

TO  
BFW.

# Newsletter Winter 2003



**EXEMPT!** Reviews of Trafalgar Square  
**BEHIND THE SCENES** What it's really like to organise the  
Morris Federation AGM and Day of Dance  
**HORBERIE SHROGYS** What's in a Name?  
**'TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY'** Celebrating Christmas

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# EDITORIAL

*There have been three big events since the last newsletter...the MF AGM in September, the Wantage weekend and the Day of Dance in Trafalgar Square in November, that we jointly organised with the Morris Ring and Open Morris. This was to celebrate the exemption clause that John Bacon and others fought so hard to get, with regard to the new Licensing bill. You will find accounts of all these, and other events, later in the newsletter.*

*I wrongly reported in the Autumn newsletter that it would be the last time John and Adrian contribute to the newsletter in their current posts...well, this really is the last time! At the AGM in September Trefor Owen was*

*voted in as President, and Mike Everett as Archive Officer. A warm welcome to both.*

*The practice season is well underway, and Doug Bradshaw has written a useful article about running a successful practice session. To go along side this, Susan Graham has written an interesting piece about performance. In fact, there are lots of interesting articles in this issue...thanks to all those that have contributed!*

*Don't forget to book your place on the Rapper Workshop that is being run by Black Swan Rapper in Nottingham, in January ... there are still a few places available.*

*I hope you all have a very Happy Christmas and wonderful New Year.*

*Nicola*

**Printing**  
**Next Issue**  
**Front Cover Photograph**

Outline Print Service Ltd.  
Spring 2004 (copy date 1<sup>st</sup> Mar '04)  
Severn Gilders (by John Bacon)

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

*To all Secretaries, Squires, Bag people, etc.*

### NEWSLETTER

One of the common complaints we get from the average Morris dancer in the street is that they know nothing about the Federation and what it is doing. Some don't even know if their side belongs. This usually turns out to be because the person in their side who receives the MF information (ie. YOU!) doesn't pass any of it on. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE don't be guilty of this. DON'T KEEP THE INFORMATION TO YOURSELF! Pass it round at practice, make a rota for who has the newsletter next....

### MEMBERS' MANUAL

All members of the MF should have a copy of the Members' Manual. This contains a lot of material that members may need to refer to from time to time. If you have misplaced the free copy sent to you when you joined, a replacement (or additional copies) can be purchased from the MF Secretary at the cost of £4.00 (inc.p&p) each. Please make cheques payable to 'The Morris Federation'.

### ADVERTISING

The MF will distribute enclosures with the Newsletter, or other circulars, and items of advertising relevant to commercial products. A fee is charged to the advertiser for this service. However, this should not be taken to mean that The Morris Federation necessarily endorses the product. Enquiries concerning any form of advertising through the MF should be addressed to the Newsletter Editor.

# President's Prologue

So the end is near, and I have reached the final curtain call...

...well almost as I still have some loose ends to tie up before I hand over my President's Badge to your new President, Trefor Owen. And I also have to welcome Mike Everett as your new Archive Officer since Adrian is also standing down after four years on the Morris Federation Committee.

Adrian and I were the new boys four years ago -- and I think that we have had an exciting time. The four years have been pretty hectic for all of us and a number of the issues have been resolved by your committee -- for the betterment of the Morris Federation. Rather than detail every issue I thought that I would mention the issues that will affect us all the most. The first was the question of insurance. We were all very conscious of the very high premium that we were paying and after much discussion we decided to change insurance companies to the Royal & SunAlliance -- and this reduced our total premium quite considerably. Then came the "9/11" episode in the States -- with the consequence that all public liability policies were becoming loaded.

By getting our heads together with the Morris Ring and Open Morris, we joined forces and established one policy covering all three organisations and this comes into affect in January 2004. By thinking big we have managed to cut down the large increase in separate policy premiums.

The second issue was the Performing Right Society (PRS) and though not a statutory body they were causing headaches to some of the sides. By working in partnership with the Morris Ring and Open Morris resulted in the three Morris organisations obtaining a PRS licence and this enables us to perform non-traditional music without fear of being taken to court by the PRS.

Your committee has always been conscious of the fact that many Morris sides feel that they could get a better deal at festivals, so with this in mind we joined the Association of Festival Organisers (AFO) and it is hoped that our presence will raise the image of Morris in the organisation and hopefully in time we shall see some benefit to us.

Last and not least was the Public Entertainment Licence. The three Morris organisations had to get something into the 2003 Licensing Act otherwise our activities would have been seriously curtailed. With the help of Lord Redesdale, the following clause was included;

*Schedule 1, Part 2, Clause 11 states: "The provision of entertainment or entertainment facilities is not to be regarded as the provision of regulated entertainment for the purpose of this Act to the extent that it consists of the provision of (a) a performance of Morris dancing or any dancing of a similar nature or the performance of unamplified, live music as an integral part of such a performance, or (b) facilities for enabling persons to take part in entertainment of a description falling within paragraph (a)"*

The recognition of this inclusion, culminated in the three Morris organisations Day of Dance and Morris Showcase on the 2 November, and my what a success that was. There were some 50 teams from all over the country attending representing many of the styles of dance performed by the three Morris organisations. Later in this Newsletter are selections of photographs of the day. A commemorative CD is being produced for those who would like one. We would not have succeeded in getting this exemption into the Act if we have not worked closely together. However we still do recognise that the Act falls short of satisfying all the Folk Arts and we will continue

to act as a conduit in pursuing amendments, that will hopefully enable music sessions after a Morris performance, mumming and regional variations to be looked at sympathetically. The next stage is getting the Statutory Guidelines to the Act through -- and we have put many amendments to DCMS that will hopefully clarify what exactly is a Morris performance.



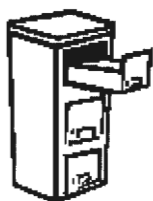
*A historic moment in Trafalgar Square.*

One last word before closing, our AGM this year in Much Wenlock was something to be remembered especially the dancing in Ironbridge and on the bridge itself. My sincere thanks go to the two teams who put in so much work in organising the weekend.

And so the end is here, and I want to give my thanks to all of the members of the Morris Federation committee and our Web Site Editor Kevin Taylor for supporting me throughout the last four years.

Finally, live long, prosper and keep dancing -- I shall be watching...

*John Bacon*



# Archive Activity

(My last lot)

## New acquisitions

The most recent acquisition was presented to me at the AGM. It is a PhD thesis by Tom Brown entitled *English Vernacular Performing Arts in the Late Twentieth Century*, The City University, 2000, 590 pp. The sub-title is *Aspects of trends, influences and management style in organisation and performance*. It is vast and covers many aspects of the Morris and how it is run. It includes diverse case studies, including Whitstable's Mayday Jack-in-the-Green, The Hunting of the Earl of Rone and The Shropshire Bedlams. It is a work of scholarship, but I am afraid that I may never have time to read it!

## Pathe News Archive Film Clips

Last time, I mentioned the Pathe News Archive. I have now 12 items including various types of Morris and Sword dancing going back to the 1920s, on VHS tape. I watched with others at the Wantage workshop with a mixture of amazement, fascination and amusement.

Some features run throughout. Audiences were generally much bigger in those days - presumably the competition for audiences was smaller apart from anything else. These days, hats are worn by the Morris performers and the audiences are generally bare-headed. In the years between the wars, this was often reversed. Although some Rapper dancers sported moustaches, there is not a beard to be seen! A summary of the clips follows:

*A time to remember* is a look back at the transition between the 1920s and 1930s included more Men's Cotswold (the tune was Greensleeves) as some 'period' commentary on the changing roles of women in the 1930s. These irked a little, but the final scenes of two 'steeplejanes' dancing a Charleston in high heels & overalls on a 4 foot square board, balanced on top of a huge chimney took the biscuit!

*Merrie England - Once Again*. '1500 dancers recapture spirit of Old England in great dance festival in beautiful grounds of Blenheim Palace.' 1932. It includes a great number of sets dancing a

Headington Rodney. These were by separate sets of men in whites with identical kit and women in fairly long dresses. The women's sticking was nothing if not vigorous! There was also some social dancing with rather more spirit than most EFDSS events I have attended. I presume that it was an EFDSS event. It is technically good in that, for example, the sound is well synchronised with the dancing (so many modern TV clips seem to ignore this facet of Morris dancing).

*Dance compilation from 1940* Erratically Silent.

Includes a mixed set of men's Cotswold, dancing outside a large church or cathedral probably Westminster MM (about 10secs long). There is also a shot of the Helston Furry Dance. Some of the dances from overseas, jitterbugging and jive did, I must admit, make some Morris rather tame.

*Village Dance from 1947*. Visit to countryside and seeing a Bampton team dance on Whit Monday. It includes one dancer dressed as a sailor and I am told, Francis Shergold. The soundtrack was not of the team - a pity.

*With famous Racecourse as 'Village Green' from 1932*. It was Chester with vast audiences and a variety of NW and Carnival (Fluffy) teams, both male and female. There were apparently 200 dancers.

*Better than Ever from 1929*. Silent. A vast procession in Newport (now Gwent) crossing the bridge over the river Usk. It includes (I think) *The Savoy & Cabbage Comic Band* and some processional Morris. I must admit that I am not sure if they are boys or girls or what!

*Duke and Duchess at garden fete from 1922*.

Silent. The coronets are those of Northumberland and they watched some rapper. The team was not named. There was also a women's team dancing a Cotswold corner dance. As in *Merrie England - Once Again*, they wore long skirts.

*Miner dances from 1926* [The year of the General Strike]. Silent. Introductory screen: *Winlaton's veteran troupe of working miners - their average age is over 60! - rehearse their centuries old dance for an All England Folk Dance Competition*. They danced in a street to a big audience, mainly children, to the music of a whistle.

*Miner dances from 1930* The same Introductory screen: as 1926, but with sound and music from a concertina. The dancers' ages totals 455 and the oldest is a Mr Prudhoe, who was the Tommy. Mr Prudhoe (not pronounced as Geordies would) was 73 and had been dancing for 53 years. He looked like a man not to be crossed. The Betty had a remarkably limp-wristed manner, not quite a tactic for survival in a pit village I would have thought!

*Miner dances from 1925* Silent. Newbiggin's team

also rehearsing for the folk dance competition (a predecessor of DERT I suppose - someone please enlighten me). The first scene shows the men straight from the pit's mouth & looking every inch like the pitmen that they were. The second scene had them in a street in kit with gleaming white shirts. The colours worn by the Tommy & Betty must have been breathtaking: alas it was in B&W and silent.

### Rochester Sweeps 2003

This was kindly supplied by Mike Lanng of the Seven Champions on video CD and DVD. It is a reasonably factual programme about the Rochester Sweeps Festival and some May morning activity nearby. Gordon Newton, the driving force, features in it. I had not realised that he runs a monumental masonry business.

### Trafalgar Square

I rushed out to buy newspapers on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov, only to be disappointed that my purchases were in vain. Anyway, I eventually found a picture in the *Financial Times* and learned that the edition of the *Guardian* that was available in the far off land of Cambridgeshire had a picture, which was kindly provided by Adam Hughes. Duncan Broomhead provided a fine photo of and article about Horwich Prize Medal Morris Men from the *Bolton News*. I understand that the Shropshire Star featured an item on the Ironmen and Severn Gilders. The photo in the FT was excellent and of Kennet Morris Men, but had caption "*Dancing for joy: Morris Men, more often spotted in villages than central London, perform in Trafalgar Square yesterday to celebrate winning exemption from the 2003 Licensing Act, which requires public dancing to be restricted by licence*". The unwary may have inferred that only men dance the Morris or that only Morris men were exempt! I did write to the FT, but the letter has not been published (yet). I wondered to what extent the FT produced the text and then noticed that the photograph was attributed to *Associated Press*. A search of their web site revealed four photographs of Trafalgar Square, including the ones in the FT and the *Bolton News*. The FT did change the text of the caption, but had clearly bought it with the photograph. The original was: *Morris men dance in Trafalgar Square, London, to celebrate Morris organisations winning exemption from the 2003 Licencing [Sic] Act which requires public dancing to be restricted by licence*. The photographer, who I imagine, provided the caption was one Fiona Hanson. Of the three other photos, two captions refer generally to Morris men and one, specifically, to Horwich

Prize Medal Morris Men.

The Rest of Morris Photographs on the Press Association Web Site contains 8 photos under Morris Men of which 2 also appear under Morris Dancers. 4 of these are of Trafalgar Square. There are 9 photos under Morris Dancers and one under Morris dancer. Details of those other than Trafalgar Square are listed below. I am happy to e-mail people the images on request (all are watermarked). All the captions (except one) in this set refer to "Dancers" when the team name was not apparently known rather "Men", if that is what they were. The one exception mis-described a team by adding "Men" to the team's name and yet named a female dancer! Oh dear. I heard 3<sup>rd</sup> hand that there was a clip on London local ITV news. If anyone recorded it, please send me a copy - P&P paid for.

### Boffins

The BBC Radio 4 programme "Start the Week" (Mon 27<sup>th</sup> Oct 03) included an item on Francis Spufford's new book, "*Backroom Boys*". It is a celebrations of Boffins and was described along the lines of: *A celebration of British scientists ...bearded people ...People who wear pullovers...People who do Morris Dancing...People who are spectacularly good at DiY*. The programme can be heard on the BBC Radio 4 web site at:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/progs/listenagain.shtml>

My first reaction was that I was being stereotyped as I apparently fit much of the bill, but I would never claim to be spectacularly good at DiY! Of course, it not about me, but a Friend of the Federation certainly is: **Roy Dommett CBE**. I have not yet read the book, but Roy and Marguerite were certainly pleased and amused by it, despite odd, small, factual errors. It was reviewed in *The Observer* on 16<sup>th</sup> November and I shamelessly repeat this: *Dommett's spirit is one Spufford finds in other, unexpected places, but this is not simply a homage to eccentricity; rather, it is an attempt to isolate a certain kind of national character, one which prides itself on innovation and modesty*.

### Is that it?

Well, Mike Everett is taking over the job now, but I intend to play a role in sorting out Roy Dommett's collection. Thanks to all of you who have contributed items during my term. I am quite sure that some have never been acknowledged, but will come to light as the archive gets passed to Mike.

Adrian Williams

# COMMITTEE NEWS

## **FINANCE - Rachel**

When you receive your registration forms etc., please read them carefully:

*Group Personal Accident Insurance* cover starts on the 26th January, please make sure I have your forms and payment in by 20th January as cover will not start until the cheque is in the hands of the insurance broker.

For *Public Liability Insurance* cover this does not begin until registration forms and subscription (still £30) is with me.

Please, please do not staple anything together.

## **EVENTS - Jean**

Workshops:

Sadly two workshops arranged for this autumn have had to be cancelled because of lack of support. Some of the difficulty is due to the wide geographical spread of the Morris Federation. Some people were interested but couldn't manage the travelling involved just for a day's workshop. It has been disappointing as I think both the Fieldtown and the Playing for Dancing would have been very worthwhile. One point that came out of the geographical problem is that musicians may also like to consider the tutor scheme. I had two groups interested in the music workshop and have suggested they may like to consider inviting someone to offer tuition. The Federation are prepared to subsidise 75% of the expenses. It is worth thinking about.

The rapper workshop will definitely take place on January 17<sup>th</sup> 2004 at the Indian centre in the middle of Nottingham. There are still places available. Don't be put off by the suggestion it is for advanced dancers only. Everyone will be able to learn something from Black Swan even if it is not the entire dance. It would be wonderful to have a really full workshop with many teams taking part. This will be the only Federation workshop this quarter, as Shropshire Bedlams have had to reconsider their offer of a workshop. It would be wonderful to have some feedback about workshops. Perhaps the general feeling is

that they are no longer required? It is certainly something that the committee will be discussing in the future. If anyone has any comments or suggestions they would be most welcome.

## **SECRETARY – Fee**

I've had a couple of e-mails recently asking for changes to the contact for sides where I've been asked to restrict the personal details of the contact - addresses, phone numbers, etc.

My database and information is kept in accordance with the Data Protection Acts; briefly, this means that I only keep the information given until it is updated by you and then it's deleted, and also that I don't hand it on for any purpose other than that which you agreed to. Information goes into our directory and to interested parties (people booking sides for fetes, bods wanting to join Morris/dance sides near them, etc); to the EFDSS for their Root Source directory and to Mrs Casey for the Direct Roots directory, which you agree to when you sign the registration forms. If you object to your e-mail or website being published by us then you're asked to contact Kevin Taylor, our web editor directly.

There are a couple of people who work with sensitive information or whose jobs put them into situations where releasing their home addresses would jeopardise their safety or that of their families, and I certainly wouldn't want to put anyone in that situation. However, can I ask you to consider that you only take on the job of being the side contact \*if\* you are willing for your address and telephone number to be published in these forms? I know we all hate junk mail and spam e-mails, but putting a contact whose details can't be released kind of defeats the object of being a contact.

Thanks.

*"Please remember to inform us of any change of address, email and telephone no. so that we can keep records up-to-date and you informed of any special events, etc."* Ed.



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**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

"Dear All,

The Chingford Morrismen did not consider participating in the Trafalgar Square bash.



While we appreciate the efforts of their Lordships in mitigating the effects of the entertainments licensing bill, we see no reason to celebrate the concession when all sorts of related (and unrelated) music will be hit. There is no need for control beyond the Health & Safety and Fire regulations covering public facilities, so there should be no licence required and therefore no need of such sops as the Morris exemption.

The proper time to celebrate will be when this wretched bill is consigned to the place it belongs - in that event we'll be delighted to join in.

Adrian Hilton  
Squire, Chingford Morrismen"

*"There is more than one side to every story. Chingfords concern is quite right in that there are big anomalies in the Act - and Morris exemption is one of them. Nevertheless an exemption for Morris dancing and similar forms has made people aware that "it" exists - and I feel that our image has been raised considerably. The exemption not only applies to Morris dancing but "dancing of a similar nature" - which is what we all do. The argument that the best time to celebrate is when the Act is consigned to the bin may take place but I am sure this will not be in our time.*

*Whilst we are pleased Morris dancing is exempt, it is a continuing cause of concern to many in the folk world that the Licensing Act 2003 will prevent other traditional activity such as carol singing in pubs, mumming, other community singing and music sessions from taking place. It is not in the interest of our traditional culture for such activities to be prevented, but it is not in the Constitution of the Morris Federation to support activities apart from "Morris".*

*We, as the Morris Federation have not just stopped now that the Act has been passed, as we have been active in assisting in the drafting of the Statutory Guidelines. In addition we will also acting as a conduit for examples of the Act and Guidelines being "misused" so that DCMS can be lobbied with the aim of getting amendments in due course.*

*The Trafalgar Square day was not a true celebration, but a recognition that our activities will become exempt and will not require licensing. We were there to dance, recognise the exemption, and also draw the public's attention to the very many anomalies in the Act - and this we did.*

*John Bacon - President"*

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

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# Trafalgar Square

2<sup>nd</sup> November '03

We stood in front of Nelsons Column at 10:45 a.m., 2 November, 2003 -- with the rain pouring down and said why did we pick today of all days. Cliff Marchant, Squire of the Ring, Chris Hall Chair of Open Morris, myself, Lord Redesdale and your Committee all wondering what to do.

And then just before 11.00 a.m. Hammersmith Morris kicked off the day closely followed by the Pigsty, Knots of May, Wild Hunt and Boojum -- the day had begun. The decision as to whether we should start was taken away from us -- and we all felt very relieved. In total some 50 teams took part in days event of which 25 belonged to the Morris Federation. These were as follows:

Pigsty  
Ditchling  
Hammersmith  
Knots of May  
Knockhundred Shuttle and  
Clog  
Chinewrde  
Boojum  
Bullnose

Wild Hunt  
Jack Straws  
Off Spring Morris  
Fleur de Lys  
Beetlecrushers  
Yorkshire Chandalier  
East Saxon Sword  
Mortimer's Morris  
Buttercross Belles

Iron Men and Severn Gilders  
New Esperance  
Berkshire Bedlam  
Elephant up the pole  
Samhain  
Sompting  
Rampant Rooster  
Grimspound

At 1.00 p.m. every team who was present gathered on the North steps of Trafalgar Square and Lord Redesdale read out the Clause that means so much to us.

There followed a short massed dance led by the Morris Ring, of Banks of the Dee and Young Collins - - the day finally ended at 4.00 p.m.

From the comments that I have received this joint effort must be repeated and many have said -- this must be the way to go.

Many other teams who did not have a slot on the Square also supported the day and my thanks go to them for the effort that they put in to just be there. There were plenty of spectators present to see this Showcase of Morris and many were interested in the considerable styles of dancing that they saw.

The press covered the event and photographs appeared in a number of the countries broadsheets. Unfortunately the television companies did not have sufficient interest in coming to televise the day.



Nevertheless the day proved successful and the demonstration of many of our traditional dance styles will have raised the image of the Morris Federation, the Morris Ring and Open Morris.

*John Bacon  
President*



More Morris dancers than pigeons!

The teams gather on the steps of the National Gallery for a photo-call.



The joyous Chris Hall (Open Morris), Cliff Marchant (Morris Ring), John Bacon (Morris Federation) and Lord Redesdale.

*Photo of Nelson's Column by Pete Thomas, 'Exempt' badge by Ann Bacon, all others by Adrian Williams.*

*See middle pages for more photos of the day...*

## ***Not the Licensing Act again!***

I think it is fair to say that we had a tremendous day on the 2 November in spite of the early rain, and thanks must go to all of the sides that put themselves out and took part. My thanks go especially to those sides that started to perform in the rain at 11 a.m. and really set the day off. Unfortunately we received very little television coverage but we were well reported in some of the broad sheets and the magazine, Arts Professional.

With the successful completion of our Showcase on the 2 November -- we must not think that it is all over and put to bed. We received a historical exemption on the 8 July 2003 but that is not the end of it. The new Licensing Act 2003 will not come into effect until the Statutory

Guidelines have been completed, approved, gone through the House and finalised. The Morris Federation, the Ring and Open Morris continue to lobby the DCMS to get into the Guidelines a number of clarifications that will make our lives much easier in the future. The main ones are:

- 1 - That music sessions after dancing are part of a Morris performance and they should be exempt
- 2 - That Mumming invariably forms part of a Morris performance and should also be exempt
- 3 - That some teams use low level amplification so that their instruments can actually be heard and therefore when amplification is used the Licensing Authorities should take due note of the needs of the performers.

Whether these and other amendments get into the Guidelines, we shall have to wait and see. However once the Act has been enacted, all the anomalies about un-amplified and amplified music, folk plays, small events, etc etc etc, will no doubt come out of the woodwork and we will have the opportunity to lobby DCMS again about further amendments to the Act. Don't forget that this Act forms part of primary legislation and will be extremely difficult to get rid of even if we wanted to. All we can do is to try and get the Act amended in the future when problems rear their head. In putting together a case it is essential that the facts are accurate and not just hearsay.

So what is the timing for the Act becoming Law? The Secretary of State is currently reviewing the Guidelines (early December). They then go to the House for approval, hopefully in the New Year. There is then probably a 6-month period before a transition period of 9-month starts and this means that the Act will not be enacted until early 2005. Delays in getting the Guidelines approved will mean further delays in the Act becoming substantive. So please keep your ears and eyes to the ground so that we can apply the greatest of pressure if we hear anything that is likely to affect our cause.

*John Bacon - President*

### **NEWSLETTER COPY DATES**

SPRING	1 <sup>st</sup> February,	for publication on 1 <sup>st</sup> March
SUMMER	1 <sup>st</sup> May,	for publication on 1 <sup>st</sup> June
AUTUMN	1 <sup>st</sup> August,	for publication on 1 <sup>st</sup> September
WINTER	1 <sup>st</sup> November,	for publication on 1 <sup>st</sup> December

## 'The Horberie Shrogys'

### What's in a name?

How did Wakefield Morris Dancers come up with that snappy name for the team? It's just so perfect. As one festival programme put it "Does just what it says on the can. They're from Wakefield and they dance." Well not quite here's the real story.

Some time in the last century an itinerant clog maker strayed across the Lancashire/Yorkshire border and set up shop near Wakefield. One day, so the story goes, the clog maker heard that the ancient mediaeval Wakefield Mystery Plays were to be performed in the city. So it occurred to him that what the city could really do with was a Morris team to dance as part of the celebrations. With possible self-interest he also decided that the Northwest style would be ideal for the event. Just one snag, no local Northwest team existed and importing one from Lancashire might be problematic on several levels.

So the simple solution was to start a new team. Local contacts produced a group of chaps who could be moulded into shape and the outlying village of Horbury produced a Methodist Hall where the team could practise. Searching for a name for the new team a line from the Mystery Plays was found which had an appeal - "Get thee to the Horberie shrogys". This was in fact a banishment of one of the characters to the district now known as Horbury. The shrogys was a reference to the swampy wasteland near the river Calder flowing past the village. What a gift history and relevance in one short phrase! The new team was christened "The Horberie Shrogys".

So the men's side danced and developed their skills, but wives and girlfriends decided they wanted some of the action. Now the Northwest style has long and honourable associations

with women dancers. In fact some Lancastrians actually regard men dancing the Morris as being a bit of an anomaly. But the women were not welcomed into the hall; this was after all a men only side! So the women took to dancing in the yard outside the hall until eventually the men gave in and let them into the hall.

When the women started to dance out as a side in their own right they needed a name. That yard at the back of the hall had the name "Ring O'Bells" and with a slight tweak this became the team name "The Ring O'Belles". And so the two teams danced out together doing alternate dances until one day it fell about that shortages of numbers for a dance led to the combination of men and women in a single set! Horror! All hope of membership of the Morris Ring now lost to the men, possible exorcism from the Women's Morris Federation for the women. And the women unwilling to use a name implying damp and useless whilst the men were unable to accept the feminine connotations of "Belle". What to do?

Simple really. Just stick the label "Wakefield Morris" on the joint side and join the Open Morris. For some years the team actually used all three names taking the best fit for any specific side. There was always the plus that event organisers who had not got on with the "Shrogys" might invite the "Belles" or "Wakefield". But time and tide have reduced the numbers so that now we generally perform as Wakefield Morris. But listen out for the introductions. Every now and then an all women set gets up and the spirit of the "Belles" comes out to play. And who knows, perhaps one day the "Shrogys" might even emerge from the swamp?

*Doug Bradshaw*

### 'Balance the Straw'

*Do you know where the name of this tune came from?...*



"I was in Normandy some while back as part of a group of people building a gazebo from wooden frames and wattle & daub. We made the daub by churning up the clay soil with a rotivator, pouring gallons of water over the ground as we walked around scattering armfuls of straw and treading it in. After some time I asked the English guy in charge of it if we'd trod in enough straw. His reply was 'not yet, you've got to BALANCE THE STRAW'."

"It is an interesting anecdote. I believe that 'Balance the Straw' was a dance made up by a team somewhere in the 1950s or 60s and is named for the tune, which I assume is a traditional tune. The "Fool" for Oyster Morris always introduces "Balance the Straw" with "and now Oyster Women are going to do the impossible - balance the straw"."

"Perhaps the tune itself was named after the term 'balance the straw' originating from daub-making. It would seem very feasible that a dance was named after the act of several people stomping around on the ground (making daub). Perhaps the dance vanished but the traditional tune remained and gave its name to a ... dance!"

*Mary Levy, Fee Lock, Rhiannon Owen*

## 'Whip the Cat (Rapper)'

"Where did you get that name from?" Well...

"To whip the cat: used in various senses, some of which are not satisfactorily explained. (a) To get drunk = 'to shoot the cat'. (b) To lay the blame of one's offences on some one else. (c) To work as an itinerant tailor, carpenter, etc. at private houses by the day. (d) To play a practical joke. (e) To practise extreme parsimony. (f) To shirk work on Monday. (h) To complain or moan."

We (the librarians among us) spent several days/weeks ploughing through Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase & Fable and liked the name because of the connections with Monday (being our practice night, where we are anything but idle) and working as itinerant

tailors (making fun of our obsession with making kit samples - even more true today!).

The other name that we'd narrowed it down to was Scavenger's Daughter (a mediaeval instrument of torture). When we came to vote on it - one person suggested Whip the Scavenger's Daughter - she's a Cat!

*Linda Hewing, Whip the Cat Rapper*

If your team has a name with a history, or you know of dances or tunes with interesting names, then send the information to me for the Spring '04 newsletter. Thanks, Nicola.

**EXEMPT!, EXEMPT!, EXEMPT!,  
EXEMPT!, EXEMPT!, EXEMPT!,  
EXEMPT!**

2<sup>nd</sup> November was a fantastic day !  
and we are producing a  
commemorative CD of the  
Showcase, with pictures of the  
majority of the teams that took part.

This will be available shortly through  
the Morris Federation at a cost of  
£6.50 including postage and packing.  
The disc will contain well over 350  
high quality pictures.

Low resolution thumbnails can be  
viewed at

**[www.kyla.co.uk/morrisday](http://www.kyla.co.uk/morrisday)**

If you would like a copy of this  
souvenir CD please contact me.

*John Bacon - President*

# "Team Talk"

## Young dancers from Cheboksary visit Cumbria



The Westmorland Step & Garland Dancers have had connections with Cheboksary, a large industrial town on the Volga, 400 miles east of Moscow, for many years. In 2000, 15 members went there and danced at the Opera House and the Children's Palace of Creativity, staying with families, and visiting schools to talk to the pupils about life in England.

Many friendships were formed and this year it was our turn to

repay the hospitality. A group of 12 young dancers and 5 adults spent a week in Cumbria, staying with team members. Gillian Slater spent many months organizing the visit and Ged Pinder spent the first week of his retirement working flat out to make sure everything went smoothly.

They danced at the Westmorland Show, Queen Katherine School and at the Town Hall for the Mayors reception preceding the Torchlight Procession. They also joined us in the procession itself. Their standard of dancing was very high and the youngsters, boys and girls aged from 12 to 15, had obviously worked hard to be allowed places in the group. They had several sets of costumes, all lovingly handmade and all works of art in themselves.

We took them on a boat trip on Windermere, caving, swimming, and a 'cultural tour' of Kendal, which mostly involved trying to extract them from shops.

It involved all the team in a lot of work but everyone agreed that it all amounted to a wonderful experience for us as well as for them.



*Ken & Kathy Trimmer*



## Morris Federation Weekend of Dance & AGM

26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> September 2003

Hosted by The Ironmen and Severn Gilders  
William Brooke School, Much Wenlock

Writing a review five weeks after the event leads me to contemplate the lasting memories of the 2003 AGM...beautiful weather, friendly and helpful people, keen dancers.



*Photo by John Bacon*

When the Ironmen and Severn Gilders confirmed they were prepared to host the 2003 AGM, I for one breathed a sigh of relief. At last, a willing team and some definite plans! They worked long and tirelessly providing us with a picturesque setting, wonderful dance opportunities and indoor and outdoor camping that was realistic considering they were catering for nearly four-hundred people.

I travelled on Friday evening as many people did and arrived to hot soup, crusty bread, friendly faces and beer. Time to unwind, relax, catch up with old friends and set up the sleeping bag.

Saturday dawned, a bright autumn day. Coach tours left promptly at 9.30 to various places around Shropshire. My coach was one of three that went to Blists Hill Victorian Town where we danced at several venues before partaking of beer at three hapence a pint! Following lunch our coaches took us on to Ironbridge. Most teams took part in the procession through the town and danced again for an appreciative audience on or near the Iron Bridge itself. Then it was back to Much Wenlock for tea, cake and a rest before the evening activities.

The Ironmen and Severn Gilders offered a choice of evening activity. A ceilidh with "All Blacked Up" called by Dave Hunt, or a concert featuring Cuckoo Oak, Bill Caddick and John Kirkpatrick. My choice was the ceilidh, which was lively and not too crowded though my feet certainly told me I had been dancing all day by 11.30pm! I believe the concert was well attended and enjoyed by all.

Sunday was another sparkling day at least in the weather department, which was just as well considering there was a Border Morris workshop in the car park led by our host team, the Ironmen. Where do they get their energy! Severn Gilders also had their dancing shoes on and led a North-West workshop in the hall.

The AGM itself took place in the Theatre at 11.00am. Business was discussed in a friendly and co-operative way and the meeting closed shortly after 1pm. A short break to eat and then it was time to drive north.

I would like to thank Ironmen and Severn Gilders for their active support of the Federation. Organising a weekend for thirty-four teams, (around 400 people) is no easy task. Most aspects of the weekend ran smoothly and people attending were given opportunities to enjoy dancing in a beautiful part of the country, socialise with old friends, make new friends and extend their knowledge of morris dancing and dancers from all over the country. Problems were dealt with as quickly as they could be. The evening meal was logistically difficult but most participants were patient and forbearing. Most schools today run a split lunch hour requiring less space for diners. Our hosts tried hard to overcome the problems, some of them caused by unthinking people who switched meal choice because the queue was shorter. Was it YOU!!!! To be serious, despite the difficulties very few people actually complained aggressively which was in itself a reward for all the hard work that had gone into the weekend.

This was my first experience of a Morris Federation AGM when the finger could have been pointing at me. I enjoyed the weekend. The site was convenient and easy to use. I met new people and was able to watch sides dance whom I

had not seen before. The Morris Federation relies on positive input from sides and their members and I am grateful that Ironmen and Severn Guilders were prepared to take on what may seem like a thankless task. I hope next year will be equally successful and look forward to seeing you there... Kendal, September 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> 2004 hosted by Westmorland Step and Garland Dancers.

(I'm not sure how much the beer was actually except that it was old money and not very much. There is no need to email me with the correct price...artist's licence!)

*Jean Smith*

## ELEPHANTS ON PARADE

We came just to the Saturday of the Morris Federation Weekend in Ironbridge.

We had a fantastic day! It was, of course, helped by the stunningly hot weather - so the sun really DOES shine on the righteous! We were based at the Blist's Hill Museum for much of the day, at different dance spots.

One of our side had a chat with a BBC man who presents history programmes who was there filming part of a documentary series. We all had to stop dancing for a short while, so that our sounds wouldn't ruin their sound tests.

Ruin? RUIN? Have they no taste?

Blist's Hill provided some interesting retail experiences and the pub came in handy too. We danced to some good crowds too, and the lunch, organised by the Federation, was fantastic! (We had cake. What more can I say?)

One of the highlights of our day was the procession along the Severn and up to the Ironbridge itself (now a World Heritage Site - perhaps a bit like dancing on one of the pyramids). We took great delight in scaring some young car passengers who were sitting outside their cars - well, a herd of elephants IS intimidating!

*Kate Balfour*  
*Elephant up a Pole Morris*





## MORRIS FEDERATION AGM 2003 NEWS ABOUT THE COMMITTEE

At the AGM it was agreed that:

The committee may co-opt members to assist running the Federation. Co-opted members of the Committee shall be invited to attend Committee meetings and to participate in discussions, but will have no voting rights. They will be invited to report their activities to the membership through the Newsletter or personal presentation at General Meetings. Co-opted members may include those who take on a post that falls vacant before the normal term of office expires.

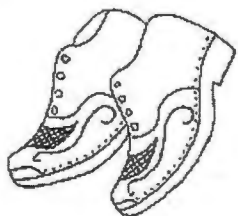


If anyone feels they have something to offer specifically but doesn't want to commit themselves to the kind of workload the other posts have, we'd like to hear from you.

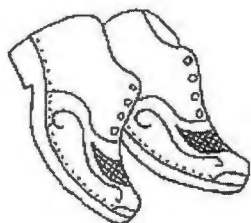
For example John Bacon, retiring president, is probably going to be persuaded (and if that doesn't work, threats of violence!) to stay on as a co-opted member to continue lobbying the DCMS over the Licensing Act.

### Argarmeles North West Clog & Rapper Team

would like to send out a general invitation to any team who would like to attend our Weekend of Dance on 9th, 10th and 11th July 2004 in Southport, Lancashire.



The weekend costs £8 per adult with under 18s free and includes a music, meeting and drinking session in Lancashire's oldest pub, the Scotch Piper, on Friday night, bus to dance spots in Southport on Saturday followed by tea and cakes and a ceilidh on Saturday night. The weekend finishes with dancing outside the Scotch Piper at Sunday lunch-time.



Please note that although this is a change in date from our usual weekend we have booked the good weather!!

More details are available if you email me now at [carrie@dunster-southport.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:carrie@dunster-southport.fsnet.co.uk) and more information and a booking form will be sent to interested teams next February.

*Drawing of clogs by Sandra Turton.*

# Autumn

## The Dancing Year Begins

*Part 1 of a series of articles on the running of teaching/practise nights*

*by Doug Bradshaw*



Autumn comes around again and here I am trudging towards the practice hall with a rough plan of action for the evenings teaching. You see I'm the dance master, the one who failed to duck when the need for a teacher was identified. Put simply the job is to please all of the people all of the time and have a decent display side ready for next spring and the new dancing season. What could be easier? Waiting for me in the hall will be a few new faces eager to find out what dancing the Morris is all about. There'll be a group that have danced out and had a chance to find their feet with the team and now they're keen to get some more of the repertoire under their belts. Then there are the old hands, been there, done that, got the T-shirt and waiting to be impressed.

So what's the plan then? How do I set about teaching the basics, whilst honing the finer points for the developers and at the same time keeping the interest of the old hands? Anyone out there with all the answers I'd be glad to hear from you. But for now I'll share what I do with you and hope for a few tips sometime.

The first bit is easy enough. Just let the crowd drift in and settle down, discuss the latest gossip, what was on TV last night, what the kids are up to and so on. But whilst they're doing this get them to do a basic set of warm-up exercises. By the time you're ready to start you've got a fair idea of what you can do for the evening, if you're lucky it might even fit with the plan you had as you walked in the door!

Once we're settled down we run a set of display dances trying to get everyone up at least once in the sequence. In our team we like to build up the repertoire for dancers in layers. The aim for a new dancer is to get four dances learnt off pat before they dance out and generally we suggest two and let the dancer choose the other two. So this first session should give everyone a chance to get up and dance and also gives a feel for the pressure of a display spot. It's part memory test, part stamina test and part confidence builder. Learners get a chance to try out their new skills, developers can try moving around the set or trying a new (to them) dance and old hands can watch for style points that might need attention.

Next we move on to some solid teaching sessions. These could be a repetition and reinforcement of a dance we worked on last week, a start on teaching a dance in the existing repertoire for the benefit of newcomers or a completely new dance. One thing I try and avoid is spending more than twenty minutes on any one dance. Any odd bodies not dancing will quickly get bored, and cold, if we go on any longer. Also too many repetitions of the same movement can quickly produce strains and injuries if it goes on too long, and anyway there's always next week to finish off or reinforce the teaching of any one dance.

When teaching a dance I always try and give a short run down of what history I know about the dance as the set sorts itself out. After all every team member ought to be able to answer the basic questions from the public with something other than "Dunno ask golden gob". Then again knowing something of the history helps to give a sense of what we're doing and why we do it and that can't be bad can it? While we're sorting out the set we also try and match dancers so that learners get an experienced dancer as partner. For some strange reason new dancers seem to come in pairs and they always seem to want to dance together. Hopeless! It may seem cruel but split them up and that way you might keep one or even both. I also encourage learners to stick to the same spot in the set for every dance - it's one less thing to worry about. Developers and old hands are encouraged to put themselves about a bit which gives maximum scope for the learners to stick to one position and also adds to flexibility when you do get out next season.




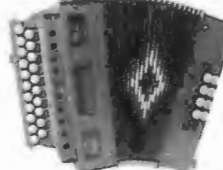

Trying to pitch the level of teaching to suit the set that's on the floor can be a problem. It might seem tedious, but explaining just what a hey or a ladies chain is might be vital if a learner is going to succeed. And sometimes it helps to actually abandon the set altogether and form a line or a circle to concentrate on a

specific element of the dance. Yes we do this for the very basic cross polka that is the basic building block of a lot of our dances. Dancing is about body memory and isolating out elements so that they become second nature can make the learning of figures and dances so much easier. I'll even suggest the "Irish Step" method or "look Ma no hands" for some dancers when they're learning. Get the right stepping, get to the right place in the set and you're on your way, hand movements can come later.

When I'm teaching I usually find there's a general level of background noise from the team. I've learnt to live with it. After all Morris is just as much a social activity as a learning one. Just so long as the chat is constructive that's all I ask. Helping a learner out with an explanation of what's just been described, having a quiet gossip or finding out what the new comers do for a living it's all team building isn't it? But I try and draw the line at open criticism of other dancers. Yes we need to criticise but too much can destroy even the most optimistic beginner. Better a pennyweight of praise and a little criticism than nothing but negative feedback. Plus which quite often a team foul-up will be blamed on the newest dancer – wrong! The team screws up, means the team got it wrong. If a dancer gets up to do a dance they don't know then the fault is with the team or the dance master not with the dancer.

Of course shouting can help and even be a little therapeutic on occasion. But generally I try and work with a bit of humour in there to lighten the load. When we get to a completely new dance or a dance that has been on the back boiler for a year or two we need it. You may have a set of notes or even a video but the musicians don't like the tune or the dancers don't think this or that movement is physically possible. If it's a new dance for the team then adapt, if it's a dance you're reviving then still be prepared to adapt, the tradition has to evolve to live. The best answer is to trust the team if they're happy then it will show in the dance and if they're not it will still show in the dance and that's definitely to be avoided.

So end of the evening coming up and time for home – or the pub. I usually try and finish off with a couple of solid dances again aiming to get everyone up on their feet. By the time the lights go out the team should be happy. New comers have found out more about the team in general and have learnt something and spotted the dance they want to learn next. Developers have built up a bit more confidence and stretched their knowledge a bit further. The old hands have managed to pass on their knowledge and shown just how it should be done. And the dance master? He's just hoping he can get away with it all again next week.

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# Trafalgar Square – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2003



*Beetlecrushers*



*Boojum*



*Fleur de Lys*



*Knots of May*



# Trafalgar Square – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2003



*Ditchling Morris*



*Berkshire Bedlam*



*Buttercross Belles*



*Mortimer's Morris*



*Yorkshire Chandalier*

# Trafalgar Square – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2003



*Pigsty*



*New Esperance*



*Sompting Village Morris*



*East Saxon Sword*



*Rampant Rooster*

# Trafalgar Square – 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2003



*Elephant up a Pole*



*Hammersmith*



*Jackstraws*



*Knockhundred Shuttles*

*All Trafalgar Square photos by  
James Barry,*

*except East Saxon Sword, by  
Pete Thomas.*

# Nine Daies Wonder

In April 2000 a motley group of Morris folk got together to dance from London to Norwich to mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Will Kemp's epic venture. He called it his 'Nine Daies Wonder' and proclaimed himself to be 'Master of Morrice Dancers'. He did it to raise much needed funds for himself, by way of taking bets.

Will Kemp was a Shakespearean actor and member of Chamberlins Men. He was also an entertainer in his own right. Shakespeare and Kemp often entertained Queen Elizabeth from 1594 onwards. He was famous throughout the land and abroad.

I got involved in the re-enactment (reluctantly) because I am a member of Golden Star Morris, a mixed side formed in 1981. GSM had a tendency to get involved in things, very 'hands-on', or should I say 'foot-on'! I say reluctantly because for a long time leading up to the event I just thought 'mad sods, they'll never do it, crazy idea, what idiot wants to Morris dance all the painful way from London to Norwich in just eight days for no financial gain, no fund raising for the needy, in fact for no apparent reason at all other than that some

Elizabethan did it a million Morris years ago?!'

Can you think why? The reason slowly sneaked into my stubborn Morris mind, as I got inextricably sucked into it, I mean, ME, miss out on things? However bizarre or daft I really don't want to do this, but! You see, excitement was beginning to build up, a motley Morris group was forming and rehearsing the 'Kemps Jig', the start date was getting closer, and finally last orders were given: 'Get on the band-wagon or go home!'. My whole life flashed through my mind in a panic, filtering out all the adventures I had ever had. The process took seconds. The answer bounced back, 'far too few', and so with a leap and a yell I was on board. The scepticism falling off me like shedding a heavy, soggy, wet raincoat. I felt like a born-again, mad Morris dancer! and lighter!

At that time my little models of Will Kemp and his musician Tom Slye were born (see advert below)...born from a need to earn something to help pay my expenses! And so they did, God bless 'em, and still are.

*Howard Templeton*

## Will Kemp and Tom Slye Models

Standing six inches high, these wooden models of Will Kemp and Tom Slye celebrate the amazing feat that Kemp and his entourage did during March 1600, and the re-enactment which took place in 2000.

They cost only £8.50 each (£16.00 for two). You may request your own colours.

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Phone: 01603-503484

Payment on delivery of your order.





## Organising the Morris Federation AGM

I was still fairly new to the Morris scene – and incredibly keen...so when our team was approached to stage this event I was well impressed. People must have heard of us, we must be on the map! The fact that we are in the middle of the map/country and therefore an apt choice did not occur to me. But why wasn't everyone else in the team quite so enthusiastic and why didn't anyone want to be Bookings Secretary? Strange, I thought, fancy trusting me with the job!

It started off as a piece of cake – it was going to be the non-event of the year – the flop of the century. Then suddenly, from about the middle of June, the 'flood' started - even more replies than junk mail to greet me! No definite numbers yet though, from most teams anyway – just a registration of interest. Still, time to learn to use Excel, like everything, easy really when you know how!

The Summer Holidays arrived – YIKES - still very vague numbers – some of the Committee not pleased that numbers weren't firm (the fact that our own team is always equally undecided did not enter into it) - time to ring/e-mail the teams. But, guess what - in the Summer Holidays people go on holiday - no-one was going to stick their neck out for absent dancers and pay for their tickets!

We'll get back to you in September came the reply and they DID. 114 incoming e-mails, 129

outgoing e-mails and enough phone calls/1571s to warrant the Morris Federation launching its own mobile phone business, just about sorted out who was coming and who wasn't! Funny how phone calls always happen when you're eating a meal, making pastry (that's a woppa!) or on the loo. To be honest, I didn't really mind the phone going – I'm sure I must have returned calls at equally awkward times. I remember all the 'B?' teams I had to ring around when my mum had taken an important message from a team that began with B! (There were eight B teams due to attend!) Everyone I spoke to on the phone was SO lovely that it made up for any inconvenience. It was really good to finally come face to face with the owners of the voices!



Then suddenly, the weekend was upon us. Folk were arriving from far and wide even before all the teachers from the school had escaped! We hastily allotted teams to their quarters/classrooms forgetting how many of us there were and giving ourselves the titchiest room. Fitting all our air-beds onto the floor was an amazing exercise in tessellation, but then we were in the maths room!

By now, it was too late to worry about the things we'd forgotten – might as well relax and enjoy ourselves. And we

certainly did!!! It was a real pleasure to be the hosts and see everyone having a good time. All the months of planning came to a successful fruition. Of course, with hindsight, there were things we would have done differently (aghhh - the Saturday Meal! And no, we didn't need to get 108 loo rolls ). It was all over so quickly (not the meal, that wasn't, I mean the weekend). We all agreed that it had been a real team-uniting experience.

Now, two months on and life's returned to normal. No more '60 New Messages' on the e-mail, just the junk mail on the mat, only joking, I'm not quite that SAD!

By the way, is there someone going round without their beautiful silver, dangly earrings? They might be wearing one sock and one trainer and be minus their green fleece with their Rover car key in the pocket. We've located the owners of a bagful of shaky cabbages and carrots, but would the owners of a green, folding tripod stool please shout out, they must be desperate for a sit-down by now!

Finally, on behalf of the Ironmen and Severn Gilders I would like to say a big thank you to the teams and to the individuals who came and made it a worthwhile weekend. Also, to the Morris Federation Committee.

Good Luck to Westmorland for next year. Despite what you sometimes think at the time, you WILL enjoy it!

*Jude Duffy*

### OLD PALACE CLOG

in spite of inadvertently getting left out of the Morris Directory 2003, would like to announce that they ARE alive & well and living in Croydon.

New members (dancers/musicians) are always welcome to come along (Thursday evening practice in Norwood Junction) and then, of course, on to the pub!

Mary Levy  
020 8656 3399



### AGM 2003 VIDEO OPPORTUNITY

A member of the public made a video of the main gathering in Ironbridge, and has sent a copy, which by Morris videos is pretty good.

This has been properly edited, with little snippets of the pre-procession standing-about, the procession itself, most (if not all) of the teams dancing on and around the bridge, and even little chats with a few people, people eating ice cream etc. It runs for 45 minutes.

She is charging just £4 for copies (made from her digital master, so good quality) and any modest profit she makes will go to a charity she supports that funds children in developing countries.

Copies can be ordered from Sue Davies on 029 2075 8126.

"As part of the team that hosted 2002 M.Fed AGM I was very aware of all the hard work Ironmen & Severn Gilders put into this years AGM. Hosting an AGM makes for close team-work, creating a bond that lasts long after the weekend. Last year my granddaughter, Jemma, and I were guardians of the coffee pot. This was great fun and we served a lot of people. This year it was pleasant to meet up with them again...this time on the same side of the tea queue."

*Kath Day*

## HOW WE FEEL IS HOW WE DANCE



In 1981 I went along to the Windsor Art Centre to try a 5 week course on Cotswold Morris dancing. We all did our warm up exercises, practiced how to stand with a good posture, learnt the steps and by the end of the evening we knew a dance. By the end of the 5 weeks we'd been taught 5 dances. This wasn't so difficult! So when I was asked, I said "Yes, I'd love to join Windsor Morris!"

The course had been called "A Taste Of Morris" and after my first practice I realized that it really had been just a "taste"! First I was taught the dance steps and arm movements, and then moved on to learn figures and choruses. Finally it all came together in a dance. And then it all begins! Only at this stage can you really start to dance. It is essential that each new dancer can assimilate not only the dance but also the style of the side. The next challenge is to move the focus of being an individual dancer, to becoming part of a team, and does it stop there? It could, - at this stage you know what you're doing, you can dance as a team with a team style - it could be enough - but it isn't. Why? Because the Morris should entertain; that's why we do it; we want our audiences to be entertained. This final element grows from experience, and you never stop adding to this as long as you continue to dance!

The performance aspect of dancing has to be experienced. No matter how many times you rehearse your first dance in the familiar surroundings of your practice hall, that first dance out in public, with an audience watching, will feel completely different! Is it then possible to teach performance skills, and why would we want to?

When I watch a dance side, their performance starts, as soon as I see them walk on. How they walk on, how they line up and how they stand, it

is all on view to the audience. They might be announced or they might start dancing straight away, but all the time they are on show and the audience are forming opinions about the side they are about to watch. The dancers are now dancing. The dance finishes and the dancers move off. All the while I'm watching I am being entertained, but what makes a dance entertaining! What is it that makes someone stop and watch?

As a member of the audience, the first "hook" for me is a side that walks on looking confident and relaxed; a well thought out kit will hint at the style of entertainment I am about to see; when everyone is in place and ready to dance, they stand still and this creates an expectation of what's going to happen next; all this and they haven't begun to dance yet! But I'm making my decision whether I'm going to stop and watch!

So the first aspect of performance I teach is body language!

1. Good posture is important, and is essential (the longer we dance!) in warding off injury, but how we stand gives off messages about how we are feeling and it's this aspect that we can control and use in our dance performance.

2. Eye contact between dancers and their audience, and also between dancers themselves is great to see. Encourage dancers to look at their partner's forehead if eye contact is too difficult, or (in practice only) get other team members to stand behind the dancer's partner and wave - to remind the dancer to lookup! It does work!

3. Smiles are not essential all the time, but it is important to let the audience know that you are enjoying performing for them. When possible make eye contact with a member of the audience and smile, include them make them feel special.

4. We don't always go out feeling confident, but we can learn to look confident by using body language; and if we look comfortable with ourselves then the audience feels comfortable watching us. How do you look confident? One of the techniques Windsor used (great fun to do on a practice night) was to give a set a piece of paper with a dance and an adjective describing

how they should dance it e.g. Trunkles - angry. No one else but the dancers knew what was written on the paper, and after the dance was finished we had to guess what the adjective had been. The dancers had to consciously adjust their body language to perform angrily, but when on tour, if something's upset us, how we feel is how we dance, and it is important to recognize this and adjust. Refining this technique, you could try dancing half the dance "fearfully" and half the dance "proudly" and get the other dancers to guess when the change occurred and the how it was danced. More usefully the dancers need to be able to analyze what they did, to create the impression they were giving out to the audience. This may seem a bit academic, many dancers naturally give an aura of confidence, and there are teams that always look as if they enjoy each performance; this is often the mark of an experienced side, but when you're new to performing, acting confident, can breed confidence; think yourself into the body language that you've practiced and everyone will believe you!

5. Always be aware of how you appear to your audience and have you got their full attention? The obvious answer to this is the applause you get at the end of the dance and sometimes someone will compliment the side personally, - that's really special. When you look at the photos or video of the dancing, look at the audience around the dance spot, are they watching, or are they looking away and talking! If it's the latter can you change this situation by using some of the techniques just mentioned?

6. Another approach to building confidence is analyzing what is it that paves the way for a good dance performance for you personally. This will be different for each of us but there are things that will overlap.

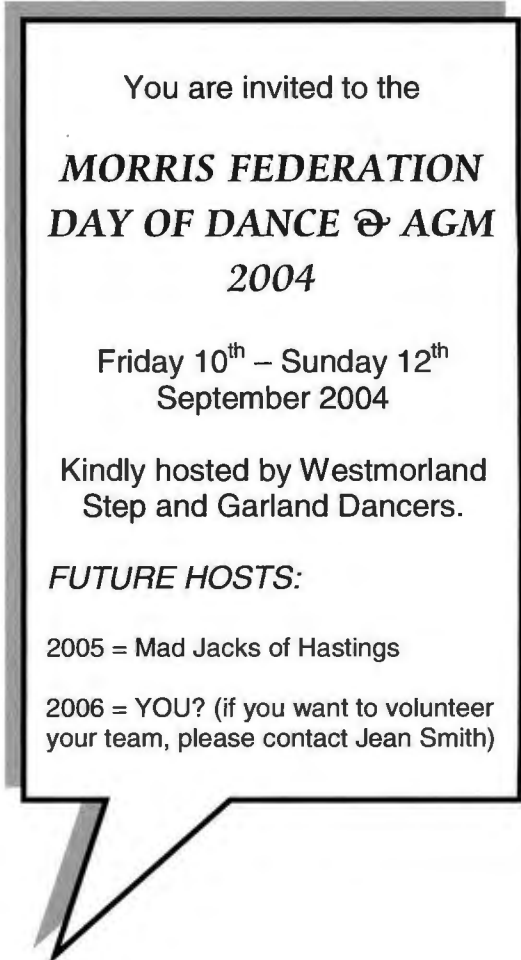
- a. Be punctual, give yourself time to get ready, and to know when the dancing starts.
- b. Make sure you have all your dance kit.
- c. Know what dances you're expected to do.
- d. Be responsible for keeping yourself informed of any changes that have been made.

And all this before any dance step is performed! These are just a few suggestions and you may

think they would have no influence at all on you personally, but be aware that there may be people in the side who are irritated when there's not enough people there to start the dancing on time, and this may create an atmosphere within the side which may then reflect in the dancing.

This is the dance ideal that Windsor aspired to and over the years we have taught not only the dances, but how to perform them. As different dancers join the side our teaching techniques have evolved to find solutions to help everyone to perform to their best standard, and when you succeed, your audience will tell you. That is the best reward you can have!

*Susan Graham*  
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07961 312958 (Mobile)  
[susan.oakend@btinternet.com](mailto:susan.oakend@btinternet.com)



You are invited to the

**MORRIS FEDERATION  
DAY OF DANCE & AGM  
2004**

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>  
September 2004

Kindly hosted by Westmorland  
Step and Garland Dancers.

**FUTURE HOSTS:**

2005 = Mad Jacks of Hastings

2006 = YOU? (if you want to volunteer your team, please contact Jean Smith)



# Morris Performance

## Visiting Tutor Scheme

Progress November 2003

First, we have another volunteer to help other teams - Pauline Woods-Wilson, who had been foreman of Windsor for a few years. So, the wealth of talent, enthusiasm and opportunity continues to grow. The volunteer tutors have nearly 300 years of experience between them. They have many skills to offer apart from those summarised below. They constitute a terrific resource to have at our disposal. I am sure that the tutors will treat any team entering the scheme with supportive consideration. What is there to lose? The MF will pay 75% of the cost of the travelling expenses of the tutor, so it will be great value!

**What does a team get from it???? See page 34!**

*Adrian Williams*

Name (Ordered by surname)	Experience in these Styles	Home location	Distance willing to travel
Anthony (John) Allen	Cotswold	Brighton, West Sussex	Any distance with expenses
Iain (Jethro) Anderson	Cotswold	Bristol	Anywhere reasonable
John Bacon	Cotswold Raglan & obscure dances	Ditchling, West Sussex	Anywhere expenses paid.
Martin Barter	Cotswold Border	Lincoln	2 hours
Ruth Dodsworth	NW & Own dances (Betty Lupton's Ladle Laikers)	Ripon, N Yorks.	2 hours
Janet Dickson	NW	Enfield, Middx	London & Home Counties
Bev Langton	NW, Garland, Border, Own Dances (Shrewsbury Lasses)	Wem, Shrewsbury	Negotiable, weekends & holidays
Ray Langton	Cotswold, Border, Longsword, Own dances (Shrewsbury Bull & Pump)	Wem, Shrewsbury	Negotiable, weekends & holidays
Keith Leech	Cotswold	Hastings, East Sussex	100 miles (Inducements may extend range)
Brian Mander	Cotswold	Toddington, Beds	50 miles
Trefor Owen	NW, Yorkshire	Canterbury, Kent	4 hours
Pauline Woods- Wilson	Cotswold	Dent, Cumbria	Anywhere reasonable



# CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS



## *Mummers, Wassail Parties, Ceilidhs...*

### Withy Morris and the Bishopswood Mummers

Christmas means many things to many people. To the members of Withy Morris it is principally *Mummers* time. Under the title of Bishopswood Mummers, members of the side spend weeks and weeks in rehearsal and practicing ready for the big weekend. Oh, alright then, we get together for an hour a couple of days before we are booked to go out.



We usually have two or three evenings over the weekend before Christmas, going around the pubs giving performances. We also take part in the Halsway Manor Wassail party on the first Saturday in January. This year's performances had the added message regarding the Licensing Bill, because Mummers Plays will become another victim if this ill-conceived and recklessly processed legislation is enacted.

Our play has a changing cast with a dozen different people playing the six parts over the season. This adds to the fun, because although there is a script, accidental ad libs help create the mayhem and encourage audience participation.

What is it all about? - Mummers Plays are a traditional form of expression and all have the theme of the triumph of good over evil. The original intention was to encourage a good crop for next year, and whilst it is now generally accepted that these plays do not affect the weather, they are still performed at the traditional times. The Middle Ages development of the plays has meant, in the main, that they follow the major Christian festivals in the winter months from Souling Plays at All Souls Night to Pace Egging at Easter.



Bishopswood Mummers perform a Christmas Play in costumes that represent each of the characters. Some plays are performed with the characters all wearing the same costume and without makeup. But the main theory of the costume and makeup is to protect the player from identity in order to ensure the "magic" works. In the later versions of the plays - in which they were used to parody the local aristocracy - the costume and makeup helped to save the players from later retribution! Whilst each play has its own style they all include a battle, the killing of the dark character and his resurrection, interspersed with songs and dances.

Any readers who would like to find out more can visit our website:  
[www.bishopwoodmummers.org.uk](http://www.bishopwoodmummers.org.uk)

### Beltane Border Wassail – 11<sup>th</sup> January 2003 - Church House Inn & Orchard, Stokeinteignhead



The side met at 7pm in the bar of the Church House – we danced outside the pub – before processing the short distance to the Orchard with our virgin leading the way. Candle Lamps had been set up to mark the path in the Orchard (fortunately the resident sheep had not interfered with them!) and more lamps hung in the branches of the trees to be Wassailed. It was a cold night, frost was beginning to form on the branches already, but there was a lovely clear sky and it wasn't raining!. Our virgin for the night was assisted up into the branches of the trees by Philthy and Tony, where she placed the offering of bread and poured a little cider. Villagers and

Morris people sang the traditional Wassail song, Alec Coles fired his double barreled shot-gun followed by everyone making as much noise as they could by bashing saucepans, sticks and old hub caps! We repeated this for three apple trees making sure we included the oldest tree in the Orchard. When we were quite certain that a good crop was ensured for the following year we all retired to the pub for a session. Spike, Cath, Tony2, Angie, Tony and Phil sang and played and we all joined in where we could. Guest musicians in the form of Norman and Robin also provided very welcome entertainment. The bar was packed as locals kept on coming in to listen and join in. Two different locals bought the side jugs of beer to show their appreciation, and the team's bag paid for the baskets of chips. All in all – a thoroughly enjoyable evening!

### Wassail with Hunters Moon Morris

Our Wassail will be held on Saturday 10th January from 7.30 pm at The Plough, Upper Dicker, Near Hailsham, Near Eastbourne.

Last year's event (our first) was a great success with torch lit dancing and mulled cider to toast the apple tree. It was very well attended by the public and everybody enjoyed the music session in the pub afterwards. The landlord, Glen, is really enthusiastic and keen on traditional dance and music. When we approached him, the only apple tree in the pub garden happened to be next to a propane gas tank - not a good idea when wanting to set off fireworks in the vicinity! Glen agreed to let us plant a new apple tree in a more sensible location and subsequently wassail it the following January. This really is a call to any interested parties who wish to come along. I can be contacted via 01323 722288 or on [greenmangallery@lineone.net](mailto:greenmangallery@lineone.net) or via the Hunters Moon website [www.huntersmoonmorris.co.uk](http://www.huntersmoonmorris.co.uk).



*Diane Bird  
Hunters Moon Morris*

## "Team Talk"

### Christmas with Shrewsbury Morris



It is Christmas that has become a time for the teams (of 1976) to celebrate in style. The teams, The Shrewsbury Lasses, Shrewsbury Bull and Pump Morris Men and Shrewsbury Clog have always encouraged members to take up an instrument so that when out performing there tends to be a band providing the music for the dance. From this has come a Ceilidh band called Pump Action that on occasions can even be encouraged to play for ceilidhs in and around Shropshire.

At Christmas though Pump Action comes into its own with the Shrewsbury Morris Christmas Ceilidh. This event has become one of the key events in the team's calendar. Over the years Ray, squire of Shrewsbury Bull and Pump Morris Men, and lead musician for both teams has researched and arranged Christmas tunes so that the entire evening is danced to Christmas Carols and tunes. The band rise to the occasion usually by donning full evening dress and seasonal entertainment is also provided ranging from clog dancing reindeer to a mummer's play.

Following this large scale event with full PA system and band of about 15 musicians a few weeks later the teams visit the small village of Ash in the north of Shropshire. Here about thirty villagers gather in their village hall and are entertained by the Shrewsbury Morris with a mixed evening of Morris, clog and sword display, with ceilidh dances for everyone to Christmas tunes. After a couple of hours the entire company repairs to the local pub where the Morris musicians lead everyone in Christmas Carols. Nearer Christmas we also usually visit some more local pubs to play Christmas music and sing carols and finally closer to Christmas we have the team Christmas meal. All in all Christmas is alive and well in Shropshire.



For many in the Morris World the Wantage weekend needs no introduction but for the uninitiated, a brief explanation! Many moons ago Roy Dommett conceived the idea of a "total submersion in Morris" weekend, organised them & taught many unusual dances which he had collected over the years. The weekend being something of a "Morris Marathon" the Olympic Torch was eventually handed to Tony Forster, who having successfully completed his personal marathon in organising the event, handed the "torch" to Adrian Williams who is running it impeccably (ever-so-slightly harassed at times but never out of breath!).

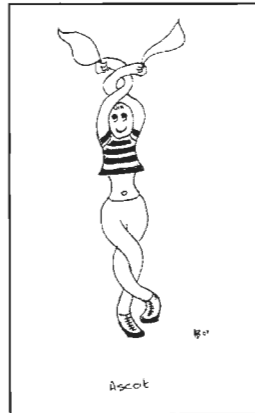
Base camp for the weekend is the Wantage Youth Hostel, situated just off the Ridgeway in a bracing but fantastic position with panoramic views over the countryside. (On a starry night it is even possible to see the twinkling lights of Didcot Power Station to the N.E.). On the domestic front the accommodation is good, no lumpy mattresses on rickety iron bunks these days, the showers are hot & work most of the time!

The format follows roughly the same pattern every year, (eat, drink, dance, eat, drink, dance...) but the content presents excitingly different challenges, a virtual cocktail of Morris. People arrive during the Friday evening & having been fed & watered/beered any thought of a quiet natter with friends over a drink are rudely shattered by a command to clear the floor for dancing! (Have no illusions, dancing is what we're here for). Before we begin there is a compulsory initiation ceremony of "essential-to-prevent-injury

## WANTAGE - What's it all about? (Hazy) recollections for the 2003 Weekend

warm-up-exercises" conducted by our guru, Adrian.

Redbornstoke kick off the weekend teaching a couple of tricky little Ascot numbers which they dance with aplomb, leaving a number of us with permanently plaited legs from poorly executed "cross/aparts".



Exhausted, we retire to the benches & conversation drifts inevitably from "what is the meaning of life?" to "matters Morris." This soon develops into a heated discussion about who should/shouldn't dance the Morris. Should they be tested? If so, who will do the testing & who will test the testers? No conclusion was reached by the time I went to bed but the stalwarts continued to ponder the imponderable far into the night!

Saturday dawned misty - or was it the after-effects of the previous night we wondered as we gathered for an early morning cuppa in the kitchen. Fortified by a "full English" we head downhill in convoy to Laines Barn, a beautiful setting for the event, a gem of an old timber barn converted to a Community Centre. All mod. cons, well heated & subtly lit. The morning session began with Adrian's ceremonial "warm-ups" (as the weekend progressed the value of these was appreciated!).

Then, over to the Flag and Bone Gang. The stepping may be simple but trying to control a set of bones in each hand, click rhythmically off-beat, then don a dark-veiled hat with almost zero visibility certainly adds a new dimension to the "mysteries of Morris." The mornings' efforts were rewarded by a mouth-watering buffet lunch & a chance to see some amazing archive videos of C# & Morris in the "good old days".



Windsor had the task of motivating the motley crew after the sumptuous repast & there was not a little difficulty emulating their high, powerful & elegant style of Brackley.

The final workshop of the day was led by Lyn Pointer of Rogue Morris teaching some of their feisty Border dances covering large area & using robust sticking.

Adrian rounded off the afternoon with a fascinating "in-depth" look at a picture entitled "Countryside around Dixton Manor" anon, painted in 1730 depicting Morris dancers. A section is often reproduced on cards but rarely shown in entirety. (The original is in Cheltenham Museum).

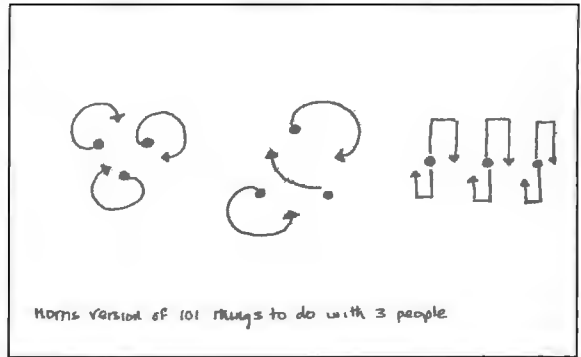
After another buffet feast served in the Barn all able-bodied survivors were exhorted to join in a Ceilidh with a



Difference. Dances were variations on a theme, one being the Nottingham Swing where many weird & wonderful items were introduced by the participants and audience, from sweeps brushes to hula-hoops. (It was impossible to differentiate between the dancers & audience at times but a good time was had by all!).

Sunday dawned much as Saturday! Back to the Barn after breakfast for another warm-up ceremony followed by a session of Stroud dances led by Julia. As in previous traditions during the weekend, the stepping appeared deceptively simple until all the "optional extras" are added,

especially the interesting inverted heys making the dances so attractive to watch. Tim Radford introduced yet another dimension to the weekend with an innovative tradition from America using different ways of turning the set during a dance making it excellent for performance "in the round." The weekend was brought to an end with a challenging session of building "Dances for Odd numbers" masterminded by Brian Manders of Redbornstoke. This proved to be very thought provoking and a brain-storming session of 15 mins produced a wide diversity of interesting new dances.



Three cheers for Adrian and Redbornstoke for another hugely successful and enjoyable Wantage weekend

*Ann Bacon, Ditchling Morris*



- Photos clockwise from top left:
- \* A flag dance from the Flag & Bone repertoire
  - \* The culmination of Tim Radford's teaching from a set dominated by Windsor and the Outside Capering Crew
  - \* Tim teaching an American tradition from Minneapolis on Charles
  - \* Active sticking in a Rogue border dance

*Photos by Adrian Williams, Sketches by Ann Bacon*



## What the Performance Tutor did for us!

Well, it would be hypocritical of me not to experience the assessment of a performance tutor in a team of which I was a member, so this is my version of Redbornstoke's engagement with the scheme.

First, the team agreed overwhelmingly (or even unanimously) to participate and actually that first step is essential. There is no point if the Foreman and Squire invite a tutor in isolation from the team. This step also implies a willingness to be assessed, judged and receive feedback. If you (as a team) are not, then just do not bother!

Second, we selected the tutor and decided on John Bacon. John's reaction was along the line of: "Goodness me; what on earth shall I say to Redbornstoke Morris?"

John observed us on two occasions: Chippenham Folk Festival, in May 2003, and one of our pub nights - The Toddington Tour, in July. The Toddington Tour is unusual in that we have several guest teams (mostly from members of the Ring) and visit 7 pubs (8 until this year). He took video footage and notes, but did not otherwise intrude or comment

on our performance.

The fourth stage was the feedback, which was in November (practice season well under way & Trafalgar Square a warm, glowing memory). He approached it with a mixture of talking and illustrating points with video clips. These were undoubtedly invaluable. It really allows you to see and hear yourself as others do: however alarming this may be! It was also a great tool for comparing ourselves with other teams (no names - no packdrill!).

John's comments covered six areas:

1. Punctuality
2. Coming on
3. The dancing itself (most certainly including music)
4. Coming off
5. Kit
6. What we did when not dancing

His observations caused useful (and humorous) discussion within the team and with John. It was stimulating and helpful and in some cases led to a discussion about fundamental questions such as "*What are we trying to achieve in dancing Morris?*" However, while John pointed out areas where he

thought we could improve and offered a few suggestions, he did not seek to impose solutions on us. There are certainly areas where we can act on John's points and should be able to change our overall performance with little effort. Some areas will take much more thought and effort and you will have to wait until next dancing season to see if there has been any impact!

Whatever we actually do, there is no doubt that the diplomatic feedback that John gave us will have stimulated us to take note of areas that we would simply have never considered. The use of video was enormously helpful, but watching it as a team in isolation does not work in the same way. The sight of a mistake, or whatever, tends to cause mirth, but leads to nothing more. Being willing to accept comment is ultimately paramount. I visited Roy Dommett recently and he observed that his most embarrassing experiences in many years of involvement with the Morris were when he offered well-intentioned advice to teams (or individuals) that was received unreceptively.

*Adrian Williams*

### The Lisa Ullman Travelling Scholarship Fund (LUTSF)

This group give one off payments for anyone researching traditional dance abroad. The costs are for travel abroad only. No accommodation or fees, just the travel.

The fund can be seen on <http://www.ullmann-trav.fsnet.co.uk>

*"We are delighted to receive high quality applications for exciting projects. Our website now includes guidelines for applicants which try to get at eligibility issues, and the application form. Next closing date is 25th January 2004".*



## Maids of the Mill weekend Utrecht, 19 - 21st September 2003

Mad Jack's usually make one or two away trips a year; personally I like to do much more which is why I tart with Loose Women. But as a joint side with a large number of teachers, self-employeds and people with employers who simply don't realise that Morris dancing is one of the three essentials in life (more on that later), we have to make the most of when we can get away. We also have a couple of callers in our side, so when one of the main musicians, the men's foreman and the women's foreman have bookings we are limited still further.

The first thing, after organising time off on the Friday, Euros, passports, insurance and checking the kit is all-respectable, is travel. We initially thought we'd try and link up with some of the other sides (Wolf's Head & Vixen, Hammersmith, Stone Monkey Sword) to try and get a big booking on one of the boats but given the above we all decided to make our own ways. We plumped for a minibus - I get to drive, huzzah - and Mike Riley, ex-squire and ex-rugby referee led the singing. Some of which was occasionally repeatable!

Coming from Kent, I railed and petitioned and demonstrated against the Channel Tunnel, and still think it's the tool of the Devil. But although it pains me to admit to a change of mind, I have to confess that it's very efficient. Ouch, that hurt! I'll say it slowly, to get used to it: You book by credit card on the phone (quick, efficient); turn up, confirm by credit card (equally quick and cool). Then you lose the Squire's drum on the fly-over; contact the Police because you're not allowed to

wander around out of your car. They put out a broadcast to what feels like the whole of the Ports and Airports Police and then you discuss the likelihood of it being run over by the 38-ton lorries. And then debate whether you'd bother the police for a bodhran.

You get called to load up ... panic about the drum. Drive up the loading concourse ... the men dance Monk's March to just a drumbeat ... what do we do if the police can't find it? Handing over credit card to load up and explain that we're waiting for the police to bring us our squire's drum. The nice lady taking our details has seen just about everything and it doesn't faze her when the police scream up in their patrol car, screech to a halt and calmly hand over Trev the Leg's drum as if this is specifically what we pay our police for.

Then you drive down towards a loading bay with what looks like a large greyhound bus - steel, square with an open side. You drive on, park the car and then much against the rules, you get out and walk about. No one takes any notice. You hardly notice when it starts up; I have problems adjusting to pressure and I only knew we were moving downwards when I felt my ears pop slightly - not even as much as when I'm going through the Dartford Tunnel. There was a party of Hassidic Jews in our carriage, who were travelling to buy orthodox hats; as they were the only ones with us we asked them if they'd mind if we danced (we explained we danced everywhere we could ... it's a Morris thaaang) and they rather bemusedly said they didn't. They were quite orthodox and said a prayer before doing almost everything, and this included watching ritual dance. But they clapped very politely

and then gathered together to pray afterwards. As we were about to disembark they all prayed again; it reminded me of reading the ancient Romans' diaries of how a prayer would be said before and after each action, such as opening the front door for the first time in the day; before lighting the fire, before cooking, and so on. But then we take the opportunity to dance everywhere we can - I've danced on planes, tubes, cross-channel ferries, cruisers, even the fast lane of the M25 during one particularly bad traffic jam.

There's something a little spooky about crossing borders without having to show your passport. I suppose it shows how isolated we are on this island. Just a blue sign saying Belgie then another for de Nederlands (although you pass through Gelderland to get there; in terms of Holland and Netherlands it's like England and Britain). We made just one wrong turning and Mike didn't get too stressed out but then Bob's your uncle, finding the youth hostel and hello to the Maids of the Mill!

I love youth hostelling. I love the feeling of all being squeezed in together; clean linen, loads of good food, bar open till stupid o'clock, knowing there's not going to be any trouble. The Maids had hired this one just outside Arnhem - we didn't get to see the Bridge Too Far; I saw it as a child and wouldn't particularly want to go back. There were us (Mad Jacks), Stroud Morris, Hammersmith Morris Men, Wolf's Head & Vixen, Stone Monkey Sword, Utrecht Morris Men, Kettle Bridge Clogs and some of Helmond Morris Men. Maids of the Mill come to Hastings Jack in the Green every couple of years so it's

great to meet up again and make new friends.

We spent the whole weekend visiting country houses and castles, which provided some marvellous venues for dancing and sightseeing and great opportunities for enjoyment. I still almost need to pinch myself to recollect that the waterfalls really existed and we danced next to them - yes waterfalls in that rather flat country (certainly aided by landscape gardeners, but nonetheless gravity-driven waterfalls). The Mill that we visited was lovely (and well equipped with a most hospitable "Folk Pub") and what a treat to find such large appreciative audiences who also seemed to understand

Morris talk and humour. It puzzles me to think of the memories of the wedding couple who were the beneficiaries (or victims?) of the "Fertility Dance" by Wolfshead at the first stand, which was a glorious castle resplendent with paintwork in Hammersmith colours. So handy that they were there to appreciate it and dance and play so well during the weekend.

Great dancing was all around, from the Maids themselves, the Utrecht men (supplemented by some from Helmond), Hammersmith, Wolfshead & Vixen, Stone Monkey, Mad Jacks men & women, Kettle Bridge Clog, and Stroud. Great drinking also - the early arrivals

drank the hostel dry of wheat beer on Friday. Mind you, many late arrivals seemed to have been well supplied with laughing juice en route. Many apologies to those that did not. Many more memories are left to be unscrambled later. So, a cracking weekend in Gelderland and a thousand thanks to Maids of the Mill and all in the Netherlands who helped.

(with thanks to Adrian Williams of Redbornstoke for contributions, edits and photos. In fact, he pretty much wrote it as well.)

*Fee Lock  
Mad Jack's Morris*

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## 23 Miles of Morris!

The Gate to Southwell is a revival of a traditional procession from Nottingham to the Minster at Southwell. Documents from 1530 record that Morris dancers took Nottingham borough contributions to the upkeep of Southwell Minster.

Today, although many do walk and process the whole way, the majority of sides spend time with other dancers and are bused from pub to pub. The whole thing ends with a procession into Southwell followed by a short service at the Minster. Then to the *Bramley Apple* where local breweries in previous years have donated beer. Buses take everyone back to Nottingham in the early evening.

We have a strong core of some 20 teams who attend every year but would love to attract some newcomers. Last year we raised over £1500 for Nottingham Hospice, a very worthy cause

If you are interested in attending next year on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2004, or want to know more, contact Chris Gigg of Dolphin M.M. on 0115 8780567, or visit [www.dolphin-morris.co.uk](http://www.dolphin-morris.co.uk) and follow the link.





# Too old to polka? Too young to die!



“What’s that about then?” I hear you cry. Well part of the answer is a remark I heard recently by John Kirkpatrick, on what I still occasionally refer to as the wireless. An approximate paraphrase of the remark would be “.. and I see some Morris sides and think come

on chaps you’re too old for this. Why not pack it in?” That set me thinking on why we “old guys” continue to dance. Then an eloquent letter from Stephanie of Ryknild Rabble in the autumn newsletter put the case for looking beyond the performance and taking into account the dynamics that keep a team going. This added to my already bubbling thoughts on that age comment and so never being one to suffer in silence here a few thoughts on the subject.

Whilst at the Bridgnorth festival this year I had the pleasure of seeing Bampton Morris in action. One particular dancer in the side held my attention simply for the grace and fluidity of his performance. Coming from a long time Northwest dancer this is a rare comment! It was only after registering the performance that I noticed he was possibly the oldest member of the side, or maybe he’d just lived more! Later I watched Ryburn Longsword in action and found the performance a real pleasure to watch. Again only after having been filled with admiration of the performance did the age factor rear its head. In this case because the age range in the side seemed to span the teens to the 40-somethings.

So is age a factor in being able to perform the dance? Not as far as I’m concerned is the answer. Over the years I have seen many new young sides emerge who seemed to blossom for a few brief years and then fade. The teams that endure seem to be the ones that have a firm grounding in who they are and what they do. Part of this seems to be a balancing act between the more experienced, well OK the older, dancers carrying the tradition in their minds and movements whilst accepting the younger dancers and their ideas on performance and presentation. The reverse is also true in that the younger dancers desire to kick the tradition into line and give it street cred and attitude gets tempered by the acceptance of the experience and knowledge of the older dancers.

Look at it this way. The younger dancers keep the experienced dancers on their toes, literally in some cases, to maintain a level of fitness that will not discredit the team as a whole. The experienced dancers challenge the wisdom of change for the sake of change, is the world really ready for a team in day-glow flared leg jeans dancing to a drum and bass track? Yes a team with a narrow age range can be dramatically good but they can also be tragically bad. And this works at both ends of the spectrum. At one end is the team who soldier on with no new blood coming in and whose performance can become stale and stolid, as age becomes an issue. At the other are the bright young things who set out to re-invent the tradition but somehow lose the plot and end up producing a parody that pleases neither the traditionalists nor the uninformed public.

The origins of the dance we can probably agree spring from a communal activity. And it’s that sense of community that we should foster in our teams. The communities from which the dances grew and developed may now be stratified by age, education, income, ethnicity and any one of the other measures the world uses to slot people into neat boxes. But one of the most valuable parts of the dance

tradition we can carry forward is the blunt refusal to be boxed in. The only criteria that really matters is, do you really want to join in the dance?

So until I get too old to polka I'll plug along. Now, readers of a certain age will possibly have recognised the strap line in the title as a pastiche on a Jethro Tull song title, whilst younger readers may now be asking who is Jethro Tull? The answer is of course the 18<sup>th</sup> Century inventor of a seed drill or the name of a popular beat combo of the 1970's depending on your age and education. Any members of Wakefield Morris muttering that the author probably remembers the inventor of the seed drill personally will find their next practise night really hard!

The last time I saw Tull play live the venue was smaller than the glory days, the crowd a mix of old and new fans. At the end of the show Ian Anderson stepped out to say "Thanks for coming along folks – without you this would just be a jam session. You're being here makes us old guys really happy." That sort of sums up what I feel about dancing. The heady days of the folk revival may have past but I still enjoy being part of a team and as long as we can draw a happy crowd around to watch we'll keep dancing. And who knows in that small but happy crowd might be the seeds of the next generation of dancers?

*Doug Bradshaw, Wakfield Morris*

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# "Team Talk"

## Headcorn Morris

Day to day diary of our Summer tour  
in Hungary



### **Wednesday 23rd July**

A good flight to Budapest and our first meeting with the Danes with whom we shared a coach for the whole tour. A three-hour drive took us first to where the Danes were staying and then to the outskirts of Algyő where Headcorn stayed in a leisure complex. We had dinner, drank lager at about 50p a pint and then made merry - as we do - with music and song. A storm at night was ominous and barking dogs kept a few awake.

### **Thursday 24th July**

We left at 9.30am in sunshine to pick up the Danes at Sándorfalva and then off to Szeged to get some currency - the Hungarian Forint. We wandered around a clean attractive city with some fine old buildings and with some interesting statues dotted about. The absence of heavy road traffic was a joy. Local bars and cafes were

well patronised by enthusiastic drinkers eager to preserve their professional status. Off then to Sándorfalva for lunch before a guided tour of the town and church while Stuart our Squire went with Jackie and Ned in the guise of our Hooden Horse - Jason - went to mingle with the Mayor and drink his plum pálinka. The festival was opened by the mayor in the cultural centre and then local children sang and danced with a seven-piece zither band called 'Citera' to follow. Local dancers then got spectators up to dance on the grass in front of the stage with Headcorn well represented by the usual suspects. Music followed - there's a surprise - and we and the Danes were there to the bitter end which was to set the pattern for the rest of the tour. Back to accommodation and a fairly early night.

### **Friday 25th July**

We went with the Danes to Szeged for a visit to the 'new' synagogue which is beautiful. Some also went to see the cathedral while the local bars were again forced into profit by a thirsty band of determined professionals. Lunch was at a school complex at Ásotthalom then some went for a swim at the local pool and others for a tour of the town. Stuart had to go Mayor mingling again with Ernie/Jason where gifts were exchanged. More local booze - good work if you can get it! We changed in the village hall before performing in an open-air arena with all sides present and had a large audience of local people who clearly enjoyed the whole event. Dinner was a short walk away at a local restaurant where we dined well and then rearranged the tables so we could indulge ourselves in some country dancing. Charmingly, balloons were given out by local children with names and addresses inside which invited a postcard from the finder but less charming was the arrival of the police. They must have thought we were all behaving perfectly well - though noisily - however and they departed without further interest. Home late and straight to bed.

### **Saturday 26th July**

Off to Szeged with the Danes to visit either the local zoo or botanical gardens and then off to the town of Hódmezővásárhely where we lunched in a college refectory - more excellent catering. Some went off for a tour of the town while some of our ladies practised a dance called 'Spotted Cow' before performing. We changed in a local theatre and gathered away from the centre to process to the outdoor stage in a little park in the middle of the town square. Another good crowd who enjoyed our unusual dancing style as well as the other performances. The organisers appreciated our co-operation in keeping our performance short and gave us carte blanche to extend our time in the evening, which we did with good effect. In the evening, off to Kardoskút, which is a bit off the beaten track but prosperous because of its oil. Stuart mingles again taking Jackie and Jackie T/Jason. Another mayor another exchange of gifts and another glass or two. There was an appreciative audience who enjoyed all the performances under floodlights and, during a dance by the men called 'Gallant Hussar', Ian surprised us all by fooling in his usual style which must have confused the audience to begin with. Once again, we felt that our different style made us stand out and Ian added an extra dimension. Back to base where Ned and Jackie discovered how small is the world. Our hosts had lost Ned's key and an English-speaking guest from a wedding party helped with the language problem. It turned out he was a close friend of Ned's next-door neighbour. Spooky! It was a late night so straight to bed for some but partying with the wedding guests for the hardcore.

### **Sunday 27th July**

Coach to Algyő where we are to dance on an open-air stage. We hung around for a long time in heat, which slowed us all down, but this is show business and the show goes on. Gnome fooled about on stage when the men danced 'Swaggering Boney' and looked like falling off at one point but it's all part of the Morris and was much applauded by the audience. Dinner was in a nearby hanger after which, the tables were pushed back once again for some music and dancing. The Estonians were clearly in the right mood and when we left for base, they partied on with a vengeance.

### **Monday 28th July**

An easy start for us with a lazy morning 'til noon and then lunch with the Danes at Sándorfalva. The highlight was possibly the sight of one of our table's members trying to move the whole shebang to help John Moore out of the sun. Collapse seemed inevitable to the laughter and cheers of the Danes but with Malcolm lying on the floor issuing directions, the day was saved together with their lunch. Stuart heard an Estonian remark, "ah yes, the Headcorn table dance". Off again to Szeged to visit a paprika and salami museum where the video they showed reinforced the feelings of all vegetarians present. The festival was closed at Sándorfalva with more Mayor mingling for Stuart. Gifts were exchanged but no boozing - had they heard about his problem? The Estonians were showing the signs of yesterday's partying but they still gave a first class performance. Dinner next, excellent as always, and more country dancing. Headcorn and the Danes were there 'til the bitter end as usual. Nicolaj from Denmark spent a lot of time with us during the week, particularly with Catherine and Malcolm - all young people together - so we gave him a Headcorn International T-shirt with an 'L' plate on his back, strapped on some bells and taught him a few steps which he performed for us to loud cheers. There was talk of a transfer but no agreement reached as to a fee. Similar treatment was handed out to an Estonian lady who found the co-ordination of feet and hands more difficult than anticipated. The Danes presented us with a bound copy of their music, which pleased our musicians no end. Back to base, a beer and another hot night.

### **Tuesday 29th July**

An early start to get our Danish friends to the airport at Budapest in time although most of them were staying on for the week. Our BA flight was delayed by two hours while a new plane was drafted in and we had lunch on them. Beer prices are appropriately sky high at Budapest Airport so sobriety was to be the new travel experience for Headcorn. An uneventful flight brought us home to a wet and windy England where most of us would be ready for a relatively early night after a well-earned duty-free nightcap.

### **Summary**

A thoroughly good week's dancing with lovely people. Organisation not perfect but few real complaints. Our two chaperones Ildikó and Tünde were great and did much to smooth out a few creases, answer our questions and translate where necessary. Amongst our own side, it was great to see Gnome fooling again which really helped to present the Morris in its true light as did Jason, ably performed by Ernie and Jackie T, who frightened the kids in time honoured style. Once again, the unusual nature of Morris dancing as compared to other dancing styles made us stand out although the same could be said for the Israeli Arab side with their loud percussion and Eastern flavour. Everybody got on together just fine and lots of friends were made and gifts exchanged. We even managed to rope Nicky in once or twice to carry our Headcorn placard so everybody contributed. As always, we owe much to our musicians – most of whom also dance – not only for providing our dance music but also for breaking the ice with other sides with the universal language of music. Our thanks go to the festival organisers for inviting us and for making our visit such a friendly and happy experience.

Headcorn International have now completed tours in France, Belgium, Freisland, Estonia, Amsterdam, Boston Mass as well as this one in Hungary and now we're looking at several options for next year.

Teams attending: Denmark: "Den Toppede Hone", Estonia: "Segapidi", Israel: "Kolot Amami" and "Caboul", Hungary: "Csutri" and "Kankalin", England: "The Headcorn Morris"



*David Barnes, Headcorn Morris*  
[www.gayner.co.uk/headcorn.morris](http://www.gayner.co.uk/headcorn.morris)

## OBITUARY OF JENNIFER MAY 1940 – 2003

### IN MEMORY OF A VERY SPECIAL DANCER...

Jennifer May was someone, who as a person our Morris side did not know all that long, but she will be sadly missed. Jennifer started dancing with the Flowers Of May, whilst living in the Harrow area, approx. 18 years ago. Jennifer was a teacher by profession, teaching younger children of 7 years old and thoroughly enjoyed seeing them learn and progress on.

Jennifer had strong connections with her local church, enjoyed singing and helped with the Brownies as a guider. In more recent years Jennifer had moved out to Wingrave in Buckinghamshire, and taught at a local school until retiring. Jennifer also adored horses and breeding dogs.



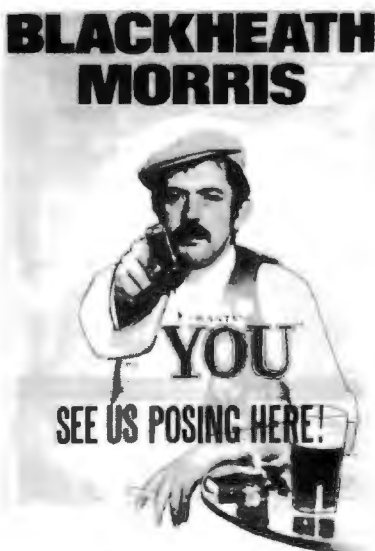
Jennifer came to Whitethorn by chance really, when we developed closer links and shared dance practices with Flowers of May, about 4 years ago. Jennifer really enjoyed dancing, although injuries and knee problems limited her dancing. Jennifer always came over as a thoughtful, considerate person and was willing to help anyone. Jennifer had moved to Devon in January this year to live in a beautiful farm, with several acres of land and stables, in which her daughter Susannah and herself shared 11 horses. Jennifer had moved away to be nearer her family, as she also has a son Ashley and husband Trevor, who had really settled into their new life. They had many plans, which will hopefully still come to fruition.

Even though Jennifer had moved away from the area, she would come to our practices whilst visiting her mother, and joined us in dancing at Wimborne festival this year, as she wanted to keep up her connections with the Morris team.

Jennifer tragically died 8 days after sustaining a major head injury, whilst out riding. Jennifer was taken by the Devon Air Ambulance to the nearest hospital, and was later moved to a larger hospital further away. Trevor and other family members kept our side up to date with events. We were very sad to hear of her peaceful death on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September. Some of our team were able to attend the funeral and we are planning to dance at her memorial service on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November in Wingrave. We will also be dancing out on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2004 to raise more monies for the Devon Air Ambulance, as their work is essential.

*Janet Jones*

## BYRON DANIEL(S) – A TRIBUTE



Byron was once described in a national newspaper as “an itinerant Welsh poet, bricklayer and Morris dancer”, although apparently he hated the article in which this appeared. To this can be added; tree impersonator, mallet dancer, ballet dancer and above all guiding hand and icon of Blackheath Morris Men.

The Foot and Death Morris were formed at Goldsmiths College in New Cross, S.E. London. Byron played a major part in the team becoming Blackheath Morris Men and moving into “the real world” where he tried to attract “artisans and workers” into the team, he often pretended dismay on discovering that a new member was “educated” or “a professional”.

His face has appeared on two team T- shirts, in one case a photo montage designed by Bill (William) Dudley catching him with a pint and a roll-up and one of his favourite sayings “fair play yeoh” (this design also features on the Team posters), the other an instantly recognisable cartoon on a shirt celebrating the Team’s 21ish anniversary. He also has a verse to himself in a Blackheath Song



featuring another well known saying, "just one more pint yeoh" and he lives on in a dance which begins with a loud yeoh and in a curious kick while sticking in Adderbury known as a Byron.

There are many stories about Byron including why the team changed to black trousers (don't ask) the mystery of the "missing" lung, the pint of mixed red and white wine in a non beer selling wine bar, all of which continue to provide the team with fond recollections.

Byron also danced (or fooled) with many other teams and played his part in the seventies Morris dancing revival in the SE of England. He was also a founder member of Tylers Men. His notebook contained details of every dance he'd seen in the early days and a few more besides. He was known by teams throughout the country who always asked after him, not only of Blackheath Morris Men but other local teams. As a member of one of these teams said, "I have met many people throughout the country whilst dancing; many of those knew Byron or knew of him. There are not many of us who can claim that".

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Always faded jacket wearing, always drunk and always swearing, fair dos yeoh always declaring; we'll miss Byron Daniels.

*Douglas Adams*  
*Blackheath Morris Men*

### **Palatine Clog Morris**

*are a dance group based in Durham City and specialising in north-west clog. I'm hoping the Fed can help us attract new members, unless we get some by Easter we'll have to fold after 15 years.*

*Our website is*  
*[www.communigate.co.uk/ne/palatine](http://www.communigate.co.uk/ne/palatine)*  
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*Carol and Bryan Attewell*

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# ***Rapper Workshop with Black Swan***

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**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2004**

**10 – 4.00pm**

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Hot off the success of their winning streak at DEPT 2003 and their performance at Sidmouth Festival the Morris Federation have booked Whip the Cat Rapper and his support team

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They have stretched the boundaries of rapper to the extent of a  
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## **Message from the Squire of the Morris Ring**

"Please would you pass on my thanks to the sides who supported the Trafalgar Sq event. I would like to see more cooperation between the Morris Ring and the Federation. This can only happen if the sides contact each other, start working together to:

a. raise the standard of dance, b. promote the dance and music especially to schools.

Both organisations want to see a greater public awareness of our 'Folk' arts whether through the dance, music or plays, but we need to make sure we put on a good performance. When a side is out dancing they are representing all of us in the Morris, no matter which organisation they belong to.



John, Trefor and I hope the Trafalgar Square day was the start of working together, not the end.

Best Regards.

Cliff Marchant, Squire Morris Ring."

## MORRIS FEDERATION PUBLICATIONS AND PROMOTIONAL GOODS

<p><b>Cotswold Glossary:</b> An invaluable reference book including definitions of steps and figures found in two or more traditions; a cross-reference to all Cotswold traditions and types; terms used by different authors for the same movements; Morris musicianship and much more.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Price: £4.00</b> + £1.00 UK, £3.50 OVERSEAS (p&amp;p)</p>	<p><b>Booklet Series:</b> A series of A5 sized booklets with between 8 and 20 pages</p>
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<p><b>Molly:</b> Dancing into the Twenty First Century, by Tony Forster</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Price: £3.50</b> + £1.00 UK, £3.50 OVERSEAS (p&amp;p)</p>	<p><b>Border Morris:</b> a brief outline</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Price £0.90</b></p>
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