

Leeds Morris Men 1950 -2010



60

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Front Cover picture: The Millennium Rose:
10.00am Kettlewell Monday 29 May 2000

l-r: Philip Kirk, John Schwarzenbach, Ken Barker, Alastair Sayles, Peter "Dickie" Pollard, Bob Price, Norman Peacock.

Moss Ambrose fooling and Allan Jarvis playing pipe and tabor

Welcome and Introduction from Rob Baker

Squire: Leeds Morris Men
2003 - 2005
2009 - present



To all Leeds Morris Men past and present

As current Squire it falls to me to offer a few words of welcome and explanation.

It is 2010 and Leeds Morris is 60 years old. Speaking as another 60 year old it seems an appropriate time to look back over the years and see how it all happened, how it developed, what makes sense in retrospect and what doesn't, and come up with a thorough evaluation of a life lived with bells on. Well, we're not going to do that. Anyway as a Leeds Morris Man I am still only in my teens!

What we have done is to try and trace members from the earliest years and the latter years and all the years in between and ask them for their stories. We have used the website, e-mail shots and fortuitously saved old postal address lists (thanks, Ken) and been surprised and delighted by the responses. What we have ended up with is an authentic celebration of the dancing and the music, the friendships and the adventures of 60 years of Leeds Morris. I will leave you to look for yourselves.

Thank you to all who have contributed (even if you didn't actually write anything!) and especially to Alastair Sayles and Allan Jarvis who have done the hard work of pulling it together.

Regards

Rob
May 2010



Brief history of Leeds Morris Men

Foundation

In 1949 there was no Morris club in either the city of Leeds or the university. And indeed no English dancing of any kind was done in the University, although there were branches of the EFDSS outside. Ted Purver of the Cambridge Morris Men who had come to the University in October as Assistant Lecturer in Spanish danced two jigs at a Carnival in the Riley Smith Hall on 17 March 1950, the first known Public performance of Morris in the University. Ted met Clifford Barstow and Norman Peacock (also a Cambridge Man and a research student) and these three planned the formation of a club to do both Morris and Long sword dances. Ted and Norman also started to collect information about the Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dance.

Norman writes in the Club's first Log: *"During the summer of 1950 these three men discussed the plans which were to lead to the formation of the club but it was agreed that nothing could be done until the 'new year' began in October. In the meantime other men were asked and some seemed quite keen"*



First public show 1951: Clifford Barstow is far left

The club was duly established with Ted as its squire (1950-51) and was ready to undertake its first public performance at the first Inter-Varsity Folk Dance Festival which, it so happened, was held in Leeds in February 1951. On 17th February the six men, Ted Purver, Norman Peacock, Peter Egan, Bill Blades, Cliff Barstow and Peter Pollard, with a borrowed pianist, did the first public performance (Wheatley

Processional; Lads a Bunchum and Constant Billy, Adderbury).

At the outset, because of the arrangements adopted for practices, membership was in effect restricted to members of the University, although Norman Peacock notes that there were always exceptions to this. Since 1971 however, the club has operated an open membership policy. The side still has links with the University, though the word 'University' was soon dropped from the name.

The second squire was Cliff Barstow, also a lecturer at the university (1951-52) and he was succeeded by Bill Barrett, a Lecturer in the Mathematics department, who had joined the club from Oxford University Morris Men and who was squire from 1952 - 72. In the early part of this period Norman Peacock was the Captain of Sword and Bagman.

Early years

In the early days regular performances were at Inter Varsity Folk Festival events and Morris Ring meetings. Though always short of men, the club was able to attend a surprising number of these. In 1953, at Whitsun, the club organised its first tour of the Yorkshire Dales, the men moving from show to show on bicycles. The tour was repeated in 1954, a coach being hired for transport, and since then the tour has been held annually, from 1971 onwards to coincide with the Spring Bank Holiday.

In spite of what some of the older men would like us to believe, touring by bicycle only happened once, and in subsequent years coaches and later cars were used to cover the distances involved and to ensure that there was both time and energy for dancing. In recent years coaches have been the preferred transport because of the difficulty of getting a dozen or more cars to the same place at the same time in the congested traffic conditions now common in the Dales. However one member of the club



Bill Barrett

was known for doing the Dales tour by bike in the 1980s and was often just in time to do Bonny Green Garters before moving on again!

In the early years practices were held at times to suit a membership whose availability was determined by their University commitments. This meant that a late afternoon time was found the most practical. In 1953, led by Cliff Barstow some Leeds men, wishing to form a non-University side which would practice in the evenings, when others not connected with the University would be able to participate, formed White Rose Morris Men, then based in Leeds but since 1971 in Huddersfield. Close co-operation continued with the new club, however, resulting in the joint hosting of the 53rd Morris Ring Meeting in Leeds in 1956. The two sides' very close links enabled them to share members and support each other's practices which was especially important when numbers were short during the 1960's and early 1970's.

The origins of the White Rose Morris Men. Clifford Barstow

At a Barn Dance in Bradford in January 1953 a group of men, which included some Leeds morris men, agreed to form a morris side of men independent of the university. This resulted in the White Rose Morris Men being formed in the spring of 1953 and being invited on the Leeds Whit tour of that year. A number of Leeds men were members of both sides and they danced together for a number of years. In 1971 White Rose numbers had decreased but there was a group of men in Huddersfield interested in dancing so the side was transferred to Huddersfield where it has remained ever since.



Leeds Morris Men became a member of the Morris Ring in 1956. At this time Longsword was at least as important as Cotswold in the club's repertoire, and this was reflected in the choice of club badges: while baldrics bore the White Rose of Yorkshire, publicity material bore the distinctive sword lock from Kirby Malzeard.

Difficult Times

A key moment in the club's history came in 1959 when Norman Peacock secured a post in Glasgow. He had been the driving force behind most of the club's activities and his departure proved to be the start of a lean time for Morris in Leeds. The club did

organise a Ring Meeting in 1961 - an instructional attended by some 40 men on 15th April - but after that there was little activity and no new members for some years. The side was very short of members, and in some years no practices could be held. The club however continued to organise and take part in the annual Tour of the Yorkshire Dales which then still took place at Whitsuntide. The Dales tour thus became an annual reunion between the few members still in Leeds and the greater number who had moved away. Through these lean years the club owed much to those members, notably Norman Peacock and Ellis Tinsley who kept in touch with former members and friends from other clubs thus ensuring that the Dales Tour maintained its unbroken run. Although full sides seldom attended, friends from the clubs in Cambridge, Colchester, Handsworth, St Helens, Grenoside, Durham, and of course White Rose, amongst others, lent their support to the tours in these years. Later many of these were able to bring full sides from their own clubs when the tours expanded in size.

Several of these friends became honorary members of Leeds Morris Men at this time in recognition of their friendship and in gratitude for their support.

Revival

There were several attempts to re-start club activities during the later 1960's at a time when Dick



Black Horse at Hellifield

Shilton was Bagman. However numbers were never sufficient to sustain a full programme of public performances, nor for practices to be held regularly. However a further fresh start was made in October 1970 and this proved successful. John Schwarzenbach had replaced Dick Shilton upon his departure as club Bagman. John, a lecturer in the Mechanical Engineering department at the University, secured a lecture theatre in his department for practices, several undergraduates and recent graduates were persuaded to attend and Bill Barrett resumed his teaching of the men.

Shortly after this a successful recruitment drive amongst the enthusiasts of the folk revival greatly increased numbers. Amongst the 2010 active membership Allan Jarvis, past squire, and Ken Barker, past squire and the club's current Bagman, were men who joined the club at this time.

Bill Barrett took the opportunity in 1972 to step down from the office of Squire, which he had held continuously for 20 years, although he continued to teach and play for the men. He was replaced by Allan Jarvis, who had recently joined the club from Cambridge. As well as taking the Squire's job Allan took on the role of Foreman in the club maintaining and building on the work laid down by Bill. Since the 1980s Squires have usually appointed several foremen each of whom has undertaken the teaching of the dances from a specific tradition in which they have specialised.

Since the early '70's the club has been continuously active. Under the encouragement of David Henthorn the club introduced regular weekly shows in the summer of 1972 and since then the side has had enough members to dance out regularly through each summer. In 1983 the club was joined by Moss Ambrose who soon revived the role of Fool, which (apart from the Dales Tour when Ellis and latterly Allan Jarvis took it on) had been in abeyance since before the lean years. Moss quickly turned this role into a key element of the club's relationship with the public.

Up to the present

Once firmly re-established, the club went on to build up a new range of close and enduring links with others, most notably Whitchurch Morris Men and Forest of Dean Morris Men. The club has occasionally experimented with Longsword and Rapper in the years since the revival but these days prefers to concentrate on Cotswold Morris with an especial fondness for the dances from Fieldtown, Bledington and Sherborne though it is now experimenting with and enjoying Ascott and Wheatley. Growing membership carried on throughout the 1980s with a new influx of students, a number of whom have stayed with the club. At times the club had more active members than could be readily accommodated at practices, Bill Barrett became unable to dance with the club regularly but still attended Dales Tours as did Norman Peacock. "Dickie" Pollard was also a regular attender at the Dales Tours, known for holding the sword and cake in the Rose on Whit Monday.

There have been a number of changes of practice venue in the years since the 1970 revival. The club was forced to move from the Mechanical Engineering department at the University when a gas cylinder exploded, wrecking a number of rooms. A temporary home was found in a room above the Pack Horse pub opposite, and later in a very large lounge in the Chemical



Norman Peacock: May 2007

Engineering department nearby. Bob Price secured the club the use of an even larger hall at Cookridge hospital which was the club's "home" for a number of years. The acoustics here were found unhelpful by the foremen however so for a time the club experimented with the community centre on Cardigan Road. For some years now the club has practised at Notre Dame Sixth Form College, an arrangement made possible by the college's Head of History, past Squire Joe Oakley.

In the 1970's and early 80's the club were regular attenders at Morris Ring meetings, those in Handsworth (1974) Bristol (1980) and London (1972) being especially memorable. The latter was the Ring meeting which was famous for being almost completely rained off. Driven by desperation the Leeds side went down into the Underground station at Charing Cross and after dancing on the platform entered a train and danced Saturday Night (Bledington) for the mystified passengers while the train took the men to Victoria. The men had done the same during the London Ring meeting in 1956.

The later 1980's were marked by a lower level of involvement in Ring affairs but a number of other new ventures. In 1988 the club was invited to be one of the resident teams at Whitby Folk Week where we undertook the "beginners Cotswold Morris workshops". 1989 saw a two week tour to Dortmund sponsored by Leeds City Council which was very successful. Another week in Whitby followed in 1991, again to provide the beginners workshops. Other new ventures in these years include the "Horsforth Mile", a day spent dancing in turn at each of the many pubs in Town Street, Horsforth; and the August Bank Holiday tour of the Leeds Parks.

Throughout the 90s the club had quite a turnover of members but still maintained an active dancing side. Sadly Bill passed away in 1995 and Dickie Pollard in 2009

In 2001 the 50th anniversary of the club was marked with a decision to dance 50 different dances on the Horsforth mile - not something we intend to replicate for the 60th! The club's website records the dances which figured in this prodigious feat.

In 2006 the club spent a week after Easter in France and Belgium and this has become a tradition with the same week being based in Bruges and having trips out to Ghent and Lille. On these trips we have been joined by friends from the Forest of Dean, Ashdown Forest and Oakworth. There have also been successful tours to the Cotswolds and Sussex.

The highlight of the club year remains the much-loved annual tour of the Yorkshire Dales, which has in fact taken place every year without a break from 1953 until the present, a reduced version being held in 2001 due to foot and mouth disease. Nowadays it is a family and camping weekend, based for many years in Burnsall, although bases in Threshfield, Linton, Buckden, Appletreewick, Kilnsey and Kettlewell have also been used in the past. The Saturday tour has always been based mainly in Airedale but the focus of the Monday tour has shifted over the years from Wharfedale alone to include Wensleydale as well. The Monday tour always begins at 10.00 am in Kettlewell, and the first dance is always The Rose from Field Town. Nowadays this dance is performed in remembrance of our founding members, some of whom have sadly passed on.



Norman Peacock – Collector, Folklorist and almost Bagman of the Ring Allan Jarvis

Everyone associated with Leeds Morris Men knows Norman Peacock. His record of only ever missing one Dales Tour is unique; as one of two founder members with whom we are in touch he is much revered and valued; and for some of us his wise advice at many an AGM were of great value. However it may not be realised that Norman was an active and influential collector of sword-dance material and the author of numerous articles and papers.

I first came across the name Norman Peacock when the 1960 Edition of the Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society reached the Jarvis household. The bulk of the journal was given over to *A Geographical Index of the Ceremonial Dance in Great Britain* and one of the four experts who had collaborated on it was N. Peacock. It remains an outstanding resource. My copy is sadly dog-eared these days!

The story of Norman's work with the Kirkby Malzeard sword dance is told in his own words elsewhere in this publication. It occupied the first five years of Leeds Morris Men's existence and culminated in a performance of the dance in front of the last known surviving member of the team of the 1880's. During the same period he recorded what remained of the sword dance and play from Greatham although he was unable to find any informant who could remember the whole of the dance. He taught the results of his research to the Leeds men who performed it at the national Gathering of the EFDSS in 1957, and published his research in the Journal of the EFDSS for 1956.

One of Norman's collaborators on the *Index*, Christopher Cawte joined him in investigating the Rapper dances of Winlaton and Murton and the curiosity of the dance-less sword dance play at Ripon. The results of their Christmas visits to all three locations appeared in *English Dance and Song* in the spring edition of 1956.



Norman's work on the plays at Greatham and Ripon led to a further collaboration with Alex Helm and Christopher : *English Ritual Drama, a Geographical Index*, published by the Folklore Society in 1967.

A further collaboration with Bill Cassie led to the publication by the EFDSS in 1976 of *The Sword Dances of Northern England*. An indication of the importance of Norman's collecting and publication activities can be found in the several references to him on the website of the Redcar Sword Dancers.

Lastly it may have escaped attention that, but for his move to the Royal College of Science and Technology in Glasgow in 1959 Norman would have taken up office as Bagman of the Morris Ring. Sadly he felt that Scotland was too remote from Ring activities for him to be able to carry out this role and it passed instead to Ewart Russell of Colchester Morris Men, a close friend of the club.

Leeds Morris Men and the Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dance

Norman Peacock

Leeds Morris men were responsible for the revival of the Kirkby Malzeard dance which, though published by Cecil Sharp, had received little attention and few performances since the last village side had disbanded in the early 1930's. Here Norman Peacock describes how he and others from the club carried out research and collection and how they took the dance back to the village in 1956.

From the earliest days of the Leeds Morris Men in 1950, Ted Purver, founder Squire, insisted that we should take up a "local" sword dance and to this end he wrote to Douglas Kennedy who had recently published an article on "fresh Light on the Kirkby Malzeard Dance" in the journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. His article was based on Kennedy's observation of the revived dance in the 1920's and subsequent correspondence with Ralph Wood who had led that revival.

We wrote to Ralph Wood but received a reply from his son, Norman, telling us that his father had died the previous December. Ted and I visited Norman Wood in September 1950 and I had a useful if sporadic correspondence with him over the next eight years. He had been "reserve" for his father's team in the mid-1920's but had subsequently left to go to Liverpool University and had never returned to Kirkby permanently. Although he had taught the dance to schoolboys from time to time, he did not then have a team and said his recollection of the dance was becoming hazy. He did however confirm that the Lock was a double triangle and that his father had said that when the "old" team had performed for the author Keighley Snowden in 1906 they had made a "standard" hexagonal lock because they did not wish to betray the secret of the double triangle.

On our visit to Norman Wood we did not learn how to make the double triangle lock and all we had to go on was the rather vague description in Kennedy's article. Back in

Leeds, therefore, we practised the dance using the hexagonal lock. At the end of 1951 I had further correspondence with Norman Wood who gave me a description of the making of the triangular lock. This we found rather confusing and, using his description as a guide we eventually discovered our own method of making the lock. We found that both Wood's instructions and our own method resulted in an anti-parallel array with the two swords on any side of the triangle pointing in opposite directions.

In the summer of 1952, on Mr Wood's suggestion, Clifford Barstow and I visited Mr Harry Holmes, the schoolmaster at Kirkby, who had been a member of Ralph Wood's team. He had recently trained a team of women who had performed the dance at the celebration of the centenary of the local Mechanics' Institute on 21st June 1952. Among other things, Mr Holmes taught us an improved method of making the triangular lock which resulted in a parallel array, with all swords pointing in the same direction around the ring.

At this time we also got a copy of the postcard showing "Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dancers about the year 1900" which George Duffield, the postmaster, had found in his post office.

From this time the Leeds Men always used this latter form of the double-triangle lock in their frequent performances of the Kirkby dance. We found that we were able to put this lock **on** the Captain's head, as described by Sharp in his *Sword Dances of Northern England* rather than **over** his head and onto his shoulders as occurs with the hexagonal lock.

I continued to think about the dance as we now performed it, being intrigued by some apparent inconsistencies in the available sources. In 1955 I got in touch with Mr A Grimsdale, the secretary of the Mechanics' Institute who gave me a copy of the account of the dance entered into the log of the Institute in 1892. This account is quoted at length by Sharp in his field notebook but does not appear in SDNE (apart from the words of the song).

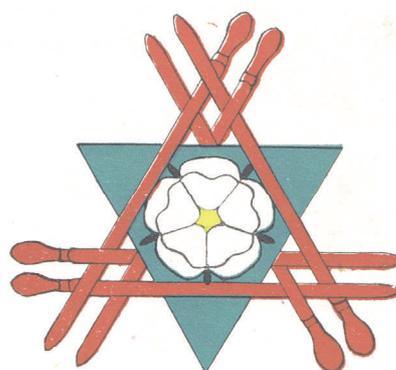
Mr Grimsdale told me that George Duffield could only think of three surviving members of the 1920's team in the village, but on a visit I met a fourth - a Mr Baynton who had also been a member in the 1920's and '30's. Not only did he give me his green corduroy breeches and yellow stockings, but, much more importantly he told me that Tom Moore, one of the 1886 team, was still living in Grewelthorpe.

I visited Mr Moore, then 89, who had started dancing in 1883 but had stopped before Tom Wood died in 1912. He was able to identify all the dancers on the 1900 postcard, including himself and his brother James. When it came to the dance and the lock he was very hazy, although, when shown them, he preferred the hexagon to the double-triangle lock. What he did say was that they put the lock **over** the clown's head onto his shoulders which would be very difficult with the double-triangle.

The culmination of all this collecting activity was a tour by the Leeds men on 23rd June 1956 which finished up with shows in Kirkby and Grewelthorpe with a special performance of the dance outside Tom Moore's house. At Kirkby the whole village turned out and George Duffield made a speech. At Grewelthorpe there was another enthusiastic crowd and Tom Moore was very pleased. The only complaint from him and others was that we took the dance too slowly.

I did have correspondence with Norman Wood again and amongst other things he lent me a photograph which, according to a

note I made at the time, shows the 1920's team at Grantley Hall displaying the double-triangle lock. Unfortunately my note does not tell me whether the swords ran parallel or anti-parallel.



Leeds Morris Men – the first decade

Allan Jarvis

The remarkable thing about Leeds Morris Men in the 1950's is the amount they managed to achieve with the slender resources they had in terms of dancers, musicians and transport.

The first moves to establish the club date to the summer of 1950 and were the initiative of Ted Purver, the club's first squire. Having previously danced with Cambridge Morris Men, he was disappointed, on taking up a post at Leeds University, to find no Morris of any description in Leeds. He set about remedying that situation. His initial collaborators were Cliff Barstow and Norman Peacock and these three were the creators of the club whose Diamond Jubilee we are celebrating in this publication.

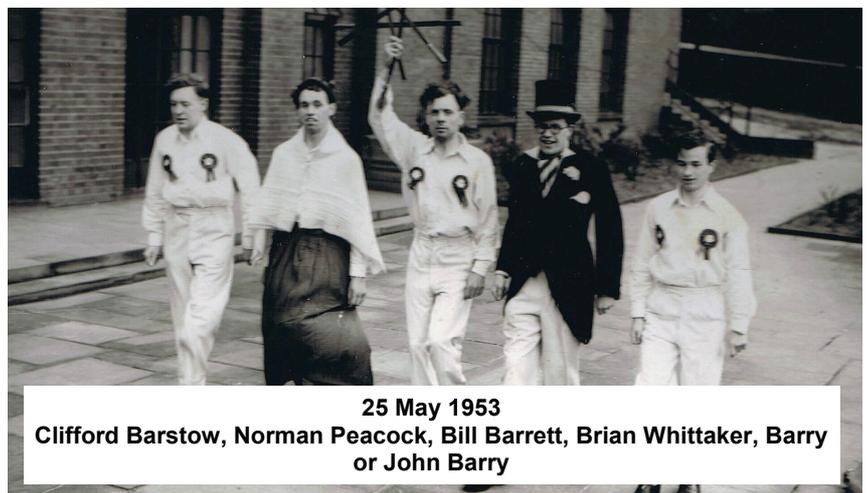
From the very first it was intended that the club would perform a local Longsword dance so even before practices had been fully established, Norman had begun upon his work of investigating the Kirkby Malzeard dance (described by him elsewhere in this publication). The first practice was held on Monday 9th October 1950 and was attended by eight men. By Christmas the regular practices had been fixed for 5pm on Fridays, Cliff had designed the club's baldric (essentially the design still in use today) and Ted had presented the first public performance – two jigs at the Agricultural Society's ball.

The first performance by a side of men came at the Inaugural Inter-Varsity Folk Dance Festival, held in Leeds in February 1951. However there was little other activity during 1951 and 1952 and numbers were small – no more than six in total. It was fortunate that Bill Barrett joined the club in October 1951, since Ted Purver left early in 1952 and the club was still short of experienced dancers. Norman's log records that it was often possible only to dance jigs.

Despite this, the men remained ambitious: they were now learning Rapper as well as Kirkby and had established a firm friendship with Bill Cassie of Kings College, Newcastle who advised them on the former. In September 1952 the club attended a Ring Meeting for the first time, at Tideswell. There were now separate practices for Morris and Longsword on Friday at 5.00pm and for Rapper on Thursday at lunchtime. Grenoside had been added to the repertoire and the first few Cotswold set dances from traditions other than Headington and Adderbury had been learned.

The repertoire in the 1950's was startlingly varied as to sword dances and remarkably small and consistent as to Cotswold. Longsword traditions performed were Kirkby Malzeard, Grenoside, Greatham (which Norman collected) and Escrick; Rapper traditions learned included figures from Winlaton, Walbottle, Earsdon Murton and Newbiggin . For Cotswold, core traditions throughout the decade were Headington, Adderbury and Bampton with small numbers of dances from most of the traditions published by Cecil Sharp. The only Morris Book traditions not mentioned in the Log are Badby, Bidford and Ilmington. Fieldtown, latterly a staple tradition of the club, did not make its first appearance until 1955 and Sherborne, another staple not until the 1958-9 practice season, when it was selected as the "tradition of the year": although individuals presented jigs from both traditions on many occasions.

One of the regular highlights



25 May 1953
Clifford Barstow, Norman Peacock, Bill Barrett, Brian Whittaker, Barry
or John Barry

through most of this decade were visits to the annual Inter-Varsity Folk Dance Festivals, which involved trips to Sheffield in 1953, Edinburgh in 1954, Birmingham in 1955, Manchester in 1956, Bristol in 1957, London in 1958 and Nottingham in 1959.

1953 saw the club's first independent Tour, the first Dales Tour on Whit Monday 26th May. which was largely organised by Brain Whittaker and concentrated the attention of the members for months. Most men cycled from Leeds on the Sunday and stayed at Kettlewell Youth Hostel and they cycled throughout the Tour. Dancing started in Kettlewell at 10.00 (as it has done every year since) and finished with the seventh show of the day at 19.00 at Grassington Station. The seven Leeds Men were accompanied by two members of White Rose and three from Manchester, including Ian Browne (who had given much pre-Tour advice) and Alex Richardson (who provided essential motor transport). The success of this Tour was a turning point in the development of the club.



At the end of August the club made its second appearance at a Ring Meeting - at Consett and in September the club undertook its first tour in the Leeds area, to Bramhope, Arthington, Pool and Otley.

By 1954 the club was firmly and securely established (although numbers remained small) and the first major adventure occurred when three men, including Cliff, were arrested for interfering with a belisha beacon and were duly bound over the following day to keep the peace for 12 months! This occurred when men were en route to the Inter-varsity Folk Dance Festival in Edinburgh. The club attended the Grenoside men's tour, held the second Dales tour, travelling by Wallace Arnold coach this time, (which was just as well as there was much rain). Eight Leeds Men were joined by four guests from White Rose and Manchester. The day following the tour they danced at the maypole-raising at Barwick in Elmet. In September White Rose men held their first tour and Leeds men attended. The following week they had a side for the Ring meeting at Coventry. In November they represented the West Yorkshire district of the EFDSS at the National Gathering, performing the Greatham sword dance to great acclaim.



The first tour of Leeds itself took place in late April 1955 and seems to have been very difficult to organise – the log records almost Byzantine complexities over the gaining of the requisite permissions! Norman organised it and seems to have managed to include virtually every significant suburb of the city! He was also able to persuade the Lord mayor to attend the first show, in Headrow Gardens. This was shortly followed by the third Dales tour which attracted sufficient numbers to be bifurcated for the first time. The two tours were designated the “Rapper party” and the “Kirkby party” and the fact that the bagman had accidentally booked two coaches turned out to have been an unwitting inspiration! There were joint shows in Kettlewell, Grassington, Burnsall and Grassington again and the extra sites were found by a detour into Littondale and the addition of Starbotton and Appletreewick.

A highlight came in June 1955 when, to replace the cancelled Ring Meeting at Stockton, the men organised their own tour to Hartlepool and Greatham, taking the dance collected by Norman back to its place of origin. A further significant event was the men's attendance at the London Ring Meeting in July when they received their staff of office as a newly-elected member club. Leeds men were amongst those who had to be made to desist from dancing in Kensington at about

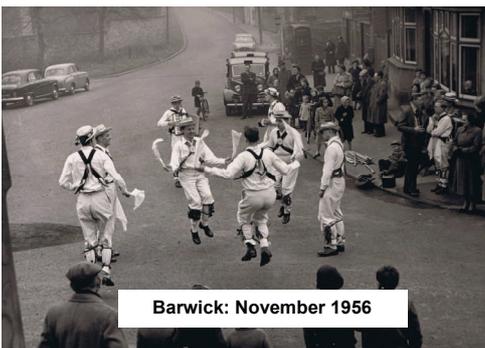
1.00am the following morning by a policeman whose seemed to think Saturday Night the wrong dance for early on Sunday morning! 12 Leeds men took part in the weekend – the largest number recorded by the log to this point. Were this not enough, the men also attended the Manchester Ring Meeting in September.

1956 saw the introduction of dancing and a feast to accompany the AGM, the first formal such meeting having been held in the previous year. It also marked a major event for the club, the hosting, jointly with White Rose MM, of the 53rd Ring Meeting. This had been planned for the last weekend in April but opposition from the EFDSS caused it to be brought forward a week, making it one of the earliest “outdoor” Ring Meetings ever. The log records, amongst other things, that the beer at the Friday evening “Ale” had failed to settle, causing some men intestinal difficulties on the following day. Norman’s log carries details of Tour E, in which the Leeds side participated. There was a massed show in the Headrow in the early evening followed by a Feast in the SCR at the University and by now the beer had settled!



The 1956 Dales tour took the now-established format, two tours, one with the Rapper, the other with Longsword, but, sensibly, swapping sites so the Rapper party went to Buckden and Starbotton, etc and the Longsword party visited Littondale. In June Leeds Men supported a White Rose tour which would have had to be cancelled as White Rose were now very few in number. This was the start of what, in the next decade, became a way of life for the two clubs as there were few occasions until about 1972 when both clubs could raise a full side at the same time!

A major event in June 1956 was a tour to Nidderdale which ended with shows in Kirkby Malzeard and Grewelthorpe. Thus the men took the Sword Dance they (especially Norman) had so painstakingly researched back to its place of origin and performed it in front of the last known survivor of the team of the 1880’s. There was general delight and much congratulation, although men were told that they danced it too slowly! In September the club sent a side to the Abingdon Ring Meeting.



The 1956-7 practice season saw rather a shortage of men and Rapper practices could not be held every week. The AGM tour visited Elmet and danced in some typically foggy November weather. There are excellent photos of this tour on the website. The men do look rather cold! Early Summer in 1957 saw a repeat of the Leeds tour held in 1955. Seventeen members danced at some point in the day.

In May 1957, for the first time, there was a tour on the Saturday of the Whit weekend. Men realised that more and more of them were staying in the dales over the whole weekend and asked themselves “Why climb Penyghent on the Saturday when we could be dancing?” The result was a tour of Airedale and Malhamdale, starting in Cracoe at 2.30 and proceeding to, Airton, Kirkby Malham, Malham, Cracoe and Hetton. The tour was remarkable for the interruption of a jig danced by Barry Caress by the intrusion of a herd of cows. The Monday tour was bifurcated along the same lines as in previous years. The next day, the men again danced at the Barwick maypole-raising.

June 1957 saw a joint tour with the Manchester MM of the Pendle Hill area and July a celebration tour with the Britannia Nutters of Bacup to coincide with some municipal landmark. In September a side comprised mainly of exiles from Leeds attended the Ring Meeting at Derby.

The 1957-8 practice season was, again, rather thin as to numbers and again Rapper practices occasionally had to be cancelled. There was a less-ambitious AGM tour because “the men were not particularly keen” and because “neither bagman nor captain was very willing to organise it.” Shortly before this the club had learned of the death at an early age of “Little John” Beaumont, an honorary member, who had given staunch support over a number of years. Only a fortnight later a second such blow befell the club when Ian Browne of Cambridge, Manchester and White Horse MM, also an honorary member, died at, again, a very early age. Ian had danced with the club less often than Little John, though he had attended most of the Dales Tours; but his advice had been crucial in shaping the early activities of the club.

Ian had suggested a joint tour with the Sheffield men shortly before his death and this took place in March 1958 in snowy conditions, the coach having to be pushed up the bank separating Wombwell and Barnsley! The Leeds tour of the previous year having disappointed as to both crowds and the bag, it was decided to travel more widely in 1958 and starting in the city centre men went via Headingley to Otley, Guiseley, Yeadon and Pool. Having chosen cup final day for this tour, the men felt themselves lucky to have secured any onlookers at all!

The 1958 Dales tour took the same pattern as that in 1957 although the Saturday tour seems to have been a very leisurely affair! In June there was a tour of the area around Harrogate and Wetherby and another of the “licensed establishments in North Leeds” in the evening – the first occasion on which the log records anything resembling our regular Thursday evening tours. Lastly in this busy month there was a tour of Richmondshire, organised as a replacement for the planned Lake District Ring Meeting which Leeds and Manchester MM had intended to organise jointly.



Loftus Sword Dancers joined Leeds MM on this tour and Norman took the opportunity to extend his researches into sword dances in the area. At the AGM in November, Norman laid down the office of Captain of Sword having been elected Bagman of the Ring and there were general congratulations on this.

The first significant event of 1959 was the now-annual tour of the Leeds district which started in the city centre and then took in Crossgates, Barwick, Harehills, Headingley, Bramhope, Pool and Otley. A tour like that would be difficult or impossible in modern traffic conditions and, what is more, it involved the men in doing no fewer than eight shows in a single day. Sixteen men took part. The Saturday of the Dales tour again started at 2.30 at Cracoe but this year the feast came on at the Angel at Hetton. The Monday tour followed the by-now-established bifurcation with Rapper on one tour and Longsword on the other. A better than usual joint show was given at Burnsall where, for once, the people stopped to watch rather than drifting past. On this occasion only one coach was employed and there was much coming and going of it as it dropped each half of the tour at its due show spot, then went off to collect the other half from theirs.

In June there were joint tours of Calderdale with Manchester MM and of Cleveland with Loftus Sword Dancers. During the latter a show was given in Greatham but sadly, on this occasion, without the Greatham dance. A tour with White Rose in July marked Norman’s final tour as a fully-resident Leeds man and the opportunity was taken to wish him well in Glasgow. In September there was a Leeds MM presence (but not a full side) at the Headington Ring Meeting, held to commemorate the diamond jubilee of the first meeting between William Kimber and Cecil Sharp.

Thus came to an end the first decade of the Leeds Morris Men. I am indebted to Norman Peacock who kindly provided me with a photocopy of his stunningly detailed log of these years from which the above highlights are drawn.

Leeds Morris Men in the 1950s

Peter Trout

I joined the Leeds Morris Men when I went up to the University of Leeds from my home town of Hull as an undergraduate in 1954, and remained with the side for a couple of years, finally leaving to pursue other activities.

The dancing that caught my imagination was the long sword tradition from Kirkby Malzeard, as well as rapper. Cotswold I mildly disparaged as a 'southern' style. I remember the sword dance kit as consisting of grey trousers, red jacket with yellow frogging, and a beret for headgear. My grandmother embroidered a knot of swords upon my handkerchiefs, one of which still survives along with my Cotswold bells and baldrick.

Norman Peacock is the only name I recall from my time with the side, though there was another, big chap with a dark moustache who later became the manager of Dolcis shoe shop in Hull at the time when I was subsequently training to become a teacher.

Standards of dance were maintained, recruits having to be good enough to be accepted. Two or three of the men specialised in a jig [the fool's jig?] that required short sticks to be passed under the raised leg. Another carried a fruitcake in a tin mounted on a swordhilt, the tin pierced by the blade. Attached was a penknife with which slices of cake were cut for distribution among the audience. I didn't see this repeated for many years until coming across something similar at the Oxford May Morning celebrations in the 1990s.



The highlights of the year were the trips up into the Dales at Easter or Whitson, dancing outside pubs, surrounded by moorland scenery. On one such trip, having over-indulged previously, I was 'on the waggon' and had to forego the pleasures of these hostleries. Orange squash or such like was my lot; it didn't seem quite the same!

Another treasured memory was the folk festival in Manchester, to which I travelled separately by train. It was absolutely terrific. Exhibition dancing took place during the day – I was in the sword side – and social dancing all evening. The evening dancing was exhausting, but exhilarating; nobody wanted to sit down.

In my final year, anxious to try new experiences, I turned to small bore shooting and left morris dancing behind until, quite unexpectedly, my son also took it up at university many years later.

Peter J.R. Trout

[Noted down by Edwin A.R. Trout from his father's reminiscences]

Memories of the 1960s and 70s John Schwarzenbach

When I came to Leeds University as a lecturer in January 1964 the club had recently gone into hibernation, since there were no longer enough men for practices. Being a 'gown' side new recruits needed to be found amongst the freshers to replace those men who graduated in the summer. Bill Barrett as Squire and Ellis Tinsley as acting Bagman however kept the Whit Tours running, with the support of country members and visiting sides and individuals. I joined White Rose MM, the 'town' side which had earlier grown out of the LMM, and some Leeds men still resident came to practices and shows. My first LMM attendance was at the Whit tours of 1966, but with 2 very young children I was only able to attend parts of the two tours.

By the autumn of 1966 after 3 years of hibernation there were enough men available to resume weekly practices at the University, and these were held in the Mechanical Engineering Department. This was convenient, free of charge, and with the facility some years later to brew tea. At the Whit Monday tour the following May there were as many as 3 or 4 sides in the massed dances.

My strongest memory of the Whit tours in those years is arriving at Kettlewell on the Monday at 10 am to find even at that early hour a large crowd waiting for us, big enough for people to have to stand about 6 deep around the area for the show (the same that we still use, outside the Bluebell). In the middle of the show the service bus used to arrive, and patiently wait and watch until we cleared space for it to come through. There were 2 tours which joined again for a show in the upper square at Grassington at 12.30, ending with Ring o' Bells as the Town Hall clock struck one. The two tours came together again mid-afternoon for the picnicing trippers in Burnsall on the Green (on grass which no-body liked), and then finally back in Grassington at 6.30. We generally had good audiences in those years, attracted by a

timetable published in The Dalesman, and by posters put up around the villages. We benefitted from the fact that many had not seen morris before, that there were fewer competing attractions, and that people did not expect sophisticated entertainment. There were still lots of residents who came out each year to see us.

We generally managed to present a good range of types of morris - the Durham Rams rapper side were regulars, and often Handsworth Longsword joined us. In 1968 we had Colne Royal, and so many applied for that Saturday tour that 4 tours had to be arranged, and many of the small villages around Skipton could be given shows. Two years later we introduced a 3rd Monday tour,



Whit Tour Feast 1963: Devonshire Arms, Cracoe

going over into Wensleydale. Colchester and St Helens were also regular visiting sides, and White Rose and LMM often joined for shows.

During this period Ring Meetings were often attended, but sometimes without a full side. One memorable dancing venue was taking part in a pageant honouring St Wilfrid in Ripon Cathedral, where we took part in a procession around the nave and then danced on a small quite elevated stage (without spectacles, for the correct period effect!). Another fine dance venue was the Merchant Adventurers Hall in York, where we put on a show for an international conference attended by 17 nationalities.

1970s

In 1970 I took over as Bagman and in 1972 we started to do some dance-outs on Tuesday evenings. We applied for street collection permits and danced in the centre of villages such as Bramhope and Bramham and local areas such as West Park and Cookridge. In response to posters in the shops and on public notice boards, people used to come out to watch, and we had some good shows - something which would not happen any more now.

It was good to have regular places for sustenance for the Whit tours - with the Coopers at Sparth House (now the River House Hotel) for tea on the Saturday, with the Lodges at The Manor House (now a B&B part of the Red Lion) in a railway carriage-like building in the garden, and with Johnny and Francois at Long Ashes restaurant in Threshfield for the Feasts where we were offered some interesting menus. At each place we presented informal private shows, and in the case of Malham this sometimes turned out to be the bigger show. In 1970 introduction of new drivers' regulations meant that we had to have our feasts in Ilkley at the Listers Arms (now demolished) and have a very slow return journey amongst all the traffic. This fortunately did not have to be repeated.

I remember being very concerned about the Whit weekend weather each year, because at that time the Monday feast was paid for out of

the bag, so having wet weather could result in a significant loss. As regards collections we tried to count and bag as much of the takings as possible, and offer the coin to shops and pubs in exchange for notes, and this was welcomed by the businesses and made safe handling by us easier. One year I estimated that we had handled 1 hundredweight of coin; pennies were large in those days! Another concern was keeping to the timetable with the coach going along narrow roads such as the back road between Conistone and Grassington, and the road to Arncliffe, and with



the number of cars increasing.

1971 saw us reach our 21st year, and we had an AGM followed by a fine celebration feast at the Albert Mansbridge College on Clarendon Road, in a grand Victorian residence where Queen Victoria had stayed when she came to Leeds to open the Town Hall. Behind the bar

Keith Constable's Wedding

Colchester Morris men's scrapbook contains a cutting from Essex County Standard - Friday August 26 1960 about the marriage of Keith & Jill Constable at Kings Norton, at which time Keith was a member of Leeds MM. Keith had previously danced with Colchester MM who presented him with an engraved rose-bowl to celebrate his wedding.

In 1956, Keith, who was then bagman of Leeds MM, wrote to Colchester MM a letter of thanks for helping out by taking part in the Kirby Malzeard Dance at the Abingdon Ring Meeting. "Rusty" (Ewart Russell) replied by sending photographs of the dancing to Keith which elicited a further letter of thanks, endorsed by Norman (Capt. of Sword).

Memories of the 1960s

Pat Malham

I became an honorary member of Leeds after attending the Whit Monday tours for a few years. There was a Leeds member, Ivor Hardwick, who, I think, was an early member and he moved down to Sheffield because of his work, about 1965. He became a member of Handsworth Sword and as Whitsuntide approached, he asked a couple of us, Les Seaman and myself, if we would like to go up to the Dales for the Monday tour. We said "Yes" and went up with him, and, I believe, Bernard Kidd, who was also both a Leeds member and at that time the musician for Handsworth. I seem to remember that we left the car at Ellis Tinsley's house in Leeds, and waited for Bert's bus to arrive. Ellis took the part of the fool for a number of years.

I'm not certain of Bert's surname* but he was always the one who drove us up to Kettlewell and then round Wharfedale. He was almost part of Leeds Morris and I seem to remember that he used to come along to the Feast before driving us back to Leeds at the end of the day. At that time, there was only one tour which covered only Wharfedale - such places as Kettlewell (always 10am), Grassington, Linton, Burnsall, Hebden, Kilnsey, Cracoe, etc - and at times it was quite difficult passing on some of the narrow lanes. Most of the teams who came were as a result of Leeds men who had moved away and brought some of their current men back with them. There were usually sides/individuals from White Rose, Colchester, Boar's Head, Durham Rams and later many others.



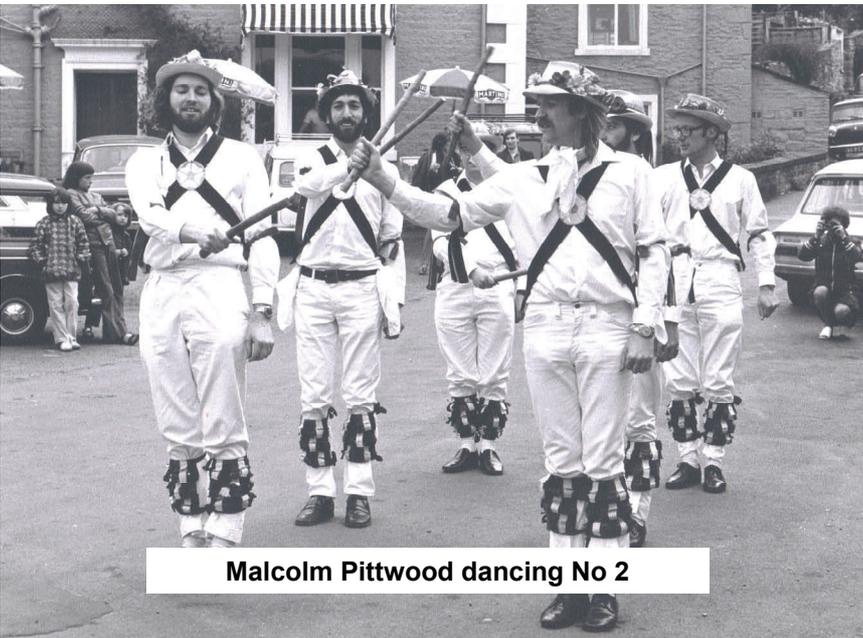
Handsworth Sword Dancers: Sheffield Ring Meeting 1961

There was one interesting happening much later. As you know, we always start at Kettlewell but at one time, there was a service bus scheduled to leave some time mid-morning. Normally there was no problem but on the occasion I can remember, he was spotted coming down the road, past the Village Hall, and making for the bridge. We were part way through a dance and it seemed likely that the bus driver intended continuing until he got down to his bus stop. But, he had not counted upon Keith Constable. Keith stationed himself at an appropriate point at the foot of the set, folded his arms, and blocked the bus. The driver continued. Keith stood his ground and finally the bus arrived at Keith, who leaned against the radiator until the dance was finished, when he calmly walked away. Somewhere, there is a photo of Keith and the looming bus, but where it is now, I don't know.

* Appleyard (editor's note)

Memories of the 1970s Malcolm Pittwood

I joined in October 1970 and was taught by Bill B and John S, as well as the dancing sides on the Dales Tour May 1971. As Squire of the side after Allan Jarvis I was pleased to be involved fully



with Leeds Morris Men whilst I was at University ('70 to '74) and then working in and around Leeds until my work location meant going to Doncaster. I was able to join the men for some events and tours even after this move. However after the NCB/British Coal dispute I relocated again to Derby to work in Nottinghamshire, rarely able to meet up with the men. Last time was on the Dales tour 2002.

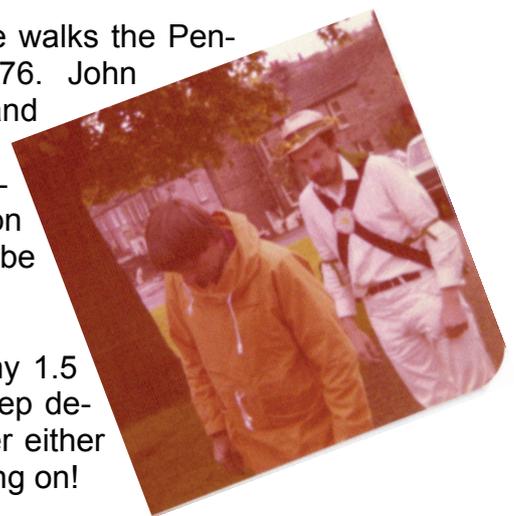
My brother Alan was made an 'honorary' member as he played music for some Leeds Morris men ring events as well as the Dales tours (he was the musician for Reading University Morris).

My recollections of significance would be: being Squire on the 25th Dales Tour when a large number of our original members were able to join the event; the teaching of John Noakes with Allan Jarvis and bringing him into a LMM side on TV in 1976 - it was good publicity for the side and during my time with the men it was possible to put two sides up to dance with musicians (two or three) and all 15 had full beards

Leeds Morris Men “Go with Noakes” and 70’s miscellany Doug Whiteley

“I remember John Noakes dancing with Leeds Morris as he walks the Penine Way, on the popular TV show “Go with Noakes” in 1976. John practised with us over the winter, about once a month, and then, come the Spring Bank holiday was filmed hiking into Malham on Saturday afternoon and “surprise surprise” discovers some morris men, who kindly teach him to dance on their day off. Come Monday he's dancing like a pro (should be with Allan Jarvis teaching), and joins us on tour.

At least one show was filmed in Bainbridge, where I got my 1.5 seconds of TV fame dancing Headington. I remember Shep deciding that there was something worth extracting from under either the cameraman or soundman's foot, whilst shooting was going on!



Doug recalls a number of incidents that left their mark:

Another reminiscence is that of my first time dancing out. The Greyhound at Tong, possibly 1 May 1975, as that was a Tuesday. It was cold and as always up at Tong, fairly breezy, so when not dancing we all clustered around an outside corner of the pub to keep out of the draft. I learned that night to always wear a tee shirt under the whites when it wasn't the height of summer.



Another event I remember would have been in 1977 (or one or two years later). Having moved to Pudsey in Feb 1977, it was my job to visit the selected Pudsey pub with the Bagman's letter asking if we could dance there as one of the summer weekday spots. So sometime in February or March off I went. At the bar I was told that the landlord had just changed, but was away at a licensed victuallers holiday,

but if I left the letter and called back some-time later, I should be able to see him. I duly did, and so we danced at the Butchers Arms in Pudsey where free food was laid on, and the landlord had a go at dancing as well. That was the start of our relationship with Gerry that had us follow him a couple of years later to the Brown Hare on Harehills Lane and then on to the New Inn at Gildersome. He was the source of the Sam Smiths re-rack we acquired for several Dales tours (referred to elsewhere in this publication).



Dancing at The Maypole, Long Preston

Clearly Doug had an affinity with the Butchers Arms as he recalls dancing there when the men were filmed by Yorkshire TV. There was also the incident dancing in one of the city centre shopping centres, the one with the wonderfully patterned but slippery floor where Ken Barker fell and broke his arm!



Castle Hill, Skipton

Dave Emberson, who regularly cycled the Whit Bank Holiday Monday tour recalls:

"Fond memories that time I left Malham Cove and decided to take the short cut to Kilnsey village hall on my bicycle via Mastiles Lane. Only two hours and the track disappeared at the top. Even better I left Kilnsey at 11.00pm to cycle back to Leeds, missed the dog leg at Threshfield for the Ilkley Road and ended up in Skipton about 1.00am. I gave up cycling and climbed over a wall in a field on the Chevin and slept for a couple of hours. Cycling back through the middle of Leeds at breakfast time was wonderful, so quiet!

We always joked that Dave was always just in time for Bonny Green Garters!

Personal highlights from 20 years with Leeds Morris Bob Price

When I went nervously to my first practice in September 1986, I had no inkling what an important place Leeds Morris Men were to occupy in my life for the next twenty years. It is hard to say exactly what was the appeal of belonging to this unlikely mixture of men young and old, fat and thin, expert and novice ... There was the comradeship; there was the ritual of the dance itself; there was the music; there were the many moments of pure magic, most of which came at events, or moments in events, when you least expected them. There was the beer.

To try to list some of my special memories; - I was proud to be elected to membership the old-fashioned way, with due ceremony and ritual, at the 1987 Dales Tour and I was enormously encouraged by the way I was accepted as a musician, especially in the early days when it must have been clear to everyone that I was anything but! Later I was honoured to be Squire.

Then there were the events. The Dales Tour has a magic of its own, and I treasure memories of the special atmosphere of 10 o'clock at Kettlewell; landlady of the Buck Inn in Malham Juli Boocock's enthusiastic welcome, and her Malham and Masham pie; hot air balloons taking off skimming the chimney pots of the pubs in Kettlewell; Simon Care (of Moulton Morris and The Albion Band) joining in our improvised ceilidh. I was especially pleased that I was able to help Moss to develop the lively and well attended event it is these days.



Dales Tour at Gargrave

Memories of the 1980s—Alastair Sayles

As a new student in 1984 morris practices became the highlight of my week for both the enjoyment of the Morris and the friendship from the men in the club which remains to this day. However my first practice left me rather bewildered as I arrived to find that I was to be instructed by a rather intense individual who was intent on giving us a 15 minute lecture on the history of Fieldtown. Should I return the following week? Well I did and have over the years been influenced greatly by Allan's teaching which in turn was clearly influenced to a degree by Bill Barrett. Bill did at that time turn up to occasional practices and would play pipe and tabor for the men despite being totally deaf.

I mainly remember the 1980s as a time of a lot of fun. There were a lot of new members in the team and we had many weekends away. A particularly fond memory was of the Forest of Dean weekend held in early June. One year driving down in a hired car with Ronan and having pitched the tents it was off to the club on the hill for a good sing. The singing seemed to just keep going through the weekend and late into the night. Sometimes this didn't go down too well with the other campers with renditions of Robin Hood in the campsite at 1.00am in the morning!

Then there was the evening of 17 December 1987 when the Mech Eng Department of the University, our practice room, "blew up". This coincided with our Christmas social at the Packhorse. Walking across Woodhouse Moor there were police barriers across the road and clearly people were, for their own safety, not being let through. Speaking to the police on the barrier and explaining that we were with Leeds Morris Men we were told "Oh, it's OK for the Morris Men to go through". Was this just kindness on their part or a cunning plan to bring about the demise of the club in one fell swoop! It was however rather bizarre sitting in the Packhorse with blown out windows enjoying our Christmas social – at least we had the pub to ourselves!

Other memorable events include the trip to Dortmund in 1989; the enormous set when we danced *Old Woman Tossed Up (FT)* during a ceilidh in the Spa at Whitby; being part of the side introduced at the Whitby bandstand spot by Jim of Kern Morris with the words "These are Leeds Morris Men – they're bloody good"; following Father Christmas through Settle, when a downpour turned the parade into a mad dash; the Cotswold tours (each in its own way!) – especially being served sherry outside the big house in Sherborne

- and last year's Sussex tour, though partly for rather sad personal reasons.

The dances: The Orange in Bloom, the finest flower in the whole bunch; plenty of other favourites from Fieldtown, Brackley, Bledington, Bucknell; Collecting *The Idiot* from America, working out the tune and the dance notation, and learning it. The singing – on the coach and in cramped pubs on wet Thursdays

And, did I mention the beer?



Briggate Tour 1988

Leeds Morris men: a family affair

The 90s became rather a family affair both in Leeds and some of our associated clubs. In the past there had not been many joint family members in the club, an exception being Allan and Joe Jarvis in the 1970s. Allan and Joe used to say that they were the only father-son pairing in the Ring that we knew of where the son introduced the father to the Morris. Joe had joined St Albans two years after Allan and then became an honorary member of Leeds in 1974, 3 years after Allan joined the club. At around the same time there were also the Pittwood brothers; Alan and Malcolm. Malcolm joined 1970 and Alan was made an honorary member the same year as Joe Jarvis.



Allan

Joe

Leeds in year as Joe

Another family pairing that was involved in Leeds were Joe and Chris Thompson (father and son) who were both White Rose men who regularly supported the Dales tour. Neither were ever actually elected a member of Leeds but at the time in question membership of Leeds and White Rose tended to be treated as membership of both! Allan Jarvis recalls that Chris always wore a White Rose baldric on the Dales tour, whilst Joe wore a Leeds one.

Further apart in time were the Careys, father and son, Gerry and John. Gerry was a White Rose man who often turned out with Leeds in the 1950's and John played fiddle for us during his years at the University in the 1970's.

In the 1990s there were a number of instances where the club had father and son members at the same time. Phil Kirk had joined Leeds in 1988 along with Chris following the club's attendance at Whitby and gone on to be one of the club's key dancers. Both Phil and Chris were elected as Squires of the club. Chris and Phil, however, were not the only father and son combination. Simon



Briggate Tour 1994: Moss, Simon, Dave, Derek, Brian, Phil, Chris. Ben watches!



Moss and Ben
Pont Aven 2003

Hayward and father John, a squire of Leeds, had been active in the club from the late 1980s and Simon continued to be an active dancer until he left to go to University. John continued to dance and teach through the 1990s before taking a break from the Morris and going on to be a musician with the Molly side, Rhubarb Tarts. Then too there were Derek and Simon Matthews. Derek, another Squire of Leeds in the 1980's, still continues to dance regularly and, although not living in Leeds, supports the club whenever he can. Simon, who joined Leeds in 1997, has continued to dance and now heads up the Jig Crew and is involved in Morris 18-30. When he gets some spare time he manages to dance with Leeds. Last and by no means least were Moss and Ben Ambrose. Ben joined Leeds around the same time as Simon and the two were well matched in some of the dances. Although Ben has not pursued his dancing with Leeds as avidly as Simon, he has continued to dance mainly with the Royal Forest of Dean



The 2 Joe Oakleys

Morris Men. Towards the end of the decade and into the new century we were joined by Little Joe Oakley who danced regularly with the club until 2008 when he decided to take a rest from the Morris.

During the late 1980s and into the 1990s Leeds were very closely associated with Briggate Morris with many of the partners of the Leeds men involved in the North West team; Maggie Sheen, Sue Karran, Alison Matthews, Glenis Price, Sharon Kirk, Joan Jarvis and Anne Lomas. As families grew up Briggate were joined by daughters Sarah Matthews, Alison Price and Catherine and Marie-Clare Oakley.

of England": a clattering of clogs, a bristling of bobbins, and a swirling of skirts. I have been smitten pretty much ever since. Leaving aside fantasies about mill girls, Briggate have loyally supported our Dales Tour for many years and we have done only slightly less well in supporting their weekends and Days of Dance. Over the years Leeds Morris have contributed at least four melodeon players to Brig-

gate. A couple of memorable recent joint ventures have been the well-dressing at Bonsall, Derbyshire, dancing outside the Hyde Park Picture House for the Leeds premiere of "Morris, A Life with Bells on", and a delightful summer tour of Sussex in 2008 when a stalwart Briggate team of 3 dancers choreographed new dances in the ladies toilets in Lewes in between downpours.

Rob Baker reflects on how he became involved with Briggate and on how the links between the two clubs have evolved

"My thought on first sighting Briggate in a Methodist Church Hall in Headingley, in about 1989, shortly after I arrived in this part of the world was "Ah, so this is the North

Cathy Smith of Briggate recalls her association with Leeds Morris Men
 "My memories of Leeds Morris span over 25 years of dancing as a member of Briggate Morris. In the early days it took me a while to recognise all the connections there were between the 2 sides. I'm sure we did meet up on occasions but I can't really remember that far back. I couldn't always work out why we didn't do many joint gigs when there were obviously close relationships. The turning point started when Chris and Bob helped us out on many gigs when we were struggling for a musician and I am especially grateful to them. In the more recent years we were saved again by Brian and Rob coming to our rescue as musicians to start with and subsequently as friends and I have **many** happy memories of spending time with them in lots of dance outs, weekends and other events. They have also encouraged and helped members of Briggate who have more recently taken up playing the melodeon, so we now have quite an enthusiastic band. Derek, Phil Westley and Allan have also played for us on occasions. I suppose now I look back Leeds Morris is a bit like an extended family to us - some people are married or have relationships, our children have been friends, sometimes people have fallen out with each other, most get on with each other in some way or another.

Here's to the next 60 years of Leeds Morris and to the future generations of Morris dancers."

Twenty-Five years of Trying: Over the hill with Leeds Morris Men

Joe Oakley Snr

I can date with some precision when the seeds of my distraction were sown: it was 8am on May 1st 1975 on the High in Oxford. I was in my first year reading History and was coming from Magdalen Bridge where I had listened to the Magdalen College choir singing their traditional anthem from the top of the tower. The road was a veritable flood of people, many of whom had made a night of it, but we were too sensible in those days to jump from the bridge into 12 inches of dirty river water covering a medley of rubbish with sharp edges. On the way back to breakfast in Corpus (my college) I was beguiled by the distinctive notes of an accordion and came across the Headington Quarry Men doing their stuff to an appreciative crowd. I had never seen anything like it before - in Great Yarmouth we had not even heard of Kemp's Men, let alone seen them - but I was riveted. On subsequent May mornings they remained a highlight, but (strange to look back on it now), I remained a spectator. I was not a dancer (still true - ask Allan !) and being of a somewhat shy disposition (still true - honest !) I could not see myself performing in public with such confidence like the Headington Men; and I did not then drink at all apart from Christmas sherry, some brandy (for medicinal purposes) and an occasional small glass of port. So I never joined the Ancient Men and met my fate 8 years later at the hands of a certain Maurice Ambrose in the Black Bull at Otley on a fine Spring evening in 1983 - a chance meeting as we say in Middle Earth.



I was in the Black Bull for their folk evening with a colleague from Roundhay School and fell to talking with Moss who had performed with his usual expertise. Afterwards we went back to my friend's house nearby for some ale and more songs into the small hours - I was younger and more hardy then. At some point Moss let slip that he had recently joined Leeds Morris which unhinged the doors of memory for me. The result was an invitation to come to the next Leeds practice and the rest, as they say, is history. Leeds at that time was numerically very strong and I was not a little nervous at trying to remember all the names - the beards didn't help ! Practices were held on the upper floor of the Mechanical Engineering building of Leeds University with Steve providing cake and tea at the break - a tradition I liked and revived when Notre Dame became the venue in the late 1990's. I became a member at the same time as Peter Karran and we had our initial footing tuition in the corridor outside the practice room with Bob Shakespeare who was a kindly, encouraging but precise tutor. The first tradition that I learned was (echoes of the Quarrymen) Headington and I used to dread the backsteps with which I still struggle. I was always relieved when we performed (?) which was all forward movement. We used to cross the road to the Eldon afterwards for a jar, the point which I discovered the devastating truth that Tetley's was not a real ale - I was still very young !

With the passing of the seasons I gained in proficiency and gained experience in a dozen or more traditions. This is an aspect of the Leeds approach to the Morris that I have always appreciated. I realise that some sides concentrate on a very few dances from no more than 2-3 traditions, thereby gaining a degree of expertise and terpsichorean skill that can be breathtaking in performance. But the joy of Morris dancing this past quarter-century has been the challenge of picking up new traditions each year and the profound satisfaction gained from performing them successfully in public. But there have been some anxious moments. It took me a long time to learn to unbuckle legs & arms so that I could do separate movements with all appendages and move in the horizontal plane without falling over or bumping unwittingly into the other men. I think we did Longborough in my second or third season with Leeds. I really enjoyed this vigorous tradition with the men flying through the air in the heys (I was lighter and more supple then) and I continue to yearn for Swaggering Boney. However I have a vivid memory of turning the wrong way into rounds and discover 5 men coming, in line astern, straight at me...and not stopping. I

still bear the scars. More recently Geoff introduced me to the delights of Ascot under Wychwood as a tradition that he felt was appropriate to the lengthening age profile of the side (sic !). For some time I was seriously worried that this would be, for me, a tradition too far as I struggled to manage the galleys part-way through the figures. But thank God it turned out that old dogs can master (at least some) new tricks.

Although now a veteran of Dales Tours they still continue to be a highlight in my year. The details merge together, but I remember crawling out of a tent at Appletreewick, perched on the site of a steep mountain (or so it seemed) to see the valley below wreathed in thick mist. It may well have been that same tour that I earned my first epithet from Mike Chandler of the Whitchurch Morris Men. On hearing that I had never slept in a tent before he immediately christened me the "Virgin Camper", and I carried the pseudonym for many years afterwards. That year the feast was held at Long Ashes, a rather "posh" venue for Leeds, though I think the food in recent times at the more humble venue of Burnsall Village Hall has been at least its equal. The year my elder daughter was born (1986) we were based at Buckden, in the field behind the Buck Inn. I have always immensely enjoyed dancing at the Buck, but my enduring memory of that particular tour must be Moss & Allan performing Babes in the Wood – a song that still stirs my heartstrings when I can get them to reprise it. When my daughters were very young I dropped out of Leeds for 5 years until a chance meeting with one of the men put me back on the straight & narrow. But I never forgot the thrill of performing with the side and always felt a pang of regret when the May bank holiday came around.

Obviously there have been other tours. In fact I honed my skills as a driver criss-crossing the realm from Norfolk to Durham, York to the Forest of Dean. I always felt I was coming home on the Sheringham, Potties weekend. The town is just up the road from my birthplace in Great Yarmouth and I spent many happy family holidays cycling round North Norfolk. I do recollect one tour however when the skies darkened and the rain fell in torrents as we approached Sheringham. The adverse weather persisted throughout the weekend, with a thick fog from the North Sea making it difficult at times to see where the other men were in the set. Nevertheless the crowds, though thin, were supportive and the Potties as ever were good hosts. As we left on Sunday afternoon the clouds drew back only 2 miles from Sheringham and the sunshine poured down ... as it had done everywhere else in the entire British Isles for that entire weekend. The Sheringham micro-climate is unpredictable and almost unique. Another favourite tour has been the Forest of Dean weekend. I love the fascinating geography, history, flora and fauna of the Forest and Dave Evans and the Forest men are the epitome of kindness and good cheer. And the local cask ales are not bad either. To camp in that great open space in the gloriously "deadspot" for mobile phone communications is tantamount to making a complete break with the trials and tribulations of the real world. This Summer Leeds have been invited to accompany the Forest of Dean on their annual pilgrimage to Pont Aven and I am really looking forward to joining them. I also have many happy memories of going down to Whitchurch, my first "foreign" tour. There was the time when a mix up over travel arrangements left me giving a lift to Moss on the Friday night. I had never driven to Whitchurch by myself before; in fact I don't think that I'd ever driven that far anywhere before ! But there was no alternative. Moss was incredibly well behaved, despite my keeping at a steady 50mph the whole way (I was a new and cautious driver then) and proven an invaluable guide, long before the days of the electronic route-planner. It had grown dark by the time we reached our destination, but the tale had a happy ending for we managed to get to the pub just before last orders were called.



To my lasting sorrow I managed to miss the great Leeds excursion to Dortmund, much feted in the side's folklore. However I had thoroughly enjoyed the now annual tours, first to Lille and more recently to Bruges and environs. I remember vividly losing the feeling in my legs in the cramped minivan, the tightening of the bladder on the interminable motorways, the strange tomb-like quality of the Tunnel. My abiding memory of Lille is performing in a wide street full of shops and hurrying commuters and eating a meal at a very jolly hostelry called the Trois Brasseurs near the station which brewed a range of extremely acceptable beverages in house. Although the hour was late (10-11pm) the streets were amazingly quiet with family groups still out for an evening stroll. The only aggravation came from a rather drunk young man who confronted us en route to catching a train back to our campsite at Armentieres. Ascertaining by our speech that we were English he tried to antagonise us with the injunction "F...Manchester United" and was perhaps confused when the bulk of our party agreed. "We are Leeds ! We are Leeds ! We are Leeds!"

At Armentieres we had to negotiate dog-turd infested pavements and a disinterested public, but Bruges and Belgium in general has always been fantastic. The delights of performance in that incredible city almost deserve an article in themselves. As a trained historian I am still blown away by the architecture and history. And of course, gives you the most tremendous buzz to be performing English traditional dance over 400 years old in such venerable locations before invariably enthusiastic audiences. One should also mention the glories of the Belgian breweries, the amazing all night brasseries and the oldest pub in Bruges – where to my amazement and my son's continuing pride we managed to beat Rob Baker and one of the Forest men at boules. Perhaps my most moving experience with Leeds came on a day dancing at Ypres. After performing in the market place the men decided to visit the Menin Gate to pay our respects to the fallen of the Great War. There we performed a single dance, Soldier's Joy from the Forest of Dean. There was hardly a dry eye and the very memory still brings a lump to my throat. Another year in Bruges I suffered the ignominy of a badly upset stomach condition which persisted for days. I survived by dosing myself with Gaviscon and Immodium and confining myself to a very light diet (toast and ice cream) and avoiding anything alcoholic – not easy on a tour of Bruges with the Leeds Men. The regular order *14 blondes and a milky coffee* became an enduring legend of which I have become strangely proud. One of the great benefits of Morris dancing is the way it gets you out of the house, especially in the Summer months, whatever jobs need to be done. Over the years I have discovered places round Leeds that I would not otherwise have known existed: picturesque spots like Ledsham, Thorner, Spofforth and Ripley Castle; comfortable little hostleries with interesting beers like the Palace, the Abbey, etc . I have danced at village fetes and school fairs, beer festivals and cultural events for international students and postal chess players. I have been the warm-up act for a Shakespeare play in a tent threatened with imminent lift off in the teeth of a gale at Ripley Castle and helped celebrate St George's Day in such diverse venues as the Gentlemen's Club in central Leeds, the Queen's Hotel (an almost entirely male audience with 2 token women !) and on stage in Halifax. The Parks Tour has come to mark, most pleasurably, the end of the Summer holidays and the recent introduction of a Squire's Tour in early Summer has opened up yet more vistas. Although we do not often perform in Leeds itself, I have always enjoyed the AGM days. Several times have encountered rather bemused colleagues and students, though I have long made it a point to inform new students of my dark



12 Men Bledington: Dales Tour Kettlewell

terpsichorean secret. I remember in particular doing Soldiers' Joy on Briggate before going on for (liquid) refreshment at the North Bar.

My Christmases have also become defined by the Leeds Men's annual curry at the Corner café and the now revived Mummers' Play in which I seem to have made the role of St George my own. We have astonished audiences with our versatility in Otley ("three times round the market and home again") Grassington, the fabled streets of Haworth as guests of the Oakworth Village Morris, the Abbey Newlay and the Owl Rodley. I have come to cherish the vision of Geoff Lomas in



a variety of fetching gowns, (offset by a beard on one notable occasion) and remember with particular affection his playing the Empress Josephine with gusto against the diminutive and largely silent (but charismatic ?) rendition of the great Emperor Napoleon by my son Joseph, then aged 9. Rehearsing and performing the Mummers' play exemplifies for me that combination of desire to sustain tradition, attain competence and yet attain a high degree of (sometimes almost infantile) enjoyment in the act that for me is something of a hallmark of Leeds Morris Men. Over the past 5 years I have gained new satisfaction from involving young people in Morris dancing. My own son, "Little Joe" became a regular at practices and a full member of the side at the tender age of 8 years old. He has accompanied me on countless Summer evening performances, several weekends and one Belgian tour and I am more grateful than I can say to my colleagues in Leeds for the kindness and patience they have invariably shown towards him. Although, having hit his teens and developed fallen arches, he is currently "resting" from the Morris, I remain hopeful that he will resume in due course. "Once a Morris man..." At Notre Dame College where I have laboured since 1990, I have almost by chance slipped into setting up and running a student side, now in its 4th incarnation, and now called Miscendi. The side is mixed and therefore a member of the Federation rather than the Ring and is currently looking very strong with 12 active and enthusiastic members. I always hoped that Miscendi might serve as a feeder side for Leeds Morris Men, and I am very proud that 3 members have indeed "graduated" to Leeds with 2 of them still active. I am also immensely grateful to Leeds Morris Men for their unfailing help and support they have given me in running Miscendi, though I am still trying to work out whether Alastair Sayles's comment that "They dance just like you Joe!" was a compliment or not. Miscendi have accompanied Leeds in several dance-outs around Leeds and have been made welcome on 3 successive Dales Tours. I would like to single out 3 of my colleagues in Leeds Morris Men for particular thanks: Caleb Jenkinson for his heroic efforts in training and shepherding the students to IVDFD events in Sheffield and Exeter, Brian Willimot for providing the music at practices and dance-outs and, last but not least, Allan Jarvis for taking over the task of foreman and (unsurprisingly) doing such a splendid job. Not only am I eternally in their debt, but I know that the members of the side have regarded them with a mixture of awe and considerable affection. All in all being a member of Leeds Morris Men has been a source of untold pleasure, joy and occasionally comfort over the past 25 years. At times of reflection I think how my life would have been so very different had I not accepted my colleague's invitation to the folk evening in the Black Bull all those years ago and missed meeting that strangely enigmatic character that rejoices in the name Moss. I genuinely feel that I would have been very much worse off for not having overcome my youthful inhibitions about dances and audiences and much the poorer for not knowing the various members of the Leeds Men. I am reminded of a very perceptive comment made by Alastair Sayles on the way to a Ring meeting in Durham. "Leeds Morris Men," he said, "are not so much a Morris side as a group of friends who enjoy traditional dance." I really do not think that I could put it any better.

From Whiteknights to Leeds

Phil Westley

Why? That is the question so many folk ask. By which they may mean “Why do you do morris dancing? Or “Why do you dance with Leeds Morris? The first is easy to answer, because I enjoy it. The second, I thought I knew the answer when I first joined Leeds in the early years of the new millennium. But now, I wonder whether there was something else. Perhaps in the words of Darth Vader I had needed “to fulfil my destiny”.

To explain, I need to briefly go back to how I started dancing back in the mid seventies. As the publicity officer for the Reading University Dancing Club (previously known as the Reading University Ballroom Dancing Society), I was trying to persuade as many as I could to sign up for the new academic year. With one of my mates the line “If you come to Dancing Club, I’ll have a go at that morris dancing you do”, seemed to work. So I gave it a go and found that (surprise) it was actually quite fun, and certainly involved drinking greater quantities of Brakspeare’s beer than was ever required after a quick tango. During my time with Whiteknights Morris I particularly enjoyed the Squireship of one Hugh Crabtree whose enjoyment of things folkish was clear to all. It was Hugh that organised a long weekend away, just after finals, using his mother’s cottage in Kettlewell as the base for three days of trips out touring

the Yorkshire Dales (a place I’d never previously visited, but even through the alcoholic haze that enveloped the weekend, I thought was spectacular).

When I left Reading, I moved to the Cotswolds and so, of course, obviously I would continue to dance Cotswold morris with some team. Nope. These were the days before the internet, and I simply didn’t come across any morris for 10 years. When I did, it was Stroud Morris that captured me with their “unique” interpretation of Ducklington.

So onto the new century and a move to Yorkshire. We thought we’d stop dancing (Pam danced with Stroud Ladies) as, after all, you have to stop sometime. But we missed it, and so started scouting out local sides. After a great deal of searching we found that there was a Weekend of Dance over in the Otley/ Ilkley area, so we set off to see what the locals were like. We were looking particularly for a mixed or joint side so we could carry on attending practices together. Well, the sides were okay, but nothing out of the ordinary (and no, I’m not going to name names) except for one. That side not only got up and danced, but actually took the trouble to communicate with the audience, and were obviously all enjoying themselves (a sight

most certainly missing from some of the other sides). As an added surprise, the dances they performed looked vaguely similar to what little I could remember of the seventies. This was, of course, the Leeds Morris Men. What’s more they were going to be performing on the right side of Leeds for us the following week. Thought we give them another look at, after all on any given weekend a side might just happen to do a good show even if they are normally let’s say ordinary. So we found our way to the Mexborough Arms in Thorner on a sunny Thursday evening. Was there a crowd of villagers awaiting the grand event? Well, let me put it this way, the audience doubled because we were there. But, and here was the important part, although it was a different grouping of dancers to when we’d seen them on the weekend, the involvement of the (small) audience was still there; indeed, Pam got the chance to join them in a dance. And there was that clear enjoyment again of a group of dancers and musicians performing outside a village pub, even if few locals could be bothered to come



out of the pub and watch. We followed on to the next pub in Stutton and got chatting to Peter Karran and others who informed us of their next performance even nearer to us at Kirkby Overblow. Having found out that I'd danced Cotswold before, there was a parting "bring some bells along if you come to watch us". Sure enough at the Star and Garter I was roped into a dance. I'd hardly got out of the set at the end when one of Claro was interrogating me about where we lived and trying to get me along to one of their practices. Too late, I'd already decided that Leeds would be a far better match for me. As we were about to leave, Bob Price asked "What are you doing next weekend as we are having our annual Dales Tour". Sounds good to me. "Can Pam come along?" "Of course". And my fate was sealed.

During that weekend, which

turned out to be particularly special as it was Leed's 50th Dales, some of the venues looked decidedly familiar to me and I realised that many of the places we were dancing at were the ones from all those years ago with Whiteknights. So it was that I joined the Leeds Morris Men and that would have been the end of the story about "Why do you dance with Leeds Morris?" Except

A few year's later, I'm dancing in Kettlewell at the start of another Dales' Monday and someone comes over to me treating me as an old friend and chatting away. It was a few moments before I realise that this is Hugh Crabtree (when I knew him he had a lot more hair – well, I can hardly talk). As it came time to move on, I asked "Have you got your melodeon with you?" "Of course", he replied. So it was that Hugh hopped on the bus and spent a day with the Leeds Morris. He

came along the next year and played with the musicians as Norman Peacock danced in a set in Kettlewell. After the dance, Hugh was clearly quite emotional and then the circle of destiny was completed. He explained that the reason he had got into folk and morris was when he was a child living in Kettlewell in the sixties, his mother would take him to see the morris dancers on the Whit Monday. It was seeing them that sparked his interest. Now he had just realised that he had played for one of the men that he had seen dancing all those years ago. And it was Hugh, with his love of the morris, that was instrumental in my continuing to dance down the years until I too had performed on a Dales Tour with the Leeds Morris Men.

Morris 18-30 and Leeds Alastair Hutchinson

In 2000 Graham Hubbard (Ickneild Way) and I hatched a plan to set up a Morris Ring student weekend, inspired by the Student Scout and Guide Organisation. With the help of Ben Higgs (also Ickneild Way) the first weekend of dance, dubbed Morris 18-30 was held in Oxford. Morris 18-30 takes the form of a weekend of dance for those aged 18-30ish. In 2005 the Weekend was held in Leeds and since then representatives from Leeds have been at the forefront of Morris 18-30. Leeds attendees at the event have included Alastair Hutchinson, Mark Ashton, Simon Matthews, James Tolley, Paul Naylor and Alun Davies, in addition to the side being represented on the Sunday at the weekends in Leeds, York and Pontefract by some of the regular Leeds men, some considerably older than either 18 or 30!

One of the older members of the club, Squire Rob, said that the York weekend would be best remembered for a bunch of old codgers from Ebor, Leeds Morris, Wakefield and Ripon City turning up as guests to a 18-30 event with no-one under 50 to be seen. They all had hangovers and were hours late. Mind you when they did show in the afternoon, we had some very enjoyable and stylish dancing. The two Leeds elders chatted to a lovely young lady who consequently invited us to Romania - a trip we sadly never managed to pull together. Probably just as well, as I suspect the afternoon dance-out gave her the impression that she was actually inviting all those vigorous young men to the land of Vlad...!



Finishing the 50 dances on the Horsforth Mile in May 2000.

Leeds Morris Men's Musicians

In sixty years Leeds Morris Men has had remarkably few regular musicians although many have played for the side occasionally. Since the revival of the early 1970's there have been only 9 who have played on a frequent and regular basis and no more than 21 all told including some very occasional musicians.

Indeed there were times in the later '70s and early '80s when no more than three musicians in total could be called upon, and two of those were also doing the teaching which could make practices quite tricky!

First mention should of course go to Bill Barrett, not quite a founder member, who played his pipe-and-tabor for many years for the men's practices and during the Dales Tour. Bill played the whittle-and-dub type of instrument, his tabor being an adapted school drum from the percussion bands that were then common in primary schools. He favoured pipes in B flat rather than the shriller D pipes promoted by Russell Wortley amongst others. After his retirement he turned his hand to making pipes and Allan Jarvis still has a fine wooden pipe in B flat which Bill made for him in about 1985.

Bill was not keen to turn out for the regular Tuesday (later Thursday) summer shows that we instituted in 1972, although he would always attend if he knew the men were going to depend on his piping. It was fortunate then that Allan Jarvis had joined the club at about this time. Allan plays the larger Kenworthy Schofield type of pipe-and-tabor and for some years in the 1970's this was virtually the only music available to the men.

Another musician who played for us in the early 70's was Vic Ellis. Vic was mainly a dancer at this time but would play so that the others could dance. Since he moved to Brighton in 1976 he has earned his living as "Vic Ellis the one man band" in which he plays melodeon and a good many other things!

The club was joined in 1973 by Bob Williams from Oxford who brought his melodeon with him and for three years shared the music-making with Vic, Bill and Allan. However Bob lived in Thorpe Audlin and found the long drive needed to reach shows increasingly irksome. When the now-defunct Pomfret Morris Men were founded he became their musician and we lost him.

As luck would have it, Colin Sutcliffe joined us at this juncture, initially as a dancer, but he quickly took up the melodeon; and his playing soon replaced Bob's, which enabled Allan to get some dancing done! Colin continued to play regularly for the men through the rest of the '70s and throughout the '80's and we continue to see him on fine Thursday evenings during the summer.

We have also had a number of fiddlers over the years: John Carey played for us whilst a student at the university between 1976 and 1978, as did Donal Crawford between 1987 and 1990; and Geoff Bowen joined us for a couple of years around 1979 before founding Burnsall Morris which was far closer to his home in Skipton. Allan Jarvis also occasionally resorts to his fiddle when a tune (such as Enrico) sits awkwardly on the pipe! Chris Birch also played fiddle occasionally but, as far as is remembered, only at practices, never at a public show.

There is no doubt that for a time in the early 1980's the club was distinctly short of musicians and very heavily dependent on two or three individuals to keep shows running. Contrast that with the



present when no fewer than seven currently active members can play when called upon to do so.

When Alastair Sayles joined the club from Anker Morris Men in 1984 it was as a musician – another fiddler – although he soon became a key dancer and we chiefly benefited from him in that role.

He acquired a pipe-and-tabor as well and although he has never been more than an occasional musician, he made a vital contribution as main musician on the 2007 Bruges Tour and on more than one Dales Tour



Alastair S

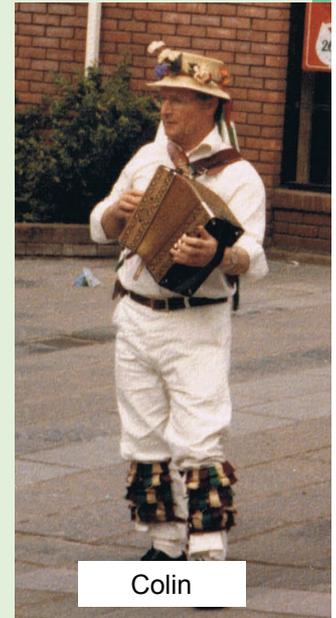
Several members of the club who joined us initially as dancers were to take up the melodeon over the years and all have provided us with superb music in their turn. The first of them was Steve Fairholme who played alongside Colin and then solo in the earlier 1980's. Next came Bob Price and Chris Kirk who joined us in 1986 and 1988 respectively. They had both acquired melodeons and begun to play for us by the mid-90's. Both became excellent musicians and it is always a joy to welcome them back from their exile in Penrith and the Netherlands.

Bob and Chris both bought excellent Castagnari instruments which provide a superb sound for dancing; and Chris also acquired an Anglo Concertina which in the view of the present writer is one of the finest instruments to dance to.

Colin Sutcliffe, a key musician throughout the 1970s and 80s recalls how he came to Leeds Morris Men

My introduction to morris dancing was upon a chance trip through the Yorkshire Dales at Appletreewick where I came across a musician seated on the ground playing what I was told was Morris dance music. He was from the Bradford Boars Head side.

I think it was about early 1973/4 when I started to learn dancing at Leeds University where I was made very welcome. In those days I changed my piano accordion for a melodian which was more traditional for the tunes. The Foreman was Allan Jarvis who insisted that the men learn to dance before playing an instrument for the side. After learning how to dance I was then in a position to know sufficient music and this was the beginning of being a happy Morris Man!



Colin

Reeds out, electronics in!

In recent years Colin has moved from a conventional melodeon ie. with reeds to a Streb, a reedless midi melodeon with 128 different voices and amps and speakers for both the treble and bass. Although it feels and plays like a conventional melodeon it has a number of additional features: it can be retuned to different keys and is also able to provide a range of instrument sounds usually only available on a synthesiser. How things have moved on in 100 years!

In the following 10 to 15 years I enjoyed with no reservations, meetings at Whitchurch, Thaxted, Whitby, Otley Folk Festivals and Dales Tours and an overseas outing to Rotterdam plus the weekly tours around Leeds.

After this time I was not an active member due to changing personal circumstances but still retained an interest in the side enjoying particularly the wonderful Dales Tours

Recently I was very touched to be presented with a framed acknowledgment

of my time with the Leeds Morris Men – a momentous, unforgettable occasion.



Bob Price

Bob and Chris had been provided with an excellent role model in John Grout who joined us in 1986 and who was already an established melodeon player of great gifts. Dancing to John's playing was always very enjoyable and we were sorry to lose him in 1990 when his career took him south where he nowadays plays for Bampton.

At much the same time the club gained its first accordion player since Alex Richardson had stopped coming on the Dales Tours in the mid 1970's. This was Adrian Maxwell who also joined us in 1986 and who was with us for four years until he moved away from Leeds. Like John and Allan (and later Bob and Chris) he was also a dancer which was just as well



Brian Willimott

since during these years the club had more musicians than it could provide opportunities for!

Another who joined us originally to dance was Brian Willimott who met us during Whitby Folk Week in 1988. He originally had no notion of playing but, following heart problems, took up the melodeon in 2000. It is just as well for the club that he did! With Allan taking a few years out of Morris, Colin retiring as a regular musician, and Bob and Chris eventually both moving away Brian found himself not only the principal musician, but often the only one! The club would have been in some difficulties without Brian in the early years of the new millennium.

Rob Baker, who joined us in 1993 was another dancer who soon acquired a melodeon which he mainly uses to play for Briggate Women's Morris. He is called upon to play for Leeds when Brian is absent and numbers are tight (i.e. when things are desperate says Rob!) and this helps to spread the dancing round and give men a break.

Two 2004 recruits who also play melodeon are Alastair Hutchinson and Mark Ashton; and Phil Westley has been learning anglo-concertina. With seven musicians in all available at the time of writing, some of them do not get called upon as regularly as they might like!



Rob Baker

Derek Matthews also occasionally plays for us when we meet up nowadays, having developed his melodeon playing since moving across the Pennines; but he seldom if ever did so when resident in Leeds as his taking up the instrument coincided with a period when the club was especially rich in melodeon players.

Fashions change in Morris as in all else. Where once we treated the music as strictly a solo activity, meaning each musician had to wait for a turn to play, nowadays we are more willing to accept ensemble playing and quite often have two, three or even four playing together. This is particularly the case at practices as it enables several musicians to master the tunes for the new repertoire at the same time.



Mark Ashton



Looking back over the years we have been remarkably lucky with our musicians. Almost all have also been dancers; the standard has been as high as in any morris club; and all have been dependable: ready to play when needed and happy to dance when not!

We cannot be sure that this list includes everyone who has played for us since 1970, but are confident that, if not exhaustive, it is at all events reasonably accurate!

Musicians for the club since the 1970 revival

Name	Years	Instrument(s)
Bill Barrett		Pipe-and-Tabor
Vic Ellis	1968-76	Melodeon
Allan Jarvis	1971 - present	Pipe-and-Tabor, English Concertina, Violin
Bob Williams	1973 - 76	Melodeon
Colin Sutcliffe	1975 - present	Melodeon
John Carey	1976 - 78	Violin
Steve Fairholme	1979 - 85	Melodeon
Derek Matthews	1979 - 2002	Melodeon
Alastair Sayles	1984 - present	Pipe-and-Tabor, Violin
John Grout	1986 - 90	Melodeon
Bob Price	1986 - 2007	Melodeon
Adrian Maxwell	1986 - 90	Accordion
Donal Crawford	1987 - 90	Violin
Chris Kirk	1988 - 2003	Melodeon, Anglo Concertina
Brian Willimott	1988 - present	Melodeon
Rob Baker	1993 - present	Melodeon
Phil Westley	2002 - present	Anglo Concertina, Recorder
Alastair Hutchinson	2004 - present	Melodeon
Mark Ashton	2004 - present	Melodeon

Aspects of Cotswold Morris foremanship Alastair Sayles

“Do as I say and not do as I do” seems to be one tenet that holds true, certainly for me, when endeavouring to teach Cotswold Morris. Having come to the morris through music I progressed to dancing and had contact with a number of foremen in the various clubs with which I danced who all seemed to hold similar values. They were interested in achieving the highest possible standard of dance given the ability of the men, researched the traditions and, I think most importantly, had a desire to share their love and enjoyment of dancing with others.

Moving from dancing to teaching was one of those things that sort of happened without thinking. Having failed miserably to teach Bucknell to a group of dancers at Nottingham University I decided that teaching was not my forte. However I still enjoyed trying to demystify the dances and seeing what made them work. It was with my return to Leeds that I felt I was “back home” in a comfortable environment and amongst people who had been taught by Bill Barrett and Allan Jarvis and enjoyed the Leeds style. With Allan taking some time out from regular Morris practices and the teaching being shared I felt I was willing to try and convey my enjoyment for the dance with the rest of the men.

Bill Barrett set the standard of dancing for Leeds and this style was taken and developed by Allan Jarvis. These were the two people most influential in the teaching of Leeds Morris Men over the history of the Club. Generally both Allan and Bill before him did all the teaching. From the 1990s this changed with other men being given the opportunity to teach a tradition. This shared the task and brought different approaches. Those who have taken on the foreman role over the years have been Ken Barker, Bob Shakespeare, John Hayward, Derek Matthews, Geoff Lomas, Phil Kirk, Rob Baker, Alastair Sayles and Dave Wass. Other contributions have been made by Bob Price and Joe Oakley.

After discussion with the Squire, I ended up teaching Oddington. A new tradition to both myself and the side. This created many challenges but the experience of researching through sources and with other teams and then trying to get my vision across was very enjoyable when it all started coming together. I always have high hopes of a new tradition and sometimes the vision is fully realised. Where it falls short it doesn't matter as the shared process of learning a tradition has usually resulted in a dance that is interesting and generally well performed.

The initial success of teaching Oddington gave me that confidence to go on and look at other traditions such as Sherborne, Fieldtown and Ascott under Wychwood. I have always tried to find something new in the dance; there is always room to interpret things differently and make the men think. Even experienced dancers need that challenge.

Then came Enrico.....! A fantastic tune and one that lends itself so well to the Morris. Should I create new dances? I always held the view that only when one had learned all the dances there were should you then create new ones. However some of the traditions are so enjoyable yet the collected dances are so few that I feel that as long as one is true to the tradition and the style and feel for that dance is maintained then there is no harm in introducing new dances.

For me the memory of Bill as an old man dancing beautifully with his feet firmly on the ground, yet appearing to rise off it is one that I will keep forever. That grace and elegance is what epitomises the club's style and what, as a foreman, I always strive for both in myself and the team.

Details of the traditions the club has danced are overleaf.



Information about traditions danced by Leeds Morris men during the last 60 years

When the club first started dancing the main traditions were Headington, Adderbury and Bucknell, with a scattering of dances from Brackley, Fieldtown, Longborough etc.. In addition the men performed the Longsword dances from Grenoside, Kirkby Malzeard, Greatham and Escrick and the Rapper dance from Winlaton. During the 1950s and 1960s Bill Barrett was the person who set the Cotswold style for the club and was the key foreman. During the 1970s and up to the late 1990s Allan Jarvis took on this role. Since the 1990s the club has adopted the practice of having a number of people teach traditions, thereby allowing those who had a hankering to do a bit of teaching an opportunity to "have a go". In recent years the job has been taken on generally by Ken Barker, Alastair Sayles, Dave Wass and Allan Jarvis. This has resulted in an interesting mix of approaches though the club still maintains its aim of staying generally true to the tradition and dancing, where possible, at a high standard.

1950 - 52 Adderbury
 Headington
 Grenoside
 Winlaton
 Walbottle

1953 As above, with dances from
 Brackley, Bucknell and
 Bampton

1954 Some Longborough added
 Greatham added

1955 Kirkby Malzeard added

1957 Newbiggin added

1958 Escrick added

1959 Sherborne added

The Cotswold repertoire in the 1950s developed by way of addition of new dances and traditions, little or nothing being displaced. However the club generally only maintained one Longsword dance at a time. Thus when Kirkby was introduced in 1955, it was at the expense of Greatham, and in 1958 Escrick replaced Kirkby.

Walbottle, Winlaton and Newbiggin Rapper appear to have been maintained concurrently in the repertoire in the later 1950's.

1960 Sherborne
 Winlaton Rapper
 Earsdon
 Askham Richard

1961 Fieldtown
 Kirkby Malzeard
 Earsdon

1962 Bledington
 Headington (planned but not
 danced)

1973 Sherborne
 Fieldtown
 Bledington

1974 Adderbury
 Headington

1976 - 77 Bampton
 Bledington

1977 Bampton
 Bledington
 Fieldtown

1978 Longborough

1979- 80 Headington
 Bledington

1980 - 81 Fieldtown
 Bledington

1981 - 82 Sherborne
 Adderbury

1982 - 83 Adderbury
 Sherborne
 Headington

1983 - 84 Ilmington
 Headington

1984 - 85 Fieldtown
 Ilmington

1985 - 86 Bledington
 Lichfield
 Fieldtown

1986 - 87 Bledington
 Sherborne

1987 - 88 Bledington
 Sherborne
 Brackley and Hinton

1988 - 89 Sherborne
 Headington
 Lichfield
 Brackley
 Longborough
 Bledington

1989 – 90	Fieldtown Bampton Headington	2005 – 06	Lichfield(Rob/Alastair) Bucknell (Ken)
1990 - 91	Adderbury Fieldtown	2006 – 07	Lichfield(Rob/Alastair) Bledington (Dave) Ilmington (Ken)
1991 - 92	Sherborne Lichfield Bledington	2007 – 08	Ascott (Alastair) Badby (Dave) Ilmington (Ken)
1992 - 93	Bledington Sherborne Brackley and Hinton	2008 – 09	Ascott (Alastair) Brackley and Hinton (Allan)
1993 - 94	Brackley and Hinton Sherborne Ilmington Bucknell	2009 - 10	Wheatley (Allan) Oddington(Alastair) Ducklington (Dave)
1994 - 95	Ilmington Bucknell Adderbury Fieldtown		
1995 - 96	Headington Adderbury Fieldtown		
1996 - 97	Bampton Headington Lichfield		
1997-98	Bampton Lichfield Bucknell		
1998 - 99	Bucknell Ilmington Badby		
1999 – 00	Ilmington (Ken) Badby Brackley (Geoff) Sherborne (Peter)		
2000 –01	Brackley (Geoff) Sherborne (Peter K) Stanton Harcourt (Ken) Oddington (Alastair)		
2001 – 02	Oddington (Alastair) Ilmington (Ken) Bledington (Peter)		
2002 – 03	Adderbury (Ken) Sherborne (Alastair)		
2003 – 04	Fieldtown (Alastair) Headington (Ken)		
2004 – 05	Bucknell (Ken) Fieldtown (Alastair)		

Friendship with other clubs

Over 60 years we have developed links with many other morris teams. In the early days we had a close association with men from Manchester, Colchester and St Helens. Many men, often after graduating, went on from Leeds to other clubs and some of those links have remained such as with Handsworth Traditional Sword dancers and Durham Rams. In recent years we have been closely associated with Briggate Morris and Oakworth Village Morris men as well as many clubs that regularly attend the Dales Tours. There are however two clubs which have always remained close friends over the last 30 years; Whitchurch and The Royal Forest of Dean



The Origins of the friendship between Leeds Morris Men and Whitchurch Morris Men.

Allan Jarvis

Many people have enjoyed the warm friendship that has existed for many years between Leeds Morris Men and Whitchurch Morris Men, but only two of them know that it all began on a Sunday morning in a toilet in Manchester!

The scene was a gentlemen's convenience at Salford University Halls of Residence. This was the base for the Manchester Ring Meeting in April 1977. Mike Chandler of Whitchurch MM found himself at the urinal next to me immediately after he had completed a musicians' practice for the forthcoming massed show in which both of us had played Pipe-and-Tabor.

Mike and I had danced in the 1960's with St Albans Morris Men but had lost touch after I moved north. By 1977 he was Squire of the Whitchurch men. I had not seen him since moving to Leeds and, as far as I know he had never encountered the Leeds men at all. He had watched us dancing on the Saturday and opened the conversation by saying how impressed he had been.¹ Then he said "Why don't you bring your side down to our weekend next year?" I said I would suggest it to the men. We exchanged our bagmens' addresses.

In due course a strong team was sent down to Wilstone in July 1978². The weekend proved very enjoyable and it seemed natural for us to say to Mike³ at its conclusion "Why don't you bring a side up to our Dales Tour next Spring Bank Holiday?"

And so it was that Whitchurch attended the Dales Tour for the first time in 1979. For at least ten years following that, we had a full side each year for the annual Whitchurch MM weekend at Wilstone in early July and Whitchurch sent a full side to the Dales. In due course Mike Chandler and Rod Holt were elected Honorary Members of Leeds and Moss Ambrose an Honorary Member of Whitchurch. Further links between the sides were forged when Simon Rollason (son of Peter) came to Leeds University and danced with us whilst an undergraduate; when Dave Wass moved for a time to Hatfield and danced with Whitchurch; and when I became involved in Ring Musicians' Instructionals, many of which were hosted by Whitchurch.

Latterly numbers have tended to decline. Leeds nowadays seldom manage to get up a side for the Whitchurch weekend, the



most recent occasion being their Ring Meeting in 2008.⁴ Mike (and Sally), Nigel Cox and a few other Whitchurch stalwarts continue to join us each year in the Dales.

Notes

1. The LMM log records that the Leeds side at this ring meeting comprised Allan Jarvis, Colin Sutcliffe, John Hayward, Bob Shakespeare, Martin Luck, Malcolm Pittwood, Ken Barker, Vic Ellis and Mike Booth. It also records that “dancing got off to a bad start, but improved a little.”
2. The LMM log reveals that the Leeds side for this first visit to Wilstone consisted of Malcolm, Colin, Ken, Allan, Martin, John, Bob, Guy Montgomery and Joe Jarvis.
3. This conversation did NOT take place in a toilet!
4. We also attended the Whitchurch Ring Meeting in 1988, when we agreed to miss the feast, and instead ate at the Half Moon in Wilstone, because of capacity problems in the hall.

Friendship with Oakworth Village Morris men Mark Ashton



Oakworth Village Morris Men (OVMM) & Leeds Morris Men's (LMM) relationship probably goes back to the formation of OVMM back in 1981. I think the first link was when Moss Ambrose came to a few Oakworth practice nights to gain some knowledge of the Lichfield tradition to aid his Fooling expertise. Oakworth have been regulars on the Leeds Dales Tour on the Bank Holiday Monday from as long as I can remember, I joined Oakworth back in 1984/85 and I always remember the side attending on the Bank Holiday. It wasn't until I was at University and joined Leicester Morris Men that I came to experience a full Dales Tour Weekend, possibly in 1994. It was the

first time Leicester had been and they've attended every tour since. It was from this point that the friendship between Oakworth and Leeds began and my own personal relationship with Leeds. Oakworth have struggled for dancers since 1993 and on this Dales Tour I chatted with a few of Leeds Morris Men in particular Moss. Moss volunteered to help us in our plight by making up the numbers with Oakworth on many a dance out and helped the side continue up to and including today. Moss is now an honorary member of Oakworth in recognition of his help over those years. Over more recent years the rest of Leeds Morris have been on hand to help Oakworth when called upon. I joined Leeds in 2003, initially looking to gain experience in other Cotswold traditions and have the opportunity to play music (melodeon) more often for the dances. Leeds were very welcoming and are a friendly bunch. I have danced with them ever since, maybe not as regularly as I could but trying to commit to two morris sides may result in frosty relations at home so it's a fine balancing act.

Some thoughts from Dave Evans of the Royal Forest of Dean on the relationship between the two clubs:

“thinking about what bonded the friendship between Forest and Leeds. I suppose the obvious one is Moss. The Fool interfaces between the dancers and the onlooker but in his case he connects groups of dancers too. Also I think the splendour of the Dales and the Forest of Dean has made us both want to meet up and take pleasure in dancing on each others patch. Eventually mutual experiences create a bond that is hard to explain and hard to break. For my one part I find that the blokes of Leeds and of Forest generally have no axe to grind and no pretensions, just honest wry humour and openness.”



Brittany 1990

The Dales Tour in the '70s and early '80s

Allan Jarvis

The '70s was the decade during which the Dales Tour evolved into something like its current format. Starting the decade with our base firmly at Long Ashes for the Monday evening, we entered the 80's with the first few "village hall" weekends. Again, starting with few guest sides but many individual friends joining us, by the end of this period we were regularly welcoming full teams as our guests as the norm rather than the exception. The decade saw the beginning of regular Whitchurch sides on the tours; the beginning of regular Wensleydale tours on the Monday; and the abolition of the Whitsun bank holiday and the substitution of the Spring Bank Holiday. The latter change was one we somewhat regretted since Whitsun had been the time when the old Cotswold sides had always danced out to welcome the Spring. The early part of the next decade saw the only death on tour, so far as I know.

In the early part of the 70's our regular guests included sides from Handsworth, Durham Rams, Derby and, of course, White Rose; and many individual friends and former members of the club joined us. For example Ewart Russell and Bill Smith continued to come up from Colchester and Chris Hillier came back from St Albans and brought his friend Roger Avery. Regular attenders included Ellis Tinsley, who fooled, Mike Booth, Joe and Chris Thompson (White Rose); Alex Richardson, Keith Normington, Bernard Kidd, Patrick Malham and Les Seaman of Handsworth, Jim Hobart, Keith Constable and Cliff Barstow.

Guest sides were usually to be seen on the Monday tour, while the Saturday tour usually comprised the active Leeds side, returning members and very close associates from White Rose and Durham Rams. Many of the Saturday guests were past or honorary members of the club and it was not uncommon to see well over twenty LMM baldrics being worn.

The Saturday tour usually commenced in Ilkley, men driving over from Leeds or from their base in the dales for a start at 11.00 am. We did experiment with starting in Otley, but found it difficult to park, difficult to find a suitable location for the show and drew no audience, so the experiment was not persisted with. Following a show in Skipton at the foot of Castle Hill we had lunch – men brought their own – and then went on to Gargrave where we danced in the main street near the war memorial. Next stop was Hellifield where there was plenty of space for a show outside the Black Horse. Then to either Airton or Kirkby Malham – sometimes both in the years when we had sufficient men for fully-bifurcated tours – and on to Malham where we would process over the bridge before stopping the traffic outside the Buck Inn in immemorial fashion. One year we organised what was thought by everyone present to be the longest Wheatley Processional ever, numbering some 25 men! The "all in" outside the Buck consisted of three concentric circles. Tea and scones at Sparth House followed. The tour then moved across towards Wharfedale and we would dance at either Hetton or Cracoe (or both) before finishing in Grassington.

In 1973 we drew no crowd at all at either Airton or Kirkby Malham, so the following year we pushed further west and danced outside the Maypole at Long Preston which was very successful. It seemed natural in the following year to reinstate a show in Settle to which place the Saturday tour had not ventured for some years. Here we found an ideal spot for a large show outside the town hall. Long Preston and Settle have continued to figure in the Saturday tour every year since then. When, as in most years, we had sufficient men for two full tours Airton and Kirkby Malham were reinstated, and we would bifurcate after Skipton and meet up again at Malham. This pattern of touring on the Saturday was very similar to that of the 1960's as recorded in Norman's logs.

In these years men drove on the Saturday, and parking could sometimes be a nightmare. There were far fewer public car parks then: there was none in Malham or Settle for example, and shows would begin with whomever had been lucky to find an early parking place!

There was no dancing on the Sunday in the 1970's. In the early '70's most men returned to Leeds after the last show on Saturday. Some – mainly returners - stayed in the Dales, or with Ellis in Skipton but the active Leeds side saw no reason at this stage to remain in the Dales during the Sunday and drove out again for the start of the tour on Monday which, of course, was at 10.00am in Kettlewell. Guest sides would now join us, and two tours would depart from Kettlewell at 11.00am, one bound for the Buck Inn at Buckden, followed by the Fox and Hounds at Starbottan; the other making for the Falcon at Arncliffe, then dancing at the crossroads in Conistone. As tradition demanded we would meet up again for the 12.00 noon show in Grassington and then separate, half the men struggling along the narrow lanes to Linton or Threshfield, the others making for Hebden or Appletreewick. We would meet again for a show on grass at Burnsall and tea was then taken at the Manor House tea rooms. Then it was usually back to Grassington for the final show followed by a feast at Long Ashes. Over the decade a good many variations on this pattern were tried in attempts to ease travel and parking problems and secure better crowds. The fixed points were Grassington at 12.00 and Burnsall at 3.30.

One year when the rain was particularly unremitting we stood under whatever shelter we could find at Burnsall and watched the deluge: we then abandoned further attempts at dancing. The following year was dry, but the week preceding it had been wet and men sank into the squelchy grass on Burnsall village green and could barely manage to dance. We vowed then that we would in future dance on the road outside the Red Lion, but that effectively put an end to the notion of a show for all the men at Burnsall.

The only tragic incident on the Dales Tour Monday occurred in 1983. The first group to visit Grassington, for the noon show, were horrified when one of the White Rose men, Derek Mallison, collapsed and died in mid-dance. The show was brought at once to an end, of course, and it was decided that the following show, at 1.00pm should, as a mark of respect, also be cancelled. It proved very difficult to intercept all the twenty or so cars that had departed the previous show and notify them of the revised arrangements, but the last thing we wanted was for jovial clanking men to arrive all unknowingly on the very spot where one of their fellows had just lost his life.

By the middle of the decade some, at least, of the active Leeds side had begun to find places to stay in the dale over the weekend. The Pittwoods the Shakespeares and the Whiteleys camped, the Jarvises borrowed a static caravan at Long Ashes and we would meet some time on the Sunday for a beer and a chat, usually at the Clarendon Arms at Hebden. Soon came the suggestion that we should acquire a base such as the Whitchurch men used at Wilstone and so it was that we hired the village hall in Linton and made a full weekend of it in 1983. The Fountaine Inn made us welcome, although it then offered only keg beer. For refreshment in the hall we were able to persuade our friend the Landlord of the Brown Hare in Harehills to provide us with an 18-gallon wooden cask of Sam Smiths Old Brewery Bitter (strictly against brewery rules – he would have lost his job had they known), which I transported to Linton on the back seat of my mini. Since then we have always had a “base” in the dale for the weekend.*

The idea of a formal feast at the end of the Monday tour persisted throughout the '70s even though more and more of the men's wives were present throughout the weekend. We tried various ways of occupying their time whilst we feasted, including on one occasion a “women's feast” but none was very satisfactory. They would rejoin us for the informal dancing outside Long Ashes after the feast and some men would stay until well after midnight including Boars Head men who all seemed to have a prodigious capacity for beer.

By the end of the '70's many of the individuals who had kept the tour going during the '60's had ceased to join us, but in their place we had a number of regular guest sides – White Rose, Boars Head, Handsworth, Durham Rams, Whitchurch amongst others – to ensure that two full tours were always required on the Monday and we consistently split the Leeds contingent into two

sides, the "old men's side" whose nucleus was of course Norman Peacock, Ellis Tinsley, Mike Booth and Keith Constable and the current men's side which was always led by the squire. We had introduced the idea of a brief "general meeting" of the members present during the Monday tour so that those who had joined the men at the start of the previous practice season could be elected members and "dance in" before the end of the tour.

The idea of a tour of Wensleydale had first been mooted in 1964 and actually implemented in 1969. The club's second venture into Wensleydale came late in the '70's and happened to coincide with the "Go with Noakes" episode which Doug Whiteley recalls elsewhere in this publication. We had been finding getting cars and coaches round Wharfedale increasingly tiresome. On one oc-

For many years Whitchurch Morris men joined Leeds on the Dales Tour. They have kindly provided us with some extracts from their archive recalling some of the excursions north.

"The family feeling in the club continued in the spring of 1978. For the Bank Holiday weekend at the end of May a large party set off northwards to join the Leeds Morris men for their excursion to the Yorkshire Dales. The entire Chandler family went; there were also the McKeggie and the Sandford families, John Warren and Andrew Main with their wives and Joe Ward and his son. (Nigel Cox joined them later, once his livestock had been settled for the weekend.) This proved to be quite an efficient communal arrangement, letting those who were not so keen on dancing to take a break, knowing that their children (or husbands) were being well looked after. The Whitchurch men were surprised by the gritty northern endurance of the Leeds men. Even at the end of a long hot Saturday of dancing, Andrew Main records,

"Leeds seemed indefatigable, happily embarking on 'Saturday Night' watched in bleary disbelief by Whitchurch who returned exhausted at a late hour to the campsite and lime crusher!"

The lime crusher behind the campsite at Cracoe, which operated non-stop through the weekend, along with the malodorous public toilets in Skipton, next to which they had to dance both on the Saturday and the Monday, and the cannily avaricious farmer in Burnsall who charged the men to park in his gateway, alone marred a happy and busy long weekend. The sun shone all the time, bringing out enormous crowds to all the beauty spots where the dancers performed. This sometimes made driving difficult but swelled the collections at each spot. Not everyone in Yorkshire downed tools for the Bank Holiday and at Hellifield the men found their 'Lads A Bunchum' being gleefully mocked by a team of building workers using spades and pickaxes. Luckily, this variation never found its way into the club's repertoire. The Sunday was set aside as a quieter day when the families could spend time together. The enjoyment of this weekend helped found a tradition of attending this Leeds event which continues down to the present day.

The 1979 tour of the Yorkshire Dales with the Leeds Morris Men was damp, but many thought the Dales looked at their best with a slight hint of rain in the air. In 1981 fourteen men and some of their families set off to the north at the end of May. Much of the weekend was spent dodging showers. Early on it looked as though the Whitchurch side might have the gift of turning the rain off when they began to dance, but before the first day was out the rain had demonstrated that it was subject to no-one. Some ingenious solutions were found to the problem of the rain - dancing under trees and dancing in anoraks, for example - but the best answer was always the simplest, to take refuge in the nearest public house."

The Dales weather appears to dominate the Whitchurch log. "In 1982 the Yorkshire Dales weekend, to which the club again sent a party of twelve, with families in addition, enjoyed temperatures in the upper seventies. This did cut down the men's vitality for the apres-dance activities. In 1983 the weather cast something of a cloud over the Yorkshire Dales Weekend, which the club supported once again. It was so cold that one of the hardy campers had to go and buy some thermal underwear. Saturday ended, too, with a cold supper in an unheated hall. The memory of the weekend was dominated, sadly, by the sudden death of Derek Mallison of the White Rose Morris Men, while he was dancing at Grassington on the Monday. The White Rose Men and Whitchurch were touring together; the White Rose Men naturally were unable to continue, and it was a rather subdued Whitchurch side which carried out the rest of the day's engagements.

1984 ranks as the coldest, wettest tour to date. Usually we get one fine day on the weekend, but by the end of Monday this year all the families were decidedly unhappy. In 1986 a small party went to the Leeds Morris men's Dales Weekend, and it rained a good deal. There was a new camp-site which seemed quite some way off the horizontal. There was a running buffet on the Saturday night - 'you had to run or else you starved' - and then more rain on Sunday and Monday,"

Since 1984 Whitchurch have continued to send representatives and, where possible, a team to the Dales weekends. You can read about how the close association with Whitchurch came about elsewhere in this publication.

casion the time taken to get to Appletreewick was so great that the show had to be cancelled; and then, of course, we struggled to get away from Appletreewick and the following show at Grassington was also compromised. Although the drive over into Wensleydale was a long one, movement there was expected to be easier, and so it proved. Bob Shakespeare and I did the research for the tour. We planned shows at Aysgarth, Askrigg, and Bainbridge as well as Buckden on the way up. It was certainly easier than driving up and down Wharfedale. It led, of course, also to another innovation, the introduction of a second Kettlewell show to round the tour off.

There is a wonderful continuity about the Dales Tour! There have been many changes of format over the years – some major, many minor - and the present family weekends at Burnsall seem very different to the car-based out-and-back tours of the early 70's or the Monday-only bike tour of 1952. But so much remains the same – the wonderful setting in Wharfedale, the 10.00am start in Kettlewell, the magnificent scenery, the large and appreciative crowds throughout Monday, the joy of sharing Morris with our friends: these are all timeless and unaltered. Long may they continue to be!

* Bases we have used include the village halls in Kilnsey(2 years), Kettlewell (2 years) Buckden (2 years) and Appletreewick (once).

Dales Tour from the 1980s to the present

Alastair Sayles

From the 1980s until the present the Dales Tour has continued to grow. Whilst the number of dancers has remained fairly constant, the number of friends and family members coming with them has seen a great increase: this has created a number of logistical challenges for camping, transport, food and locations. In the 1990s Moss Ambrose took on the job of co-ordinating the Dales Tour and with the assistance of a number of key people, not least Bob Price (well known for his Gant charts), the various challenges have been met.

In general the number of tours on both the Saturday and the Monday has usually required 3 coaches though in some years it has been two plus a minibus*. We have a number of regular guest sides who always attend; Leicester Morris, Heartsease, Whitchurch, Jet Set and Forest of Dean. In addition there are other sides who have attended for a couple of years then missed a few before returning.

On the Saturday there are now staggered tours at Skipton and the latest introduction is a staggered arrival at Settle at the end of the day. For many years we managed to arrange for all 3 tours to assemble at Malham for a rolling lunch whilst we blocked the road successfully for an hour or so. However with the departure of the landlord from The Buck Inn to the Devonshire Arms at Cracoe we now have a number of different lunch stops

Sunday has now become a regular dancing day, albeit optional. In general a Leeds side will go to Buckden and Hubberholme and may be joined by a few odds and sods or another team that wants to do some informal dancing.

Monday still commences with the traditional dancing of The Rose at 10.00am in Kettlewell come rain, sleet or snow! Tours then range out to Wensleydale to such delights as the Westburton Fayre and the Black Sheep Brewery. Everyone then meets back at Kettlewell for the 6.00pm show. Those missing the demise of the Sparth House tea on the Saturday make up with cream tea at the tea rooms in Kettlewell.

After years camping at various locations as described by Allan Jarvis above the team has settled on the base at Burnsall which has provided an excellent hall and a variety of camping combinations in the village. The memorable year of camping on the slope behind the hall and Allan's du-

bious parking will always be remembered as will the morning wake up call from the rooks, the “interesting neighbours” and the incessant chiming of the church bells!! The current campsite seems to fit the bill and, as long as we can still fit people onto it, it should carry on for some time.

The social aspect of the weekend has also moved on. Gone are the formal feasts and instead we had in the 1990s a buffet arrangements which always seemed to be rather a scrum. Lots of tired hungry people wanting a meal on the Saturday night! With some careful organising and the introduction of professional caterers the eating arrangements now work much more effectively and, once the eating is done, the evening lends itself to homespun entertainment. Guests sides are invited to do a turn and Hartsease now run a ceilidh.

The late night singing sessions still endure and the regulars seem to crawl out of their tents in order to join the candlelit gathering in the side room. Numbers have waxed and waned over the years but the mood is still the same. Enjoying a pleasant drink and a good song with friends.

Looking round the crowded hall at Burnsall on the Saturday evening last year, it was apparent that our tour has reached its largest practicable size – there was standing room only for a good many people – but the songs, acts and country dancing made for a wonderful evening; and we hope and trust that our friends will want to join us for more of the same and for many a year to come.

So the Dales Tours continue on and in 2012 the club will be celebrating its 60th tour. See you there!

* In 2001 the tour was almost cancelled due to the Foot and Mouth epidemic. However a small number of men managed to book into pubs in Long Preston and from there we did a Saturday and Monday tour of the Dales. This was really appreciated by the villagers who had been cut off from tourists through the summer. The welcome we received in Malham was unbelievable. Most unusual was the way the Dales looked and sounded. The grass was long with wild flowers everywhere and there were no sounds of animals. Something we don't want to see again.

Leeds Morris men at Whitby Folk Week

Allan Jarvis

Leeds Morris Men have twice enjoyed the privilege of being one of the resident sides during Whitby Folk Week – in 1988 and 1991 – and our participation on both occasions proved to be amongst the most enjoyable Morris experiences for those who were lucky enough to be able to attend.

The first invitation reached us by a most surprising route. I was on “dinner duty” in the cafeteria at Buttershaw Upper School when I noticed that the area catering manager, Ken Wood (yes, a very appropriate name!) was in the kitchen. He asked to have a word with me and said that he had been asked by “the committee”, by which he meant Malcolm Storey, to invite Leeds Morris Men to be one of the Festival’s resident sides in August 1988. I asked what was involved and he said that we would be expected to present a number of scheduled shows on each day of the festival, take part in the two parades and provide a series of daily beginners’ workshops on Cotswold Morris. In return, we would be given free camping and a free season ticket for all concerts, workshops etc.

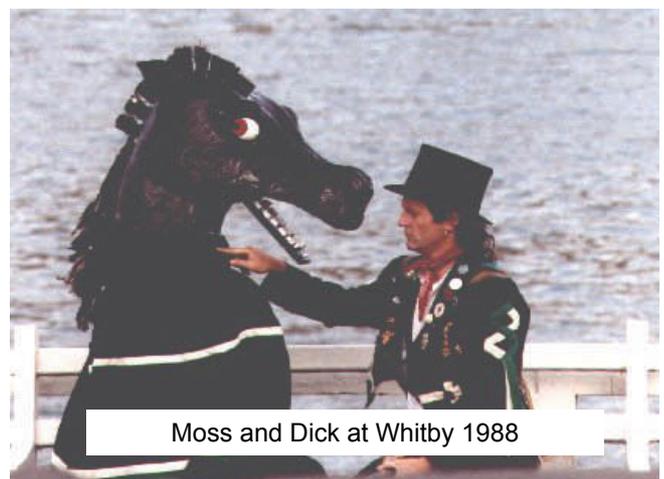
Ken needed an answer quite quickly in case a “no” meant looking elsewhere, so we “bagged” the invitation at the next practice. It was agreed that we needed a strong side of at least eight men, a fool and a musician to make it viable and someone to deliver the workshops. Men announced at once that the squire would have to do the workshops and a number expressed interest in going. By the following week it was clear that we had a strong enough side and an acceptance was telephoned to Ken.

There then followed utter silence from Whitby. We expected detailed instructions, a detailed programme, details about camping and other accommodation. None were forthcoming until, shortly before we were due to depart, information reached us about the campsite. This informality proved to be the epitome of the Festival.

It has to be admitted that we did not at that stage know enough about the festival to exploit its opportunities fully. Most of us did not make as much use of the free season ticket as we might have done and finding places to eat, especially in the evening, proved more difficult than expected. However we had a very good week. The weather was fine most of the time, most of our shows were well attended and apart from an alarming excrescence on Alastair Sayles’ ear, the men were well and cheerful.

Our favourite place for a show was East Side Market, despite the cobbles and the slope. Mid-week the crowds were small but we drew excellent crowds at the beginning and end of the week. We shared the Cotswold Morris billing with Pomfret Men who were providing the advanced workshops, which necessarily concentrated on Bucknell, being the only tradition they danced. Our workshops were based on Headington and Brackley. They drew a fairly consistent attendance of about a dozen, some of whom were dancing well by the end of the week. We had to prepare them for an event known as the “Workshops Showcase” on the Friday where participants showed what they had learned. We were able to put up four mixed sides which acquitted themselves quite well.

The parades were mercifully shorter than they are now, starting from the church hall at the



Moss and Dick at Whitby 1988

top of Flowergate. We alternated Winster and Wheatley although we found the latter very tiring! We drew favourable comment from others present for our show dance at the bandstand at the end of the week. Virtually the only tiresome features were the long trek back to the campsite at the end of the day and the obligation to put on a show at an evening ceilidh where we were kept hanging around for a considerable period and then only required to do one dance!

Many of us attended the final big concert at the end of the week and much enjoyed the Water-sons and others.

Our second week's residence followed much the pattern of the first. Peter Karren, squire in 1991, was keen to accept the invitation, so again the key questions were – had we a strong enough side and had we someone to lead the beginners' workshops? When both questions were answered satisfactorily we happily accepted.

The main differences this time were a better-sited campsite and a better understanding amongst the men as to how to achieve maximum benefit from the season tickets we all held. The workshops were much as before, and indeed attracted several who had attended in 1988! With a strong side our dancing again received praise and, as Bob Price recalls elsewhere in this publication, we were introduced to the crowd at the end-of-week bandstand massed show in the most flattering terms. At the workshops showcase event it was announced that "other workshop leaders had been attending Leeds' workshops to find out how they should be done" which compliment was much appreciated but slightly spoiled by our having noticed no such "spies" during the week.

Whilst walking from a concert to a show, Moss and Allan were stopped by Roy Bailey with the news that Peter Bellamy had committed suicide. Another concert featured the Kippers and had us in fits of laughter. By the

Highlights of a 9 year old Morris Dancer Simon Hayward

Our team was first to dance at the very beginning of Whitby Folk Week. My Daddy was the first to dance, the dance was Saturday night, we were at the Bandstand with Manley Morris. Later we danced with Persephone also at the Bandstand, then we went to the East Side Market again with Persephone. It was then time for the 1st Parade of the week we danced Saturday night and Winster, it was very tiring. In the evening we danced at the Royal Hotel Big Bamboo, I danced 2 dances. We collected lots of money during the day.

On Sunday I learnt how to do Getting Upstairs in the First Workshop. We had our Second Parade during the afternoon dancing Wheatley and Winster it was not as tiring. We danced two show dances, I danced Jockey to the Fair. In the evening we went to see Strawhead, Martin Carthy, Les Barker and Swan Arcade in the Spa Theatre. I got into bed at half past twelve. On Thursday we started dancing at 11am today, during the day we danced 3 times at the East Side Market plus the workshop and 1 show at the Bandstand. Dick, Moss and I collected lots of Money during today, 2 boxfuls. I also did lots and lots of dancing, we had a game of putting in the evening.

My two brothers danced in the parade as well doing a long sword dance. The parade was the longest of the week. There were hundreds of people watching during the parade and at the Bandstand, where all of the sides danced for the last time. Leeds danced Orange in Bloom then Dick fell dead but was brought back to life by some children and a kiss. We then Wheatleyed off to end our weeks dancing. In the evening we went to the final ceilidh until 10 o'clock then my Daddy took me to the final concert where I saw Les Barker, the Water-sons and the Kippers. It did not finish until 20 past one, this was the end of the festival. I did have a very good time from beginning to end.

end of the week we felt we had established ourselves as a dependable bunch who would be worth inviting again, so it came as something of a disappointment over the succeeding years when no third invitation was forthcoming. However we continued to attend as "buskers", and indeed have done so virtually every year since. Amongst others who attend the whole week are Derek Matthews and Brian Willimott.

One last thing to mention: had we not attended in 1988 it is probable that we would never have been joined by Brian, by Chris Kirk and Phil Kirk, which would have deprived us of our main musician and two past squires!

Whitby Folk Week, 20- 26th August 1988 by a relative of the 9 year old, only much, much older

Before getting onto writing about this event, may I just digress as to why it was so special to me and the fulfilment of a long standing ambition.

After attending Whitby Folk Festival from the early to mid seventies, I finally plucked up enough courage to go along to the Beginner's Cotswold Morris Workshop having admired as a spectator for a number of years the grace and athleticism of the dancers and the wide range of wonderful tunes the tradition seemed to contain. So after a week of sorting out which of my three left feet was the right one and making one hand go clock and the other anti wise under the guidance of someone called David Welti, who I understand knows one or two things about morris, I was hooked. At the end of the week I asked the name and address of my local side, which turned out to be Leeds Morris Men and Roy Simcox (Bagman) and the rest, as they say, is History. It has been a very happy history over the last twelve years with many high points and fond memories (but that's another story). So when the invitation came last Autumn for the side to take part in the 1988 Whit by Folk Week and to run the Beginners Cotswold Morris Workshop I naturally jumped at the-chance to, as I saw it, repay an event which has changed and increased my enjoyment of life so much over the years.

So enough of this senile rambling and onto the event itself. How would we as a side stand up to twelve shows shared with other sides, two solo shows, four parades round the streets of Whit by, followed by show dances, one show display at a Ceilidh, six workshops lasting 1 hour 20 minutes each, and an evening invitation by Goatland Plough slots to Beck Hole as well as enjoying some of the other hundreds of events contained within the programme, all crammed into seven days? How we stood up to all this can be summed up in one word; "Magnificently". Our bunch of heroes who did themselves, the Club and the Tradition so proud were Allan Jarvis (Squire), Peter Karran (Bagman), Moss Ambrose (Assistant Bagman & Full-time Fool), Ken Barker, Derek Mat thews, Alastair Sayles, Bob Price, Marko Piplica, Simon and John Hayward, and of course Dick (Superstar) the Horse.

Despite large cysts, an extremely upset stomach, various parts of various leg and ankle strains and numerous blisters and the like to the feet, our dancing standard, commitment and team spirit was from beginning to end of the highest quality, being enthusiastically received by audiences and organisers alike. Our Workshops for Beginners were heralded as the best there had been for years (we produced four sets who danced in the 'Workshops Showcase' in the Spa Pavillion on Friday afternoon to a surprisingly high standard), and thoroughly enjoyed by pupils and teachers alike.

So on to some specific highlights of the week;



John Hayward

Singing 'Oh what a Beautiful Morning' inside the Bandstand in our only rain affected show of the week on Tuesday; The dancing of Simon in Trunkles Bledington (the first time he has tackled the dance); His enthusiasm to collect money (1³/₄ boxfuls by the side in the day); Remembering the 'Dick speech' from beginning to end after a number of fluffs earlier in the day; The side's dancing in the evening Ceilidh, particularly Orange in Bloom.

The charming dances and personalities of the ladies of Beetlecrushers from Somerset in our two shows with them; The blissful hour of peace and quiet in The Star between shows (plus the emergence of Derek 'Pool' superstar); Simon still pushing the collecting.

Parade (number three of the week so far) on Wednesday from the Old Market Square over the bridge to the bandstand; The harassing of the Northampton Morris Horse by Dick.

On Thursday our extended show of 45 minutes mid-afternoon. Due to the Street Theatre Group we were scheduled to perform with being double-booked we had to hold the fort until they arrived. This show was one of our most professional of the whole week. Having been dancing since 11 o'clock that morning and six days into our gruelling schedule, it typified how much of a 10-Headed (11 if you count Dick) unit we had forged ourselves into. We never stopped for the whole duration, going from dance to dance in front of a steadily growing, appreciative crowd. Dick, who had been threatening to become a superstar all week finally made it, Moss having to promise that Dick would come to see all the children in the crowd rather than them ~ coming to see him all at the same time. By the time we were relieved of our duties it was hurting but there were no complaints only exhilaration. Simon was also very happy that our collecting for the day came to two full boxes (definitely a budding Bob Shakespeare on our hands).

The dancing standards of Kings Morris (a boys side from Canterbury, dancing Cotswold Morris. Faith restored, Great); The dancing of 'our beginners' in the Workshop Showcase Show; The final parade, great to see so many friends (old and many new) cheering us on (or heckling as was their wont) made the longest parade of the week pass with ease.

On a more personal note, two more Haywards in the parade and dancing at the bandstand, Thomas (8), William (7). They had been attending the Hobby Horse Club all week and had earlier in the afternoon danced Long sword at the Workshop Showcase. All this and in the parade I had not been able to see due to our dance commitments, so it came as a very touching experience for me to see them perform their Long sword dance at the bandstand prior to ourselves taking the dance area.

Our Grand Finale at the bandstand, the dancing of Orange in Bloom, death and resurrection of Dick; Kiss, Kids and all.

So there we have it, a lot of writing to explain a lot of very special memories spread over seven joyous days. Was the ambition satisfactorily realised? Admirably.

Three items that will always stand out in the mind as special:

Firstly, the sight of Dick in the Distance in the Parades, standing and head above everyone.

Secondly, the total commitment of Simon, always wanting to be involved be it with collecting boxes, walking round with Dick or being always ready and willing to do the next dance, showing a maturity far beyond his tender nine years.

Lastly the camaraderie and team spirit within the side, which was tremendous throughout.

European Tours and International links

Since the early 1980s Leeds Morris Men have been dancing on the international stage! The first foreign tour in 1981 was to Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

then after an 8 year break the opportunity came to spend two weeks in Dortmund as part of a City twinning event in 1989. Despite some criticism of the whole event from some quarters within Leeds a number of Leeds men departed Leeds on a bus with a steel band for two weeks of high jinx in Dortmund. Since 2004 the club has regularly been visiting France and Belgium, most notably Bruges in the week after Easter. Other associated trips have been to Ghent, Damme and Lille. As well as travelling abroad we have

welcomed many International students through dancing at events organised by the Leeds Universities. Quite what newly arrived visitors from Uganda and China made of us who knows!



Rotterdam Visit: 23-24 January 1981 Ken Barker

This was the first overseas trip for Leeds Morris men and was an event organised and paid for by West Yorkshire County Council (Tourism) from County Hall, Wakefield. There were a number of other groups such as a Yorkshire pudding expert. A minibus and driver were provided from Leeds.

There was an overnight ferry on the Thursday evening from Hull to Rotterdam where we stayed. The return ferry had a problem and we had to drive fast to Dunkirk to get home. I recall sharing a cabin with Colin on the boat

The team comprised Ken (Squire), Colin Sutcliffe (musician), John Schwarzenbach, John Hayward, Roy Simcox, Steve Fairholme, Malcolm Pittwood, Keith Penny, Terry Warwick and Roger Lockyer.

It was on this tour that Terry produced the "Morris men dancing" road sign which clearly bemused the locals.

Our repertoire was Bledington, Headington, Bampton and Wheatley. We usually started with Hey Diddle Dis from Bledington and ended with Bonny Green Garters. There were official functions in the hotel, speeches, presentations and us as entertainment. We were free to dance in the local streets and canal sides. On Saturday we went to Amsterdam and danced outside the Royal Palace as well as meaner streets.

I'm hazy about details but can remember thick pea soup, certain streets, Roger suggested a souvenir photograph. We duly posed outside a shop, after a bit of a "move to the right" etc the photo was taken. Later we saw the print, a typical morris picture but with "SEX SHOP" written above us. Luckily I didn't know what they were selling!

1981 Repertoire

Bledington: Hey Diddle Dis, Young Collins, Billy Boy, Idbury Hill, Over the water, Flowers of Edinburgh, Gallant Hussar, Cuckoos Nest, William and Nancy, Glorishers, Trunkles and Saturday Night

Headington: Constant Billy, Rodney, Hunt the Squirrel, Getting Upstairs, 29th May, Haste to the wedding, Laudanum Bunches, How do you do sir and Trunkles

Fieldtown: Bobby and Joan, Country gardens, Balance the Straw, Banks of the Dee, Shepherd's Hey and Dearest Dickie

Bampton: Highland Mary, Bobbing Around, Banbury Bill, Shepherds Hey, Bonny Green Garters

Wheatley: Processional and Shepherds hey

“Tod durch Gastfreundschaft” (Death through hospitality) Leeds Morris Men in Dortmund 1989 Peter Karran

It was early May 1989; and the weather was sweltering all of the time. Bob took a picture with all of us sitting in a kid's playground; I think Bob took that. My memory of the cast is hazy; I recall Alastair, Moss, John H, Simon H, Bob Shakespeare, Martin (with ears on his hat), Bob Price, Donal, Adrian, Me, Duncan and Andrew (who was pretending to be a Morris man).



We took the coach from Leeds Civic Hall in the afternoon, overnight ferry from Hull to Rotterdam and overland next day to Dortmund. There was some dancing in a very tight space on the boat. We had a lady “chaperone” called Erika; I mean she accompanied us most of the time. We stayed in a small hotel that served the same buffet breakfast every day. I used to stay in the hotel bar on an evening whilst typically the rest went partying the night away in Dortmund. Apart from the night we had a little party in one of the rooms. I knocked back a bottle of duty free Jack Daniels; Moss and Bob did similar. We managed to find a coffee bar on wheels the next “morning” that sold schnapps; I recall that it was a pretty good “hair of the dog”.

I think that we got £17 a day expenses. We did some busking. I remember someone putting a 50DM note into the bag; I think that was the biggest payment we ever got. We went up the big tower in Der Westfalenpark Park. Our first gig was an evening do at a local school. It was our first experience of the amazing hospitality that we received throughout our trip. I recall that the dancing was reasonable; however it got better.



We appeared on Saturday afternoon television after the steel band from Chapeltown. We got the German equivalent of pie and peas: mushy pea stew with smoked sausage. Alastair and Moss spoke to the presenter on air.

Somewhere in the middle of this I did an impression of Mr Woo; mainly because Andrew and whites did not mix particularly well. The major pastime in Dortmund appeared to be Male Voice Choirs. The best night that we had was at a social club in what appeared to be the Dortmund equivalent of Seacroft; as guests of one of the many choirs. The food was absolutely fantastic; including the best steak Tartar sand-

wiches ever. We swapped songs and got in famously with the locals; even though we spoke different languages.

We did a “posh” do for local dignitaries. They wanted us on the stage. After inspecting the venue we reorganised the seating so that we danced in the middle of the audience. We did a Hinton dance; rather spectacularly. In the show out we exploded across the set; stopping dead right in front of the audience. They got over it; eventually !

We did at least one more gig in a school; the Immanuel Kant Gymnasium. I ran into some folks I had met at university. We left before the Kondor Quartet got into full swing. We came home and did the Dales Tour.

I wanted to be a professional Morris dancer after that; unfortunately reality got in the way.

European tours 2003 - 2010

Rob Baker

Intrigued by tales of the Dortmund trip the 2003-2005 Squire set his mind on further European adventures. Our first in the current series of Easter visits overseas was to Lille, in the industrial heartland of Northern France, and twinned with Leeds! Accordingly we sought support from Leeds City Council to promote its cultural reputation abroad. Although no funds were forthcoming, the council's International Office did negotiate permission for us to dance in Lille.



I can't recall how we first came to discuss the matter with friends from the Forest of Dean but they joined us right from the first tour in 2004. In addition we recruited Kevin Murphy from Ashdown Forest Morris, a friend from Alastair Sayles' exile in Sussex.



With a hired 7-seater from Leeds we picked up Kevin in Ashford, Kent, and then met up with Forest of Dean at the ferry port in Dover, arriving eventually at a rather bleak municipal campsite in Armentières at dusk. The only other campers seemed to be a somewhat out of control young couple from Paris with their similarly out of control lap-dog named “Fanny”.

Lille, European City of Culture in 2004, was teeming but few people seemed to have time to stand and stare. Our happiest acquaintanceships seemed to be with Algerian bar staff.

We were also interviewed by French newspapers and television, probably a result of Leeds City Council's intervention. There was a memorable day trip over the border with Belgium to Ypres/leper, where we danced the Forest of Dean's dance, “The Soldier's Joy”, at the Menin Gate in memory of the fallen of the First World War, certainly the most moving moment of my Morris career.

Our first taste of Belgium led us on to a Bruges-based trip in 2005, incorporating a return journey by train to Lille, during which probably the most gripping experience was dancing on the train. We had been joined at the Belgian campsite by Trevor Eydmann of Ashdown Forest. Camping Memling in Bruges has been our tour base ever since, being just about staggering distance from the

city centre after a hard day's dancing and the height of luxury compared to Armentières. We stayed at Camping Memling in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2009 (with a fallow year in 2008, when Easter fell chillingly early) with outings by train to the historic towns of Ghent (2006) and Antwerp (2007), and most recently by canal boat to the nearby village of Damme (2009) where the whole place seemed to know we were coming and treated us with exceptional hospitality. For the 2009 tour the Squire of Bedford Morris Men joined us. The movement was growing!



Bruges 2009

Whilst we have explored a number of other beautiful Belgian cities we always return to Bruges, with its superb range of dance spots, from the grandeur of the Burg to the quaint mediaeval fish market. Other regular Bruges venues are the "Half Moon" brewery and Simon Stevin Plein, a perfectly appointed square named after a Belgian mathematician and engineer, and the place where most of us take the opportunity to buy chocolates for loved ones left behind in dear old Blighty.



Bruges 2006

A recent favourite has been Café Vlissinghe, apparently the oldest pub in Bruges, with the loveliest landlady, who in 2009 inspired some of the more gallant among the men to burst into song. Also worthy of mention is a brew called Garre, apparently only to be found in one bar in the city, a well Garreded secret at 14%.

Organising the trips has taken quite a lot of planning but once there, it's been, like Belgian chocolate, pure self-indulgence. At the time of writing we have had to get ourselves signed up to a street festival for Belgian over 55s in order to be able to dance at Easter 2010, for their delectation, in Bruges. Tot ziens!

Odds and Sods abroad

Although not as a club the side has been represented in a number of other foreign trips. The memorable Utrecht Ring Meeting in 1991 was attended by Moss Ambrose and Alastair Sayles who danced with Whitchurch. A weekend noted for its lack of decent food and organisation¹ Starting with the long trip to Utrecht only to be welcomed with no food whatsoever. We had to await the delights of the lovely Mothers Pride bread at breakfast. There was also the fantastic idea of having 4 converging teams of men dancing towards the centre of Utrecht to the chime of the city's bells playing the Winster processional. The only flaw was that the chime wasn't quite exactly Winster and therefore not really possible to dance to. Many confused legs staggered into the centre of Utrecht for the massed display on the Sunday!



Bruges 2006

Moss has also danced with Forest of Dean Morris men at their Pont Aven festival in Brittany for many years. This year they are likely to be joined by some other men from Leeds.

There have also been a number of missed opportunities. The club has been offered the chance to dance both in China and in Romania but sadly both have not gone ahead due to changes in plans or lack of financial support.

Leeds Morris Fools before Moss Ambrose

Think of Leeds Morris Men and most people these days think immediately of Moss Ambrose and his often-inspired fooling. But who fooled for the men before Moss joined us in 1983?

The answer in the period immediately preceding his arrival is – nobody! Ellis Tinsley had stopped fooling on the Dales Tour and my very occasional appearances as fool had also ceased as I found the preparation of bladders tiresome and unpleasant.

The very first public performance by Leeds Morris men, at the inaugural Inter-Varsity Folk Dance Festival in February 1951, had seen both a fool – Ted Purver – and a betty – Norman Peacock. This seems to have been exceptional as Norman's log entries for the early years does not mention a Cotswold-type fool again. Considering the number of occasions when the log records those present as numbering no more than seven or eight men including musicians, it's probable that a supernumerary character such as a fool was thought a luxury the men could not afford. A search of our archive of photographs has failed to find any evidence of a fool before the first appearance of Ellis in the role in about 1964.

Rapper was different. Here the log frequently identifies a Betty and sometimes also a Tommy and we have a number of photographs in the archive showing Norman as the former. On occasions the Betty seems to have been required to make up the set but in the main the extra characters were just that – joining in the rapper at the end of the dance.



We know that the Dales Tours in the 1960's and 1970's benefited from the presence of a fool as Ellis Tinsley made the role his own. Ellis was a very fine fool. As an excellent dancer he had the understanding and skill to show off the dances to best advantage, dancing in and around the set. He was also adept at working the crowd between dances. I would rate Ellis as amongst the very best fools I have seen. His technique was in many ways very similar to that of Russell Wortley of Cambridge Morris Men who fooled superlatively when he could be spared from musician duties. Ellis continued to fool on the Dales Tours at least until the late '70s, sharing the role with me on a couple of occasions, he fooling on the Monday and I on the Saturday.

Ellis and the Dales Tour apart, the club otherwise very seldom seems to have had a fool until Moss arrived. Since then, I recall fooling on one occasion when Moss was absent but that is all.

The Fool 'irritating, but good' Moss Ambrose



I suppose that I have always been attracted to the idea of non-conformity — anarchy, even - and the fool is the ultimate embodiment of this. More than this, though, he's the means by which the dancers can link to their audience, and the audience can begin to understand the pattern and movement of the dance. He's there to break down barriers, build bridges, open up dialogues. or whatever other redundant metaphor you can come up with. He's also there to see that everyone has a bloody good time, and that can happen just as well with an audience of two or two hundred (more usually the former, it must be said!)

It all started a very long time ago for me, in the second or third year of dancing, I think, so I've never really been anything other than a fool, so to speak. I went on a weekend

'course' which featured such luminaries as Father Ken and Morris Sunderland, emerging with a rather scruffy certificate signed (sort of) by the latter. So there it is, I am officially certified by the Morris Ring: a decision they probably came to regret in later years. I recall with some hang-over-fuelled nausea Morris S's Sunday morning treat of pulling raw bladders from a cardboard milk carton for division between and inflation by a rather less-than-ecstatic band of would-be acolytes. The survivors presumably went on to inflated-rubber-glove territory, but since I met few of them subsequently, I wouldn't know. This despite my offering to be a collection-point for foolish confidences: the couple of letters I did receive in consequence did little to strengthen my respect for the brotherhood, one seeming to sincerely claim a real ability to inseminate by touch. Ahem!

Ellis Tinsley, Leeds' previous fool, taught me more, as you'd expect. His letter on bladder-craft From an Old Fool to a Young Fool was invaluable, and later appeared in, I think, Tyke's News, though I'm not sure who else actually profited from it. And it was Ellis's praise that I really valued when he told Maggie I was 'born to it.' A slight variation on Dougie Eyle's 'A good fool is born, not made.' To which the late-lamented Donal replied, 'Moss was brewed.'

It does seem a skill difficult to pass on, since it's so idiosyncratic. I did try through a workshop at Bromyard Folk Festival some years back, but there's a limit to what you can teach beyond the patterns and some of the patter. My own rather OTT character (and no, I am not like this all the time, as Maggie will tell you!) probably started with the first Shakespeare play I saw at 14: Feste, the fool in Twelfth Night really stood out for me, and I've always approved of the line:

'There is no treason in an allowed fool, though he do naught but rail'

-'rail' means criticise/complain/backchat etc.



.essentially not good manners! I think the Morris Ring could learn a bit from the Bard, but to be fair, it is also something of a puzzlement to me that I have never actually sustained injury subsequent to some of the remarks I regularly make in public. Maybe the Fool really does have immunity from censure and reprisal: not totally sure, but close on 30 years with no life-threatening disabilities seems pretty good going so far!

I don't fool during the practice season, since to do it properly you have to know the dances from the inside. No, you don't have to be the best dancer: simply a good dancer

who knows what's going on in the dance, and how to ensure you don't get in the way. Best compliment on my success from Dave W: 'I've never known you were actually in the dance.' Leeds are generally very precise dancers, and it's easier to fool when you know exactly where they'll be at any point: then you can simply arrange not to be there yourself! Though I've recently taken to dancing backwards, which really is trusting to luck: we shall see! Some teams have dancers whose precise movements are impossible to predict beyond a vague sort of round there, probably. at which point, I tend to busy myself with the audience. Safer in the long run.

I used to draw diagrams, but it didn't really
l a s t .

Though it is amazing what complimentary shapes you can make. My personal favourite is a kind of V-shape which cuts across



the set and comes back out further up than it went in: you really have to know your team to make that work! Mainly, however, it's sort of instinctive: see a gap and head for it, and hope no-one else gets there first. When I first started fooling with Forest, it was clear they'd been practising in the confines of a skittle alley, and I had to keep reminding them that I was actually there, and trying to get down the middle: and also that I didn't have the dimensions of a bowling ball. Still, it all worked out in the end!

Which of course brings me to the subject of what have been termed my whoreish quali-

ties. Yes, I do dance with a number of teams: but never for money!! Over the years I've really enjoyed being a member (sometimes Honorary!) of Whitchurch, Forest of Dean and Oakworth: all excellent groups of blokes, all with different styles and different personalities. One of the challenges has always been to adapt your dancing style to fit in with theirs: think I've mostly managed, but the challenge has been stimulating — for all of us, I imagine.

Stand up Dick



Dick, the skeletal but rather lovable horse of Leeds Morris Men, came into being in 1983/84 for a mummings play that Moss had put together. In his early days Ben Coggan was Dick and Dick's gown was a fairly simple piece of black



material. As the club had sufficient numbers to allow men to have a break from dancing there was scope for others to try their hand at Dick. Alastair Sayles was a fairly active Dick from 1987 – 88 and also was instrumental in making Dick a new gown – well, persuading his mother to do it! That gown is still going strong today. Having had problems with children wanting to give money to Dick, a nosebag was made which proved its worth on Whitby folk week but became quite a liability for the person inside Dick as it got very heavy. Following

the cyst incident in Whitby in 1988 (of which we will say no more) others took on the role of Dick and Dave Wass took him to Dortmund in 1989. During this period John Wright also did some "Dicking" and then others such as Phil Kirk, John Despin and Allan Jarvis also did their time. As an early Dicker one of my best memories was getting a lift on the back of a Harley through the streets of Malham. Alas there was only one rather poor photo taken!



Throughout the 90s and into the new century Dick became rather battered and for a number of years was in Dave's airing cupboard and garage. In 2009 however Dick played his part in marking the Death and Resurrection of Morris by being carried funereally into the square at Kettlewell on Bank Holiday Monday by a cortege led by our friends Jet Set. Luckily there was an available virgin to give the kiss of life to Dick and so he lives again - but for how long? Only as long as the next available

Dick steps forward!

"In comes Dick with all his men, he's come to see you once again. Once he was alive, but now he's dead He's nothing but a poor old horse's head.

Stand up Dick!"

Mumming@leedsmorris

Mumming probably has very ancient roots in ceremonial drama and has been known to exist in roughly its present form for about 250 years. A huge number of plays have been recorded, and continue to be written or adapted, all with a rather similar formula and always dealing with the universal human dilemmas of war and peace, love and deceit, death and resurrection. It is unclear how or how long ago Leeds Morris became involved with mumming. We contacted the cast...

60 second interview with the cast (including former players).

1. How long have you been involved in mummers plays for Leeds MM?

Responses ranged from "First time this year" to "About ten years".

Two performers seemed to go off into reverie:

I first did a mummers play in 1997 with Kennet. For the occasion I made a 4ft long sword out of tongue and grove. It came with me as I moved around the country, but never got used. Then in 2009 Leeds decided to put on another mummers play so I volunteered - I felt vindicated in my decision to lug that sword round. Then at dress rehearsal Moss appears with these two large old iron swords - the sound they made was fantastic, sparks flew, and I was fearful for the life of my wooden sword, so it still hasn't been used!

Since some time in the late 1990s. I don't know how it started but it seemed to grow organically out of the Leeds Morris experience and suddenly I was in it. My only prior experience of acting was as Maid Marian's uncle in the primary school panto so mumming with Leeds was the most obvious next career move.

2. What part do you play and why? (guess who said what?)

I started off as the Turkish Knight, especially enjoying my set tos (sets to?) with Mr Joseph Oakley (Snr) as the pompous Saint or King George. However I now seem to be type-cast as a bumbling Santa, juxtaposed to Moss Ambrose, who, acting on the whole to type in the role of my anagram (work it out), is a real god-send to the cast, capable of working the most unpromising crowd.



Geoff aka Josephine
Grassington

I have played, Santa, Beelzebub and women on 3 occasions (scrubber, Josephine, Egyptian queen,) It's the pulling on of the tights and the wig - it puts me in different place it takes me out of my self and I become another person - o'lovely.

I have played the Doctor (because it was my doctor's bag) and the king's mother (because Geoff couldn't do it that year).

I played the bad Egyptian knight - They wanted me to be doctor, but as a Consultant I felt general medicine beneath me. As a campaigner for St Alban to be our patron saint, I felt being St George was inappropriate. Geoff makes too good a girl

for me to interfere.

3. What is your favourite location/event to perform at?

Grassington as there is a great event atmosphere at the Dickensian fair. The location and people wanting to be entertained and have festive fun.

Grassington has usually been good. Otley tends to be too full of uncontrolled kids [sorry, Otley – Ed].

The main street at Haworth was the best this

year.

This year we did our first series of mumming performances ever (I think) in picturesque Haworth during Oakworth Morris's traditional pre-Christmas dance-outs. The setting here, the backdrop of the Pennine skyline, the cobbles, the crisp air, the "Victorian" Christmas lights, the holly scrogging, the Ram Tam in the Fleece.... Perfect.

4. Why do you think the public enjoy watching?

Responses ranged from:

It is something a little different and unexpected entertainment during a day out.

It's different, it's unusual and very amateur and they want to enjoy the day.

I think they like the combination of a bit of slapstick with something that they recognise is traditional

To:

Do they?

I am not sure the public enjoy watching, they are fearful to leave with Beelzebub around.

5. Do you recall how many mummers plays the club has done?

I've no idea. I've been involved in about 4 different plays, 1 or 2 of which have appeared in more than one version, whether trying to bring in some current affairs (sic) or adapting the play to fit the cast – e.g. making sure there's a female role for Geoff. Sometimes we have moved away from parodying the antagonists of the crusades and made fun of the French instead, trying to keep just the wrong side of good taste.

Not sure but I think I have been involved with 6.

Different ones? Or how many years? Having not been involved in the last 3 years, I can't really answer either question. We think

the first one was 10-15 years ago, probably nearer 15.

6. What is your least favourite part of acting in a mummers play?

Wondering if we can get a cast together is the only real worry. The rest of it is down to creative teamwork and sheer hard graft – irrespective of the end result.

Forgetting lines.

Overcoming the noise of the 20th century machine, generators and other internal combustion engines

The cold, especially in a dress!

7. What is your fondest memory of performing a play.

Watching Joe Oakley (Jnr), aged about 8, as a wonderful miming Bonaparte to Geoff Lomas's gorgeously sultry Josephine.

St George (Joe Oakley Snr) in a boxing ring fighting the evil foreigner at Grassington dressed in his best long-johns and vest on a cold December day.

Moss sidling up to any woman in sight [*including Geoff? Ed.*]

Best of all was the night in the City of Mabgate in the days when it was a real pub, players and audience crammed good-naturedly into the tiny space. I also like the Headington Mummers Dance - I was only thinking about it while listening to Tim Van Eyken singing "seven joys of Mary" a couple of days ago.

Contributions from:
Bob Price
Geoff Lomas
Alun Davies
Alastair Hutchinson
Rob Baker

And what of the future..?

The last few years have seen many older established teams struggling to recruit new and younger members. Some suggestions have been made as to why this has been a problem: morris dancing isn't something you want to be seen doing? Why bother maintaining tradition? Some in the Ring have even suggested that over the next 20 years Morris dancing may die out entirely as the current dancers will become too old and infirm to continue and there will be very little new blood to replace them.

Is that the situation in Leeds? Well, no it isn't. Like all other teams we have had times when recruitment has been good and times when it has not. The 1970s was a time when folk traditions were embraced and celebrated and there was a large influx of dancers. But in the 1980s too there were a lot of new members, many of them students and those just starting employment. Into the 1990s and the new century the club has continued to gain a trickle of new members. A number of Leeds men have moved to other areas and have taken their dancing with them and are now contributing to other clubs or starting their own! Simon Matthews, who started dancing almost as soon as he could walk, if not before, is now active in the Ring's 18-30 Morris (as are a number of other members of Leeds) and is Squire of the Jig Crew, a group of enthusiastic young dancers who get together on an ad hoc basis.

In addition we have attracted a number of new members through Miscendi (formerly Motley) Morris based at Notre Dame Sixth Form College where we practice. Thanks to Joe Oakley's enthusiasm, plus teaching and musical support from other members of Leeds Morris, Miscendi continues to grow and is providing a whole new generation of male and female dancers with the experience of Morris. A number of Miscendi dancers have become full members of Leeds Morris and also gone on to dance with other sides.

But we are not just recruiting youngsters. Jon Pedlar, who joined Leeds in September 2009 and has made excellent progress despite being bombarded by three traditions, tells his own story

Morris first impressions – the view of an apprentice Jon Pedlar

When, on retirement I looked for activities that would get me out of the house and keep me fit, Rob Baker, with whom I had worked, suggested that I try Morris to see if I might like it. My first session with Leeds Morris felt as if I had joined an alternative universe in which everyone else had been living the whole of their lives: a cross between an extreme sport and an alien culture. Being taught how to "step" at 60 seemed unnecessary, but it soon became clear that stepping was not as I had known it. Finding myself surrounded by a new language of "gyms", "galleys", "heys", "capers" (of various types), as well as a protocol of who in the set did what, which direction was "up", was enough in itself without trying to get my hands to do different things at the same time. I was reassured that Oddington was a challenging tradition and that others would be easier: I had had no idea there were so many different traditions.

So why am I still practicing? Absolutely everyone made me welcome, tolerated my being in the wrong place or going in the wrong direction, took time to tutor me or give me suggestions (like "make sure your stick is well away from your head when I hit it"). But there is also admiration (maybe becoming love) for the robust beauty of the dances, the strongly-rhythmed music, the dramatic characters in the side and the sheer fun had by everyone. I wish I had started 40 years ago.

We wish he had started 40 years ago too but we still welcome his commitment and enthusiasm now.

So, what of the future? Leeds Morris Men certainly has one. This is due to the hard work and commitment of the men throughout the last 60 years that has made this a friendly club where people can enjoy their dancing.

M	Peter Karran	1983 -
M	Barry Chatterton	1983 - 89
M	Ben Coggan	1983 - 89
M	Steve Sykes	
M	Alastair Sayles	1984 -
	Andy McCaig	1984 -85
M	Phil Hyde	1985
M	Adrian Maxwell	1986
	Dave "Stan" Harrison	1987
M	Dave Hall	1986
M	Kevern Stafford	1986
M	Bob Price	1986 - 07
	Andy Bevan	1986 - 87
M	John Grout	1986 - 90
M	Donal Crawford	1987 - 90
M	Marco Piplica	1987 - 03
M	Ronan Doyle	1988 - 90
M	Chris Kirk	1988 -
M	Phil Kirk	1988 -
M	Brian Willimott	1988 -
M	Martin Philips	1988 - 91
M	Simon Hayward	1987 - 94
M	Kelvin Wilkins	1988
	Mike Wiseman	1989
M	Dave Wass	1988 -
H	Rod Holt	1989
H	Mike Chandler	
H	Ron Newsam	1989
M	John Wright	1990 - 01
M	Geoff Lomas	1990 -
M	Brian Elliot	1991 -
M	Rob Baker	1993 -
M	John Despin	1994 -
M	Henry Wilkinson	1994 -
	Duncan Brown	
	Alan Smith	
M	Simon Matthews	1997 -
M	Ben Ambrose	1998 -
M	Joseph Oakley Jnr	2002 -
M	Phil Westley	2002 -
M	Arnie Appleyard	2002 -
M	Alastair Hutchinson	2004 -
M	Mark Ashton	2004 -
M	Caleb Jenkinson	2005 -
M	James Tolley	2005 -
M	Paul Naylor	2005 - 07
M	Neil Murphy	2006 - 08
	Alex McCracken	2007 -
H	Dave Evans	
	Darryl Brown	2008 -
	Bob Isle	
	Simon Love	2008 -
M	Jon Pedlar	2009 -
	Ray Smith	2009 -
M	Alun Davies	2009 -

Officers of Leeds Morris Men

Squire

Ted Purver	1950 - 51	(died 2003)
Clifford Barstow	1951 - 52	
Bill Barrett	1952 - 72	
Allan Jarvis	1972 - 75	
Malcolm Pittwood	1975 - 77	
Roy Simcox	1977 - 79	Elected 1977
Ken Barker	1979 - 81	Elected 1979
Roy Simcox	1981 - 82	Elected 1981
Doug Whiteley	1982 - 83	Elected 1982
John Hayward	1983 - 85	Elected 1983
Derek Matthews	1985 - 87	Elected 1985
Allan Jarvis	1987 - 89	Elected 1987
Alastair Sayles	1989 - 90	Elected 1989
Peter Karran	1990 - 91	Elected March 1990
Allan Jarvis	1991 - 93	Elected 1992
Bob Price	1993 - 95	Elected 1993
Chris Kirk	1995 - 97	Elected 1995
Ken Barker	1997 - 99	Elected 1997
Philip Kirk	1999 - 01	Elected 1999
Geoff Lomas	2001 - 03	Elected 2001
Rob Baker	2003 - 05	Elected 2003
Joseph Oakley	2005 - 07	Elected 2005
Geoff Lomas	2007 - 09	Elected 2007
Rob Baker	2009 -	Elected 2009

Bagman

Ted Purver	1951 - 52
Norman Peacock	1952 - 53
Keith Boulton	1954 - 55
Richard Trigwell	1955 - 56
Keith Constable	1956 - 56
Alan Andrews	1956 - 57
Paul Helliwell	1957 - 58
Bill Page	1958 - 60
Fred Dosser	1960 - 61
Mike Boddy	1961 - 63
Ellis Tinsley	1963 - 68
Dick Shilton	1968 - 70
John Schwarzenbach	1970 - 75
Roy Simcox	1975 - 77
Bob Shakespeare	1977 - 78
John Hayward	1978 - 79
Steve Fairholme	1980 - 81
Bob Shakespeare	1981 - 82
Terry Warwick	1982 - 85
Peter Karran	1985 - 89
Derek Matthews	1990 - 92
Moss Ambrose	1993 - 02
Ken Barker	2002 - 2010
Alastair Sayles	2010—

Treasurer

Bob Shakespeare
Bob Price
Geoff Lomas
Dave Wass

Captain of Sword

Norman Peacock 1950 - 58
Keith Constable 1958 - 61

Captain of Rapper

Clifford Barstow 1952 - 56



The 50th Dales Tour taken on May Bank holiday Monday 2002 in Kettlewell



Photograph taken for presentation to Bill Barrett in 1989.
The back yard of the Packhorse pub, Leeds