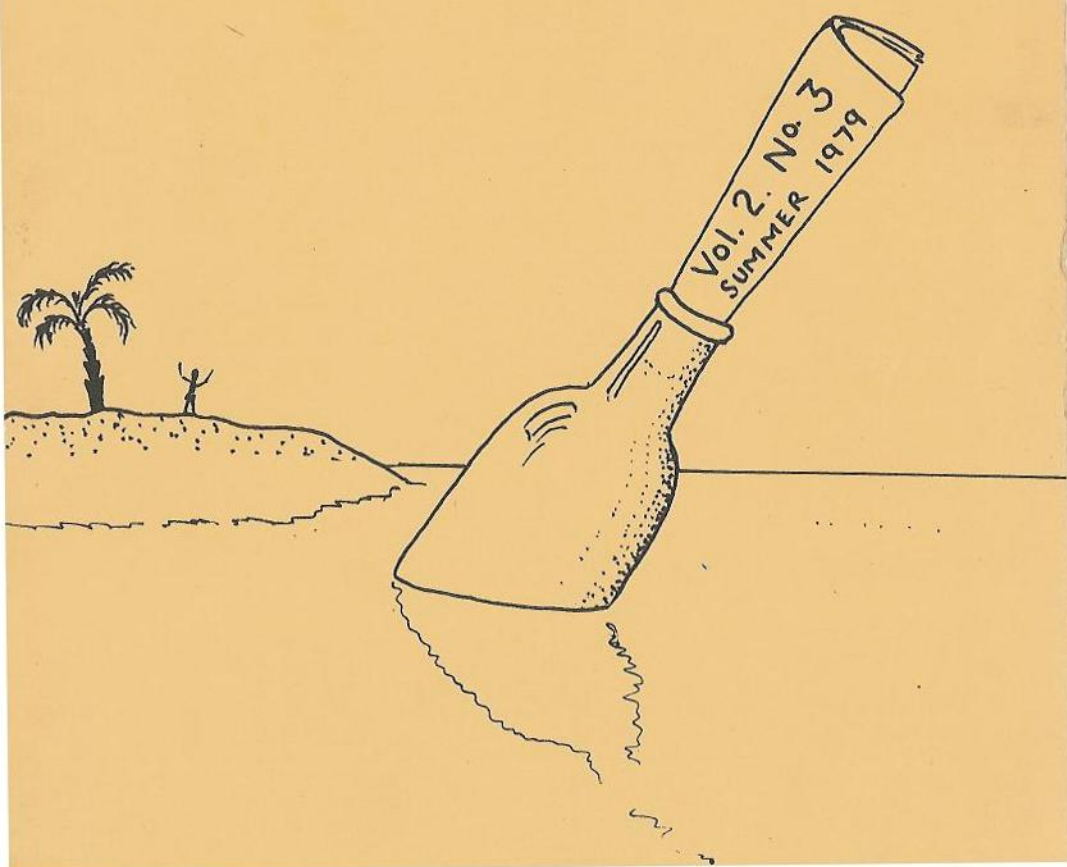


# MORRIS MATTERS



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# EDITORIAL

At the moment, the position of magazine editor (and staff) is determined at each A.G.M. of the Women's Morris Federation, and is therefore liable to change. Since the magazine's inception we have tried to broaden its scope to include all aspects of the morris, and we now have a greater number of subscriptions from outside WMF than from Federation members. Because of this, we think it would better reflect the actual situation of Morris Matters to become independent of WMF and for the Federation to take out a block subscription for all its members to be covered by their annual subscription. We have proposed a motion to this effect, to be discussed and voted on at the WMF AGM at the end of October.



From time to time Morris Matters is approached by other publications

for permission to reprint articles. Since chasing up individual contributors is time-consuming we would like to inform all contributors to the magazine that unless they specifically state otherwise, they will be assumed to have granted permission for all or part of their article to be reprinted elsewhere.



Readers are reminded that Morris Matters is available on subscription (£1 for 4 issues - cheques payable to Windsor Morris). Back copies of Vol. I No. 4 and Vol. II No. 2 are also available, price 25p per copy.



We are looking for a very cheap second hand electric typewriter! Can anyone help?

This issue of Morris Matters was written and compiled by Patty Cohen, Jill Coleman, Mouse Dismore, Jenny Joyce, Rebecca Matthews, Cath Oakley, Frankie Stringer and Alan Whear for Windsor Morris, 24, Alexandra Road, Windsor.

Roy Dommett

## on Competitions

Many dancers like the morris because it is currently not competitive and there are no examinations. Yet there is a concern for standards and the achievement of excellence. Anyone who has been on a joint tour knows the needling that can develop and most dancers respond to the stimulation of dancing against others. There was a place once for competitions. The objective of a competition is the encouragement of sides and individual dancers in the pursuit of excellence in the Cotswold morris style of dancing by the following of those standards known to have been observed by the older generations of Cotswold dancers. Experience with other competitions, stepping or sword, is that there must be no ambiguity in the rules and no area of interpretation unclear to competitors. There must be no change in the rules once the competition has been announced.

### JUDGES

The judges need to have been dancers. There needs to be 2 or more. They must appear to be independent both of the organisers and

of each other and their names need to be announced at the first notice of the competition. They should score independently. Because of the importance of rhythm one judge should concentrate on listening to the bells.

Competitors should have the right to ask for spoken or written comment on their performance and to be able to ask for a written explanation of judging policy if it is unclear, but the judges' policy is not to be challenged. There should be a channel of appeal but only on the interpretation of the rules. In general the judges' decisions are final on what happens during a dance. Frivolous or disruptive objections should lead to suspension.

### CLASSES

There are 4 classes of dance that need to be encouraged.

1. Set Dances in traditional form to nominated tunes.
2. Solo jigs to recognised Cotswold Morris tunes.
3. Baccapipes.
4. Original dances of own devising.

The relationship of dancers to music is very important and all entries must be encouraged to provide their own musician. If they have to use one provided by the organisers they must be given facilities to practise.

The question of "traditions" is difficult. For many such the exact form is unknowable and individual interpretations should not be penalised. Even the well known "traditions" with recognised characteristics are subject to several authoritative versions differing in the detail that could become issues in a competition. It is believed that the consistency and quality of movement of a true tradition will bring its own reward artistically and technically. Organisers could consider allowing competitors to hazard some marks against the judges' understanding of a nominated tradition.

making an error. The judges' ruling is final and the judge does not necessarily give the dancers the benefit of the doubt. A side that tries to avoid this by declaring no rules will lose heavily on artistic grounds!

3. Traditionally, feint steps were frowned upon - they could be detected by listening to the bells and technical merit should be recognised by skill in avoiding them.

4. Entry and exit is part of the dance and its presentation and should be judged as part of the performance.

5. Mistakes should carry a fixed penalty, say 5 points (out of 100 at risk), and the judges should list them for the benefit of the performers.

## JIGS

### SOME RULES FOR SET DANCES

1. Traditionally the tunes were nominated and also whether they were to be handkerchief or stick dances. Of course particular variants of tunes cannot be demanded. As an objective is preservation it may be adequate to ask for a variant of any tune in a recognised authoritative book such as the "Handbook of Morris Dancing".

2. The performers must declare beforehand the rules they are adopting for starting foot and direction of turns. For example leftfoot start or first half left and second half right are common forms. If the declared rules are complex the side must accept the risk of the judge

1. In any class the points that can be awarded should be divided according to some declared plan.

a. Dance technique - say 50 - to cover the quality of stepping, arm movements, posture, height.

b. Artistic impression - 30 - to cover the linking of movements, pace, excitement, internal self consistency (authenticity).

c. Technical difficulty - 20 - inclusion of shuffles, capers, slow passages, galleys. It is believed that the dancer attempting more complex movements has the greater chance of mistake and poorer quality of movement and should have the chance of scoring higher.

2. A solo dancer should score a bonus if they can dance each movement leading off with either foot

as this was considered a prized skill in the Cotswolds.

#### BACCAPIPES

1. The floor on which the dance is performed is to be covered with sand or flour before each competitor tries his dance to allow the judge a measure of where the foot grounds.

2. The pipes may be of any material but at least of a certain length and diameter. The specification would have to be like:- at least 13 inches long, at least  $\frac{1}{8}$ th inch diam. and bowed at least 1 inch. The pipes are to be supplied by the competitor.

3. The pipes are to be placed over a reference point, marked on the floor, by the dancer to the satisfaction of the judges to an accuracy of about  $\frac{1}{8}$ th inch.

4. A dancer retires if in the opinion of the judge the baccapipes have been touched during the dance.

5. The judge checks at the end of the dance whether the baccapipes have been moved relative to the reference point.

6. The dancers are expected to use during parts of the dance a true "heel and toe" step and to step over the baccapipes using both toe and heel taps at different times.

7. The winner is that one judged to have touched closest into a vertex of the crossed baccapipes without touching the baccapipes as measured by the closest smudge of the floor dusting to the reference point.

The above include all the known features of the old competitions. They should allow equal opportunity for simple dances done well and for "traditional" sides.

---

### The Black Joke .....



..... 4 turn c.c.l. Position.

s.b. s.h.f. out s.b. s.h.f.

l.b. f.t. Jo. l.b. n.b. f.t. Ju.

x.h. b.s.

## WMF

## Notation Group ----- Barbara Butler

The second Notation Meeting was held at the end of June. Due to an unfortunate mix up over dates only four members were able to attend- Tubby Reynolds, Roy Dommett, Paddy Davies and Barbara Butler. Both Val Parker and Helen Parsons sent letters with their comments on items to be reviewed from the previous meeting.

After a Friday night social with local Morris Men and Women work was commenced with the redraft of the Cotswold Glossary. The break of six months since the previous meeting helped to bring fresh ideas and clearer turns of phrase into the subject. This time the prose was aided by clear stickfigure diagrams produced by Phil Butler. The redraft of the glossary took most of the Saturday to complete with the rest of the time being taken up by the third and final draft of the first set of workshop notes (which at the time of writing only require typing neatly and the addition of music & diagrams.)

The rest of the weekend was taken up by some additions to the North West dances (now 52 in total) and working on the Border Morris. A list of Border Morris dances was drawn up and the notation sources were examined. Amongst our notation collection one unknown dance was found, similar to Brimfield, and enquiries were set in hand to discover its origin as a separate dance or as a

variant of the aforementioned dance.

The North West Glossary was also discussed and a different approach was agreed upon. A list was drawn up of all the different terms needing definition and a copy of this was sent to every member of the group for each to design layouts and definitions. A master draft taking in the group's ideas will be prepared at Notation Group 3. Roy Dommett said he would bring a draft of a Moberley and Glosop Workshop to the next meeting and Barbara Butler agreed to make the first draft of a Brackley Workshop.

The weekend ended watching some of Roy's excellent films and discussing the Wishford Faggot Dance.

Notation Group 3 will be held on the weekend of December 7th - 9th.

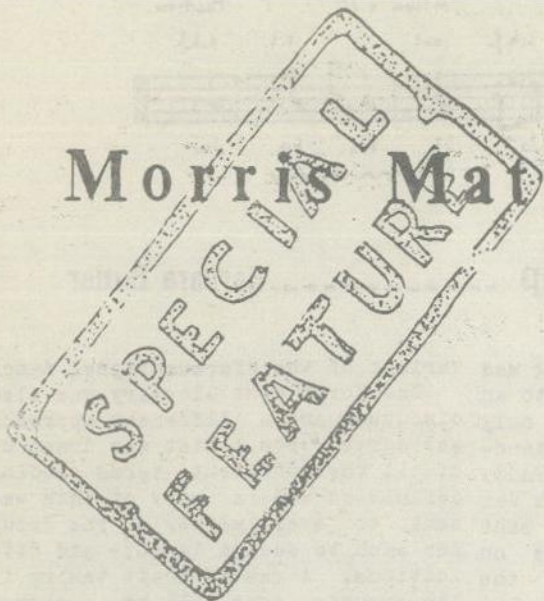
### Provisional Agenda:-

- 1) Final review of Cotswold Glossary
- 2) Preparation of NW Glossary
- 3) Review of Moberley and Glosop workshop
- 4) Review of Brackley Workshop
- 5) Listing & recording sources of Garland and Broom Dances.

Should you wish to join the Notation Group please contact:-

Barbara Butler,  
3, Stockwood Vale,  
Keynsham,  
Avon.

# Morris Matters



talks to

## Tim Radford

One of the most fascinating aspects of the morris revival must be the re-establishment of sides in the villages from which the morris was originally collected. Of these, the longest established is Adderbury, and for a look at the ideas behind it we interviewed Tim Radford, Squire of the side since it began. We met together, out of season, in the Oak Room of The Bell, a Hook Norton pub in the middle of Adderbury village.

MM On the way up we were thinking that it never would have occurred to us to go into one of the original villages and start a side. What gave you the impetus to do that?

TR Well, it started originally when I moved up into Oxfordshire. I was very excited when I came through Adderbury for the first time - I thought, 'This is a fantastic place!'

MM So you aren't from Adderbury yourself?

TR No. I started my morris in South Hampshire - many years ago. I suppose I learned most of my stuff from Roy Dommett. I was always very interested in the morris and I helped start a side down in Christchurch. I learned a lot there and did some teaching, then I moved to Oxfordshire and danced for Oxford City. When I moved up to Banbury (25 miles away) travelling to practices was pretty bad

and so I decided to do something locally. There was a folk club in Banbury and I met Chris Leslie and a couple of other people there and heard that they were interested in trying to start a morris side. So I said I'd be willing to teach them and we started an informal morris instructional evening at the Tech. Then Brian Shepherd approached us. He'd been dancing with Moulton but was moving back to Adderbury and he wanted to restart the Adderbury Morris. So we moved the morris to Adderbury and started practising in the village itself - that was in June '74. We called ourselves the Adderbury Morris and that was how it started. The music was no great problem - we had people who could play but none of them could read music, so my wife Annie, who can, taught them all the tunes. It was quite easy once we started.

MM So you started out as Adderbury Morris with just the same information on the tradition as everybody else had?

TR Yes and no. We decided that we would dance nothing else but Adderbury and then we thought, let's get as much information on it as we possibly can. Brian had already got some information from the original Sharp manuscript, which is a bit different from what he published though not very much. Then Brian told us that Janet Blunt had collected a lot of Adderbury dances and so Annie and Brian and his wife went up to Cecil Sharp House and copied all her manuscripts - all four sets of them. So we sat down with all this stuff to decide how we wanted to do the dances.

Blunt had collected from Walton, the last squire of the side, who was in his 70's - 80's at that time (1906-1914). She introduced him to Sharp and Walton actually went up to London one weekend and Sharp collected from him there with Maud Karpeles. Walton died only two weeks after meeting Sharp so it was just in time!

Blunt collected in a different way from Sharp. If she saw that they danced towards the musician, she would put down that, whereas Sharp was collecting to a pattern - he'd call it a foot up, that kind of thing. He had an idea of the structure of the dance, the way things fitted in, whereas she didn't. She just wrote down what she saw. It makes her manuscripts more difficult to interpret. Sharp also collected more of the details - of kit for example.

The last time the Adderbury side danced was about 1880 - noone knows for certain.

MEM

So there you are sitting with all the sources in front of you - what do you do with the information? Do you dance Adderbury 'to the letter' of the available information - or have you taken a hand in interpreting and developing the tradition?

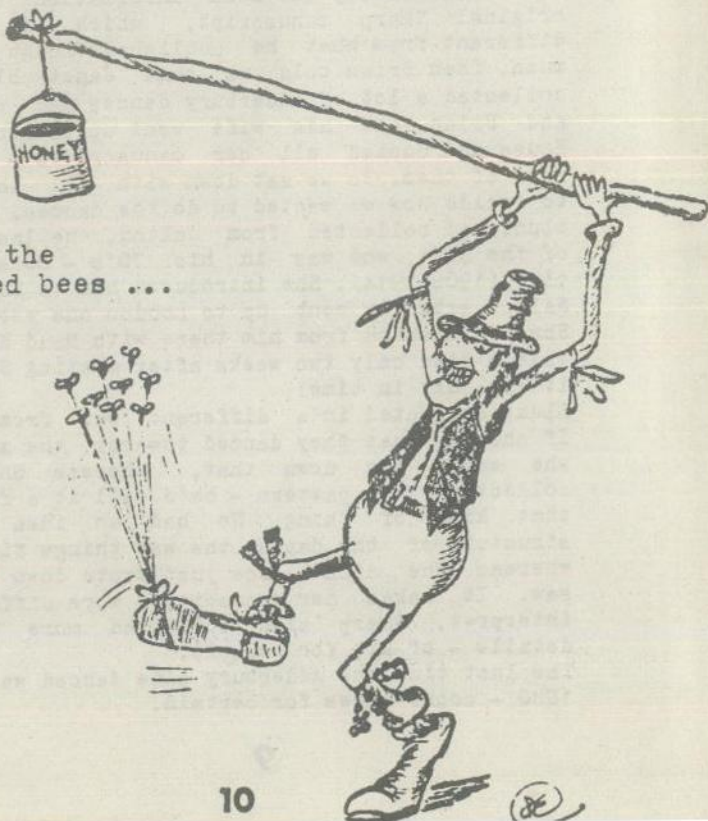
TR

Really we had, if you like, a combination of three sources - Sharp, Blunt and our own individual experience of dancing Adderbury with other sides. We used a bit of each and came up with the common ground to all of them.

The fundamental decision we made was to dance as slowly as possible. I think that most morris sides of today that look ridiculous - it's simply that they dance much, much too quickly. It's obvious that if you dance slowly you have to spend more time up in the air, which is what I think it's all about.

We also tried to give the tradition as much shape as possible. Adderbury hasn't got slow capers or uprights etc., but it has a great range of figures not found elsewhere - processions up and down, hands round, etc. The steps are varied too - double steps, single steps; we've even got a dance

How to raise  
the foot with the  
aid of trained bees ...



that goes one two hop, one two hop! We made certain rules, for example that we'd always start on the right foot. And we'd always stick to the same sequence of figures wherever possible, so that we'd dance to a pattern. If you learn the basic pattern in morris I think it's easy to learn the dances as the only thing that changes is the chorus.

We tried to take out the complex things - I always consider that the people who danced morris wouldn't have done really complex things. We didn't try to change the character of the tradition, but tried to do it as we thought the earlier dancers would have done it.

MM That brings us to the question of making morris look convincing, for want of a better word. It does seem, when you look at Adderbury, that you've made this effort to stand back and look at it as a whole tradition. And this pays off - it feels right and it looks right. You seem to have given it this cohesion and authenticity.

TR I think that was an effort we made right from the start. We realised that people would probably be extremely critical of what they were going to see, just because of what we were. We were probably the first side to try and revive a tradition and so we said well, we've got to do it right or people just won't take it seriously. And if there's one thing we wanted it was for people to take us seriously. Another reason for wanting to do it was that noone else was doing other than the six main Adderbury dances. And there are some damn good dances in the tradition that just aren't done by most sides. And not many sides concentrate on Adderbury because it's thought to be mainly a teaching tradition.

MM There seems to be this idea that if you concentrate on just one thing then people will get bored and drift away.

TR Well, we feel we have a good balance of dances. There's such a variety of dances within the one tradition, you know. We have 26 dances, including 3 jigs, and there are a lot of differences between them. And we've filled in some gaps by making up our own dances since the revival. For example we didn't have an 8-man stick dance, so we wrote one. And we wrote a corner handkerchief dance too, because we didn't have one. So the question of getting bored doesn't arise really. We

can do a programme of dances that are all Adderbury dances, but all different for the people who are watching, and the men who are dancing.

MM Would you like to tell us something about how you run the side? What about teaching?

TR You know, I consider the double step as the most important thing in the morris, and I think if people can do it properly then they can dance morris - anyone with a mild intelligence can learn the figures. The double step is all a matter of coordination and life - that life is an integral part of the morris and the only way you can put it in is with the step.

We spend a lot more time on stepping than on figures - I don't think people put enough emphasis on teaching stepping. You've got to keep on and on teaching it throughout all your practices - not only in the first year. I'm still trying to remind the original men - you know they fall into bad habits. (One of the most difficult things about any morris side is to keep up the standard of the older dancers who think they know it all!)

We tried something that worked for a while - self criticism. I've always believed that if you're going to teach something, you've got to have a really strong personality. We tempered that a bit by having a period of getting other people besides me to criticise. We got people up dancing on their own and got everyone else in the room to criticise them. It's not only up to me as foreman to say I don't think you're doing it right, it's up to other people too.

I've probably done a lot of comparing practices with different sides - you know some people just seem to run through the dances and that's all. What we tend to do is to take a dance and break it into pieces, then take each bit and put it together, because it's no good being able to do the chorus and do the figures and not fit the two together.

The other fundamental thing is that you've got to make people think of the dance while they're dancing.

MM Concentration?

TR Yes. We try to instil into our blokes that they must think about and concentrate on the dances while they're dancing. Of course some don't do it, and on occasions nobody does! But you've got to know what you're doing, it's got to become second nature.

In common with a lot of sides run by people with strong personalities and definite ideas of what should be done, Adderbury suffered a split in its early days. (The other side - Adderbury Village Morris - no longer functions.) We asked about the reasons for the disagreement.

TR Well one thing was that some people wanted to stipulate that only people who lived in Adderbury could be in the side. (Very few of our side live in the village - simply because we can't afford the house prices!) I don't think it's possible to restrict a side like that and I don't think it's traditional, particularly.

But the biggest problem was over female musicians. We had one - my wife - who'd taught the musicians all the tunes. But the question was raised at the AGM, should we have women musicians. The majority didn't object to women playing the music and the ones that did were the people that left. So really, there was this difference between persons in the side.

MM So how do you see the future of the side?

TR Well, we carry on, hopefully.

MM That's a tall order in itself, to keep going and keep the standards up.

TR Yes. At this year's AGM we decided we'd probably be less outward-going than we'd been in the past. When we first started it was important that we showed Adderbury as much as possible and so we did a lot of festivals and things. It was good experience. But this year I think we'll look in to the village a bit more; to try and involve people more. I want to see more people in the village taking part not only in the dancing but in everything about it. I think we are accepted in Adderbury now - people will come out and watch us. (We only dance here a couple of days a year - Boxing Day or New Year's Day and on our Day of Dancing. I think you can do too much.) You know when we met that American dancer from Boston, she was just amazed - she thought it was incredible that we came from Adderbury. Most people in this country who've heard of Adderbury have heard about it through the morris, and I think that people ought to take something that is their own a bit more to their heart than they do at the moment.

THE ASTONISHING ADVENTURES OF...

# DUTCH ELM *Morris*

PETER LORD '79

THE TORN LIGAMENT...



HAUNT OF AFICIONADOES OF THE MORRIS. RON VOALE, SQUIRE OF DUTCH ELM IS TALKING TO BILL CONSTANT, DOYEN OF THE MORRIS WORLD

EVER HEAR OF THE BEDBURY MEN, RON?

THE MOST DYNAMIC DANCERS EVER? I HEARD NO ONE COULD EVER GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO COLLECT THEIR DANCES.

FILL YOU UP?

THAT'S RIGHT. EVERYONE THOUGHT THE LAST SIDE WAS WIPED OUT IN THE GREAT WAR - BUT I'VE HEARD DIFFERENT.

RUMOUR HAS IT, THEY NEVER WENT TO WAR. THEY STAYED BEHIND IN THE SNUG BAR OF THE LAME BADGER AND THEY'VE BEEN THERE SINCE 1914!!

CRIPES! HAVE THE OTHER HALF?

SHORTLY, AT THE BOG LANE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HALL, H.Q. OF DUTCH ELM M.M.



LOAD UP THE CAR, BOYS, WE'RE GOING TO BEDBURY!



WE'LL COLLECT THEIR DANCES AND GET IN THE HISTORY BOOKS!

MAYBE EVEN FOLK NEWS!





# MUSIC WORKSHOP

Alan Whear

Len Atrill has written in response to the last music workshop with a variety of points he feels are important.

Like David Anderson, I am pleased to see some attention is being given to morris music, and am also interested in the idea of a workshop on the subject. It's certainly true that most of the Morris music heard today could do with a bit of "fire and character" (to quote Russell Wortley, writing in the best article on Morris Music I've read; published in Folk Review, February 1975.)

In your Editorial, the point is made that it's a good thing to get along and see other sides, to learn from their mistakes as well as their attributes. The point is, of course, also valid with regard to the musician; the way in which the music is played, and the way in which the dancers respond to the music.

However this point, and the whole concept of a 'morris music workshop' raises, I think, the key to the matter: can the music be looked at in isolation from the dance? The answer must be no - the two in my mind are inseparable, and pleasant as some of the tunes are to listen to, they're not 'morris music' without the dance, any more than dancers jiggling about without the music are 'morris dancers'. The musician - likewise the fool - is anything but an extra character (to use Sharp's terminology); the musician and the dancers (and the fool, if the team has one) form part of a whole unit that functions

together in a synergistic fashion - the whole being greater than the sum of its individual parts. I won't go on further about this idea of the musician being part of the team - the point is made very well indeed in the article I've just mentioned.

With regard to 'having a clear idea of what you are trying to achieve' it should be obvious (although to see many revival morris teams it clearly isn't obvious) that the musician should have the same 'clear idea' as the team he or she plays for. The music is there for the dancing, nothing more, and the dancers should dance with (not to) the music - the two complement each other perfectly. If you, as a musician, have ideas of playing say the fiddle in the Jinky Wells or Reg Hall styles (admirable styles, I must say), it is a point-less idea if the team want to dance in, say, the Gloucestershire Old Spot style. (I haven't chosen these examples for any particular reason, but hope that the point is made.)

To get back to the point about seeing other sides, I feel it's particularly valuable to go along and watch the traditional sides; here the concept of the side functioning as a whole unit comes over exceptionally well - Francis Shergold's Bampton side, to my mind, providing the superb example. It's worth noting that the musicians' styles in one team vary quite considerably, and in the 'technical' respects, almost totally; compare the ways in which Rod Stradling and Reg Hall handle the melodeon, in particular the bellows action. Despite what I've said earlier about the music of the morris 'on

its own' it's also very instructive to listen to recordings of the older traditional morris musicians, e.g. Jinky Wells and William Kimber. In many respects the way in which musicians of this type played either solo (i.e. without the team dancing to the morris music) or for social dancing was almost identical to the style used when playing for the morris; this isn't, of course, true of many modern musicians, who may play in a wide variety of styles, sometimes successfully. Speaking personally, having played for the morris and in a dance band for some years I do have difficulties occasionally, especially regarding the pace, and particularly after a few pints!

Getting back to the traditional teams, it's worth noting the way in which their musicians dress, the way they stand when playing, and the numbers they use. The costume worn is generally in keeping with that worn by the dancers, but the musicians do keep a separate identity, above all they don't look like dancers 'temporarily removed from the set' (to quote Wortley again). Here the Abingdon, Bampton, and Headington Quarry teams provide shining examples - fortunately, this is a trend which seems to be growing within the morris revival. Of course, there are many photographic examples of traditional musicians wearing their every-clothes, and to my mind this practice is still of some value.

The musician, in the traditional sides, stands still at the top of the set; not, of course, always the case with many revival teams - which often causes the set to shift its position! In general, only one musician is used at a time; now, there are instances when more than one musician can add to the display although how much depends on the instruments used, and how used the musicians are in playing together. In general, however, the result is

horrendous. The sound is a good deal less 'tight' with the inevitable result upon the whole spectacle. The sound of massed morris music (particularly that of a barrage of melodeons or piano-accordions) makes me shudder; indeed I have the same feelings with regard to massed morris displays. Unfortunately, the idea of 'morris bands' seems to be a bit of a growth industry.

It has often been said that sides should concentrate on a single, or a few, tradition(s). It is as difficult to play in a number of different styles (and the music of the various traditions is certainly varied in style) as it is to dance in that way. Unfortunately, even where a side will dance in, say, two different styles, the musician will play in the same way for each. It's difficult, I know, as I mentioned earlier, but it's something to be concentrated on.

Well, a number of varying points to add a bit of spice to the column. In general the comments I've made relate only to the Jotswold Morris, as should be apparent to the reader.

Just one final point on learning the tunes by heart: yes, of course it's necessary to do so - but should one stick to the 'correct' (usually meaning the published) version of the tune? In many cases a number of variants were collected. In my view, the collected version forms a necessary and invaluable basis, but given the extent to which the dances may be adapted, why shouldn't the tunes be adapted as well, and why shouldn't new tunes be introduced? Any thoughts?

Thanks very much for the letter, Len. The only thing I'd like to add concerns the question of learning tunes by heart. The reason I advocate this is that you don't need to return to the printed music once you have learned the tune. Then

there is always the possibility of the tunes' being adapted in the 'traditional' process.



In the last Morris Matters I dealt mainly with the area of getting on the same 'wavelength' as the dancers and how you find out in what way your side phrases their dancing.

Tony Barrand, Squire of the Marlboro Morris Men in Vermont, U.S.A. passed on this illuminating quotation during his recent visit to England: 'the music should make the dancing audible, and the dancing should make the music visible'. Somehow the musician has to translate the changing pattern of acceleration and deceleration, forcefulness and relaxation into similarly changing emphases in the tune.

In this issue I want to start looking at the ways to create emphasis, once you have decided where it ought to be.

Different instruments have different mechanisms for producing emphasis but they all have one important thing in common. The energy that produces the sound is contained in a reservoir, where you can always get at it.

For example:

Melodion, concertina and accordion - have the unused volume of air in the bellows

Fiddle - has the unused length of bow

and

Whistle - has the air in your lungs.

Why this is important is that it is helpful to be able to control the note even after you have started to play it.

What you actually do to bring out the 'danciness' of a tune may be divided into the following broad headings:

- 1) Articulation
- 2) Harmony
- 3) Decorations of the melody
- 4) Volume

Of course these are not rigidly separated, and I am aware that in my own playing I use a combination of all of them. However, I think it may be useful to examine how each plays its part in the total effect, so let's look at each in turn, using Constant Billy as an example. (This is a good tune for practice since it's so common. It covers all types of phrasing from single stepping through all combinations of double steps, backsteps, galleys etc., although the melody itself is not especially variable.)

1) Articulation

It simply means leaving a clear-cut piece of silence between each note. It might sound strange but you do actually sound more powerful by playing less!

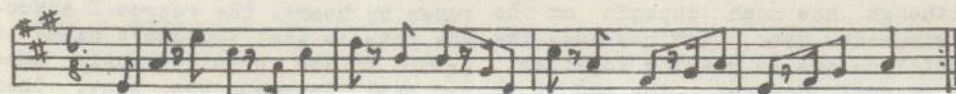
For example, in the Wheatley tradition, the tune is usually written down as in fig.1, but actually what you play will be much nearer fig 1a

Each time the dancers thrust themselves into the air on one of those single-steps, you cut the note short. What is happening is that you are saying musically - "Right, I've finished that note - you

Fig 1:



Fig 1a):



should be in the air by now!" - and so they should. (Conversely, if you play without any gaps, you'll encourage the dancers to dance without leaving the ground!)

## 2) Harmony

By which I mean playing more than one note at a time! (If you're a whistle player you can skip this bit.) The instrument's capacity to introduce harmony alongside a morris tune varies from the single extra note on the fiddle right through to the veritable orchestration available to the accordion player. Once again the important thing to ask yourself is what are you aiming at? Really, the only reason for doing anything at all to a morris tune is to make it more 'dancey' and this applies especially to harmony. I know accordion players get a lot of stick for their left hand technique but the fact is that when they produce those complex melismatic bass lines with lots of notes and chords, the effect is to 'knit' the phrase together so that it sounds pretty but becomes almost featureless from the dancers' point of view.

Some people find the type of harmony distasteful in itself, but I think the real problem lies in this 'knitting together'. You may hear inexperienced melodeon players creating the same effect by setting up a continual oom-pah, oom-pah rhythm with their left hands, irres-

pective of the changing emphasis in the dance.

Personally, I favour an accompaniment that uses additional notes to punctuate the tune, rather than as harmony as such. I remember being struck by this the first time I heard the playing of William Kimber.

Kimber used quite a wide variety of chords, runs and isolated notes to accompany his morris tunes, but the effect was always to 'reinforce' the rhythms rather than merely 'fill out' the sound. The nice thing is that this is something that you can listen to, learn from and incorporate into your own playing whatever instrument you use. For example, on reed instruments, it doesn't work too well to play as Fig. 2 :-

Something like Fig.3 is better :-

Decorations and the control of the volume of sound will be the subject of the next music workshop.

During the summer I have been mentioning the idea of a musicians' weekend to various people, and since there seems to be some enthusiasm for the idea I am proposing a meeting at Windsor during the winter. Anyone interested should write to 24 Alexandra Road, Windsor, or phone me on W. 53724. It is intended for musicians of all levels of expertise - so don't be put off if you've only just started.

Fig 2 :



FIG 3 (ALTERNATE BASS) :



# Exercising for the Morris

by Ruth Fraser

Warm up exercises before morris practice - you must be joking!

If Morris to you means a slightly more complex form of social dance, done for public display, which gives you an opportunity for some pleasant social outings and to meet some nice people then you're dead right, I am joking. Who needs exercise to prepare for that, the dance is itself sufficient exercise.

If, like us, you have discovered that Cecil Sharp was telling nothing but the truth when he said, "Morris is not an easy dance", you have one very good reason for exercise already. Should you also like the feeling you get from trying to do something to the best of your ability then you have a second, even better, reason.

A lot of thinking went on in Belas Knap before we developed the routine we use at the moment. The first step was realising that no other group we could think of involved seriously in physical activity, from boxing to ballet, did not have some form of exercise programme, and they had very good reason for doing them; principally, they work!

We next decided what results we wanted our exercise programme to produce and devised the following list:-

(1) To increase circulation.

(2) To improve muscle tone and mobility.

(3) To develop those groups of muscles particularly involved in the dance, i.e. the shoulders, legs and feet.

(4) By improving muscle tone and mobility to lessen or prevent injury, particularly to knees and ankles.

(5) At the end of it all to produce better and more enjoyable dancing.

Having got our list we then approached a physiotherapist, a gymnast and a chiroprapist interested in preventive work with feet and gave them each our list and asked them to think of exercises which would help us achieve our purpose. They all were interested and helpful and came back with many suggestions and good advice.

Out of all this came these exercises which we have been doing for over a year.

(1) Six deep breaths, breathing in slowly to maximum lung capacity and out slowly. (No more than six or too much oxygen is absorbed and makes you dizzy.)

(2) Swinging the arms in all directions of which they are capable i.e. forward and back and

circular movements.

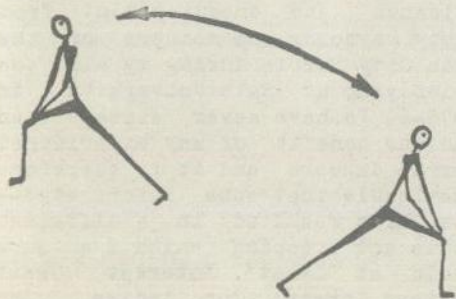
(3) Gentle running on the spot.

(4) Stand sideways to the back of a chair, rise onto the toes sink into a squat and then rise up onto the toes and return to start. Repeat this three times facing one way then on the 3rd rise turn and face the other way and repeat. Do the whole exercise 4 times.

(5) Working in pairs (A) stands sideways to the back of a chair and, keeping the trunk upright, raises her outside leg to the side. (B) grasps her ankle and continues to raise it until (A) cries quits. Shake leg and repeat with other leg. Change places and repeat. Change places again and repeat from beginning; it is surprising how much further the legs will go the second time around.

(6) Stand with the feet at a slight angle and rise onto the toes, with the weight over the big toe joint. It is surprising how strenuous this is if done correctly and how good for the calf muscles. One member of our side could not get her winter boots to fit round her calves after 6 months of this, beware! Do this not less than 30 times and not more than 50 times.

(7) Squat leg changing (see diagram). It is important in this exercise to keep the straight leg straight for as long as possible.



NOTE It is important at the completion of each exercise that the part in use should be shaken to prevent cramp.

The seven exercises should take not more than 20 minutes at the beginning of practice and it is, as we have found from experience, time well spent.

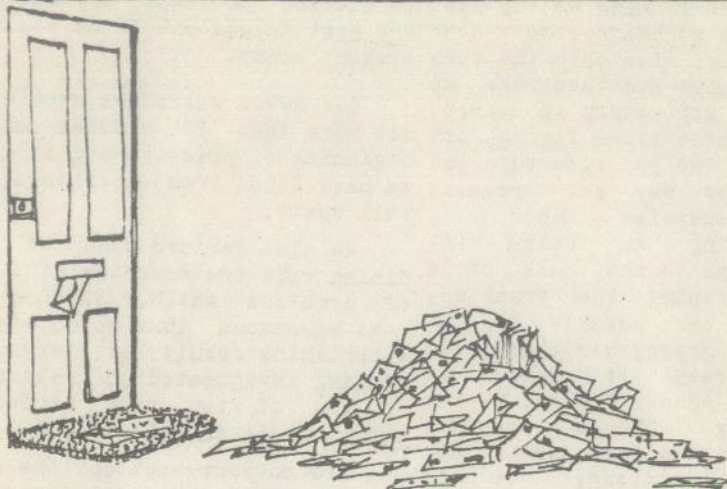
We also decided that we would finish with one exercise at the end of practice which, although the most strenuous that we do, has the astonishing result of leaving us feeling invigorated and relaxed at the end of two very hardworking hours. It is as follows:-

Lie on your back on the floor. Rise up into a shoulder stand. In that position bend the knees and lower them to each side of the head. Go back into the shoulder stand then lower until the legs are nearly on the floor then raise the legs alternately 3 times. Go back into the shoulder stand and lower very slowly to the floor. Promptly roll over onto the side and completely relax for two minutes.

We don't suggest for five seconds that our routine is the only one that achieves what we set out to do. What we do feel is that the principles behind our routine are valid for any group and any routine which achieves those aims will both benefit the individual dancers and inevitably improve the dancing of the side as a whole.

We would like to thank Roy Domett for giving us the impetus to take the bull by the horns; Margaret Allard, physiotherapist, Jane Bolton, gymnast and Graem Taylor chiroprapist for their interest and helpful contributions.

# MAILBAG....



## Letter from Australasia I

Dear Editor,

What a gross misrepresentation of the facts were the comments by Jim Haddon on the Morris Scene Down Under in your Vol.2 No.2 edition of Morris Matters!

Perhaps I could be allowed to comment.

Firstly, there was no question of the Erewhon Morris of Christchurch New Zealand wanting to "invent" a breakaway tradition. It just happened due to the shortage of people in the formative years, a reflection of a young country with little traditional colour. It was a question of compromise or perish.

Since that date in October 1976 the Erewhon side has grown in numbers to such an extent that both male and female sides could now be established if the will to do so existed. It doesn't as yet but may do, one day.

It was particularly pleasing to read John Lewis also in your mail bag in the same issue to see that

the Morris scene in Britain does have some tolerance for sides with differing circumstances, and my regard for Great Western Morris has been heightened since seeing them perform at the Sidmouth Festival recently (so much so that I am taking back their recent publication for study!).

Jim Haddon's comments that our dancing will cause a proliferation of teams of low standard is also uncalled for and without foundation. Our traditions of Ducklington, Bledington and Bampton have been carefully researched with the aid of literature available and initial guidance and encouragement from Tubby Reynolds and members of the Bath City Morris during my all too brief year at Bath University in 1975-6. We have never since then had the benefit of any experienced Morris dancers and it is therefore inevitable that some interpretations have resulted in a different style and stepping (which I am sure would at least interest Great Western Morris). Our ladies I am pleased to say would do credit

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in some cases to the Windsor ladies and I am equally confident that the Windsor ladies would do credit to any Men's side with regard to excellence of dance technique.

The Erewhon Morris was quickly joined by sides in Auckland and Wellington with prospective sides likely shortly in two other centres - all at present mixed sides. As a result Morris dancing has become a living entity in a country devoid of such culture and is becoming an accepted and colourful addition to the New Zealand scene. Compare this with Broken Hill in Australia where I believe Jim has been able to establish only a Morris Jig side, solo ones at that.

Further comments I should like to make:-

1) Mixed Morris teams in Australasia are the majority not the minority as indicated by Jim. Only four (all-male) teams are currently allowed in the newly constituted Morris Ring out of probably twelve or more in Australia plus the three in New Zealand.

2) Erewhon did not try to force the Australasian Ring to accept mixed sides. What it did try to do was to gain a vote for all teams interested in morris dancing in order that a true vote could be held in Melbourne to ascertain whether the Australasian Morris Ring should represent all Morris sides or just male sides. We lost because proxy votes were not allowed as nobody could get across to Melbourne from New Zealand and our views were not even made known despite the strength of our numbers. (We have never yet been allowed to publish our views in the DEPSA Australian Folk Newsletter.)

We are not down-hearted; it is over

2000km to our fellow-dancers in Australia and our nearest side in New Zealand is 400km distant and Auckland 1000km. All teams are therefore isolated by distance and unable to come together except for perhaps once a year. Inevitably therefore our traditions will develop in isolation and I hope will be accepted for what they are, a reflection of our circumstances.

All Morris Dancers whether male or female are therefore assured of a warm welcome at any of the three centres of Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch. So bring your bells and join us as we spread Morris Magic throughout the land.

Bob Crowder, Squire Erewhon Morris  
Box 61, Lincoln College,  
Canterbury, NEW ZEALAND.

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### Letter from Australasia 2

Dear Editor,

I am writing to ask if WMP is prepared to send a copy of your publication to an Antipodean Mixed Morris Dancer. (Our side - Plenty Morris - has 15 members, almost a 3:2 ratio female to male.) I'd like to write about our side and Morris in Australia as we see it particularly after Jim Hadden's letter in M.M. vol.2 no.2. The Easter festival Jim Hadden referred to is our Aust. national Folk festival, the venue where all morris sides in Australia (and those with finances enough from Australasia in general) try to attend for an annual meeting - distances between sides here make

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such meetings rare. We (the Plenty Morris) had never previously met three of the five all-male sides nor the two all-female sides, and our mixed side was anticipated with much disapproval and scepticism. By the end of the festival tension had relaxed, with an attitude of bemused realisation that serious mixed Morris was better than no Morris and we had made many friends. (Incidentally we were host side!)

Our side in general consider the 'issue' is not one of 'maleness' or 'femaleness' but that the intricate tapestry of the dance and its ceremonial associations should be maintained and shared. Mixed Morris doesn't necessarily mean sub-standard Morris any more than does 'male' or 'female Morris, and we aim to prove this by example - not confrontation. We do respect the decision of those all-male sides who will not dance with us publicly. We do hope that in the future acknowledgement and acceptance of a side will be on the basis of their skill and interpretation of the dance tradition at hand - not gender - however we have no intention of polarising the issue, considering Morris folklore unity more important.

There are five all male sides, two all female sides and three mixed sides in Australia, with three mixed sides in New Zealand. The earliest record we know of Morris in Melbourne dates from a lady teaching in Dandenong around 1910, with Morris being taught at least in a few girls' schools in Sydney in the 1930s. Of the present ladies' teams the Fair Maids of Perth concentrate on Garland dancing and the North West traditions while the Sydney Maids of the Mill and the five all male and three mixed sides variously dance the Cotswold Morris.

Our side enjoys the history and folklore surrounding the Morris and hope to expand our repertoire of ceremonial songs and the occasional Lummers' play for the appropriate seasonal festivals. (Winter Solstice at 100°F never seemed quite right!) Plenty Morris is the oldest of the Australian mixed sides (2 years!) and the only active side in Melbourne, with Ballarat mixed our closest neighbours 70 miles away. Our name is taken from the Plenty River which flows through the north-east of Melbourne where we are based.

I hope this gives you some idea of how a female member of a mixed side views Morris in Australia. Thanks again for sending me 'Morris Matters'; as we're comparatively isolated over here it is most informative and encouraging.

Pam Pittaway

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..... and the reply

The Squire of the Australasian Morris Ring, John Milce, was in England this summer. Morris Matters met him and asked him for some background to the Australasian Morris scene. The oldest side in Australia is Perth M.M., who started (taught by an English dancer) in 1972. They were invited to dance at the 1977 National Polk Festival in Adelaide. Sydney M.M. (formed in 1975) were also present. By the next year they were joined by all-male sides from Canberra and Adelaide at the Festival in Perth.

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Since there had been such correspondence between the sides themselves, and between the sides and the festival committee, the idea was born of forming a Morris Ring to facilitate communication between sides.

According to Mr. Milce, "Then someone from Erehon in New Zealand came up to us at the festival and said that his side would be interested in joining. And no sooner had the Ring been formed than all these other sides were coming up and asking about it. I wrote back to them all to get everybody together, and it turns out that Erehon were a mixed side and all these other people were bloody mixed too! Well, having written to them and invited them to join we couldn't really write back and say we didn't want to know them. Also, in my naivete, I assumed that these sides were mixed because there weren't enough men or women to form a single sex side. (But it turns out that isn't true of Erehon, say)."

"We had a draft constitution made out based on that of the Ring in England - full membership to all-male sides and associate membership to women's sides, mixed sides, interested individuals, etc. - and we were going to vote on the constitution at the 1st AGM at the 1979 National Folk Festival in Melbourne. The idea was that each side present should have a vote, but some sides from further away (New Zealand) thought that every side should have a vote. Well I said that if you've got Sydney M.A., by far the biggest and most active side, and they've only got two votes, why should someone who doesn't bother to turn up, someone you've never even seen before, get an equal say? I rather suspect that the NZ sides are going to opt out,

and frankly if they're mixed and want to stay mixed, good riddance to them."

We then asked Mr. Milce to explain his obvious prejudice against mixed sides - was it an aesthetic or historical objection?

"Well, aesthetic really. I mean we didn't like women's sides at first but we've accepted them now. (as Associate Members)

Had he seen the mixed sides dancing in fact?

"Oh yes - well - I've seen one side. It just looks wrong. The women try to dance like the men. Women's sides have been accepted and we are in fact encouraging Women's Morris. (sic.) We'd much prefer to see women's sides than mixed sides."

(John Milce is bagman for Sydney Morris Men as well as Squire of the Australasian Ring. He has no experience of Morris dancing in England but learned in Australia, four years ago.)

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### Morris kit

Dear Editor,  
It is generally accepted that a good standard of appearance by a team is one of the most important factors contributing to a good display of morris dancing. Morris kit does not have to be elaborate but it does have to be effective, clean and relatively consistent through the side. It is unfortunate that many men's teams do not pay sufficient attention to this aspect of the dance and this becomes especially apparent at Folk Festivals. I am thinking particularly of the Sidmouth Festival where

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it is common to see men, at all times of day and night, wearing more or less complete morris dress for instructionals, ceilidhs, drinking sessions and, it wouldn't surprise me, instead of pyjamas. This naturally results in a scruffy appearance when (or if) these people do actually get around to dancing with their teams.

One of the very pleasing aspects of the increase in the number of teams of women performing the morris has been the attention paid to the standard of dress. Am I alone in noticing a deterioration in this standard by women dancers at this year's Sidmouth festival? It would seem that some women are trying to out-do the men and set new endurance records for the length of time and number of diverse events at which they can be seen wearing morris dress.

Having set what amounts to an ideal for standards of appearance it would be a great shame if women's teams in general allowed these standards to deteriorate just through inattention and carelessness.

John Swift  
(Organiser for Kesteven Morris)

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### Communication

Dear Editor,  
We noted with surprise the letter from David Anderson, Belas Knap Musician, in Alan's article in the last Morris Matters. Hasn't he read the Newsletter? We have been trying to organize a Musicians' Instructional and a North West Morris Instructional since February. However the response has been so small (a handful of people in the former case and one member and one non-

member side in the latter) it has not been worth continuing the organisation. Is it as we suspect that the Newsletter sent out by Val with these details and others is not getting past the bagwoman?

A meeting was recently attended where the bagwoman held up the summer Newsletter saying "I have had this from Val, does anyone want to read it?" Since noone came forward they didn't know about the AGM date, the call for resolutions etc. The bagwoman hadn't even looked at it properly because she hadn't noticed the insurance renewal form.

If the fate of newsletters is just to be filed then no wonder half of you think the committee are doing nothing most of the time!

If the information is not getting to the membership then it is also not getting back to the committee. We know that Instructionals have been/are being run but by whom or on what we have no idea. How can we hope to carry out the jobs you elected us for if we have no information on what is needed and perhaps just end up wasting WMP time and money duplicating someone else's work. Maybe duplication is the reason for the poor response to our Instructionals rather than non-reading of the Newsletter.

Whatever the cause, WMP exists partly as a channel of communication between sides and if sides don't communicate with the committee how can both new and old dancers know what is going on? We do our bit and send you all the Newsletter - now how about doing a bit of communicating back. We'd love to hear from you!

Barbara Butler  
(WMP Technical Officer)

Bev Lane  
(WMP Meetings Sec)

## Longsword

J. Trevor Stone, from Bradford, has sent us some information on Longsword Dancing in Ryedale, and a display on Longsword in the Ryedale Folk Museum at Hutton-le-Hole.

"Information in the library of the English Folk Dance and Song Society indicates that at least 10 dance teams existed in the Ryedale area during the late 1800's. Teams were recorded at Ampleforth, Hemsley, Kirbymoorside, Salton, Sowerby (near Thirsk), Stillington, Malton, Barton-le-Street, South Kilvington and Leake. The first five of these are recorded in sufficient detail to enable them to be performed. The others are not described in such detail, but careful study, together with maximum local publicity, may uncover new information or details of dances in other villages.

In an effort to ensure an increase in knowledge and appreciation of this part of our heritage, and to

obtain maximum local publicity, the Ryedale Folk Museum was approached.

The museum at Hutton-le-Hole, already had a single sword on display in the Witchcraft section. They readily agreed to mount an informative panel which was produced by Trevor Stone of the West Yorkshire District of the EFDSS.

This panel, which incorporates photographs of old teams, maps and general information about Longsword dancing, was installed in the museum in June 1979.

As a result of the gift of the panel the museum authorities and the EFDSS agreed to plan a special event on the weekend of September 1st and 2nd."

(We regret that it is too late to give details of the weekend in this issue. However, readers wanting more information on Longsword can contact J. Trevor Stone,

17 Mariners Drive,  
Bradford, BD9 4JT  
Phone 0274 44194 )

MORRIS AND BARBARA SUNDERLAND would like to thank all those who joined in their Wedding Celebration on Monday 7th May and hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as they did. They apologise to the rest of the dancing world that there was not room to invite all of you as well. Really we should have used Westminster Cathedral and the Albert Hall!

Morris and Barbara Sunderland are off to America on August 23rd to visit American Morris sides. They do not return until 11th October.

The next printing of the Bacon Handbook of Morris Dancing is now ready. Orders by post will be dealt with up to 23rd August and after 11th October. While Morris is away copies can be bought personally from Mike Chandler or Jack Thompson but no orders by post to these two, please. Cost: £6. With postage: £7.

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