



Newsletter

August 2011

Welcome to Issue 2 of the Rose and Castle Morris Newsletter

What's this all about?



Read on and find out!

In this issue we hear about the impressions of a new member graduating to his first dance-out, and about the side's weekend of dance – and more. But first: what R&C has been up to since our last (March) Newsletter?

- Sat 23 April. St George. A dance through Northampton, finishing with an evening's dancing with invited guests at The Boat Inn
- Sat 30 April Milton Keynes
- Sun 5 June 'Come n Try' Workshop, Stony**
- Wed 8 June Dance out at Stony Live
- Sun 12 June 'Come n Try' Workshop, Stony**
- Wed 1 June Old Cherry Tree, Gt Houghton
- Wed 22 June The George, Tiffield
- Sat 25 June pm Buckingham
- Sat 25 June eve Bikers' Bash, Clifton Reynes
- Sun 26 June Braunston Canal Boat Festival
- 1 – 3 July R&C & Queen's Oak Weekend of Dance.
(See below)
- Wed 14 July The Crown, Tingewick
- Thur 14 July Toddington Tour

Graham's Story: The First Time

I have found that Morris dancing has some tricky steps, but stepping out from my front door to start the first training session was perhaps the most difficult step of them all. Pros and cons had been weighed up and the decision made to give it a go. After all, if I didn't like it there was no

commitment and no need to ever go again. So why not give it a chance? You never know, I might even enjoy it, learn something new, make some new friends and travel locally and around the UK to festivals and other events. The link between Rose and Castle Morris (North-West) to my roots in the North-West (Chorley / Rivington, Lancashire) was also a definite draw as was the possibility of Morris dancing at folk festivals, folk music being something I have always enjoyed. Oh yes, and they train you for free, no membership fees until you have been trained up. The club also pays half the cost of the clogs! Final boxes ticked and out of the front door I go.

My first practice session in the Stoke Bruerne Village Hall was in December 2010. Any initial apprehension soon disappeared. A warm welcome awaited and all of the experienced dancers, and indeed members of the band, did try their very best to help me. There was never any pressure to learn a dance, and when the odd step or three inevitably went wrong I only ever received positive words of encouragement and patient guidance on how to do a step or figure correctly.

Practice sessions were more energetic than I had imagined and this apprentice was clearly not Morris-fit ! I quickly realised that there was a more to this Morris lark than meets the eye of the casual observer.

The rest as they say is history, and my first dance out was in the Rose and Castle Weekend of Dance early July and what a location - Woburn Abbey and in front of several Morris sides from around the country. They say you 'learn by doing' and it is very true that dancing in public does sharpen your focus. (pto)



New boys Graham (right) and Matt (left) in new kit, with Steve, R&C's Bagman (always trying to get in shot), in the middle this time.



A summer weekend in England - Our Weekend of Dance: 2nd/3rd July

A weekend of dance sounds an innocent enough pastime doesn't it? After months of work and organising it all comes together in about 40 hours from early Friday evening. This year an extra frisson because the rugby club venue was in the throes of building work.

The reason it's all worth it is that we were joined by over 200 dancers from all over England – from Whitby to Blackheath – to enjoy great company, food and drink, and crucially the chance to dance in new places with new friends.

The Friday evening was the usual loosener, not improved by finishing the weekend beer ration by midnight. I had told them “That's not enough beer”, but what do I know? Fortunately the club was able to get emergency supplies for Saturday.

This year the Saturday tour was organised by serious beer students and hence there were rather special stops.

It all started rather highbrow. A visit to the estate of the Duke of Bedford at Woburn. We danced at Woburn Abbey – but only after a bus journey along what seemed like miles of estate roads. Apparently it is miles but only in low single figures.



Then to the town of Woburn itself. But best of all was Toddington – a village of pubs, though usually noted for the M1 service station to which it gives its name.

What a stop that was - - alternately dancing and



lunching at the Oddfellows Arms and the Angel. This is a slice of perfect English countryside and villages that is too easily missed these days.

From there to a well known CAMRA pub at Tebworth – the Queen's Head. It's been in the Good Beer Guide for 25 years. Some achievement and a rebuke to those who think the proper pub is defunct. A diversion was provided when a bottle of something nasty (a fizzy cola of some sort) misbehaved and sprayed Nick, R & C's little drummer boy. How we laughed.

And then back to base for another fine dinner and Ceilidh until the late hours. The beer lasted this time.



Sunday brought a great session for everybody at the canal side at Stoke Bruerne. This is quite a sight even for those who have seen it many times. When the weather is good – as this year- it's a phenomenon that should be bottled and exported. Those folk who keep talking about measuring happiness need to come and have a look.

So what was that soft porn photo at the head of this newsletter? Read on....

The Gotter Dammer Dingers Perform at Ashton

We were very privileged to get The World Famous “Gotter Dammer Dingers” who were on a rare visit to the UK. The guests of the Rose & Castle/Queen's Oak Week-end of Dance were treated to a unique performance of this celebrated Bavarian troupe as part of the evening entertainment. One guest was overheard to say “I have never seen such a superb display of donging in all my life”. They left with a standing ovation from the very appreciative audience to go to their next performance of the evening at the Milton Keynes Bowl.

Interested?

If you are interested in joining R&C as a dancer, musician, or helper, contact

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