TRIBUTE TO PHILIP MERRILL

During the many years before local morris teams took hold in this country, the Country Dance and Song Society of America was the principal "keeper of the faith." In regular classes during the year in various centers around the country and at its annual summer sessions at Pinewoods Camp in Plymouth, Massachusetts, CDSSA taught morris and sword dancing and kept the spirit of the rituals alive.

One of the many important people during the "early years" who has continued to influence dancers and musicians was Philip Merrill, a dancer, teacher, and musician himself. Phil's involvement in morris and sword began in 1927 when he started learning about the dances and music at the Eastman School of Music.

Many dances and tunes later, he became Music Director of CDSSA using his piano, accordion, concertina, pipe & tabor, and mouth music to urge dancers and musicians on to greater heights. People whom he has inspired to dance and to play for dancing surely number in the thousands!

Phil is retiring this spring from his post as Music Director for the Country Dance and Song Society of America. The American Morris Newsletter salutes Philip Merrill for his years of tireless work and "play." We hope we will hear many more tunes from him in years to come!

TEAM NEWS

A feature of the American Morris Newsletter dependent on your letters, postcards, and telephone calls. Names of correspondents appear at the end of each club's news. A list of known clubs and groups dancing in the U.S. is on page 5.

Black Jokers' spring tour dates were still in the tentative stage when Bagman Jeff Howry wrote in February. In addition to some dates which were firm (see calendar), the Jokers "may do a week-long tour somewhere in the Northeast. We'll be trying to hook up with some other teams, but also hope to reach some 'virgin' territory where folks haven't seen much, if any, Morris." Any teams interested in dancing with the Jokers in June, contact Jeff at 617-366-1891, or write.

Jeff Howry, 26A Chestnut Street, Westboro, MA 01581

Bloomington Morris: Frank Hall writes that practice this winter has been difficult because of the coal strike. Spaces large enough for dancing have been closed after dark to conserve heat and electricity. Still, he hopes to "get together a full men's side for this year's morris activity." (Last year they lacked a few men but fielded a full women's side.)

Frank Hall, 1104 East 6th Street, Bloomington, IN 47401

Forest City Morris Men started dancing in September, 1977, in London, Ontario. Squire Alistair Brown, formerly of Green Fiddle Morris in Toronto, wrote that the team formed after he met John Gillett who had danced with the Shakespeare Morris
Men in Stratford, England. John serves as foreman for the team as they develop a repertoire based around Bampton, Headington, and Adderbury in morris and North Skelton in long sword. They have both men's and women's sides.

Alistair Brown, 9 Prospect Ave., London, Ontario N6B 3A4 CANADA

Green Fiddle Morris' Newsletter told of an historic event last fall: "On October 1st and 2nd, the entire York Cycle of Mystery Plays was performed at King's College Circle on the University of Toronto campus. This was a very exciting event: the first time in nearly 500 years that the entire cycle had been performed outdoors. We were invited to dance as a part of a Medieval fair that was scheduled in the centre of the circle." A persistent rain and cold weather complicated matters ("Adam and Eve shivered through the Garden of Eden") and eventually forced the pageant indoors on Saturday. Sunday was still cold, but mostly dry and the plays and dancing continued outdoors. "All in all it was an experience we will long remember." The newsletter also reported several other late fall tours, news of the Green Fiddle Feast, and the election of new officers. A record was surely set with their total of 16 officers including Squires David Parry and Kate Metaxas, Foremen Jamie Beaton and Margot Kearney, and Bagman Eileen Markwick.

Newsletter Editor: Judy Greenhill, 402 Palmerston Blvd., Toronto, Ontario
Bagman: Eileen Markwick, 141 Redpath Ave., Toronto, Ontario N4P 2K5 CANADA

Marlboro Morris & Sword reports progress in plans for the Third Marlboro Morris Ale. Twenty-four teams applied to attend the Ale of which there was space for sixteen. Those teams attending will be: Berkeley, Binghamton, Black Jokers, Fiddler's Reach, Forest City, Greenwich, Hearts of Oak, Moose Mountain, Pokingbrook, Ring o'Bells, Sourwood, Strong and Westerly. Marlboro's annual May Day celebration in the Town of Marlboro will take place on May 6 and 7 with the team dancing the two-mile stretch of South Road from the College to the town on Saturday, and at various "mances" outside of town on Sunday.

Tony Barrand, Box 51, Marlboro, VT 05344.

Muddy River Morris has expanded to the "nice, manageable number" of fourteen musicians and dancers. New officers elected recently were Robin Rogers, Squire; Cynthia Whear, Foreman; Cathy Mason, Bagman; and Diane Gregg, "Practice Runner" (to keep practices on schedule). During an active winter season, the team took its mummers play and rapper dance around to schools, homes, Quincy Market, and some local country dances. Spring touring began on April 1 in Cambridge with guests Hearts of Oak, and will continue through the season (see calendar).

Robin Rogers, 887 Bedford Road, Carlisle, MA 01741.

New Haven Morris & Sword started last November and had its first tour in early December on the Yale University campus and New Haven Green. Under the direction of Squire-Foreman David Lindsay (known as "squirt-forearm" to his team), the group meets weekly readiness itself for the spring. They have both men and women on the team and will probably have separate sides.

David Lindsay, 731 George St., New Haven, CT 06511.

Pokingbrook Morris & Sword opened its dancing season on March 17-18 at the Masonic Folk Festival. This was their third year at the festival. For the spring, the team is planning a number of short, local evening tours in the Poughkeepsie area in addition to dates shown on the calendar. Other teams are invited to join them on a two-day tour of Dutchess County, N.Y., over the June 10-11 weekend. Contact the team if you are interested.

Ed Bosson, Bouverie Lane, R.F. 1, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598.
Ring o' Bells: Spring dancing began on April 2 at Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx and will continue in and around New York City. Past events included a "highly successful tour of Grand Central Station and Penn Station in February with the New Towne Morris Men."

Jody Evans, 55 Perry Street, New York, NY 10014.

Westerly Morris Men and Mummers: The Westerly Nummers had a 30-minute show on Channel 36 Educational Television in Providence, R.I., this winter. The host interviewed Peter Leibert, director of the Nummers, and the men performed their play (Kirkby Lonsdale). At the annual Twelfth Night revels in Westerly, the Nummers were the hit of the evening with the Uckfuss play. With a newly-acquired Super 8 sound camera and projector, they are chronicling their outings for posterity.

George Utter, Bagman, 54 Elm Street, Westerly, RI 02891.

Woodford Morris Men: Jane Britton teaches a high school performing group in Versailles, Kentucky, which includes a morris side and rapper dance set as well as a country dance team. In lieu of written news, she sent three color photographs of the group performing in December, 1977. The Newsletter regrets being unable to reproduce them here.

Jane Britton, 2111 Lansill Dr. #A-1, Lexington, KY 40504.

(Is your team's news missing from the above list? Drop the editor a letter for July!)

GUEST EDITORIAL


Something has been bothering me about the Morris for some time now: namely the general laxity of standards of dance(ing) that has appeared. I'm not talking about different approaches, but just downright sloppiness.

I realize, of course, that Morris has its social side (especially touring), but it seems to me that the presentation of the dance must be primary! It's a matter of respect for the tradition and a knowledge of what you or, if you're a leader, your team can really present. I've never been an advocate of the rigid "up to the same centimeter in Half Gip" school: the Morris is capable of sustaining a wide range of self expression. What has disturbed me in the past few years is the spectacle of people so eager to 'dance out and do something different that they're specializing in a difficult tradition after only a few months of being together.

What I'd like to see is a lot more attention paid to the basics (the double and single steps, well-defined arm movements, etc.) and then have some sort of coherent team style molded from these individual accomplishments. To be specific, I think anyone who takes on the responsibility, however briefly, of leading a new team should contact an established group (Marlboro, Binghamton, Black Jokers, etc.) and ask to attend a few of their practices, not to bring back the latest Bradly variant, but to experience the kind of work and dedication involved.

I think that the great expansion of the Morris in the past several years is a marvellous thing: after all, it's what some of us have been working toward for a long time. However, I feel that this same growth has brought with it the problems I've talked about. Learning the dances should be a great part of the enjoyment of dancing Morris ... and I mean learning.

Let's have a moratorium on teams going out before they're ready and plunging into dances that are beyond them. Let's have a little less ego and a little more pride.

Arthur J. Cornelius

Postscript: Last summer I started jotting down ideas for an editorial on what seemed
to be a mad rush of groups to the street to perform morris dances. I never completed the editorial. This past winter a much more experienced dancer and teacher verbalized the same feelings that I had had. Arthur Cornelius has been dancing the Morris since 1951 and teaching for the Country Dance and Song Society (Boston Center and at Pinewoods Camp) since 1957. --FB

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Last fall I wrote to Morris Sunderland (a past Squire of the Morris Ring in England) and asked him several questions about Morris dancing and if I could share his answers with you. I asked if there is a trend in England among dancers to feel that the dances should stay in England, or that women should or should not dance Morris.

Morris Sunderland wrote back to me on December 12:

"I would like to make it quite clear that this is only my own view of the Morris as danced in the States. First, nothing but good can result from the dancing of English Traditional Dances in any part of the world as long as the persons dancing them have respect and the feeling for the tradition behind the dance. They belong to us all but we hold them in trust to pass them on as truthfully as we can.

"I personally do not mind women trying to dance the Morris, but because the public often do not understand that it is a ritual danced by men, displays by women in public places tend to weaken the tradition and may mean that in time it will be danced only by women."

"Even worse is the dancing of mixed teams, and I can see no need or justification for this practice. The place of women music players, as long as it is impossible to find a man to play for the men's team, is on the other hand justifiable as a stop gap arrangement."

Yours in dancing,
Morris Sunderland

"P.S. I do hope this is O.K. I am hoping to visit the States sometime and I would not like to have Morris persons waiting to tear me limb from limb as I arrive. My best wishes to all my many Morris friends in the U.S.A., and may they have good dancing and fellowship in 1978."

I have an article to submit in a week or two: a reaction to Mr. Sunderland's letter.

David Lindsay, New Haven, Conn.

INFLATION HITS AMERICAN MORRIS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is run on a shoestring budget by an unpaid editor. The subscription barely covers expenses for the first year of publication (there is no outside source of income). Printing costs have risen, meanwhile; so beginning May 1, 1978, all new subscriptions and renewals will increase 50c to $2.00 per year for four issues (team subscriptions will also increase 50c to $1.50 per person per year, minimum of six sent to one address). If the new rate will deter you from renewing your subscription, take advantage of the "grace" period and renew before May 1. In any case, you need your support in order to continue publication. --FB

**SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL MORRIS TEAM** **THEN SUBSCRIBE TO THE AMERICAN MORRIS NEWSLETTER**
An annual feature of the American Morris Newsletter in which all known clubs and groups using morris and/or sword dancing are listed. If readers find omissions, please inform the editor; a list of corrections will appear in the July issue.

TEAMS or CLUBS (arranged by State or Province)

British Columbia: Victoria MM, David Winn, 2142 Pentland Rd., Victoria, B.C. V8S 2W4

California: Berkeley Morris, Brad Foster, 1138 Francisco, Berkeley, CA 94702

Connecticut: New Haven Morris, David Lindsay, 95 Mansfield St., New Haven, CT 06511


Indiana: Bloomington Morris, Frank Hall, P.O. Box 9, Bloomington, IN 47401

Kentucky: Berea MM, John Ramsay, FFO 287, Berea, KY 40424

Woodford MM, Jane Britton, 2140 Garden Springs Dr., Lexington, KY 40504

Maine: Fiddler's Reach Morris, Paul Krakauske, 50 Gray St., Portland, ME 04102

Lord Hill MM, Greg Boardman, Fayette, ME

Oromo MM, Roger Cartwright, 42 Oak St., Orono, ME 04473

Troy Morris, Ken Kuenster, RDF 2, Lincoklnville, ME 04849

Manitoba: Village Green MM, John Trevenan, 392 Campbell St., Winnipeg, Man. R3N 187

Massachusetts: Berkshire MM, Peter Temple, c/o T.E.A., Harrisville, NH 03450

Black Jokers, Howard Lasnik, 22 Swan Pl., Arlington, MA 02174

Ha'Penny Morris, Jacqueline Chew, 50 Summit Ave. #2, Brookline, MA 02146

Muddy River Morris, Robin Rogers-Browne, 887 Bedford Rd, Carlisle 01741

New Cambridge MM, Mark Wilke, 90 College Ave., Somerville, MA 02144

Newtowne MM, Mark Wilke, 90 College Ave., Somerville, MA 02144

Northampton Morris, Susan Williams, Box 84, Petersham, MA 01366

Woods Hole MM, Bob Guillard, RDF 1, 11 County Rd., Buzzards Bay, MA 02532

Michigan: Ann Arbor Morris, Peggy Gerber, 808 E. Ann St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Minnesota: Minneapolis Traditional Morris, Stephen Parker, 434 N.E. 4th St., Mpls, MN 55413

New Hampshire: Moose Mountain Morris, Pete Becker, Rt.1 Box 134, Warren, NH 03279

New York: Binghamton MM, Peter Kloshy, 105 Chestnut St., Binghamton, NY 13905

Greenswich MM, Ed Durham, Spring Valley Road, Gainsville, NY 10962

Hearts of Oak Morris, D.Lawrence, 1281 Vestal Ave., Binghamton, NY 13902

Pokignbrook Morris, Larry Szdek, 110 Farmworth Dr., Slingerlands, NY 12159

Ring o' Bells, Jody Evans, 55 Perry St, New York, NY 10014

Willow Wood Morris, David Consant, 459 Auburn Ave., Buffalo, NY 14213

Ontario: Forest City Morris, Alistair Brown, 9 Prospect Ave., London, Ontario N6A 3A4

Green Fiddle Morris, Doug Gies, 11 Wanton Av. #9, Toronto M4W 2Y8

Eileen Markwick, Bgn., 834 Mt. Pleasant, Toronto M4P 2L3

Mississauga MM, Roger Hansell, 3307 Kings Mastng Dr., Mississauga, Ont.

Pennsylvania: Kingsessing MM, Tom SenfOr, 118 Monroese Av., Rosemont, PA 19010

Spruce Hill Morris, Lin Brodsky, 2012 Mt. Vernon, Philadelphia, PA 19101

Three Rivers Morris, Al Blank, 107 Buckingham Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15215

Rhode Island: Waterley MM, Peter Leibert, Rt.1 Box 191, Warwick, RI 02889

Tennessee: Sourwood Morris, Meg MacLeod, 4404 Mac lane, Knoxville, TN 37918

Texas: Men of Houston, John Vivian, 3804 Villanova, W. Univ. Pl., Houston, TX 77005

Vermont: Marlboro Morris & Sword, Tony Barrand, Box 51, Marlboro, VT 05344

Virginia: Albemarlle MM, Robert La Rae, 2221 Center Ave., Charlottesville, VA 22903

Bluemont Morris, Howard Bass, Skyfield, Box 139 Rt. 1, Bluemont, VA 22012

Wisconsin: Folklore Village MM, Bob Werner, 3810 Barlow Rd., Mt. Horeb 53572

Regional: Mountain Morris Men, Peter Rogers, 1538 Bluebird Ln., Lexington, KY 40503

Pinewoods MM, J.Martin Graets, 50 Moulton Rd., Arlington, MA 02174

OTHER GROUPS (C.D.S.S, demonstration groups, schools, etc.)

Calif.: Carol Dancey, Mary Judson, 562 E. Mendocino St., Altadena, CA 91001

San Diego C.D.S., Elaine Regeolson, 1351 Reed Ave. #1, San Diego, CA 92109
SPRING CALENDAR

(This is not a complete listing of morris dancing in North America. It includes dates sent to the Newsletter in time for publication. Check with teams before travelling!)

APRIL

7 
Ro'B: Greenwich Village, New York City


Minn: "West Bank," Minneapolis (Minn.) Folk Festival

14 
HaPo: Cambridge, Mass. (tent.)

21/22 


Ro'B: Central Park, New York City

28 
Poka: Catskill Villages, New York State

29 
GrFd: High Park, Toronto, Ontario

MAY

1 
Bing: Binghamton, N.Y.

Minn: Landmark Center, St. Paul, and Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis

Berk: Palo Alto and San Jose, California

Poka: Annapolis and Baltimore, Maryland

Lord: Lord Hill, Belgrade Lakes, Maine

Minn: St. Paul Festival of Nations, St. Paul, Minnesota

6 
Berk: Berkeley, California

King: "May Festival," Marlboro, Vermont

SpHlj: "Manor Houses," Marlboro, Vermont

Minn: "School Around Us" Festival, Kennabunkport, Maine

12 
GrFd: Locke Library and North Toronto Parks, Toronto, Ont.

Minn: "May Festival," Marlboro, Vermont

SpHlj: "Manor Houses," Marlboro, Vermont

Minn: "School Around Us" Festival, Kennabunkport, Maine

Ro'B: Friends of Riverside Tree Census, Riverside Park, New York City
(May 14, continued)

Marl: Alstead, N.H. area
Pokg: (place not definite)
13/14 Gwch: Phillipsburg Manor Festival, Tarrytown, N.Y.
21 Berk: San Francisco, Calif.
Ro'B: Street fair, Park Slope, Brooklyn, N.Y.
20/21 GrFd: Renaissance Fair, Toronto Islands, Ont.
26-29 Marl and others: Marlboro Morris Ale
27 Nhmp} Western Mass. tour
Troy

JUNE
3 GrFd: Fenelon Falls, Ont.
 Ro'B: Museum of Natural History, New York City (possibly June 4 instead)
4 GrFd} London, Ont.
10/11 Pokg: Dutchess County, N.Y. tour*
17/18 GrFd: Fort Elgin, Ont.
Marl: Clearwater Festival, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.
17 Nhmp: Toward Tomorrow Fair, Amherst, Mass.
23-25 GrFd: Mariposa Folk Festival, Toronto Islands, Ont.
24 Nhmp: Wedding in Green River, Vt.

JULY
8 Nhmp: County Fair, Petersham, Mass.

AUGUST
Ro'B: Medieval Festival, The Cloisters, New York City (no date given)

* other teams invited to tour; contact host team (see address list on page 5).

ABBREVIATIONS:
Berk = Berkeley Morris
Bing = Binghamton MM
BlJk = Black Jokers
ForC = Forest City MM
Gwch = Greenwich MM
GrFd = Green Fiddle Morris
Marl = Marlboro Morris
MdRv = Muddy River Morris
Nhmp = Northampton Morris
Pine = Pinewoods MM
Pokg = Pokingbrook Morris
Ro'B = Ring o' Bells
Sour = Sourwood Morris
Troy = Troy Morris

NEWSLETTER SPECIFICS

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R.D. #1, Box 9A, Putney, Vermont 05346.

Morris and sword clubs may subscribe at a lower group rate ($1.50 per person per year for a minimum of six copies of the Newsletter sent to one address).

Copy deadline is usually the last day of the month preceding publication. Next deadline is JUNE 30, 1978. Please send team news, articles, letters to the editor, subscriptions, renewals to the above address by that date.

OMISSION from team list on page 5:
West Virginia: The Claymont School, Barbara Koppel, c/o Claymont School, Charles Town, WV 25414