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Newsletter No. 106

July 2017

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Future Events

2017

18th August – 4th September **Australian Morris Ring National Ale**

26th – 27th August **Ring Meeting no. 356: Saddleworth Rushcart Meeting**

This is open to all; no need to apply via the Bagman, please inform the Rushcart Secretary of your interest directly.

2018

10th March **Annual Representatives' Meeting, Oak Farm Lodge, Hatherton**

19th May **JMO Day of Dance, Peterborough**

Hosted by Crosskey Clog (Open Morris), details to follow

2nd – 4th June **Thaxted weekend of dance**

Please apply directly to Thaxted Morris Men.

24th – 25th June **Save the date - Helmond Ring Meeting**

Details to follow when confirmed

29th June – 1st July **Save the date - Whitchurch celebration weekend**

Details to follow when confirmed

25th – 26th August **Saddleworth Rushcart Ring Meeting**

This is open to all; no need to apply via the Bagman, please inform the Rushcart Secretary of your interest directly.

Any clubs seeking to host a Ring Meeting in 2018, please contact the Ring Bagman urgently.

Ring Massed Dances

Please will sides practice these dances through the winter season and in advance of any Ring events they are attending; please only get up to perform dances you are confident of doing and remember the overall impression is what is important for massed morris, rather than one side's particular interpretation.

<u>Adderbury</u>	Lads-a-Bunchum Black Joke
<u>Bampton</u>	Bobbing Around
<i>(finish on rounds)</i>	Rose Tree Quaker
<u>Bledington</u>	Young Collins William & Nancy
<u>Brackley</u>	Jockey to the Fair
<u>Fieldtown</u>	Valentine Balance the Straw
<u>Headington</u>	Getting Upstairs Constant Billy (short sticks) Blue Eyed Stranger
<u>Lichfield</u>	Vandalls

Sadly Missed

John 'JB' Baxter, Dolphin Morris Men



It is with sadness that we announce the passing of founder member and second Squire (1971-73), JB, who died suddenly on 6 May 2017, age 70. He was one of Dolphin's characters and, despite living in The Lake District for much of his latter life, he was always a Dolphin and frequently joined us to perform.

His introduction to Dolphin was during the first weeks of its existence in January 1968. Allegedly poached from an EFDSS social dance night next door (where, on his own

admission, he had gone in search of "crumpet"!), he was persuaded to join the nascent side on meeting the guys after practice in the Dolphin pub in Nottingham (whence we took our name). By all accounts he took to the morris with great enthusiasm, Dolphin style under his squire-ship being described as "con brio" and "taking no prisoners". As one of our side told me, "...if your hat blew off in a dance you'd be better to pick it up quickly or most likely it would get trodden on - there were some very mangled hats worn in those days!" In one famous incident, he "flattened with one blow a skinhead who was intruding into the set during a dance...and never broke step while doing it!"

He stopped dancing regularly with the side when work took him away from Nottingham in the mid-70s, but he always remained in touch. He joined other sides where he subsequently lived, including Banchory in Scotland and Furness when in Cumbria.

In the last 10 years or so he renewed active service with Dolphin as a regular attender at Ring Meetings and other weekend events, travelling down from Cumbria in one of his idiosyncratic sports cars. He was always excellent company on these jaunts and had a great fund of anecdotes of the different scrapes and amusing situations he got into in his wide-ranging life. His repertoire of humorous songs and recitations was the stuff of legend. We will miss him greatly.

Wil Walker, Squire, Dolphin Morris Men

Frank Bull 08/11/1928-19/06/2017, founding Squire 1968-1976 of Green Ginger Morris Men

It is with much sadness that the Green Ginger Morris and Sword Men announce the passing of Frank Bull after an illness.

Frank was the first squire of Green Ginger Morris Men who formed in 1968 originally to perform predominantly Yorkshire longsword, but under the tutelage of Frank aided by his melodeon came to perform primarily Cotswold traditions.

Frank brought his knowledge of Cotswold dances to Hull from the Foresters team in Nottingham, and his first involvement in what turned out to be a vibrant folk scene was with the Portobello dancers from the Portobello Scouts in Hull, who under the auspices of Cathy Mitchell, EFDSS East Riding area rep., performed longsword dancing. On discovering Folk Union One, the flourishing music club founded by the harmony singing family, the Watersons who turned the Olde Blue Bell in Lowgate into a renowned showcase of traditional music, he met up with a spin-off from the club, the Green Ginger Men, a dance team instigated by Mike Waterson (who decided on the name). They performed Yorkshire longsword, and were also involved in rapper dancing and mumming plays. Frank started teaching the dancers Cotswold morris, starting with Bean Setting from Bampton in the Bush. Frank worked at a department store in Hull whence he acquired the carpet binding from which he manufactured baldrics to his own design. That store (Hammonds, since taken over) also provided the an ex-window display model of a horse's head which became "Oss", the accompanying animal with the side. The highlight of the year for Green Ginger was to join Frank on his annual return to his roots in Nottingham for the Foresters' feast. He cut a distinctive figure in rag coat, top hat, and carrying a curly pipe in a spring clip mounted on top of his melodeon.

In 1971 he was proud to accept the Squire's Staff of Office from the Ring at Thaxted, an acknowledgement of his work in building the team.

Although the side eventually succumbed in February 2013 to falling membership, it developed into a strong side performing in a variety of styles including rapper and Northwest, and befitting their folk club origins always ready to burst into song. They hosted two successful Ring meetings, the first in Beverley, the second in Hull, and went on two trips to the Netherlands. Frank's influence on the local folk dance scene was profound, and enriched the lives of a lot of people. Several members moved on to populate sides in other parts of Britain.

Frank was many things other than a Morris man, something of which most of the team saw in hints. In his working life he was a sailor in the Royal Navy, gamekeeper, store window dresser, hairdresser, salon manager, salon designer, and company director. Hobbies included sailing, rock climbing, collector and player of odd musical instruments, history, and ventriloquism.

He will be greatly missed, and our thoughts go to his wife, Marjorie, and their daughter, Sally, and sons, Martin and Adam.

Calling all Foremen

The Morris Ring is looking to develop guidance on good practice at being a Foreman for teaching and practising dance, possibly in conjunction with a wider project involving the other Organisations. To this end, the Bagman is seeking to collect data from foremen as follows:

One email per foreman, with the title of “Foreman’s Handbook,” stating

- name
- side
- dance style(s)

to bagman@themorrisring.org, before the end of August, please.

The email should contain brief answers to the following four questions:

1. State up to three things you *always* try to do when teaching and practising dance
2. State up to three things you try *never* to do when teaching and practising dance
3. State the one thing you feel has the greatest impact on the quality of dance of your team
4. Describe briefly the teaching style or approach you find most effective with your side?

The Ring Bagman reserves the right to ignore any essays, polemics, philosophical treatises and over-long responses. There may be opportunity for more detailed input at a later stage in the process. Please demonstrate your experience and expertise through the brevity and efficiency of your responses. Sides with multiple Foremen may submit one each.

Thanks in anticipation, *Jon*.

Another Morris Ring initiative

The Bagman of the Morris Ring receives many emails. Increasing among them are the ones of this type:

“We would like to start a morris dance troupe in our area. We have seen our local troupe but they are all old and we want to do something different. We’ve learned the basic moves from YouTube and now we would like some advice on getting gigs and festival bookings.”

This sort of thing worries me – material on YouTube is not subject to quality control, and one lousy side at a fete, fair or festival can impact on bookings for many.

It would be nice if potential new sides of young people had an offer of support in their early stages, to learn the basics properly before they do their own thing. Picasso was an excellent draughtsman first, after all.

To this end, I would like to co-ordinate an offer of support to any potential nascent morris sides, or to individuals looking to form them, by putting them in contact with local individuals or teams prepared to help out with an instructional, a workshop, loan of a musician etc. to get their enterprise off the ground. The idea would be to have volunteers across all the regions and dance styles prepared to support the formation of new teams and give them a quality start. I know lots of sides do this already on an *ad hoc* basis, I’m looking to co-ordinate communication better.

The Ring is also looking at ways to support new teams with discounts at the Morris Shop on bells, books and DVDs.

If you would like to offer your services in this initiative, please email bagman@themorrisring.org with name and contact details (as an individual or a side) and the dance style(s) or music type(s) you are prepared to offer support, demonstration and tuition in.

Thanks again in anticipation, *Jon.*

Sword Dance Union Longsword Tournament

October 7 will see the first SDU event held in the Goathland 'Hub'

Keith Thompson, President of the Plough Stots, ably assisted by John Atkinson and the rest of the Goathland team, has planned, designed and BUILT the amazing new HUB at the Cricket Ground in the village.

To celebrate the new home of the Plough Stots, the Longsword Tournament in 2017 will be both a Competition and a chance for SDU teams to simply Exhibit and show their dances.

Visiting the new Hub to gawp at the new development will be an experience to be savoured.

- Camping, Motorhome/Caravan Parking and possibly indoor camping will be available. Day visitor tickets available.
- Classes for the competition are: Traditional Teams; Traditional Dance; Invented Dances; Traditional Juniors; Traditional Dance Juniors.

Information from SDU Secretary; Phil Heaton

pcheat@btinternet.com

Grimsby Morris Men 50th Anniversary

From Nick Booth, Bagman, Grimsby MM:

This year is GMM's fiftieth year and we have designated 21st December as our "official" 50th anniversary as this was the date of the side's first public dance-out at the Lifeboat Hotel, Cleethorpes, back in December of 1967.

As you may imagine, we have a few celebrations planned : Our biggest celebration is the Grimsby Morris Men's 50th Anniversary weekend of dance on Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th July.

We will, of course, be celebrating on 21st December but the plans for that day are still in the early stages.

We are also going to be doing some important away fixtures. We will be at the York Festival of Traditional Dance and Lincoln BIG Morris in September.

Finally we are having a selection of workshops and open days to promote the anniversary and hopefully get some new recruits.






Further details can be found on our website at www.grimsbymorrismen.org.uk.

Morris Ring Display Boards

Are you making full use of this asset?

If you have any opportunity to make use of one of the five sets we possess please contact your Area Rep or the Ring Bagman.

If you want to use them, even if a set is not currently in your area, arrangements can be made to get a set to you.

<p>the MORRIS RING</p>	<p>the MORRIS RING</p>	<p>the MORRIS RING</p>
<p>The Morris Ring</p> <p>The Morris Ring is an organisation for men's clubs. Every year our members can be seen dancing out during the summer, either on their own or in the company of dancers from other clubs who have been invited along to share a day or a weekend of dance. We hold a number of special meetings of the Morris Ring each year at which clubs from all over the country come together to dance. The most important of these is the annual meeting in early June in Thaxted in Essex, the town where the Morris Ring was founded in 1934.</p> <p>You can find out more about the Morris Ring by visiting our web site at: www.themorrisring.org</p> <p>On our home page there are links which will enable you to find the Morris clubs in your area.</p> 	<p>Morris Dancing</p> <p>Morris dances are the national folk dances of England and have a recorded history going back six hundred years. In this display you will see examples of the various styles of dance which have developed over the centuries and which are performed today in all parts of the country. Why do we do it? That is an easy question to answer. It is because we enjoy it and for the fun and friendship which comes with being a member of a Morris dancing club.</p> 	<p>A Potted History</p> <p>Over the centuries the popularity of Morris dancing has waxed and waned but by the latter part of the 19th century dancing had died out in many parts of the country. By great good fortune in 1899 there was a chance encounter between Headington Quarry Morris Men in Oxford and Cecil Sharp, a professional musician. Following this meeting, Sharp devoted the rest of his life to the collection of English folk songs and dances. As a result of his work and the work of others who were inspired by him, there was a great revival of interest in our folk traditions in the 20th century and especially in the 1960s and 1970s.</p> 
<p>Fools and Animals</p> <p>Often the dancers are accompanied by a fool, whose job is to engage the audience with humorous banter and ensure that they are paying attention to the dance. Many clubs have made an animal head which is mounted on a pole and attached to a cloak. One of the dancers entertains the audience by going among them underneath the cloak and grasping the animal's jaws together.</p> 	<p>Regional Styles of Morris Dancing</p> <p>Most people are familiar with the Cotswold style of dance which comes from the counties of the West Midlands and which is characterised by the use of sticks and handkerchiefs. Other styles of dance have evolved in other parts of the country. There are sword dances from the North and the rapper, or shortsword dances from the North East. In the North West there are the processional dances, which are often performed in chaps. The Border style comes from the counties bordering Wales and there are the Molly dancers from East Angles. Mummers' plays come from all parts of the country.</p>	<p>Looking to the Future</p> <p>There are probably more people Morris dancing today than at any time in the past and our clubs are always keen to recruit new members. Many Clubs are involved in teaching young people to dance through programmes with schools, the Scout organisation and other youth groups.</p> 
<p>The Joint Morris Organisation</p> <p>The Morris Ring is one of three organisations representing Morris dance clubs. The other two are the Morris Federation and the Open Morris. Once a year we all get together for a combined day of dance to celebrate the Morris as a dance for everyone, irrespective of age or gender.</p>	<p>How about you ?</p> <p>Would you like to try Morris dancing to see if it does for you what it does for us? Many clubs hold special sessions for potential members to come along and try it out. Find your local clubs by following the links on our web site and go along and meet the dancers. Before long you too could be a Morris dancer!</p>	
<p>founded 1934</p>	<p>www.the MORRIS RING.org</p>	<p>founded 1934</p>

This is what the complete set of three banners looks like.

Morris Ring Publications

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On-line Links:



The main MR website with millions of pages stuffed to the gunnels with all you need to know about the MR:

<http://www.themorrisring.org/>

Follow the latest media reports concerning Morris Matters at <http://www.themorrisring.org/article/morris-matters>

The Morris Ring Google Group (MRGG). Private Forum for debate or announcements. <http://groups.google.com/group/the-morris-ring?hl=en&pli=1>

Contact the Morris Ring Bagman to register to use.

Morris Ring Facebook site: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Morris-Ring/158759257502840>

Morris Ring Twitter: <http://twitter.com/#!/TheMorrisRing>

The Morris Shop *"the Bells and Whistles"*

<http://www.themorrisshop.com/store/index.php?route=common/home>

Call for Contributions

Any items of Morris-related news, please send to me at bagman@themorrisring.org for inclusion in the next Newsletter. Longer pieces to Tony Foard, please, for the Circular.

If you have any photographs, you can send them to Duncan Broomhead, the Morris Ring Photo Archivist (duncan.broomhead@btinternet.com) and any articles, ideally accompanied with photographs, can be submitted to Tony Foard, the Editor of the Morris Ring Circular, details above.

Charlie Corcoran, the Keeper of the Morris Ring Log Book, is keen to receive stories about Ring events, both the formal and the quirky (Charliecorcoran7@ntlworld.com).

