

The Morris Federation



NEWSLETTER

MAY 1984

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Derby Crown, who are hosting this year's Weekend, would like an early response from all who wish to attend, to help them keep on top of all the organisation. So, can I remind you all to complete the forms and return them to Derby Crown as soon as you can.

The A.G.M. itself is being held in Derby on Sunday, 30th September. A formal notice of the exact time and venue will be circulated in July, together with a Provisional Agenda. If you wish to put forward any proposals or nominations, please could I have them by the end of June, to be sure of their appearing on the Provisional Agenda. You should all have a green A4-sized form for this purpose, sent out last year. If you have not, please write your proposals and/or nominations, clearly worded, on an A4 sheet, stating the name of the member (the side, in the case of Group Membership) and the date of the meeting to which they apply. It should then be signed by a representative of the member. On receipt of the form, I will send you a fresh one for future use, by way of a receipt.

COMMITTEE

You will no doubt be pleased to know that we have a Meetings Secretary once more. Lynne Downes, of Betty Lupton's Ladle Laikers, was the only nomination and she was seconded by Bev Lane. She is thus elected unopposed and no meeting is necessary. You will find a letter of introduction from her in with this Newsletter.

On the subject of the Committee, we thought it might be useful for you to know the dates of our meetings (usually 4 per year). The remainder for this year are planned for:

Sunday July 29th (Coventry or Leicester)
Sunday Nov. 4th (Harrogate)

NEWSLETTER

We have had a couple of responses to our appeal for your opinions of the Newsletter. What about the rest of you? Are you happy with things as they are or don't you care one way or the other? We will be discussing it again at the next Committee Meeting (July), so let us hear from some more of you, even if it is only to advocate the status quo.

DAY OF DANCE

Sadly, Betty Lupton's had not from anyone by the deadline they set and have therefore had to cancel their M.F. Day of Dance, planned for June 9th. They wonder whether the invitation went out too late and people's diaries were already full but they are still very disappointed by the total lack of response.

MOOTS

Equally sadly, it seems no Moots will take place this year either. The one planned for June has not come off and there were no others in the pipeline.

In fact, the Committee has decided to shelve Moots for the time being. There seems to have been a great reluctance on the part of many sides to run or attend them. Is it a fear of criticism?! It seems a shame, as we thought they were a good idea and most sides who have been to one have found them useful and enjoyable, despite any apprehensions they may have had beforehand.

WORKSHOPS

You will see from the Diary (a bumper edition this time!) that a Foremen's and Basics Weekend and a North-West Instructional and Musicians' Workshop are taking place later in the year. Booking Forms will be circulated to all members, so there is no need to do anything yet if you want to attend any or all of these events.

SUPPLIERS

We will shortly be putting together a Suppliers Address List and would like to know of any that you use or know of (bells, clogs, badges etc.). If you can help, please contact the Publicity Officer. (Sue Marshall)

"NON-MORRIS" MEMBERSHIP

As you may have noticed, we have some Group Members who are not strictly morris teams. Also, I have had enquiries from others who do not really fit that description but who undoubtedly indulge in closely related activities. Our constitution says 'Practising morris sides'. Do we wish to change this? If so, how? Would it be better to introduce an Associate Membership for such sides? Or should we define 'morris' somewhere to include their activities? We would like to know what you think. It is probably too late to formulate suitable proposals for formal changes this year but we may well include a general discussion on the topic at the A.G.M..

I would point out that insurance is no problem. As long as these teams pose no greater risk than pukka morris teams, and there exists no more suitable organisation for them to join, our Company will accept them.

So please have a think about it and let us know how you feel.

The Secretary: Val Parker 16 Evans Grove, St.Albans, Herts AL4 9PJ.

News from the Technical Officer

Several new publications have recently become available:-

1. The Morris Ring Jubilee Brochure. This is a very well presented pictorial account of the history and diversity of the morris, compiled by Doc Rowe on behalf of the Ring. Their current print run of 5000 is almost sold out, either the few remaining or the new rerun should be obtainable from the Morris Ring Treasurer:

Roger Baker 10 Oldlands Hall, Heron's Ghyll, Uckland, Sussex.

2. Morris at Spelsbury: an analytical essay by Keith Chandler in 'Oxfordshire Local History' Vol 1 No 7 Autumn 1983. For those who thought there were no women's teams in the Cotswolds in the past, this description of the Spelsbury team 1820/1830 will prove enlightening. It is obtainable as a back copy from the Editor of Oxfordshire Local History:-
Dr.V.Larminine 81 Old Road, Headington, Oxford. (Ask for Vol 1 No 7 1983 rather than the article.)

3. An Interim Checklist of References to Morris Dancing in Local Newspapers. Part 1: 1733 to 1914. by Keith Chandler 1983. This monograph is a must for anyone contemplating or involved in the study of historical morris in the Cotswolds. Another monograph by Keith and part of the same series is:- Morris Dancing at Bampton until 1914. Both are available from Keith Chandler, The Bungalow, Hill Grove Farm, Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire OX8 5NA. Price: £1.50 plus 25p p&p.

4. Trouper. This magazine is aimed at the Carnival teams including the Carnival Morris. It is an attractive publication with articles (one of the backnumbers has an article and pictures of Somerset Maids Morris - Vol 1 No 2 Nov 1983), many photographs, a diary and advertising suppliers. It is certainly worth taking if you are one of the teams who dances carnival-type morris or are interested in the subject. The magazines are obtainable at 45p each (plus p&p) or more easily as a year's subscription - 12 issues - from:- M Gardener Garden Flat 6 Randall Road, Cliftonwood, Bristol BS8 4TP. The envelope should be marked 'subscription' and cheques made payable to 'Trouper Magazine'.

5. Exploring Local History. Although not a morris magazine, there are features of general interest. For example, the first issue has an article on 'Limitations on Oral History' by Gillian Sykes - important for anyone who collects morris material. It is available by subscription only - £9.50 for 12 monthly issues. Obtainable from:- Elmcrest Publishing Maggs House 78 Queens Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1QX.

6. Polka Round. This book gives an introduction to, descriptions and notations of the 'Cambridgeshire Feast Dances and Comberton Broom Dance.' It has been jointly edited by Cyril Papworth, Wendy Crouch and William Palmer; Cambridge 1984. In the main, the feast dances are the same as the molly dances but performed as a mixed set. Copies of the book are obtainable from:- Wendy Crouch 44 Kelsey Crescent, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CE1 4XX or Cyril Papworth 25 Ferry Path, Cambridge; at a cost of £1.20 plus 20p p&p.

7. Morris and Matachin. By John Forrest. This book is a very important publication with regard to the history of morris. The various stages of morris - Ring Morris and Jig Morris and the possible merger with the European Matachin to produce the dances we now call morris - is clearly laid out and a refreshing look at our origins. All teams wishing to 'blind their audiences with history' should buy a copy and peruse it carefully.

Copies are obtainable from:- The Publications Secretary, CECTAL, The University, Sheffield S10 2TN at £2.50 plus 40p p&p; or at £2.00 plus 40p p&p for EFDSS members (quote mem. number) from VWM Library, Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regents Park Road, London NW1 7AY. (Make cheques payable to University of Sheffield or EFDSS as appropriate.)

The Folklore Society is offering an Annual Essay Prize - £50 plus £50 worth of books from the Folklore Society's publications. There are 3 categories - for undergraduates, postgraduates and individuals resident in the UK not working full-time in Folklore. Further details may be obtained from Annual Essay Prize, The Folklore Society, c/o University College London, Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT.

New Material Acquired by the Archive

Apart from the 7 listed publications as already described, the archive has received the following periodicals:-

Buzz Nos 5 and 7 1983/1984

English Dance and Song 46 1 1984

Instep Nos 11 and 12 1984

The Morris Dancer No 18 1984

Roomer 3 4 1983, 4 1 1984

The Archive has at last been indexed. This was a marathon task and the result is 34 pages of A4. We are hoping to have this available in the not too distant future - the photocopied index would be prohibitively expensive - anyone interested in a copy should contact the Technical Officer.

For the Notation Files, June Smith has very kindly drawn out all the tunes to complement our notations. In future, dance notations will have the tune attached but in the meantime, if anyone would like a copy of particular tunes they should be available - again contact the Technical Officer.

As a reminder, Roy Dommett's NW Tunes is available also and this costs £1.00 plus postage.

Notation Group

NG11 was held in Windsor on Sunday March 5th 1984 and ably hosted by Jenny Joyce. In addition, Barbara Butler, Paddy Davies, Philip Heath-Colman and Sue Swift were present.

After a brief exchange of the latest news and views, we started on a crammed agenda. Roy Dommett had submitted the Stanton Harcourt Workshop that used a fresh approach and this was discussed at length. The Glossary Appendices were examined in detail, only the Technical Appendix now requires insertions.

The Brackley Workshop has been retyped and needs an up-to-date layout. The notation of the stick dances needs further checking but we managed to teach Philip to twirl a stick during the course of the discussion.

The Hinton and Bucknell Workshops are about 2/3 complete and Paddy, in particular, is doing sterling work on the variants. Philip hopes to make a start on Oddington and will use the latest forms of the Glossary and Workshops as a guide.

Chas Marshall has worked hard to complete Abram. It is very well presented and is circulating the group for comment.

Wheatley has had a final grammatical check and at last, after a long gestation period, is on its way to the printers.

Altogether this was a very encouraging meeting and, with so much of the laborious groundwork covered, the workshop notation is getting easier and gathering momentum.

If you are interested in further information, please contact Sue Swift (Technical Officer).

Non Federation Meetings

Traditional Dance Conference 1984

This 4th annual conference was held on March 10th 1984 at Crewe and Alsager College of Higher Education, Cheshire. As the other conferences it was well attended and had an interesting range of topics. These were:-

'John Clare - Dancing Master or Scribe?' by Michael Barraclough

'Aesthetics and the Morris: Mutual Interactions of the Dance, the Dancers and the Community' by Anthony Barrand (Tony is the morris world's only professional - the paper was quite unlike anything ever heard before on morris!)

'Manuscript Sources of Traditional Dance Music in Southern England' by Vic Gammon

'A Properly Conducted Morris Dance - the role of Jimmy Cheetham before the Great War in Oldham and Royton' by Michael Higgins

The latter paper was particularly most entertaining and informative, a rarely allowed insight into these teams.

Each Conference has published Proceedings which are available from:-
Theresa Buckland 10 Addison Close, Wistaston, Crewe, Cheshire CW2 8BY.

UK Joint Standing Committee on Folk Studies

2 meetings of this committee have been attended by the Technical Officer on behalf of the Federation. The body was set up following a critical report on the deplorable state of Folk Studies in this country. Recent reductions in funding have meant the closure of university folk study departments and a lack of staff in others. The standing committee is thus an "umbrella" for organisations to put pressure on the Government and Funding Bodies to reverse this sad decline. It is early days yet but it is hoped to make use of resources like MF's exhibition and dancing membership to publicise this important work. Some 80 - 90 organisations have pledged their support and further developments are eagerly awaited.

An Introductory Letter from the new Meetings Secretary

I have been interested in folk music and dance for many years and I was introduced to morris dancing in 1980 by a friend who was then the leader of Betty Lupton's Ladle Laikers, and to her I owe a great deal. Through the team I have had the opportunity of meeting many people from all over the country and have been fortunate in establishing some very close friendships.

My interest and involvement increased as I became aware of the many aspects of morris dancing - the different traditions, the varying interpretations, attitudes and origins. This has whetted my appetite to learn more and become further involved both in Betty Lupton's and now the Morris Federation. I hope my enthusiasm will help me to make a worthwhile contribution to the Federation as I feel it is playing an important part in encouraging an interest in Morris, both for established sides and for future generations.

Some people feel the need for a greater commitment to Morris; others find their circumstances allow them more time to become involved. Whatever the degree of dedication, everyone who participates appears to get the same fun and enjoyment from dancing and this I feel is good for dancers, spectators and for Morris as a whole.

Lynne Downes

A Letter from the Publicity Officer

I have recently written to all the Regional Tourist Boards giving details of the teams in their area. I know that some teams do have a good relationship with their local T.I.C.s but I thought it wouldn't hurt to jog their memories. It would also be helpful if you could let me have copies of your summer programme and also to mention the Morris Federation in any correspondence.

A similar letter has also gone to local radio stations. In my own experience, they are keen to have you on the air for general interest items on Morris - it can usually be coupled with details of a dance tour.

On the subject of summer programmes, please don't forget that I keep a file of posters and handouts etc. Quite a few teams sent me copies last year and I hope even more will do so this year.

The display panel that some of you may have seen at Dancing England still needs more photos - so if you have some nice ones of your side please let me have copies, as I plan to display it at various festivals this year.

Hope you all enjoy the summer's dancing and I look forward to seeing you all in Derby in September.

Sue Marshall

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BELLS

Roger Baker, who supplies bells for Morris Ring members, can supply you at the following rates:-

7/8" - £9.20 per hundred
1 1/8" - £10.80 " "
1 3/8" - £12.50 " "

No extras. Any quantities.
Cheques with orders:-

Roger Baker
10 Oldlands Hall,
Herons Ghyll,
Nr. Uckfield,
SUSSEX

SOUTH HERTS

Breakspear Morris, a new female Cotswold morris side, is struggling to start up in the Watford area, which is currently dominated by NW sides. More recruits would be welcomed rapturously!

Please contact:-

Elaine Emery
5 High Street
Bedmond
Abbots Langley
WATFORD
WD5 0QP
Tel: Kings Langley 65083

CLOGMAKERS DIRECTORY

by Duncan Broomhead.
2nd Edition now available,
Price 30p + p&p. Full of
lovely hand-drawn illustrations
of clogs and their patterns.
Available from Duncan (see
"BUZZ")

BUZZ

Back issues Nos. 1 - 6
available, price 35p + p&p.
These contain much information
on NW Morris, including old
team pictures and notations.
Available from:-
Duncan Broomhead
23 Bray Close,
Cheadle Hulme,
CHESHIRE
SK8 6DQ

PUBLICATIONS

For general news of
recent publications,
see the Technical
Officer's News in
this Newsletter.