Dancing On!

Inside!

Steps in Time Receives the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service ֍ The Sue Dyke Award 2020 ֍ Eken Morris Dancers - 40 Years of Dancing in Stockholm, Sweden ֍ The Origin of the JMO Day of Dance ֍ Rattlejag Morris and Plough Morris

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OPEN MORRIS

Contents

Editor's Column 3

Chair's Column 4

Introducing New Officials! 5

Steps in Time Receives the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 6

The Sue Dyke Award 2020 9

The Guinness World Record: A Musician's Perspective 12

Eken Morris: 40 Years of Dancing in Stockholm, Sweden 14

How to Start a Morris Team 16

Morris Online! Cecil Sharp's People, Morris Dance Database 18

The Ancient Art of the Tabor Pipe 20

The Dancers of Life - Poem 22

A Different May Day 24

The Origin of the JMO Day of Dance 26

Rattlejag Morris and Plough Morris: A New Case for a Sub-Genre of Morris Dance 28

Cover image of Steps in Time at Shaftesbury May Day
Dancing On! logo designed by Christopher Todd

Editor's Column

Celebrating a Lone Morris Festival in Bunnies from Hell kit

Hello, and welcome to your new Dancing On! I'm honoured to take over from Jen and, as scary as it's been, I have loved putting this first issue together as we step forward with a new look. Our beautiful new logo is designed by the wonderful Christopher Todd of Rockingham Rapper, and with it I hope to have retained the same warmth palpable in previous issues.

This hasn't been an easy year for morris, but we have been delighted to see people still dancing from their homes, and the community has been more lively than ever on social media. The OM team particularly enjoyed seeing Roses are Red dance the Bacca Pipes for the first Lone Morris Festival, and Brixton Tatterjacks sent us their socially-distanced set dance on YouTube, which was a reminder of how lovely it is that we can all still see each other through the sharing of videos online.

Putting this issue together has proved to me how efficient a healer our community is, and I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity to be in contact with our member sides and contributors. Thank you to everyone who has helped make this issue one to be proud of, and to Hilary Maidstone for her eagle-eyed proofreading.

Lastly, this magazine wouldn't be possible without your submissions, so please feel free to send in what you've been up to, creations of art or things of interest - anything you want! This is your magazine, and I'm proud to be part of it.

Conor Smith
dancingon@open-morris.org

Chair's Column

Little did I imagine when I became Chair in November 2019 that the world, and indeed the Morris world, would be so radically changed in such a short space of time. I had a very large pair of (Morris!) shoes to fill in taking over from Nicki, and the fates have certainly conspired to test my mettle. I'm very grateful to all of the OM team for their dedication and hard work throughout lockdown. I'd like to thank the whole team, some of whom are very new - Lucy, Sam, Clare and Chris have joined us since the last magazine edition, and the reins of Dancing On! have passed into Conor's very capable hands. I've been so excited to see Conor's first edition as Editor, and I'm immensely proud of what he's produced! I hope you all enjoy reading what is hopefully the first of many excellent publications.

Between the pandemic and the global anti-racism movement, we've been challenged to address some very fundamental aspects of the Morris world in the last few months, and the change that has been set in motion by both of these things will, I strongly feel, build a more robust and broad-horizoned Morris world. These issues are emotive and controversial, but they must be faced within our community.

I'd normally here be telling you about all the great events I've attended recently, but as things are I can only report that I've been doing an awful lot of step clogging in my kitchen, as well as jigging, and attempting to think my way through Raglan Heys whilst imagining the rest of the set! My picture above was taken at the first #LoneMorrisFest, and I must also just show you this lovely picture of Liz and John, our Treasurer and Membership Secretary, demonstrating a dance at one of their Zoom 'Lockdown Hoedowns' - great fun!

The ingenuity, creativity, enthusiasm and community spirit the Morris world has shown in these extraordinary times has been truly humbling. We may be apart but we are still dancing together, and long may that continue, whatever the future brings.

Jen Cox

Introducing New Officials!

Clare Mach - South Central Area Rep

Hello, I'm Clare. Having been introduced to social dance and Playford at University, I moved on to Cotswold Morris, dancing with Red Stags and attending workshops and festivals. Before children, I was Squire of Red Stags for some years. After about 10 years dancing Cotswold and a certain amount of Border, I moved away from Southampton to Horndean where I joined Devil's Jump Clogs, a step clog side. I am very pleased to see that things have moved on over the past 40 years and the three Morris organisations are now working together. As South Central Area Rep, I hope to meet local sides when out and about and to act as a source of information and support as required.

Chris Lamb - South East Area Rep

I live in Beckenham in South London and am a dancer with Fowlers Molly and Brixton Tatterjacks as well as with a third side, Freaks in the Peaks, who dance further afield. I also dance with two sides who are members of the Morris Federation, and an international side, Ragged Robin, who focus on overseas tours.

I already know several sides in the area from dancing at various events and look forward to meeting others when we're all able to get back to dancing. My role is to help sides keep in touch with Open Morris and its activities and to transmit any concerns and suggestions you may have to those best placed to deal with them. *Note from the Editor: Chris is not nearly as ferocious as his image suggests. Not really.

Sam Davey - West/South West Area Rep

A dancer since 2013, I started in south London with Blackheath Morris, whose genteel guidance has made me the member I am today. A secret longing for the dark side led me to Box Hill Bedlam and then Wychwood, after a move to the Midlands. I've since danced with Beorma, and currently drum with Belle de Vain, latterly helping to set up Ragged Oak. I can't wait to see the creative changes afoot in the community post-pandemic. Outside of Morris I've completed the trinity as an (occasional) historical re-enactor and CAMRA card waver. Otherwise, writing, art projects and the search for the perfect architectural commission keep me busy.

Steps in Time

Receives the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Steps in Time, a volunteer-run junior traditional/historic dance group based in Dorset, have been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the MBE for volunteer groups. It aims to recognise outstanding work by volunteer groups to benefit their local communities and is the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK.

Steps in Time, now in its 31st year, can often be seen around the local area performing traditional dance at festivals and fetes. As well as dancing locally, we have also performed at Sidmouth International Folk Festival, the Olympics and Paralympics for London 2012, as well as representing England a number of times at the Europeade (Europe's largest cultural festival). You may have even seen us on TV in 'Meet the Ancestors', at the Filly Loo on BBC, ITV's 'Ade in Britain', shown around the world dancing at the Jane Austen Festival, and even a glimpse in the film 'Morris: A Life with Bells On'. More recently we appeared on the last series of Countryfile in February 2020. As well as dances mentioned by Thomas Hardy, in Jane Austen adaptations as well as other dances through history, we cover traditional rhymes and games with the first group and every few years teach making Dorset buttons, a skill we learnt from previous local generations and continue to pass on.

Representatives from Steps in Time attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace in May 2019, along with other recipients of the award. Steps in Time received the award from Angus Campbell Esq HM Lord-Lieutenant of Dorset at a thank you event held in Shaftesbury. The event was attended by many who have helped us over the years and Open Morris was represented by Jen Cox.

Dancing in Padua with other groups

Penny-Jane Swift of Steps in Time says:
It is such an honour that the work Steps in Time do to preserve our heritage and pass it on to new generations has been recognised by our community, county and country. We are delighted to receive this award in recognition of all the work done by members of Steps in Time over the years, its dancers, musicians, parents and all those who have supported us with help and donations. When Dot Swift, who sadly passed away, started the group she didn't expect it to be still going after 30 years let alone receive this award. Thank you all so much.

If you would like to help us with future funding or join us please contact us.
Tel: 07988908841 Email: info@stepsintime.org.uk
Donate to Steps in Time at http://localgiving.com/stepsintime
Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/stepsintime
Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/stepsintimeuk

The Sue Dyke Award Winner 2019

We are extremely proud to announce that Hannah Mitchell, of Roses are Red, was the first-place winner of the Sue Dyke Award 2019! Her entry, on the theme of 'Morris in Our Community', was a video that the judges said 'encapsulates the pure joy, the friendships, and community spirit that Morris brings to her life.'

The award was presented to Hannah at a Roses are Red practice by John and Liz Scholey of Open Morris.

Daisy Kennedy was awarded runner-up, and the judges noted that they were 'really happy to see entries from two young and enthusiastic dancers who are very much supported and encouraged by their Morris communities.'

You can find the judges' full comments at https://open-morris.org/sue-dyke-award-2019-competition-results/

Please also visit the Open Morris website to learn more about the judges, or read up on the rules of the competition. The Award was started to showcase the talent and personalities within the youth of Open Morris, and we have seen such brilliant creativity among our members already. We sincerely hope all eligible members consider participating, and look forward to this year's submissions!

The Sue Dyke Award 2020

'Morris in Today's Climate'

We're pleased to announce this year's theme, and welcome young dancers and musicians (aged 25 or under) within Open Morris to respond to it however they wish! So far, we've had some inspiring creations and we look forward to see what you come up with.

First Prize: £100, a certificate from Open Morris, and a year's custodianship of the Sue Dyke Tankard, engraved with your name.
Second Prize: £50, and a certificate from Open Morris.

The closing date for this year's competition is Friday 28th August. Please see the Open Morris website to read the full rules at https://open-morris.org/the-sue-dyke-award-2020-competition-rules/ If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact chair@open-morris.org

Thank you, Shinfield Shambles!

The Sue Dyke Award Fund has received a very generous donation of £500 from Shinfield Shambles Border Morris. Members of Shinfield Shambles attended the 2019 OM AGM, and were inspired to help the fund. The picture below was taken on the occasion of their 25th Anniversary day of dance in 2018, and you can see our Chair, Jen, in the lilac kit at the bottom right of the picture. Shinfield Shambles was Jen's first side, joining at the age of 12, and from that very young age being part of the side inspired her to greater and continued involvement with the Morris world, so it's really lovely that Shinfield Shambles are contributing to inspiring other young people in the future. On behalf of all those young people, and the Open Morris team, we'd like to say thank you very much!

Shinfield Shambles are from Reading in Berkshire, and you can find out more about them at www.shinfieldshambles.com

Announcement from Potties!

The Potty Festival was started by the Lobster Potties Morris dancers in 1993 by Reg Grimes (the then Squire), Clive Rayment (Foreman), and Penny Shepherd (Bagman) as a way of saying thank you to the sides that had invited the Potties to visit them for a weekend of dance. So the following year in July with Briggate Morris, Belchamp and Old Bull Morris, we set forth on a coach tour of North Norfolk, stopping off and dancing at various spots along the way.

The weekend proved such a success that it was decided to hold it again the following year. And so it began, firstly in a small way inviting one or two more sides and still travelling out and about. Two years later it was decided to make it a static event along the lines of the Rochester Sweeps Festival which we had first been invited to in 1993 and had enjoyed meeting and making new friends there.

Incredible as it may seem, 2018 was the 25th Anniversary of the Potty Festival here in Sheringham. We've come a long way since our early beginnings in 1993.

To celebrate our 25th anniversary in 2018, it was decided to have a go at the Guinness World Record for the Largest Number of Dancers all doing the Same Dance at the same time. Everything was meticulously planned and the attempt took place on the Saturday morning of the Festival.

On the 17th September 2018, it was confirmed by Guinness that the Potty Festival, with the help of 369 Morris Dancers from 33 sides, had set a new world record for the Largest Morris Dance. An amazing feat by any standard.

As a way of saying 'Thank you' to the Morris community and to give something back in a way that will benefit Morris in the future, the Potty Morris and Folk Festival committee have agreed to donate £1,000 to boost the Sue Dyke Award with the hope that young members will be encouraged to develop and further their interests in Morris and its associated activities.

Tony Chadwick - Potty Morris and Folk Festival Committee

The Guinness World Record

A Musician's Perspective

Image copyright Gareth Gabriel

On 7th July 2018, at the 25th Anniversary Lobster Potty Festival, 33 sides collaborated in an attempt to break the previous record for the most morris dancers dancing the same dance at the same time in the same place for five minutes or more. The previous record was 144 dancers, dancing Tinners Rabbits in Preston on 5th September 2015.

The organisers of the GWR attempt wanted a single band to play for the dance, rather than the usual approach of creating a scratch band of musicians drawn from participating Morris sides. Wicket Brood were delighted to provide the music.

The selected dance was the same as used for the previous attempt, Tinners Rabbits. The music for this dance, as any musician will know, can be fairly tedious, especially if played for 5 minutes. Instead, Wicket Brood decided to use the well-known tune 'Not for Joe'. Microphones with speakers pointing up and down the high-street were set up to amplify the music for all dancers to hear and dance to the same beat. Wicket Brood sent out the dots and detailed notation in advance so that all participating sides could practise to the same tune.

Not for Joe is also quite a simple tune, but it can easily be enhanced without losing the feel of the music. Wicket Brood introduced two variants to the 'b' music – one was Rule Britannia and the other was Ode to Joy. On the day of the GWR, the variations were clearly a hit with the public who cheered and joined in by singing along when Rule Britannia kicked in.

Ali Heywood, 001. I wonder who was 007?

The attempt was carefully and well organised and managed. It had to be in order to meet the stringent GWR rules. Sides had been processing through the town on the Saturday morning, and as they arrived at the High Street, those who were taking part in the GWR attempt went through the barriers collecting a wrist band on the way. Wicket Brood were first through, as shown by this photo of Ali Heywood with wristband No 1.

There were of course last minute glitches – for example a new caller had to be found. Luckily, the volunteer caller went through the calls with the band before the attempt. As any musician knows, when you play for a dance for long enough, you get to know the calls well. Some of his calls were not the usual Tinners Rabbits calls, so the band made sure that the normal calls were used so the dancers would not get confused and make a mistake.

There are many great videos on YouTube of the event. The picture on the previous page was captured from a YouTube video (with permission from Gareth Gabriel), and really shows what an amazing event it was.

The Guinness Book of Records have confirmed that the new record for the Largest Morris Dance is 369 Morris dancers. This will take some beating! Many thanks to the organisers of the Sheringham Festival for making this happen and creating such an exciting opportunity for the participating sides.

Gill Clough - Wicket Brood Bandleader

Wicket Brood after the

Eken Morris Dancers

40 Years of Dancing in Stockholm, Sweden

Eken Morris Dancers was formed in Stockholm in 1979 and is the only existing side in Sweden entirely devoted to English Morris dancing. The formation was a result of a growing interest in English folk music in the 1970s.

Eken Morris Dancers is a mixed side using costumes of the traditional men's Morris style: white shirt, white trousers, baldricks and ribbons in the colours of red, green and yellow. A black hat and bell-pads on the legs and the outfit is complete. We also have an animal - "Mooses" - a Swedish moose, a favourite among children.

Our basic repertoire and dance technique was taught to us by English Morris dancers who have visited us in Stockholm. Our teacher for the initial workshop during Easter 1979 was Adrian Turnham from Albion Morris. He returned the next year for a follow-up workshop. Today our repertoire consists mainly of dances from the Adderbury, Bampton, Brackley and Headington traditions but during the years we have done dances from Bledington, Lichfield and Oddington among others.

After the Easter workshop in 1979 we decided to form the side. The first public performance was in November 1979 in Kista, a suburb of Stockholm. During the summer season you find us dancing outside pubs in Stockholm. We also meet frequently with our Finnish friends, Helsinki Morrisers, for an Arctic Morris Meeting. Since 2003 we also run a monthly English Music Session in Stockholm – details on our website: www.ekenmorris.org.

Our first English tour was in the summer of 1986 when we danced with Albion Morris in London and Long Man Morris in and around Eastbourne. We continued to Bournemouth and Bourne River MM and Bourne Bumpers. The tour ended in the heart of the Cotswolds together with England's Glory Ladies Morris, Pebworth MM and Glouchestershire MM. Since then we have been back a number of times. Our latest visit was at the Lewes Folk Festival in October 2018. In September this year, as part of our celebrations, we will spend a dancing week in and around Bourton-on-the-Water in the Cotswolds and meet many of our dancing friends – details will be posted on our website www.ekenmorris.org later.

By the way, if you wonder about our name, Eken means "oak tree" in Swedish, an old nickname for Stockholm.

Jan Ivarson - Eken Morris Dancers

How to Start a Morris Team

Ten bullet points to help when setting up a new team

- **Have a clear aim in mind** – do you want to start a top-notch display team, or do you want to keep fit and have a bit of fun? Both are great, but it's worth discussing this as a group at the beginning so that you all have similar aims in mind.

- **If you are all totally new to dancing, ask for expert help!** Open Morris can help to put you in touch with people who might be able to offer advice about the dancing, where to find material, or the music.

- **Think about attending workshops as a team** to learn new dances or styles. Many festivals offer workshops in all sorts of types of dancing, and there are loads of online resources too, now more than ever.

- **Go and see and make links with other teams in your area** – your local teams will be the people you dance at pub nights with, who come to your events and hopefully invite you to theirs! Friends in other local teams can sometimes be a good recruitment link too.

- **Consider writing a constitution** to set out your aims and structure. Open Morris recommends having a constitution as good practice, but many banks will also require a constitution to enable a group to open an account. There's a template constitution available at https://open-morris.org/about/documents/constitution_template, which is free for anyone to use.

- **Get started on kit ideas long before you need to!** Nothing worse than a last minute shopping or sewing panic! Consider how easy it will be to get hold of your chosen fabrics, styles of clothing and equipment in the future, and think about how your kit will look on other people who might join in the future, as well as your current team.

- **Talk about finances and consider setting up a bank account.** It's likely that you'll have expenses to pay as you set yourselves up, from hiring halls, to purchasing kit and equipment. Be up front with members about your plans for how you will pay for things, and setting up subs. Open Morris has a fund available to help new teams purchase equipment, you can find out more at https://open-morris.org/the-douglas-pickering-memorial-fund.

- **Make links with your local community.** You never know who might be interested in joining – make sure they know you're there! Consider parish noticeboards, local magazines or social media groups. Other local community groups might also be interested in booking you for their events.

- **Plan your first dance out carefully!** It's a good idea to consider the timescales involved from the outset – are you planning on dancing out in a few weeks, a few months, or next year? How quickly a team can be ready depends on the complexity of what you're trying to learn, the commitment of the members, and lots of other factors besides like the level of previous experience. Make sure your members understand they need to commit themselves to bookings and to practice, and be aware that some events have a long lead time – it's common for festivals to book teams the previous winter.

- **Have fun!** At the end of the day, that's what it's all about! However technically brilliant you strive to be, a good and happy team should enjoy everything they do together, as it's that atmosphere which will make people want to join and help your team to thrive!

  If you have any thoughts on this or points you'd like to add, please email chair@open-morris.org and we might start a list on the website!

Jen Cox

Cecil Sharp's People

www.cecilsharpspeople.org.uk

A new website was launched in January 2020 that will provide biographical sketches of the 650 folk singers, musicians and dancers who gave their songs, tunes and dances to Cecil Sharp in the Edwardian Folk Revival. In his notes Sharp left us many statements and clues about the performers – more information than any other collector. It has been possible to identify and reconstruct the lives of nearly all performers.

With the help of a Maltwood grant from the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, freelance researcher David Sutcliffe completed the Somerset section of the research (342 performers) in July 2019 and has been extending his research to all the other counties which Sharp visited. The research is 80% complete and it is hoped to be completed by Easter 2020. It does not cover Sharp's visits to USA.

There is considerable interest currently in the people who handed on their folk heritage to the early collectors. 'Who were the Folk?' is a recurring question. This website now provides the answers. Researchers and performers can use this latest research to recreate the social context of song collection at the time.

Ever since the digitisation of the song material of Sharp and other collectors within the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library website (www.vwml.org), there has been a need for more information on the singers involved. With the kind permission of the English Folk Dance & Song Society, the new website is able to show Sharp's photographs of the singers and to link back to the digitised songs and tunes with ease. The website will run for three years to test its usefulness and will be maintained by David Sutcliffe in Somerset. It is a non-commercial website.

The website is absolutely flexible - information can be updated and amended in the light of new evidence from researchers, from the 1921 census, from descendants of singers etc. It is another starting point in our understanding of folksong, not an end point. For more information, contact davidsutcliffe27@btinternet.com.

David Sutcliffe

David Sutcliffe is the author of the biography of Rev Charles Marson 'The Keys of Heaven' (Cockasnook Books 2010) and of the article 'Cecil Sharp and Rev Charles Marson (The Early Years)' in 'Old Songs, New Discoveries', edited by Steve Roud and David Atkinson (Ballad Partners 2019).

Morris Dance Database

www.morrisdancedatabase.org.uk

For those of you at a loose end due to the curtailment of morris practices and events, you are invited to take a look at the Morris Dance Database.

The database was conceived with a view to gather, in one website, a wealth of information on Morris and related traditional dances through the websites of individual sides, the national organisations, and other sources. The database has been up and running since 2018 and now includes over 1000 sides and 3000 dances. New features in 2020 include facilities for tune search, adding links to videos of dances, and adding other relevant information about any dance. With a dynamic website, the development is ongoing and the content subject to additions and amendments. There are many sides, however, for which the information is still fairly sparse.

The aim is to get all sides, past and present, listed together with a record of their dances, particularly those developed since the publications of Lionel Bacon's Handbook and other earlier sources. Many sides have developed their own dances based on existing traditions and many have also developed their own 'tradition'. The database will **not** include notation, but sides can add a link to available notation if they wish.

Contributions to the website from side officials or any appropriate person would be much appreciated. There is a downloadable form available on the home page of the website, but even better would be for a representative to request editorial access and add information directly. All that is required is name of person, name of side and a valid email (which will not be displayed or shared with any third party). Comments and suggestions are also very welcome.

The hope is that this website will become a resource shared between the Morris organisations and individual sides. There is the potential to include links to sources of archive material, historical records, etc. In fact, anything Morris!

A link to the database www.morrisdancedatabase.org.uk from a club's own website would also be much appreciated.

Colin Andrews

info@morrisdancedatabase.org.uk, 01363 877216, for general enquiries, comments, suggestions and provision of data.

Anahata

webmaster@morrisdancedatabase.org.uk, to request editorial access or report any problems accessing or using the website.

The Ancient Art of the Tabor Pipe

So you want to try the pipe and tabor? An instrument that sets dogs whimpering at 500 yards, grits the teeth of more sedate melodeon squeezers, drowns out bodhran beaters utterly and has only two volumes – loud and off? But what of the downsides? you ask . . . Let me spin you my story.

I'm Squire for the Minster Strays, a mixed Cotswold and Border side based in the Howardian Hills near York. Some years back, with six weeks to go, we had no musician for a major event. In the Dunkirk spirit we rooted out the latent musical talent in the Strays. I myself found a curious short pipe with only three holes and a dusty drum my wife had bought me as a present years ago and which I'd never found a use for. Put these two together and with six weeks' practice working from the Susato fingering chart I had Michael Turner's Hornpipe under my belt with Queen's Delight nearly recognisable.

At this point I discovered the Taborers' Society (TTS) via the web, and realised the instrument had deeper roots than I realised. It has a long history dating back to the early middle ages and was used for dancing for all classes of society, ceremonies and processions, folk customs and street entertainment. In the 15C, a good tabor player was the rock star of the age and much sought after. William Kemp would not have got far on the road to Norwich on his Nine Days' Wonder in 1600 without his faithful taborer, Thomas Slye! "Whittle and dub" playing was close to extinction in the early part of the 20C, but a revival of interest occurred and the English pipe and tabor tradition remains vigorously alive today.

I found the TTS to be an incredibly kind and inclusive group of elite musicians, willing to give their time and encouragement to a budding beater and whistle warbler. There was a steep learning curve: in my first lesson with the TTS, I found I was playing with the wrong hand, the wrong fingers, the wrong parts of the fingers and in the wrong key (plus my drum was upside down – still is, get over it!) Perhaps prospective players may wish to try one of the TTS beginners' workshops before investing too much time in the instrument?

Moving rapidly on, half an hour's practice a day for six months gave me our full repertoire of 25 tunes plus a whole new set of medieval, early music and renaissance pieces that have been a pleasure to tussle with. It also nearly led to divorce, the neighbours complaining and hearing loss in our cat. Still, sacrifices must be made for our art!

Since those early days, I've had the privilege of performing solo for our dancers at Chippenham Folk Festival, played in York Theatre Royal to a full house, led Waggons in the York Mystery Plays, experienced amazing virtuoso musicians at the Taborers' International Festival and vastly expanded my own understanding (and delight in) early music.

A basic pipe can be had for a tenner, workable drums for under twenty; so, compared to the majority of musical instruments, the initial investment is not high. You need a certain determination, confidence in the end result and encouragement from friends and the TTS. Oh, and taut goat skins, but that's another tale ...

For information about TTS and the pipe and tabor, see:
http://www.pipeandtabor.org
http://www.pipeandtabor.org/the-pipe-and-tabor

For the TTS beginners' workshop, see:
http://www.pipeandtabor.org/repertoire/beginners-workshop

Gez Pegram, Morris Dancer

The Dancers of Life

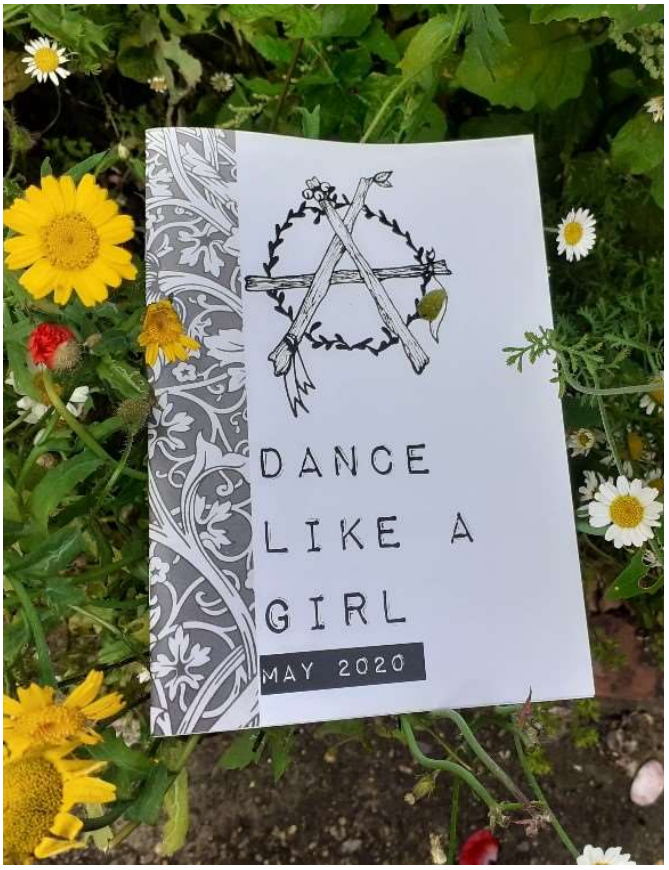
Sticks clash together as the bells ring
Heralding Centuries old rites of spring
Morris Men dancing in each season
Each well-rehearsed step for a reason
The fiddle player keeping with tradition
Lending the dance for all his rhythm
Denizen of all things beauteous and green
The village has chosen The May Queen
Morris Men dancing good harvest to bring
Then the fool is crowned the misrule King
The green wood, the field ripe with corn
From winter's deathly hold, spring is reborn
Every jig performed, every "hey" and every dance
If you be lucky enough to watch them perchance
Be sure to applaud and treat them with respect
They do this for all of us, mother nature to protect

In market square or village green the dance goes on
Through countless generations and the dance goes on
Right across this fairest land forever the dance goes on

Dean Fraser
www.deanfrasercentral.com

Dance Like A Girl

We are a zine for the morris community. Independent of the morris organisations, we want to share all of the brilliant things people in the morris are up to, from artworks to morris histories and even some helpful how to guides!
This all started online three years ago, and we are so excited to announce our very first print edition.
Want to order a copy?
Email us –
dancinglikeagirl.caf@gmail.com
Or
Send us a message on Facebook or Instagram!



The Plymouth Morris Tradition is a set of (mostly) four-man dances first performed in public during 1989. A new 24-page book compiles a short history of early morris dancing (including Tudor records for Plymouth), and the music and dance notation for the tradition.
The book is available as a free download using this link:
http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/13279.

The book is also available in a paperback edition for £3 in person, or £4 including postage and packing (cheques payable to Plymouth Morris should be sent to Plymouth Morris, 92 Ponsonby Road, Plymouth PL3 4HW). The proceeds from the sale of the book will be dedicated to renewal of the Plymouth Morris costume in preparation for the Mayflower 400 celebrations (postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19).

Plymouth Morris hold their practice night on Wednesday evening at 19:30-21:30 at the School of Creative Arts, Millbay Road, Plymouth, PL1 8EZ from October to April (subject to current government guidelines being relaxed by the Autumn) and welcome prospective new members at any time.

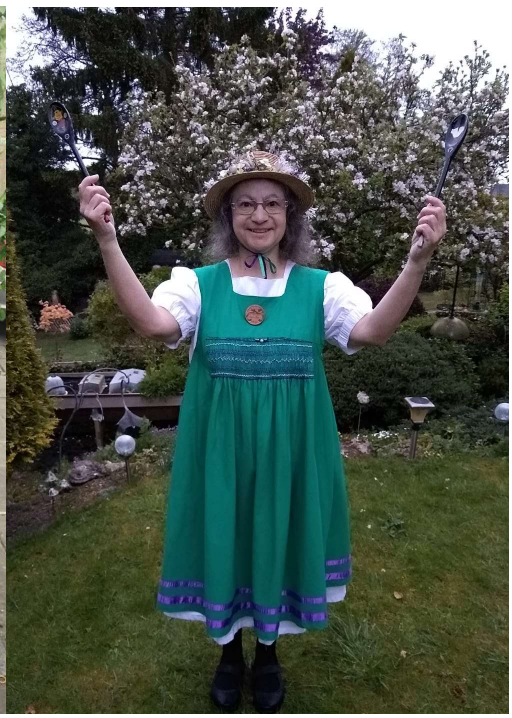
A Different May Day

Although sadly there could be no community dancing at Otley's historic Maypole this year, The Buttercross Belles, Otley's North West Morris team, together with dancing friends from Wayzgoose, found other ways to mark and celebrate May Day. The Maypole at Cross Green was decorated with flowers by dancers on their daily exercise. A few Belles were up before dawn, in their gardens or taking a walk with their household, to dance up and welcome the summer sun in the traditional way in Otley, Shipley and Spofforth.

More Belles up and down the Wharfe and Aire valleys joined in later in the morning, dancing at home. Homemade maypoles were constructed and Lego models made, to celebrate the traditional customs in new ways.

Jaci Bowman, the Buttercross Belles' Squire, said, 'This was a very different May Day for all of us. Although we couldn't dance together, the Belles and friends from Wayzgoose found inventive ways of coming together and marking the day. We look forward to dancing out before too long and gathering at the Otley Maypole to celebrate in a more traditional way next May.'

The Buttercross Belles, May 2020



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The Origin of the JMO Day of Dance

By spring 2003 my e-mails were being clogged up every morning by messages entitled PEL (Public Entertainment Licence). How I came to dread switching on in the morning.

Things went at such a pace, with John Bacon being the pivotal point and the driving force behind our campaign. Throughout, he co-ordinated our efforts, told us who to lobby and when to do it. We were also supported by Lord Redesdale (Lib-Dem Peer). Although we continued to try to get a small events exemption added, this was unfortunately defeated.

I was able to go up to Parliament with West Somerset Morris Men, The Squire of the Morris Ring, Cliff Marchant, and the President of the Morris Federation, John Bacon, as a guest of Ian Liddell-Grainger, the MP for Bridgewater. We danced on the Green Paper on Parliament Green to highlight our concerns about the effect of the Bill, receiving good Press and TV coverage. We continued our pressure and, with the help of Lord Redesdale, managed eventually to bring about the exemption clause just before the Bill was passed in the Commons on July 8th. The clause read as follows:

> *The provision of any entertainment or entertainment facilities is not to be regarded as the provision of regulated entertainment for the purposes of this Act to the extent that it consists of the provision of,*
> *a. A performance of Morris Dancing or any dancing of a similar nature or a performance of unamplified, live music as an integral part of such a performance or*
> *b. Facilities for enabling persons to take part in entertainment of a description falling within paragraph a*

Basically it meant that we would not need a licence to dance in a public place when the act was brought into force, whether or not a PEL was in place.

At this point I'd like to tell you how much time this had taken. I'd say that for about 6-7 months I spent about 1-1½hrs/day dealing with PEL e-mails, reacting and replying as they came in. Where time permitted, I consulted our other Officers but sometimes an instant reaction or reply was needed. In such cases I had to follow my instinct to do what I felt was best for OM and Morris in general. I'm sure that if I spent that much time then John Bacon must have spent double, if not treble, the time dealing with the Bill and its effect. We owe him a great debt of gratitude. Had he not been so tenacious and good at steering us all in the right direction we may have been in a very different situation today.

Of course, having got our exemption, we felt we needed to mark it in some way. The idea of a mass dance out in Trafalgar Square was put forward and seemed like a good idea, so we set about organising it. The e-mail subject changed from PEL to TS (Trafalgar Square).

So 17 years ago on November 2nd, after a hot, dry summer and a warm, dry autumn we woke up to rain on the day, great lumps of it falling from a leaden sky. But we were not downhearted - just damp.* Our sides all turned up and did us proud. The rain did eventually stop. Not only was this a great day in terms of the exemption but was the first joint event of its kind organised by OM, The MR and The MF. Everyone involved enjoyed the day and the public enjoyed the spectacle. Press and TV coverage was not as good as we had hoped but a number of Broadsheets had pictures, Sky news covered the event as did World Service, we were on the front of 'Stage Professional' magazine and I think EFDSS carried a picture in their magazine. It was so successful that sides went away asking when we were doing it again, which of course we have done many times since.

Until this year of course when Covid 19 put paid to our plans. On April 18th we should have been dancing in Liverpool with our friends from The Morris Federation and The Morris Ring. The event, sadly, was postponed because of lockdown, but all was not lost and Jen Cox, for the JMO, put together a video of the sides who would have been dancing on the day. If you missed that there's still the opportunity to see it via YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYj9ZCH6ei4. The catchy hashtag was #nogoJMO.

Chris Hall

*Hilary Maidstone, Proofreader, notes: We weren't just damp, we were drenched! But it was a great day.

Rattlejag Morris and Plough Morris

A Case for a New Sub-Genre of Morris Dance

Rattlejag are just another morris dance team, aren't they? Well, not exactly. Along with two other sides, Flag and Bone Gang and Maltby Sword and Plough Bullocks, they have been inspired to recreate the traditional dances that were once done in East Yorkshire discovered by Paul Davenport and which he called the "Forgotten Morris". Paul was privileged in interviewing the last surviving morris dancer in the region and from his research we found out about the simple dance figures and stepping of the region.

Chris Rose, a long time morris dancer in the more familiar hankies-sticks-and-bell-pads Cotswold morris style, did more delving into archives, history and old newspapers and discovered that Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire had also had rural morris dance traditions that had disappeared and not been recorded. Along with other interested dancers and musicians, he helped found Rattlejag Morris in 2002 with the main purpose of developing a dance style that would recreate the spirit of these long-lost dances of the "east shires", starting with Paul's material and then working from Chris Rose's own discoveries. Lincolnshire has proved to have had strong traditions, (often in partnership with mummers/plough players - the terms "morris" and "mummers" being interchangeable around these parts). Nottinghamshire seems less so, perhaps as it grew more industrialised and seen as less likely to produce authentic material. Rattlejag has kept faith with the research material and the simple stepping and figures gleaned from the old records, but, as dances were not written down in the past, has had to be creative and interpretative – producing their own unique variant of morris. Indeed, just as many a Border or Molly team has done in these modern times.

We don't have bell pads or hankies, as they are not in the records for the region. Our costumes reflect the simple clothes decorated with ribbons as in old descriptions and photos, as well as a preference for "coloured clays" face decoration. Our predecessors used "rattles" or bones and "flags", so we have be-ribboned bell sticks and various rattle accoutrements to enhance the dances (including goats' toenails!). The repertoire includes morris dances with rattles as well as stick, bacca pipe, broom and sword variants – they are all evidenced in our region – an interesting and eclectic mixture. Our latest dance picks up on the mention of bulls' horns as morris dance apparel.

Malcolm Smith, our musical director, has used Lincolnshire folk tunes, referencing mainly the Joshua Gibbons collection, on which we base our music. We haven't tracked down any Nottinghamshire tunes so far. We use traditional instruments in our band – particularly melodeon and fiddle, but also bagpipes, hurdy-gurdy, whistle, mandolin and shawm. Our bass line is enhanced by a bassoon, trombone and drum.

BUT we don't fit into any of the recognised sub-genres of Morris Dance – Cotswold, North West, Border, Molly, Sword. We are a little weary now of being labelled "other" or "various" – yet we don't cross genres. For some time we have wished for better recognition for the research into Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire dance compiled by Paul and Chris and the resulting developments and have looked for an overall name to fit. After long discussions, we believe the title "Plough Morris" to be the most effective. Why? Because morris dancers in these rural eastern shire districts had a strong connection with plough festivals around the 6th January and were known to dance in association with the "Plough Jags", "Plough Jacks" or "Plough Bullocks". It seemed an obvious choice in the end. For there was no one geographical title to be found that could be applied to the east country farmlands that stretch northwards from East Anglia, up through the Trent valley that bounds Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire, and up into the Yorkshire plains.

We hope to put forward a case for acceptance of our region's genre of dance and music under the title "Plough Morris" and we would hope to see the concept taken up with the kind of enthusiasm we have noted for Border or Molly over the last few decades. In this respect we were working towards organising open workshops to share what we know and do with others but the current crisis has put those on hold. However, Chris Rose has now published his account of his findings in *Dancing in their Uncouth Fashion: A look at the survival of the Morris dance in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire*. This book expands on the work already in publication by Paul Davenport and it is an interesting read around Chris' historical research, illustrated by charming original quotes, alongside records of how Rattlejag Morris have taken the material and developed it.

Rattlejag have all the information on their dances, music (in video and sound) and our historical research on our website – every dance we do has roots in our research and region. If you want to see how different our style is and why, please visit www.rattlejagmorris.org.uk. Or when we get back dancing come and see us (check our online diary – at least when we get active again!) or visit us at one of our practices in Retford, Notts, which we normally hold between September and April. We would really love to have other people take an interest in these "eastern shires" traditions and keep them alive for the future – especially and hopefully a new generation.

Moira Ruff and Chris Rose

Notes:

Davenport, Paul D (2015) *Under the Rose: Yorkshire's Traditional Seasonal Dances*. Hallamshire Traditions. www.hallamtrads.co.uk.

Rose, Chris (2019) *Dancing in Uncouth Fashion: A look at the survival of the Morris dance in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire*. Available from ivyfarmpress@gmail.com. £5 + £1.50 p&p.

Rattlejag Morris: www.rattlejagmorris.org.uk (enquiries@rattlejagmorris.org.uk)

And finally . . .

Something to look out for!

On July 21st we at Screen Archive South East, in collaboration with our partners at the West Sussex Record Office, will make available a variety of archives, which we think will be of great interest! Through our portal, called West Sussex Unwrapped, we will present a smashing film that features an epic festival of Morris Dancing through the sleepy streets of Horsham in 1989, while the West Sussex Record Office blog will feature records, photos and historical information about Morris Dancing in West Sussex.

This online presentation, which is free of charge, shows teams from all over the country arriving at the market town and dancing their way through the streets and squares, which we're sure you'll find to be both a nostalgic and enjoyable experience.

To access this film please follow the link:
https://screenarchive.brighton.ac.uk/search/4063/

Photo Credit: ['Morris Dancing' 1989, Reginald C. Charman from the collection of Screen Archive South East at the University of Brighton]

Both the film and the blog go 'live' next Tuesday, 21st July, and will be available throughout the summer. On that day we will also share the film with you on Facebook for sharing with your friends and fellow enthusiasts. We do hope you'll enjoy this affectionate archival tribute to both rural dance and English folklore.

With very best wishes from all at Screen Archive South East and the West Sussex Record Office

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Dancing On! needs you!

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

Many thanks as always to all contributors to this magazine, and to all of the OM team for being efficient, excellent and a general delight to work with! The next edition of Dancing On! will depend on the frequency of submissions, so please send us what you've been up to! Contributions should be emailed to dancingon@open-morris.org

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

www.open-morris.org