

The Morris Federation



Newsletter
Spring 2000

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 Newsletter Editor.

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PRESIDENT'S PROLOGUE

As your new President I would first like to thank you for supporting me at the AGM last September, and I hope that I will be able to serve your interests and the Morris Federation during my term of office. I also would like to thank Mortimor's Morris for organising such a super weekend for the Federation.

For those who do not know me here is a summary of my background and my aims while I am in office.

I have been the Foreman and principle musician of Ditchling Morris for 13 of the 15 years existence

My introduction to the Morris was while working in Cyprus in 1981 where I was a member of a side called the Amazing Headbanger Morris! We were in great demand and were booked for all the wine festivals and other similar events. On returning to the UK, and being hooked on the Morris, I joined Brighton Morris and after a surge of interest in Ditchling, formed Ditchling Morris in 1985, as a family side, dancing mainly Cotswold. The side has expanded to about 30 members and we have diversified into Molly and Border. I spent 2.5 years in Hong Kong with HK Morris, and was volunteered to arrange a tour to the Australian Folk Festival and since returning to the UK have run Morris and Morris music workshops in Chippenham, Swanage, and Broadstairs. Last year Ditchling Morris ran the MF Raglan workshop in Ditchling, having been taught at the feet of the 'masters', Bantam Cocks, after the side disbanded.

My principle aims while President are to:

1 – Foster good relationships with the other Morris organisations.

2 – Work towards a better relationship with the EFDSS, of which I am a member.

3 – Continue and encourage the teaching and performance of the Morris in our schools.

4 – Improve the public image of Morris dancing through the media, so that it will be accepted as essentially an English dance form and sharing the same profile on a par with Irish and Scottish folk dancing.

5 – Improve the standards of Morris dancing performance.

6 – Promote the Morris abroad and maintain links with overseas Morris organisations.

The Dome

Now to come to the point which is very much in our minds at the present time – and this is the 'Dome' of course. Your previous committee under Janet Dowling has worked ceaselessly and closely with the Morris Ring and Open Morris to secure a workable contract for the Morris world. However we know from the media the difficulties that the Dome is encountering and unfortunately I have to advise you that to date it has not been possible to obtain a satisfactory solution. Many of you will have kept the dates that have been allocated free – and I am sure you have declined other engagements. I hope that this is not causing you too many problems. I am in regular contact with Janet, the Morris Ring and Open Morris and we will keep you informed of any positive developments in the future.

As your new President I would like to meet as many of you as possible and will be very happy to visit when you are dancing at a function or

organising a festival. So please contact me as far in advance as possible.

Now to remind you about the other new members of the committee, Fee Lock is our new Secretary, dances with Mad Jacks Morris in Hastings. Fee is a well-known ceilidh caller in the south and her work as a PA and Administrator will be of great value to the Morris Federation.

Adrian Williams joins the committee as the Archive Officer and dances with Redbornstoke and brings his talents as a Research Scientist to the committee.

I am sure the new members, and those continuing, will continue to promote the good image of the Morris. Rhian Collinson continues as the Notation Officer, Rachel Pinkney as Treasurer, Judi Barrett as the Newsletter Editor, and Jethro Anderson as Events Officer. I look forward to working with the committee to promote the Morris Federation's best interests.

Before finishing, I would like to offer, on behalf of the new committee and all Morris Federation sides and members our thanks to those committee members who have just retired. These are of course Janet Dowling, President, Beth Neill, Secretary and Lynn Rogers, Archive Officer and a personal note to thank Janet for her kind assistance and support during the handover period.

Finally before really signing off I would like to add one of Ditchling Morris practice session pointers as a timely reminder before the new season starts to reduce the risk of injury, 'get fit for the Morris, don't use the Morris to get fit'.

Happy dancing,

John Bacon

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Each year I make every effort to get you registration forms etc., to you by the end of November, and am therefore extremely frustrated to get calls from you in January saying you have either lost or not received them. The latter usually means there has been a change of correspondent who hasn't passed them on, or the change was earlier in the year and we were not notified.

Please, therefore make a note to keep us up to date with your correspondents address.

Note should also be taken of the closing date for the Group Personal UK and overseas Insurance which is clearly stated in bold type.

I feel very strongly about these matters as it has been the worst year since I have been in office, for returns.

Thanks, it will save me a lot of time and heartache if these matters are dealt with promptly.

Thanks to all those who did return forms promptly, they certainly kept me busy over the festive season.

Thanks also to those who fill in the charity section of the registration form. The sum notified last year was £24,680.46, which I think was pretty good.

I've had my gripe, now I really do wish you all the very best for 2000.

Cheers,

AGM 2000



THE MORRIS FEDERATION AGM 2000

Hosted by Ryknild Rabble

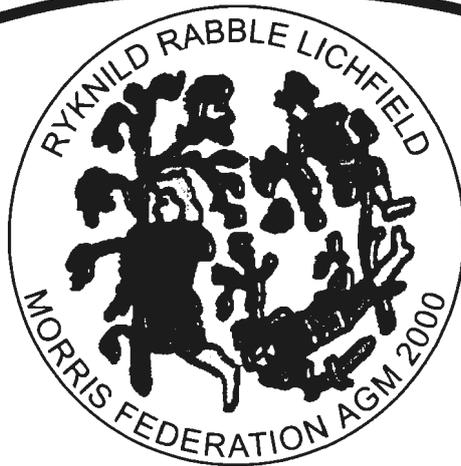
What a capital idea to celebrate the Morris Federation's millennium AGM in the brewing capital of England, Burton - upon - Trent. Your hosts, Ryknild Rabble, invite you to join them from Friday, 29th September to Sunday, 1st October in the town that gave you Marston's "Pedigree", the Bass union system and the Burton Bridge Brewery. And if that isn't enough to wet your appetite, you will be staying at the Ind Coope Sports & Social Club [renamed Belvedere Club] and will be able to enjoy the usual outdoor / indoor camping facilities offered by previous AGM hosts, plus free use of the sports facilities, including squash courts.

There will be dancing tours on Saturday morning and the massed stand will be held at the famous Bass Museum of Brewing in the afternoon. Apart from Admiral, Ambassador, Imperial and Masterpiece, the Bass shire horses, you will be welcomed by the Mayor

of Burton and have free entry to the museum's exhibitions and shops. As part of the Burton Festival, Peeping Tom will be the ceilidh band on Saturday evening and the caller will be that 'man in the hat', Martin Harvey.

So what have you got left on the Sunday, after you have drunk the real ale bar dry and sent two of your less hung-over team members to the AGM meeting? Going home? Nah! Wimps! Ryknild Rabble challenge you to enter a team for the World Beer Barrel Rolling contest through the streets of Burton, another event of the Burton Festival. For details of this and the AGM please contact Adrienne Moss on 01283 - 790088 / e-mail: amm@belgrave.biblio.net . As more information becomes available, it can be seen on the Ryknild Rabble web site at <http://www.risa.demon.co.uk/mfindex.html>.

AGM 2000



ANNOUNCING THE MORRIS FEDERATION AGM 2000

Ryknild Rabble, now in their 10th year, are your hosts for the Morris Federation AGM 2000 to be held on 29th - 30th September and 1st October 2000 at Burton-upon-Trent Staffordshire.

The focal point for the weekend is the prestigious



which offers full facilities including indoor/outdoor camping, caravanning, car parking, children's play area, bars with "real ale", showers, toilets, changing rooms, main hall, sports amenities and a full catering service.

You will be able to enjoy a full programme of events. Friday - Informal Gatherings and Sessions. Saturday - Dance Tours, Massed Stand at the famous **Bass Museum** and Evening Ceilidh with **Peeping Tom** and caller **Martyn Harvey**. Sunday - The AGM 2000.

FOR A GREAT WEEKEND AND TO HAVE YOUR SAY IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU ATTEND AGM 2000

So don't delay, fill in and return the enclosed booking form as soon as possible

For the latest information visit Ryknild Rabble's web page at <http://www.risa.demon.co.uk/mfindex.html>

For further details please contact - Adrienne Moss 01283 790088

EDITORIAL

NOTATION

Here's our first Newsletter of 2000. John Bacon gives his first introduction as the new President of the Federation, and updates information on the Dome.

Rachel Pinkney has an important plea about the punctual return of registration and insurance forms.

Most importantly, information and booking form for the AGM 2000 hosted by Ryknild Rabble.

A second North West dance for six dancers from Trefor Owen, to keep you busy in the run up to the start of the season.

From Westmorland Step and Garland dancers, an article about their trip to Germany, from Three Shires, details of their tenth anniversary celebrations, and from Cathy Sharman, a write up of the Border Workshop held last November in Kent.

We continue the occasional series 'Key Figures in the Morris' with a history of Fred Forster by Ian Craigs and Chris Metherel. This is a series of articles which we would like to continue, so please, if there is someone about whom you wish to write then please do so.

There is also information about the Gloucester Pipe & Tabor symposium, Hastings Jack in the Green and Devon Morris events in April.

Another series which we wish to continue is that of Youth, so please once again send in information photos and articles about your young people dancing, playing, and generally being involved in Morris Dancing.

Our next issue will be due out in June, so please send details and photos of your May Day events. Last year, sadly, we did not have a single item about May Day, so please, even if you don't want to write an article, send a picture.

A reminder to note the change of committee members and addresses, also, please note Rhian Collinson (Notation Officer) change of address and e-mail.

Closing date for submissions for the next issue is 10th May, and the Newsletter should appear on 1st June.

If your article does not appear in this issue, my apologies, it will next time.

Happy Dancing

Jude Barrett

Late in November Oyster Morris hosted a Border workshop lead by John Lewis. There is now a three hour tape of highlights of the day available for £7.50. If anyone wants to buy a copy they should phone me (note the new phone number) and I will arrange for one to be sent to you.

I have moved house and changed phone number since the last Newsletter and still have a lot of boxes unopened. Apart from producing the Border tape I have managed to find time to type up Trefor Owen's "North West Dances for Six - some more building blocks" which appears in this Newsletter. The two parts will be combined and be available as a separate publication in the near future.

Now back to unpacking.....

Rhian Collinson

North West Morris for six dancers - some more building blocks
Trefor Owen

Here are some more moves that can be used in dances for 6 people.

<i>Set formation</i>	<i>Other information</i>
1	2
3	4
5	6

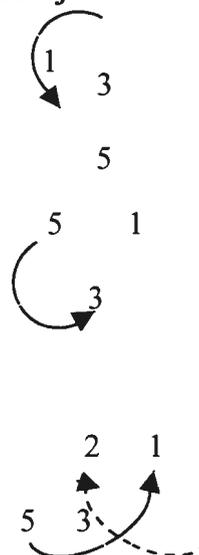
Single steps, Outside foot start.
 Long double-ended sticks.
 On the spot = dancing facing the top with appropriate arm movements.
All figures start facing the top.

Knots

16 steps.

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Movements</i>
1 - 2	Top couples peel out, others in each line move forward and follow a cast-style movement which turns into stars on the outside of the original set.
3 - 4	Turn the stars half way around, outside hand leads by being thrust up to the outside as the move begins, inside hand down at the side. Dancers touch tips of outside sticks as the star is created
5	Continue the stars a further quarter turn.
6 - 8	Change sides, crossing over into the opposite star, the person from the left (odd numbers) passing in front of the person from the right (i.e. 1 in front of 2 etc.). All follow, as a dancer leaves the original star they change hands, dropping the outside hand and raising the inside hand to lead the cross over into the new star.
9 - 11	Turn the new star round fully then...
12 - 14	Cross back to original side, new left line (even numbers) in front of new right line, changing hands as the cross over takes place, new outside hand going up and leading, remaining up until home, other hand sown at the side.
15 - 16	Cast up to original set positions.

path of dancers



Triangles

8 steps.

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Movements</i>	<i>position of dancers</i>
1	Turn on the spot to face the appropriate direction to create two triangle shapes. 3, 5, 6 turn anti-clockwise. 1, 2, 4 turn clockwise.	1 2 4 3 5 6
2 - 4	Maintaining the angles and using one step per side move once fully round the triangle, returning to the starting position. A sort of angular cast.	<i>(The set does not distort sideways as shown in the diagrams. The shift is meant to emphasise the split)</i>
5	Turn on the spot if necessary to create a grouping facing new directions. 1, 2, 3 turn anti-clockwise. 4, 5, 6 turn clockwise.	1 2 3 4 5 6
6 - 8	Angular cast once round, one step per side of the triangle, back to original place	

Petals

32 steps.

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Movements</i>	<i>position of dancers</i>
1 & 2	Form a circle from the set, remaining facing top. 1 & 6 move sideways, 3 & 5 slightly forward diagonally, 2 & 4 slightly backwards diagonally. Giving the shape shown. Hands down.	1 3 2 5 4 6
3 - 8	Turn on the spot to all face clockwise and move round as a circle, back to the starting positions of the circle. Outside hand up, inside hand down.	
9 & 10	Change the circle to a line of 6. Dancers 1 & 6 are already in position, the other 4 break from the circle and move sideways into line. Keep hands for steps 9 – 16 as in steps 1 – 8.	1 2 3 4 5 6
11 & 12	For those that need, turn on the spot so that: 1, 2, and 3 face Right, 4, 5 and 6 face Left.	

Petals (cont.)

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Movements</i>	<i>position of dancers</i>
13 - 16	As a line of 6 pivot through 180 degrees round the centre point between 3 and 4. As the move starts, in each group of 3, place hands on nearest shoulders. The "spare hand" on the outside end points up and out; the "spare hand" of dancers 3 & 4 touches tips or sticks making a slight "arch" to act as a focal point.	
17	5 and 2 face the opposite direction giving:	
18	Create a circle from the line of 6. Dancers 6 & 1 are already in place, 2,3,4,5 move out to the side and all turn, if necessary to face clockwise.	
19 - 24	Circle once fully round.	
25 - 28	Creating a right hand star momentarily as the figure progresses, all 6 dancers move into the middle, touch Right sticks and move around the star half way. Break off and move out with 2,3,4,5 ending directly opposite their starting positions, still facing clockwise.	
29 - 32	To regain original set positions dancers 1 & 6 move directly out to the side to create "markers" for the remaining dancers to line up with. 2 & 3, 4 & 5 turn by the Right, pass each other and move into original positions, all end facing top.	

Lines turn

16 steps.

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Movements</i>	<i>path of dancers</i>
1	All turn to face across.	
2 - 4	Using dancers 3 & 4 as pivots swivel both lines into an inverted V shape. Dancers 1 & 2 come closer together, 5 & 6 having move backwards, further away from each other.	
5 - 8	Moving towards the rear of the set, the two lines cross through each other, Left line in front of Right, into a line of 6 facing the bottom.	

Lines turn (cont.)

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Movements</i>	<i>position of dancers</i>
9 - 12	Pivot on the middle of the line i.e. 5 & 6 and swing as two lines of 3 through each other to end facing out, Left pass in front of Right. The set has again moved down the dance space.	From: 2 4 6 5 3 1 To: 5 6 ◀ 3 4 ▶ 1 2
15 - 16	Pivoting again, with 5 and 6 as anchors, and continuing the flow of steps as in 9 – 12, the two lines swing up the outside of the set to regain the original set formation, all facing top.	1 2 3 4 5 6

Other suggestions which could be used to build figures.

1. Horseshoe Hey

- One line casts inside the other to invert the set.
- Each line casts out from the bottom to end opposite their original places.
- One line casts inside again (other line inside this time).
- Each line casts out from the bottom to end in original places

a)	b)	c)
6 5	2 1	5 6
4 3	4 3	3 4
2 1	6 5	1 2

2. Partner swing

Cross over and back as with any longer set but add a reel in lines of three on the wrong side before crossing back, then a further reel of three on own side to balance the number of steps used.

3. Reel of six – all move at the same time

This starts by going across the centre point between 3 & 4. All go into the middle with Left arm in and do a half star round out to the position diagonally opposite, taking 8 steps to get there. 1 swop with 6, 2 with 5 and 3 with 4.

Next 8 steps all loop wide with left shoulder in and move to the position one place clockwise from the current place. 1 to 5, 2 to 3, 3 to 6, 4 to 1, 5 to 4, 6 to 2.

Repeat twice more which will get dancers back to their original positions and take 32 bars.



TRIP TO RINTELN AND HAMLIN, GERMANY

On Tuesday August 18th 1999 the Westmorland Step and Garland dancers all returned safely from a trip to Germany. Even all 7 of the children were still with us after our day spent dancing in Hamlin. The current Pied Piper, resplendent in multi coloured tights and playing his pipe took the whole group on a tour of the town, shedding light on the main part of the famous legend.

The team was in Germany as guests of Kendal's twin town Rinteln, which lies on the river Weser, as part of their music and dance festival. We had left England on Wednesday 11th, journeying through France Belgium and Holland before arriving in Rinteln.

We were to perform for an hour on the central stage in the town square in Hamlin, which we did between peels of bells from the musical Pied piper statues on one side and a clock tower on the other! That evening was spent with our host families at a Folk Dance where we consumed quantities of Sauerkraut



and sausage, and learned dances from all around the world.

Saturday was our first engagement in Rinteln and we felt quite at home because it rained. The musicians, lucky devils, had a huge stage to themselves while we poor dancers had to splash about for an hour in various degrees of rain. However, we had a wonderful audience who appreciated everything and clapped enthusiastically from under their umbrellas. That evening we were able to join the festival as specta-

tors and sample the excellent range of music dance and entertainment provided on the 3 stages.

Sunday saw us recovering from the night before, in time to do the afternoon spot and another hours performance on a different stage preceded by 3 German dance teams. They danced in the rain, but by the time it was our turn the sun shone and the audience, press and T.V. were out in their droves. We needed the free time that night and next morning with our hosts and to enjoy the area as tourists.

Our last spot on Monday was at a large holiday camp. Again it rained, but we found some umbrellas and danced for our supper. After careful packing of souvenirs and many bottles of wine amongst the instruments and dress bags, we waved our hosts farewell and vowed we would be back again.





Noticeboard



The Gloucester International Pipe & Tabor Festival

Dates: 7th-11th June 2000

Location: Gloucester, UK

Provisional programme includes:-

- Basque and Catalan musicians
- Tour of important collections and sites
- 1 day symposium
- Concerts
- Street performances
- Beginners Workshops
- Master classes
- Instrument Makers Market
- Piper's Feast
- Early Music
- Folk Traditions
- Playing for Morris

Weekend, day and full festival tickets available

Enquiries: Steve Rowley
Tanronen, Lurks Lane, Pitchcombe,
Stroud, GL6 6LL 01453-763181
pipe@artension.com

Devon Morris 2000

At 10.00 on Saturday 15th April, at Exeter Cathedral Green, there will be a huge, colourful gathering of Morris dancers, comprising North West, Clog, Rapper, Border, Cotswold and pitchfork Dancers

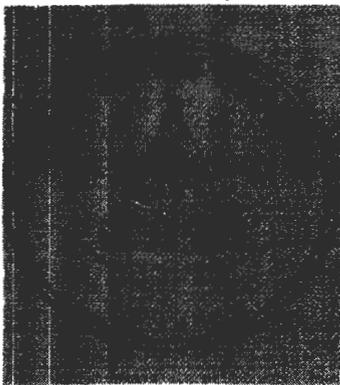
The tours will then disperse to various spots around the city, coming together again for a short service in the Cathedral at 13.15, conducted by the Reverend John Leonard.

At 1400, there will be a massed dance at the Cathedral Green, followed by more afternoon dance spots around the city, which continue until 1630.

A ceilidh for all participating sides will then be held in the evening at Priory High School.

The money collected during the day will be donated to Childrens Hospice South West, and money raised from the ceilidh will be donated to Devon Air Ambulance.

Hastings Traditional Jack
in the Green May 2000



All Morris teams are invited to join this annual event. With over forty Morris sides the infamous Bogiemen and Jack in the Green himself. Ceilidh with the Committee Band, Concert with the Amazing Mr. Smith and Magpie Lane and more. All FREE to participants, cheap indoor camping available on a first come first served basis.

**Contact Keith Leach, 205 Priory Road, Hastings East Sussex TN34 3JB
Tel 01424 716576 e-mail keith.leech@britishlibrary.net**

All bookings must be in by end of March

KEY FIGURES IN THE MORRIS

AN OCCASIONAL SERIES

FRED FORSTER

*NOT JUST KEEPING IT IN THE
FAMILY*

BY

*IAN CRAIGS & CHRIS METHEREL
(HIGH SPEN))*

One hundred years ago Rapper dancing was a common sight in the pit villages of Northumberland and Durham. High Spen was just one of these pit villages where the dance was performed by pitmen and their children. The village is located on high ground about 10 miles south west of Newcastle in what was the county of Durham, but is now Tyne and Wear. Before the opening of the pits, High Spen was simply a farm, with perhaps a few labourers cottages at the end of Ashtree Lane, a track to the nearby village of Barlow. It was not until the building of the Garesfield Railway linking the area to the main railways of the Durham coalfield that the pits in the area opened up. The pits around which the village of High Spen grew up were owned by the Priestman Collieries Ltd., prior to nationalisation.

The earliest records of sword dancing in High Spen refer to the "High Spen Sword Dancers". This team was run by George Stobbs, three of the dancers being Robert D'eath, Jack Keith and George Gibbon. George Gibbon, who will

feature in due course, forms the earliest known connection with the Forster family his mother being a Margaret Forster. His daughter Hilda, was to reforge the Forster link by marrying Fred Forster Snr (born 03.03.1893). Fred had begun his involvement with dancing before the great War with the Vernon Troupe, as the team was then known, when he started as keeper of the coats (later to be known as the 'bagman'). He went on to dance with the team along with his brother in law George Gibbon and his cousin Eddie Gibbon.

Frederick (Freddy) Forster (born 02.11.1919) was one of a number of young boys who began dancing with the founding of the High Spen Blue Diamonds in 1926. His Father, Fred, had taught the boys to dance the same High Spen dance which had been performed by the Vernon Troupe and the High Spen Sword Dancers before them. Fred recalled that they began learning the dance in May or June of 1926 as he was certain that it was 'Hay time' when they started. This boys team won the junior class in the North of England's Musical Tournament, Newcastle Upon Tyne, in 1926 and 1927. Both the Vernon Troupe and a later adult team called the Amber Stars competed in this competition on a number of occasions. In 1927 the Vernon Troupe were 2nd equal. By 1928 this team had been replaced by the Amber Stars, who were 3rd equal. This team also danced in 1929. The Blue Diamonds danced in the adult competition in 1932-1934, although they do not seem to have won.

The boys had first become interested in the dance when Fred Forster Snr. Showed them how to tie the 'Star' using pieces of stick. They began to practice in the Forster's kitchen, at Eatson Street in High Spen, on a 5'6" square board which was used to protect the linoleum. The Amber Stars were also known to have practiced on this board, the result of which was a dance performed in a small area. Both of these teams competed in the North of England tournament at Newcastle – upon-Tyne on a number of occasions.

In the early days of dancing Fred recalled that many of the dances performed were for the local 'go as you please' events which were organised in the surrounding villages such as Chopwell and Rowlands Gill as well as High Spen. Other events included dancing at Durham Cathedral and Rothbury races for Lord and Lady Armstrong.

The costume was limited in the early days but the main emphasis, even then, was on footwear which was an expensive item for most families in the 1920's. Some boys were entitled to free shoes through school and Fred recalled that many more children were able to 'step' than there ever seemed to be dancing in the team. In the early days the boys simply wore black trousers, white shirt and tie, but the costume was later to develop into a kit based on a miner's Sunday best of the early 1900's. This included white shirt, navy blue tie, royal blue hoggars, navy blue socks and a light blue sash.

In 1933 when Fred was about 13 or 14 years old, the team decided to organise a tour of England showing the rapper dances as they went. They first obtained permission to leave work. Me Priestman, the managing director of the Victoria Garesfield Colliery where they worked, told the men that their jobs would be waiting for them on their return. It was nearly the end of August when Mr & Mrs Fred Forster put their furniture into storage and gave up their house while they were away, and set off with the rest of the team. The tour was an extensive one and involved Jim Crampton, Bill Holroyd, Fred Forster, Tommy Purvis, Norman Leowes and Tommy Wilkes as musician (playing melodeon). Mrs Forster and young Fred also went on the tour. This consisted of travelling by bus or walking and took in places such as Bishop Auckland, Barnard Castle, Kirby Stephen, Kirby Lonsdale, Burnley, Wetherby, York, Doncaster in time for the St Leger!), Bawtry Retford, Newark, Linclon,

Grantham, Melton Mowbray, Leicester, Evesham and Kettering.

The tour was an eventful one and included such incidents as sleeping in the Police Station in Grantham, sleeping in a stable at at Garstang and having to open tins of corned Beef with an axe. At Kettering the team completed their tour, after three weeks, and returned to the Pit.

Fred served his apprenticeship as a mechanic with Adams and Gibbon Engineering, Newcastle, while the team continued to perform until the outbreak of waer in 1939. During this time Fred served with the Merchant Navy, Senior Third Engineer. Here too he had an eventful few years. On one occasion the tanker on which he served was mined and he returned to the vessel later with ten others and successfully beached her in order to save the cargo. On another occasion they were attacked by an aircraft whose bomb went through the side of the ship and two tanks of aviation fuel, but did not explode. They stayed onboard the ship for four nights, wearing life jackets at all times in case of disaster. The ship was unable to enter a port in this condition so the remaining fuel was transferred at sea and then they threw the unexploded bomb over the side before limping to port.

Fred had been very keen to keep alive the High Spen tradition, but had met with many disappointments. Then in 1952 the dance was revived as part of the 'Gibbons Family Concert party' (George Gibbon being the parental Grandfather of Freddy). The team consisted of Fred Forster, Freddy Forster, Albert Walker(cousin), John Short, Joe Cox (Uncle) and later Billy Heron, Isaac Wood (uncle), 'Kelly' Lawes as Tommy, Billy Clasper as Betty, and musicians Jimmy Farrage (mouth organ) and later Jimmy Johnson (melodeon).

The team had many engagements in the north including the TV programme 'TOP TOWN,' when it celebrated Blaydon on 15th October 1954. In January 1955 they appeared in the EFDSS New Year Festival at the Royal Albert Hall.

1954 also saw the start of a new junior team which included the third of the Frederick Forster's (Ricky). On 3rd April 1956 the Blue Diamonds performed in the opening programme of the new television studios at Dickenson Road, Manchester and the following November they danced at the EFDSS Festival of Birmingham. The team then broke up with the closure of the pit and people leaving the area. Fred Started another team based in Birtley which operated until about 1960.

After Fred's death in July 1964, it was up to Freddy to carry on the High Spen tradition. In the early 1970's the team was again revived. There was Freddy, and his four sons Ricky, Joe, Edward and Colin, with David Osborne and Jimmy Johnson (now in his 60's). This team danced locally for garden fetes, festivals and charity events. In the early 1980's the team was joined by Bob Wilson, George Wallace, Richard Preece and Mike Douglas (again melodeon player). In 1984 Ian Craigs joined the team, later followed by Steve Peirson and Chis Metherell.

In 1986 a heart problem forced Freddy into semi-retirement, leaving most of his duties to his two eldest sons Ricky and Joe. The team has continued to dance successfully to this day.

By 1984 the team was in such great demand at festivals and other events that they had to obtain sponsorship to help replace dance kit, purchase new rappers and support expenses. Freddy was very successful at persuading companies to sponsor the team. During the 1980's and 1990's the team was supported by 'The Federation Brewery', and 'Thorn EMI'. It is currently sponsored by 'Elementis', previously 'Harcos Chemicals'. There have been a number of times over the

years when Freddy and the team were asked to dance for the benefit of TV cameras. Usually this meant standing around for hours and having 2 or 3 minutes in which to show an 8 minute dance. This often meant that there was only time to film a calling on verse, 2 figures and the finish. This was something which Freddy was never happy with. Before Freddy died it was his ambition to create a dance which might give a good overview of the High Spen figures in a short period of time. He devised the High Spen Express, as it was later to become known. The idea was not to create a fast dance, but to combine different figures so that they merged into one another. Towards the end of his life Freddy began to teach the team his last set of figures.

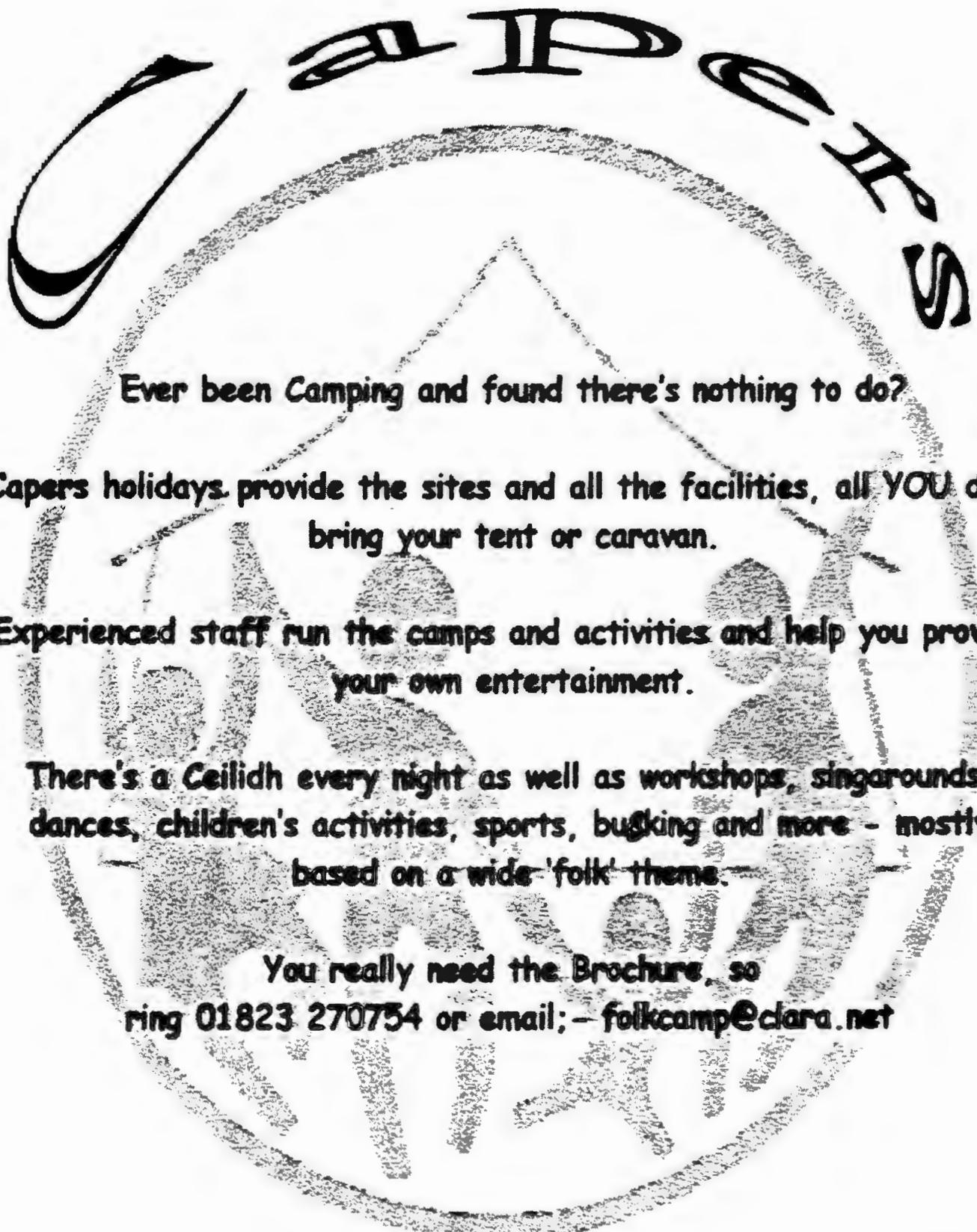
Unfortunately Freddy never saw his figures performed as it was some time after his death in November 1989 before the dance was ready for its debut. Although it is not exactly as Freddy had written it down, it was basically the same dance, and was successful as a dance in its own right as well as a taster of the 16 High Spen figures.

Fortunately the team has Ricky to continue the work of his father and grandfather. Since Freddy's death he has been a driving force behind the team. The Blue Diamonds have performed at the Great Northumbrian Roadshow, The New Victoria Theatre, Stoke on Trent, The Swan Theatre Stratford, The Octagon Theatre, Sheffield and in Aberdeen, together with many festivals at home and abroad.

In 1988 Ricky choreographed a rapper performance for a professional pantomime, 'The Lampton Worm' by Little Bilty Fane, which ran until April 1989, with a member of the Blue Diamonds standing in for an injured cast member.

The team continues today, evolving and developing the dance, running workshops and supporting younger dancers in schools. A tribute to all those in the Forster Family.

CAMPERS



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CALL FOR PAPERS

Gloucester International Pipe and Tabor Symposium

Friday 9th June 2000

Location: Blackfriars Priory, Gloucester, UK

We are currently seeking submissions for the Gloucester International Pipe & Tabor Symposium to be held on the Friday 9th June.

The Symposium forms the centre piece to the International Pipe and Tabor Festival which runs from 7th - 11th June. The festival will include performances, workshops, masterclasses, a tour and exhibition of important English pipes, and also an exhibition (market) of current instrument makers.

Submissions should seek to inform, illustrate or advance knowledge of the pipe and tabor, its history, origins, current situation, and future.

All forms of the Pipe and Tabor are of interest, around the world:- Whittle & Dub, Galoubet et Tambourin, Flauta y Tambor, Eenhandsfluit en Trom, Chiflo y Salterio, Gaita y Tamboril, Trommel und Flöte, Flabiol, Flutet, Txistu, etc.

The symposium language will be English, translation from other languages may be available. Submissions should include a summary in English.

Submissions are sought in the following categories:-

Research papers - New findings, original work.

Commentary - Observations on the development or spread of the Pipe & Tabor.

Demonstrations - Practical illustrations of new findings or understandings.

State of the Pipe - Demonstrations of new Pipe & Tabor developments.

Forum - Short papers to inspire debate.

Poster presentations - any aspect of the Pipe & Tabor.

We would encourage speakers to illustrate their submissions with performance.

We can organise a temporary exhibition at Gloucester Museum to house any artefacts that you wish to bring for demonstration.

Deadline for submissions: May 1st 2000

It is intended that the papers will be published by The Taborers Society later in the year.

Submissions should be sent to:-

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Three Shires

Traditional North West Style Clog & Garland Dancers



'Ten Years Young'

In September 2000, Three Shires will be 10 years old, and to celebrate we are holding a day of dance. Invited teams will be dancing in the three shires which Harthill (our home village) borders – South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. To help make our 'Party' one to remember, we applied for, and were granted, funding through Awards For All. This will enable us to invite teams to a free day, and give them a commemorative badge.



Back in 1990 when we first got together, there was great debate about the name. We finally decided that as Harthill is the most southerly village in Yorkshire and has a population with close ties to Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, not to mention the fact that Harthill has in the past been slipped from one county to another, that The Three Shires Clog would be most appropriate. This also gave us great opportunity being 'affiliated' to three counties, to approach each for sponsorship money, a rather Yorkshire trait.

Our current team is made up mainly of original members and we have had a great time over the years, and hope to continue. We've danced at the World Student Games, the opening of Crassington Water by the Queen and appeared on television in the Parish Pump competition. The dance is now

our favourite.

Like most teams we have lost members; our greatest loss was Pauline who died shortly after being diagnosed with cancer. She was the bubbly member who made me realise that the important thing is to enjoy myself, and enjoy myself I do!

Now we have a Step clog branch of three shires. This is a good ploy for large teams as it gives non steppers a break whilst the others do their stuff.

Back in 1990 we thought a waistcoat would be a great idea, and Awards for all are making this possible.

Our celebration day is Saturday 30th September, actual venues to be decided, but there will be a massed stand in the village in the afternoon, at the village well, which will be dressed for the occasion.

BORDER WORKSHOP 20/11/99

LED BY JOHN LEWIS

HOSTED BY OYSTER

Our arrival at the school hall was warm in contrast to the cold driving rain outside, it was lovely to see old friends from far and wide out side of the "season".

John introduced himself modestly saying that what he teaches is not definitive he has not done any formal research but has watched and talked to dancers from Shropshire, however his extensive knowledge of the style and tradition became obvious as did his love of the dance.

Much of what was said in general terms applies to all styles of dance, it is important to learn the basic techniques and language so that it becomes part of the soul this ensures you can get out of trouble when the inevitable occasional hiccups happen. Most important is to enjoy dancing and to convey that to the audience engaging and drawing them in .

My motivation for attending this workshop was the opportunity to have a good days dance in the winter. I did not expect to find it especially taxing physically and definitely not mentally after many years of Cotswold.. My experience of watching border has been a lot of shrieking and sticking and much formless jogging. What John was to teach us was to open my eyes to the variety and intricacy of real border.

Three jolly Sheepskins had us warmed up spinning and changing directions just as well the tankards where not full! Then a stick dance to the tune of Ding Dong Merrily on high. John observed that when these dances where done in the past the men and women had far greater upper body strength so the sticking would vigorous but controlled, it is crucial to know where the ends of your stick are and where they are going to end up.

By now the large plate glass windows of the hall which had rain pouring down the outside were equally streaming and steaming on the inside as we reeled and ran through hunt the squirrel. I see watching the video that not everyone knew where their

stick would land.

The smells from the kitchen became more and more enticing as we started on Upton upon Severn stick dance. This was very familiar to many of us as a Cotswold dance but that meant we had to concentrate extra hard to maintain a border style. The reward for a morning of real mental and physical was a fantastic spread laid on by Oyster starting with a soup that would sustain an arctic expedition accompanied by a huge range of bread cheese and ham and fruit. There was enough energy left for a good natter and exchange of news.

Although weighed down with good food and mellow with good company our enthusiasm was renewed by John starting with a dance to Good King Wenseslas again demonstrating how much interest there is in the style as the set continually changed orientation. Before launching in to the final dance John commented that the longer a side stays together the more complicated the dances become. The side from which this last was collected had evidently been together for centuries. Again watching the video I am reminded that I was defeated by the sticking and am not the only one. I look forward to having another go at it.

Now, the one group I haven't mentioned with out which it would not have been possible are the musicians. They were simply terrific their enthusiasm never waned despite playing the same tune or little bits of it over and over and then having periods of enforced silence. All these wonderful people who worked so hard for our benefit did all the tidying up while we drove off, the rain had cleared up a positive end to an excellent day. A few of us still enough energy for a ceilidh that evening –just.

Cathy Sharman

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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 SYSTEM FORMAT STYLE - any density OPERATING

SYSTEM DOS format Textfile

FORMAT ASCII, WordPerfect

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

BOOKIMAGAZINE 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

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