



the
morris federation

FedExtra

Spring/Summer

2023

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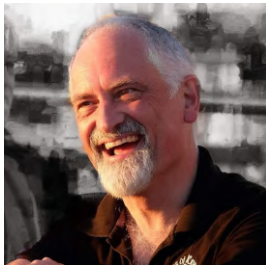
A Warm Welcome Back, with well-wishes from your adoring committee...



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Photo - Dorset Morri'arty



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P.S. IF YOU'D BE INTERESTED IN JOINING THE COMMITTEE, JENNY, MIKE AND JESS WILL BE STEPPING DOWN THIS YEAR, SO THE TREASURER, ARCHIVE AND MEMBERSHIP COMMUNICATIONS POSITIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE!

...and our wonderful Health & Safety Advisor!



Health & Safety Advisor
Sally Wearing
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A bit about me...

I'm Jess, your friendly neighbourhood magazine editor, Morris dancing enthusiast, and all-round fan of jigsaw puzzles. I've been involved in the folk world since a chance meeting with Wyvern Jubilee back in 2011, who kindly provided me with the opportunity to do some bean-setting.

I got the bug bad, and a good ten years on, you'll find me out and about with Dr. Turberville's, Enigma, Festus Derriman, the Knights of King Ina, Mendip and Wyvern Jubilee this summer (and, hopefully, my latest addition, Rockhopper, next year!)

Before launching into the magazine proper, I'd like to say a massive thank you to everyone that's submitted an article to include in this issue. I've been thoroughly enjoying reading everyone's news, so can only hope that the rest of you do, too!

Now that the introduction is out of the way, without further ado, the main event commences...



Dorset Morri'arty Photography

President's Prologue

Pauline Woods-Wilson, President of the Morris Federation



Welcome back! It's a welcome return for our favourite magazine - the FedExtra! Cue fanfare!! Such a lot has happened since our last edition in 2020, when the Covid pandemic had just taken hold. We've said a sad "au revoir" (but not goodbye) to Fee Lock as Secretary, Sam Ross as Newsletter Editor, and Mike Adamson as IT Administrator, and a warm "hello" to Andrew Knight as Secretary, Jess Searle as Membership Communications Officer and Dan Watford as IT Administrator. Jess Searle and Jenny and Mike Everett have, sadly for us, decided to step down from their roles at the end of this year, so please think about whether you can support us by being our **Treasurer**, **Membership Communications** or **Archive Officer** from January.

Nominations will be requested in June/July to go into the AGM Pack for voting on at the September meeting.

The **Member's Manual** has now gone properly online in the 'For Teams' section of our web site - this covers: setting up and running a team, safeguarding, running events, and links to existing resources for Insurance, IT advice and our publications. Do please take a look at this extensive resource.

More magazines - we are now hosting the archive for the **Rattle Up My Boys** longsword magazine, and, along with the **Morris Matters** archive, these are now both searchable, thanks to work by Brian Kelly, another of our volunteers.

We ran a huge number of online workshops and talks over the last 3 years, and these look set to

be an ongoing offering - we do have a new volunteer on the horizon who has some new ideas for new formats, so watch out!

The *JMO DoD in Liverpool* in 2022, hosted by the Morris Ring in the North West, was the first big event since lockdown; there were so many happy people just so happy to be out dancing again! A year later, we have just come home from a very excellent *JMO DoD in Exeter* in 2023, hosted by Beltane on behalf of Open Morris. Next year it'll be our turn for *JMO DoD in Newark*, hosted by Trentside Holmes. In the meantime, this year it's 20 years since John Bacon gained an exemption for "Morris dancing" from the Licensing Act, so various teams across the JMO are organising *JMO 20th Birthday Regional DoDs* - six regional events for you in Sept/Oct 2023 - feel free to choose which one(s) to go to.

I've run out of room again to give my potted Morris history, so just to say that currently you may find me with (in alphabetical order) Chiltern Hundreds, Downes on Tour, Red Rose, Rivington, Stone the Crows, or Windsor. Do please please come and say "hello" to me and the rest of your Committee when we are out and about. Until then, enjoy your FedExtra.

Pauline

Dates for your Diary – [click here for more!](#)

September 9th	Regional 20 th Anniversary JMO Day of Dance	Belper, Derbyshire
September 16th	Regional 20 th Anniversary JMO Day of Dance	Norwich
September 23rd	Regional 20 th Anniversary JMO Day of Dance	Chester
September 30th	Morris Federation Day of Dance & AGM	Shropshire
October 7th	Regional 20 th Anniversary JMO Day of Dance	Newcastle
October 7th	Regional 20 th Anniversary JMO Day of Dance	Bath
October 21st	Regional 20 th Anniversary JMO Day of Dance	London

Morris Federation Badge Presentations

Pauline Woods-Wilson, President of the Morris Federation

To commemorate their service to the Morris Federation, we presented the volunteers below with Butterworth Badges as a token thank you for their hard work over many years. The beautiful badges include their name, title and dates of service.



Fee Lock - Secretary for 22 years, from 2000 to 2021.

During her 22 years she has seen a lot of changes in the Morris Federation, including the introduction of a web site, and the use of social media. Fee is a huge supporter of the Joint Morris Organisations and has been wonderful at working with other organisations; she was involved with the lobbying for the exemption for Morris dancing in the amplified music licensing act. Her hallmark has been her carefully considered and reasonable replies that she has made to the press and general public. Her knowledge will be sorely missed.

Photo: Fee Lock, Secretary, 2000-2021 (22 years) being presented with her badge at the AGM 2022, by Pauline Woods-Wilson, President:

Sam Ross - Newsletter Editor for 7 years, from 2016 to 2022.

During this time Sam launched the new-look 'FedExtra' magazine, turning the members' magazine into a more modern, appealing, engaging, and professional-looking publication. Her technical skills were also put to good use behind the scenes as she helped implement the Membership Database, and spent a great deal of time on both the look-and-feel and content of the new-look Web Site.

Photo: Sam Ross, Newsletter Editor, 2016-2022 (7 years) being presented with her badge at her home in 2022, by Andrew Knight, Secretary.



Mike Adamson

Mike was the co-opted IT Administrator for 3 years, from 2018 to 2020. During this time Mike introduced and maintained the membership database, which dramatically eased the work of the treasurer and the secretary.

Photo: Mike Adamson, IT Administrator, 2018-2020 (3 years) being presented with his badge at a Rivington Morris practice in 2022 by Pauline Woods-Wilson, President.

JMO Day of Dance Liverpool

Jess Searle, Knights of King Ina

Hosted by the Morris Ring in North West, Saturday 9th April 2022 saw the return of the JMO Day of Dance, this time in Liverpool. A wonderfully well-organised event, opened by the Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Merseyside, Mr Robert Owen JP DL, followed by a dance from Saddleworth Morris Men to kick off proceedings. The day closed with an informal farewell gathering at St John's Gardens, with teams taking it in turns to display.

There were two particularly exciting things about the event for me. Firstly, to sense the elation of the folk community at what felt like the return to 'normal dancing-out' after all things lockdown. I know there were events the previous summer, but from my rather sketchy



Milltown Cloggies

memory, it was all a little cautious... At the JMO Day of Dance in Liverpool, that usual, unabashed excitement at the joy of being able to dance more freely together created this extra-special underpinning energy to the whole event; greetings of friends old and new were given with the biggest of hugs or the warmest of handshakes... even the smiles seemed brighter and wider!



Clerical Error

As well as this return to 'normal dancing-out', I also had the sheer delight of witnessing one of my now-dearest friends experience her first ever Morris day of dance, with her only prior knowledge being that of the Mendip Morris practice hall. From watching her spot the scattered array of bonnets and baldricks that boarded the train, to the sheer number of sides at the opening ceremony (the excitement of which caused her to positively fly with skipping down the street to the first stand of the day)... I'm not sure I can put into words just how special that vantage point was, and a wholesome reminder of my

personal journey to being a member of quite so many sides!

I have to confess to this momentary sense of panic when she squealed so loudly, I thought there must be something wrong, but when I looked to where she was pointing, I couldn't help but laugh as I realised she'd discovered her first Morris dog!



The combination of her sheer elation at all things Morris, and the extra buzz of excitement in the air from the folk community all around at the rediscovered free-ness of dancing together very much made the Liverpool JMO Day of Dance, for me, one of those unforgettably special days, that will stay with me and bring me the warmest of smiles for years to come.

Black Annis Morris Dog

'Unwrapped' – The Story of Sweet Rapper

Alan Courtney, AKA Dorset Morri'arty



Let me set the scene and take you back to Chippenham Folk Festival a few years ago. Picture this... a slightly apprehensive Sweet Rapper are about to share a dance spot with the youthful and brilliant Black Swan Rapper. A little nervous and conscious of their senior years, Sweet Rapper's Mary announces to Black Swan that Sweet Rapper are 'alternative' rappers and suggests that this will probably be how they will be dancing in 40 years time! There are few senior ladies rapper sides, especially ones in their sixties, so if you are

looking for female dance role models, be sure to consider Sweet Rapper!

How did this unusual ladies' rapper side begin? Founding members Ursula Cox and Barbara Westcott formed the idea at a rain-soaked Sarum Morris dance-out with Quayside Cloggies on Poole Quay in 2004.

A name was decided upon and logo designed, both by Katrina Ellis, featuring a toffee on the badge, and the liquorice allsorts earrings added to the theme.

They organised some coaching from local men's side Dorset Buttons Rapper, who showed them their dances, and they also went to a couple of workshops, including one by Stone Monkey Rapper. They gained some valuable instruction but soon realised that they were neither fit nor flexible enough to do the 'proper' rapper stepping, so they decided to make up their own rapper dances instead!

They initially borrowed some swords, before eventually getting their own beginner's swords made. As they improved over time, they had these shortened so they could dance much closer together.

Sweet Rapper have always been blessed with having talented musician Katrina Ellis play for them. Katrina had previously written original music and dances for Sarum Morris, so she set about writing some original tunes for Sweet Rapper to dance along to.

They now have 3 original dances that they dance. These are in keeping with their confectionary-inspired name, and are known as 'Vanilla Fudge', 'Walnut Whip' and 'Curly Wurly'!





Long may the Sweet Rappers show the youngsters what can be done using their unique blend of original dances, steps, music and determination!

Sweet Rapper is currently looking for new recruits. They train on the Dorset/Wiltshire border. While they are currently an older-aged side, Sweet Rapper welcome new recruits of all ages.

If interested please contact Ursula Cox email: ilovegiraffes@outlook.com

A Virtual Straw Bear www.strawbear.org.uk

Brian Kell BEM and Christine R Kell (Presidents, Whittlesea Straw Bear Festival)

Photos – Andy Gutteridge

Perhaps to understand the format of the Virtual Straw Bear Festival, a little bit of amplification may be in order. The Straw Bear has not missed a year since the revival in 1980. When faced with a total lockdown in 2021 the Bear did go out on the street. However, the 2021 Bear danced out on Christmas Eve 2020 to beat the lockdown. He travelled about 200 yards along the street from the front door to the back door of the property where he was constructed. The little bear danced in that property's garden and was subsequently burnt there. This was all part of a family bubble in accordance with lockdown rules. The mid-winter outing was observed.

In 2022 he danced out on the Tuesday after Plough Monday (the correct day according to historic records) unannounced. There were no attendant dance teams on either of these occasions.





The Virtual Straw Bear was produced by a few members of the group who had the skills to construct the virtual programme. This contained information regarding the scant history of the original sightings of The Bear from the latter part of the 1800s, construction details of the current Bear, video footage from some of the guests who had performed in previous festivals in local schools, a welcome from the mayor, greetings from our Straw Bear friends in Walldürn, Odenwald, a virtual folk concert, a virtual barn dance, and a music and song session to emulate the Saturday night session at The Letter B Public House hosted by White Rose Morris Men. Also, video footage from YouTube and from our good friend Doc Rowe, and our extensive pictorial and video records of the revival. The Straw Bear website still contains many of these videos, only a click away.

The dreadful weather at the beginning of this year's live event did little to dampen the spirit of those in town on the day which is a clear indication of how the event had been missed and is popular with the locals and beyond.

When Brian Shuel, the author of *Guide to Traditional Customs*, was asked why Whittlesea Straw Bear had been omitted from his book he replied "it's no more than a mediocre Folk Festival and did not warrant inclusion". We wonder when does an event become traditional?

SARUM MORRIS 40TH ANNIVERSARY 1982-2022

Chris Cox – Squire, Sarum Morris

Sarum Morris were formed in 1982 in Salisbury, Wiltshire. The City of Salisbury has one of the oldest documented references to the Morris dating back to 1564. In those days, it was 'sponsored' by the Guild of Merchant Tailors, as the Tailors Guild annual accounts show expenditure for costumes. The Morris dancers would traditionally accompany the Salisbury Giant, Christopher, and the tourney hobby horse, Hob-Nob, and process through the streets of Salisbury in celebration of festivals such as Midsummer's Eve, St. Peter's Day and St. Osmund's Day. They appear to have declined over the years, as the Giant's outings became fewer, and more gaps appeared in the records. The last recorded appearance of Morris dancers was at the time of King George V's Coronation in 1911, although a team did attempt to keep the tradition alive for the Children's Peace Pageant in 1919.

Since 1982, Sarum Morris have performed as a 'mixed' side of both ladies and men dancing Cotswold-style Morris. We currently dance in all-white shirts and trousers with blue and gold sashes - the men wear baldricks with a cummerbund and the ladies wear just the cummerbund decorated with blue and gold florets. Our style of Cotswold dancing is slower than some other Morris sides to exaggerate the height and style of the tradition. During the 40 years, we have performed at many locations throughout the UK and in other countries including France, Sweden, Finland and Canada.



Our youngest member performing at the Salisbury St. George's Day event on 24th April 2022



Sarum Morris performing the dance Soldier, Soldier (Ilmington tradition) in the grounds of Salisbury Museum in the shadow of Salisbury Cathedral with Christopher, the Salisbury Giant, and his companion Hob-nob on 2nd May 2022

In 2022, Sarum Morris celebrated our 40th Anniversary by performing 40 different dances from our current repertoire at 40 different locations throughout the year. #40-40-40. We had only been able to perform a handful of events in 2021 due to Covid restrictions and a number of our regular festivals and village fetes still not going ahead. However, 2022 got off to a good start in April with the regular St. George's Day event in Salisbury returning. A number of our 'senior' dancers were still reluctant to perform in public due to health reasons but we were fortunate that we had been able to recruit some new members during the previous 12 months who were now very capable of providing a good performance. St. George's Day was followed by another returning annual event at the Downton Cuckoo Fair just before May Day where we were again able to perform to the dawn at Old Sarum Castle. The following day, we had a new event in Salisbury at a Spring Fair in the grounds of the museum where we could exhibit our copies of the Salisbury Giant and Hob-nob. Our programme then continued throughout the rest of the summer with the return of many of our regular festivals and village fetes, including Chippenham Folk Festival, Wessex Folk Festival, Wimborne Minster Folk Festival and others, plus numerous pub stands. In

the middle of this, we had a very successful 'Day of Dance' in Salisbury with 8 guest Morris sides and our Summer events concluded with a weekend at the Swanage Folk Festival. At this stage we had only completed 35 dances at 35 different locations! In September we attended the Wareham Folk Harvest and performed in Wareham, Dorset and then finished the month with the return of our annual performances on the 'Stones Tour' with visits to Stonehenge and Avebury with guests from East Kent Morris and Newton Bushel Morris - that's 2 more locations!

Our target of 40 dances at 40 locations was achieved on 2nd December. We first performed in the afternoon at the St. Thomas's Christmas Tree Festival in Salisbury and then finished the day at the event for the turning on of the Wilton Christmas Tree Lights. During 2022, Sarum Morris raised £1,000 which has been donated to local charities.

Sarum Morris pride ourselves in being 'all-inclusive' and our current dancers range from 8 years old to a lady in her 80s. Our aim is to enjoy ourselves and although our performance is rarely perfection, we hope that we provide entertainment for the onlooker and encouragement for others to participate in this traditional activity.



Sarum Morris perform Mason's Arms (Ilmington tradition) at the Chippenham Folk Festival on 28th May 2022

25 years of Cobbled Together

Cobbled Together

“And those who were seen dancing were thought to be insane by those who could not hear the music”
Fredrich Nietzsche - famous German philosopher.

I'm sure many of you reading this may agree with him - our members of Cobbled Together certainly do.



Cobbled Together is so called because we all hail from Northamptonshire which is the historic home of shoe making. Together we are an eclectic group of people who enjoy dancing, music and each other's company.

Since Cobbled Together's inception twenty-five years ago - then solely as a North West clog side - we have made several changes to our original plan. These include name change, kit design and the addition of other dance traditions. In fact some may say we're a bit like "Trigger's broom!" However, our ethos for inclusivity and diversity has never changed. There is always a warm welcome for everyone, be they would-be dancers, musicians, percussionists or anyone of any age who fancies having a go. Currently our Cobbled Together members range from nine years old to beyond pensionable age!!



Over the years our numbers have fluctuated and at a low point we only had three dancers remaining. Therefore, in order to keep going we needed to increase our numbers so we took the decision to adapt and change! With this in mind we began by introducing other dance traditions to add more interest to our performance although we still wear clogs. Offering a variety of dance traditions proved to be a positive step for recruiting new dancers. As a result, our numbers are now in double figures and we accommodate all-comers by adding both

'Longsword' and 'Border' traditions into our dance repertoire.

In 2023, after twenty five years, we are still "Cobbling Together", having fun and looking forward to summer gigs, festivals and especially our own 25th celebration - during which we'll raise a glass of prosecco or beer (I did say we are diverse) to all of us "who can hear the music" and love to dance.

Cheers everyone! And here's to the next 25 years!

Duke's Dandy Turns 40 + 1! (2022)

David Wigg, Duke's Dandy

Duke's Dandy was formed in Retford, Nottinghamshire, in 1981 by Penny Smith, who had been learning with Greenwood Clog in Nottingham and was approached by various friends wanting to 'have a go'. Penny's husband and team musician, Glyn chose the team's name because the first dance out was at a fund-raising event for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme at which the team wore patterned 'Sunday Best' or 'Dandy' clogs.

Glyn was a talented musician; having had only a few piano lessons, he went on to teach himself the melodeon and the team never looked back. Glyn was team musician for 27 years, having to give up in 2008 because of Parkinson's Disease. Glyn sadly died in 2021.

Our current musician is Jill's husband, Bernard, who is ably supported by other members' husbands, David and Jim, who have followed on from Ken Watson.

By 2005 our numbers had dwindled, but were then boosted by Lynette, Wendy and Sue from Green Ginger and Jill from Charnwood. More recently, Jane from City Clickers joined our ranks. Our newest member, Lauren, joined in 2020, bringing a burst of youth to the team, the rest of us being retired.



During the Covid lockdown we continued to practise with fortnightly Zoom sessions, which kept us engaged socially and, after putting the world to rights, we also managed to do some dancing! Despite the fact that Zoom practices were not ideal, we were a lot less rusty when we were finally allowed to get back together.

Unfortunately, we were not able to celebrate our 40th birthday during Covid times. We invited several teams to Retford to help celebrate in September 2022, but, in deference to the death of the Queen, the event was cancelled.



In October 2022 we were invited to Rattlejag's 20th birthday Day of Dance in Sherwood Forest, and at last managed to celebrate our significant birthday jointly, with tea, coffee and a magnificent cake baked by Penny.

In our early days, we arranged an annual Day of Dance around Retford in conjunction with Broadstone Morris, an event which continued for some 20 years. Rattlejag was formed as a mixed side after Broadstone Morris disbanded.

We still practise in Retford, despite the fact that only two members still live there, the rest travelling from as far afield as Hull, Folkestone and Hayle (Cornwall).

While not attending as many events as we used to, we are still as enthusiastic as ever.

2024 Ebor Morris 50th Birthday Celebrations

Kevin Holland, Ebor Morris Bagman



In 2024 Ebor Morris will be celebrating our 50th birthday!

One of our celebratory events will be a weekend in Seahouses, Northumberland, for all current and former members, 11th to 14th May 2024.

We will also have a day of dance in York, probably mid-June, and an anniversary dance out on 1st May in Poppleton, the precise anniversary and location of our first public appearance.

Please get in touch if you're interested in attending - we are hoping to make the weekend in Seahouses FREE for all current and former Ebor Morris men.

Ebor.morris@outlook.com

Please can you pass this on to anyone you know that used to be in Ebor Morris.

Mersey Morris Musicians' Workshop October 9th, 2022

Exploring the Strange Relationship between Music and Dance in the Morris

Paul Williamson (Anglo Concertina and Recorder)

There is a strange, almost mystical, relationship between music and dance in the Morris. A common saying among the dancers when unsure of precisely what to do (or when!) is that 'the music will tell you'. This conjures up a picture of Morris dancing as a train, with the Morris dancers as the carriages, being pulled along by the engine of the music; the 'oom-pahs' of the playing stoking the fire of the overlying melody. But is this reality? To find out, Mersey Morris held a day-long music workshop, led by folk royalty: the one-and-only John Kirkpatrick, MBE, former member of Steeleye Span and the Albion Band, former BBC2 folk musician of the year, and, of most immediate relevance to the day, a long-time dancer and musician for various Morris sides, most recently the Shropshire Bedlams & Martha Rhoden's Tuppenny Dish.



The workshop was organised by our long-suffering Music Major, Sarah Roberts, and took place in the hall of the Thornton Hough WI. This proved to be an excellent venue, allowing sufficient space for all of the musicians and, later in the day, for a team of dancers to perform, too. The catering facilities were up-to-snuff as well!



Present at the workshop I counted seven melodeons, three fiddles, three recorders, two concertinas, one guitar, one 'penny' whistle, and one 'cost-a-lot-more-than-a-penny' flute. Fortunately, in order to give them a day out, these instruments had brought along their various owners. In short, the massed ranks of the fearsome Mersey Morris music band.

John Kirkpatrick led the workshop with great gusto, even though (as he kept reminding us) “I’m older than the King, you know!”. John played *con brio* on his mighty (and weighty) button accordion, showing subtle variations in volume ranging all the way from mezzo-forte (*mf.*) [somewhat loud] through to

fortissimo (*ff.*) [bellows-bustingly loud]. Throughout the day he also demonstrated short extracts from various Morris dances, in order to show the timing of various movements that needed to be emphasised via the music.

The first key lesson of the day was that music played to support dancing is different from music played for the pleasure of the listener. Good dance music, we were told, should emphasise footfalls, jumps and various other climactic parts of the dance. This emphasis being provided by a mixture of changes in volume, note duration and other musical tricks. As John noted, this meant that at times we would need to ‘murder’ the music in order to get it to work in a way which best supported the dancing. Those musicians amongst us who rely on the dots (printed music) to play our various Morris tunes gently wept, as we learnt that the rhythm we needed to play often bore little resemblance to the timing indicated in the musical score. And all of us, whether we learnt our music via the dots or by ear, had to wrestle against our innate tendency to play the music smoothly and sweetly (i.e. musically), rather than in the much more chopped and staccato fashion required to support the dance.

The second key lesson of the day was that ‘the dance tells the music what to do’, contrary to the dancer’s old adage that ‘the music will tell you’. Hence we spent much of the day dissecting various dances in order to understand when a particular dance movement, such as a jump, happened, and how this needed to be responded to musically.

All of this came to fruition towards the end of the day when, by pre-arrangement, some Mersey Morris dancers turned up and danced for us, so that we could put all of this theory into practice. Initially things were a little shaky, as some of us found our habit of playing ‘too musically’ hard to break. The log-jam broke when John (having already told us how to do it, shown us how to do it, and got us to practise doing it) leapt into the fray, conducting us in stentorian tones that were not to be denied. At this point things seemed to click, and we rounded off the day by providing our dancers with a very dance-oriented accompaniment. Mission accomplished? Well, in truth, more like ‘journey begun’. But that is one of the joys of the Morris. Whether as a dancer or a musician, there is always more to learn, one more hill to climb...

What Shape should your Clog Sole be?

Phil Howard, Clogs and Leatherwork, www.nw-clogs.co.uk 01943 511029

Traditional clog soles have ranged from the flatter factory soles to the very turned-up toes often associated with steep paths and clog purling (fighting).

The inside shape generally matches the clog cast (the wooden foot-shaped block the clog is constructed around) but even this can change for those who find bending their foot painful due to arthritis or other issues. In cases such as these, the inner foot platform can be cut flatter.

Clog soles are now being cut with the weight just behind the ball of the foot. This makes it easier to rock forward when walking. An American cowboy boot is designed to take the weight in a similar place but that is because of its higher



heel. Ladies' high-heeled footwear is similar.

For clog dancers, however, there are a number of considerations... We dance on the spot, many steps tap the toe, and we want to absorb our weight when landing, often on the front foot, so that we can spring up again (while the step dancers are balancing back on their heels).

During the last 30+ years of clog making I've re-wooded many pairs of clogs. Ignoring the Morris dancers' clogs, which usually only needed re-wooding due to wear when rubbers or irons weren't replaced in time, the step dancers' clogs were split roughly between two shapes. Bearing in mind these soles had been worn down the way the dancer performed their steps.

Some ended with a final shape that was nearly parallel with the upper wood. I would expect the wearer to have performed steps that included a mixture of toe and heel beats, which resulted in quite even wear, basically parallel to the clog sole upper.

The other shape had more of a platform under the front of the foot, with the area behind the ball being much less worn. When standing still, the weight would rest behind the ball of the foot, but when performing, the weight would be on the front platform. I call this my Off-The-Toe clog sole shape and I usually have a few in stock, or it can be requested. The picture shows samples of some of these soles.

Other considerations are undercutting the heel to make it easier to balance on the back of the heel, or keeping the sides vertical for easier heel clicks.

Another option would be to request the sole shape copied from a previous worn pair. It won't be perfect as the soles are worn both vertically and horizontally but it will be closer and speed up the time it normally takes to get a new pair performance ready.

I can be contacted via email at phil.howard.clogs@gmail.com and to answer the question of what happened to the clog maker from Stockport, I moved to Otley in West Yorkshire.

Sword Techniques, Ravens Morris

Jon Watkin, Ravens Morris



Anyone familiar with Ravens Morris will know that we have our own Steampunk style of Border Morris; some traditional dances, some our own, and some a bit of both. We include other routines to our performances such as songs, giant puppets, rope dancing and Rapper sword. We also make our own videos and perform live street theatre, bringing elements of our Morris routines in to augment the experience.

For this article I will focus on the sword routines. Normally we perform a simple 6-person rapper routine, starting with the ring of swords, circling back and forth, and ending with them joined and held aloft in a star.

Last Summer, we did 7 performances of the Last Judgement as part of the York Mystery Plays 2022, on behalf of the York Merchant Adventurers Guild. Our play was written and directed by our Squire, Alan Pope, and adapted from the historic

texts. It was performed by the entire Ravens side, plus a small army of supporters and friends, with music, songs, dancing, stilt-walking devils, a chainsaw, and hound dog, all on (and around) a wagon, pushed by hand through the streets of York. Costumes were a mix of traditional robes and dieselpunk-style, made by the cast themselves.

For everyone involved the experience was challenging but extremely uplifting, especially for those with no previous acting experience. The performances received much positive critical acclaim.

The play began with 6 sword bearers circling a poor soul, joined on either side by groups of souls, the 'Saved' in grey and the 'Damned' in black. As the souls performed a Moorish-style back-and-forth dance, the sword bearers circled; a damned soul was introduced inside the circle, the swords were joined, the soul was sacrificed, and the sword star held aloft. This spectacle was witnessed by the souls before the assembled panoply of God and her angels. As the soul fell dead, the other souls cried out, the 'Saved' in agony and the 'Damned' in rapture. The chasm between the 'Saved' and the 'Damned' was clear, and a portent of the turmoil and fantastic routines that were to follow.

The next instance was the York Nativity, performed in the ancient St Saviourgate church, York. As before, the play was directed by Alan Pope, with the cast and performers drawn from Ravens Morris, and actors from other York Mystery Plays in the Summer. Early on in the play there was a maypole dance with coloured ribbons to celebrate the marriage of Mary and Joseph. The sword routine was used to simple but horrific effect with the slaying of babes by King Herod's knights. A group of terrified mothers with babes in arms assembled into a circle. The knights circled the group with their swords held high and thrust them into the swaddling in the mothers arms. As swords were withdrawn, they were festooned with the same red ribbons used earlier, only this time they became entrails. A single knight stood running them through his hands, his face staring at them in wonder at what they had just done. As the crowds thronged in their thousands outside, in pursuit of another sort of Christmas, it was humbling to witness the York Nativity being performed inside.

I hope this article does credit to our very talented side, it is my privilege to be part of.



Sharp & Blunt's Television Debut

Written by Beth Flemming, Sharp & Blunt Squire, Feb 2023



We were all very happy just practising every Monday, having regular dance-outs with a variety of other Morris sides and joining in with our village's annual Day of Dance. However, when the opportunity came to feature on a prime-time TV programme, we were very excited and naturally jumped at the chance.

Our Morris side, Sharp & Blunt, is a Cotswolds-style side based in Adderbury, Oxfordshire, which has been going from strength to strength since it formed nearly 13 years ago. Last summer, our bag received an email from a production company, Curve Media, asking us if we would be interested in appearing on the second series of *Motorhoming with Merton and Webster*. The first series had

been very successful, and featured married couple Paul Merton and Suki Webster touring the country in their motorhome, visiting notable places from all over the UK. They were now returning for another series, and were actively seeking a Morris side to join them in their 'Cotswolds' episode. All we had to do was some Morris dancing at the Rollright Stones, talk a little about the legends surrounding the Stones, and about our involvement in the Morris world. Initially, we weren't sure if we would have enough people available,

especially as the time-frame required for a response was pretty tight. However, within hours of sending out the request, we had a side of dancers and a musician. We were in!

We arrived at the Stones to clear skies and a very welcoming production team. We were given a run-down of the plan for the morning and I had a microphone strapped to me. We then danced one of our favourite dances, Nanny Moore - a hankie dance - among the Stones. It was a lovely moment, dancing in such an atmospheric place, made all the more special dancing our own choreographed dance to a tune written by one of our members, inspired by her grandmother. As we finished, Paul and Suki came in applauding our efforts, before chatting to us about Sharp & Blunt as well as the Stones themselves. We spoke about our home-village of Adderbury and the three sides which are based there, as well as how we got started and the reasons behind each of us joining in the first place. Surprisingly, we all gave very varied reasons for wanting to join, but it was unanimous that we all have so much fun dancing together. Both Paul and Suki made this conversation so easy, as they were very laid back, and had a genuine interest in us and Morris dancing. Then Suki had a go at dancing with us, which was great. We taught her a little of Bluebells, a beautiful stick dance, arguably a little complicated for a beginner; she was such a natural, and picked up the rhythm and steps very quickly. We handed her a card with our details, just in case she was ever in the area again and fancied a dance! We then left both of them to explore the Stones by themselves, including counting them. You apparently never tally up the same amount twice. That seemed to be the case for Paul and Suki too. Next followed the agonising wait to hear when the programme would be aired. In the meantime, we couldn't mention it to anyone, as the new series wasn't being promoted yet. Then we found out it would start in the New Year, and that our episode was the second in the series - brilliant! We all sat in front of our respective televisions, waiting with nervous anticipation to see how we would look on our screens, but there was no need to worry; we were all really pleased with the result, and felt our Morris cameo had been a huge success.

What a great opportunity we all had last summer to add to our flourishing Morris repertoire, and to spread the word about Morris to such a wide audience! A huge thank you to Curve Media for asking us to take part (and for being so supportive and looking after us so well), to Paul and Suki for their enthusiasm and interest in us, and to my fellow Sharp & Blunt participants for enjoying the day so much and showing the country just how enjoyable Morris dancing is.

Huginn and Muninn – The Morris Men Movie

Vaughan Grandin, Huginn and Muninn

Greetings from Huginn and Muninn. For those of you who don't know us - hello! We are a 2-person Border side from London who dance for our musician god Odin. As Huginn and Muninn are characters from Norse mythology, who gathered news from around the world, please allow us to tell you some tales too.

This one starts with setbacks and obstacles - in our case HALF the side got sidelined with a torn calf from the otherwise amazing Dorking Day of Dance in June 2022. This is an annoying way to lose 4 months of danceouts. But finally we were ready... for one of the most exciting events in Morris history...

THE MORRIS MEN MOVIE

A movie. About Morris dancing. Well... ninja assassins who also Morris dance, with more action than the last practice before May day. Beltane were in it. Mythago/Wolfshead & Vixen starred. Boudicca Border taught the actors how to dance. Class. And we got to dance at the ceremony for our comeback!

Outside the delightfully-Victorian Princes Theatre (Clacton-on-Sea), we hooked up with some serious border royalty. Wolfshead & Vixen were up from Kent. Local stars Boudicca Border were joined by fellow adventurers Hells Bells, and some Brixton Tatterjacks. The fair size crowd watched the Morris pit opening while the tuxedoed movie stars arrived in limos and strolled the red carpet. The movie producer (DB Morgan) was loving it, the Clacton crowd was cheering and before you knew it, it was time for the movie.



(c) Nick Davarias



Now... of course you want to know about the movie... but you should watch it yourself right?

It's currently on the festival circuit (winning awards we believe), but will be streaming this year. We're so glad the movie's been made - it's a million miles away from the outdated twee image of Morris, and is gritty, tough and violent. The link between eskrima martial arts and border Morris is a tantalising one and we have been trying some moves ourselves for danceouts (getting hurt in the process)...

So...go watch this movie!!! Its amazing to see border Morris play such a great part in a film (without a hint of parody).

FAST FORWARD TO NOW

We are super excited for Rochester Sweeps and the JMO Exeter event, but this year it's all about heavy metal for us. Bloodstock's 'Metal to the Masses' event is a chance for bands around the UK to perform at the festival, and for us to showcase Morris to a new audience as a living, breathing artform. We competed in round 1 as a band, onstage - with Odin playing nyckelharpa and Valkyries drumming - and we danced (for 30 minutes!). At a metal band competition. Not supporting another band but being the main act! And the applause we got was insane. We absolutely loved it.

So...we didn't win the round (2 other competing bands were former finalists) BUT the judges liked us enough to put us

through to the lucky loser mosh pit round that was held on Sunday 12th March. Check out our Facebook page to find out how we got on!

The Morris Federation AGM 2022

Nick Appleyard, Black Diamond.

Photos – Dorset Morri'arty

It was September 2018 when several members of Black Diamond Mixed Cotswold Morris attended the Morris Federation AGM weekend in London hosted by New Esperance.

We knew Customs and Exiles were due to host the 2020 AGM, but the committee were looking for someone to host 2021. One of our members looked at me and said 'we could do that, Nick', and that was the start. As we all know 2020 and 2021 didn't happen due to Covid. Fast forward to 2022.

Friday night gave some of us the chance to gather for a meal in a local pub, and I met some people who I had only ever spoken to via social media and email. Saturday September 24th, and we were welcoming 16 other Morris Teams from around the country to Darlington:

Ripon City, Minster Strays, Harlequin, Ravens

Morris, Silkstone Greens, Mabel Gubbins, The Knights of King Ina, Leek Morris, Belfagan, Blacksheep, Mockbeggar, Locos in Motion, Carlisle Clog, Black Gate Morris, Beverley Garland, and Maltby Sword.

The dance spots had been checked, the pubs warned and we were good to go.

Halfway through the first spot, the rain came. Fortunately not enough to cause any major issues, but a quick Risk Assessment meant moving a spot slightly due to the dance area becoming too slippy.



Black Diamond Morris



Maltby Sword

There were a couple more hitches, one solved with thanks to a Council Enforcement truck, and the other a slight shift of a dance spot due to lack of space (another learning curve for me) but once the sun came back out, and what needed to be sorted had been sorted, everyone was soon back to enjoying their dancing.

The smaller teams got to go and dance outside one of our local pubs in one of Darlington's Yards during the afternoon. The final dance spot was definitely the highlight of the day for me. Seeing all 17 teams performing in the market square, and finally getting a chance to join in with the dancing. The post dance session in our home pub had the place packed out, and people enjoying the specially brewed Morris Federation Ale.

The AGM itself was held in the Victorian Central Hall. It was well attended both in person and also via Zoom (the first time the Fed has ever tried a hybrid meeting). I think the biggest problem in the hall for the meeting was the acoustics with people struggling to hear what was being said.

This was the venue for the evening ceilidh with Fiddlers Wreck Ceilidh band. It started very slowly, with people having gone for meals and a rest after dancing. but once it got going it was a fabulous evening.

A session was restarted in the pub as well. It was an enjoyable evening, and a great close to a brilliant day. On Sunday morning several members of various teams went to the Victorian South Park to dance. It was a fun way to end the weekend, with jigs, clog dances and set dances. Everyone just mixing in together.

Black Diamond Brought Morris Dancing back to Darlington again.

The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts

Jed Dunn – Fool to Wyvern Jubilee Morris and The Knights of King Ina.



The Mersey Morris Liver Bird

The IOFB is dedicated to represent Fools, Beasts and all manner of Morris “folk” who may not be easily categorised as either dancers or musicians. It is open to anyone who may wish to enquire of its curious nature and affiliates itself with The Morris Ring, The Morris Federation and Open Morris.

Once a year, around the end of October, we gather for our “Unconvention”; a weekend meet of merriment, usually with a Saturday tour and evening feast, various workshops, and the AGM. I have been unlucky enough to have hosted this weekend three times to date; all have been the most enjoyable fun, where the unexpected becomes the expected normality.

We have a website and Facebook pages, all of which can be easily sought out under our heading, where you can find out a bit about us, who to contact, and where we might be next. We welcome “old hands” and especially those new to Morris, or those who might be thinking of giving a character a try-out. You can find help in designing and building beasts and costumes as well as hints and tips to get you started.

In 2022, the Unconvention was hosted by our very good friends Mersey Morris Men, and I would direct you to their Facebook page for their own personal account. For me, the Unconvention comes at a time in the year when we are winding down from the dance season; it is a chance to meet up with old friends and to make new ones, to bring out all the old jokes and sing all the old songs. But also much more, the

Unconvention does its best to travel around the country (and abroad) and can bring us to places new and perhaps unexplored.

The Friday night “meet & greet” is often my highlight of the whole weekend, settling in, chatting, trying new beers/ciders, chatting, singing, chatting and finally either going to bed or starting breakfast depending how long the chatting went on. Our hosts will have set out a coach tour for Saturday, which is always a most leisurely affair and **MUST** include ice cream at some point, plenty of dancing and the chance for all those beasties to stretch their paws, claws, hooves etc. The evening brings the feast, most welcome after a hard day’s fooling, where our Convener, Trigger/Trotter (hard to tell who is charge sometimes) will welcome new members and hand out certificates to those newly joining.

Sunday dawns to a more serious note, breakfast, workshops, AGM and more dancing (none of which is taken very seriously) and then, all too quickly, the weekend is at an end and it is time to bid farewell and head home.

“Never argue with a Fool, for they will be doing the same”

love & hugs Jed



*Jed Dunn and Pauline Woods-Wilson
(c) Jack Smee*

'ROOM ROOM' by Kate Lynch

The Winter Season with the Langport Mummers



A goodly cast of mummers drove down the A303
To Chapel Cross at South Cadbury
It was the week before Christmas, the first of our shows
Thermals under our costumes in case we froze.
Next, off to Lydford, to the Cross Keys
Where we got a large crowd
Oh they laughed out loud
At Tossport's farts.
They loved the new lines about the man
Who put his feet up in the Commons
And rising sea levels and extreme weather conditions
With Bold Slasher releasing some toxic emissions!
Then it was Christmas, so madly commercial
Roll on the season of Wassail!
Such fun!



We kicked off at Croscombe during the day
It rained cats and dogs and we performed our play
Indoors.
In Street the sun came out as we processed
Who would have guessed
The orchard would be so pretty, the tree decorated
Straw bales in the round on which people were seated.
It was treacherous though as we found out
Squishy apples underfoot and we all slipped about!
Oh, and there was a rainbow overhead
As George rose from the dead!



More wassails to come, the next at night - our favourite!

We love the guns, the songs, fire and noise

The banging of saucepans by girls and boys

The pouring of the cider into the roots of the tree

All the ritual of the old ceremony

And we mummers in our guises appear -

a colourful addition to welcome new year.

Enterin comes first, with the musicians

We all follow on in our different positions

George, George's Mum, Molly, Bold Slasher

Tosspot, Devilty Doubt, Beelzebub and Doctor

The posturing, the fight, the death, tears and grief

Magic cures of all sorts, resurrection - relief!!

George raised, Bold Slasher renounces his sins

The audience clap, smiling eyes and broad grins

Then Devilty Doubt reveals the gold in her cloak

And her broom sweeps out winter - this is no joke

For the dark days are over, the light's on its way

Let's banish the night and welcome the day!

The Langport Mummers formed in 2003. Last winter season 2022-3 they performed at nine venues in Somerset: Chapel Cross, South Cadbury; The Cross Keys, Lydford; The George, Croscombe; North Wootten; Pigpen, Over Stratton; the Charlton Cider Club; Westcroft Cider, Brent Knoll; the Alfred Gillett Trust, Street; Midsomer Norton. They collect for the Somerset and Dorset Air Ambulance. Facebook: The Langport Mummers
Kate Lynch is Molly Masket in the play and her husband, James Lynch, is Bold Slasher (sometimes known as The Black Prince of Paradise).

Obituaries

Alison Ross, Hexhamshire Lasses – In Memory

We were sad to report the death of Alison Ross on 17th June 2022, aged 85. Alison danced with the Hexhamshire Lasses team for 23 years before retiring from dancing in 2018. She was a much-valued seamstress who tirelessly made all our costumes, and decorated our hats and garlands. When she wasn't dancing, she would carry the hat around, talk to people and collect donations for the team. Alison was diagnosed with a brain tumour at the beginning of 2022. We are comforted in the knowledge that we were able to visit and dance for her just a couple of weeks before she died which brought back some happy memories.

Alison was passionate, dedicated and an outstanding supporter of Tynedale Hospice at Home. She gave hours of her time to support the charity and on special birthdays she definitely went the extra mile - when Alison was 70 she swam a mile raising £1,930; when she turned 75 she zip-wired across the River Tyne raising £6,000; and at 80 years old Alison took part in Go Ape at Matfen Hall raising £4,000. Other fundraising efforts including bucket collections, baking and manning stalls. In her time as a volunteer with Tynedale Hospice at Home she raised over £50,000. Alison was a volunteer in a million. She will sadly be missed and fondly remembered by everyone who knew her.

Kind regards, Valerie Bell, Hexhamshire Lasses



Gerri Fussell, Anonymous Morris - In Memory



Gerri is sitting in the middle of the picture, holding her precious banjo - big grin on her face. It is the last picture we have of her and it was taken at Swanage Folk Festival in September 2019. Of course, we all know what happened in early 2020 - but Gerri spent that year buying all sorts of

weird and wonderful instruments from eBay, learning to play them with varying degrees of success, and enjoying everything all the same. Don't know what her rabbit and cat thought about it all, but Gerri got through that difficult patch while she waited for a date for a serious operation.

Gerri was very deaf and could get frustrated with life, the world and the universe, and in particular with the banjo going out of tune, but one of us would remind her that new batteries in her hearing aid would help. She'd laugh and say that the batteries hardly lasted any time at all and the rest of us were doing a good line in mumbling.

While some of us were moving furniture around to accommodate mobility aids after her operations, it was noticeable how much Anonymous Morris memorabilia was dotted around - lots of pictures, toy mice dressed

in tatters, her decorated hat, a face mask also adorned with our tatters - the Morris side was a big part of her life. Unless she was really ill, and in spite of hearing loss, she would turn up regardless of how she was feeling. Sadly, after one major operation, she fell and had to have another, and during this second stay in hospital, she contracted Covid and died in early February 2021. When the side reconvened, and started dancing out last year, the band would play her favourite tunes in her memory at some point during the evening - South Wind and Man in the Moon. At Swanage last year, we played it the best we have ever done, with a big round of applause from the audience, who stood respectfully and seemed to sense that something was going on... I am sure Geri would have loved that.

Pam Lloyd Davies - Anonymous Morris

Doug Deedman, New Forest Meddlars – In Memory

Doug Deedman played fiddle and mandolin with New Forest Meddlars. He joined the side in 2007 and was an accomplished musician. He was Bagman for several years, organising the finances, dance-out programme, publicity for the side, and setting up a new web site.

He died in September 2022 at the age of 73 after a long struggle with Parkinson's disease and later, Lewy Body dementia. His widow, Jill, maintains contact with the Morris fraternity.

Jane Drayton, Bagman, New Forest Meddlars Morris



The Boston Mega Bash - Mike Boston remembered at Sidmouth

John Lewis, Great Western Morris

Mike Boston - 5th August 1948 to 9th December 2021



(c) A Friend of Great Western Morris

Mike Boston, one time Squire, Foreman, Bagmen, Ceilidh Master, and universally acknowledged as the best known Morris Fool around the world, died unexpectedly on the 9th December 2021.

His funeral and wake, organised by his two daughters, Miryam and Nina, on the 7th February 2022 will be long remembered by all who were there, but as thoughts turned to Sidmouth that year, it seemed right that his contribution to the festival should be marked and celebrated, so the idea of the Boston Mega Bash was born.

Mike had a deep involvement with dance in general - he held the lifelong role as GW Ceilidh Master, masterminding regular winter social dances in Exeter, supporting both local and nationally known bands for more than 30 years. He was known at all the major festivals, and made a major contribution

towards keeping dance at the centre of Sidmouth Folk Week in the early 2000's. He promoted and managed the Blackmoor volunteer bar from its inception. But to his very essence, Mike was a people person, and the Mega Bash was moulded around making it fun for everyone. So the Monday afternoon of Sidmouth Folk Week 2022, the Blackmoor venue was taken over by his friends to simply entertain themselves and others, as Mike would have loved. Music was provided by members of Blowzabella (Mike's favourite band) for a bit of dance, with performances from Seven Champs, Newcastle Kingsmen and Hammersmith all adding to the fun.

In the final 'Princess Royal' jig (requiring audience engagement) the lead row were all John Gasson Jig Competition winners, backed up by dancers of all ages and origins. The only thing lacking was Mike himself, who would have loved to have been there to join the occasion.



(c) John Dowel

Chasing The Moment

Dorset Morri'arty



Mythago Morris

Jess has asked me to write an article for this, the latest edition of FedExtra. My last article was way back in 2019, when Sam (the previous editor) asked me to write a few tips on photographing the Morris.

Well many years and one pandemic later, I am still at it, photographing the wonderful world of Morris dance and music. It was way back in 2012 that I took my very first Morris photo. That was at a very rainy Wimborne Folk Festival. It was sheer luck that I just happened to have the magnificent Mythago performing right in front of me. I was hooked!

Why does photographing Morris dancing continue to inspire me so much?

It is so many different things. I love the dancing of course, the tradition and especially how it continues to evolve. Capturing the moments of joy and the thrill of trying to 'chase the moment' and bottle it up. Ultimately it is the characters of the dancers and the musicians that fascinate me.

So, has my photography changed over the years?

Originally, I was mainly known for my photos in black and white, where I would pick out the dancers and musicians in colour. I still think this is an effective way of highlighting the dance action. These years of experience I've got under my belt, however, mean I can better anticipate the dance action. My experiments in 'arty' processing continue in my photos, allowing me to hopefully give them a

distinct look. I also used lockdown to get to grips with Photoshop! I can now produce composite photos such as my recent homage to Boss Morris, Wet Leg and Banksy in the recent image I made, which seemed to garner a lot of positive comments online.

One thing that I find is essential is the music I play when I work on my photos on the computer. Music has an essential and profound effect on my processing choices, frequently having a very serendipitous and beneficial impact on the final result. Some of my recent Bandcamp favourites (such as Ellie Gowers, Sam Sweeney, Magpie Arc, Emily Portman,



Madder Mill Molly



Homage to Boss Morris, Wet Leg and Banksy

Jackie Oates,

Jon Wilks and Will Allen to name just a few) have inspired me immeasurably.

The Morris community has so many fabulous dancers and

musicians who have been so kind and generous with their support for my work. From the very beginning I have had so much encouragement and kindness from everyone, and have made so many good friends.

I look forward to sharing some new photos with you, and of course those from my back catalogue, too, over subsequent newsletters, and on the Morris Federation Facebook page.

Book Reviews

All Step Up: The History of the Manley Morris Dancers

by Derek Schofield

It had been known for many years that The Manley Morris Dancers were struggling for numbers, and that there was a danger that the team would cease to exist. The Manley dancers always passed their dance on to learners by example, demonstrating the steps and the figures physically, so that new dancers could copy and learn in this traditional way. No-one officially kept written evidence of the steps and figures, so it became vital that records were made of this unique dance before it was too late.

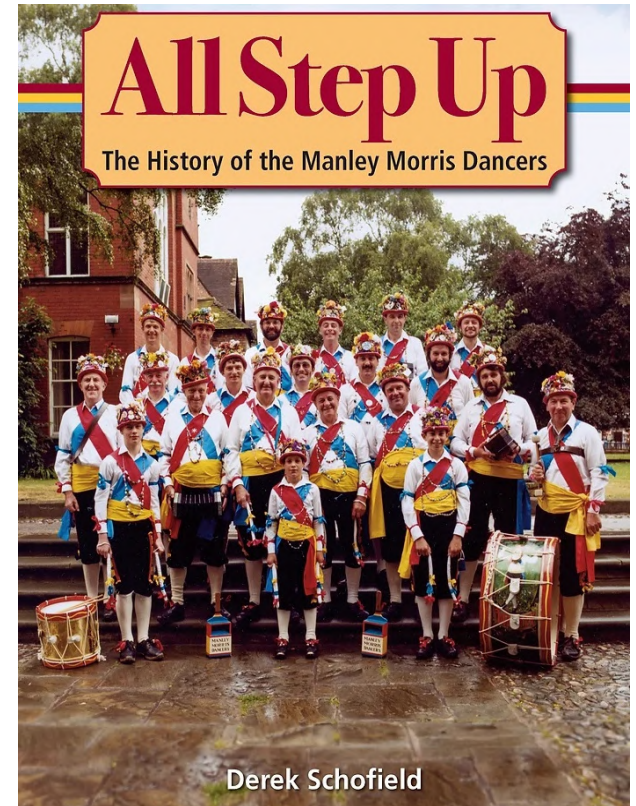
Derek Schofield has published this volume, which not only records the figures of The Manley Dance, but also covers the origins and history of the dance and gives credit to the significant individual members involved over the years.

This is a magnificent piece of work which gathers a very wide range of knowledge together and it is essential reading for anyone interested in the history of Morris dance in the north-west.

In conjunction with Derek's book, the team has also produced videos which include interviews with significant members of the team, footage of the musicians playing the tailor-made tunes, and a record of almost all the figures that the team performed.

This means that future dancers can learn the Manley version of the Royton Dance with ease, in what is close to the way the team taught - by visual example, and not from written instruction. Derek Schofield is to be praised for his prolonged efforts over the years in producing such a comprehensive historical record.

Although not mentioned in the book, in the latter years of the team's existence, I practised with Manley



under the conductorship of Graham Rathbone and then Derek Schofield, and I was very lucky to dance out with them on half a dozen occasions.

As a footnote to this review, Derek was unable to include the figure that was devised specifically for a visit to The Albert Hall, which was, not surprisingly, called "The Albert Hall", simply because no-one could remember it. If anyone has information, or even film footage of this figure, please let Derek know. Thank you Derek for such a diligent piece of work.

Geoff Bibby

Thelwall Morris Men, Lymm Morris Dancers, Abram Morris Dancers

Carnivals, Contests and Coronations

*A Social History of Morris Dancing
in Trafford before the Second World War*



Richard Nelson

Carnivals, Contests and Coronations

by **Richard Nelson**

Richard looks at a small area (the Borough of Trafford, now part of Greater Manchester) and mainly considers the development of Morris dancing, and the associated carnivals and competitions, from before WW1 to the outbreak of WW2, although there are references to events before and after that period to provide context.

The book is extremely well researched with copious notes and appendices for anyone wanting to follow up references etc. although many newspapers are now digitised, and many of the local papers that Richard had to use are not. Much of the information has come from what must have been many hours spent in the North West Film Archive and other local archives.

Richard has had access to much of the research done in the 1970s when teams such as Poynton Jemmers were starting. What Richard has shown is how many more teams there were in the 1920s and 1930s. It is a pity that more active research wasn't done in the 70s when participants would still

have been alive. That's not to denigrate the collectors - it's just that with hindsight, so much more could have been collected.

Many of you will have come across Johnny Haslett's books based on newspaper reports for West Lancashire up to 1929. Richard takes this forward ten years.

Trafford lies to the southeast of West Lancashire and he shows that different things appear to have been happening there. During the period that he covers, one style of Morris dancing is gradually turning into a competitive carnival style. It appears that this happened more so in Cheshire than in Lancashire, although many Lancashire teams were travelling to take part in the Cheshire competitions.

Richard shows that even within a small area like Trafford, the development of Morris dancing in two sub areas, Altrincham and Gorse Hill (Stretford), was quite different despite them being only 6 miles apart. The book also gives the context of Morris dancing during this period. Some of the teams from Altrincham had associated entertainment troupes. Despite being much older than the Altrincham troupes, the dancers from Gorse Hill did not start entering competitions until 1931 and never had an associated entertaining troupe. For many years I have said that there is no such thing as 'Northwest Morris', as the Pennine and Lancashire Plain forms are very different. This book shows that there were differences even within very small areas. Where possible, many of the dancers have been identified and their backgrounds given. Particularly interesting is the Gorse Hill troupe, where the families mainly moved into the area in the early 1900s; many were railwaymen and a 1907 newspaper article referred to them as being 'of the highly respectable class'. There are a number of photographs of the various troupes included, together with some of the entertaining troupes. Also included are the notations for some of the dances.

The book can be purchased from the Shuffleback Press website where there is also a blog with latest research news: <https://www.shuffleback.co.uk>

All in all, it is a fantastic resource that fills a gap in the history of Morris dancing and leads nicely into the work that Lucy Wright has produced on Carnival Morris.

Peter Bearon

The Rumworth Morris, Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers, Lymm Morris and Abram Morris Dancers

The Morris Dance Database www.morrisdancedatabase.org.uk

Colin Andrews, Administrator of The Morris Dance Database



Devizes Jubilee Morris (c) Dorset Morri'arty

The Morris Dance Database, sponsored by the Morris Federatin and Morris Ring, continues to provide a comprehensive reference facility for all aspects of Morris and related forms of dance world-wide, with over 4,000 dances and over 1400 teams listed.

Most recently added features include year of formation and demise of a side (where appropriate), and the facility to add archive information and participation in folk customs such as Mumming and Wassailing. Ideally, information about a club should be added or amended by a team editor for that club, but there are still many clubs who have not yet requested and registered for such team access. There is no cost involved! For those sides who have registered, it is important to log-in from time to time to ensure that club information and listed dance repertoire is up to date.

Notation of dances is not posted on the database but a link to where notation is available can be added. One issue that the database aims to address is the provenance of new dances. Many are already attributed to the side (or individual) who devised them but others are still 'unknown tradition'. If your side does perform 'new' dances either of your own, or 'borrowed' from elsewhere, please check on the website. Inevitably, some dances moving from one side to another will get adapted and sometimes even renamed.

Any information that can be provided would be most welcome. I am always willing to answer any queries and consider any suggestions for improving the Morris Dance Database.

bonnygreencolin@gmail.com

Brian's IT Top Tips

Brian Kelly, The Morris Federation

The Jack Worth Morris census of 2020 was damning - IT isn't of much use in finding new members; rather the focus should be on word of mouth! As the newly appointed Communications & IT volunteer for the Morris Federation, Brian regarded this as a challenge!

The IT Resources section of the Federation's website was launched at the Fed's AGM in September 2021. In addition to this, a series of advisory documents and a number of surveys providing evidence of the effectiveness of use of online services by Morris Federation sides was subsequently published.

In March 2022 a survey of "Google Coverage of Morris Federation Team Websites" found that only 40 websites had the home page indexed by Google, with 7 websites being completely invisible to Google (don't panic - we haven't published names!).

Around this time, the Morris Federation's Teamfinder service was developed so that sides could add descriptions to their profile (which previously held only summary information such as the name, address and contact details), and shortly afterwards sides could upload photographs and links to videos. To cut a long story short, the Morris Federation website is very Google-friendly (it has thousands of pages and incoming links from hundred of websites).

WHAT WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO DO:

Add a rich profile (more than just 'xxx Morris are a friendly mixed Morris side based in Ambridge and we welcome new members') and you should find that, once Google has indexed your new profile, your side could also be on the first page of results for "Looking for a mixed Morris side in Ambridge"

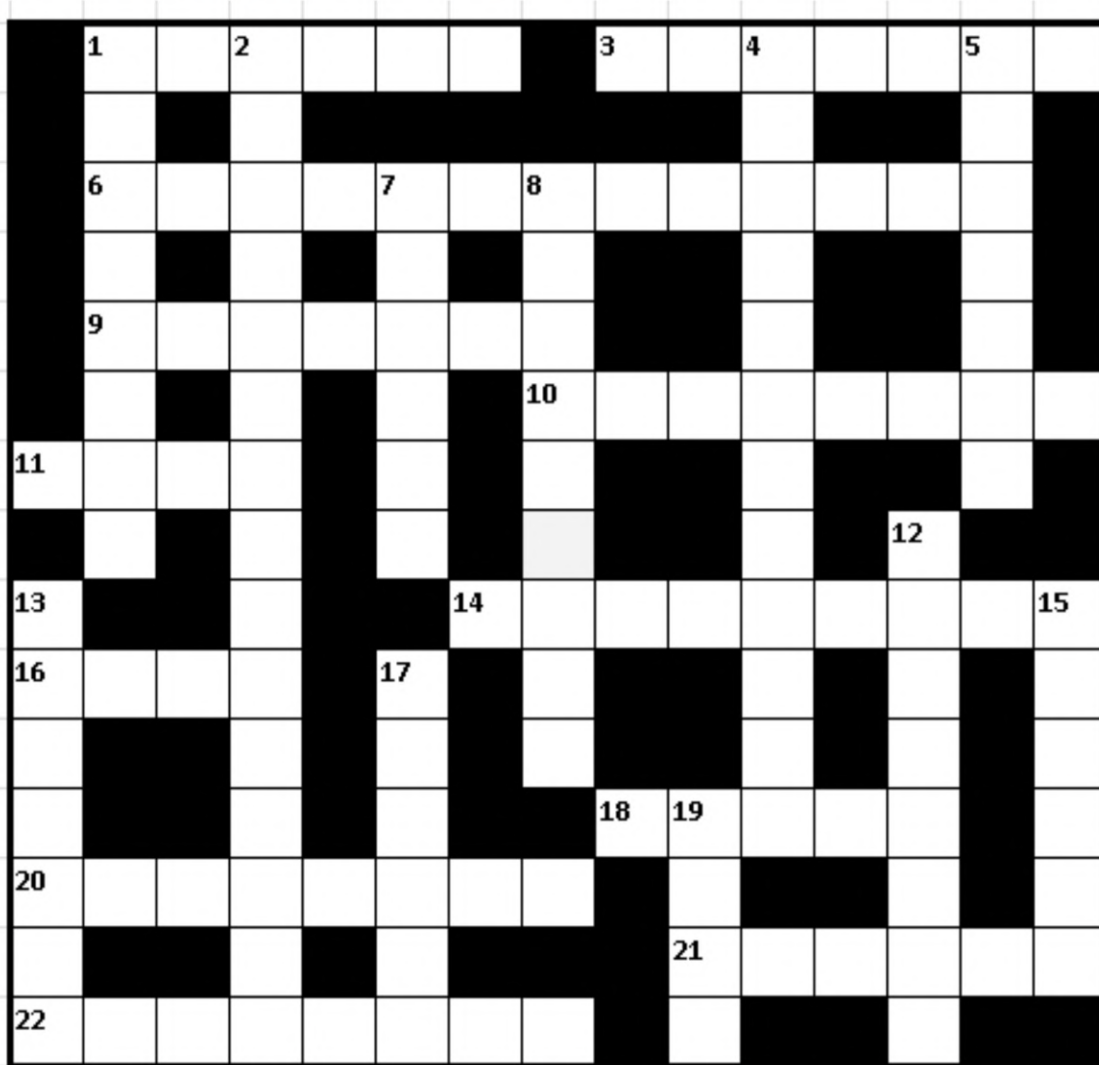
Don't forget to add a hashtag for your side in your profile. Google "#poachermorris", "#makeneymorris", or "#ebormorris" to see some examples of sides which are making effective use of digital technologies to support their marketing activities. [CLICK HERE](#) for further details!



*Outside Capering Crew's Molly Pipe - Multiplied!
(c) Dorset Morri'arty*

Dacre Crossword

Colin Merry, Dacre Morris



Clues across

- 1 Last figure before ordering drinks for all (6)
- 3 Around, up and down (7)
- 6 Dance before Sunday morning (8,5)
- 9 Ordered a dark tan on drinker's vessel? (7)
- 10 Feelings about a restored moon site (8)
- 11 Jump! It's a long year (4)
- 14 They make plenty of notes (9)
- 16 Beers for Morris tours (4)
- 18 Prank in the salad? (5)
- 20 Get reign correct to welcome (8)
- 21 Gluteus Maximus cleverly concealed (6)
- 22 Royal jig (8)

Clues down

- 1 Standard bush (4,4)
- 2 River dance? (5,4,6)
- 4 Temporary accommodation on the south coast (8,4)
- 5 Poor Kentish girl, she threw them all away (7)
- 7 I adore arranging someone to carry the sticks (6)
- 8 Tradition of covering a snake with earth (9)
- 12 Morris man wears Black Adder's side-kick (8)
- 13 Pig returned, fractionally, passing right shoulder (4,3)
- 15 Gesture of respect (6)
- 17 Key person when on tour (6)
- 19 Limbs in pub names (4)

So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish!

Jess Searle, Editor, with what I hope would be obvious credit to Douglas Adams.

Photo Credit – Dorset Morri'arty

Here endeth the Spring/Summer edition of the 2023 FedExtra.

I hope you've enjoyed it, with my warmest thanks once again to everyone that submitted articles, and a merry bundle of gratitude to those who helped out behind the scenes.

If you sent something through that hasn't appeared in this issue, then it will definitely be considered for the next edition.

If there's anything that you'd like to submit for consideration for the next issue, please email the Membership Communications Officer at:

member-comms@morrisfed.org.uk

300-500 words, with a couple of photos.

