' for show**

"It is a traditional form of Morris dancing that dates back to the 17th century. Unemployed and facing bleak winters, the Border-style dancers would blacken their faces in a bid to hide their identities from friends and family before begging in public. Though not as popular as it once was, the folk dance is still performed to this day to prevent it disappearing from English culture for good.

So when a troupe (sic) of dancers were invited to a school's diversity and culture show they were naturally overjoyed at the chance to explain its historical and cultural significance. But their excitement soon turned to disappointment when the head teacher cancelled the booking - amid fears their blackened faces would cause offence. 'They said people might be offended but didn't even investigate why we dance with black faces,' said Pete Hargreaves, a member of The Motley Morris Men in Kent.

The troupe (sic) had been booked by Chantry Primary School in Gravesend to take part in this week's exhibition. But just days before they were due to perform head teacher Hazel King informed them that she was concerned their blackened faces would cause offence. 'I dare say it is an ancient tradition, but we have moved on - perhaps the dancers should too.'



Interesting request: BfB received this enquiry via the MorrisShop :
"I'm interested in purchasing a traditional Morris outfit and wondered if you could point me in the right direction. I don't mind paying whatever it takes to make sure that it is of the highest quality. Do you have any suggestions?"



Bledington Workshop Bedcote Morris will be hosting a Bledington Workshop on behalf of **Open Morris** on Saturday 10th October 2009 at Gigmill Methodist Church Hall, Glebe Lane, Stourbridge DY8 3YH. *10.30 am until 5.00 pm*
Taught by Mike Nesbit (Lady Bay Revellers) the cost will be £4, includes tea, coffee, biscuits. There is a pub very near by for liquid lunch and cobs, a chip shop within 400 yds and a food pub about the same distance, otherwise bring your own lunch.

Afterwards at Royal Exchange, Stourbridge there will be a social evening, at which their sponsors, Bathams Brewery, will supply the first two pints per head. (Sorry only beer is given away; buy your own soft drinks, cider, lager etc).

Bedcote Morris will supply a light Buffet. If you wish to attend, please contact Phil Watson at philwatson5852@gmail.com.

Forest of Dean MM and the Wildlife Heritage Foundation. To raise funds for this charity, Kevin Passey Squire of FOD MM is off to Peru at his own expense on 16th September to take part in a trek over the Andes to the ancient city of Machu Picchu. Part of seven days of high altitude trekking will take Kevin via the Salkantay pass, nearly 5000mts above sea level, to Machu Picchu, where he plans to dance a Morris jig at the city entrance. He hopes to raise £1,000 through sponsorship and donations for the Wildlife Heritage Foundation which is a charity set up in England, to promote the protection of several species of large cats which are in danger of extinction. Further information from k.passey@btinternet.com or justgiving.com/kevinpassey

Conclusion:

As I explained at the beginning of this edition for this to be a genuine news letter I need to have your news. Enjoy the rest of the Summer.

Charlie

Bagman of the Morris Ring

Future Dates:

2009 THE MORRIS RING'S 75th ANNIVERSARY

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
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
3rd - 5th September Trigg 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 MORRIS RING
1934 ~
founded ~