

The Morris Federation



NEWSLETTER

Autumn 1998

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.

ADVERTISING

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

Enquiries concerning any form of advertising through the Morris Federation should be addressed to the MF Newsletter Editor.



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President's Prologue

I write this having just come back from Sidmouth, where my own team, New Esperance, have been one of the booked teams as a "Town" team as opposed to being an arena team. It has certainly been a year of hard work, with the main focus being on being good for Sidmouth - not that the team doesn't strive to be good all year around, but there is something about performing in front of an audience, most of whom know what they are watching. It sharpens the mind, gives a little extra to the dance. The team want to give of their best, take a pride in what they are doing, but also are aware that each Morris dance is impacting on the public image of the Morris.

The outgoing Squire of the Ring used to refer to himself as the spiritual leader of the Ring. I was never quite sure whether he was serious or not, but the passion that discussing the Morris can evoke in people certainly indicates that the feelings run deep, and that people have a sense of Guardianship about the Morris, both in preserving the dances in the form in which Sharp first recorded them (thus taking a snapshot of the dances at the turn of the century), and in allowing the Morris to develop, evolve and change.

Dances from the Cotswold and North West Morris seem to maintain their general shape, although some points of style may vary. I recall Roy Dommert saying that he taught the North West dance- Knutsford, at a workshop, and that five years later he had recorded 17 different variants of the same dance. Some were obviously remembered versions from his workshop, whereas others were second or third hand variants, or from totally different sources. Whatever happens, the dance develops in a way that is meaningful to the team.

In my own team, we do two Cotswold traditions, and then have developed our

own dance, based on four people, which can be done with 4,8 or 12. I've left the team and come back several times, and it has been interesting to see how the dance develops- I have to remember to stop doing the side-steps the way we did them in 1982, but how we do them now.- I just revert back to the way I first learnt- not the revised version. But if the side folds (please no!) what would happen to our dances. What should we record- the way we first devised them, or how we are doing them now. Should we take time to record them every five years, as a snapshot in time, or wait until we have no need of them.

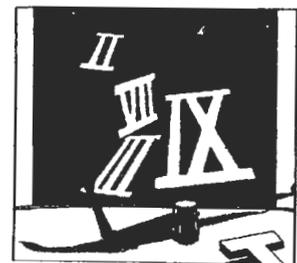
How do you record what you do ? Very few people are able to communicate what it is that they do so that the other person can grasp it first time. The oral tradition is you do it like that.- how do we convey that?

Nowadays we have so many ways of recording beyond the written word -video tape is one way - but you try working out how High Spen Rapper do their Bulldog figure from the video. It is not as simple as a straight look into the camera.

I do not think that there are any easy answers to any of this. The main thing is to enjoy what you do, and if you feel that you have something that you will want to pass on to others, then make sure that you do record it in some means. If you do not want to share the notation with others while you are dancing it, that's fine, the Morris Federation have a closed archive. But if you have something good that you want to pass on, then you need to collect and notate it yourselves.

Dance well, and prosper

Janet Dowling



Editorial

A more modest edition this quarter. I think many of us are still involved in the Summer reveries, indeed the Season is still far from over with many sides being busy well into October. Apologies therefore, for the late publication of this issue.

As we are still awaiting confirmation of dates and venues, Events information will appear in the next issue, but if you have any queries please contact Jethro Anderson. (See back page for contact details).

An addendum to Trefor Owen's article in the Summer edition: referring to John the Fish trading as Dandy Clogs, the notes should read, "not making MANY nowadays", apologies for this error.

This month Janet Dowling has included an article "Key Figures in the History of the Morris" and the person about whom she writes is Mary Neal. We would like to include this as an occasional series, and invite you to write in about someone you feel has had a key role to play in the history of the Morris; this could include some of the Headington or Bampton dancers like William Kimber or Jinky Wells, Sharp, or recent collectors like Roy Dommett.

You may like to be reminded of copy dates and publishing dates throughout the year, they are:

copy date 1st November	published 1st December
copy date 1st February	published 1st March
copy date 1st May	published 1st June
copy date 1st August	published 1st September

(or thereabouts!)

Presidents Prologue: Janet reports on festival performances and Guardianship of the Morris, preserving dances, and allowing them to develop, evolve and change. How and when to record your dances, and communicating them to others.

General Beth Neill: AGM information & suggestions. Current membership queries. Volunteers required to produce contact prints of archive negatives, please contact Beth.

Financial Services Rachel Pinkney: Public Liability Insurance has now been renewed. The

travelling shop, will cease to travel to all Federation events, except the AGM, so goods will be sold by mail order only in future. The conference book "The Good, Bad and the Ugly" is now sold out.

My thanks to all those who have contributed articles for this newsletter, namely, Eileen Lea, who informed us of the death of Pauline Rayner of Three Shires, a tribute to her is included in this issue.

Ruth Condon for her report on InJigNation, a day of dance for jig dancers held in Brighton.

Alan & Doris Corsini of Dublin City Morris Dancers, stories of their "marathon" 21st Birthday celebrations...read on!!

And finally to Dan Johnson, information about where he is currently photographing Morris dancing, get in touch with him if you wish to have some photo's taken, or feature in his future exhibition .

Janet Dowling is also planning May Day 1999 early, please be thinking about your plans and let her know as soon as possible what you are doing and where you will be. She has also included some more sightings of Morris in the media, again let her know about anything you have done or seen.

So, thats all for this issue, do send photo's and stories of your participation in the many great events which have taken place this summer, and enjoy what is left of the season. We have ordered sunshine for the AGM, which will make a pleasant change from the recent perpetually damp weather, lets hope it finds us!

Jude Nancarrow



General

By now you should all have received a formal notice of the AGM, together with agenda items. Please read and think about the topics. If you really can't get a representative to the AGM, you could send in comments to me. FlagCrackers seem to have put together a very good weekend.

Please note that not having a dancing team available for Saturday does not preclude you from attending the AGM on Sunday! If you're local why not just come and watch the dancing at the main stand, even if you can't join in. See you there!

- We are still trying to check on current membership. Please, if you know that any of these teams have ceased to exist, can you let us know - and if they are still going, remind them they haven't rejoined!

Black Dog; Black Shuck Borderline; Bloxham; Captain Ruxton's; Clydeside; Devon Violets; Fishbone Ash; Handforth; Hogshead; Infamous Audreys; Knickerbocker Glory; Paradise Islanders; Riches to Rags, Thrales Rapper, Women on the Wold

- Is there anyone out there who has a darkroom and likes printing/photography? We have negatives of all the photos in the Morris Federation archive and it seemed like a good idea a few years ago to get contact prints made of them all to facilitate identifying the right one when we are asked for a specific print. My husband did volunteer but that was before the arrival of our son and prompt loss of much hobby time! So they linger on my shelves and I would love to see the job passed on to someone else! If you feel you can do even a few films worth then please get in touch.

- A minor error crept in when I sent out the Appendix for the Members Manual - I wrote that the Food Safety article was May 1995 when it should have said May 1993 - thank you to the lady who pointed that out to me.

Beth Neill

Financial Services

You will be pleased to know the Public Liability Insurance has been renewed for another year to 30th August 1999, therefore you are covered to the end of the year when your subscription finishes. To ensure continuing cover make sure you return your registration form before the end of the year. These should reach you in November, if for some reason you do not receive one, please let me know.

- The committee have decided that the travelling shop is no longer a viable proposition, the only exception being the AGM, so in future all goods will be sold by post. A list of goods for sale will be published in the Newsletter each quarter.

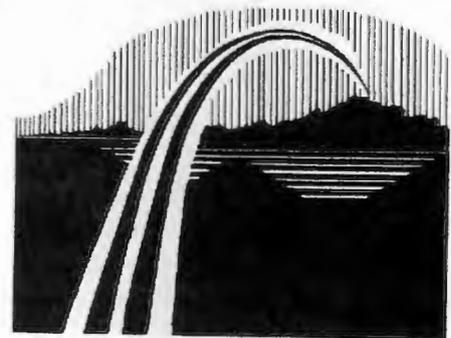
- Two new items of stock are: a leather badge - MF logo on gold on a black background. Very smart. A leather key ring - MF logo in colour on a natural background. Both these items cost £1.00 including post and packing.

All copies of the conference book "The Good, Bad and the Ugly" are sold out.

- I try to keep a good supply of all goods. and send the order on the day of receipt, as long as the Post Office is open.

Looking forward to seeing you at the AGM,

Rachel Pinkney.



In Remembrance

Three Shires



Three Shires Mourn the Passing of Pauline Rayner

There are teams all over the country who will mourn the loss of one of our dancers, Pauline Rayner, none more so than her own team.

Pauline was with Three Shires since its birth in 1990. Always an active member, she agreed last year to accept the position of Secretary of the group, but in January this year Pauline was struck by cancer, and in May was given the news that she only had 3-6 months to live. Nevertheless, her strong disposition kept her cheerful and smiling until Pauline finally succumbed on 14th July.

Wherever she danced she will be remembered for her friendliness, lovely smile and warm personality. A youthful 50 plus, she could leave younger members in the shade with her boundless energy and enthusiasm, and was always a reliable member for any forthcoming events.

We talked, laughed and danced- dancing being one of the loves of her life.

Pauline will be missed by us all.

COME TO THE 13th ANNUAL

MADCAP MORRIS

Border Morris House-party

Malvern, 4th-6th Dec 1998

- Friday Evening - Morris & social dances in local pub room.
- Saturday Morning - W/S - Morris Dances of Hereford, Worcs, & Salop.
- Saturday Mid-day - Informal dancing in kit & lunch at another local pub.
- Saturday Afternoon - W/S - New dances in the Border Morris style.
- Saturday Evening - Buffet & Ale (various morris & social dances).
- Sunday - Border Morris tour on foot around the Malvern Hills.

Those who come form one big team for a 48-hour party, all public and private dancing being in multiple mixed sets with a big band, so the invite is for individuals rather than teams. Ragshirts are preferred but other morris kit acceptable. Fool & animal costumes welcome. Headgear & face painting optional. Dances for the Sunday tour will be taught on Saturday morning. The workshops and Sunday tour spots feature Border Morris only, but Cotswold & NW Morris and folk dances of many kinds also occur during the two evenings and the two lunch spots. Join in everything as best you can. The aim is informality, almost anything goes, and lots of food, drinking and dancing. Workshops for 60 people are held in the village hall at the bottom of the drive to Folly Cottage. The house and extensive outbuildings can now accommodate 50 for indoor-camping. Cooked breakfasts available. Fri & Sat pubs are within walking distance on West Malvern Rd (which is the north section of the B4232 on the west side of the Malvern Hills). Those who want more privacy or quiet than is possible in a house full of people determined to party into the early hours can obtain B&B close by.

Cost: £20 includes all food from Friday tea-time to Sunday tea-time, indoor camping, beer Sat evening. No reservations without payment. This is a popular, well publicised event generally fully booked by mid September. Organiser: Mike Salter, Folly Cottage, 151 West Malvern Rd, Malvern, Worcs WR14 4AY. Tel: 01684 565211 dayeve.

Survey of Younger People in the Morris

I had hoped to have the full list of teams who could field a team of under 18s for this newsletter. Unfortunately, the computer has been reformatted, and we can't find the file on the back up (why do these things happen to me!!)

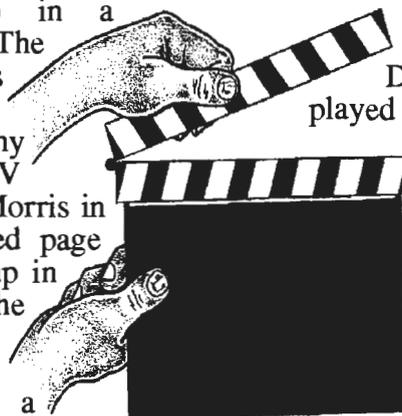
I will re-enter all the names and addresses, and it will go out with the next newsletter. If in the meantime you want to have a copy (to link up with another team with younger people, to book a team with younger people etc) let me know and I will send you a copy when I have got it finished.

Sorry!

Janet Dowling

Morris In the Media

Redbornstoke appeared in one scene (about 15 seconds of transmitted time) in a production of Oscar Wilde's *The Canterville Ghost* which was broadcast by ITV on Boxing Day afternoon. They have no idea why they were asked as the TV company obviously had Border Morris in mind. There was a photocopied page from Dave Jones' book pinned up in the wardrobe trailer and the costumes were based on that. The TV company also blackened their faces, and they danced a slightly adjusted version of the Ampthill opening figure (Redbornstoke's own dance). It's interesting that ITV were blacking up dancers, when BBC were refusing to film dancers who did dance with blacked faces!



do to the French, but they scare the wits out of me! And of course Will Kemp, that famous Morris Dancer of the *Nine Days Wonder*, played the comic character roles in many of Shakespeares plays.

A century later Aphra Benn (the first woman to earn her living as a playwright) had the comic character in *The Rover* - (dressed in strange clothing, and putting on an old rusty sword and buff belt) saying Now how like a Morris dancer I am equipped. There are several other examples of apparently uncomplimentary references to Morris dances in Restoration plays, but always identified with an English character.

More recently there was a programme on BBC on writing CVs to get you that particular job. They were extolling the virtues of getting a professional CV writer to do the writing for you, but pointed out that it might be that special something that gets you the job - cut to presenter with man in suit inspecting a CV - ha says the man in suit I see we have something in common - Morris dancing ! whereupon man retrieves hankies from pocket and proceeds to dance a jig. Exit presenter with a worried look on his face! At least the Morris dancer was a person in authority (at least I think it might be good!)

But whatever Morris dancers get portrayed as, at the end of the day they are the most easily recognised representation of English Folk Culture!

Please let me have your snippets about Morris in the Media - either something that you have done, or seen, read or heard.

Janet Dowling

But it's always been like that - the Morris dancer has been held up as an easily identifiable English icon of fun. Even Shakespeare uses the Morris dancer. In *Henry V* the Dauphin discusses the prospect of war with the English and tells the French king "go fort hand let us do it with no show of fear - no, with no more than if we heard that England were busied with a Whitsun Morris-dance." I think he might have been singing a different tune if he had seen some of our modern Morris dancers- to paraphrase the Duke of Wellington- I don't know what they



NOTICEBOARD

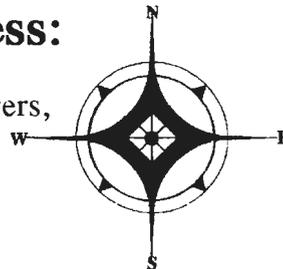


Tanglefoot Oxfordshire are desperately seeking a musician- accordion/melodian, for a lively step- clog side. Practices are on Monday nights (at the moment) in Oxfordshire.

Please contact Fiona 01376 820211.

Change of address:

Please note that Lynne Rogers, Archive Officer has moved, her new address is:



4, Castlemead Road,
Wadborough,
Stroud,
Glos GL5 3SF

Tel: 01453 762752

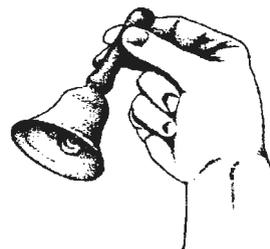
Calling all Morris teams in Kent, Hampshire, Sussex and Surrey:

The Listings Editor of a new(ish) magazine called Downs Country would be pleased to hear about your winter programmes- more specifically if you are dancing out on Boxing Day.

You will receive a free entry advertising your presence - no strings.

Please send your programme to:

Richard Gahagan,
15, Rodney Crescent,
Ford,
Arundel,
West Sussex
BN17 0BD



Frecks in the Peaks

Same But Different!

3-4 October

*Join us again in scenic Eyam (ref: SK2176)
All we need is better weather!*

Friday meet-up from 8pm. in the Bulls Head Inn, opposite Eyam Church

Saturday workshop: 10am-1pm, Eyam Mechanics Hall, next to the Bull
This is a chance to learn/teach new dances, and practice old favourites. Cost £2
The dance selection is based on Border stick and hanky dances, both traditional eg. Upton, Pershore, White Ladies Aston, & Much Wenlock, and more recent eg. Twiglet, Dilwyn, California, Penn Cross, & Welly Boot
Lunch choices: try out the fish n' chips at Just Cooking; investigate the Miners Arms; or stay in the Mechanics.

Dance spots: Outside the Miners Arms; also the village triangle. Dance on historic stone flags at Eyam Hall;

T-time: Relax with sticky buns at Eyam Hall's tea rooms and craft centre. Plenty of room to dance in the courtyard if still enthusiastic.

Evening session: the Royal Oak up the hill has a good selection of food, and space outside for a set or two.

Sunday Weather and energy permitting, the plan is a stroll up to The Barrel Inn at Bretton, returning via the Bulls Head Inn at Foolow.

Accommodation:

- Free camping behind Eyam Hall; includes toilets and a small shelter.
 - Basic indoor camping in Eyam Mechanics Hall at a cost of £2.50 per night
- If you prefer more comfort, try the following:
- **B&B** at the Miners Arms (01433) 630 853 from £50 ensuite double.
 - **Eyam YHA** (01433) 630 335 members £8.00 (short walk above village).
 - **B&B** Mr C.G. Brackley (01433) 630 381 £24.00
 - **Self catering** Mrs D. Sammans (01433) 630 957 at £20 per night.

Frecks in the Peaks badges; and dance & music notation available - please ask
Everyone welcome - especially beginners and musicians.

If you have them, bring rag jackets or similar; bells; sticks & hankys; and photos.

More info from Susannah on (0114) 266 0398, or S.Diamond@Sheffield.ac.uk

Key Figures in the History of the Morris

Occasional Series part 1- Mary Neal

So who was Mary Neal anyway?

Most people with a sense of the history of the Morris Revival will be aware that the revival is generally dated to 1899, when Cecil Sharp first met Headington Quarrey. However nothing else seems to have taken place until 1907, when the collecting of the Morris dances began in earnest, leading to Cecil Sharp publishing the Morris Books, from which many of the traditions danced today draw their source material. So what happened?

Sharp recorded the meeting in his notebooks, and took it no further. He was a music teacher to the two young princes, which took up most of his time. He developed an interest in folk songs, and joined the group of people collecting them at the time. He felt strongly that the songs were a link to the nations natural music, and that they should only be collected from people who had been untainted by education and modern music. He had an article published on some songs he had collected in Somerset.

Mary Neal was born in Birmingham, of a well-to-do family. She had been influenced by the publication of *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* - detailing the poor conditions in which people were living in. She moved to London and joined one of the Settlement Missions, based on the work of St Francis of Assisi. She set up a club for working girls, and developed a tailoring establishment - called *Maison Esperance*, offering good working conditions. She heard of the folk songs, and approached Sharp asking if they would be appropriate for the girls in her club. Sharp was delighted with this saying that by a spiritual sixth sense, these working girls would reclaim their lost inheritance.

The result was electrifying. Mary Neal reported it was as if the club had gone mad, they were perfectly intoxicated with the music. Pleased with the effect, Mary Neal then asked Sharp if he knew of any dances to go with the songs. Referring to his notebooks, he was able to give her the

address of the dancers he had seen six years previously. She took a train, and a hansom cab, met William Kimber, and invited him to London to teach the dances to her girls. They performed them at the club Christmas party, and encouraged by their reception, did a public performance of singing and dancing, with Sharp giving a lecture.

The consequence was that the *Esperance* girls were asked to put on demonstrations around the country and to teach the dances in schools and other places. Mary Neal invited over 30 traditional dancers to come up to London and teach the girls, who in turn taught others. The school boards took an interest, and Sharp collaborated with Herbert MacIlwaine, (musical director of the *Esperance* club) to produce the first of the *Morris Books*, dedicated to the *Esperance Morris*. Sharp noted the music, while MacIlwaine notated the steps from one of the *Esperance* girls, Florrie Warren.

Having started on a common path, however, Mary Neal and Sharps views diverged. Influenced by his experience in the folk song collecting, Sharp was keen to preserve the dances untainted, to keep them in the form that was an expression of their enthusiasms, based on the incidents of a common life and common work. In 1907, the magazine *Punch* published a cartoon of three male Morris dancers and three female Morris dancers, led by Mr Punch.

Mary Neal saw this as a positive step, advertising their plans to set up a national movement for folk dances. However Sharp saw this as a threat, of the Morris dance being sucked in to the ethos of *Merrie England* which presented a saccharine view of the past, and being changed beyond recognition.

In addition, Mary Neal was also developing a political interest. She was at the first meeting of the *Womens Social and Political Union*, taking the minutes of the meeting. Although not active herself, the *Esperance* club danced at many of the *Suffragette* events. Sharp was unhappy with the suffrage movement (his sister Evelyn was also active and had been arrested on one occasion) and felt that it was not appropriate.

Attempts to set up a national movement failed, mainly because Sharp tried to put too many restrictions on how it would operate. During this time Sharp began collecting the Morris dances on his own, and published the second volume without reference to the Esperance club. There began an acrimonious relationship between them, with Mary Neal having a more relaxed approach to the dance, to learn from the traditional dancers and pass on both the steps and the spirit of the dance, whereas Sharp felt it needed to be more disciplined, with people trained to teach the dance uniformly. At one point he declined to let the traditional dancers participate in the training of teachers because they were doing it differently from the way he had collected it.

Mary Neal was then invited to the USA to teach Morris dancing. Taking Florrie Warren she set sail, with a full programme of engagements. However when she landed she was advised that all her engagements had been cancelled by a friend of Cecil Sharp in New York, on account of the Education Authorities having thrown her over. Undeterred, Mary Neal stayed and managed to reinstate the majority of her appointments.

On her return to England she found the Education Authorities were proposing to follow her approach, but in the meantime, while she was out of the country, Sharp had taken over many of her potential engagements. With Clive Careys help, she collected the material for the first of the two Esperance Morris Books, published in 1911.

There followed a period where the argument and counter argument between Mary Neal and Sharp were carried out in the letter columns of National Newspapers and magazines. Both trying to put their point of view, and becoming frustrated with the other. Trying to decide what a traditional dancer was, where Sharp challenged, she would counter using Sharps arguments against him. In time Sharp, with his social influence, academic standing and publications, established the foundations of the English Folk Dance Society.

With the coming of the war in 1914, Mary Neal turned her attention to other areas, and to all intents and purposes left the arena. Sharp died in 1924.

In 1934 the Morris Ring was founded, and it must have given Mary Neal some satisfaction to have been approached by Francis Fryer for advice on the Morris. He said that the attitude of the Morris Ring was not quite the same as that of the EFDS, and that the latter had had to sit up and take notice of the Ring's policy of going back to Wells and Kimber for information about

the Bampton and Headington dances, disregarding where necessary the book versions.

In 1937 Mary Neal was awarded the CBE for services in connection with the revival of folk songs and dances.

In her later years she fell under the influence of Rolf Gardiner, and in trying to understand why she had failed in the revival of the Morris, she took on his beliefs that Morris dancing was masculine ceremonial, and that by putting women on to this masculine rhythm " had quite innocently and ignorantly broken a law of cosmic ritual, and stirred up disharmony which became active as time went on.. I believe now that this misuse of the Morris dance was the reason for the bitter estrangement between my colleagues and myself, the cause of which was as unknown to them as it was to me".

Mary Neal died in 1944.

The contribution she made to the revival of the Morris dance outside the existing traditional teams, was very significant. Without her input, organisational skill, enthusiasm and vigour, Sharp may never have been inspired or enabled to take an interest in the Morris dance. Although they had a common aim to begin with, they diverged with how they wanted to develop the dance. It is unfortunate that Mary Neal felt that she had fallen foul of some cosmic force by introducing women into the dances, rather than recognising some of the social pressures she was working against.

The saddest part, is that the issue was not so much which one of them was right, but why one of them had to be wrong. In this day and age both points of view are needed and greatly valued.

Bibliography

Fryer F 1938 Letter to Mary Neal held in Vaughn Williams Library

Judge R 1989 Mary Neal and the Esperance Morris in Folk Music Journal vol5 no5

Neal M 1911 Esperance Morris Book Curwen

Swift S 1998 The Forgotten Mary Neal - the true spirit of Morris dancing

Dramatised narration performed at Sidmouth Folk Festival 1998.

Janet Dowling

MayDay- Early Planning

You may recall that we collated the information on Mayday this year, and published it on the Internet. Although we started early, it wasn't early enough, and I have had feedback from a number of publications and the tourist board that they would have appreciated the information earlier.

So- this is the call for MayDay information.

If you know that your team will be dancing out on MayDay in a certain area (even if you haven't finalised the precise spot), please let me know as soon as possible, and no later than the end of November to be included in the piece that I will be sending out to different agencies. If it gets to me after the end of November it will be included in the list on the Morris Dancing Web Site, to which agencies will be referred. If your team are organising a weekend celebration, let me know about that as well.

Check first that your team are happy with your plans to be publicised as some teams feel that their MayDay celebration is personal to the team, and might not want other people turning up.

I will need the following information (in this format please)

County
Town (and/or general area eg bluebell common)
Date/s of event
Name of team hosting
Style of dance
Name of other teams attending if any (within reason- if it is more than say five, name five and then say plus 4 other teams)
Styles of dance
Specific details of venue (if available) when, where
Contact name and telephone no.
E-mail address + name
Website address (if you have a website don't forget to put on details of your tour)
Thanks

Janet Dowling

PS I am not restricting this list to MF members, so if you know others who are not MF , let them know too.



Report on InJigNation

a day of dance for jig dancers



The Dance of Death by Frome Valley

JIGGING ABOUT IN BRIGHTON

The idea of having a day dedicated to jigging originated from Simon Pipe who had two aims in mind - to provide an opportunity to give jigs an airing and to see whether the jig could attract and sustain the interest of an audience. Brighton seemed the ideal venue for testing this out and the circumstances were in favour - not too hot, not too cold, not too wet - plenty of people about including many overseas visitors.

There were seven sets of performers (the Outside Capering Crew, The Bee team, Fi Locke (Mad Jacks), Kirstie Mair (Stroud), Ditchling Jigs, Barry Honeysett (Great Western) and Frome Valley) in

groups of one, twos, threes or fours, announced as among the finest in the country. Each stand was carefully staged to ensure continuity and contrast and all the tricks of the trade were employed to draw an audience and entertain them. Onlookers were treated to the straight and the wacky, including a broom dance, dancing musicians, bacca pipes, dancing on fire and musician hoopla. All excellent stuff.

In Brighton a crowd can pick and choose. The competition for an audience in the Lanes is fierce with amplified South American musicians, saxophonists, didgeridooists, guitarists providing alternative entertainment (and with more in the way of spectacular street performances going on at the beach). Competition for space was also challenged by a regular flow of newly-weds in Rolls Royces foraging through the crowd outside the Royal Pavilion (a new venue for marriage ceremonies). Those who took the trouble to see what was going on seemed to enjoy it, but the finer points of a good jig may not have been appreciated by the audience and passers-by may not be tempted to stop and see what is going on.

So did the day achieve its objectives? It certainly provided an opportunity for jiggers to demonstrate their wares. The quality of the performances without a doubt provided a worthwhile investment of time for morris enthusiasts and perhaps a bit more publicity within morris circles would have helped in that regard. But for the general punter, the mixture of acts may have been too "bitty" and the refinements too subtle to draw great numbers. None the less a good size audience was had for most of the day.

Ruth Condon
Cuckoos Nest.



Simon Pipe & Brain Mander, The Outside Capering Crew who organised the day

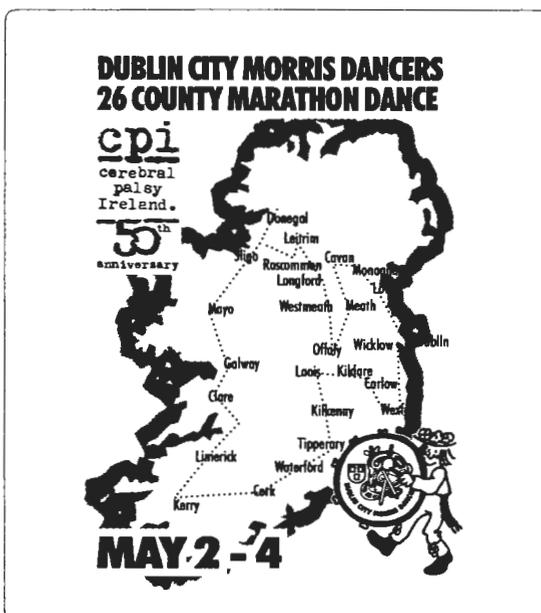
Dublin City Morris Dancers



Celebrate their 21st Birthday

At 20:00 hours on the evening of Friday May 1st, twelve dancers and musicians of Dublin City Morris Dancers (DCMD), helped by a number of past members, gathered at the bandstand on promenade in Bray, Co Wicklow. However this was to be no ordinary Mayday tour. This was the first stand of a tour which, over the next 3 days of the bank holiday weekend, would see us dancing in all 26 counties of the Republic of Ireland! The stand was the culmination of weeks of

military style planning and a timetable which bore a striking similarity to that of an American package tour. The organising committee, although maybe not the ordinary dancers, were glad that the tour was finally underway. After a rather chilly night in a church hall we boarded two mini-buses at 08:00 hours and departed for Gory in Co Wexford. Unfortunately we found the road closed due to a shooting incident so lost half an hour on the detour. The tour continued by way of Carlow town, and Athy (Co Kildare), Portlaoise (Co Laois), to Kilkenny Shopping Centre and a large crowd. We then headed for Clonmel (Co Tipperary), Lismore (Co Waterford) & Fermoy (Co Cork). The overnight stop was in the small village of Kilcummin, Co Kerry, but owing to navigational problems and our inability to comprehend the local lingo we were somewhat late arriving. However after dancing for the residents at the local nursing home, the local pub made us welcome and some of us even managed to finish (!) the day by joining in some furious Kerry sets. A short night in a local sports hall and we were on the road again to Adare (Co Limerick) where a party of American tourists thought we were



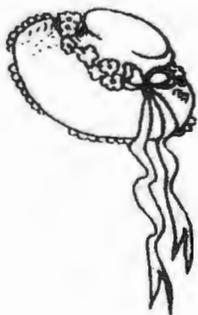
laid on as part of their package and there was therefore no need to put anything in the hat, Ennis (Co Clare) to Galway City and warm summer sunshine. In Claremorris (Co Mayo) the weather took a turn for the worse and by Sligo town there was a heavy drizzle falling which may account for the smallest crowd (one man and a dog) and the smallest bag (1.50) of the tour. We pressed on to Bundoran (Co Donegal) and Roscommon town to finish in the village of Drumshanbo in Co Leitrim. After another even

shorter night in a community hall we made a dash back to Dublin via Longford town, Mullingar (Co Westmeath) and Edenderry (Co Offaly). Kells (Co Meath) proved difficult to find, resulting in two mini-buses doing a rather neat half gip across the road as they tried to end up pointing in the same, and hopefully right, direction. Then with spirits rising and the end in sight, to Bailborough (Co Cavan), Carrickmacross (Co Monaghan) & Ardee (Co Louth), arriving in Howth (Co Dublin), much to the surprise of the waiting crowd only about 1 hour late! As a result of this tour we would like to claim a number of records, quite apart from the one of dancing 26 stands in three days, each in a different county. The first must be for the latest 1st pint on a tour (11:30 pm) and maybe also for the last (1:30 am). The second must be for having the entire side out of their sleeping bags (and more or less awake) by 7:00 am on three consecutive mornings and without the use of undue force! The tour also raised a number of interesting questions which we feel require further research. Why is it that you can contact anywhere in the country on a mobile phone but you can't contact the mini-bus 100 metres behind? Why does the person with the largest air-bed always have the smallest pump? Why did

Dublin City Morris Dancers



the Squire, who sprained his ankle in the second dance, make a miraculous recovery towards the end of the last day? Do people actually live in Sligo town and if they do, where do they vanish to on Sunday afternoons? Why are there no signposts to the town of Kells (Co Meath)? DCMD are renowned for marking anniversaries in crazy ways; for instance for our tenth anniversary we danced all the 74 miles from Dublin to Kilkenny. Of course this latest mad venture was not only for our own amusement, although most if not all participants enjoyed it. The main purpose was to raise money for Cerebral Palsy Ireland. Sponsorship from friends and a few companies, together with the 1,500 collected during the tour resulted in a net profit of 4,150 for this charity. DCMD are already thinking about equally mad ideas for our next major anniversary, although the few remaining founder members have a feeling that it may have to be considerably less energetic than this present escapade.



Bourne Bumpers Morris

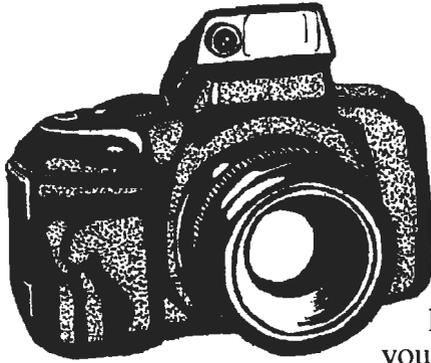
OLD BUMPERS REQUIRED

During the next year Bourne Bumpers Morris will be celebrating our 25th Anniversary. We are currently planning several events to be held during 1999, including a ceilidh and a weekend of dance locally.

We would very much like to invite any previous members of the group to join us in our celebrations, and are anxious to trace as many ex members as possible. If any readers are 'old Bumpers', or know the whreabouts of any, please contact us:

Margaret Rustici
77 Yeatmimster Road,
Canford Heath
Poole
Dorset
Tel: 01202 605411

Letter from Dan Johnson- photojournalist



The reason for this letter is to let you know precisely what I am up to in case it's of any interest to either the Federation or member sides.

Basically, I'm photographing Morris (all forms and including Mumming) in the area (for the time being) south of the Thames and east of the M3. I'm not really a Morris freak - I just happen to enjoy it when it's done well, and I think it ought to be encouraged!

I'm basically a photojournalist at heart and heavily into people pictures, so the emphasis is on the dancers and the dancing as an entertainment ie I'm not interested in whether everybody's step-perfect, and in fact probably wouldn't realise if they were....

At present I've only got together about 100 decent slides since May Day, but it's encouraging that they're getting better as I get more to grips with what is not at all an easy subject. One thing I have learned, though, is that an awful lot of people I know who are otherwise intelligent think that Morris Dancing = Hanky Dances Done By Men In White With Bells On. They also seem to think that most if not all sides are the same one, and don't know where to see Morris if they want to - which some wouldn't mind doing.

That's given me something to aim for with my pictures - an exhibition which can, if nothing else, perhaps go round the libraries in Kent and Sussex after next season. If it does come to pass, I intend getting some of the

local sides to incorporate their own publicity material and who knows dancing at the library?

Hence the thought that you ought to know what I'm trying to do, because the sort of pictures I'm trying to take are exactly the sort of pictures which a magazine might use to illustrate Morris - and for all I know you might get asked if you know a source.

Similarly, if you get to hear of any sides who want professional standard publicity photos at a cost to them of only what travel, film and processing costs me, I'm game to see what I can do for them.

I'd like to spend a lot more time on this than I can afford to do, but unfortunately I've got to earn a living.

Still, the learning curve's steepening up nicely, and by the end of this season I'll at least know how to photograph sides well!

Meanwhile, at least you know what I'm trying to do.

Yours sincerely

Dan Johnson

01892 665776





GOODS LIST



The Morris Federation

The Morris Federation

THE MORRIS FEDERATION GOODS LIST		Price
SWEATSHIRTS	Round neck, long sleeve with MF name and logo	
Sizes	S-M-L-XL	
Colours	Raspberry-Royal Blue-Yellow-White-Black-Navy-Jade	£13.50
T' SHIRTS	Round neck, short sleeve with MF name and logo	
Sizes	M-L-XL-Few Small at £4.50	
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BADGES	Enamel-1" dia. with MF logo on burgundy background	£1.70
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	Leather - with MF logo in colour on natural background	£1.00
STICKERS	4" dia. bearing MF name and logo	
	Self adhesive for music cases, files etc	£0.50
	Window suitable for car and house windows	£0.50
COLOURING BOOK	A4 spiral bound-drawings of dancers and musicians-13 teams details of kit colours provided	sale- £1.00
BELLS	Size: 5/8" - 17p each	£16.50-100
	Size: 7/8" - 18p each	£17.50-100
	Size: 1" - 19p each	£18.50-100
	Size:1.1/8" - 20p each	£19.50-100
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	PLEASE ADD £1.00 P.P TO EACH BELL ORDER REGARDLESS OF SIZE OF ORDER	
ORDER FORM		
QUANTITY	ITEMS	PRICE
	Make all cheques payable to THE MORRIS FEDERATION	
Name	Address	Phone No
Please return to :	Rachel Pinkney, 15 High Street. Standon Ware Herts SG11 1LA	
		01920-821694

Summer Snapshots



Durham Folk Party



Knockhundred Shuttles, Towersey



New Esperance, Sidmouth

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AGM - ORGANISATION Jethro Anderson
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BOOK LOANS Lynn Rogers
CIOFF Lynn Rogers
(Dancing at overseas folk festivals)
Derek Schofield
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MORRIS CONFERENCE Lynn Rogers
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NEWSLETTER Judi Nancarrow
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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. Hand-written **MUST** be legible. **ALL CONTRIBUTIONS MUST REACH THE EDITOR BY THE COPY DATE**

DISK 3.5 - any density OPERATING

SYSTEM DOS format

FORMAT Textfile / ASCII, WordPerfect5.1

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 1998

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