

# Raggle Taggle

Australian Morris



February 2011

## CONTENTS

Squire's report	2
Bagman's report	3
National Folk Festival	4
Western Australian Morris	6
Whyalla Morris Ale	11
Reviews & opinions	12
Noticeboard	15
Side reports	16
Comic	20
Singing sessions	22
Sticking for fun and health	23
Massed morris notes	24



# SQUIRE'S REPORT

Greetings fellows,

Well, I'm not going to joke, the last three months have been flipping exhausting. I am frankly disappointed in the Australian Morris Community's inability to roll over and do as it's told; your Squires once sent me twenty three emails in one day! Rest assured that I am reading and gossiping as widely as I can and am trying to find the most comfortable middle road for us all.

Your Squires are working hard discussing and making decisions about the AMR organisation of the NFF morris commitment "going forwards". My hope is that these conversations are reaching the depth and breadth of the Morris community. There is a summary of the discussions and decisions to date on page four of this newsletter.

Congratulations to all who attended and danced at Woodford, the Black Joak campsite at least offered its own challenges to keeping kit neatish, being awash with water, leeches, maggots, mud and banjos with everything from leather shoes to "water resistant" tents and shelving developing a layer of mould. (Henry tells me his shoes actually sprouted mushrooms. Not sure if that was Woodford's fault though...) Still, the QLD Morrisers forged on with another spectacular rushcart processional (pleasingly lighter than the last one I hauled) and SA represented with giants and the wonderful Spirit of Albion show.

I'm looking forward to the glimpses of the 2011 NFF that I can see between my enormous to do lists. We have had an overwhelmingly positive response from Dave O'Neill on our joint application and with his encouragement Mr. Ian Bagman and I are working on coordinating our Fools and Beasts Parade with the Children's Festival and other street performers... fingers crossed! St George's day also falls during this chilly NFF, and we are hunting down a St George and a Dragon.

An enormous thank you to all of the contributors of this newsletter. It was a mammoth effort and I deeply appreciate the goodwill and creativity that went into it. I've learnt things I never knew (Perth Morris Men) and things I wish I now didn't know (Sydney Morris Men... unfortunately unpublishable).

See you all soon,

*Stephanie  
Squire, AMR*

EDITORS · Stephanie Swanson, Squire in Chief · Natalie Rolfe, Proofing in the Pudding · Vivien Lowe, Happy Birthday! · COVER IMAGE · Emma Jones, Snap Snap · SIDE REPORTS · Mike James, Adelaide Morris Men · Emma Grey, Albion Fair · Carissa Lee, Black Joak · Justin Presser, Brandragon · Nigel Edwards, Britannia Morris Men · Adrienne Piggott, Hot For Joe · Rachel Massey, Hot For Joe · Steven Mansfield, Perth Morris Men · Lindsay Hamilton, Red Raven · Diana Davies, Jolley Hatters · WRITERS · Bill Parker, Doctor of Morris · Bill Singleton, Whyalla Morris · Carissa Lee, Comic Kitten · Christian Reynolds, Bygone Error · Dave Purdue, Boozing Morris Man · Henry Sisley, Sisley Socialist Singing Sessions · Ian Redpath, Bagging · John Watson, Not Elementary · Joyce Edmonds, Fair Maiden · Ken Smith, Immature Drunkard · Pete Kneeshaw, via Sydney Morris Men · Rick Curtis, Not the Funny One · Sean Jennings, Michael Flatley · Steve Dancer, NZ correspondent · Tania Siegemund, Dancing dots · Terry Sweet, Not on Tune · Veroniraptor Wagner, Cosmic Kitten · LAYOUT · Danika Hadgraft, No Amusing Nickname

# BAGMAN'S REPORT

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The Bag is fairly full. We should work out how to spend some of it.

I have investigated fixed deposit accounts with our existing bank, but the return is poor for amounts under \$5000 and we can't lock up that much.

Which Bank also refused to reduce the monthly fees, despite their "The new fee is free" campaign. There's lies and there's advertising, but mostly they're the same. I am likely to propose a new provider and new arrangements at the next AGM. At this stage ME Bank is my frontrunner, but I don't wish to proceed without member consultation.

I recently visited the offices of the National Folk Festival to work out the details of our NFF events and discuss the Fools and Beasts Parade with the Festival's artistic director, Dave O'Neill. Displays and workshops are as scheduled in our application.

The Festival would be delighted with a Morris parade that engages with other elements of the Festival. We discussed working with the Children's Festival to make animal masks and tails, approaching the theatre group that does the big bogongs and other creatures, the hopping kangaroos, Big Rory and Ochie, and people from the Fringe Festival. We are looking at a parade on Saturday at 5pm, so that it will still be light and hopefully not too cold. Dave noted the potential for some great images from the parade, so as I get more details I will work with him on some media releases.

The plan was to have a parade led by some big animals and musicians, followed by a Morris side with fool or beast, followed by some kids as monsters, followed by another Morris side, followed by some kids as animals or Fringe people, followed by another Morris side, and so on. I was hoping Black Joak could bring their Horned Dance, Brandragon parade their dragon, the Raggies will teach lots of the kids a procession called Pandemonium (very noisy with lots of bashing pot lids and sticks). Ken Smith used to have a couple of hobby horses, as did Colin Towns and Paul Carr... Any other beast costumes would be VERY welcome. Have fun! Be creative!

Dave also noted that our detailed joint application saved him a lot of time, and would welcome similar approaches from other dance genres.

Other than that it's been a relatively quiet Christmas and Woodford for me with the birth of my son Taran in November. He's looking forward to his first National, and I just have to throw in a thank you to Woodford staff for being so accommodating of a family with small child in the rain and mud.

Cheers

Ian

*Ian Redpath*

*Bagfellow*

*The Ragged Band | Dark Side Morris | Australian Morris Ring*

## DID YOU KNOW...?

Wild morrisers and interested parties can purchase individual membership of the Ring. Members of current financial sides need not apply.

# THE NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL

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## ASK NOT WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR THE AMR

*Stephanie Swanson*

In 2010 the AMR, in consultation with the Squires, agreed with the NFF to submit group applications for the next few years. 2011 is the first time that the AMR has been the sole point of contact for the NFF. To make sure we represent the views of the Morris community accurately, a number of discussions and decision topics are being agreed upon between the Squires and the AMR.

The first concerned display ("performance") and street dance ("busking") sides and their workshops. We considered:

- how should the AMR choose the display and street dance sides?
- featured states
- workshops
- the NFF's guidelines:  
<http://www.folkfestival.asn.au/apply/performers/dancers-information/>

Eleven sides participated in this discussion. We decided:

### How the AMR will choose display and street dance sides

1. Sides interested in performing at the next NFF (e.g., 2012) will inform the AMR within six weeks of the current NFF (e.g. tell the AMR you would like to be a display or street dance side for 2012 within six weeks of the end of the 2011 NFF)
2. Sides from the featured state have first preference for display or street dance tickets
3. The AMR will choose the remaining sides to maintain a diversity of traditions and a diversity of attending sides (i.e., a NW side would not get tickets every year if there was a Cotswold or Border side who hadn't been in a couple of years)
4. No side will get display tickets two years running unless there are no other applicants
5. The AMR will confirm their decisions with the Squires of member AMR sides.

### Workshops

1. Will follow the above process, but in general a display side will also provide a workshop in their tradition
2. Out of the ordinary workshops (rapper, step clog, jigging etc) can be applied for by the individual hosting the workshop using the above process.

### Spectaculars and massed Morris events

Once the display and street dance sides are chosen the AMR will discuss spectaculars and massed Morris event ideas with the Squires.

### Workload

Those on an AMR ticket will provide six hours of performance for the NFF. This includes any AMR dance commitment (stage performance, workshop being run by the side, street dance spots, spectaculars, massed Morris) spread as evenly as possible over the festival.

### What's on next

The Squires and the AMR will be discussing sharing out the 100 tickets we have been allocated and the delicious issue of what to do with the money.

The payment decisions can probably be applied for the 2011 NFF, but the ticket decisions will have to apply to the 2012 NFF. ☺

# THE NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL 2011 PROGRAM

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## CELEBRATING VICTORIA

*PLEASE NOTE: This works out to SIX HOURS per group, as agreed.*

### Display sides performances and workshops

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#### **Brandragon**

Performance: Friday 10am Piazza 30 minutes

Workshop: Friday 1pm Fitzroy 60 minutes

Street: Monday location and time of your choosing 30 minutes

#### **Britannia Morris Men**

Street: Friday location and time of your choosing 30 minutes

Performance: Sunday 10am Piazza 30 minutes

Workshop: Sunday 1pm Fitzroy 60 minutes

#### **Ragged Band**

Performance: Saturday 10am Piazza 30 minutes

Workshop: Saturday 1pm Fitzroy 60 minutes

Street: Sunday location and time of your choosing 30 minutes

### Street sides

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#### **Adelaide Morris Men**

Street: Friday location and time of your choosing 30 minutes

Street: Sunday location and time of your choosing, two sets 30 minutes

Street: Monday location and time of your choosing 30 minutes

#### **Black Joak**

Street: Friday location and time of your choosing 30 minutes

Street: Sunday location and time of your choosing, two sets 30 minutes

Street: Monday location and time of your choosing 30 minutes

#### **Albion Fair**

Street: Friday location and time of your choosing 30 minutes

Street: Sunday location and time of your choosing, two sets 30 minutes

Street: Monday location and time of your choosing 30 minutes

### Other events

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#### **Morris Spectacular**

*All on an AMR ticket*

Saturday 5pm of your choosing 60 minutes

Fools and Beasts Parade: bring your own costumes, hobby horses, dragons etc!

#### **Thirdest Ever Jig Challenge**

*For those who wish to partake*

Sunday 1pm Piazza 90 minutes

#### **2011 AMR AGM**

*For those crazy enough to partake*

Sunday 6pm Singing Room (above the Session Bar, I bet you know where that is) 90–120 minutes

#### **Massed Morris: What's in a Tune?**

*All on an AMR ticket*

Friday 3pm Piazza 60 minutes

The AMR would like to do something a lit-

tle bit different with the Massed Morris this year, and try out something called "What's in a Tune?" Musos will play a particular English tune and multiple sides will dance different dances simultaneously to it. We have discussed, but never tried this on any scale, and we think it would be a great way of demonstrating the different Morris traditions. At this stage the suggested tunes are:

Lily Bolero

British Grenadiers

Not for Joe

Portsmouth

Jenny Lind

#### **Massed Morris**

*All on an AMR ticket*

Saturday 3pm Oasis 60 minutes

Monday 3pm Oasis 60 minutes ☺

# WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MORRIS

## THE PERTH MORRIS MEN STORY

*Dr Bill Parker*

Beginning in 1973, with our first public foot up on a Saturday in March 1974 in the Hay Street Mall in Perth and then on the same afternoon at the Caversham Wine Festival, Perth Morris Men (PMM) have entertained thousands and disappointed none in an unbroken Morris rule crossing two centuries to the present day.

The early days were in 'pure revival' style – full of energy and fun and in essence a bunch of ex-pats and local yokels whose eccentric pranking and poncing about became synonymous with the multi-cultural revolution that was quietly permeating Australia at the time. PMM were a godsend to the organisers of everything from school fetes, mardis gras events, festivals and street processions through to the TV stations who in those days produced their own programmes and eagerly sought new angles...even the Morris!

We proudly took our place alongside the Lithuanian dancers, the Maoris and the Scottish Country Dancers on many an occasion. We even danced for the blind (in full gear), the severely mentally challenged (at Graylands) and for the inmates at both Fremantle Gaol and Bandyup women's prison where the long sticks caused considerable apprehension for the authorities before we eventually convinced them that sticks were an essential part of the act.

The side has survived and thrived in the intervening years and still does plenty of foot-ups although with some of the older guys are finding themselves fighting gravity a little more these days! One founding member, John Watson, recalls dancing with the Sydney Morris Men at Numeralla in January 1975. Our first big multi-side interaction was when we danced with several other Morris teams, incomplete teams and lone stragglers at the 1977 National Folk Festival in Adelaide. We applied for and got on the main festival concert at the Adelaide Festival Hall and in front of 2000 people 'winged'

a complete Bampton dance when musoes Ken Ferguson and Terry Sweet played the wrong music. At the first chorus we all broke out in a cold sweat but just kept going...and luckily it fitted. It was probably the one and only completely unrehearsed dance performance of any kind at this iconic establishment. Our rivals from the Sydney Morris Men didn't even spot the error!

By the end of the 1970s the side sported as many as twenty or more men and had a reputation that occasionally led them astray as well as into some hallowed halls ("astray" is used cautiously as one of our members became an axe murderer). The side was a featured act at the celebrations held at Government house for the 150th anniversary of the founding of WA. The guests had been tutored in the finer points of bush dance steps and divided in two halves;

they were either sampling the feast or dancing. A veritable cornucopia was enjoyed by all, especially ourselves.

Those too were the days of the Shell Folkloric shows and we had some fun. Under the direction of Guillermo Keys-Arenas, a man who had a passion for folkloric traditions (who sadly passed away in 2006), the Perth Morris Men were knocked into better "stage" shape. He also allowed us a lot of licence to

interact with the audiences and our Fool, Richard Curtis, made the most of it riding a kid's bike through the auditorium at the Perth Concert Hall and carefully "picking" a Maid of the Mill from the audience. As well as dancing at numerous notable events in Australia, a contingent of the PMM danced in Perth, Scotland in 1979 much to the delight of many, including the Provost.

The side is often asked why their baldrics are maroon and yellow. Simple. When the side formed in 1974, most of the men lived in Subiaco and found a ready supply of cheap ribbon because of the Subi footy team. Our Subi colours have been on show at many National Folk Festivals, and despite the distances, most of us have danced in other parts of Australia, and

"We assaulted officers with pig's bladders"

# WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MORRIS

always with a sense of irreverence built of course on a dedication to styles and tradition. Never mind that, Bampton and Adderbury and Field Town and the rest always have our "stamp". We have had connections with English roots, Bampton, The Travelling Morrice, Eynsham (including Andy Dixon, an émigré to Perth from that village), Kirtlington, Herga, and more.

These days the grey hair shows but that hasn't stopped us. We're still doing gags like "Hello folks! Morris dancing is always done by the most handsome and virile men of the village... today unfortunately they couldn't be with us so they sent their fathers instead". Then we recall the days when we all dyed our hair black, and used our horse to frighten mounted police, or "assaulted" police officers and guard soldiers with pig's bladders.

Once we were sticklers for the "maleness" of Morris, and still are by default, but over the years Angie Varey, Christine Hogan and Kay Jones have joined the side as musicians and been voted in as "honorary men".

To claim we are the leading lights would be a bit precious, but as Morris men have come and gone we have acquired a vibrant mix of dances and traditions ranging from Border to Bampton and we dance on. If only we could get the Adderbury parallel hey perfected... ☺



*A group of Morris dancers from Perth, Western Australia, who performed on the South Inch, Perth, on Saturday.*



## HOW PERTH MORRIS MEN FIRST RULED THE WAVES...

*John Watson, Perth Morris Men and Princess Royal Morris Men (founder)*

Whilst there may have been a 'folk revival' in Australia in the 1970s there can hardly have been a 'Morris revival' as this was pure import stuff – however 're-vival enthusiasm' was the style of the Perth Morris Men, Australia's first dancing side, which started in 1973–74.

Within a few years there were several Australian teams some of whom made it across to the 1978 National Folk Festival where we had great sessions with the Sydney Morris Men including some memorable singing in the pubs between stands. It was here that we may have picked up the first whispers of Sydney thinking of applying to join the UK Morris Ring...a bit of a 'coup' someone gleefully confided.

The following year, in June 1979, I attended and danced with a scratch team of other Morris odd-bods at a Ring meet at Hull in Yorkshire and at the Ale was approached and quietly asked if I knew anything about the Sydney Morris Men who were applying for membership of the Ring. For the record I was supportive and waxed lyrical about our friendly rivals. However, only a week or two earlier when catching up with other Perth Morris members who were in the UK at the time we realised that we

had enough members in and around the UK to form a side if only we could all get together in one place. After a few phone calls and further consultation with Dave and Angie Varey and then with Dave and Sophie Foster, we were able to target Saturday 7 July most symbolically at Perth Scotland...to 'meet on the South Minch at 10 am'. The day was just meant to be a chance to dance unannounced somewhere 'because we had to' (tradition? – little did we know – read on!).

Bells, sticks and baldrics were provided by Dave Thomas, an original PMM who had subsequently



Perth Morris Men's first gig, 1974

returned to the UK and joined the embryonic Banchory Morris Men in Aberdeenshire. As Dave already had a PMM baldric and the Banchory group couldn't make up its mind about colours, ending up using the same purple and gold used by PMM. Additional baldrics were manufactured 'on the run' by Sophie as a bunch of us drove up from the south. Dave Foster bought an incredible pair of US marine bell-bottom whites especially for the occasion. Clyde Morell flew in from Dublin having somehow conned a student flight from Aer Lingus, and Dave Thomas brought down Noel Pritchard, who had been a PMM while on sabbatical at UWA the year before, and a couple of reserves from Banchory to boot. As luck would have it Roger Fiskin (a former PMM fiddler) was at a

I had no sooner joined them [the Fair Maids of Perth] than I fell whilst ice skating and broke my right arm. Undaunted, I danced out with the Fair Maids for the first time at a folk festival in Albany at Easter 1982 with a cast on my arm. I still remember the buzz of dancing "Knutsford" in a hall in the evening. As we began the dance our clogs all hit the

floor at the exact same instant – the one and only time that ever happened.

...During the course of 1983 the Morris sides in Perth received an invitation from the Hong Kong Morris to go and help them celebrate their 10th anniversary. The trip to Hong Kong was in November when the weather was purported to

be kinder. The celebrations also included a small folk festival. We danced in many places around Hong Kong. It was a most enjoyable trip with great interaction with the Hong Kong Morris (amongst our souvenirs were the HK squire's underdaks).

*Joyce Edmonds, Fair Maids and Free Settlers Morris*

# WESTERN AUSTRALIAN MORRIS

On the subject of pig's bladders, whilst fooling I have zapped two Premiers of WA on the head - Richard Court at Tranby House and Ray O'Connor at Ascot Race Course. I also got a Governor

of Western Australia at the Nannup folk festival. A military man - the expression on his face translated roughly as 'We are not amused'.

*Rick Curtis, PMM*

[PMM's] original connections ie influences were set by John Haliday South Shropshire Morris Men and Kris Keen, ex-Oxford Ancient Men.

*John Watson, PMM and Princess Royal MM*

fiddle school at nearby Stirling and came across to join Angie Varey (accordion). The icing on the cake was provided by Phil Wilson who also brought his clogs and one-man mummers play outfit and kit.

Our meeting on the Minch was slightly surreal...was this really PMM dancing in the UK? We spent about half an hour refreshing memories and oiling up the joints (Roger brought his own). We soon knew the Morris magic would work. When rehearsing Bean Setting an unusual number of worms committed suicide by surfacing in the dubbing zone of the short sticks - the dance thereafter being referred to as 'Worm Squashing'.

It was during these preliminaries that the press arrived unannounced. As the Minch is a large open grassy parkland visible to occupants of cars driving one of the main roads into Perth we had been spotted by the local tourist promotion officer. She enquired as to what this was all about and at first we thought this may be an official warning to move on but she quickly saw the twin city and promotional potential and went on to suggest suitable dancing venues. After taking a few pictures she said that even though it was a Saturday she would contact the Provost (Lord Mayor) and hopefully see us later - we headed off into town with the promise of official blessing from the big man at the top...well, maybe...the proof was not yet in the pudding.

To cut a long story short, it was a fantastic day. The Provost duly turned up and watched the lunchtime stand, a Scotsman in a kilt wolf whistled at us from across the street and our

adopted base, The Twa Tams, had a perfect beer garden fronting a busy pedestrian street like a mini amphitheatre. When the pubs shut for the afternoon (this was Scotland, 1979) the Provost invited us to the council chambers and the Beagle in all his regalia gave us the grand tour before we drank deluxe whisky with the Provost and signed the visitor's book.

There are two postscripts to this tale. The next day Dave Foster discovered a large stone



Most of the current side (plus a couple of young fans), Subiaco in December 2010

plaque attached to a wall alongside the riverside pedestrian way. It referred to a 'band of 28 (?) Maurice dauncers who danced before King James 1st (?) of Scotland' in Perth, with date. Having photographed this plaque I subsequently lost the slide. However, I returned to Perth Scotland for a mountain conference in 2005. Coincidentally, this meeting was opened

by the current day Provost and at the reception I introduced myself and told him the tale. He invited me to his office after the conference and let me photograph the old visitor's book with our names in. Having searched in vain for the plaque I also discovered that massive floods had occurred when the River Tay breached its banks some years before. The plaque had either been washed away or possibly re-located to a safer point. Hopefully I'll track it down again or maybe find that missing slide one day.

So...there was a tradition of the Morris in Perth, Scotland, all along and maybe PMM can badge themselves not only as the first Australian team to dance in the UK but also as a true revival team after all...! 🐾

## PRINCESS ROYAL MORRIS MEN, ALBANY, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

*John Watson, PMM and Princess Royal MM*

Albany is located on the south coast of WA about 450 km to the south of Perth. It is very attractive with a rocky coastline interspersed with fine beaches and a backdrop of the inland mountains ranges to the north and forests to the west. In 1826 it was the first settlement in WA, three years before the Swan River Colony (Perth). It was originally referred to as King George Sound and provided a safe natural anchorage in the Princess Royal Harbour. It had a strong association with whaling and the nearby Frenchman Bay Whaling Station finally closed in 1978 and is now a whaling museum.

The Princess Royal Morris Men formed in 1980 following a visit by the Perth Morris Men. The name chosen was 'bleedin' obvious' and we chose royal blue and tan for our colours signifying the sea and the timber country. For a few years (until it got wrecked by mice) we had a 'Hobby Whale' complete with water spout hand operated by an old style 'squeezey' washing up liquid container. This was very popular with the crowds.

Having lived and danced in Perth since 1974 I picked the eyes out of the more popular Cotswold and Border dances typically used for massed Morris, but I also introduced our own focus with a number of East Anglian Molly Dances and my native Yorkshire Long Sword. We also learnt Abingdon Princess Royal as our theme dance for obvious reasons. The Molly

was very easy to do and the Long Sword really fitted well into the maritime theme. For long sword we adopted the Flamborough costume that I had seen at Rudston Fair on a trip home to Yorkshire. I liaised with Richard Traves at Flamborough and also with Cyril Papworth near Cambridge regarding the Molly.

The side went well for about five years and we danced not only locally but around the south west of WA and joined up with the Perth Morris Men and Fair Maids of Perth at various festivals including the 1984 National in Perth where we disgraced ourselves with an almost complete strip tease to Monks March at the Ale.

Sadly the side slithered into active demise in the early 90s. It is not easy in a small country town, although we peaked at about 10 dancers at one stage. Unfortunately, Bob, our main muso relocated to Perth where he still remains as a lead muso for Perth Morris. Three of us and a muso still remain in Albany and occasionally we help out with some unusual requests including choreographing Morris dance scenes for a local repertory group and most recently working out and then coaching a stick dance for primary school kids in their annual musical show. We were acknowledged in the programme as 'Morris dance consultants' (beat that!) Other than that we retain our colours, still have sticks and swords and occasionally dance with Perth Morris Men at festivals and other gigs if our paths cross. 🐳

"For a few years we had a Hobby Whale complete with water spout"

PMM has danced at a more Westerly Australian location than any other side in the world (Rottnest Island). Other interesting facts are that there are now more deceased PMM than there are currently dancing, and that our present average age is 64.

I recall an incident at a fete

in the mid 80s, in which the PMM were dancing Jockey to the Fair attended by our hobby-horse Maurice (ridden by Fritz Fitton). Maurice galloped towards 3 mounted police, who were to put on a riding display. The sight of a brightly coloured, 2-legged horse-like creature, with the barbarian

Fritz astride it caused them to rear and scatter in panic, with their police riders hanging on for dear life. The crowd thought this was great; however, Maurice (and Fritz) had to run for it, as the police were definitely not amused.

*Terry Sweet, PMM*

# WHYALLA MORRIS 21ST BIRTHDAY ALE

*Bill Singleton*

In August 1989, the Whyalla Morris had their first paid booking at the Whyalla Show and incorporated this into an ale with Adelaide Morrismen and Glorishears. This was followed by a dozen or so ales covering much of the northern part of the state.

To celebrate the 21st anniversary, the Whyalla Morris organised an Ale in the wonderful Clare Valley. This must have struck a chord as we had around 50 attendees from Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales and South Australia.

Friday night was a meet and greet in the Sevenhill Hotel, a 10 metre hike from the accommodation with a ceremonial greeting of the bus

from Adelaide and meals appearing till late.

Saturday was a tour of the Clare Valley by school bus, which some would say was appropriate, starting at Knappsteins Brewery, dancing in Clare, then to Neagles Rock (10 years since we danced for their opening) and winding up at Taylors before the Ale at Sevenhill.

Sunday started with a foot-up on the hill top at Molly's Chase before breakfast. The rest of the day comprised a tour to Sevenhill monastic winery, Martindale Hall and the wonderful Mintaro for the dance till you drop session.

Whyalla Morris organising committee understand that everyone had a great weekend and want to thank all those who came along and made it a memorable ale. 🍷



The company at Martindale Hall

Knappsteins Brewery



Early morning on the hill top at Molly's Chase

A test of strength



# REVIEWS & OPINIONS

## HEAD TO HEAD – MORRIS: A LIFE WITH BELLS ON

Review by Ken Smith the tragic bit.

I was really looking forward to seeing this film. I was one of its biggest fans. I sent the trailer to all the dancers I knew via the interweb and was in contact with a distributor with offers of help to get a cinematic release in Oz.

So I was a huge fan, that is until I actually saw this steaming pile of dog hudda.

The film had a promising start; a lone dancer practising in a field, an expert listing the various forms of Morris; Border, North West, Cotswold etc; with short snippets of each as an example. Unfortunately this was the only Morris dancing we saw in the movie.

A movie about Morris with no actual Morris dancing in it!! The least (the very least) the filmmakers could have done was to hire some real Morris dancers to help write the script!

The film was heavy on dialogue but short on laughs and the introduction seemed to be an attempt to reinforce the widely held view that Morris is just a naff pastime for nerdy types with no social skills. There was a mildly amusing bit about cider and scrumpy but these moments were all too rare.

The Milsham Morris, led by Derecq Twist were an unusual side apparently (I must admit that a side with no musos that dances to a CD player IS unusual) according to the Morris Circle they danced a form called Extreme Morris (!). Now call me a domeless wonderboy if you will but to me, Extreme Morris would involve sewing bells into your flesh and dancing with (oh, I don't know) scaffolding poles or some such; but no, apparently Extreme Morris is piss-weak snorter waving followed by a lame Thumbs-up sign. For this breach of Morris rules the side were rusticated from the Circle and Mr Twist had his snotters and sticks confiscated; this, I assume, was the funny bit.

The side, in defiance of the Circle, decided to dance "New Morris" which was just more piss-weak snorter waving which somehow resulted in the death of one of the side; this, I assume, was

the tragic bit. Having murdered his best mate and destroyed his side (no great loss), Derecq retreats to Orange County (giving the filmmakers the opportunity to indulge in some good old fashioned cliché ridden poofter-bashing). Apparently the Californian Traditional English Folk Dancing Society had never seen or heard of Morris dancing (but hey, we all know that Americans are totally ignorant, don't we?) and the Orange County Morris were giving them a jolly good wake up call.

The next "joke" involved carbon fibre staves (hardly pants-wetting stuff) which looked fab but probably wouldn't sound too good when clashed - as Clint Eastwood once said: "There's nothing like a good piece of hickory."

Derecq collaborates with the OCM and they open a festival with a spectacular dance - accompanied by a DJ (!) - which bears no resemblance to Morris at all. This, I assume, was the triumphant bit.

We then get some lame jokes about line-dancing (easy target) and Derecq heads back home to be welcomed back into the Morris fold. The Morris Circle has forgiven him (for what I never really got, maybe I'm a bit slow) and his side get to open a festival (using a CD player) but wait, they only have five dancers (bit of an oversight, one would think, imagine turning up at the National with five dancers and no musos: you'd be laughed off the Piazza!) so Derecq's other best mate (the one he didn't murder with piss-weak snorter waving) joins them. This, I assume, was the touching bit.

I'm no writer but I reckon I could bang out a better story (with a little help from some drunken Morris dancers) in a lazy few hours. I know a few people who loved this film so perhaps I'm just a cynical old bastard with no sense of humour.

Apparently the film has created renewed interest in Morris amongst the young so I guess it wasn't a complete waste of time.

"This, I assume, was the funny bit"

## HEAD TO HEAD – MORRIS: A LIFE WITH BELLS ON

Review by Christian Reynolds

This movie has been a long time coming to Antipodean screens and I am sure every side (and dancer) has a story of how (and when) they saw it, along with very strong opinion of whether the film was worth the price of admission (let alone any good). So instead of me writing a review about this spoof documentary about Morris dancing, let me ask the question "Has this movie been good for Morris dancing?"

I believe it has. I think that *Morris: A Life with Bells On* has lessened the negative stereotypes and, dare I say it, given a younger face to Morris.

Let me firstly say that I have seen the film three times, once as part of the mass Morris (and non-Morris) screening in Adelaide, once as a fundraiser for the SA Ballet company (don't ask) and finally at the Clare Ale. At all the screenings I could see many people enjoy the film and there were not too many cringers in the audiences. Comfortingly at the SA Ballet screening there were more laughs and fewer confused looks than I had

anticipated, though the confusion (when it did come) came from jokes about the English rather than jokes about Morris. At the end of both mass screenings there were enquiries from the general public about where to join a side or see performances. Twice since the DVD of *Morris: A Life with Bells On* came out have I had friends (who would never go to a real life Ale or foot up) tell me about a funny movie that I should watch called "Morris..."

"Every side has a story of how they saw it"

To me this public exposure is the primary benefit of the movie. To be sure it is not a "true" expression of what Morris is like – yes, there are no "traditional" dances – and yes, there are no musicians. But *Morris: A Life with Bells On* gives the impression of a healthy, vibrant, large and "traditional" dance scene that looks fun to be

involved with, and is this not what we want the Morris to be? ☺

*\*I am however sure either at Canberra or at Sidmouth in the near future there will be some cocky bugger who will attempt a Threeply Hammer Damson.*

Recollection by Pete Kneeshaw

My first National Folk Festival was in 1981 in Brisbane. The Sydney sides had arranged for a 40-seater bus to cart us up for the Easter long weekend. We piled in and headed north into the peak holiday traffic. The driver had decided to use the Pacific Highway and it proved a long, slow trip.

There were various forms of sustenance on board, including a hash cake baked by Leonie Hicks, I was concentrating on the beer so I didn't partake in this particular food, but I was informed by those in the know that the mixing of the hash into the cake hadn't been as thorough as it might have been, resulting in those eating the cake playing a form of Russian Roulette. Since the journey was over 20 hours long, all the cake was consumed.

We finally arrived at Brisbane University ready for the first Morris dance: the Sydney

men were dancing Border as Old Black Joe, for which we wore black pants, black hats, black faces, and tatters...we roasted!

A few dances in we were approached by security: "Do you lot look after your dead?"

"Why? What's happened?"

"There's a couple of your blokes blocking the main entryway to the university hall and we can't wake them up."

So we followed the security guards to find two of our blokes (names withheld) crashed out behind two glass doors, preventing them being opened. We picked them up and dragged them off to somewhere shady and discussed what had happened to them because they were only on their first beer. Ah...they were the ones who got the bulk of the hash in the cake and one beer tipped them over the edge. They finally came to after several hours and re-joined the festival with big smiles on their faces. ☺

## BACK IN THE DAY

# PUBS WE HAVE KNOWN

## The Cricket Club Hotel

435 Clarendon Street, South Melbourne, Victoria

*Review by David Purdue*

I have been raving about this pub to Melbourne Morris folk for nearly a year now, so when Steph asked me to write a pub review, I thought it was the perfect opportunity to inflict my opinion on to the rest of the Morris community.

I found this pub late on a summer evening as I was on my way home from a meeting in South Melbourne. Driving down Clarendon Street I was surprised to see the lights on, so thought I would drop in for a quick one and check the place out.

I was impressed from the moment I walked in to the pub. The interior is bright and airy without being garish, the furnishings are in general old fashioned but very comfortable and well maintained (although there is a new lounge at the comfy chair end of the bar). Everything in the bar is spick and span, and gives the impression of a well-run establishment.

Well my eyes drifted, as they inevitably must, to the labels on the beer taps. At this stage the pub went even higher in my esteem - not a CUB product in sight, and some of my favourite beers from Victorian micro-breweries there on tap. But more on that later.

I was then greeted by Henry, the manager who happened to be working the bar that night, and was made most welcome. It was not long before we fell into deep conversation on the choice of beer served.

I think it is the people who make this such a fine establishment. Richard and Fleur moved from Perth with an idea of the sort of pub they wanted to run (and, given the amount of time I see them in the bar, that is also the sort of pub they want to frequent), and they purchased the

Cricket Club in November 2009. In January 2010 they hired Henry to manage the pub. I am not a regular (well, OK, semi-regular), but by my third visit I was on first name terms with all the above, and all the staff are attentive and provide great service.

Henry has over 20 years' experience in hospitality, and seems to have taken this job to allow expression to his inner beer nut. There is certainly an impressive range available, and Henry rotates the selection in response to changing season, changing taste or the commercial reality of what does and does not sell. At the time of

“Not  
a CUB  
product  
in sight”

writing they have on tap: Little Creatures Bright, Coopers Pale, Mountain Goat Hightail, Coldstream Naked and Grand Ridge Pilsner, as well as some imported - Trumer Pils (Austria), Budvar (Czech) - and Kelly Brothers cider. If none of those take your fancy there is also an impressive range of bottled beers and ciders, including Carlton Draught if you absolutely insist. I have the impression that there is also a very good wine cellar, but so far I have not got past the beers. Best of all, all these beers and ciders are very reasonably priced - not the extortionist prices charged at some other South Melbourne establishments.

In all this, I have not mentioned the food. The Cricket Club has a fine kitchen, run by their head chef, known to everyone as “Mama.” There is a selection of both pub fare and more formal meals from the restaurant - these are all available at the bar. The best value is the daily specials - a different dish each day of the week. These include the classic parma, pasta, burger or steak, and are priced at \$14 - \$17, including a glass of wine or pot of beer.

All-in-all, following the regrettable decline of Bill Bell's, this has become my favourite Melbourne pub! 🍺

# NOTICEBOARD

## BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES

**Births:** Taran Redpath, born to Karina and Ian Redpath of Belswagger, Ragged Band and South-East North West (Queensland), November 2010.

**Deaths:** Elwin Jamison of Tussock Jumpers (NZ), November 2010.

**Syd "Tip" Perry** of Plenty Morris (Victoria), November 2010.

**Marriages:** Gail Miller of Brandragon (Victoria) married her partner Tom Elliott, January 2011.

## NOTICE OF THE 2011 AGM

Notice is hereby given of the 2011 AGM of the Australian Morris Ring to be held on Sunday, 24 April at 6pm in the singing room above the session bar of the National Folk Festival in Canberra. We have the room for two hours. The meeting will be slightly shorter. Light refreshments will be supplied. Please bring a tankard or cup.

In order to be considered, all motions to change the constitution must be posted to all members of the AMR via the Oz\_Morris Yahoo! Group AND the Australian Morris Ring Facebook page before 24 March.

All other business can be submitted to the Squire at [euphonious.revelry@gmail.com](mailto:euphonious.revelry@gmail.com) by 10 April.

## RING JIG CHALLENGE

The 2011 Ring Jig Challenge is looking for contenders to compete for the triumph, the glory and the slightly wonky silver Jig Trophy.

Step cloggers are heartily invited to try and stomp the stage to bits in between the flowery Cotswold stuff.

Register your interest now, limited places exist!

Email the Squire at [euphonious.revelry@gmail.com](mailto:euphonious.revelry@gmail.com) and list:

Single or double jig

Name of dancer(s)

Name of Jig

Tradition

## A SMALL DITTY CELEBRATING WOODFORD 2010-11

*To the tune of "In the Quartermaster's Store (My Eyes are Dim I Cannot See)"*

*Lyrics by Christian Reynolds*

There was mud, mud, lots of blooming mud.  
At Woodford, at Woodford.

There was mud, mud, lots of blooming mud.  
At Woodford, at Woodford.

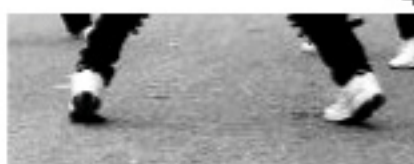
My eyes are dim, I cannot see. There is too  
much rain and mud here for me.

There is too much rain and mud here for me!

## WHOSE LIMB IS THAT?



4



# SIDE REPORTS

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### Albion Fair

*Emma Gray*

Since the last communication the Squire is proud to report that the Sydney side acquitted itself admirably at the 25th Woodford Folk Festival 2010–2011. With the fantastic assistance of regular musos Russell and John, as well as a scratch side of talented Morris musicians, Albion danced up a storm in the streets of Woodfordia, as well as participating in the rushcart and Spirit of Albion parades. It was great to catch up with / meet lots of other Morrisers from across

our fine nation and the Fairies look forward to more festivals in 2011.

Thanks to the SENW workshop at Woodford, Albion is working on adding a new dance to their repertoire: Amadeus. We tried it out last practice from memory, so the interpretation might have been loose, but hey, isn't folk dance a living tradition???

Looking forward to seeing everyone in Canberra...

### Black Joak

*Carissa Lee*

#### Side events

- New members Nadia (amazing jiver already), Daniel (pro fiddle/dancer), Jayden (voted #1 Handsome Morris Lad)
- Ex-member happy to leave an outfit of immature drunkards
- Last AGM saw in Squire, Carissa; Bag, Pete Kneeshaw and Foreman, Cimi (nee Sunday)

#### Woodford

- Everyone stripping off in the rain to set up a giant tarp and tents
- Wake-up call at dawn every day courtesy of our reliable camp alarm clock (Veronica + ukelele)
- Dancing inside and out of the Guinness tent regardless of Irish sessions

#### Bulli

- Beaching it every day before the dancing
- Watching the Morris movie amidst a sea of groans and angry jingling
- Enjoying each other's company far too much which resulted in more camp-lounging than concert-seeing

#### Dancing

- Relearning and adding to our self-written dances Majors Undies, Hadrian's Wall, and Black Reel
- Spooking/delighting audiences at the pagan Witches' Ball with our Abbots Bromley stag dance, until Duncan's phone rang
- Notching up injuries: Thomas's wrist, Duncan's back, Henry's knee, Pete's ankle... which proves that our men are actually all lovely little delicate flowers.

## VICTORIA

### Red Raven

*Lindsay Hamilton*

Red Raven were busy up to the end of 2010 and finished off with a Day of Dancing in Williamstown, followed by a Christmas party at Dave and Jo's in Albert Park. Much fun and mince pies were had by all.

Rob Pilgrim, who dances with Red Raven as well as many other sides, spent Christmas in hospital having surgery. We hope to see him

around the dance halls again soon.

Our first outing was to Newstead Folk Festival on January 22nd. It's only a small festival but we always enjoy dancing in the main street, strategically positioned between a coffee shop and the pub!

We have been working on learning some border dances but continue to dance a bit of several, previously listed traditions.

## Brandragon North-West Clog Morris

*Justin Presser*

Since last report Brandragon has danced at the Beechworth Celtic Festival, the Melbourne Folk Dance Festival and our annual dance out at Lavandula.

Beechworth Celtic Festival were not sure what they were getting when they invited the Morris to their festivities but they turned out to be pleasantly surprised. The colour and movement that our busking brought to the streets were well appreciated over the two days and the opportunity to dance in front of the numerous pipe bands were not passed up. The whole commitment, I think, would not have been possible without the presence of Red Raven since the festival did work us hard. Many of the organising committee asked if we were coming back and we are hoping can get more sides up there despite it being very busy time of the year.

Brandragon performed Gisburn and Derby Garland in the Melbourne Town Hall for the Melbourne Folk Dance Festival. It was interesting to see other folk dance traditions that are active here in Melbourne and to introduce them to a bit of North West Morris. Videos of the performances will be appearing on YouTube when I can find the SD card. Keep an eye out for posts on the Facebook group:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=172930089972> or the blog <http://brandragon.morris.org.au/>

*Nigel Edwards*

2011 starts with some optimism.

We wound up 2010 with one of our best Mumming tours ever - actually a combo of Mumming and carol singing. We marched around Hawthorn, taking in Barkers (a very nice but very expensive pub), some public parks, a milk bar, a few people's front lawns and ending up at the excellent Gibsons wine bar and Elgin Inn for dinner. Much fun had by all (performers and punters alike), so much kudos to Jacka for organising it.

BMM continues to develop its unique tradition of Kellybrook Stout Matron which we will

The Dragons end of year picnic was the usual relaxed affair, aided by excellent food and convivial company, and rounded the year out quite well.

Some dragons also appeared at Woodford to help drag the Rushcart through the festival's mud and to dance with SENW in the Giants Parade. Our thanks go to Meg, Kim, Bron and all the others who were coordinating the Rushcart and the parade for bringing about such successful events. We also must thank the Morris folk for being welcoming as always and providing us places to sleep.

Lavandula Harvest Festival. The day was sunny and mild, a vast improvement of other years, and a merry time was had by all. It was our pleasure to dance with members of Red Raven again and their presence made the whole gig half as knackered as usual.

Further news: Claire Marks and Benno have a second baby on the way and Gail Miller married her partner Tom on Australia Day and there was much rejoicing.

In travel news: the Dragons have been a little less intrepid with only Julie heading overseas to ski in Japan.

In upcoming news: Brandragon turns 10 this year and we will be doing various events throughout the year to celebrate. Keep your ear out for further announcements.

Britannia Morris Men

take into the new year. We already have paying gigs of a substantial nature coming in and with new/returning dancers lining up this year we may well see 2012.

The year starts with a dinner on 29 January to set the tone rather than an ale to wrap up. Then we have gigs in Echuca, Swan Hill, Kellybrook, St Kilda and the city.

We are reviewing our marketing strategies and new ideas will set the standard again and maybe result in more people enjoying what is the finest activity known to man.

So, best dancing trousers on and let us dance on your problem.



Adelaide Morris Men dancing with the Foresters at Wellow Maypole day.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### Perth Morris Men

*Report by Steven Mansfield*

The Perth Morris Men finished the year with a flourish. There was a small amount of dancing (in the supper break) at a Hills Folk Club gathering to celebrate the life and times of former Perth Morris man Ken Ferguson who passed away in late 2009. Then in an eight-day stretch

we danced at three foot ups: the Jacaranda Festival at Applecross, the Subiaco Street Party midweek, and the St Paul's Christmas Fair. The Jacaranda Festival marked the first public performance with the Perth Morris Men of female musician Kay Jones.

## TASMANIA

### Jolley Hatters

*Diana Davies*

We Hatters put on a mighty fine display at the Cygnet Folk festival with our friends from Longford Morris and Mens Britannia. The Stick Cutting was pretty short on sticks, but we came away with the ashes, now proudly displayed at our very regular enthusiastic practices.

Britannia joined us at our magnificent Bo-

tanical Gardens Spring Festival along with Longford and we were all lifted by the presence of our fabulous part time harpist. We fielded a new Green Man in the Hobart Christmas Pageant, all ready to roll next May Day on the mountain, and danced out at all manner of interesting gigs in small towns and historic homesteads, even taught some Morris at a daycare.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### Adelaide Morris Men

*Mike James*

Not much to report really. The latter half of 2010 saw us dancing at the Fleurieu Folk Festival, the Port Adelaide Christmas Pageant, the Norwood Christmas Pageant, and Bernard's

place for the annual Christmas Party. A pretty quiet year by normal standards. We started 2011 with a footup at BrewBoys Brewery in Adelaide. Our numbers haven't really changed in that time, and neither has the repertoire.

*Rachel Massey and Adrienne Piggott*

Despite the near constant rain conspiring to prevent us dancing as much as we'd have liked, Hot For Joe was thrilled with our side's efforts at the first Woodford Folk Festival. Hot For Joe has performed at in well over a decade. Wearing our modified "Woodford" kit – short leggings originally modified for Woodford so many years ago to enable us soft South Australians to cope with the heat and humidity (though useful this time around in preventing our kit from becoming completely mud splattered) – we managed to get the side out for one Rushcart Procession, one Parade of the Giants, and the Spirit of Albion New Year's Eve Extravaganza.

We fielded a full side blacked up on the night of the second scheduled Rushcart Procession, including Cherie Wilkinson, who blacked up for the first time with us that night. By this stage (having been forced to abandon the first Rushcart and the first Giant's Parade due to rain) we were all itching to dance, so it was with great energy and enthusiasm that we performed two of our favourite dances: Shewolf (which we haven't danced out for ages!) and a double set of Brain Damage.

The second performance forced us to make do with a more limited set of dancers, as three of our girls were busy dancing with Hedgemonkey that evening. However, we can't begin to express how proud we were to lead such a wonderful procession of giants, morris dancers, guisers and 'obby 'osses through the streets of Woodford. It is an experience we will not soon forget. Despite our restricted numbers, we were still able to perform Bonfire, Brain Damage, Brown Hat and a joint Menage a Trois with Hedgemonkey.

Our final performance as part of the Spirit of Albion New Year's Eve gig was challenging and rushed, but overall extremely satisfying.

Many of us were performing in multiple roles that evening – Cherie Wilkinson, Rachel Massey and Rachael Neild were also dancing with Hedgemonkey, Adrienne Piggott was singing with Spiral Dance immediately prior to dancing and singing with Flange Desire, Paul Gooding

played for the morris, as well as with Spiral Dance and with the Mummurs – so between kit changes and so forth, we were all slightly harried. By the time we were due to perform, the overall programme was slightly behind schedule, and we were obliged to drop a dance from our planned set list. However, after a dance or two under very hot lights on a less than solid (read: mud) dance surface (read: muddy bog), none of us minded too much. In addition to our joint Spirit of Albion dance with Hedgemonkey and Spiral Dance, we were able to get out our favourite Shewolf again, along with our version of Greywell Tunnel, our six-person Duel and five person Spin Cycle (with the indomitable Glenda Neild jumping in when needed at the last minute and performing a position she hadn't practiced – well done).

Some of us in Hot For Joe have come away slightly damaged, though not permanently (we hope!) from our Woodford experience, and it is just wonderful to have Hot For Joe performing at big national festivals again. We are very, very proud to be part of Spirit of Albion, and we wouldn't have been able to get there at all without the hard work of everyone on the organising committee. A big thank you also to Paul Gooding and Lisa Grapentin for playing and drumming for us, as well as Bron Lloyd for accompanying Paul – we couldn't dance without our musicians and they do a fabulous job. Finally, a big thanks to all the other morris sides at Woodford for dancing (and drinking) with us, especially the Queensland morris and the rushcart.

So the next few months will see Hot For Joe along with Hedgemonkey Morris getting ready for our annual English Ale on the May 14th weekend. This event is growing bigger every year and the Spirit of Albion will continue to live on and we hope we are joined by the many Morris sides from interstate that came last year. This year we hope to have a 'Morris Central' - camp and dormitory accommodation not too far away from the Ale in Mylor where all the Morris can gather together and travel out to the Ale from there. We will keep you all posted as plans unfold and we look forward seeing many of you there this year! 🍷

Introducing...

# MORRIS COMIX

FEATURING THREE LOVEABLE, UNFORGETTABLE CHARACTERS! \*

## SULKY



## BULKY



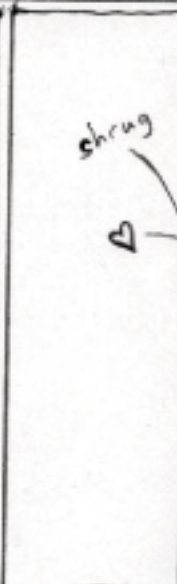
## ARABELLA



ONE EXCEPTIONALLY GORGEOUS DAY IN AN ENGLISH COUNTRY GARDEN...



\* ALL CHARACTERS HERE ARE FICTITIOUS. ANY RESEMBLANCE TO ANY PERSON MAY NOT BE -PURELY- COINCIDENTAL BUT IS NOT TARGETED AT YOU ALONE.



THE JUNK

# SINGING SESSIONS

## PACE EGGING



Here's one, two, three jol - ly lads all in one mind. We have come a pace - eg - ging and I



hope you'll prove kind. And I hope you'll prove kind with your eggs and strong beer. For we'll come no more



nigh you un - til the next year. And the first that comes in is Lord Nel-son, you'll see, with a



bunch of blue rib-bons tied 'round by his knee, And a star on his breast that like sil - ver does



shine, And I hope he re - mem - bers it's pace - eg - ging time.

### Chorus

Here's one two three jolly lads all in one mind  
We have come a pace egging and we hope you'll  
prove kind  
And we hope you'll prove kind with your eggs  
and strong beer  
And we'll come no more nigh you until the next  
year

### Verses

The first that comes in is Lord Nelson, you'll see  
With a bunch of blue ribbons to tie round his knee  
And a star on his breast like silver does shine  
I hope he remembers it's pace egging time

Well the next that comes in it is Lord Collingwood  
And he's fought with Lord Nelson till he shed his  
blood

And he's come from the sea old England to view  
He's come a pace egging with the whole of his  
crew

And the last that comes in is old Tossopot, you'll see  
He's a valiant old man and in every degree  
He's a valiant old man and he wears a pigtail  
And all his delight is a-drinking mulled ale

Come ladies and gentlemen, sit by the fire  
Put your hands in your pockets and give us our  
desire

Put your hands in your pockets and treat us all  
right

If you give nought, we'll take naught, farewell  
and goodnight

### Other verses

The next that comes in is old miser Brownbags  
For fear of her money she wears her old rags  
She's gold and she's silver all laid up in store  
And she's come a pace egging in hopes to get more

If you can drink one glass, then we can drink two  
Here's a health to Victoria, the same unto you  
Mind what you're doing and see that all's right

# SINGING SESSIONS & STICKING FOR FUN AND HEALTH

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If you give naught, we'll take naught, farewell  
and goodnight

## Notes

From my quick and limited research I believe that this is an Easter song, from the North-West of England. The word 'pace' is most probably derived from the Latin term 'Pacha', which means Easter and Pace Egging was a tradition of collecting eggs by going around the homes and farms of the town begging. Pace Eggers, while begging for

eggs, would sometimes perform a small mummers' play accompanied by songs such as this one. The mummers' play was one of death and resurrection, where heroes would fight, be slain and then be resurrected by a quack doctor. This song is calling out the heroes of the play, and it was probably sung in parts by the actors of the play for the characters that they represented. I would think that there are many lost verses of this song as heroes have come and gone. ☺

*Notes by Henry Sisley*

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## STICKING FOR FUN AND HEALTH

*By Steve Dancer*

England, 1958: There they were, standing against the wall. Smooth, stripped willow, of similar lengths, maybe an inch-and-a-half thick – a nice set of 6 Morris sticks. As a six-year-old, I thought, "...bit thick to make bows 'n' arrows from, though."

Fast forward 25+ years and half a world away, and there I am, dragging myself backwards through an Australian hawthorn hedge. "There's a good one just there Steve," says another Adelaide Morris Man. "Can you get the pruning saw in?" Sod it! Why not. What's another spiked finger anyhow? At the end of the day we all had a chance to show off our injuries over a pint at the nearby Charleston Hotel.

Journeying back from a Sydney Ale, we once "picked up" a stick. It whacked up underneath the hired Commodore as we travelled across the Hay, jammed itself under the body-work and stayed there for the next 500km. I finally extracted it and popped it in the stick bag. It served us for 3 years!

However, as sticks rarely find you, stick-gathering missions inevitably arise. Get as many dancers as possible to collect/cut the sticks – it's a team activity, especially if some are prone to "stick abuse". A good stick? Straight-ish, smooth-ish, of medium density (my preference), intact with no (or few) scars. Avoid knotted timber, which can be prone to snap and is more difficult to prepare anyway. Broom sticks are to be burnt on sight! What sticks you use will come back to availability, ease of gathering and longevity. Hawthorn's OK, though shards dangerously in the striking area just back from the tip

(at the thinner) end. Dibbing dances (the likes of Bean Setters) aren't much fun with splintered sticks, and, long flowing locks have been known to be painfully caught in a sharded hawthorn stick, which stuffs up the dance a bit!

Look for coppice varieties, or any plants of straight growing habit. Try to use one type of timber only – avoid mixing soft and hard woods in the same set. Cut them, well before use; a few months maybe. Bear in mind that those dancers of a more gentle persuasion have been seen to struggle whilst wielding logs! And as for aesthetics, it seems to me, six foot dancers look a bit (more) silly dancing with twigs in their hands; twigs just sound crappy too. "Inside leg" is a reasonable length. Dry slowly (the stick, not the inside leg!) to avoid cracking/splitting at the ends. Strip if you need to (the stick – oh, forget it!). Linseed oil's a nice touch too. But first, bevel the ends slightly, on a fixed grinder by preference. I used a hand rasp for far too many years. Date-mark your sticks from their first use – this gives a good idea how effective your preparation/choice of timber has been. Later, consider clear "cello" taping liberally around the sharded areas – this may well double the life of your sticks. You'd have to look closely to even spot the tape. And consider white-taping the ends, or dipping the ends in white paint. Besides helping to stop end-splitting, in poor light conditions it helps considerably, especially with darker coloured sticks and with folks whose eye-sight is wanting. With trial (and inevitable error) you'll know what's best for your side.

Happy sticking! ☺

# MASSED MORRIS

## NORTH WEST

AMADEUS

### Notes from Brandragon North-West Clog Morris

*This is a Portsmouth street dance written by Mary Rose. Brandragon were taught it by Glenda from the Lancashire Witches.*

- Set:** 6 people: 3 couples with 1 hankie each, in R hand.
- Music:** Jacky Tar. Start the dance to 2 x the B music and A B until we finish with an A.
- Figures:** Stamps, Rounds, Tops Cast, Cross over Cast, Bottoms Cast, Dash Up the Set, Middles Cast, Swings.
- Stepping:** R foot start. 1 2 3 hop, 1 2 3 hop, step hop, step hop, 1 2 3 hop. Repeat starting L foot.
- Hands:** Hands always on hips when not doing arm movements. Hanky in R hand doing a figure of 8 across body, start top R down to L. There is a down arm stroke on the first beat of every group of steps ie . 1 2 3 hop, 1 2 3 hop, step hop, step hop, 1 2 3 hop.

**Stamps** Squire's side facing up, others face down. Hands are on hips. Stamp R foot 8 times – 4 bars.

**Rounds** Once round circle, taking twice through stepping.

**Tops cast** 1 & 2 cast out to bottom, cross & up through 5 & 6 (passing squire's side high), then out between 3 & 5 and 4 & 6 and up to top. Clasp R hands and turn by R on 2nd set of stepping for rest of music.  
3, 4, 5 & 6 turn in on 1st beat, face across set with hands on hips and stamp.

**Crossover cast** All cross across set (1 2 3 hop) all stay on spot (1 2 3 hop) and concentric cast forward (step hop, step hop etc). New Squires side casts down outside and back up inside. Cross back to place on last '1 2 3 hop'.

**Bottoms cast** 5 & 6 continue into cast out to top, cross through 1 & 2 (squire's side high) then out sides between 1 & 3 and 2 & 4 and to bottom to turn R hands.  
1, 2, 3 & 4 turn in on 1st beat, face across set with hands on hips and stamp.

**Dash up the set** 5 & 6 dash up middle on set on '1 2 3 hop', finishing above 1 & 2. Others '1 2 3 hop' on spot. Whole set dashes forward on '1 2 3 hop'. Sharp turn out, and back down set for 'step hop, step hop, 1 2 3 hop'. Sharp turn in and repeat for other two couples.  
4th time: all '1 2 3 hop' on spot, all dash '1 2 3 hop', all sharp turn out and back down set. *Note:* loud whooping usually accompanies dashing by dashers only.

**Middles cast** 1 & 2 and 5 & 6, stand closely side by side facing into set, stamping R foot to music.  
3 & 4 cross by R across centre of set, cast L round ends of set, cross by L across set, cast R round other end. Turn R hands in centre of set rest of stepping.  
*Note:* on last 1, 2, 3 hop dancers 1, 2, 5 & 6 step sideways, away from each other, so that a circle is formed in time for the beginning of the next figure.

**Swings** All L hand swing, opposite hand on hip, 1 & 3 and 2 & 4 on sides of set and 5 & 6 across bottom of set, once through stepping. All R hand swing 1 & 2 at top of set, 3 & 5 and 4 & 6 on sides of set until last 'step hop'. On last '1 2 3 hop' head back to first partner and dash out of set to Y formation, finishing with R hand flick up on final hop. 1 & 3 at top Squires side, 2 & 4 at top non-Squire side, 5 & 6 bottom centre. ☺

*Music can be found at <http://folktunefinder.com/tune/167184/>*