

# Newsletter Autumn 2006



**SECURITY – It affects us all. It affects us now.**

**TEN QUESTIONS – Dave Hunt**

**SIDMOUTH JIG COMPETITION – Results**

**A DECADE'NT DAY OUT- On Dartmoor**



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# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

*To all Secretaries, Squires, Bag people, etc.*

## NEWSLETTER

Newsletter – odd sort of compound word really. “News” has that connotation of information that is new and dynamic or for the less cerebral, possibly just gossip. “Letter” something personal to the recipient. So “Newsletter” could be taken to mean new information and gossip for the recipient alone. Except the recipient is the TEAM not the individual. So PLEASE PASS THE NEWSLETTER AROUND. Set a quiz on the contents as part of practice nights – award prizes to the winners, and medals to anyone who can explain the licensing act, just PLEASE PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD!

## MEMBERS' MANUAL

All members of the MF should have a copy of the 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 £6.50 (inc.p&p) each. Please make cheques payable to 'The Morris Federation'.

## ADVERTISING

The MF 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 MF should be addressed to the Newsletter Editor.

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## EDITORIAL

Maybe it comes with the fact of living in England that we have an almost obsessive interest in the weather. As dancers the weather can play a major part in the way we view a performance since for most of us performing is an outdoor activity.

But weather is just one factor in the multiple elements that go to make a display of dancing. There's the surface and the space we have to perform on and in, the size and quality of the team who are available on the day, the size and interest level of the crowd, the musical input, the organisation of the event and more. Each element contributes to a performance. I find it useful to score each element out of ten and then view the overall result.

Perfect tens are rare and wonderful and make for happy memories. But often the lowest scoring item gets all the blame for a "bad" day and it's never true. The weather is the one element we cannot control. Most others we can in some way influence. So analyse your "bad" days and try scoring the elements, if the same thing keeps scoring low decide what you can do to fix it. Shrugging off a bad day as down to the music, or the learners, or the crowd is never the answer. They're challenges to be taken on and dealt with.

*Doug*

### Printing

### Next Issue

### Front Cover Photograph

Outline Print Service Ltd, Colne, Lancashire

Winter 2006 (Copy date 19<sup>th</sup> November)

Vera Perkins (See Archive slot for more information)

Photo :Contributed by Paul Bradley

# President's Prologue

## **Do we need to move with the times?**

In this issue is an item by our editor re "Security". It is as a result of occurrences, which have happened over the late spring and summer.

We have always felt safe and possibly even a bit smug in our little folkly morris world. We assumed we are secure within our dance community and we generally are, but recently we have been spotted as a soft target and this bubble we live in is very thin walled and offers no protection. It has now been pricked by the sharp outer world.

Event organisers now need to look at security of sites/venues and how they go about advertising them with a mind to doing nothing to expose participants to any possible vulnerability.

These incidents are not new though, as many years ago (at least 12) Sidmouth was targeted by a team of "professional" thieves and the various traders staying on the campsite were selected and robbed. As a result some improvements were brought about in the boundary security and site stewarding. (I speak from personal experience here!).

We must consider how we organise our dance weekend campsites to minimise any risk. It is impossible to fully protect a tent left on a site (nor even cars and caravans as you will see from the later article) but all efforts must be made to eliminate them as easy targets.

## **Donald where's your Trousers:**

Not a reference to an incident involving a female side in Whitby's Spa bar this year, though the concept of (tongue firmly in cheek) of bringing morris into disrepute

and issuing a Red Card could be seen as appropriate!

There is an old joke about what a Scottish gentleman wears under his kilt...Answer: - Why of course his socks and his shoes.

Is it appropriate to wear nothing else especially when dancing atop a windy 'exposed' spot (again in Whitby but this applies to anywhere else as well)? A constabulary friend informs me it could be classified as a Public Order Offence with an £80 fine (Indecent Exposure). Maybe a rethink on kit is in order?

And while on "Complaints", how many of you sing 'Ribald' ditties pre or during a public dance spot?

Does "My Brother Billy's got a Ten Foot ..."(Well you can see the rhyme I assume) seem OK? Or does your 'Postman charge only Tuppence a lick'? Should we be considering what we sing in public and worry about causing offence? A number of 'Songs' have brought comment to me this year.

Do we need to be more aware or should we just ignore these comments as a waste of breath and time as such words are all part of the bigger "Robust" picture we are trying to promote? Are we all guilty of bringing morris into disrepute at times?

## **And while we're on the subject.....How is your Equipment?**

Is it old and tired and a bit frayed at the edges? As we are talking about morris sticks here, please don't knowingly use tatty/damaged ones in public, nor for that matter wear loose clogs irons or other bits of kit that fall off mid dance. It doesn't really look that good now does it.

And that isn't the 'Morris Kit Police' talking there.

*Trefor*

*Editors Note: More on the subject of security on page 10*

## ARCHIVE NEWS

The front cover picture for this edition comes from the archives. As you can see it's a performance of a bacca pipes jig at an event unknown. The picture comes from and is used with the permission of Paul Bradley who has provide a copy for the archive together with the brief information that follows.

The dancer is Vera Perkins (nee Greenwood), a member of the EFDS and friend of Imogen Holst, the composer, who was a resident of Thaxted. Vera lived in the Walthamstow and Epping area and was a keen cyclist and youth hosteller. The photograph is thought to have been taken in the 1920s, probably in Walthamstow. Can any readers shed any more light on this?

*Mike Everett – Archive Officer*

### Bells and Drums

Maker of "Gurt Mint" bodhrans



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Bell pairs (200/240/300) (200/240) £20-25</li> <li>2) Lattice cat £31-50</li> <li>3) Parallel cat £31-50</li> <li>4) Oak Spiky £38-50</li> <li>5) Childrens model £18-50</li> <li>Bell band, standard £4-05, long £ 5-00</li> <li>Wide bell band £11-90</li> <li>Beating Stick £10-80</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drum rope (natural) £185</li> <li>420mm x 320mm or 17" x 13"</li> <li>Bass Drum rope (natural) £240</li> <li>540mm x 180mm or 21" x 13"</li> <li>Colours: natural, black, green, red</li> <li>Drum Hugs, from £30.95</li> <li>padding, water resistant</li> <li>Bells 3/8", 1" and 1 1/4" available</li> <li>Leather Thonging available</li> </ul>
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Repairs and Re-skinning of drums

**KRESS DRUMS**  
*London Road*  
maker of drums and bell-pads  
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Wales, CF37 2ED  
Tel: 01443 49 11 66  
Email: [gehare@gurtmint.co.uk](mailto:gehare@gurtmint.co.uk)  
Website: [www.gurtmint.co.uk](http://www.gurtmint.co.uk)

New Address!



Can anyone provide a caption or explanation for the above picture? Is this the turning of the worm against the tyrannical rule of the head Witchman? Is this the last man crossing the line in the procession from hell category? Legal, decent and printable suggestions welcomed.

Note: Entries from the Kettering area will be scrutinised with great care.

# COMMITTEE NEWS

## FINANCE – Rachel

1. The recent rises in postage costs mean that the costs of mailing out the Newsletter will inevitably rise. We are currently looking at the impact this will have on finances and evaluating possible ways of handling the matter. However as you will see the current issue continues in the A4 format.

The cost of mailing shop items has had to be increased for the larger items but until I get some firm information on overseas postage costs these will remain as before.

2. A reminder that I will not be standing for the committee post of treasurer at this years AGM so we need nominations for this post. Committee meetings are held four times a year and as treasurer I have learnt a lot about the workings of the Federation from my time in post. So if you are wanting to get involved and are prepared to give a little of your time then please don't be shy, get yourself nominated.

3. In order to complete my role as treasure I need someone in the Hertfordshire /Essex border area who can look over the accounts and sign them off as the person who used to do this is unable to continue. If you know of anyone who could fulfil this task or are in fact someone who could do it please contact me.

## NEWSLETTER – Doug

1. As Rachel has already mentioned the new postal charges have been causing some concern. However my initial investigation suggests we may be worrying over what may be a relatively small price increase. A typical Newsletter comes in at under 100gm per copy and would be classed as a large letter. Posted second class this will now cost 37p.

Switching to an A5 format would reduce the postage cost to 23p.

Obviously such a switch would involve some work on the part of all concerned in production, well that's Outline Print and myself at least. Before making a decision it would be useful to have some feedback from you as readers on what you think.

Just to put my view forward I feel that the current A4 size is a good format for the picture spreads, which are, I feel are a feature of what is after all a very visual subject – dance. Switching to A5 would reduce the impact of this visual element. That's my view, what's yours?

2. Talking of feedback I rarely hear from our advertisers on what success they have from placing adverts with the Newsletter. So if you do use any of our advertisers don't forget to mention where you saw their advert. And if you're using a supplier or service that doesn't advertise with us then why not mention the Newsletter? Details of costs available in this issue – and every issue before that!

## Morris Matters



The journal of all things related to Morris - tunes, pictures, notation, historical stuff, views, reviews - published twice a year. Contributions always welcomed. Subscribe now to the address shown:

Morris Matters  
27 Nortoft Road  
Chalfont St Peter  
Bucks SL9 0LA

Annual subscription for 2 issues is £6.

3. Finally, before that Summer Tour, dance out or stunning performance fades into the mists of time why not get it down on paper and share it with us? Review a festival from the dance aspect either as performer or audience. Get a gripe off your chest or sing the praises of something you want the world to share.

Yes, I'm looking for material for the next issue and every issue after that until someone tells me that it's time to hang up my keyboard and ride off into the sunset. So as the mellow mists of autumn roll in, get writing and dig out any relevant photos I'll even scan in hard copy if you still use print film.

#### **EVENTS – Jean**

Just a reminder about two workshops this Autumn.

Firstly a Joint Organisations workshop in Rickmansworth looking at how we present ourselves as performers and in the public eye. There will be opportunities to try out ideas rather than just listening and assimilating. Workshop leaders are Chris Pitt focusing on announcing, introductions and voice projection: Gavin Atkin looking at press releases and handouts and Steve Rowley running a practical workshop on PR Strategies for Morris.

The workshop takes place on Saturday October 14<sup>th</sup> 2006 from 10am-4pm and the cost is £10.

The second workshop is a bit further north in Harrogate and is a Clog Stepping workshop. Anna Marley's soft-shoe steps will be taught by Carrie and Val of Incognito while Barbara and Paul provide the music. Clogrhythm are hosting the workshop and the venue is easily reached from the A61.

The workshop takes place on Saturday November 11<sup>th</sup> 2006 from 12noon-6pm and the cost is £10.

Contact [events@morrisfed.org.uk](mailto:events@morrisfed.org.uk) for further information or telephone 0191 2591349

City Clickers are running a day of workshops for clog stepping on October 21<sup>st</sup> 2006 in Bristol and offer steps suitable for beginners, improvers and more experienced dancers. For more information contact [city\\_clickers@hotmail.com](mailto:city_clickers@hotmail.com)

Finally, please contact me if you have an idea for a workshop or would like to request a workshop. I am looking forward to hearing from someone!

## **Clog Stepping Workshop Saturday November 11<sup>th</sup> 2006 12noon -6pm Harrogate**

**ANNA MARLEY SOFT SHOE** (*Intermediate*) Tutors: Mother & daughter team Val & Carrie (in their Incognito 'shades) will teach the Marley softshoe clog steps which were first introduced to England at the 1994 Sidmouth folk festival. This routine was invented by Anna Marley, using steps which are entertaining, laid back and definitely cool (so maybe you should bring shades...), and which include obvious Marley family cues. Carrie & Val will teach the steps as they learned them. At the end of the day, it's all in the style - which is your call. Incognito's Paul Hudson will play for this workshop. Barbara usually sings, but not all through the workshop! Clogrhythm play hosts.

**£10 including lunch and refreshments. Under 16's free.**

For more information contact [events@morrisfed.org.uk](mailto:events@morrisfed.org.uk)

Tel:0191 2591349

Dear Doug,



Although I have only been Morris dancing for a short time I have been making teddy bears, for teddy collectors, for about 5 years. All my bears are made from German mohair and they are all one off creations. Most are traditional bears although some are more eccentric.

At the beginning of this year I had just finished a tall white bear, when I saw a picture of Dogrose Morris. It seemed to me that this new bear was a perfect Cotswold Morris dancer all he needed was a baldrick, bells and some handkies. As my bears have weighted feet, so they can stand up on their own, when I had embroidered his handkies and made a Dorset Button for his baldrick, he looked as if he was waiting for the music to start. After seeing Dogrose at Warwick this year perhaps my bear is a little sedate!

Then I was inspired. I looked through my mohair supplies and found some dark brown material with black tips. This seemed right for a border morris bear, as it looked as if he had blackened his fur. All I needed to do was add dark velvet paw pads and make a little tatter jacket.

Recently I was commissioned to make a bear for a member of Chippenham Town Morris dressed in their distinctive brown and gold colours. Other Morris bears are planned for the future. At the moment I am researching how to make a smock for a musician bear and how to make flowery garlands.

I am pleased you liked my idea. I have attached an advertisement to this message and some pictures that you might like to use.

Thank you for your help. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Regards

Carole Anne Tonge.

*Editors Note: Carole has taken out an advert for her bears, see page 19.*

**YOU NEVER CALL YOU NEVER WRITE!**

Actually you might be and it just could be that I'm ignoring you. Why would I do that? Well in this electronic age the majority of the material I receive comes via the e-mail. Now it might just be me but a whole heap of e-mail turns up offering me the opportunity of riches beyond avarice in exchange for the use of my bank account, or the chemical cures for almost any ailment known to man and sundry other junk. So I tend to be a bit ruthless with the delete key to chop out the spam that escapes the filters.

So if you are sending in a letter, article, poem or musing for the newsletter please take a moment or two to make sure the subject line makes it obvious that it's for the newsletter.

Doug Bradshaw

## International Sword Spectacular – 23-26<sup>th</sup> May 2008

The Fifth International Sword Spectacular Festival will be held in Yorkshire on the 23-26<sup>th</sup> May, 2008. The aim of the weekend is quite simple – to bring together the biggest and most varied collection of sword dancers we can manage, so that they can see each other dance and get to know each other a bit better. We expect to see 30-40 British teams, a dozen or so from Europe, and an unknown but growing number from North America.

As ever, British longsword and rapper teams are likely to turn up in the largest numbers, but one theme for 2008 is to reach out to those Morris teams who ‘do a bit of sword’ but who rarely go out with other sword teams. We would love to see you.

What’s the deal, then?

- Friday night is meet and greet time, an informal session for gathering and registration, and there will be the opportunity to mix and chat; if some people feel the urge to dance or play tunes, then so much the better.
- On Saturday, each team will be scheduled on a tour which puts them with some British teams and a couple from Europe (and, we hope, North America). This will take in a number of locations (these will vary, but could include towns, seaside resorts, or inland villages). Tours finish late in the afternoon, after which there is a break before the (optional) evening social dance.
- On Sunday morning there will be a couple of workshops, followed by some dancing from about mid-day into the early afternoon. The dance concert will start around 4pm and finish around 9pm, but don’t worry, the format is informal enough to enable you to move in and out, get a drink, and so on. After the concert there is some more social dancing for those who want it.
- Monday is the wind-down; those who wish to will go together and do some sword in a village setting, followed by an informal session which tends to develop into dance-swaps, seeing how many swords you can tie into a single lock, and such like. It’s all very pleasant, and a good time for networking (fancy an overseas trip to somewhere new?).

Prices have still to be announced, but will be comparable with many weekends of dance.

What if you want to come as an individual? Then you’ll be very welcome. Contact us as shown below.

Regular updates will appear here and elsewhere, including the sword dancing publication ‘Rattle Up, My Boys’. We are looking forward to hearing from you, so contact:

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*Andrew Kennedy*

## THE WAYS OF THE WORLD

All too often I find myself muttering "It's not where you live it's when you live" as I read of yet another shift in the moral compass that directs the world. Sadly this summer has brought the wicked world directly into contact with our world of carefree camping and enjoyment.

The first indication of this was an e-mail from Rose and Castle reporting a serious incident at their weekend of dance near Towcester. The text of this is below :

*"Dear Trevor and Fee,*

*Rose & Castle and Queens Oak Morris*

*In case you haven't heard though the grapevine, we had a serious security incident at our Joint Weekend of Dance last Weekend.*

*For the past 15 years, we have held our Weekend at a local Rugby club on the outskirts of a small, rural village in Northamptonshire, where we have never had any problems before.*

*On the Saturday afternoon, during the brief period when there were no club members on site, the campsite was entered, 3 caravans and a car were stolen and two other vehicles were broken into. All stolen caravans and vehicles had security devices, which were simply cut off, (probably with a battery powered angle grinder).*

*Whilst there is nothing more that can be done about this incident, most Weekends that we attend are run on similar lines to ours and where security has never been an issue.*

*Perhaps this is a 'Wake-up Call' to other Weekend organisers; security may now be an issue. Perhaps you could make other Member Sides aware.*

*Regards,*

*Phil Lizius (Rose & Castle Bagman)"*

Following on from this an internet broadcast was sent out through the Federation system to alert all members to

the potential threat. I'm sure that many sides are all too well aware of the problem already but security is a matter of constant awareness and being prepared.

The fact that you have never had a problem in the past, or that the location is too remote to be a target can no longer be an option for doing nothing. Nor can we dodge the issue by stating on an invite that there will be no security or just not mentioning security. Security has to be an issue for everyone in this day and age not just for individuals but for organisers as well.

A possibly aggravating circumstance in this case was that the local radio carried details of the event and the tours on the Saturday, alerting the "bad guys" to the possibility of an easy soft target. With no interruptions the thieves worked their way round the site and given that three caravans and a car were stolen we are not talking opportunist crime this had to be planned. In fact one victim of the crime(s) reports that on the Friday a group of four men arrived at the site asking for details of the next days tours and timings!

Now I'm sure that many readers are shaking their heads as they read this either in disgust at the fact that the theft has occurred or in disbelief that organisers can be so trusting. But this is our modern age and these are the facts. The world has changed and we need to be aware that the criminal fraternity have identified a target where cars, cash, caravans and personal goods can be found a weekend of dance. It has to be up to those organising a weekend of dance where a threat is perceived to make the thieves job as hard as possible.

It is true that people must take responsibility for their own security and insurance. – to a point. Insurance gives some compensation but does not make the crime "victimless". After all we all pay higher premiums each year. And whilst the pub or supermarket might have an "Public parking at your own risk" notices

increasingly CCTV or security staff are part of the street scene.

So it really is up to the organisers to make some contribution to the security of their event. Professional security firms with 24-hour patrols may be expensive but some premises make the provision of this level of security a condition of hire. One worthwhile option to investigate is the local Venture Scouts. For a modest contribution these folk can be persuaded to turn out and provide security. The enterprising Scouts might even provide a food tent with a little extra effort!

It seems likely that the criminal element involved in the incident above came from the "traveller" community, as the only arrest made was a traveller. The saying tells us that "bad news travels fast", so having found a vulnerable target it may be that this sort of incident becomes more likely. All we can do is be aware of the threat and plan to maximise our defences against it. So that we do not lose something that we take pleasure in we must make sure that we do not offer easy pickings.

But having read this sad tale of how an innocent hobby activity can be affected by the criminal activity of a minority in our society news came of how even "professional" events are now being targeted.

The Association of Festival Organisers report a disturbing increase in the levels of crime being reported at festivals. To the point where it is almost certain that the criminals are professionals specifically targeting large festival sites.

Now here we usually have the benefit of stewards controlling entry and exit, and on some sites security patrols. So how do the criminals operate? The answer is simple. They buy tickets and attend as ordinary punters. The favoured time for their attack is early on in the festival programme, when the campsite is quiet and most festival goers are out sampling the entertainment.

Strolling round the site they can quickly seek out cameras, cash and other valuables and may usually go unchallenged. If challenged then the usual excuse is "Sorry must have got the wrong tent."

So the bottom line is that we all need to be on our guard and watch out for each other. More especially if you are planning an event of any sort then security of your site and your visitors and their property must be a priority. Arranging 24-hour security cover so that the site is never left unattended has to be top of the list. Let the local police know that the event is planned and that they are aware of the possible problems. And even out at a display spot watch your bags and baggage or take measures to protect them.

Without being paranoid this is the state of our world today. We have to live with it so if we are going to continue to enjoy our chosen hobby we need to be on a guard.

*Doug Bradshaw*

*Editor*



## City Clickers

in association with  
**The Morris Federation**  
present a day of

# Clog Dance Workshops

where: **Bristol**  
when: **October 21<sup>st</sup> 2006**

We will offer three workshops:

Fun **Westmoreland** social dance steps for beginners – including absolute beginners – taught by **Jane Sheard**

For improving dancers **Lesley Thackeray** will teach the **East Fife Clog Hornpipe**.

For more experienced dancers **Jane Pollitt** will teach her **Competition Hornpipe**.

Price: **£16.00**

For further information:

email: [city\\_clickers@hotmail.com](mailto:city_clickers@hotmail.com)

write: send sae to  
City Clickers  
c/o 51 Bishop Road,  
Bishopston  
BRISTOL BS7 8LS

## **STRIKE A LIGHT WE'VE WON!**

At the Scarborough Morris Fayre 23<sup>rd</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> June England's Glory Ladies Morris were privileged to be awarded the 'Gordon Crowther Memorial Staff'. This award is given annually to the morris side that best exemplifies 'the spirit of the dance' by the organisers, Yorkshire Coast Morris.

Gordon, a fantastic character, was a former squire of Yorkshire Coast, who died about 10 years ago, and who was the prime mover in getting the very popular festival established. The staff was instituted in his memory, and award holders are instructed to take it out with them whenever they perform, so Gordon can look down and enjoy (hopefully!) the dancing. England's Glory will hold the staff for twelve months and return to the festival in 2007 when it's to be held in Filey, to hand it on to the next recipient.

Previous winners have included Ashley's Rise, Lady Bay Revellers, and Mucky Mountains Morris. One year the winners (un-named to protect the guilty!) were awarded the staff for being late at every single spot!

*Peter Cripps -England's Glory*

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## **JOHN GASSON TROPHY**

The John Gasson Jig Competition is held annually at the Sidmouth Festival. The competition was started as a commemoration of John who was tragically killed on his way to the festival in 1987.

The sponsors for the 2006 competition were Janet Dowling, Pete Collinson, Trefor and Rhianon Owen, Chris & Tracey Rose, 7 Champions and Daryl Hurtt. The judges were Beth Neil, Jameson Wooders, John Braithwaite and Jethro Anderson. This year there were thirteen solo entrants and four double entries.

The organisers would like to say a big thank you to everyone who entered and to the judges and sponsors for their support. It was an enjoyable and interesting competition and very close.

There was only half a mark between the first and second placings in the Double Jig Competition. Start practicing now for next year especially for the double jigs, as we need more doubles.

The results of the jig competition are as follows:

### **Solo Jig**

1<sup>st</sup>-Laurel Swift of Morris Offspring with musician Saul Rose.

2<sup>nd</sup>- Doug Swift again of Morris Offspring with musician John Dipper.

3<sup>rd</sup>-Emma Darby of Oyster Morris with musician Andrew Swaine.

### **Double Jig**

1<sup>st</sup>-Laurel Swift and Mikey Radford of Morris Offspring with musician Jamie Delarre.

2<sup>nd</sup>-Della Caine and Jack Worth of Ditchling Morris with musician John Bacon

3<sup>rd</sup>-Fiona Bradshaw and Jessica Arrowsmith of Pecseatan with musician Richard Arrowsmith

### **Audience Appeal Prize**

Doug Swift and musician John Dipper

### **Best New Entrant**

Jess Arrowsmith and Fiona Bradshaw

### **Best Over 40 Years Old**

Barry Honeysett Mary Jo Seale

To join the Jig Competition email list email Tracey Rose on

[tracey@ewell.demon.co.uk](mailto:tracey@ewell.demon.co.uk).

*Tracey Rose*

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## **ANDY HAMILTON AWARD 2006**

The Rochester Sweeps Festival sees an award made as a memorial to Andy Hamilton of Woad Works Morris who died in 2002. The award is made to a young morris musician selected by the Woad Woks team.

This year the award went to Lauren Kruge of Anstey Royale Chalfonts.

Previous winners of the award have been Katherine Hazell of Young Miscellany, Harry Elliot and William Hatton Price of the Witchmen.

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## **A Tribute to Nibs**

Nibs Matthews was the outstanding dancer of his generation and was a superb teacher of folk dance. He started dancing as a schoolboy in the early 1930s and rose to become Director of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. He was also squire of the Morris Ring, 1960 to 1962, and the first Director of the Sidmouth Folk Festival. Nibs Matthews died on March 3rd 2006 at the age of 85.

To celebrate the life of Nibs Matthews, the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) has organised 'A Tribute to Nibs'.

The event is being held on Sunday 17 September 2006, 2:30 - 6:00pm, at Cecil Sharp House in London.

'A Tribute to Nibs' is a combined dance and concert event. The music for dancing will be led by Denis Smith, Jim Coleman, Jenny Smith and friends, with dances called by Marjorie Fennessy, Hugh Rippon and Ron Smedley.

The display and song items will take place in breaks between the dancing. Two of the dance displays are from a couple of the longest established morris dance sides in the country - Bampton Traditional Morris Dancers and Headington Quarry Morris Dancers, both from Oxfordshire. Nibs Matthews had a long association with both morris teams.

The third dance display will come from Stone Monkey Rapper - one of the best rapper sword dance groups in the country.

Martin Carthy and John Kirkpatrick two of this country's foremost interpreters of folk song will also perform at 'A Tribute to Nibs'. Bob Rundle, a pioneer in the playing of the melodeon in the folk revival, will play some tunes on Nibs's own melodeon.

The doors open at 1:00pm and lunch and a bar will be available. There will also be an exhibition.

Tickets are £8.00 and all the proceeds will go to The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library of the EFDSS and to the Douglas Kennedy Memorial Fund.

Tickets and further details are available from the EFDSS, Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London NW1 7AY.

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## **'GOOD' MORRIS DANCER REQUIRED**

For 1st class PROFESSIONAL tour, December 2006

I, and possibly others, have been approached to find a 'good morris dancer' to perform as part of a seasonal nationwide show, touring most of December.

The dancer will need to be free of all other commitments.

Pre-tour rehearsal time may / will be required.

This is a front line engagement and may be before large audiences on major stages alongside highly respected internationally known artistes.

Absolutely reliable day / nightly performance would be expected. This would probably involve own maintenance of costume (laundry in strange towns etc.), stamina and attitude. May need own transport.

No age, sex, race or tradition has been specified. I imagine an exuberant Cotswold style jig.

Please inform... Experience and age may be useful. Allowances may have to be made, i.e. if fourteen or seventy-five there may be legal or accommodation issues.

Up to it, or know someone? Let me know.

All the best,

Simon Ritchie, Bagman, Thaxted Morris Men.

Please visit: <http://www.simonritchie.com/>

## TEN QUESTIONS to Dave Hunt



We've explored the lives of some of the past presidents of the Morris Federation. Now its time to look around the teams at other Morris people

from different parts of the country, and different Morris traditions!

We start with Dave Hunt. He is a member of Ironmen and Severn Gilders and is well known on the folk and dance scene for his various dancing, calling and entertainment skills!

### **1. What first got you interested in the Morris?**

I came to Morris as did many people in the 60s through an interest in traditional song and customs. In 1963 a folk club started in Wolverhampton - (the Giffard Folk Club) and after a short while I became a resident singer at the club, and a committee member too.

In 1967 we started running dance workshops, social and Morris, coached by Ken Clarke from the EFDSS. One day some of us met Jockey Men's Morris (Birmingham) dancing in Wolverhampton on a Ring Meeting tour. We were introduced to Jim Billson, who had danced with Jockey for nearly 20 years, but lived in Wolverhampton. He was very keen on helping us form a side, which we did and Giffard Morris was born.

### **2. How long have you been dancing/playing?**

Jim remained our excellent foreman for many years - and I was elected first squire - a position I held for ten years in total. Very soon after Giffard formed, several of us also joined Jockey and I danced with them for about five years. We were taught by Bill Patrick, a very knowledgeable and wonderful teacher. Whilst with Giffard I was also part of the

Long sword team (dancing North Skelton and Flamborough) the Rapper side and the Mummers.

In 1978 I moved to Telford and got involved with the Ironmen - as musician and dancer -and as a musician with Severn Gilders. At the next AGM I was voted in as Foreman of the Ironmen. At that time the team were dancing Cotswold - mostly Bampton - and pretty badly too. I worked with the team for a while to improve the standard of the Cotswold. Having read the Dr. Chris Cawte article in which he coined the phrase 'Border Morris' and realising that we were in the centre of what had been a hotbed of dancing - I wanted to introduce local dances. There were plenty of recorded instances of groups of men, and later children, dancing in the area, but practically no description of the dances. So the team made the decision to put together our own dances, based on the scant recorded descriptions. The first dance we wrote - collectively- was our Much Wenlock stick dance, using the tune published by Bacon. We then gradually developed more dances in our own style, using locally collected tunes wherever possible.

For a year or so we continued to dance both Cotswold and Border, until we finally made the decision to dance only our own Border dances. That's when we started blacking up, added tatter waistcoats to our kit and danced in clogs, which had been the everyday footwear of the artisans in the area.

During my 28 years with the team I have been - at various times -Men's Squire, Men's Foreman, Bandleader and Publicity Officer.

### **3. Have you ever tried any other style or tradition?**

The Severn Gilders were winners of the 'Ritual Dance Competition' at Sidmouth - but the men, quite rightly I think, would have nothing to do with competitive dancing. However I was involved a couple of times. On one occasion the late

Vic Baker (Prof. Wingnut) and I entered as a two man Longsword side - and another year with Vic as the sole surviving member of some fictional Cotswold side, with me as the musician. He danced 'Lads a Bunchum' Adderbury, with five invisible companions - 'Processional up' was wonderful, because as number one he just had to watch the invisible men dance the figure. The sticking throughout was hilarious, very silly but lots of fun.

I have also been fortunate to be a guest with a few traditional teams - I have been 'Maid Marion' with Abbots Bromley - a 'Gulliver' with Minehead Hobby Horse and a fat bearded 'Queen' with Winster at Bampton!

#### **4. What has been the high spot of your dancing life?**

Over the last thirty years Ironmen and Severn Gilders have danced in Ireland, (the Tralee Festival), Spain (guests of Elai-Alai), Belgium (International Traditional Dance Festival), France (Dournenez Festival and twice in Thiers) and Germany (three times in Schrobenhausen). We've also made several TV appearances and starred in a film specially commissioned for the Arts Council as part of the series 'Dance for the Camera'.

#### **5. And the low spot?**

Watching very poor sides dancing out - no wonder the media and some of the public ridicule Morris.

#### **6. What or where do you consider the strangest dance spot/dance out you ever took part in?**

When we were involved in a Japanese film documentary about iron - with artificial 'smoke' being wafted around us!

#### **7. What advice would you give to a newly formed dance team?**

Go and look at lots of teams dancing - see who has a high standard of dancing and presentation and then try to emulate them.

#### **8. Is there one aspect of the Morris world today you would gladly see consigned to the scrap heap?**

There is some good Morris about these days, and many keen young dancers. They are dancing to a high standard and developing their own distinctive style - particularly some of the Cotswold and Rapper sides.

There is also an awful lot of bad Morris too. Over the last 20 years there has been a proliferation of 'Border' sides. I'm sorry to say that many of them are truly dreadful. They seem to think that all one has to do is devise some outlandish 'raggy' costume, put on coloured make-up and run about yelling a lot- without considering the accuracy or appropriateness of their dancing. I think that a lot of people saw it as an 'easy way in' to forming a side - without the necessity of the years of practice needed to produce at least a half decent Cotswold, North West, Longsword or Rapper performance. This ain't my idea of Morris.

#### **9. Is there one aspect you would fight to keep above all others?**

Having said that, there are also some very good 'Border' sides too - who have put in the work, developed their own distinctive style, and are a pleasure to watch, and to be with on tour.

#### **10. What other interest do you have outside dancing - keep it legal decent and honest!**

Other interests - I am a full-time Community artist. I do a lot of work in Primary schools all over the country teaching Morris - mainly Border or Longsword with the occasional Cotswold or North West processional dance. I like to get the kids to devise their own dances - and some crackers they have produced too! I also produce mummers plays for schools - using local plays wherever possible.

*(Continued on next page)*

For over thirty years I have worked as a caller - anything from all the major Folk Festivals to little PTA or wedding ceilidhs. I run a monthly music session [mainly English] and continue singing wherever possible. My major interests outside the folk world are gardening, Thames Sailing Barges and collecting all sorts of things - 78rpm records, (we have over 4000), early theatrical postcards, old woodworking tools, cookery books (well over 500) and books on East coast sail. My website is

[www.sunshinearts.co.uk](http://www.sunshinearts.co.uk)

*Thanks Dave- certainly a lot to think about there!*

*Janet Dowling*

## OVERHEARD AT THE FESTIVAL

In the crowd watching a robust display of Cotswold dancing "Of course they're all bankers and solicitors in real life you know." I'm not sure if the "bankers" reference was some sort of rhyming slang or not.

Walking through Shrewsbury at the first festival after relocating from Bridgenorth a mother was heard explaining to young teenager. "No dear it's not an Old Folks Festival it's a Folk Festival"

Two dancers chatting at Cleckheaton "So anyway when they found out the men and women were using the same changing room they decided we were running a brothel and that put a stop to the dancing there."

On a very hot day with a display in full swing a steward was heard asking a team if they could get the crowd off the pavements as they were blocking the traffic. "We can try" came the reply "But it's the only shade to be had and we'd be dancing in it if it was wide enough!"

Two women Northwest dancers on the way to their next spot were stopped by a passer by who wanted to know if they were promoting Dutch cheese and if so where was the stall.



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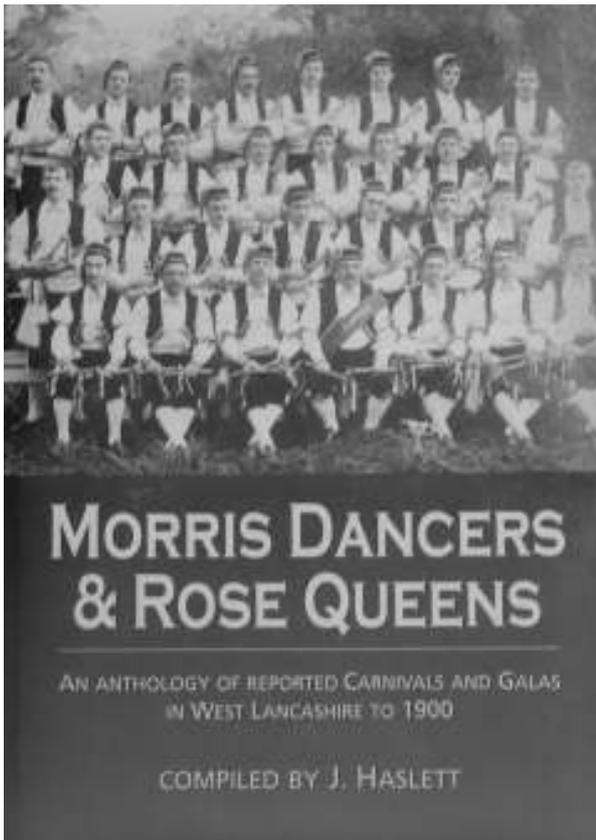
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## Book Review

### Morris Dancers & Rose Queens,



#### J. Haslett, Fairhaven Press

A recent acquisition for the Morris Federation Archive is a copy of Johnny Haslett's book. Johnny is well known in Morris circles. He has a lifelong interest in North West Morris, having been a member of Leyland Morris and Preston Royal Morris Dancers, and is a regular at many folk festivals and the dance organiser for the Fylde Folk Festival.

The book is sub-titled An Anthology of Reported Carnivals and Galas in West Lancashire to 1900 and it is a wonderful collection of written accounts of Morris dancing and associated events in part of Lancashire in late Victorian times. Although most references are contemporaneous reports from the 1890s, the written accounts date back to 1837 and some of the early articles refer to activities and events from preceding centuries.

Over many years Johnny has gathered an incredible archive of material from local newspapers and other sources, which is reproduced here, together with related advertisements and photographs. This is a work of love and dedication for which the Morris world should be particularly grateful.

This is a book that would grace anybody's coffee table but is also of inestimable value to the serious researcher into dance history and sociology, painting a picture of the high days and holidays for the ordinary people of the time and illustrating how Morris dancing and sides spread throughout the region. It is a fascinating book that can be dipped into at any time with no fewer than eight indices (or should that be indexes, as used by Americans and the EFDSS for the plural form of index?) that cross-reference the information to help you find what you're looking for.

Although this is a limited edition, copies are still available directly from Johnny Haslett for £35 including post and packing. Telephone 01772 423209 or visit <http://johnnyhaslett.co.uk> or email [haslett1@supanet.com](mailto:haslett1@supanet.com).

So, who should buy a copy of this book? People that immediately spring to mind are all Lancastrians, all primary school libraries and primary school teachers for their Key Stage 2 history topic on the Victorians, all public libraries, all Morris dancers, anybody interested in folk music, dance and customs, and, of course, everybody with a coffee table.

*Mike Everett*

#### From the Archive Officer

Whilst we're talking about books. Does anybody still have a copy of the Federation's Colouring Book that was issued about 15 years ago? If so, would they like to donate it to the Archive or lend it to me to copy? And would there be any interest in a new edition of this book?

*Mike Everett*

## Raddon Hill Clog Morris

Lismore, Ireland 14-19 July 2006



Raddon Hill Clog Morris are well used to trips abroad over recent years dancing in France and Germany with twinning groups, but we have always had a yen to dance in Ireland.

Our drummer Barry took on the challenge, started to make some contacts and managed to inveigle us an invite to perform at the "Fleadh Cheoil na Mumhan" taking place this year in Lismore, County Waterford. This is the competition celebrating the skills of musicians and dancers from all around Munster who compete to go through to the all Ireland finals.

Just before we left, a few doubts began to creep in – this was the regional championships – thousands of performers and their families – serious stuff, what would they think of a North-West Clog side from Devon? Oh well if nothing else we could be the novelty warm up act!

But of course we needn't have worried as we received a wonderful Irish welcome – the hospitality was first class – the Guinness cold and refreshing – and the dancing went down well too.



We managed to see quite a few of the competitions – step dancing, melodeon, harp, banjo, fiddle, - what a wealth of talent from youngsters of all ages – we were bowled over by the standard of playing and dancing – puts us to shame in this country.

If you have the chance to visit or take part in future "Fleadhs" – go for it, we're sure you'll be as impressed as we were.

*Liz Alexander*

*Raddon Hill Clog Morris*

### THAT LICENCE THING AGAIN

The PEL exemption for music is for unamplified live music. Sidmouth this year issued a very clear statement that amplified music was not permitted. Yet the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea excused the Notting Hill Carnival from potentially £64,000 of licences using the dance exemption, the wording allows for 'any dancing of a similar nature', and the fact that the sound systems play recorded music!



Minster Strays have a huge (width 16 inches diameter 28 inches) bass drum surplus to requirements. Both sides have got intact skins and it has a waterproof case

**£250**

Contact -

[judenchris@pulipalace.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:judenchris@pulipalace.fsnet.co.uk)

## **CIOFF – Information please.**

The Morris Federation is currently an associate member of Cioff for a fee of £35 per annum. All Morris Federation members can therefore be a member by association for an additional fee of £10 per year, which gives groups access to many international festivals around the world. However, groups must make an application to attend individual festivals, which may require the submission of video footage and other details regarding the dance style and nature of the group. Information is sent by Cioff initially to full members and then to associate members about a month later so full members could have a slight advantage in applying for festivals. In reality this is minimal as groups often negotiate their attendance up to a year in advance.

Each year the committee review membership costs of additional organisation and would be grateful for feedback in terms of Federations Sides who have taken up the opportunity to become Members by Association. If the service is not being used then it would be sensible to allow the Federation membership to lapse. The Federation is committed to Cioff for a further year but may not renew membership in Autumn 2007 unless it is apparent that the service is being used. Please let me know if your side has joined Cioff as a member by association or if you would like to.

*Jean Smith – Federation Events Officer*

*Editors Note: For those wondering what Cioff might mean the answer is “Conseil International des Organisations de Festivals de Folklore et D’Arts Tradionnels”.*

## **MORRIS BEARS**



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**COMMISSIONS WELCOME**

## CATS EYES ON THE ROAD



After its first season of practice and a couple of local dance-outs, Cat's Eye Border Morris ventured away from its Cornwall base to perform at Upton on Severn Festival.

The verdict: an excellent weekend.

As the organisers made clear, it was very much a do-it-yourself event but Cat's Eye found the venues and the amount of dancing just about right.



Undoubtedly, the highlight was the final procession, where goodness knows how many dancers and musicians lined the route at the end and a great crowd gathered to watch and enjoy.

One concern to Cat's Eye had been the kit. Not fully developed yet but the pirate shirts arrived just in time and the coats of various lengths gave the side a character all of its own.

There had been great discussion about blacking up. The compromise was a stripe, with lots of room for personal interpretation and experiment.

We might be looking for a couple more festivals this summer. So if you saw us at Upton and have space at your event, do make contact with :

Paul or Sally on 01822 832548.

Or email on [rally.bango@virgin.co.uk](mailto:rally.bango@virgin.co.uk)

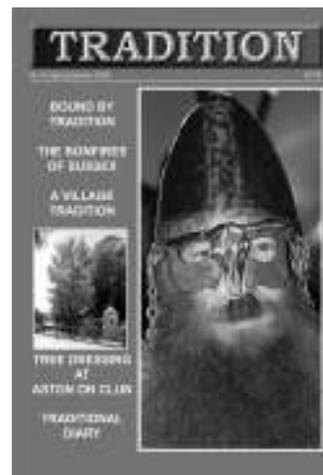
There's a web site on the way.... Email if you want to know when.

*Paul White*

# TRADITION

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**WINTER NEWSLETTER COPY DATE  
19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2006**

## Cogs & Wheels Decade'nt Day Out



Cogs & Wheels Ladies Morris were formed in late 1995, starting their first dance season in 1996. We take our inspiration from National Trusts' Finch Foundry in Sticklepath

Devon, and the surrounding Dartmoor landscape. Our costumes reflect the hues of the moor and our Beldames style of dancing is quite distinctive. We perform a wide variety of dances from several traditions—mostly Cotswold, with some Border and some our own. Our original team of ten has grown each year and although some are relatively new to Morris dancing we believe that our enthusiasm and joy for the dance overcomes all obstacles! As we are this year celebrating ten years of dance, we decided to mark the occasion with a 'Decade'nt Day Out'. July 8<sup>th</sup> saw an abundance of Morris dancers touring Dartmoor.



*Sides gather at South Zeal for the Decade'nt Day Out.*



We welcomed sides from Winkleigh, Tinnors Morris, Cats Eyes, Heather and Gorse, Sidmouth Steppers, Grimspound and Wreckers Morris to South Zeal, where we all boarded coaches to take us onto Okehampton, Princetown, and Badgers Holt, or to Chagford, Bovey Tracey and Widdecombe. Tourists and locals alike were entertained (& hopefully enthralled!) by displays of dance, good music and *bon homie*.

Following the inevitable pub stop for lunch, and cream teas in the afternoon, we were still in the mood for further entertainment on our return to South Zeal. A home-grown ceilidh saw some delightful entertainment, including the Tinnors Songsters, who provided a beautiful rendition at very short notice. A hilarious version of 'Lets Do It' was given by Fiona Elsworth and Bill Williams, and Wreckers treated us to a version of extreme Morris in the form of 'Blindfold Morris dance'. A scrumptious dinner, followed by birthday cake kept us all fed. The whole event was rounded off with further music, song and dance.

We would like to offer thanks to those who sponsored part of the programme, including the Kings Arms at South Zeal, Tom Cobley Inn at Spreyton (try some of their ales!) and West Devon Borough Council. Collections made throughout the day will be donated to various local charities.

*Alison Cruse – Day Tour Bag*



# HASTINGS TRADITIONAL JACK-IN-THE-GREEN FRIDAY 4TH - MONDAY 7TH MAY 2007

If you would like to take part in some of the best Morris dancing to be found on a sunny Sussex weekend, get in touch now at [www.hastingsjack.co.uk](http://www.hastingsjack.co.uk), [keithleech@britishlibrary.net](mailto:keithleech@britishlibrary.net) or 01424 716576, or [feelock@hotmail.com](mailto:feelock@hotmail.com) or 01424 436052.



## September

### Sat 2nd

Three Shires at York Festival

### Sat 9th

Lincoln BIG Morris Festival.

**Sat 16th** Three Shires at Dukes Dandy Day of Dance (Retford)

**Sat 23rd** Federation AGM Sheffield hosted by Triskele Sword.

## October

### Sun 8<sup>th</sup>

Black Horse and Standard Northwest Morris 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

### Sat 14<sup>th</sup>

PR Workshop Rickmansworth

### Sat 21<sup>st</sup>

City Clickers Clog Stepping Workshop Bristol

### Fri 27th-Sun 29th

Fools and Animals Unconvention, Old Warden, Bedfordshire

*Hosted by Letchworth Morris Men*

## November

### Sat 11<sup>th</sup>

Clog Stepping Workshop Harrogate

## January 2007

### Mon 1st

Tæppa's Tump Lunchtime pub display 1.00 o'clock. The Black Horse, Fulmer, Slough

## May

### Fri 4<sup>th</sup> – Mon 7<sup>th</sup>

Hastings Jack in the Green

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## The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts

On behalf of the Morris Ring, I, as Convener of the Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts, would like to invite your Fool and Beast, Betsy or any other Character associated with your Morris Side, to the 2006 Unconvention, 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> of October

As last year, the invite to the Unconvention has been extended to all Fools and Beasts from all the Morris organisations - The Morris Ring, The Open Morris and the Morris Federation.

The Unconvention will take place at Old Warden, Bedfordshire and will be hosted by Letchworth Morris Men. Accommodation will be Indoor Camping at the Village Hall.

There will be various Workshops over the weekend, details to be arranged; and the tour on Saturday is still to be arranged, but may involve a visit to a Garden - or an Air Museum - depends who will let us in for free!

The cost? £50 per person. Please book your place by filling out and submitting the attached form, as soon as possible, because numbers are limited. Accommodation at the village Hall is restricted to 35 persons, indoor camping; more can attend, but will have to arrange own accommodation. (not sure if anyone would be interested in outdoor camping at end of October...still it is Fools and Beasts!)

Please send remittance to Robert Chisman. Cheques payable to "The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts". Closing date for applications **1st October 2006**. I will be happy to answer any queries by phone or e-mail.

Robert Chisman

Fools and Beasts Convener, Robert's Pharmacy, The Coombes, Polperro, Cornwall, PL14 2RG, Tel: 01503 272250 (day) 01503 272437 (eve); E-mail: triggertroutter1@aol.com

*Editors Note : Space prevents me printing the application form If you want one I'm sure Robert will be happy to oblige.*

## MORRIS FEDERATION SHOP

### PUBLICATIONS:

**Cotswold Glossary:** An invaluable reference book including definitions of steps and figures found in two or more traditions; a cross-reference to all Cotswold traditions and types; terms used by different authors for the same movements; Morris musicianship and much more.

£4.00 + £1.75 UK, £3.50 OVERSEAS (p&p)

**Adderbury:** Produced jointly by Tim Radford and The Morris Federation, this book contains the history of the tradition, copies of original notation from the Blunt manuscript and modern notation with easy-to-follow diagrams for 13 stick and 13 hanky dances. Includes photographs and music.

£4.50 + £1.75 UK, £3.50 OVERSEAS (p&p)

**North West Morris:** This book contains notations, illustrated with figures and diagrams for ten of the best North West Morris dances, originally researched by Trefor Owen.

£4.00 + £1.75 UK, £3.50 OVERSEAS (p&p)

**Wheatley:** Wheatley is a very pleasing tradition to dance and yet one of the most straightforward. This book was produced from a complete review of source material and includes current practice and innovation.

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**Hinton:** Traditional and creative Morris by Sue Swift.

£4.00 + £1.75 UK, £3.50 OVERSEAS (p&p)

**Abram Circle:** Provides background, complete notation, pictures and music for the Abram Circle dance. The dance originates from the North West but has a different structure to most North West dances.

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**Molly:** Dancing into the Twenty First Century, by Tony Forster

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**Raglan Bantamcocks Morris:** characteristics of the tradition, notation and some music

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**Women and the North West Morris Dance**

£0.90

**Beginners and Basics:** Roy Dommet's ideas on the basics of Cotswold. Essential reading for leaders and foremen.

£1.25

**Twenty Years On, 1975-1996**

£1.25

**Border Morris:** a brief outline

£0.90 (Currently out of stock – being re-printed)

**Few Facts About the Morris**

£1.00

**Compact Discs – The Magic of Morris**

Double CD £15.00 p&p £1.00

### BELLS:

Size/qty	25	50	100
1 1/4"	£14.50	£29.00	£56.00
1 1/8"	£10.00	£19.00	£37.00
1"	£8.50	£15.25	£30.50
7/8"	£7.25	£14.00	£25.50
3/4"	£6.75	£12.75	£24.75

NB: For bells all prices include 1<sup>st</sup> class postage

Orders for quantities of over 100 bells will carry a surcharge for additional postage costs.

### PROMOTIONAL GOODS:

**Sweatshirts:** Sizes – S. M. L. XL. Colours – black, navy, raspberry, yellow, jade, white, royal blue

Round Neck: £11.00, Button: (black and navy, small only) **SALE £7.50** No choice of colour (Was £12.50)

**T-Shirts:** Sizes – S. M. L. XL. Colours – black, navy, red, yellow, green, white, royal blue

**SALE £3.50** No choice of colour (Was £5.50)

(Please give 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> colour choice for clothing)

**Stickers:** 4" diameter bearing MF name and logo – self-adhesive for music cases, files, etc.

£0.50

**Leather Badges:** 2" in diameter bearing MF name and logo (Black and colour on natural background or Gold on black background)

£1.25

**Leather Key Rings:** 2" in diameter bearing MF name and logo on natural background

£1.25

**Most booklets and promotional goods include postage.**

**Prices are correct at time of printing.**

**Please complete enclosed order form.**