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Newsletter No. 67

May 2010

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This is your Newsletter.

It is your means of getting information to all members of all sides within our organisation. It is distributed in paper form; via the Morris Ring Google Group; via email and is available on the Morris Ring website.

I welcome any and all items of news and general information that might be of interest to the Morris Ring Membership - and even small ads.

Please contribute or there is no Newsletter.

Peter's the Lord of the Ring

Published date: 09 April 2010

LORD of the dance Peter Halfpenney has been appointed to the highest office in the Morris

Ring and it has put a spring into the step of local Morris men. It means that the pretty *Doomsday Book* village of Harthill has a new squire for the first time anyone can remember - and it is set to fire fresh life into one of England's oldest traditions! Peter, a member of the Harthill Morris side since 1981, has been appointed the 36th Squire of the Morris Ring, an international organisation made up of more than 200 men's Morris sides dedicated to keeping the dance alive and taking it out to the public.

"I regard my appointment as Squire of the Ring as a great honour and I am very mindful that I am following in a long tradition of men who have worked tirelessly to keep the dance alive and vibrant."

Peter, from North Anston, sees his new role - a kind of managing director of the Morris Ring - as a challenge to breathe new life and bring new blood into the organisation which was formed in 1934. He plans to visit as many sides as possible during his two years in office spreading his 'come and join us' message.

"I recognise the need to bring new and younger members into the Morris and a recruitment drive will be high on my agenda."



Asked what a budding Morris dancer might expect to get out of this tradition whose origins are lost in the mists of time?

"For a start it keeps me fit," said Peter, "and the social aspects are innumerable. Add to that I have made friends with some of the nicest people I have ever met in my life through the Morris."

He became Squire elect of the Morris Ring at the recent Annual Reps Meeting in Abbots Bromley, in Staffordshire, and formally takes over as squire at the Castleford Ring Meeting in Selby, in September.

During his time with Harthill Morris Peter has been Squire of the side three times, and Bagman (secretary) and 'Old Man' (chairman) each twice. Peter has also been keen to spread the magic of the Morris overseas, organising a party of 35 men on a trip to Spain in 2006, and last year he took a party of 24 on a highly successful visit to Kinnaird Castle, in Brechin, Scotland - a trip he hopes to repeat this year.

Treasurer's Report

Firstly, a thank you to the Morris Ring sides who took part in the JMO day of dance in Bury St. Edmunds held on 17th April, hosted by the Morris Federation. As those taking part will know, it was a belting, sunny day with a wide variety of sides taking part from all 3 Morris Organisations.



I must admit I've never been to Suffolk in Morris kit, so it was a new one on me, but it was a friendly occasion and a great setting for a day of dance. I struck lucky and managed to find B&B in the Old Cannon micro-brewery, which also happened to be one of the dance spots (sometimes things just go right!). A special mention here must go to Belchamp MM for their excellent Border dance set at the Cannon. Funny how we should meet in a pub yard, how unusual for them and Saddleworth...

Between myself and Paul Reece (Chair of the MR Advisory Council) I think we met up with all the Morris Ring sides taking part and those sides certainly did the Morris Ring proud. 2011 will see the Morris Ring hosting the JMO day of dance and work is ongoing on venue etc. I hope you will consider taking part next year and helping to make it even more spectacular than this year's event.

Just one admin notice relating to the Morris Ring database of sides details/contacts etc. This is something I maintain as part of dealing with subs renewals year to year. It forms the basis of our mailing list to your side as well as being a record of your preferred contact. If there are any changes in your side that mean these need to change part way through a year, please ensure you contact me as soon as possible to pass the new details on. If we don't know, it will mean information being sent to the wrong place!

Finally, I look forward to meeting up with many of you during the coming dance season.

Cheers

Ed Worrall Morris Ring Treasurer Saddleworth MM



"Progress being made with the 2012 Olympics" (Paul Reece)



Please refer to the Minutes of the 2010 ARM and contact Paul Reece directly for information pertinent to your area.

The key is individual sides getting involved with youngsters in their area.



Recruitment leaflet / PowerPoint



If you are interested in helping to develop a generic handout or PowerPoint presentation that could be made available to sides across the Morris Ring for personalisation and use please contact the MR Bagman. This will be an electronic exchange of ideas leading to a proposed draft that will be considered by the Squire and the Advisory Council later in the year.



Location Location Location

Need some help finding your dream home?

Kirsty and Phil are back for a brand new series of Location Location Location and they're looking for Morris Dancers currently looking to buy a home. If you're on the hunt for the best new home and would like our help we'd love to hear from you.

To apply send your name and number to locations@iwcmmedia.co.uk or Call 0141 353 8496



Massed dances for 2010 Morris Ring Meetings will be the same as last year:

- Fieldtown: The Valentine and Banks of the Dee
- Adderbury: Shepherds Hey and Lads a Bunchum
- Bledington: William and Nancy
- Bampton: Banbury Bill and Bobbing Around
- Headington: Constant Billy and Laudnum Bunches
- Bucknell: Queens Delight (six-corner version)

Brian Tasker Squire of the Morris Ring

Cecil Sharp's diaries now available in full The final part of the project to get Cecil Sharp's diaries online has now been completed - you can read all of Sharp's diaries from 1915-1918 online, searchable by date. These are his only surviving personal diaries, in which he describes his collecting experiences in the Appalachian Mountains of North America.

WHAT'S ON: Cecil Sharp House is the venue to a wider range of one-off folk-related activities as well as regular weekly or monthly EFDSS classes and workshops. Full details are available on the EFDSS website. Examples include:

- Monday Musicians** Play the traditional music of the British Isles.
 2nd Monday monthly 7 - 10pm, Maggie Fletcher: 01628 486 461
- Morris Dancing** Do you think it's fun to watch? – It's even more fun to do!
 Tuesday evenings 7 - 9pm, £4 EFDSS: 0207 485 2206
- C# Minors** Folk dance, song, music and singing games for children
 Exercise, teamwork, rhythm, co-ordination and FUN!
 Tuesdays, 4-4.45pm, 4 to 5 year olds, £35 per term;
 5-6pm, 6 to 9 year olds, £40 per term
 Summer term 27 April-6 July (no session 1 June)



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Copy date for next issue: 31st July 2010

New dance Collator: Mike Wilkinson (Dolphin MM)

"The 2010 ARM was told that the position of New Dance Collator was vacant and had been so for some years. I took the hint and shortly after the meeting I volunteered.

I am Michael Wilkinson, Fool of Dolphin Morris Men. I've been a Cotswold dancer since 1983. Some of you will know me as a teacher at the Jigs Instructional; others as the chap on the unicycle who turns up at Thaxted most years.

A few examples of the sort of thing I may be interested in are:

- A new distinctive figure ("chorus") within an established tradition.
- A new figure introduced into an established tradition.
- An established dance performed to a different tune.
- A completely new dance.
- New "traditions" - which I think would be two or more dances in a new and consistent style.
- Set dances developed from jigs, and *vice versa*.
- The stories behind the new dances.

As a general rule, I will only be interested in dances that are a real part of the side's repertoire. I know from my experience with Dolphin that for every three or four "good ideas" only one results in a dance that becomes established.

I expect that some sides will be very proud to see their new dances performed more widely. Other sides may feel more protective: why spend all that effort developing something distinctive, only for it to be copied by everyone else? With this in mind, I plan to keep three lists of new dances, more or less as follows:

- Dances that can be danced by anyone. I won't be actively promoting these dances, but the details will be available on request.
- Dances that can be published but without general permission for other sides to perform them.
- Dances that won't be published, but which may be of interest to Morris historians of the future. I expect that this will be a small category, but I promise to respect any requests not to publish.

I am not a collector or archivist by temperament, but I love the Morris. I like to see it gradually developing, and I am always impressed by a genuinely worthwhile new



dance. Examples of "new dances" that have become part of the mainstream repertoire over the last few decades include the popular *Balance the Straw*, *Fieldtown*, and the spectacular *Jenny Lind*, Lichfield. I believe that the gradual evolution of the repertoire is vital to the continued health of the tradition.

However, although we can debate where the dividing line is, I think there is an important difference between "evolution" and "innovation for its own sake." I am not here to change the Morris, but to collate details of any changes as they happen naturally.

My own background is almost exclusively in Cotswold, and naturally I will tend to focus on this most in the early days. This does not mean that I am not interested in new dances from the other traditions, but it makes sense to me to start with what I understand, and then build on that.

The job title is "Collator" not "Collector," so don't expect me to turn up on my bicycle, order a glass of milk and offer you a Guinea for your memories of old dances. Most of the job can be done by email, or face to face at Ring meetings. I'm based in Nottingham, so visits to sides within reasonable striking distance may be a possibility as I learn more about the role."

Michael Wilkinson Dolphin MM

Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts



A Message from Tigger: "After last year's successful trip abroad to Utrecht, we are back in England this year. The event is being hosted by Bloxham Morris and Adderbury Morris, and is based at Cropredy, near Banbury, Oxfordshire on the weekend 22nd-24th October 2010. I am reliably informed that it will include a tour of the Hook Norton Brewery, dancing in Stow-on-the-Wold, and will also include workshops and the Annual General

Meeting of the Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts. The cost this year is £60 pp; accommodation is indoor camping; there may be space for outdoor camping if anyone is daft enough.

Attendance is open to any Fool, Beast or Morris character, including Betsies & Mollies, or anything else, from any of the three Morris Organisations.

If you would like to come, please complete the Application Form (*at the end of this Newsletter*) and send to the Convener and Scrivener, Robert Chisman, from whom

more information is available.

For anyone who is already a member, then the new cloth and pin badges are now available, with the design based on the Betley window, (*see picture*) showing a Saddle Horse and a Jester. Cost £4 each Inc p&p from Robert - cheques payable to the Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts.

The latest newsletter for members of the Illustrious Order is due out very soon - if you are a member and have not received your copy via e-mail, please e-mail Robert at triggertrotter1@aol.com and ask to be put on the distribution list!

DEBT 2010 & DERTY Rap! April 10th 2010

The Dancing England Rapper Tournament originated as an afternoon interlude at the annual Dancing England festivals which were held in Derby, and has since taken on a life of its own. This year it finally returned to its city of origin, courtesy of the local sword team, Stone Monkey.



The event has grown mightily over the years, from a mere handful of entrants in its original format to numbers approaching thirty teams in recent times. The format has changed, too; originally modelled on the dance competitions of old; it required teams to give their all in a single do-or-die performance on a stage. Some teams loved this; others wanted the chance to get a bit more dancing and to take it out to the public, and for the last decade or so the competition has been judged over a whole afternoon's tour of a series of pubs.

The new format, when taken in conjunction with the growing numbers of participants, has provided its own challenges: above all, how to ensure that all the teams are seen by all the judges. Each set of organisers has attempted its own solution, with varying degrees of success.

Stone Monkey set an ambitious programme. The day would begin with a youth competition, to be held on the stage of the Guildhall Theatre, a lovely spot for it. The teams were divided into two classes, Juniors and Youth, and attracted a strong entry. The overall standard was high indeed, and many of the teams could have put in a respectable performance in the main competition. The best of even the youngest teams showed some very good stepping and sword handling - a reproof to all those who think that children's teams should be all about using 'charming' songs and

costumes to garner the 'aaahhh' factor. Repeat after me: young children *can* dance well if only someone will teach them to do so.



**The Newcastle Kingsmen performing in the Brewery Tap at DERT 2010 in Derby. The Kingsmen won the Best Characters and Steve Marris Trophy as best overall team.
Photo from Rapper Online**

For the main competition teams were grouped into ten tours. Judges were placed in five locations (four pubs and the Guildhall). Two tours started in each location. Each team danced once and then moved on. Half the tours went clockwise round the circuit, the other half anti-clockwise. Are you still with me? It meant that each tour met five others during the course of the day, and so Newcastle Kings got to see how some of the competition was doing. Teams were judged on an aggregate of their day's marks but, in a nod to the old format, a separate prize was awarded for the dance on the Guildhall stage, so any spectator who felt indolent could simply get

themselves a seat in the auditorium and watch the competitors come past.

Stone Monkey had limited entries to twenty teams but in the event, twenty-three teams toured, in addition to which High Spen danced at the Guildhall but not in the pubs. For the last few years there has been a regular American presence at DERT. This year three of the teams were from the USA, two from the Boston area and one from Minnesota. So enthusiastic are the Boston teams that they are hosting the first DART (Dancing America Rapper Tournament) in October of this year.

What about repertoire? Well, teams were free to dance whatever they felt would score the points, within the general criteria of what constitutes a rapper dance. There was no obligation to do the same routine every time, and indeed there was some credit to be gained by tailoring the performance to the particular space. Most teams now perform dances of their own creation, dances which tend to reflect the teams' individual style and even philosophy.

Amazingly (or maybe not, if you think how hard Stone Monkey had worked) the whole afternoon worked very smoothly. It all ran pretty well to time, and nobody got irretrievably lost. Even the sun shone, which by no means a sure was bet given the winter from which we were just emerging.

But it was not over yet. Those who hadn't had enough could now move on to the Quad, a modern arts centre next to the Guildhall, for the Traditional competition. It is important to remember something of the tradition's origins, particularly in this centenary year of Sharp's first collection of sword dances. The Traditional competition is open to any team which wishes to perform a dance as collected from the North-East, although not solely those collected by Sharp. The performance is judged both on its technical merits and according to its accuracy in reflecting the published notation. Once again, High Spen competed alongside the teams who had been touring.

After this the teams took a well-deserved break before gathering in the Guildhall for the evening showcase and prize giving. The prizes were as follows:

Junior:	Miniwindmillers
Youth:	Heage Windmillers
Traditional:	High Spen
Guildhall Stage:	High Spen
Open:	Silver Flame
Premier:	Gaorsach
Tyzack Trophy ('buzz factor'):	Black Swan
Music:	Black Swan
Character:	Newcastle Kingsmen
Best original calling-on song:	Newcastle Kingsmen
Steve Marris Trophy (2010 DERT Champions):	Newcastle Kingsmen

All in all it was a vast undertaking very well organised, and congratulations are due to all the winners but even more so to all those who made it happen.

Andrew Kennedy

Morris Ring Display Boards Brian Tasker is currently updating the Morris Ring display boards and he needs some good photos of all the traditions we represent. If you have a really excellent photo of your side please send it to Brian for consideration. Please do not send whole photo albums! The new boards will be of the roll up type which is easily transportable and each Area Rep will have one for the use of sides in his area. It is hoped that they will be used for recruitment and advertising purposes.



1st – 3rd
October
2010

In a break with tradition, the date for this year's Morris 18-30 Weekend has been announced before the summer! It's a little earlier this year, the first weekend in October. So get the date in you diary now and don't miss out!

For the 9th 18-30 Weekend we are retuning to the East Midlands, this time visiting the home of Adrian Mole and the Brewing Capital of Britain as we travel through the National Forest.

Hosted by Packington Morris Men, we will be **staying in Ashby-de-la-Zouch**, a lively little 'chocolate box' market town in the north west corner of Leicestershire (about a mile from Packington itself).

On the **Saturday** we will dance in **Burton upon Trent** where we will visit more than one brewery and sample a good selection of local real ales.

BAGMEN

Let your young members know - we need the support of all Ring sides to keep Morris 18-30 the success it is.

The Morris 18-30 annual weekend promotes the future of all male Morris, ensuring all young morris men will keep dancing for many years to come.

Visit online:
morris1830
.org.uk

On the **Sunday** morning we will dance in **Ashby**, with a visit to the spectacular castle ruins and finish the weekend with **lunch and mass-dancing in Packington** with invited local sides.

The details are still to be confirmed, but we are set for one of the biggest and best weekends to date! **Add your name to the Mailing List** to keep up to date with developments.

SOMETHING for EVERYONE



To celebrate the sides who have sent men to Morris 18-30 weekends, a new section has been created on the website. It lists the Sides, the Men and the Weekends.

Click a side to see who went to which weekend, click a man to see which weekend they attended and who they represented at that weekend, click a weekend to see the men and sides in attendance!

It is a totally absorbing archive of the first 9 years of Morris 18-30, and will continue to be updated year after year.

Is your side there? Give it a click!

Morris dancing postman from Bushey recognised for community work

Wednesday 12th May 2010



Watford Observer
Wednesday, 12 May 2010

Morris dancing postman from Bushey recognised for community work

12:07pm Wednesday 12th May 2010

By Chris Hewitt

A Morris dancing postman from Bushey has won a Royal Mail award for community work.

Wayne Lang, of School Lane, has a daily round in the Elstree Road area and gives talks at nearby schools, as well as being part of a Watford Morris dancing "side", their name for group.

The father-of-two has now been recognised for his hard work by being awarded a '1st Class People Award', something he will collect at a ceremony in London later this month.

Wayne, 46, said: "I feel embarrassed really. It is something I have always done and not gone out of my way for the recognition but I am very pleased and really chuffed that someone thinks I deserve it."

The keen Morris dancer has given talks about his work and traditional interest to the children at nearby Merry Hill Infant School, which Wayne's six-year-old son, Rhys, attends.

Photo: Watford Observer. Wayne Lang and his son Rhys.

Newsletter No 66 CC-BY-NC-SA Footprints 2010 a. Morris dancing postman...

"A Morris dancing postman from Bushey has won a Royal Mail award for community work. Wayne Lang, of School Lane, has a daily round in the Elstree Road area and gives talks at nearby schools, as well as being part of a Watford Morris dancing "side", their name for group. The father-of-two has now been recognised for his hard work by being awarded a '1st Class People Award', something he will collect at a ceremony in London later this month. Wayne, 46, said: "I feel embarrassed really. It is something I have always done and not gone out of my way for the recognition but I am very pleased and really chuffed that someone thinks I deserve it." The keen Morris dancer has given talks about his work and traditional interest to the children at nearby Merry Hill Infant School, which Wayne's

six-year-old son, Rhys, attends.

Deputy Headteacher Nicola Perry said the children are "fixed on his every word" when he comes in "dressed in his postman outfit."

"The children think he is fantastic," she said. "He gets them up and involved and is really good with them. We have had him come in with the Morris dancers before and the children loved it.

"He definitely deserves recognition for his work in the community. He has time for everyone and even came in to volunteer and help out when our caretaker retired." Although Wayne admits to getting a "fair bit of stick" for his Morris dancing, he says it allows him to combine three of the best things of "tradition, exercise and beer". He said: "I loved it when I was younger and, a few years back, went along with a mate to see them in Croxley Green and thought 'why not?'. Once you get over the stigma of wearing a hat with flowers and bells it is great."

Married to Gabriela, he has two children, 12-year-old Amy and six-year-old Rhys who he says "let him get on with it".

His membership of the Woodside Morris Men takes him to village fayres and pubs across the country, but it is his work in Bushey that earned him recognition.

He has worked at the Bushey delivery office, in High Street, for nearly 16 years and has been in the industry for nearly 20, something he says he "just really enjoys". On May 24th, he will be presented with the award by BBC presenter Christine Bleakely at the Haberdashers' Hall in London." From the **Watford Observer**

And finally.....

Stop Press:

See **Ray King** (MR Squire 1984-1986) dance the ballet on BBC2 on 12th and 19th June. The programmes are about the Birmingham Opera Company's production of Verdi's Othello and a documentary on the work of BOC's Artistic Director Graham Vick. Ray's comment was "The full performance including the ballet we took part in will be shown again on BBC2 a week later on 19th June. Just hope we don't come out of it too badly!!"



When BOC write on their website: "Verdi's Othello was recognised in the classical Oscars, the RPS Awards, as one of the top 3 shows of 2009 and with a company of over 300, we were able to work with a number of ground breaking initiatives e.g. People Dancing to enable the foundation of a new dance company. "

Do they mean *Green Man Morris Men*?

Does Ray do an Arabesque?



Is this Othello pleading for Ray to perform an encore?

Charlie

Bagman of the Morris Ring

Future Programme.

2010

4 th June - 6 th June	323	Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting
3 rd - 5 th September	324	Trigg Morris Ring Meeting
10 th - 12 th Sept	325	Castleford Longsword Morris Ring Meeting
1 st - 3 rd October		18-30 Weekend: Ashby de-la-Zouch
22 nd - 24 th October 2010		Fools and Animals: Cropredy, near Banbury, <i>Hosted by Bloxham Morris and Adderbury Morris Men</i>

2011

21-23 January 2011		Jigs Instructional Sutton Bonington
25 th - 27 th Feb (TBC)		<i>Musicians Instructional Weekend hosted by Moulton Morris</i>
4 th - 6 th March (TBC)		ARM Hosted By Mendip Morris Men (TBC)
20 th - 22 nd May		Moulton Morris Ring Meeting (40 th Anniversary of revamped Moulton Festival)
3 rd June ~ 5 th June		Thaxted "Centenary" Morris Ring Meeting
24 th - 26 th June		Wath-on-Dearne Morris Ring Meeting
8 th - 10 th July		Greensleeves 'Chipperfield' Morris Ring Meeting
22 nd -24 th July		Rutland MM

2012

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

2013

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

The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts
Fools and Animals Unconvention, Oxfordshire, 2010
Hosted by Bloxham Morris and Adderbury Morris Men

22-24 October 2010

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

This year's Unconvention will be based in the Village Hall at Cropredy, near Banbury, and will involve workshops, dancing tour with Bloxham and Ducklington to Stow on the Wold, a visit to Hook Norton Brewery, and a presentation on William Cutler (Old Mettle), Fool for Adderbury and other sides in the first half of the 19th Century. Plus the AGM of course - your chance to have your say.

Costings are still being worked out, but we are aiming for approx. £60 per person.

Closing date for Applications 4th October 2010.

Application Form

Delegate:1).....Fool/Beast/Other.....
2).....Fool/Beast/Other.....
Team:.....
Address for correspondence.....
.....
Tel:Day:.....Eve:.....
e-mail.....
AnySpecial Dietary needs.....

We anticipate having further applicants, if places available.

Return this form with cheque for the full amount (£60 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: triggertroutter1@aol.com

Founded ~ the MORRIS RING ~ 1934 ~