

## THAMES VALLEY LOGBOOK

### 2000 to 2009

This was a difficult period to reconstruct. Cyril's logs, Jim's notes and a series of independent newsletters had all finished. John Elkins was Bagman until 2005 and Dick Keen from 2005 to 2009. Both still had computer records but some were lost when, independently, they changed email accounts.

With the help of other TVMM members who found (some) incoming emails from the Bagmen and also dredged through their memories, plus more lever arch files with paper copies of all sorts of stuff, a sequence of events has been constructed. Often there is little more to say than we danced at X. Sometimes there are long articles about favourite events and memories, for instance the Cotswolds weekends, Krov, our 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations and similar memorable events.

John Walsh has again scattered some photographs from the Thames Valley archives through the text. They often resolved disagreements about in which year x happened, who was there, whether this was the year when that happened and so on. We intend to add more in time.

As is clear to me, the content of all the logbooks ultimately depends on whose memories and preferences about what was worth recording were consulted. The content of the first two logbooks was decided by Cyril. I take full responsibility for what is include in the logbooks covering the years from 1987 onwards, although there are plenty of articles written by others. If you read any of the logbooks and think of something that has been left out and should be put in, or if anything is just plain wrong, please tell John Elkins who will be happy to include your favourite stories.

John Elkins

July 2020

## 2000 LOG

**Friday, March 3. Squagman's Night Out. The Running Horses, Mickleham.** Edward and Maureen Morris +1, Paul Goddard, Robin and Rona Cobb, Mervyn Stanley, Paul Brooks, Steve and Linda Tovey, John Hare, Tim and Sue Cawdron, John and Linda Elkins, Dick and Sheila Keen, Robert Peace +2, Andy and Lane Melville, Jon and Maria Stanley.

**Saturday, March 18. Brookwood.** Angela Coombs' birthday bash at The Vyne Community Centre.

**Friday, March 31. Morris Ring AGM.** Steve Ashcroft attended.

**March 31 to April 2. Dockenfield.** John Elkins: *"Dockenfield went well. We invented a new going off dance based on the Fieldtown processional, and Merlin took us through Stickfrog Fieldtown, which is his reaction to my banning all leapfrog movements this year. I've also banned the Sherborne split capers, in both cases because we do them (as a side) embarrassingly badly. The dances live on however, with star jumps in Sherborne, which I think we can just about manage, and compromises for the leapfrog. As you may gather, I intend to concentrate on things that we can nearly get right, rather than on things we wish we could still do."* A party from Royal Borough turned up.

**Tuesday, May 2. Hocktide.** We danced in the evening at the Parish Church and then at The Ram.

**Wednesday, May 3. North Camp Methodist Church, Farnborough.** Francis Smith married Janet Barnett.

**Tuesday, May 16. Claygate.** The Griffin, with Datchet MM.

**Sunday, May 21. Send.** Another of Lieutenant-Colonel Molyneux-Child's revivals of ancient practices, Beating the Bounds of the Manor of Dedswell and Papworth on Rogation Sunday, as part of Guildford's millennium celebrations. Jack Straws danced "at various places along the route". Waterborne Manorial Minstrels and Singers accompanied the party along the Wey towpath. TVMM nestled in at the New Inn, Send and waited for them all to arrive. John E: *"The session at Send on Sunday went well I thought. We did a new spur of the moment version of Country Gardens Bampton, a new spur of the moment version of leap-frog Fieldtown, and Constant Billy Sherborne to a different tune. And that was just the first three dances."*

**Tuesday, May 30. The Vine, Chertsey.**

**Friday, June 2. Merton.** An urban evening tour with Greensleeves at The Princess Royal, South Wimbledon, followed by The Sultan, Haydon's Road. TVMM danced every version of Constant Billy that the side and the musicians could remember.

**Sunday, June 11. Cobham Mill,** with Countryside, and maypole dancing by schoolchildren.

**Tuesday, June 13. Brockham.** With East Surrey at The Royal Oak.

**June 16/18. Durham.** Tim Langston, a student at Durham University and a member of TVMM organised an excellent weekend tour of the city

Tim wrote: *"As far as the itinerary is concerned, I don't think that Friday night is a likely bet for dancing. The journey is a killer and so I would suggest a relaxed evening at restaurants and pubs. On Saturday, we intend to get the show on the road by midday, dancing for about three hours with pub and lunch breaks. At c.3.30pm we shall have a rest so that people can see the town (cathedral and castle etc), starting up again at about 7pm, for an hour or so in the Castle Courtyard. I hope four/five hours dancing is sufficient? "I am waiting to hear back from the council and the Dean and Chapter for permission to dance in the Cathedral Close and the Market Place. This apparently should not be a problem."*

He advised on accommodation in the University but warned: *"As far as additional university accommodation is concerned, other colleges do not seem to have much going. I can look into this further, but if people are bringing wives they may want a nicer room – the Castle (now part of the University) rooms are rather TVMM! In addition, the mark up of about £12 means a full English breakfast (rather than toast) as well as better facilities. Nicholas and I have to go home on Sunday to leave for Hong Kong the next day, so things will end on Saturday night or Sun morning."*

Mervyn *"was amazed today when I found out that it would cost me between £60 and £80 just to get to Durham and back by train. If I travelled late and avoided the rush hour - how do I do that - then I may have got away with £52. Great but the place would have been shut down when I got there. So Friday night is out and with you and the lads leaving early on Sunday there is not much left of the week-end. Like you I don't fancy driving. What with the additional camping costs, I can't afford to come so please strike me off. I do not think that £120+ for a day and a half's morris is value for money - even if it is in one of my favourite cities."* Did he actually come in the end?



The party was Edward and Maureen Morris, Mike Vardy and Jill Jones (Park View Hotel), Steve Tovey and Paul Brooks (Castle View Hotel), Robin Cobb (over a bridge somewhere), Paul Goddard, Jan Lucas, Dick Keen, Mervyn Stanley, John Elkins (The Castle) and. Of course, Tim and Nick Langston.

The programme was: Saturday: Meet at The Shakespeare and dance at Prebends Bridge, the Cathedral Close and Cloisters, lunch at The Hogshead. Dance in the Market Square and the Castle Courtyard, Curry at Shaheen's, The Shakespeare until closing time.

Lots of good memories of the weekend.



\*Durham ladies with skirts up to here, and tops down to there, walking ten abreast, arms linked, along the main street on Friday night sweeping aside any men who happened to be in the way.

\*Dancing in the face of protests from some TVMM members, **inside** the cloisters, where the surface and acoustics were excellent.



\*Jan forgetting the tune (Fieldtown Processional?) we wanted to dance, someone (Paul Brooks?) phoning Fran at home, Fran singing the tune. Total length of phone call 20 seconds?

\*Entertaining and being entertained by some saucy ladies from Durham Town in the Shakespeare Tavern, who'd never met Morris dancers before.

\*Robin stumbling on (almost) a couple locked together late at night on the bridge he had to cross to get to his digs. The bridge was immediately renamed "Shaggers Bridge" the next morning.

**Tuesday, June 20. The Saddlers, Sendmarsh.** An Ale Tasting with Victorian flummery organised by Lieutenant-Colonel Molyneux-Child.

**Tuesday, June 27. The Swan, Walton,** with Jack Straws.

**July 1/9 Lalinde.** Jan Lucas had been asked if TVMM would like to perform at a festival in the Dordogne at a town called Lalinde, just East of Bergerac. The morris "tour" was planned

for the week before the festival, on the Saturday. The organisers offered free camping space, and to reimburse travel costs from the UK.

Jan wrote: *"I've told him that we'd be happy to accept the money in francs. Also I've suggested that rather than camp in his garden (apparently that was the idea) we'd be better off in the municipal campsite, which, according to my sources, is very nicely situated alongside the river, and is bound to be cheap. I've asked for B&B for 2 couples (Edward and Robin). Also I've got English friends who live in the area and I've suggested that they have a scout around for suitable locations (ie bars) to dance at during the week. They will get back to me with a list of places that are interested (and not too far away), and we can work out a programme beforehand. They (the bars) would rather have a booking than have us turn up whenever, but at least this way we can dictate how much/little we do. I've also mentioned that we'd like to meet up with the Duras dance group."*

He also wrote – but not to Thames Valley: *"Pas de probleme - les frais pour 5 voitures c'est d'accord! Je vais m'occuper bien tot pour t'envoyer K7, video. Il faut dire d'abord que la groupe est surtout une groupe qui fait la danse. La musique (tres special bien sur) normalement ce n'est que pour danser (mais nous pouvons louer un peu si vous en voulez).*

*Le nom de groupe c'est "The Thames Valley Morris Men". Je t'envoyerais les affiches .*

*Pas besoin de loge si nous sommes deja habille en costume, si non, une petite salle seulement.*

*Je vais demander le nombre actuel de personnes (femmes inclues) – je crois qu'il y aura une douzaine des tentes. Tout le monde sauf une couple vont faire du camping. Je crois (mais je verifierais) qu'une couple seulement veulent logement.*

*Pour la scene - de habitude nous dansons dehors les pubs en Angleterre, alors nous ne sommes pas habituer aux micro, mais il y aura 2 ou 3 accordions diatonique et 1 ou 2 concertinas (il y a les hommes qui fait ou la musique ou la danse, alors pour une danse c'est possiblement un musicien, pour la p.rochaine c'est 4 musictens, ca change pour chaque dance.*

*Le surface doit etre solide! par ce que nous sautons beaucoup, et aussi- nous utilisons les batons et battre le sol avec.*

*Chaque danse prends environs 5 minutes, mais normalement nous faire plusieurs (ca dur quarante-cinq minutes normalement). Suivant la programme nous pouvons faire deux parties de 45 minutes? Nous pouvons faire comme vous voulez pour la spectacle. Si vous voulez les musiciens peuvent louer quelques morceaux anglais aussi.*

*Est-ce que vous voulez que nous dansons dans la ville pendant la journee? Comme j'ai dit c'est notre habitude de danser en plein aire (surtout avec de la biere!) (mais pas trop par-ce que c'est tres fatigant).*

*Il faut penser comment pour payer (francais ou Anglais). Je dirai a propos de ca et le contrat apres que j'ai parler avec le chef."*

Jan remembers: *"It's difficult to remember anything apart from snapshots:*

*There was a bar on the campsite where they sold pizza and Kronenbourg 1664 (which by the end of the holiday we could order perfectly in French).*

*We went to a bar about 1Km upstream which was run by a Swiss(?) lady, who bought us all a drink. There was an international incident when some of us tried to buy another beer – she somehow got the idea that we were asking for another free drink and went apeshit. Then we started back for the campsite – most of us on foot – and the heavens opened and we all got soaked.*

*I seem to remember going to an evening market somewhere south of the river but I can't remember many details. I think we all had a meal together after the dancing in a local restaurant.*

*On the Saturday we were a great hit dancing around the town – we danced near the local wine shop at some point and the owner brought out a tray full of glasses of Monbazillac for us. I liked it so much I went back the next day and bought half a dozen bottles.*

*I don't remember much about dancing on the stage, apart from the fact that the sound engineer was completely useless.*

*One thing in my mind stands out very clearly: I was given a sum of money by the festival organisers to split amongst the blokes for expenses (and at least two of the team were relying on this – they couldn't afford to come unless it were subsidised). When everyone arrived, it turned out that **someone** had invited the Countryside girls, and they were all expecting a cut of the money too – which made it very awkward for me.*

*I know for sure that the following were there: Fran Smith (with Jan – this was the one and only time she ever camped with us), Mike Vardy (& Jill), Malcolm Snowden, Mick Jenkins, Dick Keen, Robin Cobb, Edward & Maureen Morris, Jenny Glaister (with Siward of course), Peter Jones.”*

**Saturday July 15. Claygate.** We danced a lunchtime session at The Foley followed by two spots at the Flower Show at 3.25 and 4.25, where Robin had made sure that there would be food, beer and tea for us. Steve Tovey, Mervyn Stanley, Edward Morris, Paul Goddard, John Hare, Jon Stanley Tim Langston and John Elkins were probably there. Mike Vardy, Malcolm Snowden, Alan Goddard, Paul Brooks may have been.

**Sunday, July 16. The Hog's Back Brewery.** A session organised by Fran Smith.

**Tuesday, July 25. Claygate.** An evening at the Foley with Greensleeves.

**Saturday, July 29** Fran's Tour, to include – yet again - the Hog's Back Brewery.

**Tuesday, August 1. The Stag on the River at Lower Eashing,** organised by Fran.

**August 6-13 The Peter Jones Twitchen week.**

**August 26-28. The Cotswolds.** Saturday: The Halfway House, Kineton; The Plough, Cold Aston; the Sevenhampton and District Show, Brockhampton; The Kings Head. Sunday: Procession to The Mill, then the Kings Head. Tea and dancing in the road at the Yanworth village hall; The Seven Tuna (sic), Chedworth.

Letter from the chairman of the Sevenhampton Show: “*Dear John, I can't tell you how much everyone enjoyed your dancing at our Produce Show on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> it really has been quite a talking point, it was all such fun, you were such a cheery crowd. One husband nearly had hysterics when the horse sat on his wife's lap, he laughed so much.*”

Margaret Brown wrote: *“Dear John, Thought you might like a report of the conversation I overheard at The Plough from the next table. 1st person: This seems a queer place for them to dance – miles from anywhere. 2nd person: Well, I expect they have to practice in out-of-the-way places before they can perform in places like Banbury or Oxford.”*

**September 2. Andy’s virtual Harmondsworth tour.** Virtual in the sense that Andy was in Caracas. The Five Bells, the Great Barn, outside the Church/Five Bells, tea and cake at Andy and Jane’s.

From the chairman of the Flower Guild: *“Your visit with the Thames Valley Morris Men on the Saturday afternoon put the finishing touch to what was, essentially, a village event. Harmondsworth Flower Guild Committee joins me in saying a very big thankyou to you and your team. It was one of the highlights of the whole weekend.”*

**Saturday, September 16. Yateley Day of Dance.** Our tour took in Queensmead Shopping Centre, Farnborough; The Royal Oak, Wood Street Village; The White House, Guidford; the Hog’s Back Brewery; massed dancing and Ale in Yateley. This was the occasion of TVMM’s introduction to Blue Streak. Lester Bailey of GUM asked John Elkins to make up their numbers in a new dance, which he did on tour and in the show dance at Yateley.



**October 7/8. Dockenfield.** Instructional and ale. John E: *“My plan for Dockenfield this year is that we should do a lot of jigs, and a few set dances, which I haven’t yet invented. I don’t think we do enough jigs, which are the ultimate test of how each of us can dance. And I don’t so much mean how well we can dance - we all have shortcomings in that department - but of what kind of dancers we each are. I hope that everyone who comes to Dockenfield will demonstrate a jig or two, or at least learn a jig or two over the weekend.”*

We danced Old Tom of Oxford (Bampton), Jockey (Sherborne), Princess Royal (Sherborne), Bonnets So Blue (Bucknell) – and more.

Paul Brooks, Dave Dearsley, John Elkins, Paul Goddard, Dick Keen, Tim Langston, Jan Lucas, Edward Morris, Fran Smith, Mervyn Stanley, Steve Tovey, Mike Vardy, John Walsh and four men from Yateley MM were there.

**Tuesday, November 14. The Foley.**

### **THAMES VALLEY MORRIS MEN - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Present:** J.Barclay, J.Bead, J.Brooks, P.Brooks, R.Cobb, J.Elkins, J.Farrant, S.Glaister, P.Goddard, R.Keen, N.Langston, J.Lucas, E.Morris, F.Smith, M.Snowden, M.Stanley, G.Thompson, S.Tovey, P.Underwood, M.Vardy, J.Walsh

**Apologies:** A.Goddard, P.Jones, A.Melville, R.Peace

**The President:** John Elkins reported that Jim Brooks had agreed to become President of the side.

**Roll of Honour:** The Squire reminded the meeting of former members of the side who were no longer with us: Peter Dashwood, Amnon Derrenberg, John Glaister, John Hall, Martin Jolly, Norman Keam, George Lawrence, Dick Mussen, Derek Paynter, Christopher Penton, Ted Perry, Gordon Ralph, Cyril Smith, Gordon Smith, Phil Sylvester, Bill Tofts.

**Farrier's Report:** Dick Keen reported that the beasts were in good health, although some refurbishment might be needed before our 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. The hobbyhorse had escaped to an animal weekend at Banbury but had been recaptured. Phil Underwood revealed that the hobbyhorse formerly known as Dobbin was in fact female, named Epona, after the Celtic horse goddess.

**Ragman's Report:** Edward Morris said that 2000 had been a quiet kit year, with sales of £80.50 and expenses of £155.29. £55.50 remained to be paid by members, and a debt of £42.00 had been written off. Edward appealed for members to lend him any surviving original TVMM kit for display during the 50<sup>th</sup> celebrations.

**Treasurer's Report:** Robin Cobb reported a trading profit of £89.00 and a closing balance of £2,469.55. Income from Tours just topped £600, with Boxing Day supplying £316.56, and the Claygate Flower Show £130.00. Income from members' subscriptions was £245.00. Expenditure of £870.51 was made up mainly of the two Dockenfield events (£343.22), the purchase of Ring booklets (£168), Kit (155.29) and Subscriptions to the Morris Ring, the EFDSS and Elmbridge Twinning (£125). It was agreed, after some discussion, to retain the present £10 annual subscription. The subscription was to remain voluntary, but the Treasurer agreed to issue reminders.

Robin also reported that the landlord of the Foley had agreed to sponsor the side in 2001. He would cancel the annual charge for the hire of the Hall in return for advertising on the side's brochures.

**Bagman's Report:** John Elkins reported that there had been 24 dancing events in 2000, with many highlights, including the Durham tour, the holiday in Lalinde and the Cotswolds tour. We danced with Datchet, Jack Straws (twice), Greensleeves (twice), Countryside and East Surrey and at the Yateley Day of Dance but, unfortunately had had to pull out of the Broadwood Day of Dance, Thaxted Ring Meeting and Wimbledon Village Fair. John Hare had moved to the USA, but the Langston duo had established themselves as regular members of the side (University commitments permitting). Fran Smith had made an honest woman of his Jan.

**Squire's Report:** John Elkins said that the side was in pretty good shape. The standard of dancing was not vintage, but definitely enthusiastic, and the newest members were well integrated into the side. Attendance at practice had been encouragingly high over the year. All of this he attributed to the efforts of the previous Squire, Steve Tovey.

A large part of the attraction of membership of Thames Valley was clearly the opportunity to continue old friendships and revisit familiar dances, but he warned against the dead weight of tradition and said that he would continue to seek out opportunities to extend the side's repertory. During the year the side had concentrated on Fieldtown, Sherborne and Adderbury, but had also adopted Blue Streak (from GUM), and had devised F.Off (as well as F.On) Fieldtown. Knuckles was back in the repertoire and so was Withington (nearly). Five jigs had been revived at the second Dockenfield weekend.



**Election of Officers:** The new President was joined by Squire: John Elkins (re-elected unopposed); Bagman: John Elkins (re-elected unopposed); Treasurer: Robin Cobb (re-elected unopposed); Ragman: Edward Morris (re-elected unopposed).

**Web-Spinner's Report:** Jan Lucas reported that he would be setting up a new web-site for the side which would be automatically linked to the existing site run by Martin Kiff. The plan was to include more information about the history of the side and to update the fixtures list more frequently than we had been able to do in the past. The new site should be available for use early in 2001.

**Expenses for Musicians:** Dick Keen proposed a motion that the sides' musicians should be reimbursed for the cost of maintaining instruments used in the service of the side. A lively debate followed with contributions from musicians and non-musicians. Although the musicians said that they were not seeking payment, it was agreed that the officers of the side would consider (in private) any requests from musicians for a contribution towards upkeep of instruments and make payments as they saw fit.

**50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations:** In response to a letter from the Squire making suggestions about possible celebration activities, it was agreed that a sub-committee should meet to develop more precise recommendations. J.Barclay, E.Morris, F.Smith and M.Stanley agreed to form the committee and to report back to the officers quickly. Phil Underwood volunteered to organise his "Wildheads" exhibition as part of the celebrations.

**Boxing Day Cake:** Jim Brooks collected commitments for Boxing Day cakes.

**Fixtures Meeting:** This was set for Tuesday November 24<sup>th</sup>.

The Meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.

**John Elkins, Squire and Bagman, December 3, 2000**

**Tuesday, December 26. Boxing Day, Claygate.** The Swan, The Foley, The Hare, The Winner, The Griffin.

## 2001 LOG

**Saturday, March 3. Old Village Hall, Denham.** An extraordinary Night in The Old Bazaar with Grand Union Morris – their 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ale. Mustafa Beer welcomed Malcolm Snowden, Mervyn Stanley, John Walsh, Paul Brooks, Paul Goddard, Dick Keen, Edward Morris, Fran Smith, Jan Lucas, John Elkins to a meal including cous cous, falafels, houmus, tagine of lamb, baby earth apples, fruits of the desert with thickened camels' milk and much more, served by his concubines. These turned out to be GUM wives and girlfriends who had been taking belly dancing classes, and turned up in (or out of) belly dancing costume. John Elkins managed to dispose of his parents' collection of miniature spirit bottles by encouraging TVMM to drink a bottle each during a dance (? Monks March). Most of us stayed overnight.

**Friday, March 16. The Running Horses, Mickleham.** This year we had the inner room in the dining area, behind glass doors, so that we only heard our own noise. We had three tables: A. Paul Goddard, Tim and Nick Langston +1(their sister?), Edward and Maureen Morris +1, Mervyn Stanley. B. Jim Barclay, Fran and Jan Smith, John Elkins, Sue Cawdron, Jane Melville, Steve and Linda Tovey, Paul Brooks. C. Siward and Jenny Glaister, Mike Vardy + 1, Dick Keen +1, Robin and Rona Cobb.

**April 6/8. Dockenfield.**

**Tuesday, May 1. Hocktide, Kingston.** Parish Church and The Ram.

**Wednesday, May 2. Horsell.** John Elkins, Jan Lucas and Paul Brooks explained the Morris to the 1st Horsell Beaver Scouts.

**Thursday, May 31. The Plough Coldharbour,** with Ewell.

**Wednesday, June 13. The Anchor, Pyrford and the New Inn,** Send with Pilgrim.

**June 15/17. Tim and Nick's tour of Durham.** Tim'n'Nick wrote: Thank you all so much for agreeing to take part in the TVMM Durham Tour 2001. Last Year's tour proved to be a great success and with three extra dancing slots this time round, I hope it will be yet more enjoyable. Anyhow, this is the itinerary. It may seem vague, but Durham is like a large village, Should you get lost ask any local (if you have a Geordie/English phrase book) or a student to point you in the right direction.

A party of eight travelled by minibus from Surrey on the Friday, and twelve travelled back on Sunday. In fact eight travelled to Durham and ten travelled back! The Langstons had organized accommodation in The Castle View Hotel (Mike Vardy, Jill Jones, Edward and Maureen Morris, Paul Brooks, Malcolm Snowden) and The Georgian Townhouse for John and Linda Walsh, John Elkins, Jan Lucas, Dick Keen, and Allan Goddard. They, of course, had their own beds in the University. Tim advised that the drive would take five and a half to six hours – it did. He came by train.

The schedule was Friday: Dance at The Old Elm Tree, Crossgate; Drink at The Shakespeare; Dine at Shaheen's Indian Restaurant, North Bailey. Saturday: Start at The Old Elm Tree, then to the Cathedral Close (and Cloisters), The Court Inn, Prebend's Bridge, The Market Place (Outside The Market Tavern), The Swan and Three Cygnets on Elvet (Shagger's) Bridge, The Castle Courtyard, and a Bar-B-Q on the river bank next to the Castle boathouse (which didn't

happen).

**Wednesday, June 20. Richmond/Twickenham.** The White Cross and The Barmy Arms with Spring Grove and others.

**Tuesday, June 6. The Swan, Walton.**

**Saturday, June 10. Feathers, Laleham Beer Festival.** Mervyn Stanley, John Walsh, Dick Keen, Steve Tovey, John Elkins, Jim Barclay, Mike Vardy, Edward Morris.

**Saturday, June 30. Mike Vardy Tour.** The Plough, Byfleet; The White Hart, New Haw; Heathervale Recreation Ground Fair and Fete, New Haw; tea at Jill Jones'; The Castle Ottershaw; The Victoria, Woodham.

**Monday July 2, with Datchet.**

**Saturday, July 7. Bramley.** We danced for hire to the incoming crowds at a rock concert on the Wintershall estate. Eric Clapton was appearing at a special invitation-only black-tie charity Picnic Concert by the Chapel on the Lake with all proceeds going to HASTE, the Heart and Stroke Trust Endeavour. Despite torrential thunderstorms throughout the evening, the audience warmed to performances by Damon Hill's band; Roger Taylor's Band, Bob Geldof, Rory Bremner and "The All Star Band du Lac" - Gary Brooker, Andy Fairweather Low, Dave Bronze, Henry Spinetti, Mike Rutherford (Genesis), Paul "Wix" Wickens, Eric Clapton, Sam Brown and Margo Buchanan. The evening concluded with a most impressive fireworks display and had raised in excess of £200,000 for HASTE. Surprisingly there was no mention of TVMM in the reviews. But we did get a thank you letter: "*Dear Morris Dancers. Thank you so much for appearing at my concert and sorry that we could not sell beer (or even give it away). Do hope you will come again some time, Yours sincerely, Peter Hutley.*" We did!

**Tuesday, July 10. The Foley, Claygate.**

**Saturday, July 14. Black Cherry Fair, Chertsey.** We met at The Griffin and moved on to the Shoe, where we danced in the arena between the Surbiton Royal British Legion Marching Band and Maypole Dancing by the Chadsworth Stage School, and then between the grand Theatre of Lemmings and the Marching Band.

**Saturday, July 21. Claygate Flower Show.**

**Tuesday, July 24. The Castle, Ottershaw.**

**Monday, August 6. IPC building near Southwark Bridge.** Thames Valley were head (or maybe body-hunted for a radio 3 advertising film to show off the kinds of music you could hear on Radio 3. We arranged for one of the talent scouts to come and watch us dancing at The Castle Ottershaw, after which he wrote: "*The original idea for this production was for one guy in kit would be required - which a rate of about £400 under Equity/BBC Agreements is payable. However your guys shone so much they wanted all of you as support artists instead. This is normally about £69 per day but as this is more specialised we negotiated a higher fee for you all @ about £150 per person plus all travel etc. If all of your guys could be involved that would be much appreciated. In such commercials by their very nature a sequence like this would probably mean your people would be on screen for a very few*

*seconds.*” After some grumbling from John E, about the reduced rate, and complaints about budgets cut to the bone in these difficult times from them – “*It is quite apparent that there is a misconception about 'show business' - that it is highly paid but in today's market with so many channels and new forms of production budgets are paired back to the bone*” - we decided to go ahead.

The original plan was for a helicopter to zoom in on one morris man dancing on the roof of Tate Modern to some English music: I suggested Vaughan-Williams or Percy Grainger (Country Gardens). The final film was of 7 members of TVMM on the roof of the IPC building dancing some Bampton. We subsequently saw a copy of the BBC Location Details, which said interesting things like: “Please be aware we are filming from the rooftop of a 30-storey building – Safety harnesses need to be worn and minimum crew on the roof at all times. Crew and personnel must remain within the two-metre barrier from the edge at all times. That explains why they were appalled when we slipped out at lunchtime for a pint or three at the pub across the road.

We turned up on time at about 9.30. The director turned up at about midday and started by asking what Morris Dancing was. So we showed him a dance on about floor 16. He asked if we could do it quicker, slower, closer together and so on, which we did – although Fran was getting edgy about changing his 50 years old routine. Then we tried it on the roof a couple of times and were sent to lunch – in a canteen wagon offering (free) every kind of food known to production crews. I think we tried them all before slipping off to the pub – from which we were dragged by a production assistant, wetting himself in case we danced, drunk, straight off the roof. After that we were on the roof for most of the afternoon and ended up dancing behind Benjamin Zephaniah, who was the link man for all the different kinds of ethnic dance featured on Radio 3.

I had been told that we would be needed until 5.00, which came and went, so I threw a wobbly and threatened to walk out, only to be calmed down by an offer of more money. We eventually received a cheque for £1,500, which didn't seem much beside a budget which had to cover possibly 50 sound, film, wardrobe and production types hanging around all day just for what turned out to be a (maximum) 5-second appearance on the final film.

The TV team included Fran Smith, Jan Lucas, John Elkins, Nick and Tim Langston, Paul Brooks, and Mike Vardy (and possibly Mervyn Stanley).

**August 18/19. East Surrey Ring Meeting.** Thames Valley danced in Epsom; at The Duke's Head, Brockham; The Dolphin, Betchworth; The Plough, Leigh; Box Hill; Priory Park, Reigate, and The Sportsman, Mogador. The Feast and overnight accommodation in the boys' bedrooms was at Epsom College. In the middle of the night we were all awoken by a fire alarm caused, we later learned, by some Danish dancers from Silkeborg ripping a fire alarm off a wall, allegedly under the influence of English beer. The fire brigade and police turned up and there was a debate about whether we should be allowed back to our beds, given that the fire alarm system was no longer functioning. Some crept into the bushes on the school field and slept, but I seem to recall getting back to my bed, whether legally or not. There was little enthusiasm for the church parade the next morning. The Thames Valley contingent was: Edward Morris, Fran Smith, John Elkins, Dick Keen, Steve Ashcroft?), Jan Lucas, Mike Vardy, Robin Cobb and maybe Dick Chaundy, Paul Goddard and Siward Glaister.

**August 24/26. The Cotswolds.** Saturday: The Halfway House, Kineton; The Plough, Cold Aston; The Eastleach Fete; The Kings Head, Withington. Sunday: Procession to The Mill;

The Kings Head; Yanworth Village Hall for tea and dancing in the road; The Seven Tuns, Chedworth. The address of our contact for the Sunday tea was 21 Yanworth, reminiscent of the Duke of Wellington's address – No. 1, London.

**Saturday, September 1. Basingstoke.** Fran organized dancing at Oakley Hall Nursing Home.

**Tuesday, September 4. The Swan, Claygate.**

**Saturday, September 8. Walton Heritage Day.** Just five dancers performed by the riverside.

**Saturday, September 15. Yateley MM 25th Anniversary Day of Dance.** Ten from Thames Valley, of whom six stayed overnight. We danced at Alresford, Cheriton, East Meon, Chawton and Yateley.

**September 30, The Star, Leatherhead.** We danced at the finish of a Charity Bike Ride.

**Tuesday, October 16.** Ale tasting at The Saddlers, Send with Datchet.

#### **THAMES VALLEY MORRIS MEN - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING FOLEY HALL, CLAYGATE – NOVEMBER 27, 2001**

**Present:** J.Brooks, P.Brooks, T.Cawdron, R.Cobb, J.Elkins, S.Glaister, R.Keen, J.Lucas, E.Morris, F.Smith, M.Snowden, M.Stanley, S.Tovey, M.Vardy

**Apologies:** S.Ashcroft, J. Barclay, A.Melville, P.Underwood, J.Walsh

**Roll of Honour:** The Squire reminded the meeting of former members of the side who were no longer with us: Peter Dashwood, Amnon Derrenberg, John Glaister, John Hall, Martin Jolly, Norman Keam, George Lawrence, Dick Mussen, Derek Paynter, Christopher Penton, Ted Perry, Gordon Ralph, Cyril Smith, Gordon Smith, Phil Sylvester, Bill Tofts.

**Farrier's Report:** Dick Keen reported that the horse was in good health, as was the goat, which he had last seen at the Cotswolds, although both were ready for TVMM 50<sup>th</sup> birthday action. There more than 50 sticks in stock, more than enough to see the side through 2001.

**Ragman's Report:** Edward Morris reported another quiet year, with receipts of only £63 and expenditure of £9. Despite her move to the Welsh borders Jenny Jones was still prepared to make up items of kit on request. There were now no hats in stock. Edward suggested that there was a need for a general smartening up of kit for our 50th. He would be producing some T-shirts and/or sweatshirts with a TVMM 50th logo.

Dick Keen proposed that kit should be issued free to members, including replacement kit. After a lengthy debate it was agreed that the first set of kit should be provided free, at a time judged appropriate by the Squire, but that members should pay for replacement kit.

**Treasurer's Report:** Robin Cobb reported that club funds had grown by £452 over the year to £2922. Income from Tours had increased to £823, which included £359 from Boxing Day, £200 for dancing at Wintershall and £137 from the Claygate Flower Show. Members' subscriptions paid had fallen from £245 to £155. Apart from the normal subscriptions to the

Ring, the EFDSS and the Twinning Guild the main item of expenditure had been £269 spent on subsidising various events, including Dockenfield, the E. Surrey Ring Meeting and the Yateley Day of Dance.

It was agreed to retain the present annual subscription of (a minimum of) £10, due immediately. The subscription was to remain voluntary, but the Treasurer agreed to issue reminders.

The landlord of the Foley had agreed to continue with the arrangement under which he would not charge for the hire of the Hall in return for advertising in TVMM brochures.

**Bagman's Report:** John Elkins reported another busy season, with nearly as many dancing events as there had been in 2000, despite a slight decline in active membership. There had been one public event when four man dancing had been necessary. Highlights included the GUM 25th birthday party, a return visit to Durham, the East Surrey Ring meeting, and being filmed by the BBC for a Radio 3 advert. We danced with Datchet (twice) and Ewell, and at the Spring Grove Evening of Dance and the Yateley Day of Dance. Foot and mouth restrictions had led to the cancellation of two events, we were not accepted for the Greensleeves Ring meeting, and the return visit to Lalinde had been called off at the last minute. Nevertheless it had been a busy season, and Tuesday evening dancing was still well supported, whether at the Foley or in kit at other locations.

**Squire's Report:** John Elkins said that the standard of dancing had remained about the same as last year, and was inevitably determined by the number and level of experience of the dancers who turned out. The core membership was undoubtedly enthusiastic, and this rubbed off in performance. The side had concentrated on Headington and Bucknell during the year and Blue Streak had been joined by The Gay Dance in the repertoire (courtesy of Tim Langston). Music had, as usual, been of a high standard but this had unfortunately been the last year in which Jan Lucas would be able to play a full, regular part. Mervyn Stanley would bear the brunt of the music in 2002.

#### **Election of Officers:**

President: Jim Brooks  
Squire: John Elkins (re-elected unopposed),  
Bagman: John Elkins (re-elected unopposed),  
Treasurer: Dick Keen (elected unopposed),  
Ragman: Edward Morris (re-elected unopposed).

**Web-Spinner's Report:** Jan Lucas reported that the club's website was now fully operational. He agreed to maintain the site during 2002.

**50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations:** John Elkins reported that preparations for the Anniversary Dinner in May were well under way. The side had now been officially invited to Krov in 2002. The 50th Committee (John Elkins, Dick Keen, Edward Morris, Fran Smith, Mervyn Stanley, John Walsh) would be deciding soon what commemorative goods to produce. The favourites were glass/pottery mugs, T shirts, sweatshirts and lapel badges. 50th logos had been produced and were on the website.

**Recruitment:** There was a long discussion about the need to increase club membership. One positive step was that the club was featured in the first edition of Claygate Life, an occasional magazine distributed to all households in the village. Other suggestions were that we should establish close links with any neighbouring sides which were in trouble, make sure that we appealed to the audience at Boxing Day, and take opportunities to teach the Morris, for instance on occasions when we could not turn out when requested.

**Boxing Day Cake:** Jim Brooks said that he would prepare the Boxing Day sword and cakes, but would, unfortunately be unable to be swordsman on Boxing Day.

The Meeting closed at just after 10.00 p.m.

**John Elkins, Squire and Bagman, December 3, 2001**

**Saturday, December 1. Claygate Christmas Lights. Bobby Davro**

**Tuesday, December 26. Boxing Day, Claygate.** The Swan, The Foley, The Hare and Hounds, The Winning Horse, The Griffin.



## 2002 LOG

**March 15, Bagman's Night Out, The Running Horses, Mickleham.**

**March 21, Music session at the Foley (no dancing) organised by Ewell MM**

**April 13, Merv's walk**

**April 27/28, Dockenfield** (starting on Saturday morning and ending at Sunday lunchtime).

**May 11, Broadwood Day of Dance ?**

**May 18, TVMM 50th Dinner (See separate file.)**

### **Thames Valley's 50th Birthday**

Planning for the Birthday celebrations, as opposed to endless, random discussions, began with an email from the Squire/Bagman (Squagman) on November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2000.

The first question to be answered was: When did TVMM start? Cyril's log book recorded that the first ever dance engagement was on July 19<sup>th</sup> 1952 at the Claygate Flower Show. It is not known what (if anything) the dancers called themselves on that occasion, but it was followed by a meeting at the Foley Hall on October, 1952, and several meetings through that winter. The Log book includes the **Minutes of the inaugural meeting of the Thames Valley Morris Men was held on 1st May 1953 at the Foley Hall, Hare Lane, Claygate, Surrey.** This Side has met and practised for a year but was formally constituted on this occasion. A suggestion that the Side's provisional title (Mid-Surrey Men's Morris) should be changed to Thames Valley Morris Men was unanimously accepted.

So there were two contenders for the start, one in July 1952 and one in May 1953. Hmmmm. Or, as the Squagman wrote: "We can start celebrating in July 2002, and finish in May 2003"

A Gang of four then met at Jim Barclay's House to talk detail on November 26<sup>th</sup>. They - Jim Barclay, Fran Smith, Edward Morris, Mervyn Stanley – produced a four-page programme drafted by Mervyn

This was followed by a meeting of a gang of 5 – John Elkins, Fran Smith, John Walsh, Edward Morris, Mervyn Stanley (Jim Barclay not present) – at the Squagman's house in January 2001 and an email.

"Planning for our 50th continues. A gang of five met up earlier this month and agreed to take on the following responsibilities: \* Three grand events (see below) - Fran Smith and Mervyn Stanley. \* Collation of archive materials (photos, film, sound, written etc) - John Walsh. \* Advertising, and production of things to make and sell (badges, souvenirs etc etc) Edward



Morris. \* Dancing programme and all the other fixtures -John Elkins \* Finance - Robin Cobb [The Treasurer].

We decided that the main events for our 50<sup>th</sup> would be:

\*\* A grand (formal) dinner, scheduled for May 2002, to be organised by Mervyn and Fran. John Walsh will organise a display of archive material to be available at the dinner. The dinner is intended to be for Thames Valley members and their guests and we hope to attract as many past and present members as possible, as well as some friends of the club.

\*\* Krov. I shall try to invite ourselves to Germany, and we assume that it will take place over the first weekend in July 2002. possibly we could go for a longer trip than has been usual, giving us time to see some of the neighbouring sights?

\*\* Claygate Flower show, which we assume will be on Saturday July 26, 2002. We intend to dance (at least) the original programme danced 50 years ago.

\*\* An archive evening (day? weekend?). John Walsh will organise some kind of All Our Yesterdays multi-media, multi-cultural, multi-everything event, provisionally aimed at the depths of winter, i.e. January/February 2003.

\*\* An all-weekend tour of some of Thames Valley's historic locations - for instance the New Forest, Oxfordshire?, Surrey? - scheduled for June 2003. This would be a coach tour starting on Friday night and lasting until Sunday, aimed at Thames Valley members and families/friends. Fran and Merv to organise

\*\* A Day of Dance with Ale on the date of the Claygate Flower Show 2003. Other sides to be invited. Fran and Merv to organise.

I think that's enough detail for now. The organising group will meet regularly to make sure that things are progressing smoothly. Our next meeting will be on March 18, so if you have any ideas or offers of help, please get in touch with one of us before then.

{There was little chance that this would all happen, and so it turned out.}

But things started to happen.

Letter from Graeme Thompson. "Esteemed squire, I'd be delighted to have a stab at it (artwork for 50th products). Actually I've had a few ideas simmering, but as I've made a lifetime study of lethargy I've done nothing about it...however...even now mono images of twined leaves and numerals are dancing before my eyes, and it's only mid-morning! Just remembering old Ron Duncombe (probably wrong spelling, possibly even wrong bloke), who used that 'William Morris' type stuff to decorate Jim's scrapbooks etc, might as well continue the tradition. As it's the 3 month rainy season down here on the isthmus (Cornwall?) I'll bang out a couple of trad ideas and maybe a couple of anarchic ones to startle the traditionalists. You can use or not use as you wish...I've never been precious about that sort of thing, so don't worry I won't be offended if you think my stuff is a pile of crap.' It won't be, but it might not be suitable...sometimes I'm out on a limb somewhere (in design terms, not an outward bound course!)...expect some poo (as we graphics pros call it) in the next coupla weeks. (Graeme sent in three designs, leaning towards his Skill and Strength design, but they weren't used. I don't know why.)

The gang of how many? came up with a date for a Grand Evening at Claygate Village Hall – May 18 (but see below), 2002. The Hall and Caterers were booked. John Cole, broadcaster and old friend of Cyril's accepted an invitation, as did the Squire of the Ring, President Jim Brooks, Roy Dommett.

On October 16 2001 the Squagman reported that "The 50th committee - Fran, Merv, Edward, Robin, John Walsh and I, have been meeting on and off during the year and have actually got somewhere. Fran and Merv are working on the Anniversary Dinner, John W. is collecting archive material, Edward is planning memorabilia, Robin is worrying about cost, and I'm just there for the ride.

Claygate Village Hall is booked for the evening of May 25th, 2002, caterers have been hired and the menu, a hot and cold buffet, will be decided very soon. There'll be a bar, and the Walsh Experience, a multimedia reminiscencerama incorporating 'film, music, photos, artefacts and who knows what else? The Squire of the Ring and John Cole will lead the guests and we want you all to be there.

Unfortunately, we have to charge, but we don't expect the evening will cost more than £20 - £25, including food, a modest amount of wine and all the entertainment, from about 6.30 to midnight. Just to sweeten the pill a bit more, there will be no dancing.

We've had a 50th anniversary badge designed and we intend to knock out some T-shirts/sweatshirts with the logo discreetly displayed, as well as some tankards, possibly glass or pottery, again showing the logo. Edward also plans to produce some small badges and other knick-knacks.

Datchet, East Surrey, Ewell, Yateley, Greensleeves and Spring Grove were invited to send a couple of reps along (at their own expense!).

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Letter from Ron Duncombe, It was very nice to receive the invitation to the TVMM 50<sup>th</sup>. I would have liked to attend. Unfortunately the ailments and infirmities of old age (I shall be 90 by then) do not permit my wife or me to undertake the journey. Please give my apologies to those attending with my best wishes for a successful and enjoyable celebration.

XXXXXXXXXX

May 16, 2002. Dear Squire, Last evening I was a spectator of Yateley Morris as they danced at Coronation Road, Yateley. The Squire said you were celebrating your 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a dinner on Saturday. The information was passed on to me as I had enquired about Thames Valley as my father was Phil Silvester who danced and towards latter years with Thames Valley played the accordion. My mother – Joyce Silvester was also involved in music and dance and the three of us enjoyed going round with the team. Glad to know you're keeping up the tradition – particularly The Boxing Day tour! Congratulations on your 50<sup>th</sup>, Yours sincerely Diana Blues, nee Silvester.

XXXXXXX

Did Dave Dearsley arrange Hogs Back beer?

XXXXXXX

Jenny Jones declined the invitation.

XXXXXX

## THE BIG DAY

**Guests of Honour**, Gerald Willey, Squire of the Ring, Jim Brooks, President of Thames Valley Morris Men, John Cole, Broadcaster and Friend of Thames Valley

**Speakers**, Francis Smith, Master of Ceremonies, John Elkins, Squire of Thames Valley Morris Men, Gerald Willey, John Cole

**TVMM Attendees:** Chad Ashcroft, Godwin Ashcroft, Steve Ashcroft, Lester Bailey, Jim Barclay, Jim Brooks, Paul Brooks, Tim Cawdron, Dick Chaundy, Robin Cobb, Pete Davies, Alan Dean, Dave Dearsley, Roy Dommet, John Elkins, John Farrant, Jack Garwood, Siward Glaister, Allan Goddard, John Hare, Mick Jenkins, Alun Jones, Mark Jones, Peter Jones, Jan Lucas, Dick Keen, Martin Kiff, Stan Kilby, Nick Langston, Tim Langston, Andy Melville, Edward Morris, Nick Oliver, Robert Peace, Chris Ridley, Dennis Salt, Tim Sharp, Fran Smith, Malcolm Snowden, Mervyn Stanley, Angus Stuart, Steve Tovey, Phil Underwood, Mike Vardy, John Walsh, Bill Wakefield.

There were also many friends, relatives and representatives of other sides, but there is no definitive list of who they all were.

The menu for the sit-down meal was (possibly):

Hot Crumbed Salmon/ Vegetable Lasagne / Traditional Greek Moussaka

Mixed Tossed Salmon/ Waldorf Salad/ Egg and Avocado Pasta Salad/Coleslaw/Italienne Salad

Hot New Potatoes/Condiments/Rolls and Butter

Summer Pudding / Chocolate Roularde

Coffee and Tea

There are no records of how the evening went, except “well”.

This is the speech the Squire speech planned to make.

TELEGRAM Dear All, STOP Congratulations on your 50th Anniversary. STOP I am sorry Norma and I cannot share the festivities with you. STOP Have an enjoyable time. STOP We will be thinking of you STOP Cheers for now STOP Ted and Norma Dowling STOP

Thanks Ted. Your reward for sticking your head over the parapet is to get onto the TVMM e-mail list and be bombarded with silly messages.

I've been told that my speech shouldn't last more than 5 minutes, but I'm not sure I can talk for that long. What do you think?

First I'd like to welcome the guests, Gerald Willey, who's the Squire of something or other, and John Cole, broadcaster, friend of Cyril Smith, and Claygate resident. You'll hear from both of them later. And Jim Brooks, who's the president of Thames Valley, was dancing long before Thames Valley was thought of, and is one of our founder members.

Then, before I forget, I would like to thank the organisers of this splendid occasion. Perhaps they'd like to stand up in turn, in case you don't know them.

Mervin Stanley, our main musician, and not really that bad, and Fran Smith, Mr Organisation, who between them got the Hall and the caterers organised.

John Walsh, who has gathered together about 3 million photographs for you to experience tonight.

Edward Morris. What does he do? Oh yes. He gathered all the costumes and bits of old rubbish together. More important he'll be trying to sell you Thames Valley sweatshirts, pint glasses, and badges - which he has commissioned.

Dick Keen. Our treasurer, and hobby horse trainer. You may not want him to see you if you haven't paid for tonight yet.

Kate and Dave Sheppard, who are running the bar, and have the misfortune to be my daughter, son-in-law and Chelsea supporters.

If I've forgotten anyone - tough. At my age the memory fails.

What was I saying?

Oh yes, the serious bit.

Morris dancing changed my life. Or was it Thames Valley? And most of you here (the men that is - come to think of it all the wives and friends as well) will probably say the same.

Some of you have been involved in the Morris all your adult lives, although that may prompt some of the ladies here to question my definition of adult.

I've only been doing it [Morris Dancing that is] since I was past 40. Actually my first contact was with Spring Grove, who I saw dancing by Marks and Sparks in Kingston. Fortunately for them, unfortunately for Thames Valley, I couldn't make their practice sessions, and I was snapped up by my Teddington neighbour John Walsh. So you can blame him.

So my knowledge of the early days of Thames Valley is confined to the recollections of older members. Yes, Fran, I have heard the one about Phil phoning you in Rueil to ask what time you were dancing. And Cyril's Log Books.

I've immersed myself in the log books over the last few months with the idea of writing some kind of Thames Valley History, but there was so much there that the writing hasn't started yet. I have got what I think is as near complete a set of Thames Valley members as we're ever going to get - but I'm still only up to 1977. I'm now thinking that my first project should be to complete the log books, which peter out around 1985. We'll see.

What is clear from the log books is that every new idea I've had as bagman and Squire is an old idea. Over the last fifteen years we've done a bit more foreign travel than before then, and we're less involved in the Morris Ring and the EFDSS than we used to be. Otherwise things

are much the same. People come and go. Dancing standards rise and fall. Old members complain. New members reinvent the wheel. I expect Gerald has seen this happening in every other club he's visited.

I have been told [by the squire of another team who I completely disagree with] that it's a privilege for the public to watch Morris dancing. I think the privilege is mine and ours.

To be able to do silly things in public, to interact with and please audiences, to listen to wonderful music [but don't tell the musicians or they'll get big-headed], to dance as well as we can, and to belong to a club full of character and characters. Those are privileges.

I'm not going to talk about individuals and memories. You'll all be doing that all evening I hope. I just hope you'll have a good time, and that another twenty of you will come to Krov and fill the coach.

I hope to speak to you all during the evening. If not I'll see you all at our 60th in ten years time. John Elkins.

**May 23, The Plough, Coldharbour**, with Ewell St. Mary

**May 26, Blackbrook** - Edward lunchtime tour.

**June 1/3, Bampton** - non-dancing visit arranged by Mervyn

**June 4, Paul Goddard, Pixham jubilee**

**June 15, Jack Straws 25th Birthday**

**July 5-8, Krov.** Once again, to everyone's relief (after our experience with Dave the Prat), we had the services of John the coach, who picked us all up at Siward's on Thursday evening and delivered us to Krov the next morning by way of the Dover ferry. We were scheduled to dance on Friday at 19.30 at the Festzelt (Festival tent), and there again on Saturday at 14.00, followed by a "Kurze Volkstanzeinlagen" at 17.30, optional mass at St. Remigius at 19.00 and the floating stage at 21.00. On Sunday there was a 09.30 Ecumenical Service on the floating stage (I expected that the Langstons would wish to play their organs) and the Procession at 14.00. Plus, of course plenty of free-form sessions in the streets every day. There were groups from Belgium, Switzerland, Netherlands, Bulgaria, Mexico, and about 30 places in Germany, including the blunderbuses.

We probably had a Trossen wine tasting and danced at the Old Folks Home.

Some travelled by peculiar car/plane/train etc.

Indoor campers were warned to assume that they would be sleeping on the school-room floor, and to bring sleeping bags, anti-fart gear, and chat up lines for the buxom Bulgarian girls in the showers. They're the ones with the moustaches - Bulgarian men are usually clean-shaven. BUT, just in case we are given free B&B, think about how you'd like to be seen around your auntie's house after a wild night on the wine.

The Squire wrote "Oh yes - Phil - I wouldn't bother asking John the coach for a pee-stop on the M25 if I were you."

Six TVMM musicians danced and played in a set for the final part of the procession, but which six, (out of Jim, Peter, Nick O, Chris, Fran, Jan, Mervyn and Phil) is lost in the mists of time.

Tim Langston danced in with Jan playing

Present were Jim Barclay, Dave and James Dearsley, John Elkins, Siward and Jenny Glaister, Angela Coombs, Hilary Edgerley, Allan Goddard, Pauline Davis, John Hare, Peter Jones, Dick and Shelley Keen, Martin Kiff and Dorrit, Nicholas Langston, Tim Langston, Jan Lucas, Edward and Maureen Morris, Cheryl Whittington, Nick and Ann Oliver, Chris and Janet Ridley, Fran, Jan and Stuart Smith, Mervyn Stanley, Phil, Anna and Ian Underwood and Robbie Talley, Mike Vardy, John and Linda Walsh stayed in a mixture of B&B and pot luck [did we get the school floor?]. John Hare travelled from Switzerland, Martin and Dorrit from Vienna, Dave Dearsley by car, and Fran's party flew to Luxemburg and drove from there.

**Saturday July 20 Claygate Flower Show / evening at the Foley** "We shall spend the evening of the Claygate Flower Show day at the Foley, dancing, drinking, generally celebrating the 50th anniversary of the actual first public appearance of Thames Valley and, if we wish, kipping overnight in the practice hall".

**July 30, The Cricketers, Horsell**

**August 20, Paul Brooks Tour of Dorking.** "The tour will commence at 7.30 at The Pilgrim and will finish at the end of the evening at The Pilgrim. In between we'll dance at The Pilgrim. Perfect, Paul. If anyone doesn't know where The Pilgrim is, please phone Paul (and then tell me)."

**August 24/25 The Cotswolds**

Saturday August 24th. Assemble at The Daneway, Sapperton from 11.30. Dave Dearsley, who suggested The Daneway, says it's a little difficult to find. Sapperton's easy, a few miles west of Cirencester in the direction of Stroud, on the side of a valley. The Daneway is at the bottom of the Valley near the entrance to the canal tunnel. Good hunting. We'll stay there until about 1.00, and dance whenever we feel like it. Food is available here, but it's also available at The Tunnel House, Coates, where we'll be from about 1.00 until tea time, dancing when we feel like it. By the way, dancing when we feel like it means at least two sessions at each pub. The advertised sessions are, I think, at 12.30 at Sapperton, and 1.30 at Coates. Coates is back towards Cirencester a few miles. Location of The Tunnel House is,

again, mysterious. Tea at The King's Head. Let's try for a mass brew-up if as many as possible can bring kettles, stoves, tea and cake. Target tea-time 4.30. Evening at the King's Head. I had hoped to organise an evening around the skittle alley, but unfortunately it's too far gone to be brought back to life. So we'll dance at 6.00 and then split into the usual factions for the evening.

Sunday August 25th, 12.00 Process from The King's Head to the Mill and dance there (and maybe try to get near the bar). Then Lunchtime (including dancing) at The King's Head. And so to Yanworth Village Hall from 4.00 p.m. for dancing and tea. Time for a short kip and then Dave's walk to Chedworth, starting at around 5.00. All meet up at The Seven Tuns, Chedworth from 6.00 p.m for dancing (from 7.00 p.m.) and posh food.

**September 6/8 St.Helier Ale** I believe the following are all travelling on the 12.55 from Gatwick on Friday: Me, Tim'n'Ninger, Jan (fingers crossed), Fran, Jimbo, John W, Dick, Edward, Allan, Mike, Merv (Inshallah). Chris Ridley is flying direct from Indian Queens to a rocky outcrop off Sark, and swimming the rest of the way, I believe. Siward will do whatever he decides to do. I know of no other firm contenders. Final details of accommodation to follow. St.Helier Morris Men will charge us £45/head for the weekend, but this will mostly be covered by a nice cheque which I have now received from the Jersey Tourist Board.

This must have been the event where I sat at top table bored to death by a long finger in the ear folk song followed, with much relief all round, by Chris Ridley playing and singing The Butcher's Daughter (or something like that).

What else happened?

**September 14 Walton Heritage Day** Walton Riverside in the early afternoon, just like last year, but with a full side this year, I hope. Who wants to come? They said that our five-man team was the hit of the show last year, and they were being serious.

### **September 21, 2002 JIM BROOKS R.I.P.**

Jim died on Wednesday this week and will be cremated at 2.30p.m. on Friday September 27 at Randalls Park Crematorium, Randalls Road, Leatherhead. Jim's family have asked that Thames Valley turn out at the cremation. We will provide a guard of honour as the coffin enters the chapel, our musicians will play The Lord of the Dance, and we'll dance briefly at the crematorium after the cremation. We've also been invited back afterwards to Polyapes Scout Camp, Blundel Lane, Stoke D'Abernon, (Jim's son-in-law is the warden) where I hope we'll do some more dancing. John Elkins, Squire and Bagman

We gave Jim Brooks a good send off, with Oddington and Bampton at the crematorium and a mixed bag afterwards, including an impromptu Lord of the Dance, Oddington suggested by Roy Dommett. [This dance was subsequently adopted by Thames Valley as a Bledington dance, and named "Jim Brooks",

Jim's wife Kathy wrote: We all thank you very much indeed for the lovely flowers, messages of sympathy and most of all for dancing in memory of Jim. He would have been very proud of you all. A special thank you to Mervyn for playing and leading the coffin in and also all of you for forming a guard of honour to Jim. With love to you all and happy dancing from Kathy and family.

Some memories of Jim follow.

\* Blessings upon Jim...a very kind and gentle man. when I was 9 my schoolteacher Mrs..Ellis taught some of us lads ,bean-setting, at Ashford church of England School. I forgot all about it til at age 21, sipping tea at Runnymede I saw Datchet dance and remembered. By a roundabout way I became involved with Thames Valley, and finding myself seated beside Jim one Saturday evening at 'Sandy Balls' told him how I'd first encountered the Morris at school. Jim was overjoyed...it turned out he'd been a carpenter working on the school roof and Mrs Ellis, hearing that he danced the Morris approached him for advice on what dance to teach we young lads .... and Jim furnished her with all the instructions and music. So ore of his planted seeds at least grew to harvest over 20 years! ... a fondly remembered gentleman, good wishes, graeme thompson.

\* \* \*

The sad news of Jim's death has just reached me. Can you please pass my condolences to those concerned. I danced with Thames Valley from about 1952, when the squire was Christopher Penton and bagman Cyril Smith. I became less regular when I started as a student at Nottingham in 1956, but continued to go on their summer trips (Isle of Arran, Glen Coe, ...) for several years. I always remember Jim's knowredge and friendliness, and interest in promoting the morris. A real gentleman.

\* \* \*

John, I will be reflecting with fond memories but unfortunately not at the funeral. Jim's tunes will surely be Oddington. Perhaps Andy will dance the jig !? Celebrate with a fine 'Bonny Green' and reflect on the fertility that all that cake engendered. Rgds Peter J

\*\*\*

We should certainly do an Oddington. Jim travelled round with Dommet (who is also expected to die soon, I'm afraid) teaching the tradition. He said he was "Kimber to Dommet's Sharp" and was justifiably proud of what he had done. Steve A

\*\*\*

John, He loved the Princess Royal, Bampton, which I danced at the exhibition, and which he revisited with me, together with the Fool's Jig, for the Flower Show this year. It was the Oddington Jigs that he personally revived from Carey's notes, so I regard them as his achievement for which he will be remembered in the Morris. Hope this helps and that the day is a loving and peaceful one. I'll be there in spirit. Phil

\*\*\*

**Tuesday, November 12th. The AGM. starting at 8.00 p,m. at The Foley.**

(MINUTES NOT FOUND)

Present. Edward, John E, Dick, Merv, Mike V, Tim L, Champ, Steve T, John W, Alan G, John F, Fran, Paul B.

Farrier. Animals in fine fettle 20 sticks ready for use, 20 rough in stock.



Ragman. Jenny Jones had agreed to make kit for another year. Has enough kit for six sets. Spent something like £300 over the year including Blob lapel badges, sweatshirts, tankards for the 50<sup>th</sup>. Stock 12 hats, 7 garlands.

The Squagman reported that seven events had been cancelled for various reasons including - Hocktide, the Black Cherry Fair, an Oxfordshire coach tour, and the Yateley Day of Dance. There were only about 12 regular members out of 30 "active". Some practices didn't take place at all. Would the Foley notice and rescind our free room hire? Small numbers meant a small repertoire, Headington and Ilmington, but falling back regularly on Bampton and Fieldtown. Blue Streak and The Gay Dance now well established. Christmas carols dusted down.

Standard of dancing. Several favourable comments, but never know whether they're really saying Good considering, or actually good. The spirit was still good however.

Elections: John Elkins continued as Squagman. Dick Keen continued (?) as Treasurer. Paul Brooks replaced Edward Morris as Ragman.

A note "**TVMM - The next generation - where do we go from here?**", drafted by Mervyn was circulated and discussed. Here it is.

Where are we now? We cannot continue for much longer with the current small central core of dancers. Keeness and love of morris dancing plus the company of our friends will take us so far but then reality has to kick in. Most of our dancers are not fit or young enough, so that we could lose some at any moment through injury. Some may well move away from the central core in the relatively near future. We are a mixture of experienced and less experienced dancers and have a very small pool of dancers for normal activities. We have had very few new members in recent years. We can call on a larger pool of experienced dancers for big events such as Krov, Boxing Day, Jersey. We are not blessed with as many musicians as we were, say, five years ago. We need more.

Where do we want to be? That depends on what direction we think the club should take for the future. We have several options.

1. Status Quo. We could continue as we are now, and let things gradually decline
2. Big Events Only. We could decide to stop regular practices and "normal" fixtures and come together only for big events such as Ring meetings, Boxing Day, Krov etc. We could meet up to practice a few weeks prior to these events. It is worth remembering that Bampton and Headington exist on just such a basis. Nothing to stop us still meeting up on a regular social basis, for instance at the Foley, to 'chew-the-fat.' Obviously we would have to retain some sort of committee structure if we intend to follow the big events.
3. The Big Bang. We could decide to self-destruct. With fifty years and a grand history behind us maybe this is as far as we need go?
4. Get New Members. It's no good just saying that. We'd have to go after new members in an aggressive fashion. Advertise and display in Colleges and Universities. These have always been the breeding grounds for art and culture. Set up satellite sides, as Cyril Smith did with Ewell St.Mary's and Spring Grove, and Ted Dowling with Yateley, and encourage them to join Thames Valley. We also need new musicians. Could we borrow musicians from other sides, or from outside the Morris world and encourage them to stay on?

5. Bring on the Ladies. Become a mixed side and admit women, for instance Countryside. If we bring on the ladies we would have to re-assess our relationship with the Federation and the Ring.

How do we get there? Assuming that we want to stay in business, we have to find new dancers and musicians soon. How? We could turn invitations to dance into opportunities to recruit by persuading PTAs and Churches to form their own sides with the help of TVMM dancers and musicians. We could try the same approach at Colleges and Universities by offering Morris courses. We should be much more welcoming to new members who happen to turn up. Regard them as gold. To date we have not been welcoming enough to newcomers. We should welcome and encourage any kind of musician to join us. Variety is refreshing.

Who will do the work? Always the big question, but we have a pool of keen, experienced enthusiasts who could cope with most of what we might decide to do - if they're prepared to devote some time.

No need to reinvent the wheel. Other clubs have faced and are facing similar problems. Many sides have come back from the brink. How did they do it? Let's ask them and copy their success. As the Japanese have said for decades, 2Duccess means that at first you only have to copy the best.

Mervyn's note was discussed at length and there many suggestions about what we should do about it . . . . .

**Tuesday October 15th. Ale Tasting** at The Talbot, Ripley.

**Sunday, October 20th. Fran's Aunt's Tour.** We met at the Fox, Newfound, between Basingstoke and Overton for dancing and lunch. Then to Oakley Hall Nursing home to dance for Fran's aunt and her friends.

**Saturday November 30th. Claygate Christmas Lights.**

**November 25 2002**

### **SIWARD GLAISTER R.I.P.**

Siward died last Thursday and will be cremated on Monday December 2 at Woking Crematorium at 10.00 a.m.

Jenny wants us all to turn up in Morris kit and to dance Glaister's Gambol, Shave the Donkey and Bonny Green.

Afterwards we are invited to All Saints Church Hall, at the end of Woodham Lane, where it meets the Six Cross Roads Roundabout.

Jenny would also like there to be no flowers, but please make donations to the British Heart Foundation.

I had announced at the AGM on November 12 that Siward had agreed to be our President in succession to Jim Brooks.

John Elkins Squire and Bagman

**Boxing Day**

## 2003 LOG

**Tuesday, January 7. The Foley.** The first of a series of “free 4-week evening classes advertised for beginners at the Foley Arms on Tuesday evenings starting on January 7, February 4 and March 4 aimed at recruiting new dancers and musicians. Leaflets were delivered in Claygate, Dorking, Oxshott, and Cobham, Esher, Weston Green, Molesey, Leatherhead, Walton. An acrimonious debate sprang up about whether any women attending the classes would be allowed to join Thames Valley. It had been agreed at the AGM that TVMM would stay all-male and, in the event, very few people attended (four in total) and no women (or men) applied for membership.

**January 10/12. Weekend with Trigg Morris Men (Cornwall).** Trigg MM invited Thames Valley to join their celebrations of The Feast of St Hygenus, on Saturday January 11<sup>th</sup>, which was also the anniversary of Christopher Penton’s birthday. He had been the first squire of TVMM as well as a subsequent member of Trigg. There would be a birthday cake, and a toast to his memory in his favourite drink - rum-and-shrub – at the Old Inn at St.Breward on Bodmin Moor.

The evening took the form of songs, music, dancing, recitations and a Mummers Play. To avoid straining the resources, and the hospitality of Trigg most of the party of fifteen booked in to a Bed and Breakfast organised by Dick near Chris Ridley’s home at St.Columb. We drank in a pub in Bodmin on Friday evening – but no-one went into the folk club out the back. The squire didn’t want to and the rest were too scared to go on their own.

At Chris’s invitation we wassailed his apple trees on Saturday morning. This involved “making a lot of noise, singing a local tree-wassailing song, firing off poppers (we don’t own guns) and drinking mulled cider”. Peter Jones brought a shot gun which he loosed off into an apple tree a couple of times while we sang: “Old appletree we wassail thee and hope that thou will bear, Hatfuls, capfuls, three bushel bagfuls and little heaps under the stairs, etc etc. On Sunday at lunchtime we danced and had lunch at The Blisland Inn before driving back to London.

Mervyn, Mike, Dick, Alan, John E., Fran, Edward,

Peter Jones were there.

**Sunday, April 6. John Walsh lunch time tour of Teddington.** The Masons’ Arms and The Queen Adelaide.

**Thursday, May 1. St.George’s Day.** We were spotted dancing in Surbiton and head hunted for the first of several patriotic evening events for The Artists Rifle Association. They paid us £200 and we joined in their evening of “Roast Beef along with Bangers, Bunting, Beer and Bard; Poetry, Puddings and Pies; Music and Dance; Gifts and Guest Appearances; English Wine and Roses.” All with the theme of England and Englishness.” Because the Artists Rifles had merged over the years into the SAS we were not told exactly where the event would take place until close to the day – for security reasons – and had to submit names and car numbers in advance to be allowed access to the Regents Park barracks, where the event took place. We also had to limit our squad to ten. Dress for the punters was “Smart Casual, Party Dress, Smock, Green Tights, Codpiece”, but we were allowed to dress as Morris Men. Steve T,

Fran, John W, Dick, Tim L, Steve A, Lester, Paul. John E, Edward and Mike V ate, drank and entertained the troops.

Excerpt from The Morris Ring Newsletter - No. 29 – July / August 2003 Lester Bailey reports on his activities [and hence those of his several teams!!!] “05:30 Got up 06:15 Played for Aldbury (my current team) at Aldbury at the official Aldbury sunrise of 06:15 (Excuse is that Aldbury village is under the shadow of the Chilterns and the sun really does not appear until 06:15 in the village). 07:30 Red Lion, Coleshill for breakfast and beer played for Grand Union Morris (my previous team) then tunes in the bar and more beer. 12:00 Red Lion, Little Missenden played for Grand Union and for Woodside, more beer and dancing until 15:00. 19:00 - 23:00 playing for Thames Valley (my first team) at a gig in central London for the Artist's Rifles, who turned out to be the 21<sup>st</sup> SAS Regiment for their English evening (even more beer). 01:30 Went to bed. Back at work 07:00 Tuesday slightly the worse for wear.”

**Sunday, May 4. Kew Gardens.** As part of a 'Woodland Wonders' event “celebrating woodland skills such as besom broom making, charcoal burning, pole lathe turning and basket making” we were hired to be part of the traditional entertainments, “such as storytelling, wandering minstrels and morris men”. We danced for money, a packed lunch and unlimited tea and coffee in the Bluebell Gardens near Queen Charlotte’s Cottage. Fifteen minute dance spots at 12.30, 1.30, 2.30, and 3.30. Our families got in free. The interim list was Mervyn, Steve A., Dave D., John E, Fran, John W. A few more did turn up, including Julian from Yateley. In her thankyou letter the Adult Education Co-ordinator noted: “We loved all the different tree depictions on your waistcoats – perfect gear for dancing at Kew Gardens”.

**Thursday, May 8. Oxshott.** Morris demonstration for 1st Oxshott Rainbows. John E, Robin? Jan?

**Sunday, May 18. Woking Hospice** Lunchtime pub stop plus the Hospice Flower Festival.

**Thursday, May 22. Coldharbour.** An evening with Ewell St.Mary Morris Men at The Plough.

**May 30/June 1 Weekend. Thaxted Ring Meeting.** “Thaxted went well and it was good to have Champ, Chris Ridley and Nick Langston with us. It was also good to meet up again with Standon, who were on our tour. Blazing hot weather on Saturday, Adnam's and Ridley's, and we also shared our tour with Greensleeves and Cambridge. Our show dance was Blue Streak - I think - it was hard to see what was going on in the advancing twilight. But the sound of falling sticks gave us a clue as to where we should be.” (I don’t think the assembled masses realised that we weren’t trying too hard to catch the sticks.) The full side was, probably John E., Dick, Tim, Edward, Fran, Mervyn, John W. plus the three mentioned above.

**Sunday, June 8. Cobham.** The Running Mare, Till Green, for lunch and a little dancing. Then down the road to Cobham Mill.

**Wednesday, June 18. Richmond/Twickenham.** The White Cross, Richmond and The Barmy Arms with Spring Grove, Ewell, Yateley etc by the riverside in the evening.

**Saturday, June 21. The Swan at Walton.** Edward is being mysterious about what will happen but is promising a full evening's entertainment! Did that include a tour of The Manor?

**Saturday, July 12. Black Cherry Fair, Chertsey.** We assembled at 10.00 a.m., skipped the procession and danced at various pubs selected by Mervyn. Dick, Fran, Phil (no not that one, the other one), Robin, (no not that one, the other one), Edward, Tim, JohnW, John E, Merv.

**Saturday, July 19. Claygate Flower Show, and the five Claygate pubs.** A walking tour of The Swan, The Winner, The Griffin (lunch stop), The Hare and Hounds, two spots at the Flower Show, The Foley and then to the Old School for the evening – as part of the TVMM birthday celebrations. Yateley and Spring Grove were with us for the day and Ewell joined us in the evening after their Day of Dance. The News and Mail described the musical entertainment provided at the show by the 1<sup>st</sup> Claygate Scout and Guide Band, the Chadsworth Stage School, Zoe Bennett's Danzclub "who have performed alongside Benny Hill, Les Dennis and the Two Ronnies" and . . . .not a mention of TVMM.

**Tuesday, July 29. Evening tour of Weybridge Heath.** The British Volunteer and The Mitre.

**Tuesday, August 19. Evening at The Castle, Ottershaw.**

**August 22/24. Cotswolds weekend, Withington. Saturday:** 12.30 The New Inn, Coln St Aldwyns. 1.30 The Keepers Arms, Quenington. Lunch at The Victoria, Eastleach, then the Eastleach Fete. 7.00 The Kings Head. **Sunday:** 12.00 Process from The Kings Head to The Mill. 1.00 The Kings Head. 3.30 The Village Hall, Yanworth. The tea ladies have decided not to do teas for the punters - but did decide, without being asked, to put on teas for us. So I'm hoping for a large TVMM crowd to say thankyou. 7.00 The Seven Tuns, Chedworth.

**Tuesday, September 2. Evening at The Plough, Cobham.**

**Saturday, September 13. Walton Heritage Day.** We're dancing this Saturday for the Walton Heritage Day. When I say we, I mean a very small band – Robin, Dick, Edward, Phil, Me. Looks like Four Man Morris again. I don't think this event has ever seen a full side and it would be nice to surprise them. If you can turn out please let me know, or just turn up at The Old Manor pub – just up the road from The Swan – at about 1.00 p.m. We're due to dance on the river-front at about 2.00 to 2.30.

"It seems a long time ago now, but a few of us had a merry time at Walton Heritage Day a few Saturdays ago. As usual we weren't quite a full side, in fact I think the Walton folk would be flabbergasted to know that Morris can also be performed by six dancers simultaneously".

**Friday, October 10. The Bagman's Night Out, The Greek Vine, Claygate.** Robin A (2). Tim C (2), John E (2), Dick (2), Tim (2), Jenny, Andy (2), Edward, Fran (2), Mervyn, Phil (2), Steve T (2). 20 people

**Tuesday, October 28. Ale Tasting, Ripley.**

**Saturday, November 1. Kingston.** Musical evening at the United Reform Church, Kingston-on-Thames.

**Tuesday, November 11. The Foley. The AGM.** Edward, Dick, John E, Robin, Paul, Fran, Champ, Steve T, Peter, Nick, Robert.

A small band attended this exciting event - here are a few highlights.

\* Paul agreed to take over from Edward as Ragman.

- \* Finances remain in good shape.
- \* Dick and I remain in office.
- \* Steve will look after web information.
- \* Nick suggested getting rapper going again.
- \* We will advertise again for new members.

*“The AGM voted to keep me as Squagman, and Dick Keen as Treasurer. Edward decided to hand over his rags of office after several years in post, because he and Maureen are planning to move out of the area this year. Paul Brooks has agreed to take over as Ragman. Steve Tovey took up the web mantle and is constructing a new website as I write.”*

**Saturday, November 29. Claygate Christmas Lights.** Assemble at The Foley at lunchtime, eat, drink, practice, dance in the Parade at 4.00 p.m.

**Friday, December 26. Claygate.** Boxing Day Tour of The Swan, The Foley, The Hare, The Winner, The Griffin.

Dear all, For those who were elsewhere, a few words about Boxing Day. The day dawned mild, but wet; nevertheless 17 brave souls ventured forth to dance the Morris through Claygate. At the Swan Robin Aitken danced in, and at the Foley, our longest-serving apprentice finally bit the bullet and danced in as well, well done Eddie! As continuing Squagman, John E danced through to the tune of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer at the Hare & Hounds, which was then followed by the surprise presentation of a plaque to Fran Smith marking an unbroken run of 40 Boxing Days with TVMM - come on Fran, go for the half century!!

The roll of honour for the day is as follows (kick me if I missed anyone), in more or less alphabetical order: Robin Aitken, Jim Barclay, Paul Brooks, Tim Cawdron, John Elkins, Alan Goddard, Dick Keen, Tim & Nick Langston, Eddie Morris, Andy Melville, Fran Smith, Mervyn Stanley, Malcom Snowden, Steve Tovey, Phil Turner (new apprentice!) and John Walsh. We were greeted at the Griffin by Robin (the other one) but as he was in civvies, that does not count. The bag for the day was £316, better than last year, but less than 2001, when the sun shone on us.

5 January 2004. Dear John (Squire), Officers and Men of Thames Valley Morris Men

**BOXING DAY 2003**

A formal letter to say thank you for the plaque that was presented to me on Boxing Day. I am thrilled with the thought that was behind it, and particularly for the chosen picture showing me as young and athletic! All is vanity Smith but I love the plaque which has pride of place in our lounge. I will treasure and enjoy it all my days. I count myself as most fortunate and privileged to have danced for forty years, and still be dancing, with such splendid companions. The Morris is important and with you all I am totally committed to the continuance of TVMM. My thanks again for such a thoughtful gesture. Fran

## 2004 LOG

**Friday, April 23. St. George's Day with the Artists Rifles.** We assembled at the Royal Court Tavern in Sloane Square. There were real pubs in the area, but they involved wandering down side streets, with the risk of Morris Men finding themselves in pubs that brew their own and not wanting to come out again. We then proceeded to the Centre Block, The Duke of York's Barracks, in King's Road, where we were fed and watered before dancing. The squad was Mervyn, Dick, Tim, John E., John W., Steve, Nick, Paul. [Was this the night of the birds of prey flying along the dinner table?]

**Saturday, May 1. Jack in the Green, Hastings.** After much toing and froing three men stayed overnight on Friday and Saturday in the Dance Studio, and the rest of the party travelled down and back on Saturday. The squad was Robin, Dick, Steve, Phil, Fran, Edward, Nick, John E and John W and we were joined by Pete Davis on the day. Sunshine all the afternoon in Hastings. [Note from the organiser: Paul, our treasurer, is tying up loose ends before our AGM next week. Did Thames Valley sleep over in Hastings at all? If so, may I have £3 per person per night, cheques payable to Hastings Jack in the Green at 28 Fairstone Close, Hastings TN35 5EZ. If no one did or you've already paid and I'm having a blonde moment, could someone let me know soonest, please? Many thanks, Fee]

**Sunday, May 2. Kew, Woodland Wonders.** Sunshine all day at Kew on Sunday with some very welcome help from Yateley and Spring Grove.

**Sunday, May 16. Windsor Ladies day of dancing – Henley.** John W, Mervyn, Steve, Jim, Phil, Robin, Paul, Dick, Tim, Nick.

**Thursday, May 20. The Plough, Coldharbour with Ewell MM.**

**Tuesday, May 25. The Volunteer/Mitre, Weybridge.**

**Tuesday, June 15. The Plough, Byfleet.**

**Tuesday, June 22. The Old Manor, Walton.** A good session at the Old Manor on a rainy evening, but we managed to find a large static umbrella and an overhanging tree in the back yard that just fitted the bill. Of course the evening was made even better by Denmark and Sweden drawing 2-2.

**Sunday, July 4. Long Ditton Fair.** We dance at the Fair at 3.00 p.m. and I expect tea and sandwiches and cake, and possibly beer. The nearest pub is, I think, the Plough and Harrow, and I'll try to fix up a dance spot there, or if not at another nearby pub across lunchtime. Numbers are tight: Mervyn, Robin, Jimbo, Me, Dick, John W and, possibly, Edward and Steve. So a couple of firm extras would be good.

**Saturday, July 17. Claygate Flower Show.** A tour of Claygate pubs (minus The Swan and possibly the Winner) with Spring Grove, lunching at The Griffin and ending up either at the Flower Show or the Foley. So the whole day should not last longer than from 12.00 until about 5.00 p.m.

**Saturday, July 24. Dr Johnson's House, Gough Square, off Fleet Street.** Nick Langston was working at the house and was asked if we could dance there. An offer of £100 towards travel costs sealed the deal.

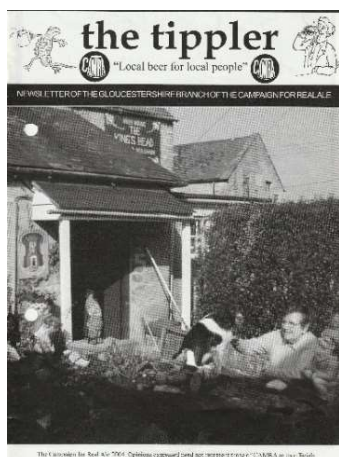
**Tuesday, July 27. The Feathers, Laleham.**

**Friday, August 13. The Old Plough, Stoke d'Abernon.**

**Tuesday, August 17. The Barley Mow, Shepperton.**

**August 27/29. The Cotswolds.** Saturday: The Crown at Frampton Mansell, lunch at the Daneway, Sapperton. Then the King's Head, at 7.00. A gentle Saturday, followed by a gentle Sunday: process from the King's Head to the Mill, dance at The Mill, return to the King's Head and dance again. No tea stop, because the Yanworth ladies didn't want to do it this year, so tea in the field and dancing at the Seven Tunas at Chedworth in the evening.

**Fellow Kings Headers,** I am sad to read that this may be our "last" Cotswold Weekend - I shall certainly be carrying on the tradition post any TVMM visits - as a private imbiber! Unfortunately, as some of you are aware, I am currently working a 4 week on – 4 week off contract in Kazakhstan (they play rugby but their version of morris involves slaughtering several Yaks after fermenting and drinking the milk then invading China!) So I will be in sunny Aksai instead of (probably) rainy Withington - but will be raising a glass or two of Vodka (£1.50 a litre!) to a successful weekend (for you not me). That said - Jane will be attending on the Sunday to represent the Melville family also to inspect kit and report to me on dancing (and drinking) standards!! Pass the milk churn and good dancing! Andrew Melville.



**September 2/7. Poitiers.** Fran Smith writes: "TVMM had known John Baker (John the Coach) for many years, travelling on his coach on Yateley Day of Dance tours, on journeys to the dance festival in Krov and on other occasions. John and his partner Jill happened to live very close to us in Ash, and owned a chateau in France, near Poitiers and he was keen that TVMM should have a short break there. After some debate and "mixed" communication the trip went ahead with our party travelling in John's coach with John driving. (Unfortunately Jill died just before our French trip.)

The party was :- Mike Vardy and Jill Jones, Margaret and Tony Brown, Julian and Sue Neaser, Phil and Lesley Turner, Jenny Glaister, Fran and Jan Smith, John Farrant and Maggie Lawrance, Rod and Jinny Crane, Edward and Maureen Morris, Dick, Sheila and Shelly Keen, Angela Coombs, Pauline Davies and Alan Goddard.

We started after meeting at Jen's house 416 Woodham Lane on Thursday, and then travelled to France with an overnight ferry. When we arrived at the chateau we found that it was in a state of renovation and far from finished. Most of the party stayed in the chateau, some camping, but a group were accommodated together in the village nearby. I vividly remember that on arrival John had to dispose of a hornets' nest above the main door to his property. I was sorry to see the hornets destroyed but they have formidable stings and they were in the wrong place.

We had a scratch side and did some dancing locally, not a lot, but the main event was an Arabian Meshwi in John's garden where we roasted a whole lamb and people from the village together with the Mayor visited. A very successful occasion taking up most of the day with lots of eating, drinking and dancing. A good deal of the shopping, cooking etc was



undertaken by Jan, Jen, Angela and Maggie. Also memorable was that five ladies of Countryside danced with us, namely Maggie, Jen, Jill, Angela and Pauline. I think that was the last time that ladies of Countryside, in their costume, danced.

Despite being somewhat chaotic on occasion in the event we had a very happy and memorable trip returning home on the following Monday. Sadly we have had very little contact with John Baker since but I think he may now be living in his French home with his beloved Jill's ashes scattered in the garden.

**Saturday, September 18. Yateley Day of Dance.**

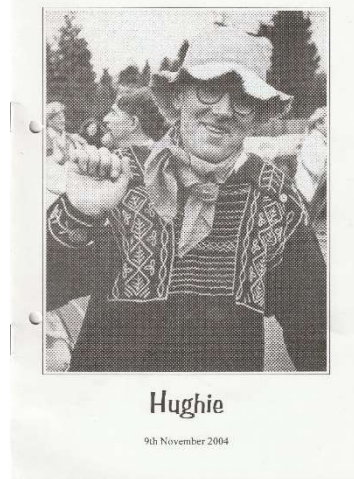
**Wednesday, November 3. Ale Tasting at the Talbot, Ripley.**

**November, 1. Letter from the Squire**

**HUGHIE GIBSON R.I.P.**

Hughie died last Thursday and will be cremated in Taunton on Tuesday November 9th. Hilda would like as many dancers and musicians as possible to turn up, and I hope that TVMM will be there in force, and in kit. The cremation will take place at 2.00 p.m. in Taunton, followed by a wake at the Church House in Crowcombe.

Hilda has booked a double slot at the crematorium to allow dancing and music, and the plan is for Brian Heaton the Abbots Bromley until the coffin comes in, when switch, with as many musicians as want to play, to Delight. Hilda would like us to dance Shepherd's Bampton at the crematorium, and one of Hughie's jigs. Sounds as if there'll also be time to do more After that the plan is to spend the afternoon (and the evening?) at the Church House, playing, dancing, and eating home made food - all contributions welcomed. There are some local musicians who expects to be there.



Hilda time for to play he will Queen's Hey, favourite dancing.

singing

Hilda

\*John, A sad, sad event but I will be there to celebrate the life and times of a great guy. I would be honoured to be included in Q.D music ensemble. Jim B.

\*John, I have cancelled my part in the dinner I was intending to attend and will be, Inshallah, at my old friend's funeral. Mervyn.

\*John, Received this in Taipei en route Columbo. Very sad news and would like to attend the funeral. But as I am not due back for a week this is not likely to be possible. Could you please send my sympathy to Hilda and advise if flowers (unlikely I would think) or something else would be appropriate. Thanks, and best wishes to all, David

\*John, Not yet sure whether I can be there. But Blob and I danced-in on a Wheatley Shepherds Hay double act and if Blob can still do it then so can I. Dave

\*Think I can be there. Also, SH Wheatley is one of the few dances I can do at the moment because it doesn't have things like galleys in it. Steve A

\*John, Thank you for letting me know this sad news. Please include me on the mailing for the funeral arrangements and I will try to come. Best wishes Phil

\*John, I was sad to hear the news, Hughie was always good company and will be missed by all that knew him. Please let me know the funeral arrangements, If we can field a side I will be happy to join, and if not I think I would like to attend anyway. Malcolm]

It's not recorded who actually did turn up, but I recall that we danced on the altar space in the crematorium and at length in at the reception in the Church House in Crowcombe. Mervyn and John E. hatched a plot to instal Chris Ridley to take over the vacant position of President and confronted him on the spot. He wriggled a bit but accepted.

**Tuesday, November 9. Contribution by Chris Seager-Thomas.**

A FOOL, BERK OR IDIOT. OR JUST UNLUCKY? THE STORY OF A DAY.

Wake up wide eyed (nearly) and bushy tailed. Swallow cup of tea and check out decided route on the computer. Check all "luggage" into car and crucify another cup of tea. Off we go for a day or two in the country. Mistake 1 - left reading glasses at home.

Off we go. M25 first, not going too badly for about a mile. Then it turns into Wembley Stadium car park on Cup Final day. Make it to the A3 exit, get off thinking to go through Woking towards the M3. Went south and ended up in Ripley. Headed to Woking and got hopelessly lost looking for the motorway. I'm not sure where I went. Anyway, made the M3. Nice trot down, however, a monsoon breaks out shortly before I hit the A303. Have to stop because the wipers won't shift the water in time. PANIC!!!!!!

Anyway, got going and on to the 303. Feeling better passing Stonehenge, which -was bathed in sunlight - wish I had a camera with me. Further down the 303 was a major accident, small van on one side of the road, car in the ditch the other side, two Police cars and an ambulance accompanied by a major traffic jam. Got past that and carried on.

BIG PANIC!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The clock in the car was moving on rapidly and I thought I would not make my destination on time. A very rare time check came onto the radio and I found the car clock was an hour out - who forgot to turn it back in October? Me.

Still, I got where I was going. Found a pub and requested directions. They kindly gave them to me. Yippee!!!! Made it in time. Off to Crematorium. Nobody there. Inquired in the office and they had not heard of Hugh. Went back to my car. Sat down and looked at a map - I'm in Yeovil!!!!!!

MEGA PANIC!!

Hot footed to Taunton, but too late. Try to find a road to Crowcombe. Get lost again! I find a YMCA. The manager gives me directions and I finally find the Church House. I have been on the road for around 5 hours. Meet and remake old acquaintances and meet old friends. Fran kindly gave me a copy of the funeral pamphlet - thank you. Unfortunately there was not enough room in the hall to jest. A tin of Guinness and two glasses of water later I decide to leave at around 5-30 p.m. Get lost again. Ask directions at a pub and set off again. Get lost for a bit and end up in Devon. Find my way to Taunton, do two or three laps of the town before finding an intelligent road sign only to find the junction to the A303 closed. Follow the diversion signs and get lost again. Ask for directions at yet another pub. Finally make the A303. Monsoon time again! Finally reach the M3 and miss my turning as the signs are obscured by rain. End up in Sunbury.

Home at 11-30 p.m. My feet hurt so I go to take off my shoes and find they were the wrong way round i.e. left on right foot Two huge Scotch's. Bed.

In the words of the folk song "Martin said to his man" "Who's the fool now!" C S-T

**November 16, 2004. Letter from Hilda Gibson.**

Dear, Dear THAMES VALLEY,

I cannot thank you enough for the marvellous send off you gave to my Hughie, I don't think it could have been better. To see you all arrive on a Tuesday lunchtime just as if it had been a Saturday or Sunday afternoon cheered my heart so much. It must have been quite difficult for you to arrange, I do applaud your efforts. I hope I can still retain the position of Honorary Morris Moll, I don't want to hang up the Green Garters yet and hope to turn out and support you sometime in the future, maybe at Withington on August Bank Holiday. I love all Morris Men, Yours, Hilda Gibson.

**Tuesday, November 16. The Foley. AGM** Attended by Paul, John W, John H, Phil, Edward, Fran, Robin, Steve, Kim B, Dick, John E.

### **Letter from the Squire.**

#### **CHRIS RIDLEY IS PRESIDENT OF TVMM**

Chris agreed to be our President over the water (the Tamar, I believe) at Hughie's funeral, and was unanimously welcomed at the AGM in November.

Other exciting news from the AGM was that all the officers were re-elected. In case you've forgotten who we are:

Dick Keen     Treasurer

Paul Brooks   Ragman

Steve Tovey   Webspinner

John Elkins   Squire and Bagman

Hughie's funeral went as well as we all hoped, with plenty of dancing in and at the crematorium, and at the very atmospheric Church House in Crowcombe.

Since then we've graced (!!!!!) a medieval banquet at The Vine in Chertsey and the switching on of the Christmas Lights in Claygate - in the presence of the minuscule Elaine Page.

Next, if you receive this quickly, is Boxing Day, which we interpret as December 26, whatever the calendars say. We're not exactly desperate for dancers, but let's just say that I'm investigating the possibility of shipping Andrew Melville back from Kazakhstan for the day. Unfortunately Edward, Fran and Mervyn can't be there, but the rest of us will just have to dance a bit more won't we?

The venues are, as usual: The Swan - 11.30; The Foley - 12.15; The Hare and Hounds - 1.00; The Winning Horse - 2.00; The Griffin - 2.30.

I tried to get us into Krov next year but had a reply saying that it was too soon since our last visit, in 2003. I pointed out that our last visit was actually in 2002, but I haven't heard back. But we have lots of exciting prospects nevertheless.

\* Feast of St.Hygenus/Christopher Penton's birthday - Bodmin - Jan 11

\* Kennet Ale - February 19

\* Aldbury Ale - February 25

\* Jack in the green Hastings - May Bank Holiday

- \* Kew Gardens - woodland wonders - same weekend
- \* Broadwood Day of Dance - may7
- \* June 3/5 Thaxted Ring Meeting
- \* June 12 - Cobham Mill
- \* June 18 - Hardwick Barn
- \* June 18 Dorking Rotary event
- \* June 22 Spring Grove Richmond/Twickenham evening
- \* Claygate Flower Show
- \* The Cotswolds
- \* Yateley Day of Dance - Sep 10
- \* Ale Tasting - November 3

We won't end up doing all of them of course, particularly since the regulars at the AGM agreed that we should do less weekend dancing and more dancing out on Tuesday evenings in the summer.

De Fortuniis Ripariensis (I think that means news about TVMM, but it's a long time since I did Latin).

John Hare has moved back from Switzerland to Byfleet. In protest Ted Dowling has moved to a Scottish island, I forget which one. But he danced at Hughie's wake before departing. After sustained attacks from armour-piercing moths Robert Peace has sold his yellow beetle after a relationship lasting 32 years. Prize for the slowest journey to Hughie's wake goes to Chris Seager-Thomas, who left Ashstead at 9.15, arrived at about 5.00, and left again at around 6.00. I believe Chris visited two crematoria and several remote counties on the way.

And finally, can I share with you the news that the world as we know it is coming to an end. The proof? On the bottom of a set of Fred and Ginger DVDs which I've just got there is the following message: "Contains mild sexual innuendo and very mild violence." Please excuse me while I go outside to be mildly violent.

Latest address list attached - please let me know of any mistakes.

Happy end-of-year celebrations (but don't call it Christmas),

**Saturday, December 4. Claygate Lights**

**December 26. Boxing Day, Claygate.** Swan, Foley, Hare, Winner, Griffin.

**February 2005 To all Thames Valley Morris Men**

I'm delighted to be chosen as your new President; thank you all- so much. Somehow this honour connects me to the "old boys" I danced with in the fifties and sixties, men like George Lawrence and Norman Keam. They danced the morris as though it was activity that belonged to them -- it was their right. They weren't doing something "unusual-" or time-filling or even as a hobby; they danced because they regarded it as part of their normal lives. Norman I believe was the finest dancer Thames Valley has ever had, before or since: compact, springy,

with perfect timing, he was always the first to make up a set and never seemed tired. He was taught -- as indeed we all were -- by Christopher Penton who'd learned it from Kenworthy Scofield who'd been taught by Cecil Sharp; Thames Valley is in a direct line with the genuine traditional dancers of the Cotswolds. This is why Thames Valley should never forget their honourable line of descent. Of course the side is getting older, but I believe the name, and hopefully the style, even its renegade outlook, should continue in some form, even if it comes down through just a few men only. Always we should remember that Thames Valley is special, different, perhaps even arrogant; and we should endeavour not only to continue these qualities but to teach them to others whenever we see the possibility. Such opportunities occur whenever we are "before the public" (dancing, observing, apres-morris) -- we should remember that it is impact that will make people stop and watch. In fact my first "edict" as President might be to ask every member to strive for impact in your dancing and performances, and remember your pride in your side and its history.

Very best wishes to you all, and I hope you have a very enjoyable season.

C W Ridley, President Thames Valley Morris Men      Feb 2005

## 2005 LOG

**February 5, 2005** "Here's all I know about our fixtures to date. I'll do some more phoning round later in the month. The main news is that it looks as if we can dance at Kew on the Bank Holiday Saturday, leaving May Day and the rest of the weekend clear. Also Fran has fixed up a Twitchen weekend in August. Several of us have undertaken to arrange Tuesday tours, but I haven't heard any details yet. Tim Cawdron has offered to organise a tour around his neighbourhood - breathtaking views of the cement works near Chinnor - but I've yet to discuss that with him.

**February 19, Kennet Ale.**

**February 25. Aldbury Ale.**

**Friday, April 22. Artists Rifles, Chelsea. (13 performers)**

**Saturday, April 23. St.George's Day at The Foley. (10)**

**Saturday, April 30. Kew Gardens** Phil, Robin, John H, Steve, Fran, John E, Alan (SG), Merv, Mike V, James, Mike. (11).

**Jack in the Green Hastings - May Bank Holiday.**

**May 2, 2005** From: John Elkins [<mailto:johnelkins@compuserve.com>] We've done very well so far this season by completely fulfilling our obligations and giving a good account of ourselves. We've danced for the Artists' Rifles, the Foley (St.George's Day) and Kew Gardens. I'd like to think we can keep this up all year, but I have my doubts. We've got a very busy June and I need to decide pronto if we really can do the things we've said we will. For those of you who can cope with Excel there's a file attached for you to complete and send back - don't forget to add your name. Simply put yes, no or maybe in the final column against each event. For those who don't like Excel the same information follows here. I've got more info on these, but the crucial thing at this stage is to count heads. Please let me know as soon as possible. One word answers please - Yes/ No/ Maybe, John E.

**Sunday, May 15. The Foley. VE day. (13)**

**Monday, May16. Feathers, and White Gates, Laleham. October 28.** The photo shows that in those days we still had the ability to attract totty of a certain age.



**Tuesday, May 31. The Saddlers, Send.** With Fleur de Lys. (16)

**Sunday, June 12. Cobham. The Black Horse and Cobham Mill.**

**Wednesday, June 15. Addlestone.** The Pelican and Wagon and Horses with Pilgrim MM. Robin, John W, Dick, Mervyn, Edward, John H, Phil, Paul. (8)

**Saturday, June 18. Dorking Rotary Centennial Fair (afternoon) plus Dorking Rotary do.** (9)

**Saturday, June 18. Hardwick Barn Dance**

**Wednesday, June 22. Richmond/Twickenham.** With Spring Grove and others at The White Horse and The Barmy Arms. Robin, John W, Dick, Fran, Edward, John H, Phil, Paul.

**Tuesday, June 28. The Old Manor, Walton.** Robin, John W, Dick, Fran, Edward, John H, Phil, Paul.

**Saturday, July 9. Farnham. Jackstraws Day of Dance.** Dick, James, Phil, Robin, John, Merv, John E, Alan.

**Monday, July 11. Godstone.** The Hare and Hounds with Marlings. (9)

**Saturday, July 16. Claygate.** The Winner, The Griffin, The Flower Show and The Hare with Spring Grove. (11)

**Thursday, July 21, The White Horse, Shere** with Ewell.

**July 27. Hogs Back Brewery** with Pilgrim, Cup Hill, Datchet.

**August 13, Weekend Twitchen** Fran's Love-in.

**August 16, Tuesday evening, Burghfield.** Kennet MM arranged a good session, a free barbie for dancers and excellent apres-morris. Robin, Dick, Fran, John E, Phil, Paul.

**Tuesday, August 23. Croydon Night of Dance.** At The Oval, The Builders, The Orchard.

**August 26/29 The Cotswolds weekend.**

From the Squire: I've now consulted "Cotswolds Dave" and phoned some pubs and this is the plan for Bank Holiday Saturday - August 27.

Step -1. Assemble at the King's Head, Withington on Friday Evening.

Step +1. The Crown at Frampton Mansell. They open at 12.00 but you may remember that they have splendid views over the Slad Valley. So you might want to get there early and soak up the Cotswolds atmosphere. We dance at 12.01.

Step 2. The Daneway at Sapperton. Down into the valley for drinkies and lunch, but they stop serving food at 2.00. So aim to start pre-lunch dancing at 1.25. You're then allowed a short break to eat. Then it's more dancing until we get bored. There's nothing then until we arrive at the King's Head, though there is a Flower Show at Chedworth which you could pick up on the way

N.B. For Cotswolds virgins (what am I saying?) finding these pubs is a challenge. You could ask a veteran, who'll just say, "Follow him", pointing at any other veteran. But since they all do that, there's no help to be had. You could try leaving Cirencester on the Stroud road and see where you get to. You could ask me.

Step 3. Repair to the King's Head for more Wickwar.

Step 4. Dance at the King's Head around 6.00

Step 5. Go to the Seven Tinas at Chedworth, to dance at 7.00 to 7.30. They do food, for those who are still interested after King's Head pies.

Step 6. Stay out as long as you dare then return to The King's Head for the musical evening, or just go home, because

Step 7. There is no Step 7. If any enthusiasts stay through to Sunday then we'll make something up, but there's no formal plan for the Sunday. Perhaps a little procession (not to The Mill), perhaps a little dancing at The King's Head?

For traditionalists, Sorry. We're not guaranteed strong enough this year to fund a full two days' dancing. John E.

**Amendment to plan** I've just noticed that I mis-spelt the name of the Saturday evening spot. It should, of course be The Seven Tunas, not The Seven Tinas. There used to be a pub in Chedworth called the Seven Tuns, but that changed hands several years ago.

Still no guarantees about Sunday activity, but while my fingers are flashing over the keyboard I thought I'd ask you all, without commitment, and recognising that the number of Morris dancers can go down as well as up, depending on the behaviour of the Footsie (which is what happens under the table when the others aren't looking), if any of you actually expect to be around on Sunday lunchtime. I've tried asking the question telepathetically, but Phil seems to be jamming the psychic airwaves with cajun white noise. John E.

**Saturday, September 10. Yateley Day of Dance.**



**October 23, The King's Head. Donald's accordion.** Jan, or was it Fran, suggested getting a smaller accordion for Donald who was struggling to play his enormous accordion after a spell in hospital. Jan found and bought a 2<sup>nd</sup> hand accordion and after a discussion about how to deliver it, it was decided to go down to the King's Head mob-handed to present it to him. Fran contacted Collie with orders not to tell Donald and a small group made the trip.

**Message from Tim Cawdron** on October 24. "Dear Colleagues, Enjoyable session yesterday for Donald - hope we arrange to go back again in the Spring as was mooted. As I was leaving the Pub, I was handed a blue Peter Storm jacket (small) which seemed to have been left behind by one of us - any claimants? I notice Paul Brooks is not on our e-mail circulation - could one of the regular practice attendees please check with him as well. Yours in step, Tim". **Jan wrote.** "It's a pity you couldn't come, it was well worth it - I was really surprised to see Donald pick the accordion up straight away and play a tune on it. Collie was quite overcome. In the heat of the moment Dick suggested we should come back again in the spring... But I'm not sure if the enthusiasm will be sustained through the winter. Jan

**Tuesday, November 3. Ripley.** Ale Tasting at The Talbot.

**Tuesday, November 9. The Foley. AGM**

**November 10**

Dear Riparians, **What were you doing in 1988?**  
Here's a little quiz for you. What can you remember about 1988? I'll give you a few hints.

- \* QPR finished fifth in the First Division.
- \* Steffi Graf beat Martina Navratilova at Wimbledon.
- \* Walter Gabriel died.
- \* Sue Lawley started presenting Desert Island Discs.
- \* It was a bad year for the GB team at the Seoul Olympics with no athletics golds, and only silvers for Linford Christie, Colin Jackson, Peter Elliot and Fatima Whitbread.
- \* I became Bagman of Thames Valley.

Well, Sue Lawley has outlasted me, because Dick Keen took over as Bagman at Tuesday night's AGM, so this will be my last message as Squagman. From now on I can, as Fran put it, enjoy being Squire, which I still am. Fran takes over as Treasurer, Steve remains as Webspinner. Paul couldn't be there, so we're not sure if he wants to continue as Ragman.

I thought I'd summarise the last 17 years of the club's life – have I really been Bagman that long? – and then I thought again. I'll just say that things have changed a bit since Cyril sidled up to me and suggested that I stand for the hallowed office. Computers existed then, but I can't remember if e-mail did. There were certainly hours of photocopying, folding, envelope stuffing, addressing and stamping for every newsletter. And there was Ladies' Pleasure, and people proposed motions and seconded them and all that kind of formal rubbish, which I'm glad to have had a hand in demolishing.

Enough. Dick told us on Tuesday that the club has more than £4,000 in the bank, some of which we'll donate to the Woodland Trust, MacMillan's Nurses, The Vaughan Williams Library and the Shooting Star home.

We danced about thirty times last year, which is pretty good for a side that often thinks it's on its last legs, and I think about 30 dancers and musicians participated. Pretty good eh? And before you say, never mind the width, feel the quality, my feeling is that we are still enjoying our dancing and communicating that to audiences. We continue to get compliments from the punters, and other sides, so if we're a bit more agricultural in our standard than we used to be I'm still happy.

Dick will be sending out his first bagletter soon, but I just thought I'd mention Krov. I've had a reply from the Tourist Office there saying that they will put our name forward at their planning meeting for 2006. We should know by the end of the year if we've been accepted. The dates are June 30 to July 3 – put it in your diaries now.

As squire I will only actually agree to accept the invitation to go to Krov if I am sure that we have enough commitments from dancers and musicians to convince me that we can put on a better than agricultural show on the floating stage. The glory, glory days of just seeing who will be there on the day and expecting to put on a good show are over, I'm afraid. Dick will, I think, be asking you to say now whether you intend to be there.

You've received this letter because you're not on e-mail (I think). Apologies if you haven't received many such letters over recent years, but about 95% of my readership is on e-mail, and this makes life so much easier for the sender. If you want to receive more written communication, complain to the Bagman, but it's no longer me. Do you want Dick's e-mail address? John E Squire and not Bagman any more

### **November 11, 2005**

Greetings to all Thames Valley dancers, music and friends.

For the first time in living memory, we have a new Bagman, and it's me. A very large set of boots I have to fill, and I hope I will have your support (and tolerance) whilst I settle into the job.

A few general points about how I would like to run the dancing out next year:

- \* A much firmer programme earlier in the year – to which end I would like an hour of your time at Practice next week (that's the 15th) to look at the actual and probable events next year and hopefully take some pledges to arrange pub evenings. A skeleton programme is attached.
- \* Dance out with other sides wherever possible. That way, if we have a poor turnout, the dancers don't have to do every dance, and we don't have to resort to 4-man Morris.
- \* Dance out at least twice a month on Tuesday evenings during the season.
- \* Take paying jobs so we can fund dancers to go on tours where there is a charge.
- \* Let's try and do a bit more apres-Morris – as our President pointed out, it can help attract new dancers, and the punters appreciate it too.
- \* I will try to keep better communication with the non-email contingent; and I hope in return that they will turn out to support us wherever possible.

The most important event of the year has to be Krov (if we get the invite). Assume that we will and put it in the diary now - don't let trivial events like wedding anniversary, birthday or dirty weekend have preference. Also put down to come to practice for the month beforehand so we get up to a tolerable level of competence.

The side has a tidy bank balance (I know this for certain) and I would hope that a significant slice of the cost of the coach can be met from there. Could I have an initial show of emails as to who can come? (particularly from country members, irregulars and friends) and the possible groupie count. Assume for the time being that transport will be John the Coach.

Swapping back to my Treasurer's hat for a moment, could I remind all that we voted to continue the existing policy on subscriptions? ie it's entirely voluntary, but the suggested contribution for the year is £10 – cheques, cash, IOUs etc to Fran please.

Dick  
TVMM Bagman

**Banquet, The Vine, Chertsey. When???????**

**Saturday, December 3. Claygate Christmas Lights**

**Monday, December 26. Claygate. Boxing Day at The Swan, The Foley, The Hare, The Winner, The Griffin.**

## 2006 LOG

### **January/ February The Squire's Soiree at Il Corallo, Esher**

**February 18 Kennet Ale** "Well, the first item on this years calendar has come and gone; the Kennet Ale was a very good night, still passing the port and singing at 2am...."

**April 16** One of the odder events. Ben Dauncey (appropriate name!) decided to dance from Tunbridge Wells to Worcester to commemorate Kemp's Nine Daies Wonder and to raise money for the Multiple Sclerosis Society. He made it as far as Snowhill - 235 miles - and is in the Guinness Book of Records. John Walsh and Robin Aitken joined him as support for some 7 or 8 miles from Tolworth to Hampton Court.

**April 20 The Artists Rifles** We were hired again and given free beer and roast beef to dance this time at the Victory Services Club at Marble Arch in honour of St.George's Day. Dear John and Dick, Very many thanks for your magnificent support at our St George's Day bash last Thursday. As always you performed flawlessly and behaved professionally throughout. Teamwork is all and you have it in spadefuls. All this is precisely what the Regiment demands of itself and those it works with. Well done all. Until our paths cross again. All the best Adrian Beales for the Artists Rifles

**April 21 Funeral of Mervyn Stanley at Woking Crematorium** Phil Underwood coordinated the music. The musicians played the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance tune at the beginning. There were Remembrances from St.John and Hellie and hymns. TVMM danced the Gay Dance (Over the Hills and Far Away) with the music diminishing to silence for the third chorus. St.John started playing The Morris Call which was taken up by all the musicians). Exeunt, pursued by a Goat. Dancing outside the Crematorium and then dancing etc at Jenny Glaister's with tea, beer and sarnies. TVMM, Chobham Men and Yateley MM attended and danced.

Dave Dearsley wrote: "Dick, So very sorry that I cannot attend. Kathie and I are off abroad on holiday (at sea) on Wednesday so it is just not possible. But I do hope that there is a good turn-out of Morris Men and that the event is a tribute to, and a recognition of, the contribution Mervyn made to our team both technically, with his musical acumen and knowledge of the dance, and socially with his good company over many years. Best wishes to everyone Dave.

**April 23 Tim Cawdron tour, Chinnor and Princes Risborough Railway** Dick recalls, "*We had been invited by C&PRR to celebrate St Georges Day with them. Danced on the platform at several stations, and also in the passageway of the buffet car. Afterwards, Tim had organized a pub stop followed by tea at Cawdron Towers*".

**April 29 Kew Gardens - Woodland Wonders** *Isn't it odd that when the venue is Kew Gardens all the WAGs want to come along? A substantial TVMM party made their way to Queen Charlotte's Cottage where a circle of straw bales had been set up as our dance spot. An enjoyable day with substantial number of watchers each time we danced.*

**May 7, Cotswolds day trip, Withington.** Dick, "*One of the big houses at the top of the village (Withington Court) was hosting a village fair. We danced at the house, then led a parade down to the Mill where a duck race was run in the stream that runs through the gardens. I think someone in TVMM won a prize*". [John E. I still have the wind-up duck.]

**May 20, Northwood Day of Dance** *I know we went on this, but can't recall anything memorable.*

**May 25, Coldharbour (with Ewell St Mary)** *It was cold and windy and it rained. Fred Hands, our Ring area rep, paid a flying visit and joined in a couple of dances. We retired to the pub for some of their homebrew ale.*

**May 30 The Manor House, Walton (Eddie)** *First we danced at the Old Manor Inn, then proceeded round to the actual Old Manor and danced there (I think the owner was one of Eddie's clients). The house is 14<sup>th</sup> century and reputed to be where the death certificate for the execution of Charles I was signed. It was also, later, the residence of Judge Jeffries of Bloody Assizes notoriety. The owner showed us around, and I remember him pointing out some wainscotting of the Napoleonic era which was actually made of papier mache.*

**June 13, The Feathers, Laleham**

**June 16/18 Melun some 40 miles south-east of Paris.**

After an initial contact by Annie Sugrue through the Spelthorne Twinning Group, Dick received this unexpected invitation.

Dear Sir, The town of Melun, 30 miles south of Paris is twinned with Spelthorne. As some of our friends there have told us about the Morris dancers, we would be very glad if you could participate to the yearly parade in the streets of our city next June. The parade takes place on the Saturday and we would accommodate your group from the Friday to the Sunday morning. If you are interested, please let me know so that we can discuss details. Thank you. Jean-Pierre Foray.

Dick wrote: "They will provide hotel accommodation for the performers (I said about 10) and will also book in any groupies at the same place (about 30 euros a night). They also have a campsite for those who prefer to be under canvas. So it's all go!!

This is the position as I understand it:

Edward plus Maureen, own car, hotel twin room.

Jan - own car, hotel single? Luciole will stay with friends in Paris

John Walsh, plus Linda? own car, hotel twin or single?

Mick Sarg, plus Kate? own car or sharing? hotel twin or single?

Mike Sugrue plus Anne, own car, stay with friends in Melun

Phil plus Leslie, camper van, camp site.

also (but not on email) Mike Vardy plus Jill.

*Also John Havencroft (Northwood) plus Tony Motley and Geoff Douglas (Mayfair)*

*This was the plan for the weekend.*

- **Vendredi 16 juin :** Arrivée de la délégation de SPELTHORNE
- Friday **18h30** Dinner
- **20h00** *inauguration of fountain*

*Back to hotel*

Saturday

Italian & German teams arrive

**13h15** *leave hotel for town centre*

**13h30** *dinner*

**15h00** Habillage et maquillage à la Salle du Crédit Lyonnais

**15h30** *arrive at start of parade*

**16h30** *parade*

**20h00** Animation Place St Jean

Dîner rapide fourni par les organisateurs

**23h00** *second parade*

**24h00** *closing buffet*

*Yes – they really did a second parade at 2300!!*

*(Recollections about Melun in a separate file to follow.)*

**June 27, The Hare & Hounds, Godstone** (Marlings). “A very enjoyable (but sweaty!) evening in Godstone”, Dick,

**July 1 Twitchen Farm, Challacombe**

"Peter Jones suggested a weekend get together at Twitchen Farm on the same dates as the abortive Krov trip. Options are camp or bring a caravan etc or go for Bed & Breakfast. It would be nice for some of us to get together in North Devon to dance, sing and play music. It may be that we may not have a side but nonetheless some of us are keen to go. *I drove down with Eddie, and we both camped in the top field. Peter Jones hosted a barbie on the Saturday night. We danced at the Black Venus and several other pubs.*

**July 11, Saddlers Arms, Ripley** with Fleur de Lys.

**July 15, Claygate Flower Show - the Foley afterwards (The Winning Horse, The Griffin, The Hare and Hounds before).** Robin, Tim C, John W, Dick, John E, Jimbo, Eddie, John H, Al B (but in Spring Grove kit), possibly James, Allan G, Mick. Spring Grove came along.

**July 24, Somewhere with Jack Straws.**

**August 1, White Hart, Godstone.** “The landlady saw us dance last night and promised beer. Several maybes last night - can you all confirm? Kate - would Marlings like to join us that night? *The pub had laid on a folkie night with some local singers in addition to ourselves and Marlings. Free beer was indeed provided.*

**August 6 Steve’s Thames boat trip.** TVMM with a little help from Spring Grove travelled from Hampton Court to Turk's pier at Kingston and danced at the Bentall's Centre, The

Druid's Head, and The Ram (lunch stop). Then back to Hampton Court where we danced on the towpath (The Palace charged for dancing) and at The King's Arms.

**August 8, The Castle, Ottershaw.** Peter Binns organized, we went, we danced, free beer was provided.

**August 14, The 6 Bells Burghfield.** Kennet repeated the previous year's invitation. There was again a good session, a free barbie for dancers and Kennet's excellent apres-morris.

**August 22 James' tour of Addiscombe,** with North Wood We danced in the charming rural landscape until well after dark.

**August 25/26/27 Cotswolds weekend.**

John E wrote: I've laboured over a hot telephone and laptop - and produced exactly the same schedule for the Cotswolds as last year. I did try to vary it but ran up against a pub (Aston Blank) which was too busy to do lunch for us. And then I lost my nerve when I came up against a pub called (I think) The Hollow Bottom at Guiting Power. I think you'll agree that doesn't sound like a suitable location for us. So this is the deal.

**Friday night.** \* Camping and boozing at The King's Head.

**Saturday.** \* The Crown, Frampton Mansell, 11.30. The church is only "neo-Norman conventicle" dating back only to 1844. The view from the pub over the valley is splendid  
\* The Daneway, Sapperton. "Slight traces of Norman work", but rebuilt by the Atkyns family at the beginning of the reign of Queen Anne - that's St.Kenelm's church of course. The Daneway Inn was "built for the refreshment of the bargees and professional leggers" on the canal. But, of course, that was before the amateur leggers of Thames Valley Morris Men turned up. First dance around 1.00 p.m. They serve food (I remember the ham egg and chips with fondness) until 2.00 p.m. Seems to me like a good place to hang out for an hour or three.  
\* Then off to the King's Head field. In a perfect world everyone would bring along kettles, Earl Grey, sandwiches and cake. Let's just hope.

\* 6.00 First dance at The King's Head.

\* 7.30 First dance at The Seven Tunas, Chedworth. Followed, if you wish, by dinner - or supper if you're feeling poncey.

\* After that The King's Head for interminable music and questionable singing. Alternatively the public bar and the garden are comparatively quiet.

**Sunday** \*The difficult thing is what to do between waking up at dawn and the first communal activity on the field. Maybe a long walk to Compton Abdale? or finish off that book you've never quite got time to read? Eventually it will be time to count how many leggers are still around and whether we can muster a side for a procession to The Mill at 12.00. Or maybe get Lester to teach us another dance so that we can mangle it like we did with Blue Streak? At any rate we should try to dance again at The Kings Head - and eat a cheese roll or two and a meat pie before going home.

Apologies to John Walsh for not finding any crowded locations, but The Cotswolds for me means uncrowded. Maybe next year? If anyone doesn't know where Frampton Cottrell is, it's just to the left of Cirencester." John E (Absentee) Squire TVMM

There seems to have been a fascinating discussion in the King's Head on Friday night about rods, poles and perches, and another about the meaning of the latin tag 'In Astra Ferimur'. John E confirmed that Ferimur turns up in Vergil, Seneca and Propertius, and later

apologised for having said that the PG Tips Decaf tea box was not made out of one piece of cardboard. It is.

He then made the following awards for the weekend.

\* Gold star award for business planning - the Pizza restaurant in Cirencester which ran out of Pizza dough before Dave Dearsley's party got there.

\* Gold star award (fast food) - for serving the Vardy/Walsh parties piping hot food at 10.00 p.m. on Saturday evening, only one and a half hours after they ordered - The Seven Tunas, Chedworth.

\* Gold star award (friendly customer service) - for declining to cook six meals for the Dearsley party (before they went to Cirencester) because it was a few minutes past the 9.00 p.m. threshold - The Mill, Withington.

\* Gold star award (B&B) - for removing all TVs from the bedrooms and not providing a main light in Lester's bedroom - The Mill, Withington.

\* Gold star award (bar service) - for continuing not to sell Museum Bitter "because the customers don't want it" - The Mill, Withington.

\* Best in show - The Mill, Withington.

\* Establishment most likely to go out of business very soon - you got it.

And if any of you don't know what the hell I'm talking about (which you all tell me is the way you feel all the time), just remember that English place names often have "chester" on the end, not because that's the way the Romans labelled them, but because the later inhabitants often named places because there had been a Roman fort/town (castra) there. And in France they did things differently, which is why there aren't any(??) -chester names there. Got that? John E.

### **September 16 Yateley Day of Dance**

**September 21 Hemel Hempstead, Tony Brown's funeral.** Margaret had asked for Tony to be played in and out and a small hardy band obliged (Dick, Fran, Eddie, Jan, Robin, Jimbo, Champ, Digger, Mike Vardy). "In fact, more than come out for a normal dance-out".

**October 31, Ale Tasting, Talbot Arms, Ripley** "We have a good side for this one, and an evens chance that Fleur de Lys will be there too".

### **Tuesday, November 7. The AGM at The Foley.**

**Present-** J Elkins, D Keen, F Smith, J Hare, J Walsh, P Turner, E Morris, J Denny, A Bull, S Tovey, R Aitken, M Sugrue, J Beard. Apologies - J Barclay.

**Roll of honour** - Mervyn Stanley and Tony Brown added.

Keeper of the beasts' report - all are well but sadly under-exposed.

**Stickmeister's report** - We have enough for Boxing Day, but more needed for the new season.

**Charities.** We will continue to support The Woodlands Trust, but Woking Hospice will be our major charity this year.

**Treasurer's report** - reserves down by £180. Major income - subs, Boxing Day and 3 paid appearances. Major expenditure - charities, Melun, attending day of dance, kit.



**Bagmans report** - danced out 22 occasions. 3 paid events. Twice out under strength. Forced to cancel several events. Had to draft in outsiders to cover Melun.

**Squire's report.** Quality of dance was rustic but enthusiastic. Often limited by what dancers can do and musicians play.

**Election of officers.**

Squire - John Elkins re-elected unopposed

Bagman - Dick Keen re-elected unopposed

Treasurer - Fran Smith re-elected unopposed

Ragman - Paul Brooks not present but indicated wish to stand down. Phil Turner willing to take over.

Webmaster - S Tovey re-elected unopposed

**Recruitment.** J Denny to take on role of publicity officer. To create new leaflet and print for xmas lights. All to help distribute and try to influence contacts to join.

Beer was provided from the Bag in memory of Tony Brown.

**Saturday 18th November - Bagmans Night Out at the Foley.** "I have 25 names, so it should be a good evening".

**Saturday, December 2. Claygate Lights.** A large, good-natured crowd enjoying all that was on offer, including Bernie Nolan switching-on the lights, accompanied by a flurry of snow. "In particular, John, we do appreciate the performance of the Morris Men who add to the atmosphere of tradition which is so much a part of what the switch-on is about"

**Tuesday, December 26. Boxing Day, Claygate.** Swan, Foley, Hare, Winner, Grifin.

## 2007 LOG

**April 21. St. George's Day with The Artists Rifles at the Victory Services Club, Marble Arch.** Dick booked 10 men in to the feast and warned that we would be turning up at 18.00. "I remember last year we nearly scared off some people by dancing in the street beforehand". Adrian, our contact replied: "On the night it'll be the usual make-it-up-as-we-go-along thing. We've rested the Shakespeare/Hank Cinq theme after 5 years. (Maybe because in a previous year John E was asked to dress up as Henry V and deliver Shakespeare's Saint. Crispin's day speech waving a sword, which he did.) This year's theme will be Churchillian! Plenty of Fighting on the Beaches and Never Surrendering!! Great stuff. We've ordered Winston's wartime speeches CD, a Winston DVD and video, and 2 CDs of WW2 film soundtracks and military music...all for background and backdrop effect. We aim to do a dress-rehearsal with all this stuff, and hopefully the control buttons are easily accessible, so when it's your turn everything looks organised. But a well-stocked bar should help smooth over all the bumps!"

**March 5, Kew Gardens, with Fleur de Lys.** John W wrote: A successful and enjoyable do. We were lucky with the weather as it rained on both the other days, I believe. We had a bare side - Fran, Phil T, Mike, Mick, Dick, Robin, Alan B, me - but were helped out by two Spring Grove men and Ian from Yately (playing mostly). So we managed well enough. I think we danced quite well and the usual big crowds were appreciative - indeed it was interesting to note that the crowd swelled each time our slot came along and faded away while the maypole dancing and the minstrels were on. Fleur-de-Lys were with us, of course, and were a help taking some of the strain and providing some variety. They seem to have enjoyed it and were pleasant company as always. Their main problem was that their music was a single fiddler who was too quiet for the location - lost the audience rather, I think. We also chatted to a couple of women from Glaxo Smith thingummy who wanted to know if we would be interested in teaching Morris at one of their team building events! Could be a useful new business outlet. We gave them our contact details - no response yet.

**May 11-14 Melun** John W wrote: A very enjoyable weekend. Dick, Phil T, Mike S, Jim, Edward, Mike V, Jan, Phil U and me plus wives (or wife to be in Jim's case) of all but Jan and Phil who brought Jenny G with them - 17 in all. Very pleasant social atmosphere. Relaxed weekend with not quite as much dancing as some of us would have liked but, with that crew, I had to be a bit careful not to wear them out. Phil U was on best behaviour and he and Jan were quite restrained with the playing sessions - just about right, I think. We all ate together in a welcoming restaurant on Saturday night and finished up with a bit of dancing - jigs from Phil, Jim, Jan, Cheryl, me and the waitress (who just improvised with great spirit!) plus some sets as well. Restaurateur seemed very appreciative. I spoke to Fran last night and he agreed that the bag would pay for that meal rather than subsidise the travel this year - I hope that's OK with you. When we did dance, we danced well and were well received by the locals. Both Jenny and Linda said the dancing looked good - neither of them are easily pleased on that front - with both commenting how much both Phil T and Mike had come on. The long procession - nearly three hours - was fun (if a little wearing) with big enthusiastic crowds. The blokes did very well to keep going - six dancing, Jan playing, Phil in goat, Dick in horse. Excellent

**May 24, Holmbury St Mary, with Ewell MM**

**May 29 Marnies, Weston Green**

**June 3 Boat trip** – S Tovey to organize

**June 6 National Shooting Centre, Bisley.** We danced at an Artists Rifles' do.

**June 11, The White Hart, Godstone** with Marlings

**June 20, Richmond** with Spring Grove

**July 4, Holmbury St Mary** with Pilgrim

**July 10, The Running Mare, Cobham**

**July 17, The Castle, Ottershaw**

**July 21. Claygate Flower Show.** “with a special guest group of men and women morris dancers” – Offspring?

**July 31, The Anchor, Pyrford**

**August 14, The George, Southwark**

**August 21 James Denny's Croydon night**

**August 24/25/26 The Cotswolds weekend, Withington**

From: John Elkins to Jan, Dick seems to think you're coming to the Cotswolds. I bloody well hope so, because I've just learned that Robin isn't, and we need a musician. Are you prepared to fight Lester for the honour? Maybe you and Lester could do an arrangement of duelling banjos? From Jan to John, I certainly plan to be there, and I'll try and play if I can... sobriety permitting. Jan

From John E. The plan for the Cotswolds tour this year is:

**Friday night.** The field is available and you can do whatever Friday-nighters do - all night.

**Saturday.** The Swan at Southrop for a bit of gastro-dancing starting at 12.00. They have a public bar. The Victoria at Eastleach. We'll dance from around 1.00. Food can be ordered until 2.00 p.m. Maybe we dance after lunch, maybe we visit the two charming mediaeval churches either side of the river (St.Andrew's and Sts Michael & Martin). maybe we go to the fete and have tea and buy second-hand books. Unfortunately they're too busy making money at the fete to want us to dance. The bloke actually said that we would distract the punters from spending money and they only had two hours to empty their pockets. Sounds like a captain of industry to me. To Withington, where we'll dance at The King's Head at around 6.00. Dick has a cunning plan which involves ordering lots of pizzas for a mass party on Saturday evening. Alternatively you could stock up on real food earlier in the day, or join me grazing on The KH's superb pickled eggs and pies. And then it's - what is it that we do on Saturday evenings? I'm always asleep by then.

**Sunday.** We process from the KH into the village and dance at some bloke's house whose name I don't remember. He's been at the KH the last couple of years and plays a melodeon one handed - you remember. Anyway he's moving out of the village that weekend and wants to buy us some beer to say goodbye. Then back to the KH for superb pickled eggs and pies etc, dancing and sleeping in the sun, or warm rain, whichever. I've yet to make contact with the tea ladies at Chedworth and I'm not confident that they'll be on duty, but I'll keep trying. 6.00 (TBC) - Dance at The Seven Tuns. I'll see if they'll lay on a buffet for us. If not you can take your chance on how long they'll take to get round to serving you, or go back to the KH for more superb pickled eggs and pies. For the rest of the evening Dick is planning a wake, or

a remembrance day service or something. I think the idea is that we swap reminiscences about past heroes like Chris Seager-Thomas, Stan Bowles, Rodney Marsh, Gerry Francis, Bruce Forsyth and so on. [I've just acquired Brucie's autobiog, by the way.] Alternatively, Jan bores us with stories about the good old days in Thames Valley. Remember Jan, "Even the good days were bad". Who did sing that one?

**Monday** .With one bound we'll be free. Unless someone really wants to dance again at the KH?

Of course, none of this can happen without a few dancers and maybe a musician or two. It would really help to know who's going to be there on which days. I don't know why I'm going to type the next bit, but, please let me know. Surprise me by replying. As I write Fran is in residence at a luxurious health spa - St.George's, Tooting - having a body transplant. I expect him to be able to leap over tall buildings at The Cotswolds. Keep on trucking - or whatever it is that Morris Men are supposed to say to each other. No, not that, Phil U. John E.

Dick said that it was a very good Cotswolds weekend, and the first one he had ever come back from with more sticks than he went with.

**September 15, Yateley Day of Dance** 7 men from Thames Valley attended.

**September 29, St. Mary Magdalene, South Holmwood. Service of Blessing for Jim Barclay and Cheryl Whittington.** Jackstraws Morris and Thames Valley danced. With additional music from Karen Tweed (Accordion) and Muff Lucas (Harp).



A VERY BIG 'THANK YOU' FROM  
CHERYL AND JIM



We REALLY had a good time!

**October 15. Lindon Bennett special needs school in Hanworth.** “I’ve been tapped up by the deputy head of the Lindon Bennett special needs school in Hanworth and I’ve impulsively agreed that we can put on a show for them. She asked how much we charged, so I said usually £5,000, but in her case tea and sarnies, and maybe some cakes. She sounded over the moon. Strange. It turned out to be a brilliant afternoon. We danced with the teachers (of course) and with the kids, including a set dance for six wheelchairs each attended by a Morris Man.

Dear John, John, what a wonderful afternoon. Thank you so much to you and all your TVMM. Just looking at the children's faces showed how much it was enjoyed by all. The staff too are singing your praises - it really has been the highlight of our half term. We are all very grateful to you. Please come back, soon, With very best wishes, Julie and all at Lindon Bennett

**October 31, Funeral of Alun Jones, Woking Crematorium.**

**November 6, Ale Tasting at Ripley**

**November 13, 2007 AGM.**

Dick wrote: We had the AGM a couple of weeks ago. Not much has changed, so I will just give you the high spots:

**Subs** The policy is the same as previous years; a voluntary donation of £10.00. If you would like to contribute, send a cheque made out to Thames Valley MM, to Fran. (You could, of course, give him cash when you come along on Boxing Day.)

**Starting early** We decided that, at practice, the creeping habit of people drifting in at around 9 ish (because there won't be a side until then (!)) is not the best use of the evening. So we are going to aim for 8 ish through the winter months. Shame really, Jimbo and I used to have a nice long cosy chat before we were rudely interrupted by other dancers....

**Officers** As nobody leapt forward to wrestle control from the ruling junta, the officers are as before, ie: Squire – John Elkins. Bagman – Dick Keen. Treasurer – Fran Smith.

Ragman – Phil Turner; Publicity Officer – James Denny

**Recruitment** As ever, this is the big issue of the day. We will be losing Robin (Cobb) due to a house move, so our music will be heavily impacted. A special vote of thanks to Robin for his support over the past few years – hope the move goes smoothly.

James will be producing a flyer to be inserted in the local free paper in time for Boxing Day. In addition we will be snowing the audience with leaflets at the Christmas Lights (Dec 1 - meet at the Foley at 3.00). We also need to mingle with the crowd on Boxing Day and other events try to get people interested.

**From the President** Finally, a letter of encouragement from our revered President, Chris Ridley. To all members of Thames Valley Morris Men

Dear Subjects, May I wish you all a fruitful Annual General meeting. I thank Dick Keen for keeping me informed of your doings, which perhaps were not supported as well as we could hope, but please don't lose heart! As I have said before, TVMM has some extremely

distinguished progenitors: taught by Christopher Penton, who was taught by Kenworthy Schofield, who was taught by Cecil Sharp, who was taught by the old fellers themselves.

May I suggest a watchword for the next twelve months: ENJOYMENT. If your outings are such that they are enjoyable, dancers will drop everything to be able to attend, be they: old and rather stiff, would prefer to watch something on television, or whatever. If you can give out this enjoyment to your audiences you will bask in their approval. Back at the pub, perhaps you could veer away from "folksongs" and try some audience-participating music – Cliff Richard, Everly Brothers, 1960s stuff – which audiences will enjoy (that word again).

RING MEETINGS. May I recommend you try to attend a ring meeting at least once a year (NOT Thaxted which you have been to often). I believe it is permitted to send less than a set; sets are easily made up from other sides. You will all be surprised by how much you can learn from other dancers, even if you've been at it for forty years or more already; and I don't just mean dance steps. Attitude is something which can be learned.

May you have a happy AGM and your President would like to know that you all still ENJOY your Morris, and that it is still a major part of your lives – as it is of mine (76 next birthday)

Your President.

### **Saturday, December 1. Claygate Christmas Lights.**

**Boxing Day. Claygate. The Swan, Foley, Hare, Winner, Griffin.** John Elkins wrote: Fran will eventually let us know how much we collected - more than £400 I believe - but I've got to tell you all about Fran's music marathon on Boxing Day. For various reasons (mainly because our "lead" musician James Denny could not be there) he was virtually the solo musician all day, albeit with some support from the orchestra. Without him there wouldn't have been a Boxing Day tour, but don't tell him, otherwise he'll keep going on about it. James had arranged a leaflet drop in the local free paper and this obviously worked, because we had probably bigger than usual crowds at all the pubs, including The Winner. I was astounded by the line of young men in black under the veranda at The Winner, until I realised that they were only there to smoke - but we had a reasonable crowd there too. Mike Sugrue danced in at The Foley when the Strictly Morris Dancing audience confirmed that he was their favourite.

We didn't have a large dancing side so we all had to dance rather a lot - my legs were complaining by the time we got to The Winner - but we managed to keep the crowds happy and generous, so that was all right. Happy New Year y'all and, Keeeeeeeeep dancing, John E.

From: Peter Jones Re: Boxing Day

Well done chaps, keep it up. A sterling effort Fran, no mean feat with cold fingers and little buttons to press. ( you do have 'little buttons to press don't you ?!!.)

We ex-pats in the West Country are with you in spirit on these occasions although the body of this one was actually with West Somerset MM. Went along with Jenny Glaister who was visiting Twitchen at the time, to lurk in the audience while they did their one stop performance which is all they do these days on BD but ended up being principle musician for half the stop ('til Brian Heaton arrived) so that a full team could dance. No difference there then. Happy New Year to all.

## 2008 LOG

**February 16, Kennet Ale. Bracknell.**

**March 29 Icknield Way Ale – Wantage ??????**

**April 25/26, Artists Rifles “ lower key than usual won’t be repeated”**

**April 26. St. George’s Day with The Artists Rifles at the Victory Services Club, Marble Arch.** The Menu was Leek and Potato soup, Sirloin of Beef, Spotted Dick and English custard, cheese, red and white wines and coffee. And still we danced.

**May 3 Kew Woodlands Wonders,** with Spring Grove and Fleur de Lys

**May 13 Recruitment Night, The Foley, Claygate** Organised by James Denny but unfortunately with little result.

**May 24 Forest of Dean tour**

**May 27 Claygate**

**June 1, Woking Hospice**

**June 5, The Running Horse, Leatherhead, with Ewell**

**June 7/8 – Melun**

**June 10 Claygate The Griffin**

**Saturday June 21. Death of Paul Vanson,** founder and life president of the Elmbridge Twinning Guild and organiser of TVMM’s twinning trips to Rueil Malmaison. There were to be no more such trips after Rueil decided that the twinning activities were a waste of time and money.

**Sunday, June 22. Dick’s 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.** The Plough and the Anchor, Byfleet followed by delicious and extravagant tea and dancing at 40 Green Lane Close.

**July 5 Banbury Hobby Horse Festival**

**July 15 The Anchor, Pyrford**

**July 19, Claygate Flower Show** Lunch at The Griffin and dancing through the afternoon was shared with Offspring.

**July 23, Royal Military School of Music, Concert in the Park, Kneller Hall.** John Hare made the initial contact. John Elkins and John Walsh made a couple of visits followed by a full-scale rehearsal. On the day an enormous military band played at length on a huge stage for a large audience. At the appointed time TVMM danced from the back of the audience up the centre aisle between a large seated audience to dance in front of and on the stage. Music was supplied by the Thames Valley band (and the military band). Our contact, Student Bandmaster Oliver Jeans wrote “I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to you and your team for dancing at the summer concert. Your willingness to visit Kneller Hall for rehearsals was also greatly appreciated as it made the job of performing on the night very easy. Many members of the public commented on how professional and enjoyable your Morris Dancers were. The atmosphere beforehand was also commented upon and it seems

that you were a great hit indeed. [Nevertheless, we were never invited again.] The team on that day was Alan Bull, John Elkins, Dick Keen, James Kenny, John Petts, Mick Sargeant. Fran Smith, Mike Sugrue, Steve Tovey, Phil Turner, John Walsh

### **July 29, The Castle Ottershaw**

### **August 19, James's Croydon evening tour**

### **August 23 Cotswolds weekend**

### **August 31, Thames river trip**

**September 20.** Yateley Day of Dance. TVMM were on the west tour, including Hartley Wintney, Silchester, the Wellington Country Park, with Spring Grove, Jackstraws, Windsor and Icknield Way.

### **October 28, The Foley, Claygate TVMM AGM**

**Present:** John Elkins (squire), Fran Smith (treasurer), Dick Keen (bagman), James Denny (publicity), Phil Turner (ragman), Steve Tovey (webmaster), Alan Bull, Jim Barclay, Mick Jenkins, Mick Sargent, John Petts

**Apologies:** Tim Cawdron, Mike Vardy, Jan Lucas, Peter Jones, John Walsh

**Roll of honour** Squire read out names of TVMM deceased members.

Jim Brooks, Tony Brown, Peter Dashwood, Amnon Derrenberg, Hugh Gibson, John Glaister, Siward Glaister, John Hall, Martin Jolly, Alun Jones, Norman Keam, George Lawrence, Dick Mussen, Derek Paynter, Christopher Penton, Ted Perry, Gordon Ralph, Cyril Smith, Gordon Smith, Mervyn Stanley, Phil Sylvester, Bill Tofts.

**Bagmans report** The animals are in good fettle, but due to low numbers, are rarely able to come out. There is a good supply of sticks owing to a raid on Collie's back yard whilst in the Cotswolds. A letter from our president, Chris Ridley was read out. A good year for fixtures, high points included meeting up with our president in Melun, Kew Gardens, Forest Of Dean tour, and Kneller Hall. Coming up in 09, Exeter Ring meeting, another Forest of Dean tour, and Spring Grove summer tour. Next year, will try to dance out with other sides more.

**Recruiting/Publicity report** Last year had not been quite as planned due to James moving out to Banbury, but now he was back in the area, he would aim to raise our profile with press releases, posters, and any other means available. No recruits this year. Squire requested that James take the lead as foreman musician. There were two motions – that all musicians wear white, and that where there is a specific variation from the generic tune for a given tradition, that variation should be used.

**Webmasters report** Web site now running smoothly and we have loads of space for photos – please email any held, particularly older stuff.

**Ragmans report** All materials now received from Jenny. We have sufficient stocks unless overwhelmed by new recruits.

**Treasurers report** Income for the year was £1,650, expenditure £2,075. We still have a substantial balance in the bank (fortunately not with Iceland), but that will not sustain us long if we have to pay for a hall next year. In that case, we may have to consider collecting



harder, or raising subs. For this year, we will continue the current practice of inviting voluntary subscriptions suggested at £10.00. We will repeat charity donations as last year – Woking Hospice, Woodlands Trust, Shooting Star childrens' hospice and Linden Bennett school.

**Squires report.** A year when we danced with vigour and enjoyment, but in a style more rustic than technically perfect. We have been invited to give a presentation to the local Venture Scouts on November 25<sup>th</sup> – it is vital that we get this one right as it is a major recruitment opportunity. [With no success!]

**Election of officers** All existing officers were re-elected without challenge.

John Elkins (squire), Fran Smith (treasurer), Dick Keen (bagman), James Denny (publicity), Phil Turner (ragman), Steve Tovey (webmaster).

**Practice Venue** In the light of Young's published intention to demolish the hall and stables to build hotel rooms, we needed direction from the membership. Initial enquiries indicated an hourly rent around £13.00 per hour. Venues were available in Claygate, but possibly not on Tuesdays. It was decided that we should not move until pushed, and that we wanted to stay in Claygate if at all possible. Means of funding the rent would be investigated if and when that happens.

Dick Keen, Bagman

**November 4, Ale Tasting, Ripley**

November 22 Bagmans night Byfleet?

**November 25, Visit to 1st Claygate Explorer Unit.** Notable for the speed with which the Scouts, who had not been warned that we were coming, ran away (literally) from the main hall when we entered. Our programme of short talks and dances was met with sullen silence, particularly in the participation dancing. No recruits were forthcoming.

**December 6, Claygate Christmas Lights**

**December 26 Boxing Day**

## 2009 LOG

**January 9 – 12. Feast of St Hygenus. Bodmin.** Once again we joined Chris Ridley and Trigg MM to celebrate the Feast of St Hygenus and the birthday of our first squire, Christopher Penton. Fran & Dick picked up Peter Jones from Twitchen Farm and lodged at the Ridley home at St Columb Major. John Walsh booked himself and Linda, John Elkins and Mike Vardy and Jill into the Harrington Guest House in Newquay for Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, about 15 minutes from the Ridley House. Phil and Leslie came by camper van, which they parked at Chris Ridley's house. Mike Sargent came alone and stayed with his brother.

On Friday night the Newquay crowd surveyed the winter dining possibilities in Newquay and had to settle for Wetherspoon's, which wasn't too bad.

On Saturday, after a pleasant early morning stroll on the beach at Newquay we all met to dance in the street and lunch at the Falcon Inn at St Mawgan. Then on to the Merrymoor Inn, Mawgan Porth, a surprisingly modern holiday pub, but a Trigg favourite, where we danced, played and ate.

On Sunday we met at Chris Ridley's house in the morning to wassail the orchard. [THE CORNISH APPLETREE WASSAILING SONG. Old Appletree we wassail thee, And hope that thou wilt bear, For the Lord doth know where we shall go, Til we come another year. For to bloom well and to bear well So merry let us be; Let every man take off his hat And shout out to the old Appletree: Old Appletree we wassail thee And hope that thou wilt bear Hatfuls, capfuls, three bushel bagfuls And little heaps under the stairs. Three cheers for the old Appletree! Hip hip hooray.]

In the evening was the St Hygenus celebration at The Old Inn, St Breward. Penton's fez circulated for performers to wear for their party pieces. TVMM danced outside in darkness and a high wind which carried sticks far from their intended destination in Blue Streak. Trigg performed their mummers play.

**January 6. Feature for the Esher News & Mail.** To: [squire@tvmm.org.uk](mailto:squire@tvmm.org.uk) Dear Mr Elkins, I work for the Esher News & Mail and was wondering if it would be possible to come along and try out Morris dancing sometime? I've read the reports about the possibility of it becoming extinct if more young people don't get involved so it would be interesting to do a feature for the paper to see what the situation is like locally. I look forward to hearing from you. Many thanks, Oliver Florence. Reporter, Esher News & Mail Series [Oliver subsequently came to The Foley to see what we were all about, and wrote an article for the Jan 21 News and Mail. There is a video on YouTube of Oliver dancing with us at The Griffin later in the year.]

**Wednesday, February 3.** A first for Thames Valley? A Press Release announcing the TVMM Gala Launch and New Season Dates, produced by James Denny. "Thames Valley Morris Men are proud to announce their 2009 season, and invite you to a gala season launch in Claygate with a chance to meet the side. Local organisation & media representatives are invited to join us from 8pm at the Hare & Hounds and later at the Griffin, both in Claygate, for a gala launch to the new season. Free beer will be available alongside historical and informative displays. The men will be dancing throughout, and officers will be available to

answer your questions. For more information please contact the P&R Officer (James) on 07876 568 414.”

**Saturday, February 21. Kennet Ale.**

**Saturday, March 28: Icknield Way Ale.** Featuring the gorgeous (female) musician playing for Mr Hemmings Men.

25 April: St George's Day - Artists Rifles?

**Monday, April 27. The Bell, Molesey** The Landlord asked us to dance quietly because the neighbours had complained about pub noise.

**Saturday, May 9. Woking Day of Culture** We danced in the Peacock Centre and collected for Woking Hospice whose patron, Michael Aspel kept us company on a cold, wet, windswept morning. Entertainment was provided by a South African group dancing in wellington boots.

**Tuesday May 12. The Griffin, Claygate.** From the Esher News: “The Thames Valley Morris Men launched an exciting new season of dancing at a gala evening in Claygate this week. The group, which was formed to perform at the village flower show in 1952, wowed onlookers at the Griffin pub with their mix of traditional music and centuries-old dance moves. As well as a return to the flower show, the highlights of this year’s programme include an appearance at the Woking Hospice classic car show and the traditional Boxing Day tour of Claygate – when the men dance their way around all five of the village’s pubs. A boat trip has also been organised from Hampton Court to Kingston.

The morris men have around 30 members on their books and are eager to encourage anyone to come along to Tuesday evening practices to give dancing a go. Publicity officer and lead musician James Denny said: "It is a common perception that the morris is populated entirely by retired men with beards but this is far from the truth. Apart from anything else, I myself am aged just 22. New members are always greeted with open arms. We are far from over the hill and still have fantastic fun – and I believe anyone who comes along will see that for themselves. We are proud of our record of finding odd places to dance – including the Hampton Court-Kingston boat, a train buffet car and inside an off-licence."

Squire John Elkins – the head of the group – added that recent talk about the impending death of morris dancing was greatly exaggerated. He said: "People tell me that they feared for the future of morris dancing 20 years ago and 40 years ago, but we keep going. We have scares but we are going to survive." The writer, Oliver Florence made a decent attempt at learning Morris dancing on the spot.

**Tuesday, May 19. The Castle, Ottershaw with Datchet Morris Men**

**May 22 weekend, Fownhope, Herefordshire.** Camping weekend based around Jenny and Siward’s cottage. Faithful City put in an appearance.

**Sunday May 31. Woking Hospice Classic Car Show.** We met and danced at The Plough, Byfleet, followed by The Village Hall and then drove to the Hospice where we were squeezed in between the classic cars and the dog show.

**Thursday, May 4. The Running Horse, Leatherhead** as guests of Ewell St.Mary.

**Tuesday, May 9. Thames Ditton,** The George & Dragon and Ye Olde Swanne

**Wednesday, June 24, Richmond** Spring Grove took us and several other sides to the White Cross in Richmond and The Barmy Arms.

**Tuesday, June 30. The Parrot Inn, Forest Green,** with Rampant Rooster

**Tuesday, July 14. Sunbury** The Magpie and the Phoenix, where there was a merry audience and Naked Ladies.

**Saturday July 18. Claygate Flower Show** with Fleur de Lys.

**July, 25/26, Exeter Ring Meeting**

**Tuesday July 28. Surrey University, Guildford** A workshop for students at the National Resource Centre for Dance's summer school.

**Tuesday August 4 Aug: The Saddlers Arms** with Fleur de Lys.

**Sunday August 9: Thames boat trip** from Hampton Court to Kingston and back with Spring Grove. Dancing on board and at both ends of the trip.

**Tuesday, August 11. The Castle, Ottershaw.**

**Tuesday, August 18. Croydon evening of dance** organised by James Denny, with Ewell/Northwood/etc at the Builders Arms and the Glamorgan.

**August, 29/30 Aug: Cotswolds weekend** Dick noted that Collie had broken a hip. "Let's make this a good one in case it is the last".

Friday evening at the **The King's Head** for the early arrivals.

Saturday **The Swan at Southrop** (pronounced Sutherop), **The Victoria at Eastleach**, the **Eastleach Fete**, where there will be many attractions including a book stall, a Pimms tent, probable sightings of ancient Tomorrow's World ex-presenters, and tea and cakes. It turns out that they didn't want us to dance there in previous years because they thought we'd divert profits away from the village by collecting after dancing. We won't. The fete organiser wrote: "We have had some very positive feedback from your appearance at our fete this year. Timing was just right and we are happy you all seemed to enjoy the tea. I have found out that the group we had a good few years back in fact came from London in a coach all tanked up before getting here hence the hesitation initially this year. Thankyou for contacting us and we may be in touch again next year." Finally **The King's Head**.

Sunday procession from **The Kings Head at 12.00 to The Mill, The KH for lunch and a few rural dances, The Seven Tunas** at Chedworth, **The KH again**.

**A footnote from The Squire** "On behalf of TVMM I would like to offer an unreserved apology to any of our members who suffered inconvenience or distress as a result of the disgraceful events in The King's Head Field on Saturday evening. Not only did the so-called Dave "Deersley" enter a blatant faux-vin capsule in the wine-tasting competition; he also attempted to influence the result by inviting the squire to act as an impartial judge, an act of brown-nosing so transparent as immediately to arouse suspicion. "Deersley's" entry into the competition was revealed after investigation to be an opened bottle of a herbal concoction - Chateau Filth - well known in the ethnic homeopathic community of Farnham, and containing very private parts of deer - hence the unfortunate entrant's pseudonym. Once the fraud was spotted the magnificent Thames Valley trophy was immediately awarded to the

only other entry - Chateau Banane, from the well-respected "Tesco" estate of M.Lucas. It has been alleged that the persistent drizzle on Sunday was a direct consequence of the Winegate fraud. The elders of the club will be investigating this allegation further and will consider what further action to take in this unfortunate affair, which has left a very unpleasant taste in the mouth (I kid you not).”

### **Saturday September 12 or 19. Yateley Day of Dance.**

### **October 10 weekend. Eddie's Forest of Dean tour**

**Tuesday, October 27 Thames Valley Morris Men 2009 AGM** held in the hall of the Foley Arms.

Present: J Elkins (Squire), F Smith (Treasurer), D Keen (Bagman), J Denny (Publicity), P Turner (Ragman), S Tovey (Webmaster), J Petts, J Barclay, J.Walsh.

Apologies: J Lucas, A Melville, P Underwood, M Vardy, M Sugrue, E Morris, A Bull, R Aitken, D Dearsley, T Cawdron, M Jenkins.

#### Roll of honour

Squire read out names of TVMM deceased members: Jim Brooks, Tony Brown, Peter Dashwood, Amnon Derrenberg, Hugh Gibson, John Glaister, Siward Glaister, John Hall, Martin Jolly, Alun Jones, Norman Keam, George Lawrence, Dick Mussen, Derek Paynter, Christopher Penton, Ted Perry, Gordon Ralph, Cyril Smith, Gordon Smith, Mervyn Stanley, Phil Sylvester, Bill Tofts.

#### Bagman's report

Animals in fine fettle and enjoyed their outing last week at the Fools & Beasts Unconvention, but have been generally disappointed by the lack of exercise in the year due to the lack of dancers. Good stock of sticks due to another successful raid on Collie's back yard at the bank holiday weekend. The dancing had been less memorable compared to the high points last year (Kew, Kneller Hall etc). There had been some good outings (St Hygenus, the Castle, Ring Meeting, the Parrot, Forest of Dean) but also ones that did not happen for lack of support (eg Cricketers, Ewell St Mary), nearly didn't happen (Jenny's cottage), or were disappointing (Woking Hospice).

#### Ragman's report

Phil had received many enquiries about hats over the year. The last batch purchased were starting to fall apart. He had some samples of hats currently available and sought opinions. It was felt that those made from stitched braid were a good colour and strength. Phil to investigate prices and look to buying another dozen. He confirmed that he had spare hat ribbons and sufficient stocks of all other kit.

#### Webmasters report

The web site has been kept up to date with fixtures and photos, but no major work has been done to the site. J Denny offered to help with maintenance/revision. Provision of a counter to see how often it was accessed would be useful. Bagman to provide an up to date members list with email addresses as soon as possible.

#### Publicity report

J Denny apologised for his lack of support last year, but now that his personal position has changed, he hoped to be able to provide posters for all events next year and provide more extensive publicity for major events. He intends to email relevant local organizations and offer reciprocal web site links. He has already set up a facebook page and intends to develop it further. He would also produce regular newsletters (email and paper) to members, friends and interested parties. The option of using the web site to send group emails was also discussed and will be explored.

#### Treasurers report

As had been the case for a few years now, TVMM had spent more than it collected, and the capital reserve was slowly being eroded. Expenditure this year was £1,782 against income of £1,416, a deficit of £366. In the light of eventually needing to pay for an alternative practice venue, this situation must be rectified. Main sources of income were subs, Claygate Flower Show fee and Boxing Day bag. Major expenses, contributions towards the Ring Meeting fees and Yateley Day of Dance, charitable donations and Flower Show lunches. We voted to give £250 to Woking Hospice in view of their current financial difficulties, £50 to Woodlands Trust and £20 to the Ring Youth fund. The suggested figure for annual subs would be raised to £20.00. Fran reiterated that subs were voluntary and private, and one could give as much or as little as wished.

#### Squires report

In contrast with the Bagman, the Squire had enjoyed the year, with many memorable events too numerous to mention, but including the St.Hygenus weekend with Trigg, the Castle, Ottershaw (twice), the Croydon evening, and the Fownhope, Forest of Dean and Cotswolds weekends. Throughout the year we have been doing the best we can with both music and dancing. Our aim next year should be to continue to do the dances we know, but make them better, rather than trying to extend our range, and to continue to encourage the less experienced musicians to take a bigger role. Music has been difficult because of the non-availability of James Denny, but old hands Fran, Jim and Steve, with increasing help from Phil Turner, John Petts, Alan Bull and Mike Sugrue had seen us through.

#### Election of Officers

All existing officers were prepared to serve again and were re-elected unanimously.

#### Future Practice venue

We had been told by the manager of the Foley that the practice hall would not be available after Christmas, although it was rumoured that this might be delayed.

Other premises in the village had been examined, and the Officers' recommendation was to book the Youth Club (Old School) near the Hare and Hounds on Tuesday evenings from 9.00 pm to 10.30 pm. None of the other halls could let us have the same night each week, let alone a Tuesday. There is a karate class in the Youth Club finishing at 9.00 p.m., so we would meet up in the Hare & Hounds and do all notices and other business before moving to the hall promptly at 9.00, and practicing solidly until 10.30. The cost of the hall would be met by a suggested contribution of £2.00 per man on the night, with any shortfall made up from reserves. This was agreed.

It was proposed that we should aim to dance out every week from May 1 to August 31 (provisionally) with only occasional practice evenings, and that Tuesday evening practices following a weekend event would be skipped.

Post Meeting note: The Squire received the following email 2 days after the AGM:

Dear John, I'm sorry that no one was able to help with your telephone enquiry to Youngs regarding the Foley Arms. It is now looking unlikely that Youngs will start work on the Foley Arms in January 2010. It is impossible for me to say exactly when the works will start. Regarding your request for a month's notice to find an alternative venue whilst the Foley is being developed, I can reassure you we will be able to give you at least that notice. Thank you for your patience and we would be delighted if you continue to use the Foley Arms for the immediate future. Regards, Andy Nash, Area Manager, Young & Co's Brewery PLC

The Officers recommend that the Foley continues to be our base until further notice. It is most unlikely that any other group would want the 9.00 - 10.30 session at the Old School, so that remains the preferred option if and when the Foley is closed.

Dick Keen

TVMM Bagman

**Tuesday, November 3. The Talbot, Ripley** for the Colonel's Ale Tasting.

**Saturday, December 5. Claygate Christmas Lights.**

**Wednesday, December 9. Thames Ditton Christmas Fair** We danced at the George and Dragon and along the High Street.

**Saturday, December 12. Shooting Star Christmas Fair - Kingston**

**Saturday, December 26. Claygate – Boxing Day** The usual five pubs, The Swan, The Foley, The Hare and Hounds, The winning Horse and The Griffin, with a little help from Spring Grove.

From the Surrey Advertiser: "A Morris dancing tour brought in the crowds to the pubs of Claygate. Every winter the Thames Valley Morris Men provide light relief to drinkers and onlookers with their expert displays of dance and music. This year's Boxing Day spectacular included the Blue Streak – involving far-flung morris sticks." The accompanying photo shows TVMM wearing tasteful white boaters with decorative red Christmas bands.