



## **John Maher 1938 - 2011**

John Maher first began dancing morris with Bristol University Morris Men in the early 1970s and started dancing with Bristol Morris Men a little later.

For some time he danced with both sides until the University side folded after which he danced with Bristol Morris Men for the rest of his life. John was one of the people who would almost invariably turn out for the side and he danced with Bristol for nearly 40 years. Over the last few years John had done less dancing in set but made the Bristol Morris Horse his own and Horse's antics were a huge attraction, particularly for children.

Like many other sides Bristol have visited foreign dance groups and enjoyed their hospitality. When Bristol have hosted visits in return, John and Geraldine were always happy to offer accommodation and hospitality to our visitors.

For over 30 years Bristol Morris Men have performed the Keynsham Mumming Play at Keynsham on Boxing Day. For most of that time John played the part of the Shepherdess, only missing a few performances recently because of family commitments.

In addition to dancing, John enjoyed good food and drink. In fact, he loved cooking and could cater for large groups of people – invaluable when running large events such as Ring Meetings, and the Bristol Morris Christmas Ceilidh where John's Navrattan has been an essential part of the catering for many years.

John went regularly to Ring Meetings with Bristol and became Overseas Bagman of the Morris Ring. As Overseas Bagman, over the years he corresponded with a great many sides and individuals and many of these people have sent Geraldine and Joanna their expressions of sorrow at John's passing and gratitude for the help John gave them in all sorts of ways.

In addition to his work as Overseas Bagman John took on the job of Webmaster for the Morris Ring website and put an enormous amount of time, energy, creativity and ingenuity into developing the site into a comprehensive and excellent resource.

After a short illness he passed away peacefully on Monday 18 July. Bristol Morris Men will miss him very much, as will the Morris Ring. We all offer our sympathy and condolences to his wife Geraldine, daughter Joanna and her partner Chris and their 3 children (John and Geraldine's grandchildren) – Joseph, William and Robert.