

Newsletter Autumn 2007



I Didn't Know Women Danced Morris – Part 2

Ten Questions with Three Generations

A Tribute to Professor Robinson

How Do You Solve A Problem Like Musicians?



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

To all Secretaries, Squires, Bag people, etc.

NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter is the quarterly publication of the Morris Federation. The aim is to provide a platform for news, views and announcements relating to the world of traditional dance and associated activities. The Newsletter goes out to each member group and individual member of the Morris Federation. Additional copies can be ordered by group members at an additional cost per copy of £10 for one year's issues. To be a living publication the Newsletter must be read so PLEASE PLEASE make sure that your copy gets circulated as widely as possible.

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

As I write I'm satiated with festivals. The rhythm of my year has for too long been controlled by the academic timetable, not me I hasten to point out but the 'live in' proof reader. So August is a month when we cram in festivals and as many of our team also seem to be bound to the academic year we generally skip August as far as bookings go. What is it about teachers and morris anyway?

This means that I get to watch dancing as an onlooker rather than in the guise of the stern authoritarian control freak which I may appear to be when performing! Opinions may vary on this subject of course.

So what do I see from the comfort of the anonymous spectator? Well I have seen displays of breathtaking energy and style that have made me long for the days of my youth. But I have also seen displays that have made me want to hide my face in my hands and slink away. Or to rush forward and explain that traditional dance is really important and that it can be done much, much better.

The lure of the "free" festival ticket may be the answer to the appearance of some obviously under strength and under rehearsed sides I saw this summer. So maybe the coming winter is a time to keep the enthusiasm, build the strength and develop the skills? Within the Federation we have huge reservoirs of talent and expertise waiting to be tapped. Why not use it?

Doug

Printing

Next Issue

Front Cover Photograph

Outline Print Service Ltd, Colne, Lancashire

Winter 2007 (Copy date 17th November 2007)

Chinewrde musicians at Whitby Folk Festival 2007.

Photo :Contributed by your very humble Editor (Again!)

President's Prologue

So another seasons dancing draws towards a conclusion and the “training” of new recruits begins if you have managed to acquire any!

The Federation consists of somewhere around 400 members sides, spread across the nation ... it's one of the reasons the AGM format has been juggled a bit this year to see if we can find a more attractive 'new' format to revitalise it.

Does the Format of the entire Fed need rethinking? Should we (as the two other morris organisations do) have a more regional basis? Would this make a Day of Dance easier to organise, if it was on a more local area basis – a series of Regional Days rather than one National one?

Since the St Georges/Licensing Act Celebrations in Newcastle a couple of years ago, the local sides have continued to gather on the Sunday of the nearest weekend to the 23rd to dance together.

Would an extension of this regionalism be a sensible move for the “management” too?

Should we have Regional Reps to find out on the ground just what their local membership wants us to do? Any regional decision could then be channelled up to the current committee.

Yes it does mean another layer in the Structure but would it represent the membership better?

It almost impossible to get round even a small percentage of member teams in a year to chat and find out what issues are relevant to them, even with the number of festivals the various committee members

and member sides attend. I know I have failed to meet upwards of half of the member teams during my three years (so far) as President.

Suggestions and/or comments on restructuring please!

Jean our current Events officer stands down this AGM and I will miss her input greatly. The post is still vacant as I write this. Any volunteers?

Music: Any Amplification no matter how small a device is Not Exempted under the Morris Clause in the Licensing Act unless the Venue already has the appropriate cover... please check and if in doubt Don't Amplify!

I do try to discuss with any team I spot using amplification just how disastrous an issue it would be if some 'jobsworth' created a fuss in the papers... don't give them any ammunition!

Rhiannon and I move house at the end of October so if any member needs to chat with me or requires notations, from Nov 1st, please contact us via our new address in North Wales:

“Bron Dinas”
1 Min y Mor
Cricieth
Gwynedd
LL52 0EF
01766 523 695

We will drag ourselves away from drinking wine while watching the Dolphins playing in Cardigan Bay to answer your queries!

Trefor

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COMMITTEE NEWS

FINANCE – Jenny Annual Report 2007

A busy year which rather took me by surprise in November with a steep learning curve of issuing renewals. Hopefully this year, the process will be a little more streamlined.

A worryingly large number of renewal invitations, renewal forms and renewal confirmations were lost by the Post Office, so it is well worth checking that you have had your insurance certificate back in plenty of time. I am considering sending confirmations by email in future to reduce this problem.

After a lot of hassle with the bank, taking 6 months, signatures were changed on the bank accounts and money held at 1/9/07 is:

Deposit account	£29,328.56
Savings account	£ 1,518.15
Current account	£10,860.90
Petty cash	£ 40.09

I expect to change the Federation bankers to a more helpful and perhaps more ethical company during the coming year.

Currently I see no need to increase membership subscriptions and recommend that they remain at the same level for the coming year.

Membership stands at 389 teams (1 overseas) and 19 individuals. These teams include 276 dancers under the age of 16 which is encouraging for the future of morris. 9 teams are also members of The Morris Ring or Open Morris.

Sales of bells have been continual and frantic at times. My local post office is now used to the jangling jiffy bags! Stocks are currently very low and I have joined the new consortium 'BellsRUs' formed by the Morris Ring to bring more

pressure to bear on the sole bell manufacturer left in England. Hopefully the joint purchasing power will prove fruitful and more stocks will be available soon. Watch for news of new stocks in the newsletter.

Sales of other publications have been steady, and Adderbury books have been reprinted this year.

ARCHIVE – MIKE Archive Officer's Report 2006 – 2007

The past year has been fairly quiet in terms of acquisitions for the archive. Regular items like copies of English Dance & Song, The NUT, and Morris Matters continue to arrive and extend the archive. A few items were donated, returned after being borrowed, or collected this year, mostly listings magazines. Purchases included a rapper instructional DVD, as well being given a free set of notations, CD and DVD from Thrales Rapper at their workshops at Whitby Folk Week.

Remember, it is your archive and that members of the Morris Federation can freely borrow items, although you will have to pay for postage if it is more than £2 and for the return postage.

A couple of visits have been made to the archive this year by the group of former officers who are preparing a history of the Morris Federation.

I represented the Morris Federation at the October meeting of the Sword Dance Union, at which its constitution was ratified and membership fees agreed.

Some ongoing work has been hampered this year by computer problems, exacerbated by a lightning strike in our village that seems to have damaged the motherboards of any computers that were switched on at the time. I am still trying to find out if any of my PC's memory can be recovered. Sadly, this means that the revised Publicity Tips leaflet is still not available and a new draft constitution and standing orders for the Morris Federation will have to wait until next year's AGM.

I have been invited to film the Hop Hoodening ceremony in Canterbury Cathedral early in September for the archive.

One of the more unusual requests this year was to try to put somebody in touch with a morris dancer that they knew 30 years ago. So now we're a branch of Friends Reunited? I don't think so.

Recently I was watching some old film footage of Magog dancing that has been transferred to DVD and noticed at the 1989 AGM, which Magog hosted, the Morris Federation banner at the front of the procession and also the scores of collecting tins that we had. Can anybody remember when the banner was last seen and used or where the collecting tins have gone?

EVENTS- Jean

The dancing season is in full swing as I write so there have been no workshops for several months. If anyone has an idea for a workshop it would be good to hear from you. My time as Events Officer is drawing to a close and I would like to reflect on past events in order to ponder the future. The constitution of 2003 (around the time I took up the post) states that the Events Officer has three main tasks:

1. To be responsible for all Federation functions, particularly the Annual weekend
2. To be responsible for the co-ordination of instructionals, tours etc. give help where necessary and encourage the organisation of events where they appear lacking
3. To maintain a current list of events and circulate this to all members at regular intervals

Taking the points in order,

1. The Annual Weekend and AGM.

Sometimes I took a more active role than others when helping to arrange the annual weekend. The host team was often cajoled into taking the task on

rather than volunteering for the obvious reason that it is really hard work! Recently AGM's have been disappointing in terms of the percentage of teams being represented and it would appear that travelling long hours on a Friday evening to indoor camp in a cavernous school building where facilities are limited is not as appealing as it was 30 years ago. So this year has seen a shift of emphasis and no doubt there will be material for discussion following the event!

2. Workshops and other events.

Workshops have traditionally taken place during the winter months when there has been less opportunity to dance outside and when sides may be looking to improve or extend their repertoire. Most of the workshops I helped to arrange over the past five years have taken place and feedback has been positive. The one exception was a Cotswold workshop I attempted in my early days as events officer that had to be cancelled due to lack of support. I am still not sure why that was but perhaps the fact that I was dealing with people and a tradition I did not know at a distance of 200 miles had something to do with it. (More on this theme later.)

3. Maintaining a current list of events and circulating to members at regular intervals.

Hmmm! All I can say here is that I found this an impossible task and one that needs some thought for the future. Is it valid to keep a list of every event that Federation sides are involved in? There are more than 350 sides – think of the number of events we all take part in over an entire dance season.

In fact some of this task has fallen on the Newsletter Editor over the past few years, if he is informed of events, he will print them in the Diary section at the end of the newsletter. The committee has already debated the situation and a spreadsheet on the Internet sounds a good option. However, it would need to be set up, maintained and controlled by someone.

Something to think about as currently all committee members are volunteers, and finding chunks of time for Federation issues can be challenging.

To digress a little I would like to comment on the history of the Morris Federation Committee. The Women's Morris Federation was formed in 1975 and consisted of 22 sides (not as widespread geographically as the membership now) and two officers, a president and a secretary. The committee was expanded to five in 1977 and when I took up the role of events officer it was seven with a possible eighth as "special projects officer" though this position has never been filled as far as I know. So to do the maths, 2 officers for 22 sides in 1975 a ratio of 1:11. 7 officers for more than 350 sides in 2007 1:50 at best. The point being that I feel there is too much to do to create an active and cohesive membership who value the role of the Federation and understand the usefulness of such a group to do more than just provide insurance cover. I became a committee member during the PEL campaign and I believe the exemption would not have been granted but for the constant pressure from the Federation and its ability to work alongside The Ring and Open Morris.

The committee rightly spends time discussing the larger issues, PEL, the presence of Morris at the Olympics, the position of dance sides at festivals, Health and Safety, Child Protection policies and a host of other issues. There is not enough time to think about planning the dancing on the streets around Britain which is the reason most of us joined the Federation. My suggestion therefore would be that more people are involved, either "co-opted members" or "special project officers" to consider how best to move the organisation into the future. One idea could be regional grouping providing more opportunity to liaise with local teams, arrange days of dance, maybe even a workshop or two if appropriate and disseminate Federation

information through developing closer relationships. There is so much anonymity in belonging to a group of 350+. It is easy to understand why some people think it doesn't matter whether they attend the AGM or not or whether they read the Newsletter or not. But it **DOES** matter. We need a more active membership to take the aims of the Federation forward into the 21st century and regional sections could possibly provide an opportunity for more active involvement. There has been research (which I can't quote) but the gist of it is that there is an optimum number of people who operate together as a community and when the group gets too big the sense of belonging wanes, factions are formed and cohesion is lost. Look at society as a whole!

These are only my thoughts at the present time looking at problems I see. Society changes with time and perhaps the Federation needs to consider its organisation so that it can offer the best possible service to its members and further its aims which are:

To encourage and maintain interest in the practice of morris dancing (or any dancing of a similar nature)

To provide a channel of communication between member sides

To encourage the improvement of standards of dancing among its members

NEWSLETTER – Doug Annual Report

Another year and another four issues produced would be the short report. However the challenge of circulating the Newsletter to the Federation membership remains a bugbear. One copy per side as part of the standard benefit of membership obviously raises problems for those sides with a large number of members.

This year however I have finally taken up the challenge of putting the Newsletter onto the world wide web and a small but significant number of visitors have found

www.mfnewsletter.info. I have the digital versions of the Newsletter going back to 2004 which will be added to the archive over the coming winter. Spread the word and let's get the readership increased! Of course members who want their own hard copy version can always ask for an extra copy of the Newsletter for a modest £10 a year.

Increased readership would also help to widen the list of contributors. Over the last year Janet Dowling and Paul White have provided material for every issue. However the field is always open for other contributions so let's hear from you. If you feel you could do better don't sit and brood get writing!

Finally the question of finance has to be addressed. The production of the

Newsletter is a significant factor in the Federation annual accounts. Commercial advertising helps to offset some of the cost but we can always use more advertisers. So if you know of or are part a commercial concern that could benefit from advertising to a focused target market which the Newsletter reaches, again I would love to hear from you. The contact details are there in every issue and now on the web.

So that's it then. If everyone's happy I'll carry on as editor for another year, in spite of the sometimes frustrating experience of wrestling copy, computers and deadlines into shape it's actually very rewarding. Of course if you're not happy, as I said earlier –“Let's hear from you”.

When Is A Bus Not A Bus?

When is a bus not a bus? When it's a five star, luxury, air conditioned, tea and coffee serving Brighton and Hove **COACH** taking Cuckoo's Nest Women's Morris dancers, ex-dancers, musicians and friends on their 30th anniversary tour of the Cotswolds of course!

Dave, driver extraordinary, put up with singing, beer spillage and general hysteria as he conducted us, with impeccable time keeping, on a two-day circuit of the Cotswolds. The aims of the weekend was to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Cuckoo's Nest by performing our repertoire of Cotswold dances in the villages from which they originated, to meet up with some of the local morris sides and to conduct a scientific survey of the local ales.

Our base was the picturesque town of Stow-on-the-Wold, where we colonised the local Youth Hostel – very civilised, especially as some kind elves had provided two barrels of beer in the kitchen! Current members of the side, Rose and Luca, masterminded the magnificent feast we enjoyed on Friday evening, which we worked off with a slightly chaotic dance practice in the

garden in the pitch dark without any sticks. It was dawning on some of us that if we were going to have the cheek to turn up on someone else's turf and dance their dances, we had better make a good showing. The ex-Cuckoo dancers and our friends from Brighton Morris Men and Ditchling Morris were certainly going to earn their keep!

A veil should possibly be drawn over the perils of communal sleeping. I can only speak for my room-mates, but we reckon that between us we heard every quarter-hour chime of the church clock, from midnight to 6 a.m. Apart from that, the heat and the creaking beds we've never slept better.

Shown speeded up, Saturday's schedule must have looked like a Benny Hill film. On the bus (sorry, coach), off the coach, dance, look for a loo. Back on the coach, off the coach, dance, look for a pub, have lunch, on the coach, off the coach, dance, etc., and finally return to Stow. The villages of Oddington, Bledington, Adderbury, Brackley, Bucknell and Ducklington are all gems of Cotswold loveliness, but by the end of the day they had slightly merged into one. It was only by consulting our souvenir schedules, (or the

map on the back of our T-shirts), that we could keep a grip on where we were!



Our dancing didn't lead to any rioting by the natives, and we seemed to be appreciated by the slightly bemused villagers of Oddington, and the genuine American tourists staying at the lovely inn in Bledington. The highlight of the day was the generous welcome we received from Brackley Morris Men, two of whom joined us for the remainder of the weekend. (It is a strange fact that there seems to be an overrepresentation of morris dancers called Robin in the sides we danced with over the weekend!)

Our final stop at Ducklington – complete with friendly ducks – produced another lovely pub and the Ducklington Morris side, who are renowned for the slow tempo of their dances and the consequent need to jump VERY high off the ground. The Cuckoo's verdict was that we would not be following suit! We also contrasted with the lone Ducklington musician, when our orchestra of ten accordions, fiddles, guitars etc. rose to play for us!

Back at Stow, once tidied up, fed and watered, we enjoyed a wonderful evening of music and singing with our new Brackley friends, and acquired a bottle of their home-made rhubarb wine which looked innocent enough but has an

interesting kick. We seemed to be the liveliest happening on Saturday night in Stow– certainly the most melodious, and our energy was sustained by yet more yummy cheese, chocolate cake and beer.

A beautiful sunny Sunday, and we danced two and three sides up in Stow's large market square, inspired by a highly appreciative audience including the now ubiquitous Americans who were thrilled to have this example of Olde Englande on display. Back on the coach and on to Bampton where we danced to one lady sitting in her car and a passing family. The Bampton Morris sides were elsewhere and the whole experience was somewhat eerie.



However, Eynsham, our last stop of the tour, more than made up for this by being an extremely jolly village with two lovely pubs complete with the wonderful Eynsham Morris, whose energy was prodigious, especially as some of them were definitely past the first flush of youth! Once our dancing shoes were in holes, musicians' fingers down to the bone, and we'd run out of Cuckoo badges to sell, we collapsed into the White Hart for a buffet lunch and contemplation of the journey home. Dave drove us safely, while Sheila balanced the books by selling off all the remaining beer (which got cheaper as the journey progressed!), and Keith tried his luck with the 'top totty' Cuckoos at the back of the bus.

Such a great weekend -roll on our 40th!!

Diana Moore, Cuckoo's Nest Women's Morris, June 2007



Badges Anyone?

Hi Doug,

I am writing to see if you have any contacts for leather badges - I am struggling to find someone to make them for us and was wondering if the MF had any contacts please?

Thanks very much,
Helen Carr - Boss - Black Dog Molly

Editors comment: I'm sure there is someone out there who can help Helen out with the leather badges. By coincidence within a few days of Helens e-mail this came out of the ether addressed to our hardworking secretary.

Hi Fee

I refer to our telephone conversation some time ago and have found a company in London that knock out badges quite reasonably - we've just had 200 from them (£50) and they're fine.

The company is "Badges for Bands" [sales@badgesforbands.com] www.BadgesForBands.com - Bentley & Bell, Phone 0207 561 9530.

Kind regards,
Cliff
Bagman Scribe,
East Kent Morris Men

Editors comment: The company referred to do tin badges but not leather but this might be useful to someone out there.

Death and Taxes?

Dear Fee,

Do you have any general information for sides about dealing with the Revenue? Apologies if this is dealt with in the handbook - our copy seems to have gone missing.

Cheryl Whittington

To which Fee replied:

Hi Cheryl

What an interesting question! No, I haven't, as (a) it hasn't arisen and (b) the tax situation for individuals can be relatively simple but for un-incorporated bodies, charities, small businesses and small partnerships is anything but. Mmmm ... can you tell that I can bore for England on the subject??

Seriously, though, is there a specific query? I / we can try to help or direct you to a specialist.

BTW, if you need another member's manual, they're £6.50.

Fee x
MF Sec

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editors comment: Fee followed this up by finding in her extensive range of contacts a tax collector who was a dancer and who is the probable source of this:

"I have asked around in the office about the tax query and the answer was that if the club is for the benefit of it's members and doesn't make a profit then HMRC is not interested. The only thing that is usually taxed in clubs is the bank interest over a certain amount. So any Morris side with thousands tucked away in an interest bearing account could potentially be liable. It is difficult to generalise because sides may run in different ways but I would imagine that the average Morris side has nothing to worry about as long as they are not doing paid bookings every night of the week.

The Inspector at Maidstone who deals with these things says that he can't see that there is any problem and we don't need to take any action.

Hope that helps!!"

Editor's Comment: As Fee pointed out in her reply "It might not stand up in court" (Phnarr Phnarr!) but it might be of comfort to any out there who are wondering about the situation.

Editors English Bias Revealed?

Hello Doug,

I was disappointed that my item was not included in the Spring Newsletter was it too late?

We are trying to heighten awareness of morris dance in Wales and educate people that although thought of as an English tradition, which it is, there are traditional morris dances from Wales as well and it is very much alive and kicking throughout Wales.

Was there a reason for its non inclusion, can you let me know

Thanks

Lynda Clode

Cardiff Ladies Morris, Clocs Canton, Full Moon Morris

Editors comment: Lynda is referring to the All Wales Morris Weekend held in Rhayader this year (www.cardiffmorrismen.org for details). The explanation is that the original e-mail had fallen foul of a spam trap in our system, which Kevin our web site editor discovered had been trapping large PDF files. By the time this was spotted it was too late for the spring issue and irrelevant to summer one!

So the message is if the item you send is time sensitive; be timely and nag me for an acknowledgement. I'm only a phone call away (see contacts page). And Lynda I promise to get the event for 2008 in on time provided I get the copy!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Ann Mason

Born 6th October 1953 - Died 14th June 2007

After stoically and practically dealing with a terminal diagnosis of oesophageal cancer in November 2006, Ann Mason, age 53, died in hospital in Norwich with her friends and husband supporting her.

Only child of Sheila Mason (herself a notable fiddle player with the Kenton Ramblers and holder of a EFDSS Jubilee Services to Folk award), Ann grew up with a love of English and Irish music and dance. She became a lively member of London Folk, an English social dance display team, the Manchester University

Folk Dance Society (1979-82), New Esperance Morris 1987-2003 (serving as squire and bagwoman), and Mary Neal Rapper from 1988-1993. Her mother Sheila accompanied the Rapper team with the most amazing jigs and reels- and it delighted Ann that she and her mother were able to perform together.

Ann was a qualified experienced librarian, and after taking her degree as a mature student in Manchester, worked in various health libraries in London, lastly at the College of Occupational Therapists.

Enthused by Morris dancing and wanting to put her professional skills to good use she joined the Morris Federation Archive Group in 1989 where she was noted for her efforts in trying to educate and guide the other members of the group on the differences between archive and library! A glutton for punishment – she was also a member of the wider Morris Archive Group from 1991, trying to help keep a fairly disparate bunch of people focused and pulling in the same direction.

In 1992, she became the Publicity Officer of the Morris Federation, a post she held until 1996. She had a busy time with the Federation – not only dealing with publicity but also publishing the Newsletter. She was seen by other committee members as a breath of fresh air on the committee – decisive, straightforward and great fun to work with.

Her concern for the future security of the Vaughn Williams library collections, expressed vocally at EFDSS AGMs, led to her being invited to join the Library Advisory Committee in 2004.

Ann was a Quaker and heavily involved with many of the groups and committees of her local and regional meetings. Her love of Cromer and the North Norfolk coast was known to many and it was at the Sheringham Quaker meeting, in June 2006, that Ann met Alan Kirkham, the man who became her husband in March 2007. At the celebratory ceilidh at Cecil Sharp House, she greeted her many friends, saying - "If there is to be a memorial ceilidh, I want to make damned sure I danced at it." And she did, looking radiant with happiness.

She signed emails with a quote "While there is music in your head, there is dancing in your heart." How true! and her friends are missing her forthrightness and infamous wicked laugh already.

Janet Dowling./ Hilary Jackson

Chinewrde's 25th Birthday

Yes! Chinewrde Morris is 25 years old this year. To celebrate this a special committee has organised a year of events. Twenty-five years ago Chinewrde was conceived by Sue Crum, our Foreman and we still have four founder members in the side.

As a side we are known for our plain kit, not decorated with any badges other than one that bears our name, to create maximum impact – we feel too much decoration causes a distraction! A lot of our early dances were taught by Trefor Owen (lots of shouting, “get them legs up!”) and over the years we have added many more, some home-grown and some taught to us by other sides.

We aim to keep our standards high, impressing on new members that this is how we see North West morris being performed – in a military style and with plenty of ‘attitude’ to capture the attention of onlookers. We are supported by an excellent band playing with ‘oomph’, band and dancers driving each other forwards

and this is combined with audience interaction, explaining to people the names and origins of the dances, educating as we go!

Chinewrde has enthusiasm in abundance and along with that has good team spirit. We have always prided ourselves on being a family-oriented side, all ‘mucking in together’ – in fact for me they are an extended family, and over the last 25 years have bought lots of laughter, lots of tears but always togetherness and a love of what we do.

In September we are going on a tour of the NorthWest to towns such as Blackrod and Abram, to take our dances back to their roots. So if you see us say hello. We will be pleased to meet you and hopefully show you why we are out, rain or shine, dancing to a massed crowd or just one man and his dog.

Here's to another 25 years and beyond!

Linda Pound, Squire
Chinewrde Morris Dancers
www.chinewrde.f9.co.uk

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How Do You Solve a Problem Like Musicians?

Sue Bell from Glorishears of Brummagem writes about how the team are using developments in computer technology to produce an online morris music resource.

Glorishears of Brummagem will be celebrating their 30th anniversary next year. We are a women's Cotswold team, who also dance Molly in the wintertime. Over the years, one by one, our musicians were not able to play for us any longer. Our remaining expert musician was Richard Arrowsmith, son of Pat a dancer and musician at that time with the Jockey Men Morris. You may recognise his name, as he is the same famous Richard Arrowsmith who plays with Hekety, Crucible and Glorystrokes. After years of dedication, Richard moved to Sheffield to settle down with his wife Jess.

So we were in a bit of a crisis. We muddled through and did our best with a few easy tunes that we could play ourselves. After a lot of perseverance, we have now built up a larger repertoire, meaning that between us we can play all of the tunes used by the side.

Different people have tackled learning the melodeon in different ways. Some do it by ear. Some can't do it by ear. Some can read music and others can't. Some like to use the button number notation. We have encouraged each other and tried to accommodate different learning styles.

We have recently invested in some computer software which I feel can help every budding musician. Finale Printmusic costs around £55. It can be used to write music notation and it will play the tune you are writing as you go along. You can check on progress by playing the whole tune through from the beginning to the end. You can then save it and replay it when you like. You can choose the number and types of instruments you want to include, although there is not a melodeon available. I find

the descant recorder and oboe options make quite a nice sound.

So, for people who want to read the black dots or listen to the tune to learn it, the programme will help. Using the lyrics facility you can include the button numbers for melodeon players who want to learn that way. There is also a facility to put in chords and these will be included in the play back. Music can also be printed.

Apparently, (although I have yet to try it) the programme will write the music automatically if you enter it through a midi keyboard or USB microphone. If you want to get completely carried away you can add percussion or make a whole orchestra arrangement out of a simple morris tune!

Once you are happy with your composition you can upload it onto www.finale.com where it will be available for anyone to use once they have downloaded a free programme called finale notepad. So, here we have a great potential for sharing this resource amongst the morris community for free!

So far I have put a number of Cotswold and Molly tunes on the site and would welcome you to use them. To find them it is easiest to search under the word "morris" or "molly" in the description box. A list should then appear and you just click on the relevant entry. Below are some technical details to help you.

Just a word of warning though. These tunes are written as Glorishears of Brummagem musicians play them at present. I'm not guaranteeing they are the definitive version! Also, a computer program playing a tune can never replace learning alongside a human musician and playing for real dancers. The play back will inevitably be in a rigid format without the nuances of a live performance. It is only meant as a teaching aid.

If you do want to use the programme and want some help then please phone or email me. Your constructive comments

are also welcome and it would be great to hear if anyone else is adding to the site.

Technical Details

Website - www.finale.com

Product we purchased - Printmusic 2007

Free product to download - Notepad

Find already uploaded tunes by searching under "Showcase", entering in the description box the word "morris" or "molly" as appropriate, or enter the title of the tune in the title box.

Any problems, queries, comments - please contact Sue Bell at snoobysoo@aol.com or phone 01922 622737

they hope to repeat these days in other schools over the coming year.



Their ultimate aim is to generate sufficient interest in the schools so that they eventually become self-sustaining.

Ann and John Bacon

Morris Taster day update

Bringing our culture and traditional heritage into our schools is the motivation that is driving Ditchling Morris to promote Morris Taster Days. We cannot expect our children youngsters to appreciate and respect other cultures unless they know about their own.

So Ditchling Morris over the last 12 months has organised and run Morris Taster Days in a further two schools in Sussex. Teaching staff and parents have wholeheartedly supported the drive and Plumpton School has set up an after school Morris Club, and the Head has taken the demonstration Morris team to other schools in the area to show what they have learnt in the Club.

The Morris Club has performed at the Jack in the Green Festival and the "Awards for All" supported a Showcase weekend in Ditchling and Brighton in June 2007.

The children's costumes were funded by the "Action in Rural Sussex Local Network Fund".

Ditchling Morris have recently run a further Morris Taster Day, this time at Firle Primary School, East Sussex and

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New Address!

DITCHLING GOES DUTCH

Visit by Major Dutch Folk Dance Troupe to Ditchling

Over the weekend of 15th to 17th June 2007, Ditchling Morris entertained guests De Lesselschoters, from Steenderen near Arnhem. De Lesselechtsers arrived on the Thursday evening and were welcomed by Ditchling at their favourite watering hole – The White Horse where the usual “networking” took place.

On Friday, a Blue Badge Guide took the Dutch on a grand tour of the Sussex countryside, including Brighton, Lewes, Eastbourne and the surrounding villages. This allowed Ditchling Morris to prepare the village Green for an International Showcase of traditional arts. It was free and some 200 people from Ditchling and the surrounding area came to watch the 90-minute performance.



There was a wide-ranging programme during the evening. Ditchling Morris performed Cotswold dances. De Lesselschoters performed dances from their own village, Lesselchoters by the way means river dances. Plumpton Morris from the local primary school danced Border style, including their own written dance called “Farmers Away” based on a local legend. Chanctonbury Morris also danced and Ditchling Mummers presented “Bold Robin Hood” from Shipton-Under-Wychwood. The audience entered into the spirit of the occasion, cheering the “goody” and booing the “baddie”.

On Saturday Ditchling Morris and De Lesselschoters travelled to Brighton and performed outside the Theatre Royal and Royal Pavilion to a large audience while during the afternoon they joined Brighton Morris at the Kemp Town Festival.

The evening event was a typical ceilidh



with the Unreel Ceilidh Band – where the evening was basically a skills exchange event. De Lesselschoters taught some Dutch folk dances (in clogs!) while Ditchling demonstrated Cotswold Morris – and the intricacies of Nottingham Swing.

Sunday was a “rest day” and our visitors saw the London to Brighton Bike ride pass through as all bikes go through the village. This event is in aid of the British Heart Foundation. Walking around the village were able to watch and experience another English tradition when they visited the church bell tower and watched the bell ringers in action.

Support for the whole weekend came from Awards for All, Action in Rural Sussex, Local Network Fund, the Phillipson Trust and Ditchling Village Association.

Ann and John Bacon

Eds Note – The pedant in me demands that I point out that the Dutch clog is in fact a sabot being all wood in construction as opposed to a wooden sole with leather uppers as in the true clog.

Winter Newsletter Deadline
Saturday 17th November 2007

Maastricht – What a Treat!

Ripley Green Garters are celebrating their 25th anniversary this year and it was decided to organise a weekend of dance with a difference! After much deliberation, it was decided to organise a trip around a brand new Stayokay hostel in the old city of Maastricht in Holland. This is within striking distance of Belgium and Germany and we were hopeful of going to three countries in one weekend.

Willing volunteers were press-ganged into forming an advance party to sample the beer, food and suitable dancing surfaces. Sadly, we were not able to take up the option of the three countries, so concentrated on just Maastricht and the local area, despite the hostel still resembling a building site with access only for hard hats, steel toe-caps and high visibility jackets. Naturally, we glossed over this fact upon our return to England. One of the interesting and time-consuming parts of organising this trip was the reams and reams of information required by the locals in order to obtain a dance permit. They wanted to know size of the stage we required, did we need amplification, did the police need to attend – with or without rioting gear? Please note all this was in Dutch and even our Dutch contacts in the UK were unable to translate the document.

Word seemed to spread about our proposed trip. The lure of all fine beer proved too much for the likes of Rose and Castle and Full Moon who were quite quickly able to provide enough bodies to make sure we had two North West Teams and one Cotswold. The party was on!!!!

Late Friday evening the first batch of travellers left Crich Fire Station in Derbyshire – well, all those who could find their passports – picking up Rose and Castle at various stops in Northampton and the remaining foreign nationals in Dover. We arrived at the hostel to find to our great relief that it had been completed and so much better than

we had expected. The rooms were all en-suite and the aspect of the hostel was glorious. It overlooked the river and was across the road from a park. There was a sun terrace, which also overlooked the river, a bar, ample seating areas and a superb restaurant. The restaurant has an unusual feature as it was constructed around a large tree. The standard of cleanliness at the hostel proved too good for one of our organisers (namely myself) as I walked into a plate glass window within 15 minutes of arrival. Ouch!!! We soon met up with dancers from Maids of the Mill from Utrecht who had introduced themselves via contacts at Winkleigh weekend. They proved invaluable in sorting out dance spots and translating. It then became apparent that the dance permit was good to have but, much as in this country, it is a case of pitch up, ask the locals if they mind and dance.

We danced in Maastricht that Saturday afternoon, to a very appreciative audience. After dancing we headed back to the hostel for a welcoming supper and then off to local hosteleries for a beer or two. Sunday dawned wet but we still decided to head for Valkenburg where the weather cleared and we danced to large crowds before retiring to one of the pubs there for a fabulous music session. Adding to the atmosphere was a Cornish male voice choir who we joined for a song or two! Back to Maastricht to dance in the main square and then off to the next dance spot with Rose and Castle processing through the town, much to the delight of the locals.

Monday morning we said goodbye to Maastricht and were off to Bruges for a morning of sightseeing. A beautiful city although a small party from Rose and Castle seemed to shy away from the local architecture in favour of a hostelry and ran up the largest bar bill ever – and all of it liquid! Not that that could be the reason why one of Rose and Castle mislaid his passport on the way home. Well, he is a musician!!!

Bud Gilling - Ripley Green Garters

I Didn't Know Women Danced Morris?

Theories of the origins of the morris dance.

Even today some people refer to Morris dancing as a pagan ritual- a view popularised by some of the dancers themselves- claiming links to ancient fertility rites. Various theories have been put forward such as a formalised dance of two lines of men representing Christians and Moors to mark the crusades, or even a dancing form derived from the Moors allegedly brought to England by John of Gaunt in the mid 14th century. Both were referred to as Moorish dancing. One suggestion is that it might be a use of the term "Mores dance" (meaning traditional dance). Other theories include a more classical interpretation of Pliny the Younger, that it was initiated by Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, as a form of military war dance/exercise.

Sharp's view of the Morris, as a primitive folk ritual that needed to be preserved, prevailed for much of the early part of the 20th century; so much so that when Barbara Lowe, an historian, published her studies in 1957 of the earliest origins of Morris dancing, not much attention was paid to her work (Hutton 1996). Her researches showed that Morris dances first appeared about 1450 as a new craze in the courts of the nobility and royalty throughout western Europe. These had 6 men dancing-"competing" for the hand of a lady- who subsequently "chose" a fool character for her favours. Approval in the English courts, with Henry VIII being an enthusiast participant, helped to promote the dance and it became a regular part of pageants in churches- with regular entries in church accounts for fees or equipment for the "morrice dauncers." It wasn't until the 1970's when different views stated to prevail about more rigorous research and the social climate when women were starting dance Morris, that there was better appreciation of Lowe's work. Today her research is the

basis of our understanding of the origins of the Morris.

Women and morris dance in the 1970's to present day.

Following the conflict between Sharp and Neal, and the advent of the First World War, the Esperance Morris ceased. During the war members of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corp included morris dancing as part of their fitness programme, and it is alleged that some village dance traditions were kept going by the women while the men were at the front. However after the war there was little Morris dancing by women. In contrast, influenced by Sharp (but originally taught by the Esperance girls) many revival Morris teams of men were set up, and the Morris Ring was established in 1934 as an umbrella body for the new teams. Morris dancing by women was frowned upon as the members adopted the view that Morris dancing was a traditional male rite.

This view prevailed until the folk revival in the late sixties and early 70's where most of the folk festivals in the 1970's were running workshops to teach Morris to men. In 1971, in the face of rising female interest in taking part in Morris, the Morris workshop leader at Sidmouth festival banned women from even watching the workshop. In 1972 in the face of much protest at the ban, a "Ladies Ritual Dance Workshop" was run, and continued for the next few years. The first women's team to be set up was Bath City Morris in 1971, and then England's Glory in 1972.

There was much opposition to women dancing from existing men's team and the Morris Ring. Some men agreed to teach women dancers, but only after promises of anonymity. One man arrived at a women's Morris practice wearing a hood so that he would not be recognized. (Wearing 2006) If a men's team were invited to the same festival as a women's team, sometimes the men would try to persuade the organizers to stop the women dancing on the grounds that it was not traditional, and when they were

not successful they would refuse to dance themselves.

In 1975 13 women's teams from across the country formed themselves into the Women's Morris Federation- a group to support and develop women dancing Morris which ran their own workshops. One of the teams was New Esperance – named for the original women's team and practicing in the same area (of which I was proud to be a member for 25 years).

In the mean time a new phenomena developed which appalled men's teams and even some women's teams. Mixed teams -where men and women danced in the same set, or Joint -where there was a separate men's team and women's team, but which operated under the same name. They were denied admittance to the Women's Morris Federation, so they formed a third Morris umbrella group in 1979 called Open Morris. By 1978 The English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) issued a statement that argued "that women's Morris could not be

dismissed as irrelevant as it might become a future tradition in its own right."

(Wearing 2006)

In 1983 The Women's Morris Federation changed its name to Morris Federation and opened its doors to mixed, joint, and men only teams. I was pleased and proud to be President of the Morris Federation between 1996 and 2000, and worked with the two other Morris organisations to develop a collaborative approach to promoting and developing Morris. The emphasis is no longer on the gender of the dancer, but on maintaining a high standard

Women and the Morris dance

Women have always had a role in the Morris dance. There are now over 16,000 people dancing Morris, and 50% of them are women. Long may it be so!

Dance on!

Janet Dowling

Trefor Owen Traditional Clogmaker

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From November 1st 2007

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After over 5 years in the South East of England, Trefor is moving to Cricieth, home of prize winning Cadwaladr's Ice Cream, three real ale pubs, dolphins in the bay, mountains, castles... (Manchester/Leyland 2hours; Leeds 2hours 45mins)

The workshop is open to the public at reasonable hours, unless we are away at a festival. There are full clogmaking and repairing services on site, some while you wait (or get you ice cream, visit the castle, a tea shop a pub...).

Keeping it in the Family - Ten Questions for Three generations of the Morris



Let me introduce you to five members of the Matthews family, who have over 100 years of dancing experience between them, and I have lost count of the teams that they dance with across a number of different styles! The family are mum and dad, Alison (50) and Derek (50), daughter Sarah (22), brother Simon (19) and grandmother Joyce Walker (76). They live in Blackpool

Sarah: currently dances Northwest with Singleton Cloggers, Fylde Coast Cloggers of Lytham and Briggate of Leeds. She has danced Northwest with Terpsichore of Pontefract and Border with Woad works of Northampton. Sarah also does some clog stepping, but does that solo and steals a musician!

Mum Alison has danced with Yorkshire Chandelier, Persephone (a founder member and forewoman), Bradford Ladies Clog, Briggate (ex forewoman, ex squire,) Terpsichore, Fylde Coast Cloggers, Singleton Cloggers (forewoman) and Rivington Morris.

Dad Derek has danced Cotswold with Leeds Morris Men (ex squire, ex bagman) rapper and Cotswold with Bradford Rapper, Northwest with Singleton Cloggers (secretary, dancer, musician), rapper and

longsword with Lamb and Flag, and played for Fylde Coast and Rivington Morris.

Brother Simon has danced Cotswold with Leeds Morris Men and with White Rose, rapper with Lamb and Flag, and as squire of the Jig crew dances Cotswold, Northwest and does some clog stepping and belly dancing! He also does a bit of rapper with Smutt and some Northwest with Singleton.

Grandmother Joyce danced Northwest with Mrs Clements Secret Recipe (now defunct) and Beggars Oak and Cotswold with Kern Morris. Now on with the questions!

1. What first got you interested in the Morris?

Sarah: My parents do it so I have been brought up doing it. I know a lot of other people whose parents also do it and are not involved but I love it. Couldn't live without it.

Alison Brought up being associated with Morris through folk dancing. I was recruited into Yorkshire Chandelier at University

Derek Alison!

Simon Parents!

Joyce Tradition, companionship, friendship

2. How long have you been dancing or playing ?

Sarah Since I could walk! Well actually, I'm pretty sure I could dance before I could walk! The earliest picture we have of me in full kit (clogs and all!) was when I was 4. I did a three person dance with me in the middle, my gran to the left and my mum to the right! So about 18 or 19 years.

Alison 31 years

Derek Dancing - 29 years, playing - 10 years

Simon About 12 years

Joyce 26 years

3. Have you ever tried any other style or tradition? (and what affect has that had on the family)

Sarah: We all do various styles of Morris and always support each other. I've done

workshops in Cotswold, Molly, Rapper and Longsword. I think it's great! I'm interested in joining a rapper team in September if I can find one near me.

Alison I have done English folk dancing since I was a child. I also did Scottish Country Dancing when a child

Derek: Have tried most styles (see Q1) as have the rest of the family.

Simon I do various, see above!

Joyce I have done various workshops over the years

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

Sarah: Probably doing the three generations dance with my mum and gran. But generally I love dancing at various events and festivals and meeting new people.

Alison Doing the Plymouth at Whitby Folk Festival with my daughter and mother when Sarah was just five years old. Watching my son when he first danced out properly with Leeds Morris Men when he was seven, although he had been dancing Bonny Green Garters since he could walk!

Derek Dancing on Mount Wellington in Tasmania at dawn on Mayday 2000, you can't get much higher!

Simon I was busking at Sidmouth, doing jigs to raise money. I was seen by one of the organisers, and invited properly for the next year. I formed the Jig Crew to dance as a team at Sidmouth.

Joyce Going to America with Beggars Oak and staying with other dancers

5. And the low spot?

Sarah: The silly laws that have come in which have meant that events and festivals have had to be cancelled. That's always a disappointment.

Alison Team politics! And when one of us is injured

Derek Having to move to an area totally devoid of any Cotswold morris due to being made redundant.

Simon Not had a low spot!

Joyce When teams fall out and break up

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

Sarah: Every year Briggate dance on a train to raise money for a local school. The train sends passengers on a Christmas shopping trip to Edinburgh on the first Saturday in December, and Briggate, as well as various other entertainers (a Santa Claus, carol singers, folk singers etc.) provide the entertainment. As you can imagine there is limited space to dance up and down the aisles of a train, so we have to be very inventive in what we do. The best one was a couple of years ago when we did the cancan in full Morris kit using a fake leg! Very hard to describe, it has to be seen really! It's all a bit of fun, but definitely very strange!

Alison Running a Morris dance evening class in the same room as a Judo class and a photography class

Derek Dancing at the premier of a film starring the Village People in the centre of Leeds

Simon Elland Road before Leeds United played, a kebab shop, a gate crashed house party with the rest of the 18-30s lads, the co-op and a bus!

Joyce Dancing on a ferry when a sailor asked us to stop as the Captain was trying to sleep

7. What advice would you give to a newly formed dance team? (and advice to a family that may be approaching the three generation model of dancing)

Sarah: Don't take it too seriously. It's a hobby and should be fun. Just have a laugh! Oh, and don't drink too much beer when you are dancing as you'll fall over!

Alison This is a hobby and always remember that. Start with a small repertoire and don't be scared of asking for help, most Morris dancers are happy to help others out.

Derek Find a good teacher from an established team, learn the dances to a

sufficiently high standard before performing them in public and enjoy.

Simon Keep going and drink plenty of beer!

Joyce Keep going and avoid dance politics. Enjoy it

8. Is there one aspect of the morris world today you would each gladly see consigned to the scrap heap? (and how do other family members respond to that)

Sarah I've discovered recently that over the next few years laws are being brought in meaning that children will not be able to dance in a team unless all members of the team have CRB clearance. That means spending a lot of money. The outcome will surely be fewer children dancing and possibly fewer parents dancing. This is a shame as it is very important that dancers start young. Most people I know started as children! Morris dancing should be family friendly.

Note: the CRB issue is one that the Morris Federation Committee is further investigating for its impact on Morris teams.

Janet

Alison PEL and government regulations (e.g. CRB)

Derek Teams that think they can dance anything they like and call it Morris even though it bears no resemblance to any known style.

Simon Teams that don't dance well

Joyce Licensing laws

9. Is there one aspect the Morris world you would each fight to keep above all others? (and how do other family members respond to that)

Sarah : To keep it fun, not a sport or too competitive!

Alison Amateur status. I believe Morris should be open to all gender, race and age and this is best achieved by being amateurs.

Derek Single sex Morris teams particularly men only teams. (Sarah agrees single sex teams, but equally all female and all male!)

Simon Proper Cotswold teams

Joyce Respect for the history and tradition of Morris

10. What other interests do you each have outside dancing (keep it legal decent and honest!)

Sarah Does going to folk festivals and getting drunk count? General things, films, music (folk, rock, pop, jazz), comedy, going for walks. At the moment I don't do a lot else. I'm quite crafty and make cards and things. Hope to start salsa or ceroc dancing come September when I have more time and pick up learning the fiddle again!!

Alison Folk dancing and singing as a listener. Real ale (I'm a member of CAMRA), wine. I don't have time for much else as currently I dance with three Morris teams

Derek No time for anything else

Simon Films, TV music, comedy, sports

Joyce Folk Dancing, Scottish Country Dancing, walking and pet sitting

Well- quite a lot of shared thoughts about morris, and yet clearly some diverse opinions! Are there any other families who are so involved in the morris? Let's hear from you and what you feel!

Janet Dowling

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:

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27 Nortoft Road
Chalfont St Peter
Bucks SL9 0LA

Annual subscription for 2 issues is £6.

Clogfest 2007

What on earth would we do with 120 clog dancers if it rained – again? That was the question that most occupied our minds in the run-up to Clogfest 2007. Clog dancers are notoriously particular about getting their clogs wet. However, after a month of rain, floods and disaster, Saturday 7th July dawned bright and fair in Skipton N. Yorkshire

This is the 6th Clogfest we have held. The aim of it is to provide a showcase for the amazing talents of Britain's step cloggers. One musician described it as like a Thaxted Ring meeting for clog dancers, and I think that's a fair description. Any clog dance side that wishes to may dance at the Clogfest. We welcome all those who are interested, from village groups that rarely dance anywhere else to high profile groups that dance at major festivals all over Europe. Dancers between the ages of 10 and 70 may appear on stage together. Everyone receives the same respect and friendship. After all, step clogging is HARD and we all know it!

The weekend started on Friday night with a party at the Devonshire Arms in Cracoe. We provided the food and assorted dance musicians provided a fabulous session for us.

On Saturday we danced in spots around Skipton until mid afternoon, then met for a showcase event at the Canal Basin. Trefor Owen, who made a stirring speech about the importance of preserving our culture in the face of many and increasing difficulties, opened the showcase. It was a great speech, and he could, should, and probably will use it again. When the dancing finished, the musicians held another stonking session at the Royal Shepherd.

In the evening there was a ceilidh back in Cracoe, this year with Derwenna providing the music. A ceilidh where everyone is a step dancer is a wonderful sight.

The next day we danced in Skipton Castle. The owner of the castle would

have liked to keep us longer, but, as we have dancers from as far away as the Isle of Wight and Northumberland, most people had vanished by 3.00. Both days we finished with a massed Sam Sherry Waltz (or something very like it!)

We hope to do another Clogfest next year, but, as usual, it depends on funding. The will is there, but every year there is a scrabble to get sufficient funding together. We are grateful to our sponsors: - Copper Dragon Breweries, British Waterways and Skipton Castle. Sometimes we even get money from the council, but not always. Our dancers are willing to pay more than they do, but we resist this as much as we can because, after all, why should they pay to dance?

Sides attending were:-

Incognito	Clogarhythm
Clogaire	Old spice Girls
Dukes Dandy	Instep
City Clickers	Addison Clog
Shuttlers Clog	Ridgeway Clog
Stoney Steppers	Cobblers Awl
Isle of White Cloggies	
Lancashire Wallopers	
Jo and Sophie Evans	
Ryburn 3 Step English Step Dancers	

And last, but by no means least:



The world-famous dancing horse Wallop.

Editor's comment: Always worth checking if your local council has a "Cultural Grants" scheme as part of the lead up to the Year of Culture in 2010.

One Hundred Years and Still Dancing A Tribute to Professor Robinson.

On March 16th 2007, Furness Clog Dancers marked an important connection with their step dance heritage by organising a special celebratory ceilidh at the Mill Room, Broughton Beck. Nothing very special about this, you might think. But this small hall, tucked away in the Furness Fells just north of Ulverston, was where the group first started to meet in 1983 and, to their surprise, turned out to be one of the venues used for dance classes in the early 20th century.

These classes were where local children learnt Lakeland Step Dancing and were run by a family of dancing masters called Robinson. The Robinson family taught dancing from about 1863 but records of dance classes in the Lake District and North Lancashire go back to the eighteenth century. It has always been the case that a dancing master would organise a 'finishing ball' at which pupils could demonstrate their skills, so each child would take home a 'ball programme' to advertise the event. Copies of ball programmes going back to 1809 have cropped up in many places in South Cumbria and the one that was found in Broughton Beck was the reason for the celebration at the Mill Room. As can be seen, the dancing master is Mr. Joseph Stainton Robinson and the date is 15th March 1907.



Throughout the hundred years separating these two events, Lakeland Step Dancing has been kept alive by local dancers and researchers, but only just. The dance masters ran classes until about 1928, giving up when there was no more interest in this type of dancing and the tradition would eventually have been lost from living memory if it had not been for the efforts of Tom and Joan Flett in the 1950s and 60s. Their research revealed many memories of dance steps and dance masters and, as a result, the Hornpipe steps that were performed at Mr. Robinson's ball of 1907 were linked in time and place to those performed at Furness Clog Dancers' celebration in 2007.



There was plenty of dancing at the ceilidh. The caller for the night was Deborah Kermode, a long-standing member of Furness Clog Dancers and who, in conjunction with husband, Mike, has continued research into Lakeland dancing and music. The couple also both played in the band, *The Old Friends Ceilidh Band* (named after a pub in Ulverston) which provided a fantastic sound that night. Dance displays involved Furness Clog Dancers, Furness Morris Men, and Alex Fisher who, as an ex member of Furness Clog Dancers, was so inspired by the Lakeland step dance tradition, that she is now performing and teaching step and clog dancing as a profession.

As well as *The Old Friends Ceilidh Band*, there was music from members of *FreeBandReel* – a group of young people

who have also been inspired by the Lakeland heritage of music and dance, and who have been supported and encouraged by the local folk initiative, *Furness Tradition*. With funding from Arts England and lots of freely given time and effort, this Lakeland community is nurturing and celebrating its many traditions with youth programmes,

community events and an annual folk festival. But central to this inheritance must surely be the unique legacy of the Lakeland dance masters, the importance of which was acknowledged, to no small degree, by all those who trod the boards in Broughton Beck as a tribute to Professor Robinson.

MILL ROOM, BROUGHTON BECK

GRAND JUVENILE FANCY DRESS BALL

Mr. JOSEPH STAINTON ROBINSON.

In returning his sincere thanks to the inhabitants of Broughton Beck and the surrounding district for their kind support to him in his Classes, begs to announce that he will hold his **GRAND**

JUVENILE FANCY DRESS BALL

IN THE ABOVE ROOM

On FRIDAY EVENING MARCH 15th 1907

Doors open at 7 p.m. To commence at 8 prompt.

The Ballroom will be at the service of the visitors for Dancing after the Juvenile Ball, at 11p.m. until 4a.m. free of charge to those attending the Juvenile Ball. **Music by Mr J. S. Robinson's Quadrille Band.**

ADMISSION: Reserved Seats, 2/-; Unreserved Seats, 1/6.

TICKETS MAY BE HAD AT THE DOOR. REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED

PROGRAMME

PART I	PART II
The Entry -- Napoleon's Grand March	Hornpipe, M. Ormandy.
The King's and Queen's Hornpipe, F. Werry, R. Gaskell, T. Hutchinson, E. Jackson, A. Hartley, M. Gaskell.	Horse to Newmarket, E. Holmes, J. Satterthwaite, W. Higgin, F. Jackson, M. Burrow, F. Werry.
The Ballroom Polka	Hornpipe, A. Winder.
Hornpipe, A. Satterthwaite, M. Wood.	Waltz Amelia
Schottische	Hornpipe, A. Hutchinson.
Hornpipe, G. Satterthwaite, R. Sawrey, S. Proctor.	Tambourine Dance, F. Werry, J. Hutchinson, B. Proctor, A. Winder, M. Gaskell, M. Ormandy, M. Woodburn, S. Sawrey.
Horse to Newmarket, T. Parkinson, A. Hutchinson, N. Hartley, R. Proctor, F. Leck, R. Jackson, T. Higgin.	Hornpipe, M. Burrow.
Hornpipe, E. Holmes.	Barn Dance
Hoop Dance	Hornpipe, M. Hartley.
Hornpipe, S. Gaskell, A. Proctor.	Three Reels
Circassian Circle	Hornpipe, M. Woodburn.
Hornpipe, W. Higgin.	Lancashire Clog Hornpipe, M. Gaskell, M. Ormandy, M. Parkinson.
Tambourine Dance, I. Hartley, A. Higgin, M. Dewhurst, O. Gaskell, M. Satterthwaite, M. Parkinson, E. Gaskell, M. Ormandy.	Hornpipe, R. Proctor.
Hornpipe, T. Jackson, O. Gaskell.	Highland Fling, F. Werry, J. Hutchinson, B. Proctor, A. Winder, M. Gaskell, M. Ormandy, M. Woodburn, S. Sawrey.
Hornpipe, A. Higgin, M. Dewhurst.	Hornpipe, R. Parkinson.
Nigger Dance	Hornpipe, F. Werry.
Hornpipe, E. Hartley.	Highland Schottische
Waltz	Hornpipe, E. Gaskell.
Hornpipe, J. Satterthwaite, F. Leck.	Triumph
Highland Fling, I. Hartley, A. Higgin, O. Gaskell, M. Hartley, M. Parkinson, E. Gaskell, M. Ormandy, M. Dewhurst.	Hornpipe, M. Parkinson.
Hornpipe, T. Parkinson, T. Higgin.	Skirt Dance, F. Werry, J. Hutchinson, B. Proctor, A. Winder, M. Gaskell, M. Woodburn, S. Sawrey.
Skirt Dance, M. Woodburn, M. Ormandy, S. Sawrey, M. Parkinson, E. Gaskell, M. Hartley.	Hornpipe, M. Ormandy.
Hornpipe, M. Hartley, O. Gaskell.	Exhibition Clog Hornpipe, F. Werry, J. Hutchinson.
Hornpipe, S. Sawrey, B. Proctor.	Hornpipe, M. Gaskell.
Clog Dance, A. Hutchinson, M. Burrow.	Hornpipe, F. Werry.
Hornpipe, R. Jackson, T. Jackson.	Military Two Step
Ideal Schottische	Hornpipe, J. Hutchinson.
Hornpipe, M. Hutchinson.	
Plaidie Dance, F. Werry, R. Gaskell, A. Hartley, E. Jackson, M. Woods, T. Hutchinson, M. Dewhurst, A. Satterthwaite, A. Higgin, M. Parkinson, E. Gaskell, O. Gaskell, M. Gaskell.	

The Juvenile Programme will close with the
GRAND Garland Redona.

Illustration from: *Half Cut in Clogs: Lakeland's dancing history* by Deborah Kermode, Old Friends Music and Dance Association, 60 Soutergate, Ulverston, Cumbria (1998)



Paul White

Ice Cream, Deck Chairs and Hammersmith. The Perfect Combination?

It was back in 1974 that a young woman now of my acquaintance had a life-changing experience. She was having an innocent drink at the Red Rover pub in Barnes Common (down London way) when the establishment was invaded by a bunch of bell-ridden, stick wielding men who proceeded to dance their hearts out and enchant this fair onlooker.

Ask her and she will tell you that she was spellbound. In fact, she hasn't stopped talking about it ever since. The dancers were Hammersmith Morris and they inspired her not only to take up morris dancing (she eventually found a side after years of fearing there was no such thing as a female of the species) but to become a fine melodeon player and to play a full role in the progress of morris by working, over the years, as squire, bag and dance teacher to many different sides.

It was when I was thinking back over the good things and not so good things that have happened this season that I was reminded of Sally's story. The bad things have been mostly to do with rain. Two of the main events our side were going to enjoy this summer were the Saul Canal Boat Festival and the Bunkfest at Wallingford.

From my point of view they were both going to be great weekends because – much as I love it – there was more on offer than morris alone. They were going to be busy, noisy, memorable experiences but then came the rain (and money problems) and the gigs were called off.

Disappointed? I have not felt so let down since the neighbour told my mother I was playing truant and I got six of the best from Mr. Corrigan in front of the whole class at St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School in Bury. Best days of my life. Thinking back, I'm glad I cut her washing line down now. She clearly deserved it!

It's bad news when any festival gets cancelled, for whatever reason. Hobgoblin Music came to the rescue of the Wadebridge event this year and those of us who have a hand in running the Cornwall Festival of Dance rely heavily on voluntary effort and the generosity of commercial sponsors, without which it would be difficult to mount.

I think it's time we tried asking the Arts Council for money again. We tried once before and got the cold shoulder. Here we are, with around 300 musicians and dancers, performing morris and many other forms of dance, traditional and modern, from all around the world and involving people from a wide age range. What's more, it goes down well. Crowds gather to watch and the performers, as far as I can tell, also have a great time. So why is official support not more forthcoming?

Crikey, it's such a success, they should be knocking on our door with offers of help! We were blessed with sunshine again this year so all our feelings go out to those who I know must have put in such hard work to organise festivals which got washed out.

It was bad and sad news to hear that Sidmouth festival was in trouble but great news that it still ran. We went along for the Sunday dancing on the front and the

place was heaving. Most were there for the festival but even those who were not were caught up in the buzz of it all.

Our friend Carol books herself and her flute in for a full week each year. No camping for her. Bed and breakfast slap bang in the middle of town and it's music all the way. She is thrilled and energised by the whole thing and when we met up and wandered along to the pub for a pint, we were called to a halt as she was assailed by fellow musicians who materialised out of the throng to greet her. It's that sort of bash, with, seemingly, something going on around every corner and in every pub and hall. Some festivals lack heart and presence, but not this one.

My daughter was in sunnier climes, so we were looking after her dog. A little Jack Russell called Dory (don't ask me why, coz I don't know). As a current non-dancing person I get landed with dogs and bags so I had an endless line of people coming along to pat and cuddle and make a fuss of Dory, who turned out to be a little charmer.

One of those was a chap whose name I didn't get but he came to pet Dory and we had a laugh at his T-shirt, which bore the legend "Festival chiropractor." But it wasn't a joke. That was his job. He had a

tent and everything and all he asked for in payment was the odd pint of beer. Carol was dead keen. Playing flute for a week with your elbow in the air gets uncomfortable she reckons. So she was a definite booking.

Good news all round at Sidmouth then, and to top it off, guess who were dancing at the very same pub. Yes, it was Hammersmith Morris. And what a stirring bunch they are. We saw many fine sides at Sidmouth but nothing so thrilling as Hammersmith in full flow. Simply wonderful.

A good day was had all round. I managed two ice creams – a rather indifferent vanilla and very memorable black cherry. Best of all though, encumbered with dogs and bags and wanting to watch the dancing in comfort, I made the decision to buy time in a sea-front deck chair.

It was a fine decision. Very comfortable and no-one asked me for money!

What a brilliant day.

Eds Note – I guess the photo at the head of the column is Dory and friend then?



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