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Newsletter No.74

July 2011

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Photos of 'Thaxted Centenary' Moorcroft Vase by Stephen Adamson

Bagman's Musings

Along with the majority of our membership it was a joy for me to be able to put months of circular 'political' debates leading up to the ARM behind me and concentrate on the dancing. The list I was able to compile, with the cooperation of our colleague Morris Federation and Open Morris Bagmen / Secretaries, enabled me to share with the media details of where approximately 145 sides were performing at 293 venues to mark St George's Day and May 1st. Leicester MM certainly had a great day. The exercise of compiling this catalogue proved to be more complex and time consuming than I had estimated but as the Press Release prompted several direct enquiries to me, and an unknown number to the sides included in the list, I believe it to have been worthwhile.

The **JMO event** in Sheffield was a tremendous success - a huge thank you here to Peter Halfpenney, and Lesley, for masterminding the spectacular. It illustrated far more effectively than any document or diatribe that all three Morris Orgs can all work together to ensure the future of this great living tradition that is the Morris.

I could only get to the Saturday of the **326th Meeting** Hosted by Moulton Morris, marking the 40th Anniversary of the revived Moulton Festival. Sides attending were King John's; Richmond on Swale and Yateley. This was a small but energetic meeting that was obviously embraced by the local community. In contrast, the **327th Meeting**, hosted by Thaxted Morris marking the Centenary of Thaxted Morrismen was vast but equally successful. Sides attending included Dolphin; Moulton; Westminster; Standon; Wadard; Ravensbourne; Leicester; Etcetera; Cambridge; Harthill; Dartington; St Albans; Chanctonbury Ring; Saddleworth; Mayflower; Greensleeves; Helmond; Monkseaton; Moulton; Stafford; Letchworth; Shakespeare; Jockey; Whitchurch; Chalice; Hageneth MM; Colchester; East Suffolk; Offley; East Surrey; Het Utrecht and Bedford. Paul Reece and his team pulled out all the stops - and even persuaded the local Moorcroft craft pottery to donate a superb souvenir piece for each attendee at the Feast.



These were so well received that many men wanted to obtain additional vases for family and friends so I am delighted to report that Maureen Edwards, of Moorcroft, has let us know that there are a limited number remaining of the Thaxted Morris Men Centenary Moorcroft Vases and that they would like to give members of the Morris Ring first refusal before they are advertised to the Moorcroft Collectors Club. The vases cost £265 each and are being offered on a first come, first served basis. If anyone would like a vase please write direct to Mrs Perry Staker, Thaxted PCC Secretary, 39 Mill End, Thaxted, CM6 2LT giving their name and address, together with a cheque for the sum of £265 made payable to 'Thaxted PCC'.

THAXTED, Essex,
 St John Baptist
 Fri Jun 3 2011 3h6 (15)
5088 Yorkshire S Major
 Comp. Nathan J Pitstow
 1 Patricia J Cresshull
 2 Liz Griffith-Jones
 3 Ann Clinton
 4 Dennis Ellisdon
 5 Ian D Cresshull
 6 David E Rothera
 7 Richard Sales
 8 Fred Bone (C)
 To celebrate the centenary of the Thaxted Morris Men, and rung at the start of the Thaxted Centenary Ring Meeting.
 50th peal: 3.
 50th as C.



From 'The Ringing World' No 653: Confirmation that a peal of **5088 Yorkshire S Major** was rung on Friday 3rd June 2011 to mark the centenary of the Thaxted Morris Men.



The **328th Meeting**, hosted by Wath-on-Dearne Morris morphed into a Family Day of Dance attended by just the Wath men and Harthill. The promised "Pretty Villages Tour" lived up to its name and was delightful. At one point the Wath men tried to beat the existing record for the number of people in a phone box. They crammed in eight. [For the record Fourteen people squeezed into a phone booth on Edinburgh's Royal Mile in August 2003, beating the previous record of 12 set in Germany in 1997.]

Squire Peter Halfpenney bravely joining Ripley in a Litchfield Dance - the danger is not the sticks but their banter.



The **329th Meeting**, hosted by Greensleeves Morris Men to mark their 85th Anniversary and the 50th Anniversary of their Chipperfield weekend, was a joy. The weather forecasts were inaccurate and a grand time was had by all: Dolphin; Martlett; Ripley; Longman; Winchester and of course the hosts Greensleeves presented to the public Morris of an extremely high standard. It was also nice to see that wherever we went it was not just the 'spokesmen' who was talking to the audience; there was a concerted effort to engage with the crowd. A report on the meeting will appear later but I would like to make two points: First to record our thanks to Bert Cleaver and his team for producing



such fine food - especially after the motorway accident on the journey down, when Bert's trailer containing the food was rear-end shunted and written off; secondly to hope that the Ripley Unicorn has recovered after being savaged by so many fierce lions.

As I write this we only have one meeting to look forward to this year: the **330th Meeting** hosted in Rutland by the Rutland Morrismen.

May I remind everyone that the Late May Bank holiday 2012 is going to be a week later due to the Queen's Jubilee. If your side regularly organises events around this time if you let me have details of dates for 2012 I will publish lists of who is doing what, where and when. Still looking forward, the Morris Ring

Officers are always looking for sides to volunteer to host events on behalf of the Morris Ring - be they a day of dance; an instructional or full-blown weekend event. If your side might be interested in holding an event under the auspices of the Morris Ring, whether to mark a particular event or anniversary or simply for the hell of it, please discuss it with Peter Halfpenney or myself.



Again looking to the future, at our 2012 ARM we will be electing a new Squire and a new Treasurer. Peter's term of office will be over and Eddie has intimated that he does not wish to stand for re-election:

"As some of you may know, I will not be seeking re-election as Treasurer when my current term of office comes to an end at the 2012 ARM. After 3, often enjoyable and often 'interesting', years it's time for some new blood to take up the cheque book and spread sheets of the Morris Ring.

My report to the ARM is perhaps the correct place for my reflections on my term of office. However, I must pass on my thanks now to Peter & Charlie, and Brian as well, for their counsel, friendship and support throughout my time as Treasurer. It's been one of the real pleasures of my time as an Officer to work with them all as a team on issues great and small.

Sadly I've not been able to get to the last Ring Meetings of the year due to other commitments. My last big event will therefore be (rather conveniently!) Saddleworth Rushcart.

Again as you may know, I'm this years' Jockey, and will be the only serving Morris Ring Officer to have ridden the Rushcart. Being Jockey is the proudest achievement there is in our side, but I will be proud also to do this as Morris Ring Treasurer. However, this does of course mean the lads will be dragging me through more trees than usual to keep me in my place...

I look forward to seeing many of you on the Stangs on my home turf. Don't forget to keep the brass kettle well filled!"

Cheers Ed

Could you be the next Squire or Treasurer - or so you know someone who could do the job with a little encouragement? Please think about it.

Having 'inherited' the task of keeping the Morris Ring Logbook (maintaining an account of Morris Ring meetings and event) from Keith Francis I will here add

an appeal to host sides and those who attended either the Moulton or Thaxted meetings. If you have any "information" that you think should be include in the Logbook entry - please let me know. It can be details such as the statistics for the side of Thaxted granddads who performed: *14 members with a total age of 980 years and an average age of 70; 76 grandchildren, that is an average of 5.43; and 8 great grandchildren, an average of 0.57.* My thanks to Daniel Fox for these figures. I especially need information about anything that happened on tours, songs sung, newspaper cuttings/ reports, anything in fact to illustrate the event. I was only able to attend for part of the Moulton meeting so I am especially short of information about that one.

Google Group: I have received several complaints about the level of discussion on the MR Google Group. Please may I remind all users of this group, who are principally Bagmen or Squires of member and associate member sides, that it is intended as an information forum! It is neither a chat room nor an abuse forum. If people are put off from looking at the site by this sort of stuff it means that news and important information might be missed.

Over the Summer I intend to establish a second group to provide a vehicle, as one disgruntled e-mailer put it: "... where those who have agendas and wish to vent their spleens can go and do so without annoying the rest of us" or more politely a forum for general discussion amongst the wider membership of the Morris Ring, but in the meantime please carry out these discussions elsewhere. So far it has been an interesting 'season', with the weather seemingly even less predictable than usual. With Leicester MM I have had wonderful weekends in the Forest, with the Forest of Dean Men, and in Sherringham, with the Lobster Potties. Both events really well supported but one with indifferent weather and the other with wall to wall sunshine. Sadly I missed the Leeds Dales Tour this year but have the truly eccentric Saddleworth Rushcart to look forward to - but I will again pass on the wrestling! As the season progresses please remember to submit 'stuff' for inclusion in the Morris Ring publications - whether the Circular or this Newsletter. There follows a wide range of reports, comments, information items and adverts.

John Maher



John Maher, our Overseas Bagman and long standing webmaster, had been in hospital with what were thought to be heart difficulties. After he returned home he asked that news of his illness be suppressed. He did not want a lot of fuss and was upbeat and optimistic for his future health. Sadly he was readmitted to hospital in late June and

further investigations have concluded that he has inoperable kidney cancer.

He remains lively of mind but is physically is 'a wreck' at the moment, although his inherent bodily strength resulting from his walking and Morris dancing will be a help to him but we remain hopeful that he will be strong and resilient enough to put up a stalwart fight against this evil condition.

He is still i-pod connected to the internet and can therefore be contacted directly by email however I would suggest that dealing with a stream of e-contacts would be onerous and wearing for him so I encourage only those really close to him to use this channel to convey good wishes. Encouraging messages sent to John's home would be a fillip for John himself and his family so please rally round and post a card or note to 'Shanboe', Claremont Avenue, Bristol, BS7 8JD.

We are putting plans in place to ensure that our website is kept as up to date as possible but you will understand that the usual levels of efficiency under John's management are likely to be impaired for a while.

efdss Cecil Sharp House Autumn highlights:

- As If Possessed: celebrating the life and work of Maud Karpeles
- Spiers & Boden
- Men on the Fiddle
- The EFDSS National Gathering
- Kathryn Tickell: Northumbrian Voices

Visit <http://www.efdss.org/> for full information about events organised by the EFDSS not just in London at Cecil Sharp House but across the country.



John Gasson Jig Competition If you want to enter this year's Competition at Sidmouth, please be warned there are a limited number of slots available and they are filling earlier than usual. The entry form is available from <http://www.johngassonjig.org.uk/> . If you're thinking of entering a solo or two-person jig, there is lots of helpful information on the site.



Photo of John from this site

BBC Performing Arts Fund Community Dance **Deadline: 12 July 2011**

The BBC Performing Arts Fund is now accepting applications for community dance projects. The scheme has up to £200,000 to award, with grants of £500 - £5,000 available.

Applications are welcomed from groups working across the UK with all age groups and dance styles. The fund aims to encourage participation and audience development. It also aims to enable groups to undertake more challenging projects through commissions and collaborations with professional artists and other local organisations. The focus of the fund will change each year - the focus for 2011 is dance; in 2012 it will be music and 2013 theatre.

For more information visit www.bbc.co.uk/performingartsfund.

From the Groups page ...

*We're looking for applications from groups working across all ages and genres, and that get their local community's toes tapping. From flamenco to hip hop; from ballroom to **Morris dancing**; groups the length and breadth of the UK are enthusiastic and passionate about dance and we want to support and encourage their development.*

Grants awarded through this scheme will allow groups to carry out training, attract new audiences, encourage new members and raise their profile in their communities. We want to encourage groups to take on more challenging projects through commissions and encouraging collaboration with professional artists and other local organisations.

Ultimately, we want to encourage a wider audience for, and participation in, the exciting UK community dance sector.

Thanks to Mike Wilson-Jones Westminster Morris Men

North Aisle roof of Thaxted Parish Church: The Ravensbourne Morris Men have suggested that as a gesture of thanks to the Church sides might like to



make a contribution towards the North Aisle Roof Appeal. Clearly this section of Thaxted Church is in desperate need of repair - there is a very real danger of it collapsing under the next really big fall of snow. The Parochial Church Council needs to raise **£200,000** by the end of 2011 in order to pay for these urgent repairs. If

any side - and not simply those who attended the Thaxted meeting this year - would like to make a donation to help maintain what is in effect the 'mother church' of the Morris Ring please send it to the MR Treasurer Eddie Worrall by the end of September - when hopefully a decent donation can be made towards this appeal.

Sword Dance Union Annual Day of Dance and Tournament 15th October 2011

**Sword Dance Union
Annual Day of Dance
and
Longsword Tournament**

**15th October 2011
Guisborough**

Programme of Events

- 10:30 am – 2:15 pm
Dance Displays around Guisborough
- 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Longsword Competitions and Showcase
Performances in Prior Pursglove College
TS14 6BU

All events open to the public
Refreshments available

For further information call
01642 454371 or visit
www.redcarsword.org.uk

Redcar Sword Dancers are delighted to be hosting the event this year in the historic market town of Guisborough, close to the epicentre of longsword dancing in north east Yorkshire. Within a few miles you will find villages synonymous with the tradition - Boosbeck, Lingdale, Skelton, North Skelton and Loftus. Sadly none of these teams are still in existence, but on the 15th October Guisborough will once again ring to the clash of swords and echo to the sound of tunes such as 'The Oyster Girl' and 'Lass o'Darrowgill'.

So, this is an invitation to all sides who dance longsword as part of their repertoire to polish up their swords and come along and join us to

show off their skills. You could even enter the tournament! There are classes for both traditional and 'own' dances, and for junior sides - so the choice is yours.

On the weekend there will be an exhibition at a local museum covering the area's longsword traditions. Recent publicity has already provided numerous contacts and memorabilia as well as some previously undiscovered nuggets of information.

If any team would like more information contact Brian Pearce
brian.pearce11@btinternet.com or 01642 454371.

Adelaide Meeting of the Morris Ring. Adelaide Morris Men would like to host a meeting under the auspices of the Morris Ring in Australia sometime in 2013. They write "Obviously Australia has summer at the opposite end of the year to England, so we could possibly make a date during the English winter. Australian summer is rather hot though, so it might be good to look at late March, early April". Watch this space!

Mike James Squire - AMM

Show off in a Ski Resort

"I recently met a group of Morris men at the Sparsholt agricultural show near Andover. I am not 100% sure if it was your group or not. We spoke about trying to bring some Morris men out to Bulgaria. I have been living and working overseas for many years now but still harbour fond memories of Morris men from my youth. I grew up in Hampshire and North Dorset and used to work at the Sidmouth Folk festival so I have seen the odd troop!

At the moment I live in a ski resort in south west Bulgaria where we have a very strong tradition of folk music and dancing. I currently organise and help to create various festivals in Bansko throughout the summer. I would love it if we could somehow arrange a troop of proper Morris men to come to Bansko to "show off" our traditional British folk culture.

James and Vania Hughes, Hotel Avalon, El Tepe 4, Bansko, Bulgaria.

Tel 00359 749 88399 www.avalonhotel-bulgaria.com

DERT London 2012 The Dancing England Rapper Tournament (DERT) is being held in London from 30th March to 1st April 2012 and being called the **Rapperlympics** In the Olympic spirit we are keen to give the event a truly celebratory flavour and we hope you will join us in London next year. It will be based at Cecil Sharp House, home of the EFDSS and hosted by Thrales Rapper.

DERT competition dances will be performed in the popular pubs of Soho but there is also room for teams who just want to strut their stuff. Those teams who do not want to participate in the competition will be able to display their dances during the day and at the showcase on Saturday evening.

A separate competition will also be held for youth teams (DERTy), split into 2 age categories for Juniors (under 12s) and Youths (under 18s).

Over the years DERT has undoubtedly improved the standard of Rapper dancing. 2012 is a great chance to meet other Rapper teams, pick up some tips and to visit London as it prepares for the Olympics. If you are interested in coming to DERT 2012, please contact the organisers asap dert2012.co.uk or email info@dert2012.co.uk

Videos of Thaxted: Utrecht MM have put three videos of the Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting onto YouTube but as they explained "Unfortunately they all feature Utrecht MM, but *vanity is the mother of the china cabinet*".

- William and Nancy (Bledington) at The Plough at Birdbrook (Tour A Stop 2): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5WrBugsP7A>
- Ladies' Pleasure (Bledington) at The Vine at Great Bardfield (Tour A Stop 5): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pA10BcLxPs>
- Riggs of Doom (style of Bampton - music by Frans Trom and dance by Mik Lammers, former of Utrecht MM) as part of the massed display on Saturday evening: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asrNOG-QukQ>

They also plan to upload, in the near future, a video of the 248th Morris Ring Meeting held in 1993 hosted by Utrecht.

Floris Jan van Hall BagChairVidWeb of Utrecht MM



This Morning programme at ITV1 are looking for applicants for a new series called "Garden Party." They are looking for the king or queen of garden parties.

This Morning will be filming garden parties around the UK this summer to find the 'Hostess with the mostess.' Successful applicants will get the chance to have their own small garden party and show off their hosting skills. They will then visit 3 other small garden parties to see who reigns supreme in the garden. Contestants will be marked on how good the garden party was and a winner will be unveiled.

If you think you've got what it takes to be a great garden party host then get in touch. Email us at thismorning@itv.com and explain....

- Why you want to host your own 'This Morning Garden Party' and why you are suitable
 - What your perfect garden party would be
- Describe yourself and your personality
- What theme your garden party would be
 - Include a photo of yourself

All entrants must be over the age of 18 and for full terms and conditions please visit our website at itv.com/terms

Sam Rees-Jones ITV Studios' **ITV plc.** Upper Ground, London .SE1 9LT



Rapper Research Phil Heaton is working on the Rapper publication for the EFDSS *Sharp's Sword Book Centenary*, and he is trying to locate information on NE teams. He is especially interested in the 1953 Derwnet Valley, The 1958 Monkseaton, 1962, Newcastle, 1964 Newcastle/Monkseaton etc, and the 1968 Monkseaton meetings. He says:
" I want to find out who of the local NE teams danced and who were invited as 'special guests' I know that Royal Earsdon Sword danced in 1960 and that Amble Sword were also present. Are there any records for Newcastle MM?"

Phil Heaton

Plumpton Festival of Traditional Dance for Primary Schools

Report and photos by Ann & John Bacon of SEFAN and Ditchling Morris

Early in the morning of the 27th May the ground shook as 250 horses converged on Plumpton Ridge. It was not 1264, the year of the Battle of Lewes but 2011 and the event about to unfold was the third Plumpton Festival of Traditional Dance for primary schools, held at Plumpton Race Course!



A special feature this year's Festival was for the children to find out about the different types of English hobbyhorse and then make their own to parade at the Festival. Children taking part were from years 3 & 4 of Plumpton, Chailey, Hamsey, Newick, Fletching, Wivelsfield, Ditchling & Danehill schools. As in 2009 & 2010 Dave Johns, teacher at Plumpton & member of Ditchling & Long Man Morris was the Festival Director, supported by John & Ann Bacon (SEFAN & Ditchling Morris)

Preparations started earlier in the year with each school learning a dance from one of regions, North-West, Welsh Borders, the Cotswolds or the Fens. Each



has its own distinctive style. The North West dances are mainly 'processional', originate from the age-old 'rush-cart' processions, when new rushes were taken to the local church to insulate the feet of the congregation from the cold stone floor. The wild, robust dances of the Welsh Borders were performed by agricultural workers in the winter when work, money & food were scarce. Cotswold

Morris may derive from medieval Court dances & is typified by sets of 6-8 dancers wearing bells below the knee, performing stick or hanky dances. 'Molly dancing' from the Fens has 'agricultural roots' dating back to the custom & festivities of blessing the parish ploughs on Plough Monday.

Tuition for dance & activities was organised & underpinned by Ditchling Morris with valuable assistance from members of local Morris 'sides', Long Man, Knots of May & Hunters Moon, some of whom are also school staff members. Funds

were raised to stage the Festival & to cover the cost of specialist tuition from Gail & Lucy Duff of 'TRADS' who ran a workshop for teachers about the history, use & construction of the various regional types of hobbyhorse.



Bright & early on Festival Day the organisers welcomed the teachers & streams of excited children clutching a brilliant array of hobbyhorses, closely followed by a team of trainee 'Play Leaders' from Chailey Comprehensive. They were a tremendous help with all aspects of the day, from setting out chairs, acting as 'Gofers', or helping with the face-painting plus persuasively selling draw tickets at the afternoon performance to raise funds for the 2012 festival. The programme of morning activities for the children included putting the finishing touches to hobbyhorses and dance costumes, rehearsing their dances and joining in a lively barn-dance workshop run by Gordon & Joy Allen of the 'Dead Efnic' ceilidh band.

The afternoon festivities were opened by Mrs Annie Rogers, Head of Plumpton school who welcomed special guests Lewes M.P Norman Baker; Shirley Collins MBE President of the English Folk Song & Dance Society & Patron of the South East Folk Arts Network (SEFAN), representatives of the Morris organisations, festival supporters, parents & friends.

There was an audible gasp as more than 200 hobbyhorses trotted through the audience to the tune of Blaydon Races, filling the dance area to create an amazing atmosphere & a moving kaleidoscope of brilliant colour. Each school performed their special dance. This was followed by a ceilidh dance producing a sea of smiling multi-patterned faces whirling round the dance-floor. Then everyone joined in the 'Plumpton-traditional' Morris dance called 'Shepherd's



Hey as a fitting finale to the fantastic 2011 Festival.

Funding for the festivals was made possible with the support of the SEFAN, a facilitating and umbrella charity dedicated to the support and promotion of

Traditional Arts to children, adults & the wider community. The charity acts as a first point of contact for anything to do with Folk, World and Roots performance in the Arts Council England, South East region.

Funds enabled SEFAN to provide workshops for staff & children, venues, resource packs & P.A systems.

We are indebted to Brighton, Long Man & Ditchling Morris, Rotary International, Harveys Brewery, Sussex Community Foundation Grassroots Grants, Plumpton Race Course, North Wealden School Sports Partnership, & the George Pheby Bequest who kindly supported the 2011 Festival.

Ann and John Bacon SEFAN and Ditchling Morris

Stolen in Keighley Yorkshire Hohner Pokerwork D/G melodeon in battered black rucksack. It has:

One brown strap, one black; One bent bass button Bellows taped with black fabric tape; Top note on G row substituted with a plastic siren and therefore not sounding at all; Treble reed-blocks marked "D" and "G". Also there are screw holes on front face for mounting bracket for radio mic transmitter (Sennheiser, also nicked) and some nickel silver bellows pins replaced with galvanised steel pins of similar design.

It was stolen in Keighley Yorkshire from a parked camper van end of June. It only plays Flagcrackers of Craven dance tunes. If you hear anything of this instrument please contact West Yorkshire Police on 01924294662 quoting crime number 13110296105

George Speller george@georgespeller.com

'Aspects of performance' A call for papers has been issued for a one day academic symposium on the theme '*Aspects of performance*' to be held on the 18th Nov.2011 as part of the *International Mummers Unconvention*, Bath. The Unconvention will be a celebration of all things mumming, with a clear emphasis on performances and workshops. The symposium will provide an opportunity for folk play practitioners and researchers to share their work.

The Symposium seeks interesting papers, footage with accompanying commentary, small exhibitions and poster submissions. Full information at

<http://mastermummers.org/blog/?p=123> which includes an initial list of interesting questions that contributors might like to consider, and provides details of how to make submissions.

The symposium will be hosted by the Department of Performing Arts at Bath Spa University on their historic Newton Park campus, and will be based in the University Theatre. Latest news and announcements for the main International Mummers Unconvention at: <http://mummersunconvention.wordpress.com/>

Symposium Leaders: Prof. Peter Harrop; Dr. Peter Millington & Prof. Mike Pearson



Sky One's *GOT TO DANCE*, is back for a third series. Davina McCall will host the competition, with Ashley Banjo, Kimberley Wyatt and Adam Garcia returning as judges, as dancers battle it out to win the life-changing sum of a quarter of a million pounds and the chance to become the *GOT TO DANCE CHAMPION 2012*.

We are now seeking applications and anyone who thinks they have what it takes to come to our auditions- whether they are 4 or 84, whether a soloist or group, a professional or amateur. Whatever their style of dance, whatever their ability, we would love to see it! Auditions are in July and August and anyone wanting to apply can do so by going to www.sky.com/dance

Got to Dance is a positive show that celebrates every genre of dance. "It really would be great to get some wonderful Morris dancers along to showcase their talents and this style of dance."

To apply or for more information please contact Kerry Hunt, **Casting AP**, *GOT TO DANCE* on 0207 985 1996 or kerry.hunt@princesstv.com



South West and Wales Area Reps Interim Report

Dartington Jigs Instructional

16th April 2011

Nine Dartington men and two members of Exeter Morris Men attended the day of jig instruction held at Dartington Primary School. Foreman Steve Holley organized the day and led the jigs training ably backed by our resident musicians, John Skirton, Joe Spalding, Ron Marks, Brian Stone and Alison.

The days programme looked at a number of jigs from varying traditions. The morning session started with Fieldtown, Ladies Pleasure and was followed by the Bampton double jig, The Nutting Girl. A session of stepping took place prior to the Bampton jig, as the Exeter men were unaccustomed to single step Bampton! However after some useful practice the step was mastered and we were able to practice the intricacies of the jig (in particular the straddle capers) without mishap. Actually not quite true as Joe Vincent turned his ankle and tore a tendon in dramatic Oscar performing fashion after reaching the sky on one of his capers. Unfortunately Joe is now going to be out of Morris dancing action for at least a month, which is a real shame.

After a tea and coffee break the practice resumed with the Bampton jig, Princess Royal, followed by (after a rest) the Adderbury jig, Princess Royal - just to confuse the music! Before lunch there was time for a brief look at Bucknell, Bonnets So Blue, with some added improvements suggested by the Exeter men.

A pleasant lunch outside in the sun enabled some welcome rest from the dancing. The bottled beer was pretty good also.

In the afternoon the Bonnets So Blue jig was further perfected and this was followed by the exhausting Headington jig, Old Mother Oxford; a good finishing dance, if ever there was one. Actually not quite the end as with 3.00 pm approaching there was just time for Nat and Casper to have a go at the intricate Bampton jig, Bacca Pipes. Dartington now have a set of bacca pipes, which the youngsters performed over without any breakages, receiving an appreciative applause from the oldies watching on.

From all that was learnt, there should be some great jig moments to look forward to during the coming season. Next year I would like to extend this event to all SW&W sides if they are interested

Into

So the Summer Season is here! South West and Wales sides were out in force on May Day. Well, "in force" might be a bit of a strong word for some sides, but "out" they were!! In Wales, Sweyn's Eye and Isca joined up for a joint programme, which sadly reflects upon numbers, but dance they did!! Chalice really were out in force and sent me a link to pictures on Facebook which I promptly lost - sorry guys. Exeter, Plymouth and Trigg were all out on May Day, as were Mendip. Frome Valley reports that they are getting a lot of enquiries for bookings, which is good, but places a strain on their very slim resources. Many sides are struggling with numbers; don't know what the answer is, but we all just have to keep plugging away I guess. Dartington are going to try the beer mat idea. I will keep you posted.

MAYDAY, MAYDAY! April 30th & May 1st 2011

By popular decision, DMM decided to dance opposite jagged rocks called The Dancing Beggars at Little Dartmouth on May Day. When asked if he could provide breakfast, the landlord of the Norton Park Hotel, offered us overnight camping, if we turned up to dance on the 30th April. Well, quite a number did, and we had a nice dance spot outside the dining room, with about 20 guests watching. We continued to entertain the guests until about 9pm, when we were treated to food by the landlord. After that we sat round the bar fire and entertained drinkers till those staying overnight went to the room provided.

After 3 weeks of amazing weather for April, 1st May was thankfully dry, but that was about all; there was a biting north wind, and it was very, very cold at

the Dancing Beggars! Still we did get dancing as a watery sun tried to appear! We did a few wind-swept dances, hanging onto our wavers in case the wind whipped them away to decorate the Dancing Beggars!! Brian regaled us with a splendid rendition of the seasonal "Hal an Tow". Then we walked back to the NT car park and drove down to Dartmouth, just as the sun broke free of the cloud.

Tagore Festival May Day

Dartington Morris returned to its spiritual home on Sunday May 1st when we were invited to begin the



Opening Ceremony of the Tagore Festival at Dartington Hall. Leonard Elmhurst was the first patron of the Dartington Morris and he was also a great admirer of the Indian philosopher, poet and songsmith Rabadabadindrabanatt Agore (Rabindranath Tagore for short). He seems to have been a sort of Bob Dylan of his day and he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913

The programme they are making will be for BBC2, shown probably in the autumn. It is part of a series of 3 or 4 programmes tentatively entitled 'Towns' being presented by one of the presenters from the 'Coast' series about towns of Britain

I have received the summer dance out programmes from most of the sides in my area, and a very varied programme it looks too. I hope to get out to as many sides as I can this summer. On a less happy note, the email for Porthleven Morris Men down in Cornwall is bouncing. I hear rumours that they have folded. If anyone knows, or a Porthleven member sees this, perhaps they could get in touch?

Well, that's about it for now. Keep sending me info, and I will be able to put in more about other sides and less about Dartington!!

Robin Springett

MORRIS RING PUBLICATIONS

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Circular No 62 is now online at:

http://www.themorrisring.org/thecircular/images/Circular_62.pdf

<p>Editor of The Morris Dancer Post vacant. Interested parties please contact Peter Halfpenney or any member of the Archive Committee.</p>

Fools and Beasts Unconvention Don't forget to get your applications in for this year's Fools and Beasts Unconvention, Oct 28th -30th, hosted by Kennet Men. Any Fool, Character, Animal or Beast - or even those aspiring to be one of these - can apply. Ask your side to sponsor you! I need to get some idea of numbers soon, so that Kennet can organise a superb weekend. Application Form on <http://www.foolsandbeasts.org.uk/> From Robert Chisman & Trigger



London 2012 Details of the Cultural Olympiad are available from their all singing and little dancing web site. Sadly I have nothing else to report concerning Morris involvement in any aspect of this much vaunted celebration:



<http://www.london2012.com/cultural-olympiad>



Morris 18-30 Weekend
7th-9th October 2011
Venue: Oxford



Hosts: Icknield Way MM <http://www.morris1830.org.uk>

Advisory Council Meeting Sunday 9th October 2011
Venue: Oxford (Details to be confirmed)

☺ **Jigs Instructional** 20th -22nd January 2012 Sutton Bonington

Other meetings under the auspices of the Morris Ring 2012 and beyond
2012

- 3rd - 5th March (?) ARM Hosted by Harthill (TBC)
- 25th- 27th May 331st Chipping Campden Cotswold 'Dover Games' Olympic Meeting
- 8th - 10th June 332nd Thaxted Meeting
- 13-15th July 333rd Letchworth Centenary Morris Meeting
- 31 Aug - 2 Sept. 334th Hartley 60th Anniversary Morris Meeting

2013

- ? March ARM Hosted by Whitchurch (TBC)
- TBC March / April 335th Adelaide MM
- 31st May - 2nd June 336th Thaxted Morris Meeting
- 21st - 23rd June 337th Dolphin Morris Men 
- 5th - 7th July 338th Martlet Sword & Morris Men (60th Anniv)

2014 80th Anniversary of Foundation of the Morris Ring

- March ARM Hosted by TBA
- TBC Thaxted Morris Meeting

2015

- March ARM Hosted by TBA
- TBC Thaxted Morris Meeting

☆☆☆☆☆



On-line Links:

<http://www.themorrisring.org/> The main MR website with pages stuffed to the gunnels with all you need to know about the MR. No registration required to access - the site is open for the world to visit.

<http://groups.google.com/group/the-morris-ring?hl=en&pli=1> The Morris Ring Google Group (MRGG). Still open for messages but files section is now closed. Forum for debate or announcements. Private site; Contact Morris Ring Bagman to register to use.

<https://sites.google.com/site/morrisring/?pli=1> Morris Ring Clubs Website. Private site, register to use. (Likely to replace the MRGG in time.) Files can be posted here so you can access Newsletters, circulars etc. as well as current affairs, events calendar & *What's On* news.

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Morris-Ring/158759257502840> Morris Ring Facebook site: Managed by Ollie King.
oliver.king11@btinternet.com

MORRIS SHOP RAMBLINGS: Stephen 'BfB' Adamson
After having had only one Morris free weekend since the momentous Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting, Morris business and socialising continues to move at an ever more accelerating pace. Of late, the Morris Shop has been seen at the Great Yorkshire Morris & Persephone Weekend of Dance at Bishop Monkton, Green Oak Morris Men's 40th Anniversary Weekend of Dance including the Hooton Pagnell Victorian Fair and the Greensleeves Morris Men's Morris Ring Meeting.



It was during the evening feast of the latter event that Bgm Gerald Killingworth officially announced Mr Little Willy's Honorary Membership of Greensleeves Morris Men after which Sqr Chris Benson presented him with his bespoke 'Greensleeves' apparel. On behalf of the recipient, a spokesperson said that he was both honoured and humbled by the whole experience. That same spokesperson has a feeling that the little chap will now be unbearable to live with but he will try to keep Little Willy's feet on terra firma..... or else!!

What's new at the Morris Shop? A few things to whet your appetite:

» **PAT SHAW 1917-1977** (Paperback 247 pages book £12.50)

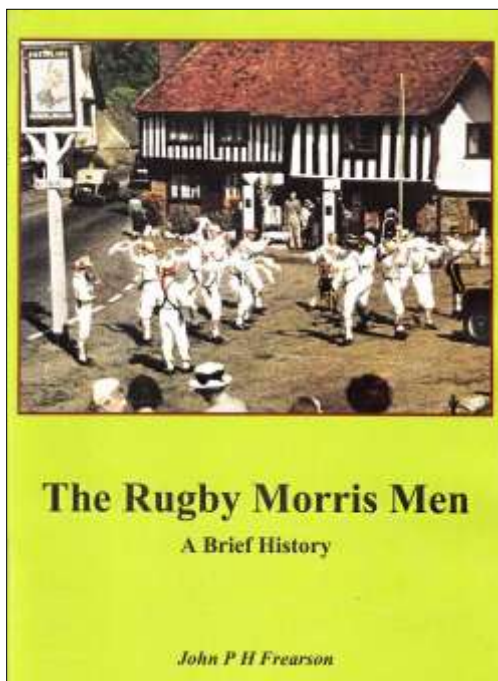


Patrick Shudham-Shaw was a man of many talents. He had a thirst for learning and had not only an encyclopaedic knowledge of most subjects (including whiskey & food) he was an authority on folk music, song and dance in many countries. He played numerous musical instruments and spoke several languages -indeed it was said that there were none he could not just pick up and play or converse in. He was a fine singer, natural teacher and a lover of puns with a sometimes wicked sense of humour.

It was his prodigious output of dances in all styles and levels of complexity which has led him to be labelled the twentieth century Dancing Master.

» **SURFING THE SCRAPEBOOK(50 Years of Datchet Morris)** CD 24 tracks, approx.. 50 mins £6.00. This is an entertaining and informative (two words that rarely go together) insight to the history and current day activities of Datchet Morris. This is a superb example of folklore multi-tasking and demonstrates their expertise in the arts of Cotswold, Border, Longsword Dance & Mumming.





» **THE RUGBY MORRIS MEN** (A Brief History, paperback ~ £4.50) by our very own John Frearson of Bedford Morris Men.

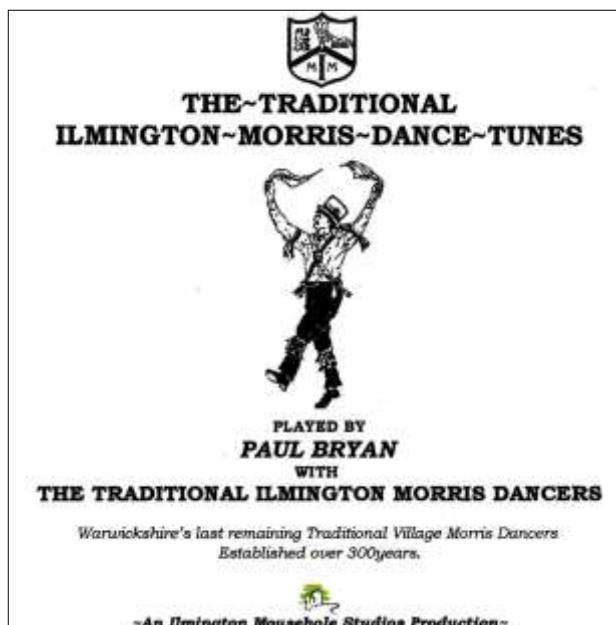
Rugby Morris Men were formed in 1946 for a 'one night' show by members of a Country Dance Class at the Percival Guildhouse. They decided to use their new skills and the Rugby Morris Men were a feature of the local scene for the next 10 years, until works moves, two tragically early deaths and changing circumstances led to their demise.

» **THE TRADITIONAL ILMINGTON MORRIS DANCE TUNES CD**

20 tracks playing for 57 minutes £10.00.

This is a wonderful library of Ilmington Morris music played by Paul Bryan; he who knows a thing or two about their tradition.

The fact that this CD was put together from recordings made as early as 1988 only enhances the listening experience.



As always, The Morris Shop is contactable via Sadamsonbfb@blueyonder.co.uk, Tel: 01274 773830 and/or FB: BFB's Morris Shop.

Preferably, I am looking forward to seeing as many as will at the 330th Meeting, guests of Rutland Morris, 22nd-24th July and then the Saddleworth Rushcart on Sunday 21st August 2011.

Steve BFB,
The Morris Shop



Some of the youth of Leicester MM were at Glastonbudget.

".....great to see you there. Really added to the atmosphere, so many thanks. Just happened to be near the blow up slide and took this picture" wrote Dave (aka the White Rabbit).

A total Stanger - who gave his permission for this photo to be used.

Morris is fun!

Charlie

Bagman of the Morris Ring

the MORRIS RING
founded ~ 1934 ~