

**NEWSLETTER**

*Autumn*

*1996*

# *Important Information*

## **TO ALL BAG(WOMEN), SECRETARIES AND SUCHLIKE**

One of the common complaints we get from the average morris dancer in the street is that they know nothing about the Federation and what it is doing. Some don't even know if their side belongs. This usually turns out to be because the person in their club who received the MF communication doesn't pass any of it on.

**PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE** don't be guilty of this. There is no excuse now that we have included a **SUMMARY SHEET**. You can photocopy this and distribute it to all your members. This can save you the time and hassle of verbally telling everyone what is in the Newsletter. However it is not a substitute for handing the Newsletter around or making it available during practice.

Remember **DON'T KEEP THE INFORMATION TO YOURSELF**.

## **MEMBERS' MANUAL**

All members of the Federation should have a copy of the MF Members' Manual. This contains a lot of material that members may need to refer to from time to time. If you have misplaced the free copy sent to you when you joined, a replacement (or additional copies) can be purchased from the MF Secretary at the cost of £3.50 (+ 50p p&p) each.

Cheques payable to The Morris Federation, please.

## **ADVERTIZING**

The Morris Federation will distribute enclosures with the Newsletter or other circulars and items of advertizing relevant to commercial products. A fee is charged to the advertizer for this service. However, this should not be taken to mean that The Morris Federation necessarily endorses the product.

Enquiries concerning any form of advertizing through the Morris Federation should be addresses to the MF Publicity Officer.



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Summary Sheet	Address List Amendments
Diary Fixtures Form	Morris Ring Goods list

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# *Presidents Prologue*

*Janet Dowling*

Welcome

The hot summer days are here again, and as I write this I am getting ready to go to Sidmouth - I have given up deciding every year whether or not I am going, now I just book the house and go.

Sidmouth is such an institution - there are people like myself who go year in and year out, others who go occasional years. Going so regularly, I am often surprised to find old friends who are "Sidmouth Virgins".

But Sidmouth does provide a lot of opportunity to see Morris Dancing in all its shapes and forms, from the booked teams to the busking teams, some good, some .... interesting. There is no Morris competition this year, but there will have been a discussion on the form of competitions in the future (which I am sure will be reported in the next newsletter). The influences across teams, having an opportunity to learn and adapt is all part of the evolving Morris. If it sounds like I am quoting dance conference titles at you, its because it is important to look at what we are doing, and how we can ensure that in 50 years time, we can still go to Sidmouth and other Festivals and see the Morris danced. It's down for serious debate at the AGM, and there is a discussion paper further in the Newsletter.

In the meantime perhaps it is important to look at our own teams now. The results from the management survey will not be out for a while, but it will show some interesting data. But what has surprised me in talking with some teams is how few teams seem to have a formal constitution. Personally I thought teams had to have a constitution in order to get a bank account - but it seems not. Some teams seem happy to operate on a very informal basis, having officers but no agreed means of effective accountability. That can work very well, but falls down when there is serious disagreement in the team particularly when it comes to deciding who has ownership of funds, kit, the side name and the bookings list.

You only have to go to Bampton to find at least three original Bampton teams to realise the problem is not a new one. If it is a small fraction of the team who split off, then common sense suggests they forfeit entitlement. But how small is small. In the constitution of my rapper team, we included a phrase stating that on the dissolution of the club the existing paid up members would have equal share in the assets of the club. Five years later when we folded due to numbers, that is how we resolved it, but it would not have addressed how to deal with a possible split. I doubt if many teams want to address it - a bit like a pre-nuptial agreements, dividing the spoils before the wedding night. But bearing in mind some teams do have considerable assets it is worth considering how the team can best protect those assets. Does anyone out there have experience of this - lessons to learn, good examples of how it has been dealt with, examples of constitutions etc etc. Please let me know.

# Editorial

Lots of penultimate in this Newsletter from myself, (Ann Mason, Publicity Officer) and Jane Shaw (Technical Officer). Neither of us is standing for re-election at the AGM. So, this is the penultimate Newsletter that I am editor of. My friends keep saying "Its not newsletter time again ALREADY". As I takes several/many evenings over a period of three to four weeks to put it together this only leaves a two month interval between each one, and yes, it does seem to come round very quickly.

This Newsletter has some large areas of white in it. This is in response to a letter from Val Stevens who kindly wrote some useful comments about the Newsletter. She is concerned about the amount of paper the Newsletter takes and the large typeface used. Some of this is for historical reasons, magazines develop a 'house style' and as the MF Newsletter was originally typed with cut and paste inserts, the style still reflects these origins. It is published on A3 paper and then folded, this means that it has to be in multiples of four pages, sometimes I squeeze it all up, sometimes I spread the text out - it depends on the amount of material at my disposal. With the ever increasing sophistication of computers and access to desk-top publishing a complete change of style resulting in a more compact Newsletter would be possible. However to change the style radically would require serious discussion in Committee (a task for the next Publicity Officer?). As for recycled paper we can ask our printer to investigate this.

I am accused of using acronyms and referring to people only by their first names. Guilty. I do try to eliminate these in the contributions and then find I've done it myself in the Editorial. I will try harder as this can create a 'them and us' feeling.

Two interesting articles about public image and the millennium from Janet Dowling (President). We met Dick Taylor of Flag Crackers of Craven at the Joint Morris Organisations Meeting, he was brimming over with energy, enthusiasm and ideas for his plan for the largest Morris event ever. If he gets the sponsorship and it takes place it will be amazing - put the date in your diary now. (Spring Bank Holiday 2000)

A great deal is happening on the workshop front with Roy Dommett doing much of the work. Roy is running a workshop in January based around what has been learnt about the Morris, and teaching the Morris in the last twenty years. A great idea, we all know how time consuming and frustrating it can be re-inventing the wheel.

I missed Sidmouth this year, having just returned from two and a half weeks in France I couldn't take the time off. I understand that a member of my side Mary Jo Searle of New Esperance came second in the Jig competition with her new Esperance Jig (our own tradition) - congratulations. Congratulation also to Jameson Wooders for winning the competition and to Vivian Bailey for coming third.

Included with this issue is the Morris Ring Good List. This was supposed to have been included with the Summer Newsletter, but arrived too late. The Ring has a large number of items available including audio tapes and the *Black Book*.

See you all at the AGM. And remember we still need nominations for Publicity Officer, So if you are even vaguely interested give me a ring on 0181-558-2547.

# *Forward the Morris!*

*Janet Dowling*

Excuse the strange title - but I couldn't think of anything more snappy just at the moment. It feels that there is a lot of emphasis on the public image of the Morris at the moment - the Dance Conference emphasised that strongly, and at Sidmouth (excuse me for mentioning it again) several of the workshops are also picking up on the issue.

Its not the first time we have had to address it. But I have felt it most strongly from having been in the front line this year in handling the media. Coping with the Urban Myths (or is it a Moral Panic), of "Morris dancing is dying" and the "Don't see much of Morris dancers these Days" (despite the fact that over 11,000 people are involved in the Morris) or the "Never seen Women dance Morris" (despite the fact that there are about 5,000 who do). And the story loses it news value if it is not the angle the media wants to play.

So part of the story is to be proactive, to hook the media on the angle you want to show. And teams can do this individually, or we can try to have a concentrated effort through as many teams as possible.

One suggestion that has been put to me by a media communications consultant (for free!) is that we develop a National Programme of events over a period of time - for example designate May as the Month of the Morris Dancer or 1997 as the Year of the Morris Dancer. Every single event happening in the Morris world is then reported to the local press, TV station etc as being part of a national programme of events. The sorts of things could include:

- Days of dance
- Programme of workshops in schools (helping with the National Curriculum)
- Programme of free " Introduction to Morris " workshops ( set aside four weeks of your own practice time, add a bit of structure and information on Morris dancing)
- Participation in local dance festivals
- Participation in other community festivals
- Challenges to other community groups to put together a "Morris" dance
- Link with a local gym on a "Healthy Alliances" promotion  
etc etc etc

You should also promote the fun side of Morris dancing

- dancing in strange places
- reports of dancing abroad
- reports of Morris dancers from abroad dancing here
- romances
- births
- a dancer who manages to belong to two teams on opposite sides of the Atlantic, and dances with them both each fortnight

There is a lot of experience out there, of the different things that people are trying. Our attempts to have a national charity day did not work well, but a longer time open focus on the promotion side may be better.

But this is only one way of looking at it and with the Millennium coming up there may be other ways. (And see the item "Onwards to the Millennium"). I hope that this will spark you to thinking about how to promote a better image of the Morris. Come and discuss it at the AGM or contact me with your views.

## *General*

### *Beth Neill*

#### **NEW ADDRESS**

Firstly - I hope you have all noticed that I've moved house. The last Newsletter went to the printers before I knew the phone number, but you should have all received a copy of the AGM notice in which I noted it. Anything you sent to the old address is reaching me after redirecting but obviously it's better to note the new one - so , in case you lose the cover of the Newsletter - here it is again:

27 Nortoft Road  
Chalfont St Peter  
Gerrards Cross  
Bucks SL9 0LA

TEL: 01494 871465

#### **TEAM ARCHIVES AND SIDE HISTORIES**

While on the subject of losing things - don't lose your teams archival material! I have taken over the project of producing the "where are they now?" supplement to see what happened to the teams who were there at the very beginning of (W)MF. It has been really difficult to get even a glimmer of what became of some of the teams - not every team has remembered to send in their side history records on a reasonably regular basis, and these can be really useful for tracking. Also - teams do sometimes let us know they have

folded (or we guess - when they don't rejoin!), and I send out a request for archival material; especially useful are recent photos and notation. It is much easier to get this done sooner rather than later - once the team stops meeting the incentive to do things connected with it will slip away! I found that my own teams side history records were less than comprehensive when Jane and Sally dug out the records - and I was the secretary responsible for providing them! It's very easy to fill in that there were no changes since the previous year - for several years running. However, I have made up for it by compiling a book of the teams membership, officers, repertoire and highlights of each year - of which a copy is now lodged in the archive.

#### **AGM**

And so to the AGM. A provisional agenda has been sent to you separately. There are several discussion items this year and we would like you to discuss these within your side so that we can have a good, informed discussion at the AGM. If there are no alterations we will work to this. Nominations for committee posts can be accepted up to the date of the AGM - even for those posts where the incumbent is not actually standing down. It is really helpful if apologies for absence are sent to me rather than to Taeppas Tump - they have plenty of other things to look after and also that means I get a bit of notice to sort them out!

# *Financial Services*

*Rachel Pinkney*

I read with interest Dick Taylor's report on the Morris Ring ARM, especially with regard to the hilarious report from their Treasurer. I only hope he does not expect the same from me, if so, he is in for a great disappointment.

## **SHOP**

As to the arrangement about exchange of shop goods. I have written to both the Morris Ring and Open Morris to see what can be done to clarify the position. I did have a few

publications, passed on to me from the previous Treasurer, but now have only a few Black Books left.

## **INSURANCE**

The Committee decided to look into the question of a £5m indemnity to our public liability as most councils are requesting this these days. As this policy is renewed on 31st August 1996 we will let you know the AGM.

# *Publicity*

*Ann Mason*

This is my penultimate Newsletter as Publicity Officer and I am already thinking of things to do with all that spare time!! for example learn to drive (this would have been useful as PO) and improving my swimming. I shall still be around the Morris scene and may even make it to some MF workshops.

## **LEAFLETS**

Some time ago I mentioned the publicity leaflet the MF produced, asking if there was still a demand for it - I have had one reply. This is a last call for replies. The leaflet gave a brief history of the Morris and the Federation and left you space to put in your own information. We suspect that with sides now producing their own leaflets the need for this type of publication has past.

At the joint meeting it was decided that the three organisations would try to produce a joint leaflet that could be used for publicity/information purposes by the organisations when contacted by the media,

for funding raising etc. I am co-ordinating the collection of the information which is then to be circulated to all the Publicity Officers for comments.

## **NEW PUBLICITY OFFICER**

So far there has been a resounding silence on this front. The job isn't that daunting and you can gain a great deal of useful experience in editing, public relations and committee work that can be transferred into the job market.

## **MORRIS PUBLICATION GROUP**

Once again we have had difficulty in arranging a meeting for this group. There should be some good news about the production of the video, however those in the know are on holiday. I will catch up with them on their return and give you a full update and report at the AGM and in the next Newsletter.

## **PUBLICITY FOR YOUR SIDE**

I've had a letter from the publicity officer of Mortimer's Morris (Nottingham) enquiring about sources of information for such posts.

There is the "Publicity Tip's" booklet produced by the Federation and available from the MF shop and the Folk Directory (available from the Folk Shop) lists folk magazines with their contact addresses.

# *Technical Services*

*Jane Shaw*

I find it hard to believe that this is my penultimate Newsletter report, and by the next time I write, we will have a new Technical Officer. Although I shall miss the contact with Federation members, I won't be entirely absent from the Morris scene.

## **STEPPING SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP**

On to the Stepping Special Interest Group: still not a lot of movement, but Steve is intending to organise the first Federation step dance workshop in 1997. Would anyone like to host a one-day (or even a weekend) event? Has anyone anything special they'd like to see a workshop on, or do you want to teach anything particular for us? All ideas would be gratefully received. (Please write to Steve Cunio, Events Officer).

## **NOTATION AND ARCHIVE GROUPS**

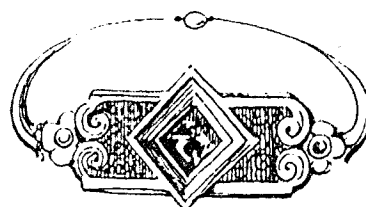
As far as our notation and archive groups are concerned, these are still hard at work. The Notation Group meets again on 13th October.

The Morris Archive Group has met again, and its own database is now coming on very nicely - we hope to be testing by the end of the year.

Our own Archive Group has now looked at the UNESCO database package, but finds it not very user-friendly, although it would be useful for some of the older types of computer some of us still use. The aim is that we will hope to use the MAG program, but have the UNESCO one available in case it's needed. The MAG database may have taken a long time to produce, but it does look as though the wait will have been worthwhile. Our Archive Group will then have plenty of work to do, on the computer index for the Morris Federation Archive. The Morris Archive Group meets again on 16th November, with the Federation Archive Group finishing a busy weekend by meeting on the 17th.

## **FEDERATION ARCHIVE**

As I am coming to the end of my term, can I remind you again that we are always happy and keen to receive donations to the MF Archive, particularly team's notations. Don't forget that we will keep items on a restricted access basis, if that is what you wish. That way your own dances/research can be saved for posterity without being in the public domain.



# *Diary*

## *October*

- 5 Headcorn Morris - Tenterden Folk Day
- 8 Three Shires - Matlock Bath Illuminations, Derbyshire - 6:30 & 7:30
- 26 Mendip Mummers - Unique Halloween Play - Dunster Castle, Somerset - 8:00pm, 9:00pm, 10:00pm
- 31 HALLOWEEN
- Mendip Mummers - Unique Halloween Play - Wells, Somerset - 8:00pm, 9:00pm, 10:00pm

## *November*

- 2 "New Lamps for Old" - MORRIS FEDERATION WORKSHOP - with Roy Dommett - Church Crookham, Fleet, Hampshire.
- 10 "Spots, Spectacles and Silly Dances" - MORRIS FEDERATION WORKSHOP - With Jameson Wooders, of Berkshire Bedlams - Reading
- 24 "North West Dance Swap" - MORRIS FEDERATION WORKSHOP - Ware, Hertfordshire

## *December*

### BOXING DAY

Three Shires - "The Bluebell" and "The Beehive", Harthill, Sheffield, with Harthill Morris

Taeppa's Tump - "The Oak and Saw", Taplow

Buttercross Belles - "The Woolpack", Otley

Highside Longsword - Tour of Kirkby Malzeard

## *January*

- 18 "Cotswold Curricula" - MORRIS FEDERATION WORKSHOP - with Roy Dommett - Church Crookham, Fleet, Hampshire.

# Noticeboard

## YOUTH FOR YOUTH

Saturday 19th October, Uplands Community Centre, Wadhurst. 10.00 - 19.30. £5.00 per participant.

Gail Duff of TRADS the Folk Development Agency for East and West Sussex and Kent is organising "Youth for Youth" a day of workshops in folk music and morris dance run by the best young performers of today for young people in Sussex and Kent aged 12-19 years.

The day will include two sessions of Border Morris, run by Benji Kirkpatrick of Shropshire Bedlams. Other workshops include playing morris tunes, run by melodeon player Ben Dauncey, Fiddle playing and singing by Oliver Bootle and bodran playing. The day will end with a showcase ceilidh.

CONTACT: Gail Duff, TRADS, Wynlic, Bull Lane, Lenham Heath, Maidstone, Kent ME 17 2JA TEL: 01622-858460

## CLOG IRONS SURVEY

This survey has been sent out by all three

Morris organisations. The response from Federation sides has been dismal. PLEASE return your survey form, we need to know if you use irons or not. We are not clairvoyant and cannot assume that no response equals no.

## BATH CITY MORRIS REUNION

Bath City Morris/Bath City University Folk Dance Club have been dancing every year since their formation by Tubby Reynolds in 1966/67, ever changing teams continue an unbroken tradition that is unique to the BCN style.

The current team are arranging a 30th Anniversary Reunion Weekend to take place in summer 1997 and hope that all former club members will be able to come along.

Names and addresses are now being collected. If this applies to you please send your name, address and telephone number and those of anyone else you know of to:

Graduate Relations Office, University of Bath, Claverton Down, Bath BA7 7AY

# Tournament of Foolishe Sportes

*Sian Hayward, Daisy Roots*

*This year at the Hastings Jack-in-the-Green Festival a new event took place on the Sunday afternoon, organised and hosted by Daisy Roots' Morris from Hastings. It was the Daisy Roots' Tournament of Foolishe Sportes, a revival of May Day sports which once took place at this time of the year. The event was a success and they would like to thank the participants and spread the news of the event through the Newsletter.*

May Day eve, and something old and almost forgotten draws people to an ancient hill amidst the ruins of an old castle. Those with the knowledge realise that May Day madness or spring fever, call it what you will, has a strong effect on Morris dancers. It can cause them to chant strange and menacing words. This is well known, but worse it yet to come. It can cause them to cast aside their traditional garb and, indeed, manners to acquire a bold, even fierce, desire to compete against each other.

On this particular May Day eve, the sun shone on this old hill, and illuminated the re-emergence of the Spirit of the Challenge. Many were there to witness this event.

Brightly painted sticks were gripped between trembling morris thighs. Beer bellies and bosoms were squeezed through narrow tubes. Old King Harold suffered the re-enactment of myth and misery as arrow after arrow was poked into, or nearly into, his eye. The best brains in the country were pushed to their limits as they grappled with strange and seemingly meaningless symbols resembling daisies and boots.

Some people got wet.

Who were these brave dancers, willing to face the challenge set by Daisy Roots in Ye Traditional Tournament of Foolishe Sports as part of the Hastings Jack-in-the-Green festival?

They were:

Black Annis - a team of youthful and energetic competitors, who did not let their lack of height restrict their volume.

Cardiff Ladies - a truly ferocious team who came with ample support, worn as a Madonna influenced kit. Specialists in synchronous swimming.

Cluster of Nous - an assorted bunch who go well with beer. Good tankard gripping is their speciality, but unable to hold their water.

Dane Geld - a team of Viking like warriors with good rugby tackle. Showed particular expertise on the more foolishe events. Rumoured to be shape-shifters.

Mad Jacks - the other side from Hastings. Specialists in the use of nut crackers.

The Renegades - a scratch team of desperately thirsty individuals who were prepared to do anything for a drink. Last seen under a pile of Cardiff Ladies.

Many thanks from Daisy Roots Morris to you all for taking part. Well done to Black Annis for winning. Everyone had a truly Foolishe time.

*The following letter by Val Parker (ex-Morris Federation Secretary) was published in 'English Dance and Song Vol 58, number 2, Summer 1995'*

Julian Pilling's assertion that Roy Dommett's statement ("Initially the Morris Federation was restricted to women because of the aggressive attitude at the time of The Morris Ring to the existence of women's morris") is "just not true" must not be allowed to pass without comment.

It may be the case that the records of The Morris Ring Advisory Council and Representative's Meetings show a "mild attitude", counselling "gentlemanly behaviour", but it does not follow that the advice was acted on by the average morris man. Since the women were not privy to the deliberations of and advice offered by The Morris Ring, they could only judge by the attitudes they met on the street.

As one of the founders of the Women's Morris Federation, I can state that it was formed because we knew we would not be admitted to the Ring, and yet we needed and desired mutual support. I can also state that the aggressive attitude of morris men in general terms to morris women was precisely the reason that the organisation remained closed to men for the first few years. I dare say there were aggressive female dancers around, who enjoyed the fray, but most of us were genuinely dismayed by the many obstacles that were deliberately put in our way and by some of the vitriolic opposition with which we were met. There was therefore a very real fear that, were the Federation to open up, it would be swamped by antagonistic male dancers (who were the majority at the time), who might simply change the rules, throw us all out and send us back to square one.

To play Mr Pilling at his own game, he has only to consult the minutes of the WMF Annual General Meetings to ascertain the truth of this.

So, whether Roy Dommett's statement is strictly correct hinges on whether or not one could, in the early 1970s, equate The Morris Ring with unsympathetic morris men in general. Either way, the point he makes remains essentially true, insofar as the women's perception at the time was that the two were, in practical terms, synonymous.

As for his final snide remark, is it so difficult to believe that most people (male or female) do most things (including morris dancing) for the same reasons as most others (male or female)? Differences in attitude may well occur because of differences in social and cultural position, but I utterly resent Mr. Pilling's implication that the female psyche operates at the same level as that of a rebellious child, deriving pleasure from doing something known to be 'forbidden'. If he really believes that, perhaps he and his colleagues should try some reverse psychology. Positive encouragement should cause all these pesky women to down their sticks and hankies and to give it all up through sheer boredom!

## ***Onwards to the millennium***

### ***Janet Dowling***

One part of the brief that I gave myself on taking on the role of President was to look at planning for the Millennium - with plenty of opportunity for promoting the Morris there. However some teams are all ready with their proposals, and are already a long way down the path in their preparations.

Some of you will be aware that Yorkshire Coast of Open Morris are organising a big Millennium meeting in 1999 and are looking for support from different Morris teams.

In the year 2000 itself Flag Crackers of Craven are proposing to hold the biggest event of Morris Dancing on the weekend of Friday May 26th to Monday May 29th at the Yorkshire Show Ground Harrogate.

They hope to be in the running for Millennium Festival Fund money, and are looking for other sponsors.

They plan a free festival, and hope to attract every side in the UK (from the Federation, Open Morris and the Morris Ring) plus as many overseas teams as possible. As well as dance displays and tours there will be other entertainment, concerts, ceilidhs, craft fairs etc to attract the general public.

It promises to be a cracker of an event (every pun intended) and teams are invited now to put it in their diaries. Dick Taylor of Flag Crackers has been to the Joint Morris Organisations Meeting and has the support of all three groups. If any one is interested in giving a helping hand then please contact Dick. He is also interested in people to act as area reps for the liaison with local teams. If any other teams were thinking of bidding for Millennium Funding could they contact Dick Taylor first to make sure there is no duplication.

There will still be an opportunity for other smaller events - lets discuss it!

## *Joint Morris Organisations Meeting*

### *Janet Dowling*

Once a year representatives of the three Morris Organisations - the Federation, Open Morris and the Morris Ring, meet to discuss issues of mutual interest. The meeting lasts all day, and we generally have a lot to discuss.

This year the key issues were:

- The proposals for the NVQ in Morris dancing  
(We aim to meet with EFDSS to discuss this)
- Concerns at the reducing supply of clog irons  
(We are surveying the clog teams to see what the demand is)
- The Millennium  
(see Onwards to the Millennium)
- Joint publicity leaflet  
(In production - slowly)

We also agreed to exchange books and goods list.

Contrary to popular myth, the Ring officials are not "women shouldn't dance morris" but share a common concern for the development of the Morris with quality of dancing being the standard, rather than gender of the dancer.

Admittedly some members of the Ring are diehards, but even in the Federation I have come across one or two teams who believe mixed dance sets should not be allowed. So there continues to be a diversity of opinion. And while the controversy fails to raise its head, lets just get on and dance even better.

# Events

## Steve Cunio

### FROM LAST TIME

I am afraid that the authorship of the workshop reports in the last Newsletter got a little confused. The report on the Stave Day was actually by Stella New, of Royal Manor Morris, and the report on Tony Dann's North West workshop was a joint effort by Fenella Spiers, Sue Barker and Denise Cooke of Turnberrie Castle Morris. I would like to apologise for any confusion or embarrassment this may have caused.

We also have a small piece of lost property from the Stave day. A photocopied sheet labelled "Key to display of Club Emblems - Museum of South Somerset" was handed in. If the owner would like to contact me I will return it.

### AGMs

The 1997 Morris Federation Annual General Meeting and Weekend of Dance will be held in Hastings, and will be hosted by Mad Jack's Morris. Those of you who go to the annual Jack in the Green Festival they organise will need no persuading of Mad Jack's ability to organise a really good weekend. Full details will appear in due course but for now just write the date in your diaries - 26th to 28th September 1997 (What do you mean, you have not bought your 1997 diary yet?)

### WORKSHOPS - BEFORE CHRISTMAS

There will be three Morris Federation workshops before Christmas. The first of these will be hosted by Fleet Morris, led by the indefatigable Roy Dommett, with domestic arrangements organised by Marguerite Dommett. The musician will be Yvonne Hallows (fiddle). Roy has sent the following to describe the event.

### "New Lamps for Old", to quote Aladdin's Uncle

A significant part of the tradition has been its creativity, although naturally this was ignored by the collectors. Every Cotswold side was and is different and often each generation within a village varied considerably. The modern Morris has introduced new figures and choruses, many of which fit today's needs better than the survivals recorded in Dr Bacon's *Black Book*. For years Roy has been recording and passing on some of the new ideas and this workshop is a last change to dance such 'borrowed' Material. The day will include a selection of choruses used by the hosts, a Morris Federation women's side, Fleet Morris.

The workshop will be on 2nd November, at the Memorial Hall, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hampshire. It will run from 10:30 until 4:30, and will cost £10 per head, which will include lunch and notations.

The next event is something a little different. Jameson Wooders, of Berkshire Bedlams thinks we take our dancing too seriously...

### Spots Spectacles and Stupid Dances

From the way many "traditional" activities are performed today, it is hard to imagine that people in the past even had a sense of humour. In fact, most Morris teams had at least one dance which could be taken less than seriously. The traditional side at North Leigh, for example, had a hand-clapping dance performed with coconut shells, whilst the Fieldtown team danced round in a circle holding each other's ear lobes ("Jug by the Earl"). Fighting dances were more common and surely provided great opportunities for

comedy. Unfortunately, many of these dances are now neglected, or - worse - performed reluctantly with embarrassment. However, such dances can be used to add variety and humour to a show, grabbing the audience's attention and making your team memorable. How many times have you danced at a massed Morris display and felt lost amongst the crowd? Surely we want to be noticed and remembered if we take the trouble of performing in public?

The aim of this workshop is to highlight the possibilities for humour, and more importantly showmanship that exist in the Morris. It is not necessarily to develop deliberately 'funny' dances, for these are likely to fall flat, but to emphasise that dances can be 'hammed up': depending on the mood and experience of both dancers and audience. There are no set rules: how far a particular joke can be taken will depend wholly on the unique circumstances of the performance in question. This cannot be learnt at a workshop but depend on the need of the dancers to entertain a given audience. After all, Morris workshops tend to be a little like undertaking - they can make the corpse look a bit better, but they cannot bring it back to life!

I'm not too sure about that last comment, Jameson! However, if you would like to come along and see what he is getting at, the workshop will be on 10th November, in the Reading area. It will run from 10:30 until 4:30, and will cost £10 per head, which will include lunch and notations.

The third workshop before Christmas will be a

#### North West Dance Swap

This is the third of these that we have held in the last five years or so. The two previous ones were very popular, so get your bookings in early. The idea with the dance swaps is that, instead of bringing in an 'expert' to teach all day, we draw on the wealth of knowledge and experience that we have developed within the Federation itself. We are looking for

three volunteers to teach one dance each, taking about an hour and a half to do so. The incentive is a free ticket to the workshop, plus the chance to have a go at teaching in a different environment from the usual team practice night. If you would like to teach at the workshop, please get in touch with the Events Officer, Steve Cunio (01935-841241). The workshop is being hosted for us by Standon Green Morris, and will take place near Ware, in Hertfordshire, on Sunday 24th November. It will run from 10:00 until 4:00, and will cost £10 including lunch and notations.

Further details of all these workshops can be found on the booking forms accompanying this Newsletter.

#### **WORKSHOPS - AFTER CHRISTMAS**

I am planning four Federation workshops for the period between Christmas and Easter. There will also be the Roy Dommett Wantage Weekend, of which more below. However, at the moment, I only have details of one of these events. This is another event organised for us by Roy, but it is also potentially one of the most important workshops the Federation has ever run. The suggestion made a couple of years ago by some parts of the EFDSS that folk dance in general (including morris) needed some sort of formal teaching qualification or syllabus, was largely rejected in the Morris world. However, Roy is concerned that a lot of lessons have been learned in the last twenty or thirty years, which we, or rather the next generation of dancers, are in danger of having to learn all over again. Roy has sent me some initial thoughts on this

#### Cotswold Curricula

There is a need to develop a basic set of the essential fundamental technical knowledge relevant to the Cotswold Morris for actual and potential leaders and foremen, which could be used as a guiding curriculum or syllabus to be expounded regularly in the future by then current exponents, rather than stay with the

current practice of ad-libbing or re-invention. This objective will take a number of attempts to clarify. The first step will be an industrious one day workshop at Church Crookham led by Roy, assisted by Andy Anderson, mostly as musician.

The topics are likely to be:

#### Group Dynamics

How groups work together and their crisis points

#### Dance Mechanics

The whys and wherefores of movement as expressed in the Cotswold Morris

#### Music/Dance Relationship

What the dancer should expect and the musician provide

#### Body Language

Attention to detail and developing terminology

#### Dance Technique

The use of traditions and jigs, and health issues

#### Standards, Interpretation and Creativity

The ultimate aim is working towards a weekend of exposition and practice, backed with appropriate booklets.

The workshop will be held on the 12th January, 1997, at the Memorial Hall, Church Crookham, Fleet, Hampshire. Marguerite Dommett will once again be providing the food. The workshop will run from 10:00 until 5:00 (Note that this is slightly longer than usual). The cost will be £10, including lunch and notations. **THE BOOKING FORM FOR THIS WORKSHOP WILL BE SENT OUT WITH THE SUBSCRIPTION NOTICES IN NOVEMBER.** I am expecting this event to be oversubscribed, so there will probably be a limit on the number of bookings per team. This will be explained on the booking form.

## ROY DOMMETT WANTAGE WEEKEND

You will find a booking form for this weekend enclosed with this Newsletter. Compared to most Morris events, these weekends are expensive, but they are good value for money. There is the luxury of sleeping in a Youth Hostel, as opposed to the usual village hall floor; there are good showers; the food is excellent; the beer is cheap; and that is before we consider the content of the weekend. Every time I talk to Roy, he enthuses at me about his ideas for the forthcoming weekend, or the one after that, or the one in March 2000! This time we are promised, amongst other things, the fruits of Roy's forthcoming trip to the Basque country. I really do find it very difficult to describe exactly why these weekends are so good, but they are. If you have not been before, and enjoy exploring the outer reaches of what might possibly be called Cotswold Morris, treat yourself and come along.



## *Opportunities with the Morris Federation Committee*

Two members of the Committee are standing down at the end of 1996 and we are therefore looking for nominations for the elections at the September AGM.

Remember that all Committee members are elected on an annual basis and you can stand for any of the Committee posts.

Develop or acquire skills that will be useful to you in your careers and hobbies. Both posts will develop your committee skills, and committee chairing (if you want to).

Committee commitments are to attend four meetings a year and the AGM where you give a report of the past years activities, and a quarterly report for the Newsletter.

### *Publicity Officer*

*For more information ring Ann Mason on 0181-558-2547*

Responsible for editing the quarterly *Morris Federation Newsletter* and for publicity in its broadest sense - the job is what you make it. Public Relations are usually dealt with by the President. you also sit on the Morris Publication Group.

Develop or acquire skills in editing, layout, proofreading, working to deadlines, liaison with printers. You will also be contacted by the press and others wanting information or comments about items in the media.

Learn or improve your computer skills using a word processor and/or desk top publishing package.

### *Technical Officer*

*For more information ring Jane Shaw on 01935-841241*

Responsible for the Federation Archive and convening the Federation Notation and Archive Groups. You also sit on the Morris Archive Group.

You will be interesting in hunting out information and finding the answer(s) to peoples' questions. Identifying and buying material for the Archive and organising the material in it using the systems in existence. Convening and facilitating the writers and researchers on the Notation Group and editing or finding editors for their work. Convening and facilitating the Archive group and organising the catalogue resulting from their work. You will also need space to store the Archive (about seven shelves)

# WHO TO CONTACT

ADDRESS - CHANGE OF ADDRESSES - NOT IN MF	Beth Neill	NEW ADDRESS - YOURS	Beth Neill
AGM - HOSTING	Beth Neill	NEWSLETTER	Ann Mason
AGM - ORGANISATION	Steve Cunio	NOTATION GROUP	Jane Shaw
AGM	Steve Cunio	NOTATION	Jane Shaw
ARCHIVE GROUP	Beth Neill	PHOTOGRAPHS	Janet Dowling
BOOK LOANS	Jane Shaw	PUBLICITY	Ann Mason
EVENTS	Jane Shaw	PUBLICITY IDEAS	Ann Mason
INTERNET	Steve Cunio	PUBLIC RELATIONS	Janet Dowling
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MORRIS ARCHIVE GROUP	Rachel Pinkney	SCRAP BOOKS	Janet Dowling
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MORRIS PUBLICATION GROUP	Sue Swift	VIDEOS - SALE OR HIRE	Sally Wearing
	Ann Mason	WORKSHOPS	Steve Cunio

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## GUIDE FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Contributions to the Newsletter are always welcome. To help these are some guidelines to make your contribution easier to produce and the Editors life easier

Contributions on disk or in hard copy are welcome. Handwritten MUST be legible. ALL CONTRIBUTIONS MUST REACH THE EDITOR BY THE COPY DATE

DISK	3.5 or 5.25 - any density
OPERATING SYSTEM	DOS format
FORMAT	WordPerfect 5.1 or ASCII is best. Other formats are acceptable if the editor can convert them
STYLE	Times Roman 12
	No indents to paragraphs
	No tabs or indents if possible
	Headings in capitals and bold
	Sub headings in lower case, underlined
	2 spaces after a full-stop
	Morris and Morris styles with a capital letter
BOOK/MAGAZINE TITLE	Italics, Times Roman 12

If in doubt please just send the text. It is much easier for me to put the house style onto your text than have to undo your style before doing this.

HARD COPY	Double spaced (its easier to read)
ADVERTS	Camera ready copy is ideal (ie. how you want it to appear) or we can set it up for you
INSERTS	A4 size, camera ready copy

# *The Morris Federation 1996*



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**All known Morris related pages:** <http://web.syr.edu/~rsholmes/morris/rich/otherwww.html>