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fedextra

The quarterly newsletter of The Morris Federation
Autumn 2019

Inside this issue...

Memories of Sidmouth past

Rivington Morris reflect on three separate appearances at the popular festival

Boss at Glastonbury

Boss Morris take a turn at the internationally renowned summer fest



Peaks Performance

Goathland Plough Stots take to the hills

issue

Autumn 2019



Goathland's Peak Challenge 06



Turbs go to Montenegro 08



Ossett Beercart 10



AGM Day of Dance 14



Boss @ Glastonbury 16



Offcumduns go border 18



Rivington @ Sidmouth 26

Loose Women — Evesham Stick winners

04 Welcome to the Summer issue & how to contact your committee

05 President's prologue: Melanie Barber reflects on six years as president

06 Goathland Stots: The team take on the Three Peaks and raise £8000

08 Turbs go to Montenegro: morris dancing proves a hit with Russian delegates

09 Kettle Bridge Clogs: calling time on their clogs after 35 years of dance

10 Ossett Beercart: the sixth annual 'new tradition' proves increasingly popular

12 Update your details: a step-by-step guide to keeping your details up-to-date

14 Our AGM day of dance: photographs of teams and activities on 28 September

16 Boss Morris: the unconventional morris team takes a turn at Glastonbury

18 Offcumduns: a change of tradition brings new members and awards

20 Hurst Morris People: HuMP turn 30 and celebrate with friends in Berkshire

21 The Evesham Stick: The colourful Loose Women take away the coveted trophy

22 Rivington Morris: looking back over three appearances at Sidmouth

24 Bradninch Millers: the team celebrates its 10th year of dance in Topsham, Devon

26 Warming up and down: a new information booklet written by Andrew Knight

27 Paul White's Diary: should England's rugby players perform morris in response to the haka?

28 It's time to renew your membership! Deadline 22 January 2020

Cover Stars

Border Reivers Morris at our AGM Day of Dance, Perth, 2019
Photograph: Sam Ross

Do you have a great action picture of your team that could feature on the cover of FedExtra?

Send a high quality image suitable to print in A4 portrait format, some background info about your team, details of where and when the image was taken, and the photographer's name to: newsletter@morrisfed.org.uk

www.morrisfed.org.uk

keep it **social**





➡ **Sam** Ross, Newsletter Editor

- newsletter@morrisfed.org.uk
- 64 The Batch, Farmborough, Somerset, BA2 0AJ
- 07849 055 339



contact your
committee



President's
prologue

welcome to the autumn issue of **Morris FedExtra**

The first thing a lot of people comment on, particularly those who have never danced before, is just how physical morris dancing can be, and many are pretty stunned at the level of fitness and stamina that morris dancers possess considering the average age of most teams.

It seems that we're a fit bunch and the majority of dancers I know are active in more ways than one.

In this issue, *Goathland Plough Stots* take this to a new level with their 'Folky Three Peaks' challenge, complete with longwords and musicians (see page 6). Congratulations to all who were involved in this endeavour, and for raising £8000 for charity.

Along with the birthday celebrations and annual events, it's also good to see teams taking morris dancing abroad and introducing the tradition to new places and faces.

Two members of *Dr Turberville's Morris* travelled all the way to Montenegro to teach Cotswold morris to a group of Russian delegates at the 7th Age of Happiness Festival, alongside other dance forms that would usually be considered more popular. The dances went down a storm and the photographs speak for themselves (see page 8).

I'm looking forward to being able to put my feet up for a well-earned break over the Christmas period now. I hope you will join me in enjoying a treat or two before heading back to practise in January.

Sam

next issue published: **February 2020**

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You can also download a copy from the FedExtra pages on our website: www.morrisfed.org.uk

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Update your team's info and contact details at any time by logging on to the membership database at: www.morrisfed.org.uk/join/existing-members

➡ **Melanie** Barber, President

- pres@morrisfed.org.uk
- 72 Freedom Road, Walkley, Sheffield, S6 2XD
- 07812 656 036



➡ **Fee** Lock, Secretary

- sec@morrisfed.org.uk
- 28 Fairstone Close, Hastings, East Sussex, TN35 5EZ
- 01424 436 052



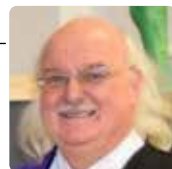
➡ **Jenny** Everett, Treasurer

- treasurer@morrisfed.org.uk
- Willow Cottage, 20 High Street, Sutton-on-Trent, Newark, Notts, NG23 6QA
- 01636 821 672



➡ **Mike** Everett, Archive Officer

- archive@morrisfed.org.uk
- Willow Cottage, 20 High Street, Sutton-on-Trent, Newark, Notts, NG23 6QA
- 01636 821 672



➡ **Jerry** West, Notation Officer

- notation@morrisfed.org.uk
- 23 Avondale Road, Fleet, Hampshire, GU51 3BH
- 01252 628 190 or 07754 435 170



Co-opted committee

➡ **Mike** Adamson - IT Administrator

- admin@morrisfed.org.uk

Advisors

➡ **Sally** Wearing - Health & Safety Advisor

- sallywearing@outlook.com
- 0118 946 3125

➡ **John** Bacon - Licensing Bill Advisor

- jandabacon@aol.com

Hello! As this is my last President's prologue, I'd like to start by saying a huge THANK YOU to everyone who has helped, encouraged and supported me along the way over the last six years. It wasn't a role I asked for, or indeed ever aspired to, but one which I was surprised to be asked to take on, and have to say that, on the whole, have thoroughly enjoyed! I've met some great people, represented The Morris Federation on various projects and at various events, been invited to make after-dinner speeches, and had the privilege of overseeing some significant changes, which I hope you'll agree has helped raise the profile of *The Morris Federation*.

I've always considered musicians and dancers as equal members of the team, as without each other we couldn't perform. So, with that in mind, I'd like to pose the question as to why some team musicians don't wear team kit? I've noticed more and more recently where one or more band members wear something completely out of sync with the rest of the team. All the teams I'm in (and I'm not the common factor!) have specific band kit, which identifies them as members of the team. This was especially apparent

at Sidmouth this year when, on more than one occasion, members of the public commented on how smart our band was in comparison to others.

Despite our membership having gradually increased, I still keep hearing quotes about to teams folding because of lack of younger members. I was quoted a while back as saying I was 'seeing more young people dancing, and more teams with double sets up' - I was asked if I'd been misquoted - No! There are always teams that come and go, and some that fold, usually because they've reached their natural end, but some, sadly, because they don't embrace change and move with the times. As I said in my pre-election biog: 'My belief is that there is room in this world for both old and new; we should never lose sight of our traditions. They are the foundations. While using these to influence new ideas can expand the wealth of dance, which really is a living tradition. There is always room for improvement, I believe you gain more satisfaction and enjoyment in dancing well, to good music.' I still believe this, and very much hope The Morris Federation continue to

look to the future, encourage and embrace change.

One change you've hopefully noticed is the new Members section on our website, which includes the revised Warming Up and Cooling Down Information by Andrew Knight. This has taken us (and by that, I mainly mean me!) a long time to publish, and I would like to thank Andrew, not only for having written this for us, but also for his patience as one thing after another took priority. I hope you take time to read and learn from it as, despite us all knowing the importance of warming up and cooling down, it's not something we always do.

You haven't got shot of me altogether (sorry!) as I'll still be The Morris Federation's contact for the SCHEDAR (Safeguarding the Cultural Heritage of Dance through Augmented Reality) Project, and working with Jenny & Mike Everett on a book to celebrate our 50th anniversary! But I will get a few more Sundays at home, and slightly fewer emails!

Thank you again for all your support. Happy Dancing!

Melanie

diary dates 2020

6-8 March
IVFDF (Intervarsity Folk Dance Festival)
Nottingham
www.ivfdf2020.org.uk

18 April
JMO (Joint Morris Organisations) National Day of Dance in Liverpool
www.themorrisring.org

3-5 April
DERT (Dancing England Rapper Tournament)
Lincoln
www.dert2020.co.uk

1-3 May
Jack in the Green
May Day Festival
Hastings
www.hastingsjitg.co.uk

Send details of events to:
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The Morris Federation is not responsible for events organised by external organisations

guidelines for submission of articles

Please send all text and images via WeTransfer.com to newsletter@morrisfed.org.uk

Articles should be sent as doc, docx, txt or odt formats. Any copy over 750 words will be trimmed.

Accompany all articles with at least three high quality images. Images must not be embedded in text and should be sent as separate attachments.

Photographs and illustrations should be jpg, eps, tiff or pdf, though other file types may be accepted.

Make sure you have appropriate permission to publish all words and pictures. Credit will be given to photographers, and captions printed where provided.



GOATHLAND'S PEAK PERFORMANCE

Sometime in the summer, *Goathland Plough Stots'* Chris Hutchings mentioned he was putting together a National Three Peaks Challenge attempt; would I fancy joining in?

Things then went quiet. Just as I mused "I've got away with that", Chris asked "Can you bring your melodeon as well?" Panic...

The plan was to dance on the highest mountains in Scotland, England and Wales – Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon. All within 24 hours! And to raise £1,000 for Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group, a UK charity offering expertise, support and research both here and in developing countries. We called our challenge the 'Folky Three Peaks'.

So it was that 11 of us gathered at a remote bunkhouse near Fort William late on 20 September for a final night's sleep. Ahead lay 10,052 ft of climbing (and, equally tough, descent), three mountains, three sword dances and 462 miles of driving. Say it quick enough and it sounds easy!

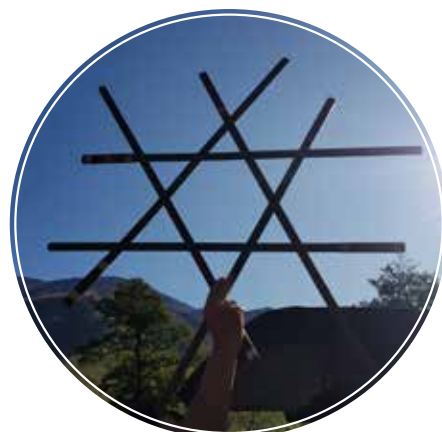
Chris, Dan Atkinson, Ben Braim, Jack Atkinson, Duncan Jackson, Liam Calvert, Luke Taylor and myself were joined by Eliza Carthy, with Sue Rutland and Steve Pierson in the crucial role of drivers, and Sue catering for all of us. Most crammed into a minibus, with Sue and me in our car with the supplies. Back home, Eilidh Smith kept the social media buzzing to

update our army of followers.

Saturday dawned cloudless, dispelling fears about the weather as temperatures hit the 20s – unbelievable! So, as the clock ticked on to 11.45am, off we set.

The summit of Ben Nevis reputedly has just 14 clear days a year and this must have been the granddaddy of them all. The fabulous sunshine also attracted literally thousands of others to climb it, causing traffic jams in places. Not only is it Britain's highest peak, the sea level start means you feel every one of its 4,413 ft.

The views were stunning, although with tunics to don and a dance around the summit trig point to perform we had



Foot of Ben Nevis

little time to take much in. Eliza did a rendition of our calling-on tune 'John Peel' before descending at her own pace and heading home.

VINCE
RUTLAND

After five hours and a quick bowl of Sue's pasta, we took the high road via Glencoe and Loch Lomond for the six-hour slog to Wasdale.

11pm and hundreds of people were climbing Scafell Pike. You could see their lights for miles – utterly incredible! Eliza's friend Jamie Normington joined us, his local knowledge a big help on the mountain, as was his toffee vodka and sloe gin at the summit! Even at 1am our dance at the top had a small audience.

3am and we were off for Wales with a welcome bacon buttie each. Our amazing drivers ploughed on as a few people nodded off – I managed 30 minutes.

Near Chester, the heavens opened but conditions improved at Pen-y-Pass, the foot of Snowdon. 7.30am, just over four hours – this was going to be tight. Matt Rowland of local morris side *Clerical Error* joined us here for the climb up the Pyg Track, while his friend Sam stayed with us a while before running the rest!



Stunning! Loch Linnhe stretching to the sea



Climbing Scafell Pike some time around midnight



Dancing at the top of Ben Nevis



Snowdon summit in the murk

The weather closed in, the climb steepened but we made the top and again danced around the trig point, this time in the rain accompanied by Matt on my box. A local distiller, he presented us with a bottle of his best. Two hours to go...drinking it would have to wait.

To return, we chose the Miners' Track, with its very steep descent but then a longer, flatter track to the finish. Despite very tired legs, we jogged most of the final two miles, my quads screaming

every inch of the way. Time was running out, would we make it?

At 11.33am we did, after a gruelling 23 hours, 48 minutes. Our reward – a hot cup of Sue's fantastic broth, a pint in the Vaynol Arms plus a birthday cake for driver Steve. Followed by the longest, deepest night's sleep I've enjoyed in years.

We don't think anyone has danced longsword on these mountains before,

let alone all three, so *Goathland Plough Stots* have our place in sword dancing history.

And we didn't raise £1,000 but more than £8,000! Thank you to everyone who has supported us in any way, you've been fantastic.

You can see a video of the *Plough Stots'* dance on top of Ben Nevis at www.facebook.com/186076654744951/videos/372505686958669



TURBS GO TO MONTENEGRO

In October, Dr Turberville's Morris musician Janet Whitteridge and Bagman Annabel Norwell Davis took on a challenge to introduce morris to Russian delegates attending the 7th Age of Happiness Festival in Montenegro.

ANNABEL
NORWELL
DAVIS

The evening dance classes in the week-long festival are popular and we were in competition with Lindyhop and Body Ballet, but we attracted a core of loyal and enthusiastic students.

By the end of the week they did us proud by managing 'Portsmouth', 'None So Pretty' and their favourite, 'Tinners' Rabbit'. They danced Tinners' at the closing concert. As we had no sticks, a certain amount of improvisation was called for. Hand slapping in lieu of clashing and capstans in lieu of the star and rabbit trap.

A great experience and certainly a week to remember!



All photographs Elena Snegireva and Aleksy Mikson



KETTLE BRIDGE CLOGS — CALLING TIME AFTER 35 YEARS

VAL DEPPE
& POM
CORDREY

Kettle Bridge Clogs was started 35 years ago by two enthusiastic dancers (who are still in the side today). They wanted to learn more about the history of morris dancing and how it should be performed. The morris world helped us to achieve this and has proved over the years to be a friendly and welcoming community.

Our journey has taken us on an incredible trip of dance, music, travel and friendship. We have performed at quaint English country pubs and in amazing places across the world, as diverse as Hong Kong, The North West Folk Life Festival in Seattle, Vancouver, Marlboro Ale, and in Turkey, where we were one of twelve countries represented. However, even though we have travelled far and wide, one of our favourite highlights was to take North West morris back to its roots in Lancashire, touring around the towns that our dances are named after. We have also attended many great festivals across the UK such as Wimborne, Warwick and of course Sidmouth.

2019 is a special year for *Kettle Bridge Clogs*. We have recently returned from a super weekend in Ossett as guests of *Wakefield Morris*, meeting up with many other sides, both familiar and new. We also had more fun on our birthday trip to Norwich, where again met up with past friends and made new ones. To end this memorable year, our final public stand was in Canterbury at the Hop Hoodening celebration. A day we have always enjoyed.

Over the years, not only have we worked hard to achieve a high standard, but we have also enjoyed so much fun and laughter, with many treasured memories to think back on. We have had a wonderful 35 years, but the time has now come for us to hang up our clogs. Thankfully, there are some great North West sides out there who will carry on this fantastic tradition and we hope to be following you for many years to come.

We send our sincere thanks to all the people we have had the privilege to dance with and to the many friends we have gathered on this incredible journey.





OSSETT BEERCART 2019

Morris teams from all over the country travelled to Wakefield for the sixth annual Ossett Beercart Festival, organised by Wakefield Morris Dancers, a mixed North-west team.

The festival, which has become a fixture on the local community calendar, takes place around the first Saturday in June, and helps to raise funds for Wakefield Hospice by combining two of the great morris traditions - beer and dancing. Hazel Parker, co-chair of the Beercart, said that 20 teams travelled from all over the UK to take part this year, including *Mons Meg* from Edinburgh and *Cat's Eye Morris* from Plymouth. "We had an excellent mix of dance traditions represented this year, and ran a mini-rapper competition in the beer hall on the Saturday afternoon, much to the bemusement of local people who had just come along for the beer," she added.

The Beercart draws on the tradition of the Rushcart, and Wakefield Morris formally started the weekend on Saturday 1 June

when they hauled a cart laden with beer barrels on a 2.5 mile circuit of Ossett.

The cart was drawn by more than 200 morris folk who took part in the procession around the town centre. Since the first Beercart in 2014, locals have started to look out for the cart on its circuit and there were about 1,000 people gathered along the route and in the market square to cheer its progress to the town hall.

It has been described by The Dalesman, a Yorkshire-based magazine, as one of the county's new traditions, and part of that



RUTH FLINT

tradition is the ceremonial Beercart dance, which takes place once the cart has arrived at the Town Hall. The carrying-in of the ceremonial beer barrel marks the official opening of the festival.

"When we ran the first festival, Ossett residents and morris dancers alike wondered what we were up to, but now it is starting to attract a brilliant crowd of local people, and some fantastic morris teams who travel a long way and make a real weekend out of it," Hazel said.

"We created a bit of a cash crisis in Ossett on the Saturday afternoon when all the cash machines ran out of money - we'd certainly sold a lot of beer."

The beer festival part of the Beercart weekend offered 40 different ales along with craft beer, craft lager, cider and prosecco.

"This year has been our most successful so far, and it was lovely to see a lot more people in Ossett really get behind the festival. Shops sponsored particular morris teams and decked out their windows in team colours; the market has grown considerably since our first year, and local pubs have said they look forward to rapper sides dropping by to dance," Hazel said.

The Rapper Dance-off in the town hall was a new feature of this year's festival, with *Sheffield Steel*, *Leeding Edge*, *Sallyport*, *Mons Meg* and *Whip the Cat* competing for the Beercart Trophy across two rounds. *Whip the Cat* took the inaugural title. Nine



Mons Meg Rapper

morris teams - some nursing hangovers - made their way to Nostell, a National Trust property on the outskirts of Wakefield, on the Sunday morning to dance in front of the stately home, bringing a brilliant weekend to a close.

For those interested in some of the detail about the weekend, the Beercart dance is performed around a beer barrel by dancers holding tankards of ale, and is performed only once a year, at the Beercart opening ceremony. It was choreographed by John Earnshaw and members of *Wakefield Morris*, set to a tune written by Tom McConville especially for the event. The Beercart

procession is accompanied by musicians who play a number of traditional tunes, but lead with the Beercart Processional, a tune by Nick Barber, again written for the event.

Throughout the weekend, *Wakefield Morris* is supported by a huge team of friends and volunteers who help make the event a success, and we would like to thank them all for their good natured mucking-in.

The Ossett Beercart Festival returns next year on 5 and 6 June 2020 and if you would like further information about this year, please take a look at the Ossett Beercart facebook page: @Ossettbeercart



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New Secretary/Bagman?**

On average, around four copies of FedExtra are returned each quarter as a result of incorrect contact details. These could be errors in the address on our database or as a result of house moves.

Around eight requests to update member details (including, address, email and phone number) are also received every time newsletters/AGM documents are posted, mainly as a result of the secretary/bagman having changed.

Did you know that you can log in to our website and update your details?

To do this, all you need is the email address that we have for you or your side so that you can request a new password and log in.

Because teams can change their main contact every year, we recommend setting up an email account specifically for your team, e.g. yourteam@gmail.com, so that it can easily be passed from one secretary/bagman to the next without loss of access.

Contact address details should also be checked regularly so that documentation is sent to the correct person.



Sam Ross
The Morris Federation
Newsletter
Editor

So you have your email, but how do you log in? Here's a guide...

1. Open your favourite browser and type: www.morrisfed.org.uk
2. Find 'Join us' on the navigation menu, and select 'Join or renew' from the submenu (**Figure 1**)
3. Under 'Membership details update', click on the text 'existing members' (**Figure 2**).

— a step-by-step guide

4. You should now be at the login page (**Figure 3**). You can also go straight to this page by visiting: morrisfed.org.uk/join/existing-members
5. If you already have a password to log in, enter the email address and password you have and click the 'Sign in' button (**Figure 3**).
6. If you don't have a password, click on 'Request password', enter your email address and click the button (**Figure 4**). (This will only work with the email address we have on record for you or your team.) Retrieve the password from your email account and login in as point 5.
7. You are now logged in! (**Figure 5**). Update the details that need changing and click on the 'Save and continue' button.
8. You're done! Sign out and don't forget to log in and update your details as soon as they change.



Figure 3

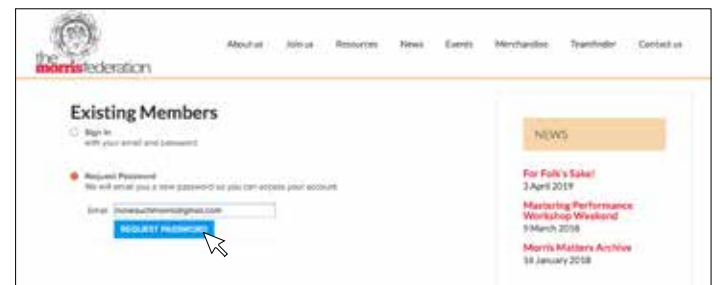


Figure 4

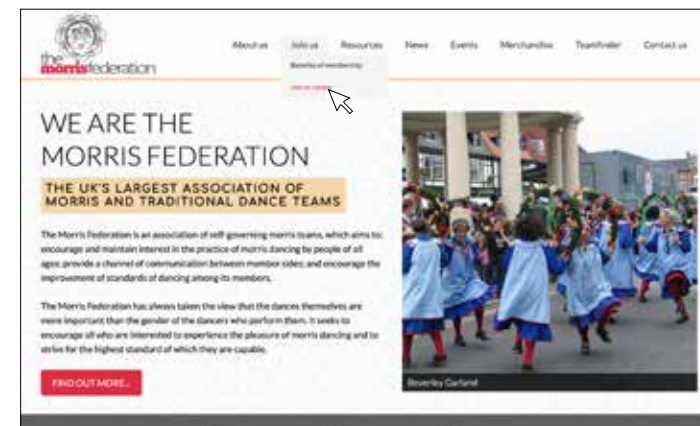


Figure 1

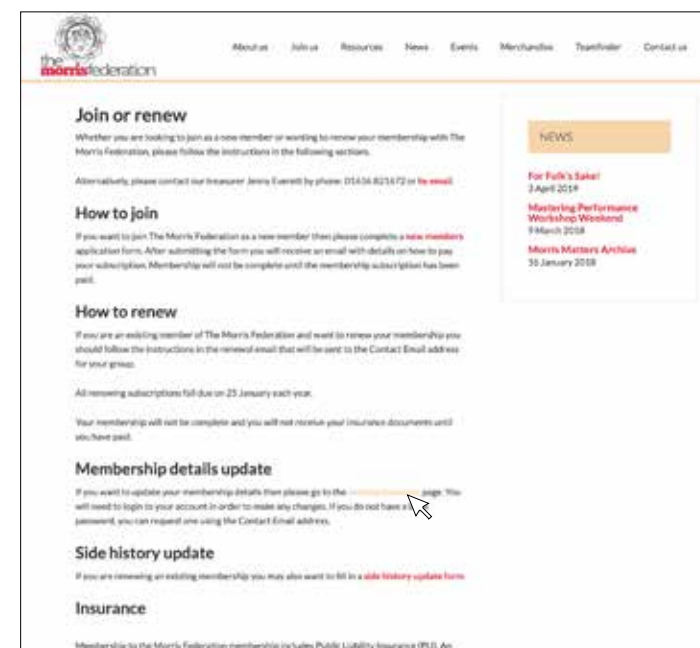


Figure 2



Figure 5



Simon Brock

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OUR AGM DAY OF DANCE

Morris Federation teams from around the UK took to the streets of Perth, in advance of our AGM, on Saturday 28 September 2019. With thanks to *Kinfauns Step Dancers* for hosting the event and to all the teams that helped create a fantastic showcase of dance.



Carlisle Clog and Sword
Photograph by Sam Ross



Ripley Green Garters
Photograph by Phil Gray



Kinfauns Step Dancers
Photograph by Sam Ross



Traditional and energetic Scottish dancing at the Saturday night ceilidh
Photograph by Sam Ross



Kinfauns' fiddler
Photograph by Phil Gray



Mons Meg Rapper
Photograph by Sam Ross



Mockbeggar and Ripley pose for wedding photos



Mockbeggar Morris
Photograph by Sam Ross



Beverley Garland
Photograph by Phil Gray



Harlequin Women's Morris
Photograph by Phil Gray



Pateley Longsword
Photograph by Sam Ross



Belfagan Women's Morris
Photograph by Sam Ross



Border Reivers Morris
Photograph by Sam Ross



Persephone
Photograph by Sam Ross



BOSS MORRIS @ GLASTONBURY

Some months ago, I'd passed on a booking at a *Boss Morris* practice, to dance at our local Pride festival on Saturday 29 June. We didn't seem to have anything on that weekend, so I was sure we'd be able to do it. Surprisingly there was little response from the side...

MARK
ROGERS

What I didn't realise was that one team member was working away relentlessly at getting us booked for Glastonbury on the same weekend. It wasn't an easy job as the stages are reluctant to give away a block of seven artistes tickets, so there were negotiations with four different 'employers', then trying to schedule spots for each with no clashes. The team were eventually told in late April, but under a strict embargo – we could tell no-one other than families until officially announced (which didn't happen until June). I was somewhat nervous, yet having always said I'd only do Glastonbury if I was performing (on the assumption that I'd never be asked) had to agree.

Jump forward to Tuesday 25 June, car loaded, and tickets in hand, off we set. The journey was quick – no traffic jams – and upon arrival at the artists car park our kit was transferred into a jeep and we were driven to our camping area. We were very central on the huge site, so could hear music from several stages, including a very deep bass from a Drum & Bass stage that made the bed shake. On the plus side, there was a dedicated Crew/Artist café on site with cheap meals and chilled water dispenser, and 'better' (composting rather than long-drop) loos and shower cubicles (albeit icy cold).

We were scheduled to dance around three times each day at different sites – I found we were walking at least nine miles per

day. The first spot was cancelled as the new Pier – Glastonbury on Sea – had not been finished, but the Bandstand and Avalon spots went ahead – and we discovered both had back-stage bars; these places were an absolute salvation – a place to sit and chill, mojito in hand, until it was time to dance.

Thursday evening had an extra spot – we were asked to dance at the exclusive 'Rabbit Hole'. The audience get vetted before being allowed in, and there's an even more exclusive bar behind it for those with the magic wristbands. We did get in, but didn't make use of the clothing-optional hot-tubs. For those who have seen a table-top jig danced, may I present the table-top set-dance.

Saturday daytime was spent, apart from normal dance spots, practising for the 'Big Event'. The week before the festival, some of the dancers were listing to Lauren Laverne on BBC Radio 6 – she's mentioned *Boss* a few times before – interviewing the band *Hot Chip* (a band in the electro-pop genre). They said to her 'we could do with some morris dancers – there must be some at Glastonbury', at which point she suggested us. Half an hour later, *Boss* were booked to dance to one of their numbers. We were told which track they wanted to use, and that it involved turning every eight beats, but that was about all. A lot of thought went into it, but impeded by not knowing how much space would be on the stage.



I watched the show from the back of the arena, but all seemed to go well. However, watching it on BBC iPlayer once home was far better. *Boss* also came on for the final number and managed to dance for all seven minutes, totally unrehearsed. The audience were spotted echoing our arm movements – who knows – maybe they were also double-stepping.

Sunday saw us do a few more dance spots, before we packed up to leave.

I heard a lot of music during the festival, but saw very little – once we'd finished our spots for the day, I found myself too tired to do much else – let alone stand in a crowd of 50,000.

Boss Morris seemed to be well appreciated, both by audience and organisers alike. It probably helps that the costumes are unusual (a different one each day) and that the team is in the right place at the right time, adaptable, flexible and try to accommodate last-minute requests from the organisers. The opposite side of that equation is that we were treated as professionals – the same as the bands, circus performers and actors. So would I go to Glastonbury again? Certainly not as audience, but as a performer – yes.



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The side originated in the South East of England in the North West Tradition, clogs and all, in 1982. The word 'Offcumdun' is a phrase from the North West of England, meaning a person who is out of his or her usual place; they have 'come from off'.

The side operated successfully for many years, however in 2016, with a number of members about to retire, and the clogs having inflicted many a shin splint, a decision grew organically to change tradition.

The new border side started as a smaller group of the existing members but a progressive attitude and an exciting new border kit rapidly attracted a wealth of young new musicians and dancers. Brought together under a new logo (designed and developed by new members), this year has seen new members take officer positions, celebrate three 21sts and an 18th birthdays, as well as a couple of single digits. 80% of the current dancers are under 35 years old.

Not everything has changed, though. You can still recognise them in bottle green, black, and white. Music and dances were brought over from the old side, specially adapted to fit in with the new style. Other Offcumduns traditions of generating new dances, or tinkering

with traditional music selections also still abound, helping new members to make their mark and claim their piece of Offcumduns history. Friends and couples dance and play alongside families, one of which now sees its 3rd generation dancing as an Offcumdun.



The culmination of this work, was to be awarded the Green Man Shield at the Rochester Sweeps Festival in 2019. Sweeps is thought to be the biggest gathering of morris dancers in the world.

This prestigious award has been handed out annually since about 1990 for contributions to morris dancing and to the festival.

The shield has its own fascinating history, having been carved from an ancient tree felled during the Great Storm of 1987. Receiving this award was especially emotional for the White family, following the loss of musician Eddie, who had been all-things-morris his entire life.

Just a fortnight after their poignant achievement at the Rochester Sweeps Festival, the side hosted their inaugural weekend of dance in their home village, St. Nicholas-at-Wade in Thanet. Partnering with the Wantsum Brewery and Taproom to coincide with their Spring Beer Festival, the Weekend attracted nine morris sides. New friendships were forged over a pint at the brewery, dances and tunes exchanged in the evening music sessions at the local pub, and the world was put to rights over a whiskey before bed at the campsite.

NICOLA
ROLFE



Sponsorship, Grants and Bursaries

Got an idea for a morris related project or workshop and looking for funding?

Don't forget The Morris Federation has funding available through its Sponsorship, Grant and Bursary Policy.

Each application is considered on its own merits. Details and application form: www.morrisfed.org.uk/resources/sponsorship-grants-and-bursaries

If you want to discuss your idea before applying then please get in touch with any member of the committee (see contact details on p4).

Offcumduns Border Morris, winners of the Green Man Shield, Rochester Sweeps Festival 2019

Next year, you can expect more of the same. Offcumduns will be travelling to more festivals, dancing more days out, and joining more sides at weekday pub stands. Look out for their green skirts twirling in the wind. Check out their new logo on signature bottle cap badges. Stand your Tankard on an Offcumduns beer mat. Bring a biscuit for their tatter-wearing morris dogs. Did they get a figure wrong? You'll hear them laughing it off. Ask them what the new Offcumduns are all about and they'll tell you they're here to have fun and make new friends, to make decisions together, and to keep tradition alive - untraditionally.

They've already begun collaboration with the brewery to make next year's weekend of dance even bigger. They hope you'll 'Come from Off' and join them.





Current and former HuMP members

HURST MORRIS PEOPLE — 30TH ANNIVERSARY

SUE CORCORAN

Hurst Morris People, founded 30 years ago when mixed sides were rare, celebrated its birthday with a party including 30 dances and many stories of past dancing.

The side, known as *HuMP* for short, was started in 1989 by Tim and Christine Taylor in their Berkshire village, Hurst. Tim said: "We decided to start a mixed team so we could do Cotswold morris dancing together."

"There were few mixed teams at the time. We wanted to create something new and open in outlook. All this was considered quite outrageous. We were criticised for starting a mixed team. Despite the opposition we went ahead."

The side, which started with seven members, now has 24. Christine, still a *HuMP* member, added: "Thirty years on, the side continues to flourish, with new people joining each year."

HuMP's first dance outs were at the Elephant and Castle pub, Hurst, and at The Colleton School, Twyford. They continue to perform at pubs and schools, and also at fairs, folk festivals and private events.

Christine congratulated the side and cut the cake at the anniversary party on 22 June.

Aldbrickham Clog and Step Dancers from Reading and *Theale Tattoo* step clog team, joined current and past *HuMP* members for dancing and a supper.

HuMP squire Karen Ricketts said: "The party was fantastic, with a relaxed and happy atmosphere. The 30th dance was Glorishears which nearly everyone joined in after a bit of tutoring!"

Also there, celebrating her own 30th birthday year, was former *HuMP* musician, Hayley Hubbard, a flute player, whose parents Brenda and Ian Brant are long-standing members.

On show were a video of past dancing compiled by *HuMP* dancer Nic Yannacopoulos and Brenda and Ian's photographs display.

For more info, visit: www.hump.org.uk



Dancing at Hurst Morris People's 30th birthday party



Hayley and Matthew Brant

Hayley was just two months old when her father Ian Brant joined the side in its foundation year, 1989. By time she was 21 months old Hayley was wearing the *HuMP* ladies kit when the team danced out, whilst her brother Matthew who was four at the



Ian and Brenda Brant with daughter Hayley Hubbard (centre) who shares her 30th birthday year with Hurst Morris People

time, wore the men's kit. By the time Hayley was 10 she was playing her flute in *HuMP's* band. Hayley (now Hayley Hubbard) joined her parents, Ian and Brenda, both still *HuMP* members, at Hurst Morris People's 30th birthday party.



THE WINNERS OF THIS YEAR'S EVESHAM STICK ARE...?

NICOLA BAYLIS

The 13th annual Vale of Evesham National Morris Weekend in June was a lucky one for the entertaining *Loose Women of Kent* who were thrilled to receive this award, given in memory of the late Geoff Watkins, founder of the Evesham Weekend.

The weekend saw over 450 morris dancers and musicians from all over the country visit Evesham for one of the largest annual festivals in the town which is supported by both district and town councils.

On Saturday 22 June, nine coach tours set off from Evesham taking everyone to some fabulous dance locations in the most beautiful parts of Worcestershire, the Cotswolds and the Vale of Evesham, including Broadway, Stratford upon Avon, Bourton on the Water, and the villages of Ilmington and Bretforton.

The evening ceilidh was provided by the *Hare Band* with a stunning torch-lit performance by *Beltane Border Morris* and an unexpectedly amusing visit by *Loose Women* dressed as school girls and boys.

A bones workshop with Louisa Davis-Foley kicked off the Sunday morning events followed by a duck race on the river Avon and a colourful morris procession to the Market Place where a good crowd were assembled ready to enjoy the entertainment.

Next year's event will take place from Friday 19 June until Sunday 21 June 2020. To attend, contact Julie: valemorrisinvitations@yahoo.co.uk Places are limited.



Beltane Border Morris



Belle d'Vain



East Kent Morris



Musicians from Slubbing Billy's and Iron Men and Severn Gilders



Rockingham Rapper



NORTHWEST GOES SOUTH — REFLECTIONS ON SIDMOUTH OVER THE DECADES

In August, Rivington Morris spent a splendid week in the deep south — dancing at Sidmouth Festival. Mostly the sun shone and the welcome we received was open-hearted and enthusiastic.

This was Rivington's third trip to Sidmouth Festival – travelling there first in 1992 when the arena was still used and international sides joined us. Honoured to be invited, we had double practices for weeks ensuring we were good enough to represent North West Morris at this prestigious event. Our first Arena spot was terrifying! But practise paid off, nerves kept us focused and the performance went well. Friends in the audience said the hairs stood up on the back of their necks as each pair of clogs hit the stage building up to a crescendo of North West energy.

However, we know the sound crew weren't impressed - during the rehearsal we said floor mikes weren't necessary - sceptically they didn't listen. 17 pairs of clogs on a wooden floor don't need amplification, and we don't dance out of line for anything - including ill-placed floor mikes! Crunch went one in the first figure, crunch went another in the chorus - hey ho, they had been warned! No more mikes for us.

We danced all day and ceilidh-ed all night -

with splendid bands and callers. It was a pleasure to dance with new teams including the amazing French Stilt dancers. The programme was busy, with venues around the town and frantic kit changes in car parks and back streets ensuring we got to all the dances and concerts as well as fulfilling our performance duties.

Our late night Arena spot followed the acrobatic Chinese dancers, whose costumes, decorated in tiny bells, shed liberally. Hitting the floor with our clogs, we struggled to stay upright on a sea of brass 'marbles' for the first dance – though by the second we had successfully flattened the bells into submission!



Rivington Morris ready for their night time Arena performance, Sidmouth, 1999

In 1999 we were invited back to Sidmouth and again started with extra practices. The event was equally fulfilling, with sides from around the world including Tibetan monks and dragon dancers.

Our band had practised hard and did us proud at all performances, though we recall one member (who shall remain nameless) blithely carrying on playing as the whole arena enjoyed the melody of his mobile phone ringtone, carried on the night air through the speaker system - he was the only person who didn't realise it was coming from his pocket!

The torchlight procession was an exciting finale to another excellent week (with flaming torches alarmingly held by inebriated onlookers) though we had learnt our lesson from 1992 and avoided dousing our clogs in sea water - our lovely new bells lost all their shine after that.

And so to this year -

**MARGARET
WATT**

great to be invited again - no longer international, but nonetheless entertaining and welcoming.

Again, we've had extra practices, some of us have danced at all three of these Sidmouth festivals and it's harder to get our knees up now than it was in 1992! Others are younger and fitter and have done the team proud with their energy and staying power.

Does it feel different to 1992? Yes – but we've enjoyed all the festivals. We've missed the international teams - holding hands with Tibetan monks and Zimbabwean dancers for the final arena show was amazing - but that loss of cosmopolitan flavour has been more than compensated for by the commitment and enthusiasm of the organisers and performers. Venues have changed - none of us have missed the trek out to the Bowd for the LNE spot! We've missed the buzz of a night-time Arena performance - but sometimes it's best to hold these things as great memories.

Sidmouth makes great memories, for us oldies and our younger dancers and musicians, who will be reminiscing about busking spots, terrifying LNE displays and



Rivington Morris dancing 'Auntie Marie's' on Sidmouth Arena, 1992

swaying lighting rigs in night-time gales in thirty years time, as they look back on another excellent week.

The world moves on, as do our traditions - thank you Sidmouth, for another great experience. We hope to do it again sometime, once our feet, knees and playing

arms have had a rest. We look forward to the evolution to come.

It would be nice to see some of the southern teams we met there at our northern festivals/events - its not so far to travel and, honestly, it ain't so grim up north! Hope to see some of you soon.



BRADNINCH MILLERS — 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Bradninch Millers Morris clocked-up their tenth anniversary this year and celebrated the occasion with a day of dance in the picturesque Devon town of Topsham.

Formed in Bradninch, a few miles north of Exeter, in August 2009, the *Millers* are a mixed side created from a nucleus of old sweats who'd all been thrown out of other sides after years of riotous misbehaviour, together with a group of keen newcomers, all eager to learn at the feet of those who should have known better.

They have been members of *The Morris Federation* from its inception. Their ranks have since been swelled by experienced dancers from other sides and, along with a talented band of musicians, may be found performing at pubs, festivals and community events throughout Devon and surrounding counties.

As with any new side, an early priority was to find a name with local connections and so the team decided to draw inspiration from the Miller of Bradninch, a local character famous for performing 'The Broom Dance' during the 1950s. One or two of the more energetic dancers can still

occasionally be persuaded to perform 'The Broom Dance', but not often.

From the outset, the side decided that they would not concentrate on a single tradition but would, instead, deliver a wide mix of dances from which they have worked to mould their own unique style. Turning out in their distinctive waistcoats of blue, green and gold – representing the sky, fields and sunshine of their home county – over a striking all-black kit, *Bradninch Millers Morris* feature

Cotswold dances from Adderbury, Bidford, Fieldtown, Bampton and Lichfield alongside a little Border and Molly.

At an early stage they also introduced stave dancing and the *Millers* are currently the only side left in Devon still regularly performing this uniquely south-western dance tradition. Their imposing blue staves topped with a brass crown are a close reproduction of the staves carried by a friendly society which 'walked' in Bradninch well over a hundred years ago. By adhering as closely as possible to the stave dances taught by the late Roy Dommett, the *Millers* believe they have produced a repertoire which is eclectic while remaining locally grounded. The team's tall staves are always a talking point and have led to several invitations from festival organisers keen to showcase something a little different.

The side's tenth anniversary fell on 14 August and they decided to

DUNCAN
HARRINGTON



Bradninch Millers



Mayhem Border Morris

Bradninch Millers




Winkleigh Morris

celebrate by inviting other local sides to join them in dancing around Topsham. With its welcoming old pubs, narrow lanes and stunning views over the Exe estuary, Topsham provided the perfect backdrop and the *Millers* were pleased to be joined for the day by *Winkleigh Morris* from Devon and *Mayhem Border Morris* from Wellington in Somerset. A very enjoyable and exhausting day of dance around pubs and quayside

ensued. The *Millers* are thoroughly grateful to the guest sides for marking their first ten years in such a colourful way.

Bradninch Millers Morris practice every Friday evening and will always welcome new dancers and musicians, experienced or otherwise. Anyone interested in joining is invited to contact the side at millersbag@gmail.com





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INFORMATION SERIES — WARMING UP AND WARMING DOWN (2ND ED)

**The importance of warming up and down is accepted by most.
How it is done and what is the best method mostly revolves around received wisdom.**

Why is it important – do we really need to spend time on it?

The average dance is 2.5-3 minutes and if done with any kind of energy or enthusiasm is akin to a sprint – that's the equivalent to running 300-400 metres and you would think about warming up for that!

The research shows that a correct warm up reduces injury and improves performance; allows one to dance to a higher vigour at the start of a show/dance out. At practices it also allows the foreman to teach steps and prepares the system to learn new movements more easily.

Can dances be a warm up?

They can but will be the final part of the warm up when the breath, heart rate and joint mobilising has been mostly achieved. Use a low impact dance that allows for some freer movement and that will complete a warm up well.

What are stretches for?

Short duration stretches are for getting the full range from a joint, they should be short duration and mobile, move into the stretch and then away again.

Long, static/held stretches are for increasing overall joint range for long term mobility, performing these in warming up reduces performance and do nothing for injury prevention researches have shown and as such they are best done in the warm down.

The paper is written in sections so Foremen can follow the basic form, common to all genres of morris and then tailor it to the specific style of morris they perform. For example: the needs of a clog dancer and a border dancer are different as they use different muscle sets to a high level, but both use the same broad muscle sets to enable them to perform.

It's intended to give Foremen a way of starting a practice session, to focus the dancers on their muscles, balance and stance. It's an opportunity to focus on the mechanics of the steps rather than the shape and interaction of the dance. Each team has its own styling and this can be delivered and highlighted at this stage, more complex steps being added as one moves through the warm up, leaving the team ready to learn, or practise further, the dance being covered.

When in a dance out it remains the responsibility of each dancer to be mindful of their safety and health. This paper contains the information needed to enable each person to achieve a warm up before performing.

Warming down has an important place in preventing the after-exercise cramp and aches caused by blood pooling and the build-up of waste metabolites in tissues. It promotes the drainage and resupply of the tissues that is good for maintaining their performance and comfort.

A few extras have been added to the paper covering specific information about adolescents and hydration, in many cases drinking enough may not be a problem for some dancers!

It is hoped the morris community will use the resource to keep the incidence of injury down and maintain good health and enjoy the dancing!

About the author: Andrew Knight (DO MSCCO) has been a practising osteopath for 35 years, a dancer for 25 years and grew up in a household that was involved in dance from age 4 with family and friends in classical dance teaching. He runs biannual jig workshops for *Knights of King Ina*, and also teaches at festivals and other morris workshops.

About the paper: The paper was written following a talk given by Edel Quinn, from Trinity Laban Conservatoire (Greenwich), at Cecil Sharp House (home of the English Folk Dance and Song Society) in London. It was apparent that the original *Morris Federation* booklet (written in the 1980s) needed some updating to include research not available at the time. To further achieve the best possible information for members it was edited and assessed by 'Safe In Dance International' and 'One Dance' before publication.

The booklet is on *The Morris Federation* website: www.morrisfed.org.uk

ANDREW KNIGHT



Paul White's DIARY

**A silly little dance?
Give me strength!**

We have fun in our caravan. It's a bit more fuss and bother than the motorhome we had but now I have got used to towing, hitching, levelling and so on, it is a pretty relaxed affair.

The van is comfortable and warm and when systems such as plumbing and electricity decide to work, it is a true home from home. And the great advantage of the caravan over the motorhome is that we can leave the van on site and whizz off somewhere exciting in the car. A morris gig perchance!

But recently we opted for change. We booked a long weekend in a pretty luxurious hotel. It's not my normal stamping ground. Good food artistically presented; decent booze extravagantly priced - but no draught ale! Huge bed, beautiful grounds, a sea view and dog friendly. It was also a rugby world cup weekend so I could watch the two semi-finals in comfort and style.

Talk around the breakfast tables was of little else. Most were pessimistic about England's chances and predictions re the Wales match were equally cautious. The young woman at the breakfast table next to ours had one of those voices designed,

planned and determined to be heard by everyone in the room. No fan of hushed conversation this one. She wasn't a thickie. Quite articulate in fact. And she seemed to know more about the game of rugby than I ever will. I mean, scrums! What the....?



Morris red in tooth and claw! Common Morris in full flight.

She wasn't bothered about watching that morning's match because she was completely certain that England were going to get a thumping. Well, she was wrong. But that's OK. Sometimes we are right. And sometimes we are not.

That sentiment was not what bothered me about this opinionated know-all. Another reason she was not worried about missing the match was that she could not bear watching those grown men doing their 'silly little dance'. She made this clear several times. And I could feel the whole room bristling. Respect, you oaf! Learn something about

the haka and understand the passion.

Now, morris is no war dance. It's not even particularly threatening, unless a stick breaks and hurtles into the crowd. But it does attract the same reaction from a large but maybe slightly dwindling

proportion of the public at large.

Recruiting members for our fairly new side is an uphill battle. We have a grand band of musicians now and a keen and pretty competent number of dancers, newly swelled by an excellent recent recruit. Asking people if they want to come along and have a go at this great tradition produces a range of reactions from a simple raised eyebrow denoting a 'not on your nelly' stance to a string of four letter words

indicating a slightly more robust point of view.

Why should this be?

We all get asked from time to time about the history and development of morris dancing. And most of us know enough to give some sort of answer. Researchers and authors know a lot more, obviously. But I always point out that virtually

any country on earth has its own folk traditions and England is no different. It came, in many forms, it nearly went, then it came back strongly and here it has stayed. Now it is danced all around the world. Other countries are proud of their folk traditions and when it comes to international events like Eurovision they like nothing better than getting dressed up in peasant costumes and parading them in front of the watching millions.

A couple of days after our breakfast incident, I opened the newspaper to find a letter suggesting that England's rugby players could perform a morris dance in response to the haka.

'Use morris men (!) to strike fear', read the headline with a picture and caption saying they could terrify opponents this way.

Lighthearted? Yes. But just another knife plunged in to the side of our noble and enjoyable art form. As long as sentiments such as that persist, as long as morris is considered a joke and as long as numbskulls like our mouthy breakfast guest continue to hold court, attitudes won't be changing.

Never mind. There's a phrase associated with a popular television programme that is more than pertinent to us all:

'Keep dancing!'

Journalist, editor, ukulele player, and singer, Paul White has been dancing the morris since the year 2000. He is a founding member of both *Wreckers* and *Cat's Eye* in Cornwall, helped form *Couptrain Morris* (France) and *Turncoat*, and has also danced with *Lodestone*. Paul can occasionally be found in Europe introducing fellow campers to the joys of morris, using baguettes, umbrellas, or tent poles for sticks. contact: pwhite420@btinternet.com twitter: @morrisbells or Facebook



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Has your team changed?

If your side kit/style/etc. has changed during the year, please download the Side History Update form from www.morrisfed.org.uk/join/join-renew and email it to archive@morrisfed.org.uk along with a side photo.

If you need further advice, just get in touch.

Jenny Everett, The Morris Federation Treasurer, Willow Cottage,
20 High Street, Sutton on Trent, Notts NG23 6QA

01636 821672 • treasurer@morrisfed.org.uk