



Dancing ON!



*The Open Morris Magazine
Autumn 2016*

*In this Issue... Fantastic new recruits and where to find them...
Meet some new teams... Longsword Abroad...
Reports and opportunities... and much more!*

Ed's Column

confessions of a Morris tart



dancing with
Whitethorn at
Swanage,
photo by
Jack Smee

Greetings to all of Open Morris, from the wilds of Oxfordshire! I hope you've all been having a great summer. We certainly have! It's been an interesting year in the Morris world, with a fair deal of unpleasantness - I think now is the time to focus on why we love our hobby so much, and it's been very obvious to me compiling the magazine just how interconnected the Morris world is, and becoming more so every day as technology allows us to experience more and more Morrisy stuff from all over the world. This in turn allows for communion of ideas and propagates a spirit of creativity and enthusiasm which is very exciting.

We are all part of the wider Morris and folk community, which is a responsibility as well as a wonderful thing - it's both a huge, sprawling entity and a small, cosy family. I for one revel in this, with all its intricacies and wonderful, rich culture. In fact I think I'm a Morris Addict - and I consider it a huge personal achievement to have only joined one new side (Sharp and Blunt from Adderbury) since last I wrote an editorial!

Many thanks as always to the OM officers and officials, to all the contributors to this edition, and our invaluable proof reader Hilary Maidstone. And a big welcome from all of OM to the 4 new teams who have joined since the last magazine was published, I look forward to meeting you all soon! Happy dancing everyone!

Jen

Contents

- 3 - Chair's Update
- 4 - In Memory of Ken Foot
- 5 - Dancing England - it's ba-ack!
- 6 - Roses are Red
- 7 - Meet Whitgar
- 8 - Longsword Abroad
- 11 - Fantastic Newbies and Where to Find Them
- 14 - A Trip to Rocca Grimalda, Italy
- 15 - An invite from Ripley
- 16 - East Sussex Children's Traditional Dance Festival
- 18 - Harlequin Morris
- 19 - Poetry Corner
- 20 - Open Morris Contacts



**Cover image - Nicki dancing at the Morris Ring meeting,
photos by Stephen Archer, Morris Ring Treasurer.**

An Update from the Chair

As I write this, I have been in post for eight months and by the time you read it, the AGM and my 2016 term of office will be over.

My thanks go to all the other Officers who have supported me and kept the well oiled wheels of OM running smoothly. In particular I'd like to thank Brian and Craig, both of whom are standing down at this AGM. Brian has been busy throughout the year organising and sending out missives to members and has devised the format for this year's absentee voting. He's also been available on the phone for advice and suggestions. Craig has been beavering away at a brand new website, which should be ready soon for you to visit and enjoy the new easy to use format.

I've already sent out various updates so will only briefly summarise our 2016 activities here:

*Various investigations have been concluded, following up on matters which arose around the end of last year. The findings have been circulated to those concerned and a line can finally be drawn under the allegations and counter-claims, allowing OM to move on.

*Following a lengthy audit process, we were able to successfully pursue the ex- Treasurer for outstanding debts. Barring anything unexpected, this matter is now also closed.

*Various people have been beavering away at a new constitution which has gone out to members and will be discussed at the 2016 AGM.

*We have had a trial of absentee voting for this year's elections.

*Our updated Safeguarding Guidelines and the Policy for Subsidising Workshops and Events have been posted on the website

Can all that really have fitted into such a short time?!

Apart from being involved in business matters, I was very pleased to get out and about and meet members and JMO officials who were previously merely faceless names. I also had the opportunity to attend the Morris Federation's AGM and the Day of Dance which preceded it, watching many excellent sides dance in the autumn sunshine.



Fee, Stephen, Nicki

One of the recent highlights for me was being invited to attend and participate in the East Suffolk Ring meeting at which Adam Garland danced out as Ring Squire and Eddie Worrall danced in to replace him. Along with Fee Lock, Morris Federation Secretary, we joined in several massed dances and made up a set with the three Ring Officers and the Squire of the host side to dance at two tour spots and a show dance, with the new Ring Squire playing for us. A historic moment! Most of the comments were extremely favourable and our reception was welcoming and courteous. How times are changing!

I look forward to seeing Open Morris flourish now and for our cordial relations with the other two morris organisations to continue to develop. I believe the way forward for the morris world is to present a united front and a spirit of co-operation and tolerance.

Nicki Pickering
Open Morris Chair

In Memory of Ken Foot

Ken passed away very suddenly in September 2016. He played the fiddle for Whitethorn, and was a dancer with Towersey Morris, among many other musical pursuits such as orchestras and bands. He was a kind, wise and gentle man, and a wonderful musician. We will miss his glorious, soaring harmonies and the joyful quality of his playing very much in the Whitethorn band. He is pictured here as we will remember him, playing up a storm.



At Ken's funeral the church was full to bursting point with people from near and far who all wanted to come and remember him, and with dancers who performed in his honour. He will be remembered as a loving family man, and for his unfailing kindness and supportiveness to others. He led a rich and full life, with a successful career in IT, a large and loving family which included many foster children, as well as children, grandchildren, and wife Fran.

Undoubtedly the world is a poorer place for the loss of Ken but a richer place for his having been with us.

Dancing England

rebooted and crowdfunded

Sheffield City Hall, Saturday 18th Feb 2017

Dancing England is back. Yes, the highly successful and oft-missed Showcase of traditional dance is taking place once more.

The rationale at the tail end of the 1970s was to create THE Premier Dance Event. Not a one-day Festival and definitely not an extended ceilidh with interval entertainment from a local dance side. The message was very clear; 'All you traditional dancers out there, come and look at the real thing, the proper traditional stuff, and watch the excellent dancers that we have in England'. Phil Heaton and John Shaw (of the Black Cap Sword Dancers ignominy) were the original organisers, and now I've joined forces with Phil to reboot the event. The rationale behind the revived event is very similar to what went on before.



some original posters from Dancing England's heyday

Both Phil and John wanted to see all the different traditions of folk dance in England. Their first choices were the "continual tradition" teams. This was only possible in certain areas, so for other areas reputable revival teams were chosen. It was billed as 'The Traditional Dance Event' but what John and Phil didn't want to see was a team from Kent doing Cotswold or Welsh Border Morris. They wanted them to at least come from the right area.

They both felt that if a team were dancing Cotswold Morris they would enjoy, and maybe learn from, watching a team that actually came from the Cotswolds. The revived Dancing England will have good representation from all the usual dance styles and traditions; Cotswold, Border, Molly, Rapper, Longsword, Step Clog and North West.

Added to the mix will be the unique and the wonderful; something like the Britannia Coconut Dancers, Abbotts Bromley Horn Dancers and/or the Whittlesea Straw Bear. There will be the same great mix of the Traditional and the Revival. Again it will be a professional, well managed show with lighting, blackouts for dramatic effect and a great MC in control.

An event like this takes a lot of effort and money to organise, so we're running a crowdfunding exercise through Indiegogo. Please do take a look to see if you can help. In return for varying contributions there are various perks available. You can access the campaign online at:

<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/dancing-england-reboot>

For more information click to **www.dancingengland.co.uk** or find and like us on Facebook.

Edwin Dyson

Dancing England and Northgate Rapper

 ***STOP PRESS*** There's a rapper workshop on the day too - I'm so excited! (Jen)

Meet one of OM's Newest Sides!

Roses are Red are a newly formed dance group, based in Bexhill, East Sussex. They are a young side who asked to keep dancing after moving up to secondary school, as they missed the camaraderie and dance sessions they had experienced at primary school.



Who could turn a request like this down? So, they hired a hall, met together, chose a name, costume, registered with Open Morris, and got themselves 'out there'. The team, made up of 11 - 16 year olds, have danced out at several events this summer, including Kent and East Sussex Railway's 'Hoppers Weekend' and were very excited about appearing at the Tenterden Folk Festival on October 1st.

Dance teacher Pat King and her husband have a passion for traditional dance and have taught this at King Offa Primary Academy in Bexhill for over 20 years. After requests for help from other schools and youth organisations, Pat and a friend also published an instructional dance book, 'Why Dance?' complete with CDs by The Catsfield Steamers. www.whydance.org.uk



***Roses are Red, how do you do? From all of OM, welcome to you!
(sorry, couldn't resist - Jen)***

Whitgar Morris



Whitgar Morris is the latest Morris side to hit the Isle of Wight Morris Scene.

We were formed in March 2015 dancing mostly Cotswold, and traditional Welsh Border style Morris.

We are a small colourful mixed side of friendly dancers and musicians that enjoy our dancing and music, and we are dedicated to improving our performances, and keeping the traditional styles of Morris alive.

Anyone who would like to join Whitgar, and commit themselves to learning the dances will be most welcome to join our happy side.

Recruitment is from October - February. We meet on Tuesday nights at St Mark's Church, Station Road, Wootton, PO33 4QU, from 7:30pm - 9:30pm, and we would be glad to see you.

If you are on holiday on the island, or are moving over from the mainland, we would be pleased to welcome you on our practice nights.



Moonshine Day of Dance Cowes

Contact: Alan Garnett (Scribe) 07729 612 467
whitgar.morris@yahoo.co.uk

Longsword Abroad

Ryburn Longsword are based in the Ryburn Valley in West Yorkshire and perform both traditional and self-penned dances. You may have noticed us at festivals and events around the country if not because of our dancing, then at least for our beautifully appliquéd velvet costumes.

Until this year, the closest Ryburn Longsword had come to the Continent had been

when we danced on the bandstand at Broadstairs Folk Festival many years ago. So it was with great delight this year that we accepted an invitation to take part in an exchange visit with Breton dance group Cercle Celtique Liviou Kerien who are based in the village of Querrien in Finistère.



Member of Liviou Kerien, Sarah Shephard, came to one of our practice sessions in 2015 and suggested the exchange. Ryburn Longsword enthusiastically agreed and after much planning on both sides of the Channel, we set off from Yorkshire in mid-August on the 750-mile trip to Querrien.

We were met at Querrien's impressive Salle Multifonction (community hall) by our hosts - we were very jealous of this fantastic resource in the very centre of their village, we have nothing to compare in Ripponden! Members of the group produced a feast of Breton gallettes and local cider for us while we tested out



our faltering French on our hosts. Ryburn Longsword band then played for English traditional dances called initially in French but descending quite quickly into Franglais, which was patiently tolerated by our French hosts who joined in the dances with great good humour. Later in the evening, they taught us some simple Breton dances.

The first weekend of our visit coincided with 15th August, a religious holiday in France so we had been invited to perform at two festivals, one on the Sunday at Batz-sur-Mer and another on the Monday at Port Manec'h.



On Sunday, we were up at 5.30am to travel by coach to Batz-sur-Mer to take part in the Pardon St Guénolé. A

pardon is a procession to celebrate the patron saint of the village church (St Guénolé) and a huge crowd turned out to enthusiastically applaud each beautifully dressed dance group. We were a little taken aback to be followed in the procession not only by local Irish dancers but also a local band playing Scottish bagpipes.

After the parade, all performers were given a traditional French lunch in the community centre and we then danced on stage in temperatures of 37°, not at all what we're used to in Yorkshire. In England, we would normally dance turn and turn about with other groups in dance displays so it was a surprise when we discovered that we would be dancing for a full half hour in that heat at each festival, so we were perhaps a little less cool, calm and collected than we might have liked!

Monday's Fête de l'Aven in Port Manec'h was much smaller and took place on the beautiful harbour there. Moules and frites, beer and cider featured heavily in the afternoon after the performance and the day was rounded off by an evening of Breton music and dancing under the stars.

Whilst not ideal for dancing in extreme heat, Ryburn Longsword costumes are very individual; black cross-dyed velvet tabards with pictures appliquéd on the back yokes each showing scenes or animals found in the Ryburn Valley. Liviou Kerien costumes are very traditional, some of the women's dresses are antique beaded velvet and they wear intricate, starched lace coifs on their carefully styled hair. The men wear mediaeval-style waistcoats and pantaloons with gaiters. As in Ryburn Longsword, dancing is a family affair, with mothers and daughters, fathers and sons proudly carrying on the tradition.



Livioiu Kerien - photo by Bruce Fitzgerald



photo by Yvonne Knight-Gregson

During the rest of our week in Finistère, our wonderfully generous hosts took us sightseeing and swimming and gave parties for us. Ice cream in the beautiful little village of Pont Aven, a Manet-like picnic in the Vallée des Saints, and finally a barbecue under the trees at Sarah's farm, where we bade a sad farewell to our new friends before setting off early the next morning to catch the ferry home.

Planning has now started for their return visit next year. Look out for them at Whitby festival and here in the Ryburn valley where we hope to find plenty of opportunities to entertain them whilst showing them the delights of Calderdale and Yorkshire. If you have any hints and tips about funding and organising such trips based on your experience, we would be delighted to hear from you - please contact me at polly.j@btinternet.com.



Breton hospitality - photo by Bruce Fitzgerald

Pauline Jones
Ryburn Longsword

Fantastic Newbies and Where to Find Them!

They are the Holy Grail of the morris world - brand new, keen recruits who are fresh into morris and excited to learn, they even have good knees - but where do you find them?

Dancing On! has been interviewing this season's lovely newbs to find out!

Andy & Nerida Cremer

Age group: 40 - 50 (Nerida) Over 50 (Andy)

Which side have you joined?

Wicket Brood

How did you find out about your side?

We saw that another local side were holding an open evening, but it seemed they were men only. In the same Google search however, we saw Wicket Brood and, being shallow, we thought their kit looked cool! Their website looked impressive, they sounded fun, so we thought we'd give it a try! Our two daughters are now old enough to be left alone for a few hours and we were looking for an interest just for us. Also, Andy has a rare genetic problem that means that his leg arteries are calcified. The exercise afforded by Morris is perfect for maintaining blood flow and general fitness.

What attracted you to them?

Watching their Youtube clips we saw a bunch of happy people clearly having great fun, and their striking appearance really intrigued us.

What's your background, have you ever done anything like Morris before?

We had 5 ill fated salsa lessons in 1997

- aside from this no, nothing!

What do you think of it then?!

We love it! We've met the friendliest people ever and although our lumbering newcomer's ineptitude must have been frustrating for others at times, nobody has ever made us feel unwelcome or foolish. In fact several members of the side have taken time to show us the basics and help us to gain in confidence, and this has been really amazing and very much appreciated. We have really enjoyed immersing ourselves in a whole other world of which we had no prior knowledge, and now we have danced out (mainly at pub nights) over the summer, we have found just how much we enjoy being part of a group that entertains the public. It is such a high to get applause and see people smiling, and to know that you contributed to it.

Morris has been fantastic for wellbeing too - as you dance, you become focused and any external stresses and anxieties simply melt away.

In summary, Morris is one of the best things we've ever done and we wish we'd found it years ago!



Jan Day

Age group: Over 50

Which side have you joined?

Ryburn Longsword

How did you find out about your side?

I have lived in the area a long time. I knew some of the dancers and have seen them dancing out many times

What attracted you to them?

I had often thought of asking if they wanted new dancers but had never got round to it. I wanted to do some kind of dancing to improve balance and coordination after breaking my leg last year. Also my husband Andy was asked to play for the side.

What's your background, have you ever done anything like Morris before?

I danced North West Morris many years ago but I don't think my knees would cope with clog dancing now!

What do you think of it then?!

It is much harder learning dances now than it was in my twenties. Longsword requires fast thinking and concentration. Everyone has been patient and helpful and it is great fun. It was exciting, and slightly terrifying, to find myself dancing out at Chester festival about two months after starting, and on a trip to Brittany with the side less than six months in. The social life is good too.

Pam and Hartley Dean

Age group: Over 50

Which side have you joined?

Wicket Brood Border Morris

How did you find out about your side?

They performed in the village where we currently live. We then looked out for them at other venues and went to see some of their other performances

What attracted you to them?

(a) Their energy and 'attitude', which was quite different from the 'respectable' village green-type dancing that we had

associated with the Morris tradition: it was a bit edgy/anarchic.

(b) The side appeared to have a very inclusive ethos and though we do not consider ourselves to be especially accomplished we could see that for us their dancing/music would be doable/playable. Pam had retired and Hartley was taking part-retirement and we wanted a pastime in which we could participate together. This would be a new experience, yet it might recapture something from our past (shared participation in musical performance) that we had been missing (see below).

What's your background, have you ever done anything like Morris before?

Throughout our teenage years we shared regular involvement - through a local church group - in musical performance. After we married, we ceased all forms of religious observance, but also any engagement in musical performance. For some 50 years, apart from family (children and now grandchildren), work (Pam in professional child care-related occupations and Hartley as a welfare-rights practitioner and social policy academic) and a certain amount of political involvement, we did not indulge in *any* pastimes. Though we had a passing interest in folk music (Pentangle, Steeleye Span, Fairport Convention), we knew *nothing* of Morris.

What do you think of it then?!

It's been a valuable challenge and a lot of fun.

Fiona Hope (aka Blobby Lost)

Age group: Over 50

Which side have you joined?

Borderline Morris (Arborfield)

How did you find out about your side?

Had seen them at Bunkfest and The Calleva Arms, Silchester.

What attracted you to them?

Their brightly coloured tattered jackets (black, neon pink/orange/green/yellow and silver), black clashing sticks, general exuberance and sense of fun while visiting different venues and working off some of life's excesses/stresses. Also a challenge for my 'Heinz 57th year' and out of my comfort zone as the Big 60 looms ever nearer!!

What's your background, have you ever done anything like Morris before?

I was office (policy/museums) or otherwise indoor based for most of my working life, with an MA in garden history. I have always been interested in the arts generally, including most sorts of music and dance.

What do you think of it then?!

Overall, I'm enjoying it, though it's a lot harder than it looks and many of those who make it look so easy have been dancing for years, often with more than one side! I still get frustrated and embarrassed about how long it takes me to pick up some of the moves/dances, especially the terminology used to call or describe the moves and sequences. However, most of the time I appreciate all the constructive criticism and it's a supportive, welcoming environment.



Jane

Age group: Over 50

Which side have you joined?

Wicket Brood

How did you find out about your side?

I saw them performing at a party.

What attracted you to them?

The energy, the craziness and the team work involved.

What's your background, have you ever done anything like Morris before?

This is an entirely new adventure. I have never seen Morris Dancing like this before. I have only danced at clubs and parties. If the music is good, I'm usually first on the dance floor.

What do you think of it then?

There were times when I wanted to give it up because I found the learning hard. I had lots of support from the members, and I kept just turning up even though at times I wanted to run away. I really enjoy feeling part of a group and working things out together. It beats being stuck at home feeling sad and lonely! It's good to laugh and not be too disheartened by totally messing it up. I've met a really nice group of people and the teaching of the dances was excellent.

I hope people have found this as interesting as I did! The thing that I find most striking is the commonality in our new recruits being attracted to sides they see locally - so local exposure obviously has a lot to offer to sides who are looking to recruit! A fun team dynamic is a factor too it seems.

Many thanks to all the contributors, we wish you many years of happy Morrising ahead!

Hastings Morris Dancers and Jack In The Green Characters visit Rocca Grimalda, Italy

On the weekend of 29th January to 1st February 2016, an eclectic group of 11 Morris Performers from Hastings, East Sussex, including characters from Hastings Jack In The Green, Mad Jack's Morris, Winter Warmers and Fishbone Ash travelled to Rocca Grimalda, Italy to take part in their La Lachera and Carnevale.

This is a prestigious, traditional, cultural event which includes processions, music, dance, theatre and story-telling. It involves an animated and coloured nuptial or 'begging' train which processes from vineyard to vineyard through the countryside, in the streets and squares and the burning of an effigy (one of the characters in the La Lachera story).



The story is based on feudalism, local myths, nuptial ceremony, the rites of spring etc. The procession includes a crescendo of sounds, cracks of whips, jingling harness bells, whirls of flowers and ribbons. Some characters are armed with swords, others with whips, some wear bells and high hats covered with flowers. They dance around a couple, while an odd 'Baby' character (maybe representing evil) dressed in red, bounds and jokes among the performers and the audience.

La Lachera traditionally develops around three dances all passed down from generation to generation, with fast footwork and energetic weaving in and out and interaction between the characters. The music is traditional Italian folk music played by local musicians. On the last day, in the Rocca Grimalda performance during the Carnevale, the streets are covered with confetti and the La Lachera characters wear traditional, sinister, papier mâché masks which adds to the atmosphere and disguises the performers.

The group who went to Rocca Grimalda consisted of people who could perform both Cotswold and Border dances, so we showed them a mix of traditions and

costume together with three Jack In The Green characters in full regalia, who 'greened' the local populace.

Our Italian hosts gave us accommodation, entertainment and hospitality, which we are reciprocating when they visit Hastings Jack in the Green in May 2016.

The people of Hastings embrace the Morris and the revival of traditions and we thanks them for supporting us by providing hospitality and a warm welcome for our Italian visitors.

Mary Phillips

(Group coordinator, Mad Jack Morris, Winter Warmers & Fishbone Ash)



An Invite to Ripley

Ripley Morris Men celebrate 90 years of Morris Dancing in Ripley on Saturday 9th September 2017

Records show that a Morris side was dancing in Ripley in or around 1927. In 2017 Ripley Morris Men will be marking this 90th anniversary with a Day of Dance in the nearby city of Derby.

Ripley Morris Men would like to invite all member sides and individual members of any of the three Joint Morris Organisations to join us in our celebrations.

Planning is in the early stages but we expect that dancing will be from 10.30am to 4.00pm around Derby with a final massed dance on the large Market Square.

To assist us in our planning it would be helpful if your side could indicate interest in joining this event by the end of November 2016 through the contact details below. We will be sending out further details early in the New Year.

Cheers

Mick Buckley

Bagman, Ripley Morris Men

Tel: 01773 743 560 Email: ripleymm@hotmail.co.uk

Or follow and message us on Facebook

East Sussex Children's Traditional Dance Festival - May 2016

Scores of smiling face-painted children replaced racehorses at the Plumpton Race Course on Friday 20 May 2016, as the 7th Primary Schools Traditional Dance Festival got under way. Eight of the nine primary schools in the Chailey Cluster took part, involving over 200 children from Years 3, 4, 5, and 6.



The 2016 Festival was organised and directed by the Primary School Sports Co-ordinator, Kerry Davey of Chailey School, assisted by a very able team of senior students (the Crew) who helped with a morning workshop and general setting up and clearing away throughout the day. The majority of children from the Chailey Cluster go on to Chailey School for their secondary education. A very special 'spin-off' from the Festival has been the development of 'an element of continuity' between the senior and primary schools in that a number of the Crew have fond memories of taking part in the early festivals at their primary schools and are now in a position to pass on their skills to the younger children.

Planning for the Festival began in September 2015 using the successful format of previous years. This year the morning activities on customs offered storytelling with Jamie Crawford who led workshops on Mumming when each group acted a short play, and 'Face painting' by the Crew where the children also learned why many Morris teams colour their faces - the answer being for disguise rather than any other reason. The Crew were instructed on Face Painting techniques by Gail Duff of TRADS (www.tradsfolkarts.co.uk).



The day was divided up into two halves, the morning programme consisted of dance practice, rehearsals, face painting and storytelling workshops while the afternoon was devoted to a regional traditional dance show for an audience of parents, guardians, event sponsors and special guest, Lewes MP Maria Caulfield.



TRADS, members of local dance teams, The Morris Ring and The Morris Federation all provided dance tuition for the children, before and during the Festival. Live music (and the ability to count) is the most effective tool for the children to learn the dances - rhythm and counting being essential to good performance, and enables the tutors to vary the tempo of tunes when necessary. This played a large and important part in facilitating a happy, relaxed learning environment. After lunch, the Crew swiftly tidied and reorganised the Marquee for the afternoon performance.



Kerry Davey, Director, opened the Festival by welcoming the visitors and thanking supporters, sponsors and helpers before the children started their show, a lively and colourful 'whistle-stop' tour of English traditional dance. This included all types of Morris, Maypole, Social and Tudor dances. During a short interval the Plumpton Parent Teacher Friends Association served much appreciated and superb refreshments. The afternoon concluded with the now traditional roof raising mass dance, 'Shepherd's Hey' by all 200 children and joined by many of the parents guests and sponsors.

After seven festivals, many of the schools now have an 'in house' resource of knowledge to 'go it alone' fulfilling the long-term aim of the first festival in 2009 which was planned and

organised jointly by SEFAN (South East Folk Art Network) and Plumpton Primary School. SEFAN closed in 2015 and The StepBack Consortium (www.stepback.org.uk) took on a lesser mantle this year, responsibilities being mainly organising the funding, external tutors and offering support if required - plus a little tuition.



Our grateful thanks to the schools who helped fund the Festival, our sponsors, the George Pheby Bequest, The StepBack Consortium, The Morris Federation, The Morris Ring, local Morris teams Chanctonbury Ring and Ashdown Morris Men for their support, without which the Festival could not happen.

Ann and John Bacon
Ditchling Morris and StepBack
June 2016



Harlequin Morris

In the last issue of *Dancing On!* you will have noticed a picture of some dancers leaping in a wild fashion across the front cover. Many of you may have wondered "who on earth are they?" and "I never knew you could find such garish coloured shirts!" With that in mind, we should probably introduce ourselves and tell you what we do.

We are Harlequin Morris, from no fixed abode and we like dancing Cotswold!

As members of other sides travelling around the country, we have the opportunity to meet and become friends with others. Sometimes this can result in ideas forming and, occasionally, these ideas happen.

demonstration of what we had done the previous day.

Since then we have been lucky enough to meet and recruit some fantastic dancers who happen to be fast learners with easy going, fun loving temperaments. Ascot-under-Wychwood has muscled its way delicately into our repertoire, along with an ever evolving kit. This year has been the busiest of the lot, appearing at a host of great festivals. We kicked off at Folk Weekend Oxford, giving us the opportunity to dance Raglan with Rockhopper Morris. Next we earned Sheffield Steel Rapper's seal of approval for dancing in the monsoon rain in Southwell. July turned to August and Sidmouth Folk Week arrived, presenting the challenge of surviving every day it threw at us - including Kirkophany's Ceilidh



photo by Ben Potton

In 2013, after lots of discussion and debate, Harlequin Morris had finally decided on two traditions to learn and, most importantly, when the first practice should happen. With individuals travelling from all over the country, a small group arrived for a weekend in Cookley, West Midlands. On Saturday we set about learning the basics of Bucknell before struggling to get our heads and feet around Raglan! Sunday was greeted with a new dislike for stairs as our calves struggled to negotiate them, but we ignored their cries as we gave sparsely populated crowds a

spot and joining Earlsdon as the only sides dancing in the driving, cold rain. Folk East gave us the opportunity to chill and enjoy the atmosphere of an outdoor festival. Our season ended with a great weekend at Bromyard, featuring just a little bit more rain!

We're always looking for new places to go, so don't be afraid to approach us, email us or Facebook us!

Email: harlequinmorrisdancers@gmail.com

Facebook: @HarlequinMorris

Twitter: @HarlequinMorris

Poetry Corner!

Trevor Barker from Moseley Morris enjoys writing and has written a poem about a fictitious Morris side, loosely based on Moseley Morris. Yes most of our members are somewhat older, between 60 and 74, bits of us do ache when we dance (some bits actually hurt) we are slower and don't jump as high as we once could, but we love to dance. Two or three of our members are actually Quakers, but the rest of us, unlike the dancers in Trevor's poem, are not teetotal. We all enjoy watching other sides dance and love the variety of costumes and wonderful names.

Perhaps some of Open Morris's members can give those of us afflicted with arthritic knees, hips and sore feet, some tips on how to survive the busy summer dancing season, how to make a small leaps look large and how to look as if you are ranting when you aren't really?



How They Brought The Good News From Aches To Gent

With sash and bells the team has mustered and, wait a bit, the Bagman's flustered
The musicians are a little late, he's getting into quite a state

The other teams are ready now outside the Bluebell Inn
One suspects that from their jollity they're full of beer or gin

Our side is extremely old and ancient now and one is eighty three
He finds it difficult to hop and rant, it's that arthritic knee

We are a Quaker side, teetotal every one
And every Thursday evening we perform outside The Swan

With clashing sticks and clacking clogs the first team starts to dance
Even the Vicar and his flock have ventured out the manse

We happily dance in homes and halls and pubs
And not one groan escapes our lips when it comes to paying subs

The whoops and sounds of clashing sticks, the clattering of clogs
The stentorian voice of the Squire and the barking of the dogs

The colour and the joie de vivre, the laughs and merriment
Remarkably have soothed the knees of our afflicted gent!

Trevor Barker
Moseley Morris

Open Morris Contacts

Chair: Nicki Pickering, Wales
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**Dancing
ON!**
needs you!

I hope you've enjoyed this edition of Dancing On!

The next edition is due out in Spring 2017, in time for the JMO NDoD. Open Morris would love to read about everything you've been up to, so why not write us an article, or get in touch if you've got an event you'd like us to cover, an idea for a great headline or anything at all you'd like to see in the magazine!

Please email dancingon@open-morris.org, or feel free to give me a call.

Please note that the views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of Open Morris.

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Area Representatives

Please feel free to contact your representative any time. If you are interested in volunteering to represent one of the vacant areas, please get in touch!

Central: Oxon, Herts, Beds, Bucks, Berks -
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W Midlands: Staffs, Worcs. Warwickshire, Shropshire, W Midlands, Herefordshire -
Vacant but temporarily covered by Will Nesbitt, contacts as above.

SW: Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire, Gloucs, Avon incl Bristol - Vacant