



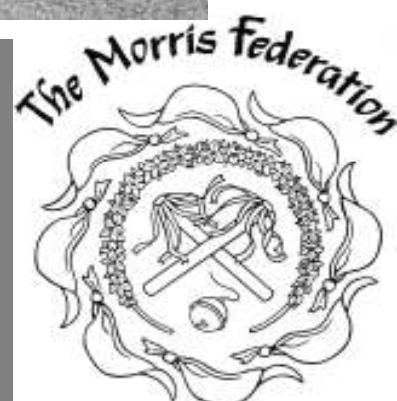
Newsletter Springs 2006

2012-OLYMPICS – Will we be there?

TEN QUESTIONS – Sally Wearing

PUBLICITY – How to make yourself heard

MUMMING – Ramblings of a Blue Stotter



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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

It's now a year since I took over as editor of the Newsletter and I guess I must be doing something right to still be here. My plea at the AGM for good cover pictures produced the terrific shot on the cover. Can it get any better? Come on folks prove that it can.

And Janet Dowling and Paul White have once again supplied pieces for which they get my heartfelt thanks. As indeed my thanks go to all those who contribute because without you the Newsletter would be a monograph on dancing "Up North".

It seems that we are in a period of change in the world of traditional dance and events. Darlington Spring Thing, an event that has opened my season for many years is now in a revised format. Holmfirth Festival seems to be at some sort of cross-roads. Up at Whitby Malcom Storey promises that this will be his last year as the principal organiser. But look to the Paul White piece for inspiration. Out of the old comes the new. So the faces and places may change, but the tradition grows with each passing year. Long may it continue to do so.

Doug

Printing

Next Issue

Front Cover Photograph

Outline Print Service Ltd, Colne, Lancashire

Summer 2006 (Copy date 21st May)

Black Dog "Morris with Altitude" – Picture Adrian Williams

President's

A recent bit of debate has been whether the role of the Federation has changed of late.... in origin it acted as a support mechanism for the women's teams who were isolated by the Ring, it moved on to become more education based, running workshops, providing notation and advice etc., and now?

Well there is certainly less demand for notation, workshops are still run but on a smaller scale, and certainly the Federation is not isolated any more, currently being the largest of the three Morris organisations. It seems more time is now taken up with PR, profile enhancement and networking! We send representatives to various conferences and meetings, belong to and voice our concerns and ideas to a number of parallel organisations (EFDSS, CIOFF etc.), converse with DCMS, Arts Council bods, local authorities et al.

Is this what you as members want us to do? If you feel we are not doing anything the way you would like or even just not doing anything... let us know! We can't act in your best interest unless we know what that interest is!

Mayday looms on the horizon, time to check the kit, repair/replace the sticks/slings, tweak that new dancer to perfection, really crack that crux move in the new dance you've been learning all winter... OOPS that seems to smack of more about standards of performance doesn't it!!!

Over the next few years there are a number of major projects we as dancers can be involved in: another joint organisations Day of Dance set for early April '07 probably in Birmingham. Participation in Liverpool City of Culture '08, and then the Olympics in 2012, with lots of intermediate sized does in between....

Prologue

If we really want to have the recognition we all think we deserve, we have to change the public perception of traditional dance from something to laugh at into a valued and respected national asset. Probably no-one wants the National Morris Dance Troupe of England, dancing in the approved style (no other allowed), but in most other nations there is the national troupe, it often gets central government funding and it certainly gets respected.

How come we don't....is it how we present ourselves? Do we want to loose that individual non-professional approach to our performance? Amateur is not a dirty word but sometimes we may need a more business like approach to our dealings with festivals and events....in the recent newspaper debate on the future of poetry a phrase came up that sounded rather like an epitaph: "it will be like morris dancing: really interesting to people who do it and incomprehensible and slightly annoying to people who don't".

The context was a perceived parallel between the decline in appreciation / publication / knowledge of poetry and the alleged decline in morris. We have to correct that image at every possible opportunity with good standards of performance.

There is currently a Department of Culture scheme to find the most suitable icon of Englishness...and should you need inspiration in your dancing , go to www.icons.org.uk/introduction, read the concept, then go to 'nominations', vote for morris dancing, then to the A-Z index and to M then morris dancing.

If you need any more inspiration to dance, go through the 'Comments'... Here are just three out of many:

“Morris dancing is the only traditional English dance form and for the most part unjustly treated by most aspects of the media. In other countries it would be treated as an art form”. *J. Metcalfe, Ulverston, Cumbria.*

“Morris dancing sums up traditional English vernacular culture. Too often derided, it should stand alongside the national dances and cultures of the world”. *G. Carter, South Shields.*

“Part of the Great in Great Britain” *Jo Jo, Essex.*

Trefor

PEL – Now it’s Here How’s it Going?

November saw the PEL legislation go “live” and in spite of dire warnings from much of the UK press the run down to Christmas failed to see the total meltdown of public order many had predicted. But the part of the legislation that affects us as dancers has had little press coverage. And the winter season is not one where we would expect to find too many test cases of just how and where the bureaucrats might seek to use the rules.

But there have been a few so far, most of which seem to offer a positive message for the traditional dance, and associated activities, world. John Burrell’s report of the Knaresborough Mummers tour has an interesting view taken by one licensing officer, even if it does potentially re-open the “pagan” argument.

Meanwhile down in Essex East Saxon Sword set out to do an on-spec tour in December and were told they must have a licence. This would have been a show stopper but for the Federation web site. One visit to the site and a down load of the exemption detail as recorded there solved the problem.

So it could be a good idea for all of us out there to down load our own copy of the exemption and keep it in “ready use”

mode. In matters of dispute it often helps to get your retaliation in first!

With the main dancing season approaching a potential area of concern is the “licensed venue”. Reports are coming in of authorities deeming only one spot in their area as a licensed venue for performance, obviously not ideal for team tours, particularly if the sole venue licensed is a) not a good one and b) subject to multiple use.

More encouraging are the reports that some towns and cities have simply licensed whole areas of their bailiwick. One thing that does come across loud and clear is the need to demonstrate public liability insurance as part of the permit to perform.

So keep us informed of how things are working out. And before charging into battle draw breath and consult the Federation that’s what we are here for after all.

DB



Bells and Drums

Maker of “Gurt Mint” bodhrans






1) Bell pads (pair) (dressed model) (2 rows set)	£ 20-25
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Bell band: standard £ 4-25, long £ 5-50	
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New Address!

COMMITTEE NEWS

ARCHIVE – Mike

Mike has been busy writing the article on public relations which features on page 22 of this issue. I'm sure Mike would welcome any additional ideas that our readers have used to get publicity in the past. Or even ideas that might work in the future. For my taste I'd steer clear of anything involving "reality TV" but maybe that's just me.

In addition he's also reviewing a majestic tome "Morris Dancers and Rose Queens" by Johnny Haslett, for which Mike has promised to provide a review. Looking at my own copy I figure this should keep Mike out of trouble for some weeks.

So our archive officer is alive and well and no doubt Shirley Dixon will soon be chasing him for material for her project on the history of the Federation. That's assuming that Shirley has the time once she's dealt with the tidal wave of material that will come from her request to the membership.

Editor

FINANCE – Rachel

Registration Forms

Getting better but there's still room for improvement in completing the forms and getting them back on time. To all those who completed the forms on time and accurately a big thank you. To those to whom I had to return forms for re-

Costs

Those of you ordering bells for the coming season will notice the price increase as of this issue. This is due to an increase in the cost from the manufacturer and also an increase in postage costs. We have kept the price down for as long as was feasible but we can no longer avoid the increase.

Insurance

Please note that the personal accident insurance does **NOT** cover those under sixteen or over sixty-five. This is because it is related to income replacement.

Editors Note: I'm sure I spotted a note in the ether from an over sixty-five protesting at this discrimination! And also a note to the effect that that the age range of members was actually eleven to eighty-two! However my computer has swallowed this so if anyone can confirm or deny that story you know where to find me.

NEWSLETTER – Doug

Costs

The cost of printing the Newsletter is where a huge chunk of the Federation income disappears to each year. A quick back of the envelope (that's a politically correct fag packet) gives a cover price of £2.30 an issue. Now I know that every team out there makes sure that they get full value from this by passing each edition round so that everyone gets a chance to read it – don't you. But either some folk are missing out or would like to own their very own copy because I've had a couple of requests for extra copies.

I would have raised this at the last committee meeting if I'd actually attended but digging my youngest lads allotment over to ease his planning up to the arrival of second grandchild got in the way. Anyway young Jack is now safely in the world so what I'd like to know is "Is there anyone else out there who would like extra copies?".

Advertising

One way of keeping costs down is to sell advertising. My thanks to those advertisers who make use of the Newsletter and support us by paying for the space. To our readers might I ask that you mention the Newsletter if you use any of our advertiser's services.

One feature of the Newsletter has been that members of the Federation have generally had free advertising in the Newsletter for **non-profit** making use.

However the committee has now decided that at the editors discretion a charge of £10 per quarter page will be payable for advertising placed by Federation members.

Technology

I've had a request from one side that we should consider publishing the Newsletter to the World-Wide-Web. At present I have to look into the feasibility of this with our web editor. But as with the extra copies question some feed back on just how useful this would be would be appreciated.

EVENTS – Jean

Forthcoming Workshops

Longsword

In conjunction with the Sword Dance Union.

Sunday April 2nd 2006

Kelham Island, Sheffield.

Workshop leaders Paul Davenport and Sue Coe.

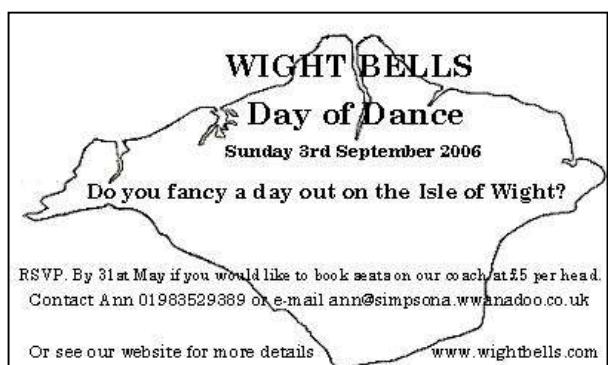
This is intended to give a fresh look to the longsword dance, working on figures and shapes.

Please support this event, it is a new approach in that it is a Sunday, and it is the Morris Federation working alongside another interested group.

Clog Stepping Workshop

Saturday November 11th 2006

Clog Stepping with Incognito



Somewhere in the Harrogate area, hosted by Clogarhythm. Put the date in your

diary. Further details in the next newsletter.

PR Workshop.

Time and Place to be decided.

It has been suggested the Morris Federation offer a workshop around the issues of PR and dealing with the Press, e.g. how to write a press release/talk to TV Radio etc. or how to find funding for special events.

Please let me know if you would be interested and the type of information you would like to receive. If anyone has suggestions of who could run this type of workshop I would be interested in hearing from you.

AGM 2007

Glorishears of Brummagem Morris Dancers have offered to host the AGM for 2007. Now that's forward planning.

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.

Brighton Morris Men Have a German Squire



Hi,

My name is Christoph Von Kuerthy and I am this years squire of the Brighton Morris Men. As you can read I am German. I just wanted to introduce myself and to ask if there is or has ever been a German squire of a morris team in the UK.

Just something about myself:

I started to morris dance with a team called Ashdown Morris men which I believe is a Ring side, in 1996 I was a student then and when I finished my degree I returned and after having danced with Oyster Morris from Kent and Frog Island also in Kent I joined Brighton Morris men in 1999. I teach German in a Steiner school where morris dancing is a regular part of the curriculum.

I hope it is OK to inform you about all this but I think there are not many German morris team squires so it might be worth while.

Best wishes

Yours

Christoph Von Kurthy

COLLAR A BARGAIN?

Hello,

Can you let your members know that we have recently introduced white collarless shirts specifically for Morris dancers. No more snipping the collar off old office shirts. These are old-fashioned cotton with half placket front. Very reasonable at £23.50 + VAT.

Available on line from www.vintageshirt.co.uk. See white cotton grandad shirts.

Many thanks,

C M Darcy

Thirty and Still Going Strong

Dear Doug,

Perhaps you would care to mention that Invicta Morris will be thirty in 2006 and are having an evening Ale on March 18th in Sevenoaks to celebrate.

1976 was a good year for morris, I know of at least two other sides started in that year.

Sincerely,

Sheila P. Finn - Secretary Invicta Morris

NIFTY NEWS

Dear Editor,

What is NYFTE? The National Youth Folklore Troupe of England.

NYFTE (pronounced 'nifty') are young people aged 10-18 from all over the country, who perform English music, dances and songs at festivals and concerts at home and abroad. We perform social/ceilidh dance; Border, Cotswold and North-West morris and both rapper and longsword traditions

Each year the team holds a variety of training events and workshops at which team members and the general public have the opportunity to learn about these traditions and to share in the joy they bring.

I am writing to you seeking support for NYFTE's trip to America this summer. If you believe that the next generation should be encouraged please encourage your readers to send a cheque (however small the amount) made payable to the 'NYFTE Travel Fund'.

For further information visit: [www:nyfte.org.uk](http://www.nyfte.org.uk)

Dave Leverton

A Dancer's Way of Saying Thanks

Hey there Morris fans!

The name is Simon Matthews, I live in Lytham St Annes, Lancashire but I dance for Leeds Morris Men. Throughout the year I'm going to try and dance at as many places I can. My reason for doing this is to raise money for Katherine House Hospice which is the place that looked after grandpa when he got cancer and the Neurological Department of Preston Royal Hospital where I had some surgery recently. I would like more places planned for me to dance so if anyone out there would like a young and very talented dancer to come to their weekend or festival then just let me know on crazydude.y2s@hotmail.com. Also I have a web site briefly explaining what I am doing and you find that on <http://www.justgiving.com/monkeymcdougal>. You can sponsor me via my web site or you can sponsor me in person, you'll just have to invite me to your area to come and dance.

Simon Matthews

My apologies to you Simon for losing a picture that came with the letter. The technology defeated me. Ed

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

Please send any contributions for the Summer Newsletter to the Newsletter editor by
Sunday 21st May 2006

Stone Monkey Rapper Workshop

Bletchington, Oxfordshire

11th February 2006

Hosted by Mabel Gubbins

Saturday dawned cold and frosty but that did not deter the forty people who had booked for the workshop at Bletchington village hall.

Mabels had worked hard to ensure the day ran smoothly providing delicious home-made soup, fresh bread and fruit and stunning home-made cakes to sustain participants.

Stone Monkey managed the eight sets admirably, each group being instructed by an individual and working at their own agenda with help from the inimitable Phil Heaton if necessary.



At the end of the day Stone Monkey were persuaded to dance in a few pubs before heading for the Whapweasel ceilidh where they provided a short spot in the band break.

Feedback was very positive and is as follows.

Venue

- Easy to find.
- Enough space.
- Sufficient if a little cold to start. (It was, but we had to open the windows in the end!

Food

- Simple and good.
- Loads and Lovely.
- Excellent Cake.
- Basic but Adequate.

Organisation

- Very good.
- Top Class.
- It worked well.
- Flexible, well organised.
- Excellent.

Workshop Leaders

- Excellent, every group having a tutor to work on the level needed.
- Very helpful and patient.
- Friendly and competent.
- Friendly and helpful.
- A little confused/confusing at times. (*This is rapper dancing!*)

Content of Workshop

- Hard, but fun and lots to work on.
- As much as we could manage.
- Excellent
- We have come away with a new dance and we are very happy with it.
- Enough figures for us to build a dance on.
- Good, something for everyone.
- At everyone's speed, challenging but fun.
- Excellent starting point as we were complete beginners.

Any Other Suggestions

- Another one next year.
- Try doing it at the pub. (A suggestion from the a Monkey I believe)
- More in Nottingham or nearby.

I would like to say a huge thank you to both Mabel Gubbins and Stone Monkey. Without people like them this type of event could not happen. The fee for the day was a mere £10 which just about covers the costs.

Jean Smith – Federation Events Officer

STONE MONKEY RAPPER WORKSHOP – A MABEL-EYE VIEW

Mabel Gubbins Rapper were approached by the Morris Federation with a request to host a workshop to be led by Stone Monkey. As it was put to us, “We all get something out of belonging to the Fed, so it’s good to be able to put something back in...” Which is very true, so how could we refuse?

Our first challenge was to find a suitable venue: Where? How big? Do we expect 10 attendees? – 100? – None at all? Luckily Katie knew of an ideal venue in Bletchingdon which has a wooden floor, would easily accommodate around 50 people, has good road communications and also has kitchen facilities – Very Important! The hall was booked and the workshop was advertised, catering was discussed.

Three weeks before the workshop date and we only had a handful of responses. Why? Wasn’t the prospect of a day with the Monkeys exciting enough? Was the date inconvenient? Was Bletchingdon too isolated for people to travel to? Did Mabel’s promise of lunch, tea and cakes not appeal? Should we cancel the whole thing? With a week to go we had a rash – nay, a veritable measles - of replies and we knew that we had a certainty.



On Saturday 11th February Mabel were in the kitchen of the Bletchingdon Village Hall by 9.00am and raring to go. The heaters were on (honestly, they were – it was a very cold morning!), the urn was filled and lunch

was being unpacked. People began to turn up, hot coffee and teas were dispensed and at 10.00am the workshop commenced. There were eight sets of dancers, and a troupe of Monkeys to

instruct, assist, demonstrate, berate, elaborate and encourage.



Now out in the hall it may have been all “tappity tappity tappity tap”; but in the kitchen it was all “choppity choppity choppity chop”there was cheese to cut, bread to slice, soup to defrost (DEFROST !! AARRGHHH!!), soup to cookand mugs to wash and mugs to wash –this rapper dancing is thirsty work ! After three hours of tangled swords and knotted brains the work-shoppers were allowed a lunch break. And they had:

THREE sorts of home-made soup; THREE kinds of bread; TWO makes of cheese; TWO varieties of apple; tomatoes; bananas; and, to crown it all, a pot of Nigel’s Home-Made Marrow Chutney.

There was time for a quick trip to the pub next door (Mabel have no idea what



happened there – they were chained to the sink washing plates and plates, ready for the tea break....) and then the afternoon session

got under way. (Continued over)

Dancing is energetic work and lots of calories get burned off which need replacing. The odd pint in the pub helps with this but, even better than beer, is CAKE – and CAKE is one of Mabel's passions (along with GIN). So with afternoon tea and coffee we provided:

NINE different sorts of cakes and biscuits – and yah boo sucks to the man who looked at them and said "I hope these are all home made..." Yes, they were – all lovingly hand-crafted by Mabel. Mr Kipling: eat yer heart out....



Having refuelled and taken on ballast, each set of workshoppers were now ready to demonstrate to each other what they had

learned during the day and there was a showcase of very entertaining dances.

Mabel would like to thank the Monkeys for being such appreciative guests; the Morris Federation Events Organiser for entertaining the notion that Mabel might be competent enough to host the event; and the work-shoppers for dutifully eating the fruits of our labours. And special thanks to the lady who, instead of going to the pub after lunch, entered the inner sanctum of the kitchen, picked up a tea towel, and dried plates and plates and plates....

Mabel Gubbins have picked up on one particular comment on the feedback forms in respect of the catering:

"Simple but Delicious"

- That's us !!

Angi Cole - Mabel Gubbins Rapper

DETR 2006

Rapper teams, thanks to all the teams who have booked for DETR so far.

I'm pleased to say that it's going to be an international event with Candy Rapper, Beside the Point and Scrambled Six returning for more. Also, good news that last year's winning Maltby Phoenix team are returning to defend their title under their new name of Sandbeck Sword.

The accommodation at the Backpackers hostel has been filled. Still space in the Youth Hotel at the moment although we've only got a limited number of rooms reserved at the price of £35.00 for the two nights. The Youth Hotel price does include a cooked breakfast. *(This was as at the end of January. If you haven't booked by now it may be too late – Ed)*

We're putting some information together on the competition format and plan for the weekend and we'll send that round soon. We've also had a good response from the pubs we've asked to use for the competition and so far they're all inside the city walls which means there shouldn't be too far to travel between them.

All the best

Kevern

Black Swan Rapper

The dates for the DETR event for those who missed them in the last edition are the 17th, 18th and 19th of March. So this is probably just too late – unless we break all records getting this edition out to the readers! - Ed

207 Mile Morris Jig

During Easter Week 2006 Ben Dauncey will attempt the World Record for Long Distance Morris Dancing from Tunbridge Wells to Worcester City. That is 207 miles in 7 days.

If you would like to sponsor him and benefit the MS Society and the Make-A-Wish Foundation visit www.nextfootup.com or phone Pat Joyce on 020 8653 6526.

QUARTER OF A CENTURY OF CROOK MORRIS

Crook Morris formed 25 years ago and amazingly several of the original members still dance and play music for the side today. The side has maintained a strength in numbers, we currently have an active membership of around 40. The energy and enthusiasm of our Foreman and Squire, Martyn and Suzanne, goes a long way in keeping us on our toes and in the frame. The camaraderie and friendships amongst our number and across the folk scene keeps us coming back for more.

It is befitting that we should celebrate our anniversary by hosting a Special Weekend of Dance at Coniston, Friday 21-Sunday 23 July 06. It will be our normal weekend with bells on, pun intended.

We are happy to announce that all places have already been taken up for the weekend and we will be joined by our friends from Silhill, Ryknild Rabble, Mortimers Morris, Sheffield City Morris, Rutland Morris Men, the Chiltern Hundreds Clog Morris, Careg Las and Loose Women. It promises to be a spectacle, a riot of colour, at times rumbustious and cheeky, at others elegant and charming, or even entertainingly energetic. We've got a range of traditions and styles covered.

Of course these things don't happen overnight and the forward planning and organisation for the weekend has been underway since the summer of 05. We want to make sure the participants are looked after, the organisation runs like clockwork, everyone is well fed in our own inimitable style and above all the weekend is jolly good fun.

Friday night we'll meet and greet the sides and settle down to some good old home spun entertainment, aided, abetted by a concoction of cocktails, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic to suit all tastes, dressed in our finery where taste will probably not feature at all.

Hung over or bright eyed groups of Morris Dancers will dance out at several locations around the southern lake district on Saturday 20 July 06 in Ambleside, Bowness, Grasmere, Hawkshead and even on the lake itself! On Sunday afternoon all the sides will dance together in the market town of Kirkby Lonsdale. Check out our web site for details, it's worth a watch, on:
www.crookmorris.org.uk.

As usual we have planned a ceilidh at our Coniston base on Saturday night. We will party in style with the top class ceilidh band 'This Way Up'; our very own Martyn Harvey will do the calling. Entry is a ticket only affair, priced at £6, and if you want one, shout now as they're going like Fanny Frail on a Saturday night! Contact Martyn on 01539 720551.

Sadly, this is the last weekend we will run in this format and on this scale. Happily we'll do our best to go out on a high note and make it a weekend to remember.

Anne Hajnrych,

Publicity Officer - Crook Morris

Why So Sad?

I just had to ask when I saw that last comment by Anne. Was this the end of another side? January had already bought news of the demise of the Stroud Men's side – the women's side continues I'm glad to say.

The good news is that of course Crook are still going strong and gaining more members to keep the side strong and healthy. The reason for this being the last weekend "in this format" is that Crook have always taken pride in doing all the catering themselves using locally sourced produce. Changes in the team makeup made it impossible to maintain the high standard they had set themselves. Hence the decision to move on to another format and go out on a high note. So the team is still there and we can only wait to see what they do next.

DB

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL 2005 AT SHUGBOROUGH



This year I was NOT keen to go. The early morning phone call between two 70+ musicians was as dismal as the wild wind and pouring rain I saw through the window. I made my bed (thinking with pleasure of hot water bottle and book later that day) and, attempting a positive vein, laid out my BLACK DOG MOLLY clothes.

At 5 p.m. the two-mile crawl in a line of red tail-lights through Stoke-on-Trent had us determining that this WAS our last Christmas event at Shugborough. Unlit country roads tax ageing eyes but what a relief! This year an illuminated sign announced the entrance to the Shugborough Estate. Waving one's performer's Pass Ticket and driving into the privileged Car Park always begins a sense of occasion despite the following squelch through muddy grass carrying bags of gear.

The trees hung with coloured lights and the merry sound of the pipe organ began in me a grudging appreciation at being a

part of this seasonal festivity. A cup of tea and slice of rich Genoa cake, in a marquee full of delightful items to buy, while being entertained by a Victorian clad group of singers found me very comfortably inclined and I was again impressed by the countless numbers of people who work at their talents in choirs, music and dance groups and give

pleasure at so many functions.

AND THERE WERE OUR DANCERS AND MUSICIANS...appearing as if by magic, costumed, colourful, prepared and utterly reliable.

As soon as our Ganger called his cheerful, cheeky preamble to the umbrella sheltered audience and my notes introduced the first lively, puddle-splashing dance I knew that I was glad to be there.

There...in the damp dark with Brass Bands playing carols and Christmas music, with mulled wine and hot pork and stuffing roll stalls, with twinkling lights and holly and fir, near the handsome decorated Hall and amongst friends who had gathered to add to a rich experience their music and dance.

Beth Lister

CITY CLICKERS' DAY OF DANCE 2005.

This time last year, we didn't know whether we'd be running another day of dance, but here we are again! The response to last year's day was so positive and people so keen to return for another workshop day that it prompted us to do it all over again. Despite some hiccoughs along the way, such as the wooden floor being removed from the largest hall we used last year, it's been a great success and we're basking in the praise whilst taking a well-earned break from organising anything at the moment.

This year, we had three very different workshops. In one Katherine Tattersall from Camden Clog took the beginners through their paces with a routine of Pat Tracey's heel and toe steps. In another Simon Harmer treated his group to an exposition of Alex Boydell's steps. And in the third workshop Chris Metherell took the advanced cloggers through an interesting and challenging routine of Ivy Sands' exhibition hornpipe steps.

All three workshops proved to be very popular with the participants who were full of praise for the tutors and the musicians. Certainly the showcase at the end of the day demonstrated that they'd all learnt their steps well!

The food we made and supplied for lunch was also very much appreciated. In fact, we're beginning to think that some people just come for the lunch because we've had so much praise for it! This all happens because of a strong commitment from everyone in the team to make soups, cakes, etc. before the day, and a willing team of volunteers to work in the kitchen on the day itself. From a personal point of view, I thoroughly enjoyed this experience and it made up in part for not being able to join in one of the workshops.

Thanks must go to the Morris Federation for their support in advertising the day again. It seems that most people get to hear of the day through their journal so this provides a vital link for us. Thanks and praise also to one of our team, Alison Meredith, who volunteered to be in charge of the whole event. This meant harrying and nagging the rest of us into completing our allotted tasks and hosting the day itself. This she did with great skill and enthusiasm, so we owe a big debt of gratitude to her. Thank you Alison!

Finally, at the end of the day (literally), we felt that although we had fewer attendees than last year, the day had still been very successful; we had brought together a community of fellow cloggers; they had all had a great time (so they told us), and we had managed to stay in the black financially. So, happy, but tired, we all retreated to a local café/bar to celebrate and unwind with tapas and wine. A great end to a great day. Will we run it next year? Watch this space!

Julie Williams,

for City Clickers Clog and Step Dance Group.

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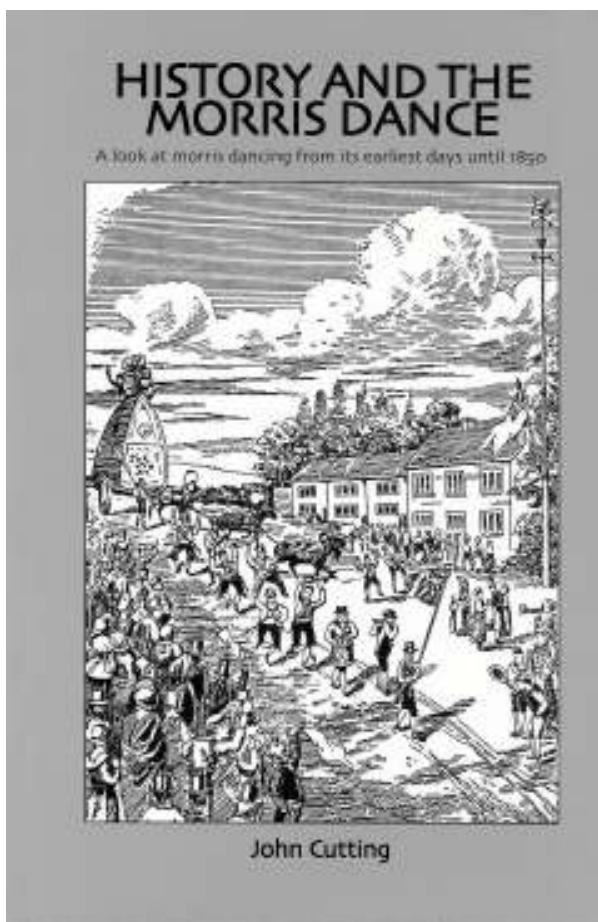


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**THE SUFFOLK FOLK
FESTIVAL**

BOOK REVIEW "History and the Morris Dance" by John Cutting.



'Where did morris come from, and what was it for?'

After thirty years of dancing, teaching, and research, John Cutting attempts to answer these questions. From the earliest known references (1137 in Spain, 1448 in England) to the middle of the nineteenth century, morris events are listed and examined, while a parallel study looks at publications about morris, from the Puritans down to the present day. Many illustrations, portraying morris or possible morris dancers, from the fourteenth century onwards are reproduced in the text.

Paperback, 204 pages; ISBN 185273 108 7, Price £12.50

Copies of the book may be ordered at: <http://www.dancebooks.co.uk/new.asp>

or from:

Dance Books, The Old Bakery,

4 Lenten Street, Alton, Hampshire GU34 1HG

Tel: 01420 86138 Fax: 01420 86142

OK I admit that the engraving of a rush bearing on the cover immediately raised my expectations of this book, before even opening it. Having reached the end of the book those first expectations are justified. The author does not attempt to restrict morris to a narrow time or place, nor to provide any definitive source for the dance. Rather we are presented with the results of his years of research collated into easily accessible chapters.

We start with a review of literary references to traditional dance over the last four hundred years. This is followed by a chapter outlining the development of the "English" and how this development may have influenced traditional dance forms. Two chapters deal neatly with the thorny question of the Spanish link and the very word "morris". In another chapter pairing we have a review of historical entertainments that had, or might have had, morris as a feature followed by a chronology of events which did actually feature dancers. The next chapter pairing gives the reader a glimpse of the written record as seen through parish records followed by a look at what history has left us in the way of illustrations. The final chapter draws together the threads of the work into a cogent view of where the dance came from and how it got to its present form.

John Cutting's writing style is easy and accessible, as an author he's not out to dazzle with the depth of his research it's more important to communicate as clearly as possible. So for the new comer to the world of traditional dance this book provides a good solid foundation of knowledge. For those wanting to take their own research deeper John's writing provides a host of starting points and for those who have already acquired a wide knowledge of the history of the tradition the book may challenge some established ideas. And for the non-dancers? Well this book gives a concise and readable account of why so many people in the 21st Century still go out and celebrate being alive by dancing. Enough said I think.

Doug Bradshaw

Black Jack Border Morris Wassail at The Fleece Inn, Bretforton



Nigel Smith, morris dancing landlord of the world famous Fleece Inn, Bretforton decided to celebrate the Wassail tradition in the Inn's gardens this year. Black Jack Border were invited to take part and as Nigel is a member of the side we were delighted to accept.

On a cool, dry Thursday evening Black Jack Border practised as usual in The Barn at The Fleece. The celebrations began at 9.30 p.m. after we had performed a couple of dances in the Courtyard. Those gathered around processed to the Apple Orchard in the Fleece Inn gardens where Nigel welcomed everyone in his speech.



The event, well attended by locals, customers, dancers and musicians began with the planting of a Worcestershire Black Pear Tree, presented by Black Jack Border to the Inn. This was followed by singing of the Somerset Wassail by

Vaughan Hully, accompanied by an enthusiastic chorus. The customary dancing around the tree, anointing it with cider and hanging toast on the branches and making as much music and noise as possible to fend off evil spirits, was entered into with a lively performance by Black Jack & the audience.

A welcome supply of mulled Plum Jerkum (the local brew, made from Vale of Evesham plums) warmed the crowd and an enjoyable time was had by all. We returned to The Courtyard where Black Jack performed several more dances to a very appreciative audience.



Every Thursday evening is "Singing in The Fleece" the regular Folk Song & Music session, so we all retired to the Fleece to enjoy a welcome supper provided by Nigel & his staff, and to continue the celebrations in the warm atmosphere of this fine of 14th Century Inn.

Black Jack Border are pleased to be associated with The Fleece Inn, and to be able to continue old traditions in our own local area.

Rosie Stroud, Black Jack Bagman

Ten Questions to Sally Wearing

Sally Wearing was on the MF committee from 1979 to 1995 – most of those as President. She confesses to being a morris tart having danced with 5 teams during that time. These were Phoenix Morris (Coventry), Chinewrde Morris, Duns Tew, Long Itchington and Coventry Sword. She made a very brief appearance with Tylers Men. She danced with all of these and was foreman for Phoenix, Chinewrde and Coventry Sword for varying lengths of time, plus taught Long Itchington for their first few years, before she joined them.

1. What have you been doing since you stood down from the MF committee?

More morris stuff, of course. Sue Swift had already dragged me into getting involved with Sidmouth Festival, and we were the morris advisors for about 12 years. I now organise the morris for Warwick Folk Festival and provide advice to Towersey Folk Festival if required. I currently only dance rapper, as Insword's Betty (I model myself on Lily Savage) and an occasional dancer with Mabel Gubbins. But I miss dancing other types of morris, especially Cotswold, and teaching – I used to thoroughly enjoy leading workshops.

2. What first got you interested in the Morris?

I fell into morris by accident. Due to a very odd accommodation policy at Bath University, I was stuck in digs by myself in my first year, despite being one of only two women on my course. On the first evening, I bumped into four maths students at the bus stop and got chatting. I quickly latched onto them and we went to the Freshers' Fair together a few days later. We had seen Bath City Morris dancing at the Freshers' Ceilidh and one of the group (not me) suggested that we joined them. So most of us went along the next week and the rest, as they say, is history. Curiously, the one who suggested joining the morris didn't make the first practice (too busy going to a God

squad meeting...) but she is still dancing and we are still in the same side, as she is Jill Griffiths.

All this was chance – I would never have thought of becoming a morris dancer. And Bath City was the best side to start dancing with: lots of experience and a great social life.

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

I've danced all the main morris styles in varying amounts but have singularly failed to do any mumming, although I'd love to.

Otherwise, I can only think of one year of tap dancing classes (done in order to improve my rapper stepping) and the usual naff bits of ballroom at school.

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

Difficult question! I refuse to pick one so here is a small selection.

Phoenix was the first women's team to dance at Bromyard Folk Festival. In 1982, we were fed up with watching the morris, which were mostly the same old usual suspects. It was the custom for uninvited teams to dance in the town on Sunday, but the unwritten rule was that only men could perform. So we decided to take the plunge and were delighted with the response. One of the men's teams (Wyre Forest) saw us dancing outside a pub away from the main road and asked us to join them to dance in the centre. The excellent crowd reaction made us feel very welcome, unlike some of the other teams and the festival itself!

The team that I am proudest of is Long Itchington. They invited me to teach them, as an outsider, when they first started. They were self sufficient after a couple of years, and I then realised that I wanted to join them. I don't have the ability to be a really good dancer, but the best dancing I have done was with them. And Long Itchington was a good advert for mixed morris, something I really believe in. And Duns Tew – thrown together at Sidmouth workshops, but a

particularly enjoyable experience. Brilliant dances, great weekends and lots of fun.

5. And the low spot?

That probably should be the time when I went right on the stage at Letterkenny Festival in front of 100s of people while the rest of the set correctly went left, but that was far too much fun. So I guess it has to be the injuries. The pulled calf muscle on the front at Sidmouth, the twisted ankle on a Phoenix Christmas tour, the shin splits, the sore feet.....

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

Dancing in high heels and cocktail dresses on a small ledge half way up the wall of a TV studio. Phoenix had foolishly agreed to do our version of 'Here's a health' (pretty dresses and silly cocktails) for a really naff Saturday night TV programme, whose name I have happily wiped from my memory. But at least we can say we were on the same TV programme as the Beverley Sisters.

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

Work hard at being good, think about what you are doing but enjoy yourselves while doing it. And ask the experts – there are lots of people with good ideas who can help you learn and develop your own style.

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

Bad morris dancers and musicians who know they are bad and don't care.

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

Innovation – just look at what Morris Offspring is doing. I so hope that this is the future of the morris. Exciting, original, energising, inventive, but definitely still morris.

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

Now I am going to sound like a real nerd. Birding is top of the list, then cats and books. And I have to say working, as that takes up most of my time. And, of course, drinking – but is that outside dancing??

Thanks, Sally, for taking time to let us know what's been happening

All the best

Janet Dowling

(PS I think drinking is allowed- inside or outside Morris!)

Recording the History of the Federation

The passing of another milestone last year, the Federation's 30th anniversary, made some of us reflect on the steps we've taken along the way, and what a different scene it is now from that encountered by would-be Morris dancers in 1975. Rhiannon Owen asked for volunteers to put together a history of the Federation, and Shirley Dixon, Val Parker and Sally Wearing have risen to the challenge.

Val and Sally were both long-serving members of the committee in the formative years - Sally as President and Val as Secretary - so we have insider information on happenings up to Sally's departure from the committee in 1995. We need the low-down on the years that followed, and are hoping to interview some key committee members. We are composing a questionnaire which we will send to all individuals who have ever served on the committee, but we'd also like to hear from anybody who has reminiscences or views of relevance. Although the published history will necessarily be a compilation of the information, everything received will be preserved in the Federation's archive. If you think you can help, please contact Shirley (shirley.dixon@ntlworld.com)

Shirley Dixon

Breaking Up is Not So Hard to Do



Has anyone out there ever totted up how many morris sides include the word “Phoenix” in their title? A quick addition of those that I know, without

reference to any books, documents or web sites, gives me a total of two!

Not many is it? Especially considering the fact that this column is about to suggest that breaking up is a natural process in the morris world and is something we shouldn't worry about unduly.

However, I'm sure there's more than two. I reckon I have heard of many others in passing and in occasional conversations. Phoenix suggests the side to which the name is attached is one that has risen from the ashes. Oh, what wonderful tales of intrigue, backstabbing, tears and double dealing there are to be told. Or in some instances, just a case of “I think it's time we went our own way”. Far too boring!

I recently met John Cutting, whose new book, *History and the Morris Dance*, contains some very interesting information. How about naked morris dancing for instance? Should put an end to those interminable discussions about kit! But where would the bells go?

John told me that on average a morris side lasts about five years before a major split occurs or the whole side just fades away, leaving a few abandoned dancers and musicians to wander the streets for ever more in search of soul mates and inspiration.

And if anyone should know, it's John. He's spent years researching and writing his book. He has left very few morris stones unturned. His average figure means that, in reality, a lot of sides last a lot longer than that. And some are incredibly short-lived.

I'm on my second full-time side, although I did two-time - twice. Once dancing with a second border side and before that by dancing with a newly formed molly side.

The molly side bit the dust, no recriminations, it just faded away. The border side is still going. I left for several reasons, one being that I found it hard to be loyal to two sides at the same time. Which was my home side? When deciding which festivals to go to was it first come first served or should one have a priority? All very difficult, so I chickened out and left the second side to its own devices and nestled back into the comfortable bosom of my original.

It was a relief in more ways than one. Not only was decision-making easier but I wasn't so knackered as a result of too much dancing and too many late nights drinking too much beer.

Now, after a difficult period, which resulted in my exploding and walking out, I have left my original side. Petulant, I know; but good drama. Me a founder member as well. Lots of others have gone for all sorts of reasons but what is intriguing is how long we lasted – five years!

I'm pleased to say that both sides are still thriving. My original has recruited new members and lives on. The second side also has newcomers and is getting on fine (it was formed after a major split in another side, still shaking a leg).

Now I have joined a brand new side, made up of disaffected members of both sides mentioned above (are you following this? I'm having difficulty!), and various others. I (and I am not alone) leave in my wake a trail of blood on the carpet; disappointment, bewilderment, sadness and joy. It would be interesting to analyse in closer detail the factors that contribute to the death of or major fracture in a morris side.

But that's for another time. The big message is that the dance goes on and in greater numbers than ever before. So, out of chaos comes some sort of progress.

The Fourth Annual Boojum Canterbury Tour.

So on a cold night in January Boojum girded up its collective loins (just don't go there ok?) and set off into the Night. Abounding in tight Lycra, well all right the Women in the Lycra, the support crew were dressed down in tails and top hat, they descended on the Two Sawyers, wood floor, real fire real beerperformed to a small but delighted crowd, received rapturous and enthusiastic applause from the drinkers and staff, followed by free drinks and then a substantial donation from the landlord! Yippee! That pays off some of the debts.



On to the Jolly Sailors, now Canterbury has the Stour trickling through it, so how come these sailors came to be Jolly is beyond me. Especially when the big screen TV volume was turned off while we danced, but the young girlies in club gear to die for were enthralled, nay mesmerised by the edifying sight of Sue tumbling. We have edited that photo for decency's sake...wood floor, more real beer but no fire, hmmm.



And so to the Bell, a small even intimate hostelry we had not presumed to perform in before. With one end of the line dancing on the hatch to the Cellar

and the other cuddling a cast iron pillar, cosy is one description, but again a brilliant reception. Real floor, real beer, real fire; gets repetitive eh!

Cutting a dash across town and arriving at the Blind Dog, and I so wish I had a joke about this name, sadly I don't. With The Dog recently having changed its licensee and thus its clientele we were unsure about how we would be received.



But professional to the last despite the cigarette smoke cloud lying about 2 inches off the ground (OK I exaggerate, 2 and a half inches), the dance went on and a small but obviously educated crowd in the top room showed their appreciation. Real beer, real wood floors, no fire; well, makes a change.

Needing to breathe we departed and headed the all of one and a half minutes walk to the final establishment, our traditional final pub, the White Hart, run by our good friend Mark. The usual sumptuous response from the crowd, with the usual response from Mark... jugs of free beer, and yes the real wood floor, real beer, real fire... enough I hear you say...

Thanks to Pete Thomas for being the Official Photographer.

Next Boojum outing is the weekend of April 8th when we invade Oxford.

How do you publicise your dancing?

The Morris Federation issued in 1989, as part of its Information Series, a booklet of publicity tips on ways to advertise your club. This has been out of print for a while and we are taking the opportunity to revise it.

The original publication was written as a series of articles in the Morris Federation Newsletter from 1986 to 1988 by Fiz Markham, when she was Publicity Officer. These were pulled together into the first version of this booklet. Fiz's original ideas remain valid and relevant and will provide the basis for the revised booklet.

At the Whittlesea Straw Bear weekend in January, I overheard yet again a member of the public asking a dancer who they were. Why does this happen? And what can and should we be doing about it?

Here are some ideas:

1. Have a Publicity Officer for your side. Perhaps then you will have some publicity.
2. Badges. If you sell or give out badges during performances, why not stick a label on the back with contact details?
3. Recruiting new members can often be difficult. Try having an open day or run a ceilidh during which the side performs.
4. Word of mouth. Do people other than your family and friends know that you dance? Why not invite work colleagues or neighbours to watch you dance?
5. Information for your audience. Do you have anything other than memories for your audience to take away? Leaflets, dance programmes?
6. Local newspapers and radio stations will provide publicity about your practices and dance spots – but only if you tell them.
7. Listings magazines can be found all over the country, often available at folk clubs. Entries in these are also free so make sure your side is listed and that you keep your details up to date.
8. Why not give your regular dance spots a framed picture or memento of the side to hang on the wall. This will create good will and allow visitors to see it – they may then come to watch you dance.
9. Could you offer to run an evening class? As well as raising the profile of Morris dancing, maybe your side will get some bookings as a result.
10. Think laterally – the media are always on the lookout for something new. What else do you do apart from dance (and drink)? Is it for a special reason or occasion?
11. "A picture paints a thousand words" Fiz provided lots of ideas on using pictures. How, when and where would you use them?
12. Avoid that embarrassing question, "Who are you?" Make a banner.
13. Can you find information about your side? Where would you look?

14. Fill in your side history form fully each year. Then the Morris Federation has up to date information to answer any queries.
15. Have you considered corporate advertising? All sorts of items are readily available now that you can have your side badge and details on – pens, mugs, bookmarkers – for sale or to give away.
16. A web-site is almost essential these days ...
17.as is an email list to let people know where and when you are dancing.
18. Get as many links on other Internet sites to your web-site as possible – the Morris Federation, Sidefinder, Festivals, Pubs, dance spots.

What works for you? You may of course be able to expand on these ideas and add new ones that you would be willing to share with other dance sides. Please send any ideas, information and tips to Mike Everett, Archive Officer (see inside front cover for contact details).

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Manchester International Festival Long-Term Planning

For those readers and colleagues in the north west of England here comes your next big opportunity. The city of Manchester, previously famous for staging the Commonwealth Games in 2002, has 18 months left in its planning cycle before staging the first major international festival in Manchester.

Already £1.8million of sponsorship has been gleaned from companies including United Utilities and the North West Regional Development Agency. The Festival is destined to last several days and cover many art forms. Folk, roots and traditional music can play its part. Those of you with entrepreneurial skills or just looking for an opportunity or a gig should contact Manchester City Council leader Richard Lees, who recently said "we have a clear objective about how an international festival would assist us in further positioning Manchester internationally as a major destination centre and how a festival would be a major opportunity for further community participation..." It is over to you in the North West. See contact sheet for details.

city.council@manchester.gov.uk
www.manchester.gov.uk

Remember St. George?

In 2005 St. George's Day fell on a Saturday and the Federation in conjunction with the other traditional dance organisations put on a dance event in Newcastle upon Tyne. By coincidence the National Front also chose Newcastle as a venue for an event of their own.

And therein lies the problem. To be seen to promote the patron saint of England would seem to imply a level of jingoistic fervour that taken to its extreme lumps us all in the same basket as the National Front. But there's a line from a song chiming in the back of my head along the lines of "We want it back, it's our flag too". If I had the power I'd make a competition of it and award prizes to anyone who can supply the artist, title and catalogue number of the CD. On the other hand I can hear my son's voices shouting "Father just what do you think the web was invented for?". Actually that might make a better competition. But I digress.

Now this month, February for the pedants out there, I notice that the subject of "Englishness" or possibly "Britishness" seems to have taken flight with the media and even the Westminster Village has climbed on board.

Mary Levy of Old Palace Clog was one of several who found a link to a web page where the public could vote for making St. George's Day a national holiday. The link we need is:

www.stgeorgesday.com/voting.asp

Mind you it would take half a million votes to even get consideration and I can hear the captains of industry muttering about how close it is to Mayday from here. But we can at least try, can't we?

Then some genius came up with the concept of an icon for England. This is worth a visit for the web users and even for the non web users. The link is:

www.icons.org.uk/nominations

then go to morris dancing.

The 180 nominations include Red London buses, a cup of tea, and Andrex toilet paper. Morris dancing had shot up the listing at one point, even beating Andrex. However one wit did point out that neither toilet paper nor a plate of fish and chips could vote for themselves.

Meanwhile back in the land of now I found a comment passed on from the EFDDS AGM. "There will be another sponsored St George Day competition by Musicians Insurance Services - prize £500 - details from EFDSS". Now I admit to a blank here. Who won last year and where this year's details are is a mystery to me.

But last year Hook Eagle Morris had an entry in the competition, which as far as I recall looks for the most effective promotion of St. George's Day. Their bagman John Ellis sent me a wonderful collection of photos, clippings and flyers that the team had put together for their events. And how neatly that ties in to Mike Everett's item on the previous page. So any teams out there planning on entering this year? Will the editor find out who this year's winner is? Watch this space.

Just to let you know that the Third Edition (2006) of Mike Heaney's "An Introductory Bibliography on Morris Dancing" is now available on the EFDSS web site at :

www.edfss.org/morris3.pdf

or via the foot of the Home Page.

Best wishes,

Peta Webb - Asst. Librarian

Vaughan Williams Memorial Library

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Who's for England and St George?

By John Boyman

NORTH Hampshire and other parts of the south coast are preparing to be one of the nation's due to the historic celebration of St George's Day. The day is a time to celebrate the patron saint of England and is marked on 23 April. It is a day when many people will wear the St George's Cross and eat a traditional English breakfast. The day is also a time to celebrate the many achievements of the nation's past and to look forward to a bright future.



John Ellis (right), barman of the Hook End & New's Taverns, and a lady say out at the St George's Day event at Deodar.

Communities unite for St George celebration

100 people of north Hampshire showed their patriotic fervour to celebrate St George's Day.



Local customers from Jerry 'Study' Good (left) and Stu Taylor raise a glass to St George.

The day was celebrated in a variety of ways across the county. In Basingstoke, the town council held a St George's Day event at the town hall. The event was attended by many people and featured a variety of activities, including a St George's Day parade and a St George's Day quiz. The day was also celebrated in other parts of the county, including in Andover and Alton.



Gearing up for St George's Day



A member of the band



Continued on page 10

Hampshire Voice & Diary

Big day APRIL 2005

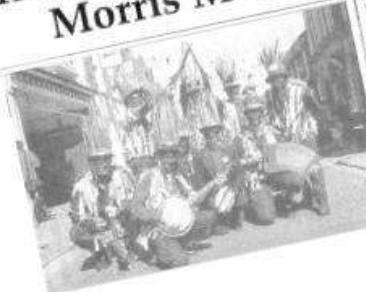
Basingstoke Observer

SIGHT & SOUND... the perfect combination

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2005 Edition April 2005

2005 Pre-season ramblings from Hook Eagle Morris Men



The annual pre-season ramblings of the Hook Eagle Morris Men are a time to celebrate the many achievements of the nation's past and to look forward to a bright future. The ramblings are a time when many people will wear the St George's Cross and eat a traditional English breakfast. The ramblings are also a time to celebrate the many achievements of the nation's past and to look forward to a bright future.

FLEET MAIL

NEWS FOR ALDERSHOT SINCE 1894



Morris men on their toes for St George

TRADITIONAL Morris dancing was performed in the town of Basingstoke on the eve of St George's Day. The performance was a time to celebrate the many achievements of the nation's past and to look forward to a bright future. The performance was also a time to celebrate the many achievements of the nation's past and to look forward to a bright future.

A terrific example of what can be done to get the world of traditional dance into the public eye. Thanks to Hook Eagle Morris Men for this – and they plan to do it again this year!

Ramblings of a Blue Stotter

Now that the Christmas Mumming season is over, it is perhaps time to reflect on some of our experiences particularly in light of your recent editorial on audience behaviour.

Firstly though perhaps we should say a few words about PEL and how it has affected our tours. The short answer is not at all. Knaresborough Mummers take their Blue Stots play on 5 tours between mid-December and Twelfth Night, visiting around 37 pubs – the pubs are generally the same ones every year but in recent years there are casualties from the greed of PubCos resulting in pub closures, being sold as housing or a change of landlord who has different ideas on how a pub should be run (these factors very often go hand in hand!) With the recent changes in legislation, I sought the advice of a long time friend and former morris dancer who is now the brains behind a local successful small pub chain.

Following discussions we considered that landlords and managers would have enough on their plates interpreting and filling in the extensive documentation required for the new licences, and that trying to pin down the person responsible to point out the intricacies and perhaps inadequacies of the new laws would result in them taking the easy way out and saying “No”! I also consulted with the local Licensing Authority within the Council – after initially saying it was exempt and I pointed out it wasn’t, he went away to consult with their legal department. When he rang back he said it was their considered opinion that it was part of a pagan festival and therefore exempt on religious grounds. Beside that, there were elements of stand up comedy and morris dancing which I believe are also exempt. When I tried to discuss it he said “You’re not going to argue, are you?!” – I got the message and proceeded to organise the tour as in previous years.

Suffice to say we did not encounter any problems arranging or performing the tours, indeed we even did a Sam Smiths pub, a brewery who seem to have inflicted serious folk club evictions due to the withdrawal of PRS payments; were we flouting the law – surely we owe the PRS nothing for traditional material?



In common with many other teams, I have always tried to keep performances to traditional pubs with real ale reputations in an attempt to reach a more appreciative audience. However, there is an increasing number of conversions to “schizophrenic” pubs that masquerade as a traditional pub by day and YPMEADU by night (Young Persons Money Extraction and Destruction Unit) – one of our pubs this year has become like a barn inside with a scattering of about a dozen disinterested or bewildered youth inside, wall to wall televisions and a bouncer on the door (to keep them in?!)

It is quite intimidating in some of the pubs and we are quite wary these days following an incident one year when a group started throwing lighted matches on to the “dead” King George, which prompted others to start a barrage of verbal abuse. It is pack behaviour – if one leads off, the others follow. This year in what we would consider a “safe” quiet pub, there was a group of youths that just didn’t know what to do – it was as if they didn’t understand the concept of having fun, having a laugh at these daft clowns with their bit of silliness. Watching their faces and hearing their monosyllabic

grunts it was as if they were waiting for some guidance as to how to behave – if I laugh and enjoy it will my mates think I'm not 'ard enough? I fear that many of the current younger generation have only a moral code learnt from an electronic box in the corner with it's diet of such as Eastenders with its totally unacceptable idea of family values. I regret to say that the answer to Doug's editorial is that it is getting worse and if someone has an idea how to overcome it, tell the Government, as it is not only folk activities that are suffering – it is becoming the way of life! Having got that off my chest, I do have to say that overall I think this year we were made to feel more welcome than ever in the pubs that do appreciate us!!

Changing the subject entirely, I regret to have to write an Obituary to an old friend that has been with the Mummers for around 25 years. My Blue Stots jacket was considered earlier this year to be unwell and, indeed when being retrieved from the garage in preparation for this year's tours, the unpleasant aroma which it gave off after being resident for a few hours in a warmer environment, confirmed indeed that it was well and truly dead.

The jacket started life in the early 1970s, manufactured by Himal of Huddersfield and purchased from Greenwoods in Harrogate's fashionable Parliament Street. For many years it gave warmth to a railway clerk, travelling daily to and from York thus acquiring a unique patina of pre-Beeching Diesel Multiple Unit lubricating oil and seat cleaner. On its retirement in the late '70s, rather than been thrown on the scrap heap, it was "refurbished" for further use by turning it inside out and decorated with tatters for its new use, that of King Slasher in our latest production – the Blue Stots. It has served faithfully in this role since 1980 absorbing the atmospheres of 971 pubs; ageing like a fine wine with a nose of tobacco, ale, gent's toilets and sweat – indeed one could almost trace the changes over time, the coming into the

area of Timothy Taylor's Landlord, the demise of Capstan Full Strength, the Fish Quay at Whitby...aaah! The tatters themselves tell their own story – wonderful patterns by Laura Ashley to remind me of my wife's maternity dresses for three little babies now grown into young women (wipes tear from eye). This year's tour would have clocked up 1000 performances for the jacket but alas this was not to be. My dear wife was quite insistent that it was in advanced state of decomposition and there had been warnings from last years tours that I would have to travel alone in future if I insisted on wearing it. So – farewell old friend – may you forever adorn the great Mummer in the sky. At least it will not be entirely forgotten - there is a lasting memorial in that the jacket is featured on a pumpclip for the Knaresborough Mummers 30th Anniversary Beer - Rooster's King Slasher (see Chas Marshall's web site).

Finally anyone who knows me will be aware that I have always tried to keep pretty accurate statistics of our plays, performances and personnel over the last 31 years. Well this year I was given a Pedometer for Christmas and just for interest I wore it on our Marton tour. Between 7pm and 1030pm I clocked up 1902 steps – and this was excluding the dance at the end of the play. Now if every performer in the play was fitted with one, I could work out a work rate for each part in the play and thus monitor whether every mummer was putting in a robust performance or not!! You can imagine the potential there is for pie charts and graphs! (sorry – just wipe the drool from the keyboard) We could also add to our workshop repertoire: *Mumming Performance – Statistical Analysis*. My wife says this is a recognised medical disorder and that I can get treatment.....

*A personal view by Knaresborough Mummers leader,
John Burrell
10th January, 2006*

This Article Contains a Serious Health Warning:

Another title would have been The Big Issue, but I gather someone else already uses that.

Now the thought of the Olympics will do a number of things to a lot of people... excite them, bore them rigid, or make them feel bilious... hopefully it might prove to be inspirational to a few of you.

It presents probably the greatest opportunity so far *EVER*, to get traditional dance in front of the million *repeat millions* of viewers who will form the captive audience of the 2012 Olympic extravaganza in London.

Some would argue that there is no possibility (even if it was thought a "Good Idea") of getting X hundred dancers inside the arena all doing the same thing at the same time, and even if they were there, they would all have to wear the same kit, dance to piped music blah blah.. All of which may be true, but there are other elements to the event...

As well as whatever the grand opening and closing ceremonies consist of, there will also be tons of other opportunities. There will be an entire Olympic village where "Cultural Displays" will take place for athletes and spectators, there will be many and varied plazas around the site with performance areas and stages. A whole host of small scale arenas for display (including Hyde and Victoria Parks), all with that same captive audience. Wouldn't you like a piece of that?

Alongside that main venue in London there will be a series of Cultural Expositions elsewhere in the UK.., this is after all the UK Olympics just "loaned" to London by the Olympic Committee. Cardiff, Glasgow and other major cities should get a look in too with a share of the £30 million set aside for Cultural events (this is on top of the £50 million for the opening and closing Ceremonies).

But not only is there the "main" Olympics from 27th July to 12th August 2012, but also the Paralympics held between 29th August and 9th September 2012 which will also have Culture prominent... *And* in between those is to be a 5 Day Carnival (modelled on Notting Hill) - a vast Youth Festival.

All of these have themes such as "Journeys and Voyages" exploring UK maritime history (oh do I see lots of shanty events???). Tying this together there will be An Olympic Friend-ship... literally a cutter sailing between numerous UK ports (it leaves Beijing in 2008 after their games and leisurely progresses here). Each port it calls at will host a mini festival, building up to the ship sailing up the Thames and into the Lea River, up to the Olympic Park to dock... now there is an opportunity for performance if ever there was one.

And more... The Olympic torch will travel through the UK, at each town of any size it passes through a celebration will take place, again culminating in its arrival at the Olympic Park. Do you start to see the possibilities of a rolling series of dance displays/events? On a nationally organised basis, each welcoming the torch and / or ship locally. Performances in each of the surrounding venues of the Olympic Site, within the site itself and you never know about the opening and closing ceremonies...

Possibly a series of sword locks in Olympic colours each forming a lock then somehow linking the locks to form the Olympic symbol!!! Not four hundred Morris dancers all failing to do the same dance at the same time, but maybe 1 solitary dancer in plain white and bells, lit by a single spot, the most atmospheric solo jig ever! Imagine!

So what are we doing about it? The Joint Morris Organisation managed to get a question asked in the House of Lords about the amount of UK culture that should be included in the Olympic celebrations... have you ever heard of

the opening and closing of an Olympics ignoring the traditional culture of the host nation?

A series of meetings have been held to assemble interested parties who all have the same desire to be involved. Those meetings had representatives from the Federation, Ring, Open Morris, EFDSS, Shooting Roots, Stepback Project and Folk Arts England... and as Folk Arts England can act as an umbrella to us all, they are currently acting as the conduit for communication with Jude Kelly (Minister for the Olympics)... FAE has Arts Council backing as well as the ear of government at national level. Whether that will be a long term arrangement is still undecided as FAE see themselves as facilitators, but in the short term they are being extremely supportive of our efforts, keeping the authorities aware of our interests.

What can we all do to ensure we are noticed? ... Assuming you read the Presidential Prologue; hopefully you noticed the references to profile? Over the next several years we have to not just to maintain a good, healthy and vigorous profile but in the words of the School report... **we must do better**. Every opportunity to show good dancing must be pushed, any and all "Bad" press reports have to be proved wrong by more and better high visibility performances. We must keep the standard so high that even the UK populace will realise that we have our own dance heritage which is on a par with the heritage of other cultures' and is to be valued.

Use any given chance to spread the gospel that we should have OUR traditions and culture represented during the Olympics too. Can I suggest that you co-ordinate all efforts via the committee just in case any plan you have is already being worked on by someone else? We don't want to waste any effort here, but we do want to ensure our message gets across to the right ears!

ADDITIONAL INFO:

The evening of Friday 10th February saw the Opening Ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Turin. As part of that ceremony there was a procession of traditional dance groups, notable amongst them was Pont Caffero/Bagalini, a team seen regularly at the "Old" Sidmouth Festival.

Now has there ever been an opening of any Olympics which did not showcase the Culture of the Host Nation?

Olympics part deux

Following on from that but yes on the same theme of what we can actually *do*...

The BIG DANCE 2006 (and '08 and '10 and yes you guessed '12)

Now we may not all appreciate Ken Livingstone or what he espouses, but credit to him and his Mayor's Office, they got in pretty quick in realising what you could do with Dance.

Big Dance is largely a London based project, but it does have spin off nationwide. It is supported by the Arts Council, Sport England, DCMS and the BBC among others. Existing events can be encompassed by it and benefit from publicity, logistic support etc. (so an existing Weekend of Dance could become part of Big Dance but without being taken over by it). New events can be promoted by and within it. These could range from workshops / have-a-go sessions to displays.

All Big Dance events will be screened on BBC big screens in all major UK cities (Leeds Newcastle, Liverpool etc.). Various World Record attempts will be made (longest Conga etc.). Culminating in a massed televised dance in Trafalgar Square on July 22nd broadcast live by BBC.

Now draw back and take in a bigger picture. This is a biennial event leading up to the Olympics. It will in reality be the biggest dance event held during the games. We want to be in that surely! So

we have to get in now on the ground floor. The Federation is registering an interest with the project (anyone can do this, so individual teams may want to as well). Don't let your imagination be constrained, this project will also be the launch of a national campaign for the arts' manifesto for dance, and this will have major affects on future funding, support and promotion of dance for the next few decades... we have to be in this!

And we can make it ours! Create an event and have it promoted, advertised and publicised by the Big Dance machine. Incorporate school projects into it; and make use of the National Curriculum 4 year "Education and the Olympics" scheme too. Just how many school kids can you teach to dance over that time span? Set a *new* world record for Longsword performed by school kids? Make DERT a Big Dance event? The Big Dance solo jig competition?

If we aren't going to try and seize these opportunities, maybe we should just crawl away now. The possibilities are beyond measure, all we need is the Imagination and desire to succeed. We get this right and we secure the future of our traditional dances and dance culture. Screw it up and we put back traditional dance for decades to come.

That's the Health Warning.

Register at
www.london.gov.uk/mayor/bigdance

Editors Note:

Before anyone else writes in I will just point out that Jude Kelly is the Chair of the London 2012 Arts, Culture and Education Committee. The Minister for the Olympics is of course Tessa Jowell.



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Doing the Gate with Style?

The 'Gate to Southwell', was an annual pilgrimage from Nottingham to Southwell which dates back for hundreds of years. It was revived by Dolphin Morris Men in 1981 and has been every year since!

The 'Gate' today consists of approximately two hundred dancers retracing the route of the annual pilgrimage from Nottingham to Southwell. These days we do it in one day with the assistance of buses. We carry the 'Southwell Pence', the Nottingham Parish's contributions to the mother church, and virtually all of the 23 miles is walked either in total or in relays, in just 8 hours. We stop at pubs to dance and collect. Last year we collected £1400 for the Nottingham Hospice. When we arrive in Southwell, we process to the minister, deliver the 'Southwell Pence' to the church and have a short ceremony and dance inside. This is followed by a drink at the famous "Bramley Apple" pub. In all, a tiring but happy and satisfying day. More details are on the Dolphin Web site www.dolphin-morris.co.uk, those interested in taking part can email us on gate@dolphin-morris.co.uk for more details.

The date for this years Gate is Saturday 10th June 2006

Chris Gigg

Dolphin MM



March

Fri 17th - Sun 19th

Dancing England Rapper Tournament in York

April

Fri 28th – Mon 1st May

Moor and Coast Festival Whitby

May

Mayday Bank Holiday

Sweeps Festival – Rochester

Whitstable Mayday Festival

Hastings Jack in the Green

Mon.1st

Shrewsbury Morris Dancers

Dancing at Dudmaston Hall, nr. Bridgnorth

Fri 5th – Sun 7th

Holmfirth Folk Festival*

Fri 26th – Mon 29th

Cleethorpes Folk Festival

June

Sat 3rd-Sun 4th

Shrewsbury Morris Dancers

30th Birthday Celebrations, with many sides joining us to dance in Shrewsbury on Saturday, with an Ceilidh with Stomp and Andrew Swain. Lunchtime dancing on Sunday 4th in Church Stretton.

Further details from Bev Langton 01939 233977.

Fri 9th – Sun 11th

Wimborne Folk Festival

Sat 10th

The Gate to Southwell

July

Fri 21st – sun 23rd

Warwick Folk Festival

August

Fri 11th – Sun 13th

Saltburn Folk Festival

Sat 19th – Fri 25th

Whitby Folk Festival

*** Holmfirth Folk Festival.**

There appears to be some difference of opinion on whether or not this event will occur this year. I publish the date for information only.

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 + £1.25 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 + £1.25 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.

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

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