Mortimer's Morris AGM - 30th Sept 2012

Present: Kathryn B, Chris, Celia, Fran, Tanya, Sarah F, Linda, Keith, Sheila, Vicky, Claire, Lauren, Anthony, Ruth L-J, Pat, Gill F, Pete M, Peter O.

Apologies: John, Victoria, Liz, Hazel, Alice C, Alice D, Amelia, Alicia, Ruthie B-G, Mary, Judith, Trevor, Eilidh.

Reports: See attached – Applause for all retiring officers (+Keith as he got a bottle of wine anyway!)

Election of Officers:

SQUIRE: Vicky – nominated by Chris, Seconded by Linda

TREASURER: Celia – nominated by Sheila, seconded by Chris

PUBLICITY: Ruth L-J – nominated by Sheila, seconded by Keith

Secretary – Chris and Kathryn to continue

Band Leader – Keith to continue

Practice Leader – Sheila to continue

Non Committee Officers:

Kit – Gill to continue

Archives – Yvonne (paper) and John (electronic) to continue

PRACTICE SCHEDULE: Reviewed as per last year's AGM

PROS: day practices in particular tend to be very productive and a Sunday off as it gives more incentive to attend other practices.

CONS: some felt that we should practice on the week off as they may not be able to attend the day practice.

There was a suggestion that we only have a week off during the Months that there are 5 weeks.

It was voted that we continue to with current schedule with flexibility to day practices/weeks off as necessary. All in favour with 1 abstention

ACTION: Committee to arrange practices at next committee meeting.

REPERTOIRE: Sheila – as we do a lot (15) of dances, she is loathed to drop any but does not want to introduce a new dance year and is just concerned that to concentrate on current dances may get boring. Linda disagreed with the boredom element and stressed the importance of maintaining high standards of dance.

It was agreed that we continue with all dances and perfect those, possibly with a selection of 'premier' dances which can be relied on to provide consistently high standards.

Regarding Seven Up – it was suggested that the chorus may be adapted as it was difficult to maintain its high momentum. It was strongly felt that the chorus is 'staggered' between dancers in order to allow a 'rest' and that to change the chorus for this reason would mean to drop Mortimer's high standard and style and therefore the dance remains the same. If any member has a 'fitness' issue with any dance, then they should not put

themselves forward to dance it out until they are able and concentrate on dances that they are able to do.

TUNES: It was discussed that some of the older dances may benefit from new tunes; Keith suggested that some tunes can be amalgamated, as in multiple tunes for dances such as Walton's Parade, which was agreed.

ACTION: Keith and band to put new combinations together, though it was not discussed which dances in particular these would be for.

MORTIMER'S WEEKEND of DANCE: Thanks to Tanya for producing a report/feedback which was previously disseminated to the side. It was agreed that the weekend was a great success with fabulous feedback from members of Mortimer's and our guests. Tanya's report will be used for reference when organising future events.

Sheila led thanks to whole of organising committee.

Use of money left over from the weekend will be decided by the committee at the next meeting.

BANK BALANCES: As evident in Fran's treasurers report, both the current and deposit accounts are looking very 'healthy' and wondered what to do with it all. Some suggestions:

- £500 towards Mortimer's Christmas party – as all side would benefit
- Keep accounts looking 'healthy' to subsidise future events
- A radio microphone for Practice Leader to use during practices
- Decent CD/MP3 player to be purchased for practices when there is no band.

ACTION: *Vicky* to discuss with Bob Rushton regarding appropriate radio mic with headset. *Anthony* to also bring one to the next day practice

KIT:

Skirts: Considered by some to be too long and 'dated' and let down the side. Yvonne will bring 'swirly' skirts to the next practice to be looked at.

ACTION: Sheila, Yvonne and Gill to work together and come up with a prototype.

Waistcoats: There is a shortage of waistcoats. There is a set of front panels that can be sewn into a new waistcoat. There are also members of the side that do not dance out very often who have them.

ACTION: Committee to discuss allocation of these.

Money for Kit: there are 2 members of the side who have kit that hasn't been paid for (as per Mortimer's Handbook)

ACTION: Committee to discuss this.

Feather hair adornments: It was suggested that they were not kit, and sometimes did not match any colours in kit and detracted from the simplicity and effect of the kit. It was argued that there is nothing in the constitution to say these could not be worn.

Buttons on skirts: As opposed to buttons on waistcoats should be the same on all skirts. This may however change with the advent of new skirts.

STICKS AND BANNERS: New sticks have the gold stripes peeling off.

ACTION: Chris to take them home and re-do them.

Vicky has done a lot of work on the banner, washed it, tidied it up and put it on a new holder. It has yet to be 'wind' tested! She also plans to add new ribbons etc. and it should be easier to then carry and dismantle.

WEBSITE: Martin's suggestions:

- More links to other sites will provide a higher viewer ranking on search engines.
- Photos/videos etc. – will be better on Facebook
- Contact us – is not only for outlook as it was felt that it was but other providers don't allow it due to default.

It was agreed that there is a lot of work to do in this.

ACTION: Tanya, Keith and Anthony to get together to discuss what work needs doing.

CHRISTMAS PARTY: We have not had a proper Christmas party for some time, tending to use the Vic at Beeston in favour of an evening party. John has volunteered the use of Valley Hall for this. Leading up to Christmas was felt to be a difficult time for the whole side to get together.It was agreed therefore that we have a (11th night leading into 12th night!) party on **Saturday 5th January.** Theme to be decided. Space for sleepers and the odd caravan.

PERFORMANCES: Sheila suggested putting together more of a 'show' package, e.g. at ceilidh spots, dancing on to a non-morris tune i.e. We Will Rock You.

ACTION: All team members to have a think and give Sheila suggestions.

During dance outs, dancing off should mean dancing off and not stopping half way.

ACTION: Sheila to address this along with calling at practice.

The band often play French tunes during an interlude in dancing and it was discussed whether dancers could join it too. It was decided that only if it was the end of a set as if a dancer was dancing it preventing the next set being properly organised and then walking on often sloppy.

POSITIONS: When dancing out, some members suggested that only the strongest dancers should be at the front and the back, when the Squire/Practice Leader feels that they are capable, length of time within the side is irrelevant, and this is pertinent especially at prestigious events.

It was pointed out that dancers learn positions in practice at the front and therefore that is where they are comfortable dancing out.

ACTION: Vicky and Sheila to consider this for practices and dance outs.

ANNOUNCERS: Murray has been happy to take this role on but does not want to be in kit. Chris L-J is happy to take this on and as he has been playing with the band, he would be in kit. Murray is fine with this but will do it if required.

Other members felt that the announcer should be in kit to show that they are with the side.

PARTNER TICKETS at FESTIVALS: There have been a couple of issues this year regarding festival tickets and partners.

Tanya explained that it is a misconception that it does not affect the festivals to give away partner tickets, as they only have a certain number of tickets in the first place. If partner tickets are given, and not utilised at concerts etc., then that is income they have lost to the public who would have paid to attend said concert. The number of tickets given away DOES influence which teams are invited.

Tanya also informed us that the Association of Festival Organisers (AFO) want this on the agenda at their next meeting

Linda stated that she did not feel that as a side we would 'black listed' from festivals and that our previous lull in festival invitations was due to poorer standards.

It was decided that with regards to partner tickets at festivals, each would be decided on an individual basis.

GAZEBO: 'Event' tent, it was decided that as we have money available, one should be purchased and trialled.

Any Other Business:

Keith – may not be at the next day practice but there are other band members able to attend.

Keith – would like to see social dances done at practice to enable more team members to engage and include the public/audiences at social events

Chris – informed all about the next NOMADS event – anyone interested to speak to Chris.Fran – is having a (not) 60th Birthday dance on Saturday 3rd November at Gunthorpe Village Hall, David's Lane, NG14 7EW at 7-11pm. This is a Bring your own drinks and food to share in a pot luck supper. Dave Morton is calling square dances from 8.30pm.

Alice C – requested that when responding to emails to not 'reply all' as it clogs up inboxes.

A minutes silence was held in memory of Paul and remembrance of Mike.

ATTACHMENTS:

SQUIRE'S REPORT

I would like to thank everyone for their efforts and commitment this year. We have had a very successful year with lots of favourable comments about our performances.

Firstly, I would like to thank all the officers for their hard work:

- To Sheila for once again running our practices, for all the preparation that she does in making the practices interesting and varied, to get us to performance standard and iron out our weaknesses and inconsistencies.

For her brilliance in teaching, whether a new dance for all or an existing dance to new dancers. I really hope that she can continue as practice leader for another year.

- To Keith as Band Leader for his incredible commitment to Mortimers and his work with the band in arranging extra practices to get everyone up to speed with the tunes and changes.
- To Frances for being an extremely efficient and uncomplaining Treasurer for the past 2 years.
- And to Chris, Kathryn and Sarah for their dogged hard work as Secretaries and Publicity officer.

Yet again this year has been marred by sadness, in the loss of another band member, Paul Cooper. We don't expect to have to go to funerals of fellow team members, yet we have done so twice now in the past 2 years. Paul and Mike will always be remembered by Mortimers. Some of us have also suffered personal bereavements this year with the loss of parents and grandparents. A sad year.

Looking back it has been an excellent season, one of great change, eg, a new practice venue; the first women to play in the band; the first under 18 year-olds to join us; and the introduction of a radical revision to our practice schedule to bring in a once a month daytime practice to enable distance members to join or continue with us. I think this has been a great success. It has meant that people have been able to come to practice with us from as far afield as London, Lancashire, Yorkshire and the West Midlands and I do hope it will continue.

We had a very fruitful taster day last Autumn and from that and later sessions, we have gained 9 new members in Claire, Lauren, Ed, Victoria, Amelia, Ruth, Emma, Hannah and Eilidh, with the expectation of more new people on the verge of joining us – fantastic! All this after the previous year when we were worried about falling numbers!

Particular highlights of this season for me were:

- Our weekend of dance in June – what an amazing weekend that was, enjoyed by us all and our guests. Thanks again to all the committee for their brilliant organisation in preparing for it and to everyone else for their hard work over the event.
- Braunston boat festival – a low key affair, but great fun and a fabulous trip sitting on top of Liz's John's boat up the canal playing and singing.
- The other main highlight was Sidmouth, We were absolutely fantastic! I was so proud of us. We had some very favourable comments on our performances, not least of all from the festival director himself; and above all we had fun, we did what Mortimers do best and partied and dressed up and sang and danced and played and laughed and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves!

Having said all that, I still feel that there is room for improvement in our dancing standards. I know I bang on every year about high knees, high kicks in choruses, straight lines and sharp turns, but it is these very things that contribute to the Mortimer's ethos - exuberance, energy and precision. Apart from dancers who have injuries or who are new, there really is no excuse for sloppiness, half-hearted polkas, capers and kicks, not looking up to the top of the set or across at partners. This should be second nature to those of us with experience, yet time

and time again I look around and see these things happening with some (not all) dancers (I have more to say on this in an agenda item). As successful as we have been this season, there is still much work to be done to improve on our standards and personally I would like to have continued partnering Sheila for another year to crack this. However, I have done my two years in office and I am aware that a few people would like a change from me, so I will stand down, unless of course no-one else wants to take up the mantle...

Squire's Award

Last year I introduced a new thing to the AGM – the Squire's Award. I wanted it go to someone whom the Squire thinks is worthy of special mention for specific thanks for their efforts or achievements or maybe for overcoming difficulties, or whatever, over the season. Well I have made a bit of a rod for my own back by awarding it last year to Chris for her outstanding support and commitment to Mortimers as this award could so easily go back to her or to a good 4 or 5 others for the same reason, so this year I have decided to give the award to a relatively newcomer to the side, for the way this person has fitted in with such ease and confidence, it is hard to believe that there was once a time when they were not a part of us. For what they have brought to side in their short time with us, for their sheer talent and endeavour (I believe they are a specific future officer in the making) and not least of all for their lovely personality and for how they have fitted in so well in socially. This year my award goes to Claire!

Treasurer's Report

NOTES ON THE ACCOUNTS FOR MORTIMER'S MORRIS FOR THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 2012

As treasurer I would like to explain the following points:

In the previous year, ended September 2011, we made a trading loss of £244.75 which is shown in red.

(We had enough money to cover this in the current account)

This year we have recovered that money and turned it into a profit of £241.24 through various ways including:

increased membership

paying less for hiring the hall for practices

recovering a late payment from the Light Night Festival of 2011

and dancing for Derby folk festival and Braunston boat fest

(we haven't received payment from the Sowerby Bridge folks yet)

Looking further down the the balance sheet please note that Mortimer's weekend also made a profit - £488.38

This gives us healthy bank balances of over £1000 in the current account and another £1000 in the deposit account.

Possibly this is the time to ask members for their ideas on what to do with this money.

Some suggestions below:

(a) put more into the deposit account

(b) leave as a starter for another occasion/weekend/day of dance

(c) use it for various things that need updating: eg gazebo, kit, flag, sticks

(d) another other suggestions

I might add some more to the above!

Fran

NB. Accounts attached separately.

Publicity Officer's Report

Much of my activity this season was a repeat of last year - targeting desired festivals with e.flyers, emailing our promotional information and photos to festivals for their programmes and distributing leaflets at dance outs. Our leaflets also went to Eastwood Festival Organisers Conference.

I've been frustrated when the information or photos I've sent have not been used. Also, for our own weekend I contacted the local paper to let them know where & when etc and they didn't turn up. Was it the word Morris or was it because of the jubilee weekend?

For future consideration;

I am aware that the wording on our leaflets needs updating particularly concerning the band

We also have lots of lovely new photos of new members that could be used.

JG has suggested new t.shirts for the side bearing my logo as seen on the leaflets - Mortimer's Morris ... a life with clogs on.

Finally, it doesn't matter how eye-catching the leaflet or photo, the most effective publicity for Mortimer's is how we dance, play and conduct ourselves in public.

Thanks all for a great dancing year.
Sarah.

Secretarys' report Sept 2012

Well our first year as joint secretaries seems to have gone quite well – Kathryn doing all the liasing with organisers of events, receiving invitations and replying, and doing all the dreaded minutes at meetings etc, and of course the contact meetings at the end of practice, while Chris does the online stuff – newsletters, ticksheets, and contact lists – with a not insignificant amount of help along the way from Tanya – thanks for that Tanya!

We hope it's not confusing you all too much copying us both in to any email replies etc. to the secretary – it helps us keep in touch with what's occuring!

This year we have received 32 invitations, plus 3 more international ones – one to New Zealand at new year, and 2 general ones for the mediterranean and the more eastern european area. 12 clashed with other events so were declined.
Of the remaining 20 we accepted 13 bookings (65%), comprising:
5 festivals – Derby, Shepley, Braunston, Sidmouth and Shrewsbury.
5 local bookings – Victoria at Beeston, Plough Sunday, Vat & Fiddle with Anstey, Gate to Southwell and the post-Olympic Torch dance with Dolphin in Nottingham.
2 weekends of dance – Berkshire Bedlams and our own in Newark
1 other – Sowerby Bridge Rushbearing.
We did of course also dance at Paul's funeral on 18th June, though we've not counted this as a booking more an honour.

It's disappointing that the number of accepted invitations has declined again – 25 in 2010, 14 in 2011 and only 13 this year, but we did do a week long festival at Sidmouth and Shrewsbury was a long weekend too. We also found time to organise our own weekend – quite a task and congratulations should go to us all for it's success, but more on that later in the agenda. It felt like a very busy year, though it started very late, with Shepley at the end of May. This will in part have been due to the efforts of organising our weekend for 3rd June.

2 of our events were paid - £200 received from Braunston (though we only asked for £100) they were so pleased with us, and £50 still to come from Sowerby Bridge.

We've already had 10 invitations for the next 12 months, two of which are on the same weekend!
We've accepted the Biggest Ceilidh Band in the world booking at Kelham Island on 21st October , in memory of Mike Steel and another Grenoside member, Strawbear at Whittlesey on 12th January, and Chippenham Festival 24-27th May.
The 2 clashing events are on the 21st-23rd June, Vale of Evesham festival, and Dolphin's Ring Meet which they would like us to join them at, on on Sunday 23rd. We'll be sending a tick-sheet out for you to state your availability and preferences in the coming week. We've been invited again to Braunston Historic Boats festival, which this year paid us £200 and was great fun.
We were also asked to consider next year as we couldn't make it this year to Holmfirth Festival 11-12th May, and Ironmen and Severn Guilder's weekend 13-15th September.
The other interesting invitation is to the international Eisteddfod at Llangollen 9-14th July, which could be a departure from our normal type of events if we were interested. Apparently Kingsmen did it last year and were placed quite highly.

We're circulating a contact list during the meeting. Could everyone initial their entry to confirm the details, or change / add them as necessary please?

We've had 3 committee meetings, the minutes of which can be accessed from the website, along with AGM minutes and contact lists.

The website has been updated to now show the new practice venue and the time and place of the next practice. We will need to decide the dates of the next practice later in the meeting, which is why this isn't currently displayed.
The password has been changed – do you all know the new one? Website appears later on the agenda.

Think that's all folks!

Hopefully you're all happy with the joint secretarial arrangement which we will be happy to continue for another year.

Chris and Kathryn.

Band Organiser's Report, Sept. 2012.

I may touch on several subjects for which I leave the more detailed discussions as they appear later in the Agenda .

Thanks for the Minutes Silence , remembering our sad losses :
Paul (2012) **, and Mike** (2011) .

Mike 's ashes / St. Chartier . I didn't go to France this year ;
- Brenda says no rush , whenever next time I go .

Onwards and Upwards *!* :

Facebook , Recruitment sessions , and Sunday Daytime practices have all been useful in attracting new members **:**

From last year 's Open session the Band (and all the dancers I believe) are very pleased to welcome **Claire and Lauren ,**
and to welcome **Chris** joining the side during the year's events - it 's excellent to have a different instrument - *and in Chris a sympathetic player* - of the Dharbuka hand-drum .

Still would like one or two reed -wind instr.s , and to try out ***any other different*** instr.s (**Anthony** has been gallantly trying out several types) , plus possibly a replacement guitarist ,
and of course we need lots more hurdy-gurdies
to keep up with the melodeon-count !

The Facebook - and Website - should reflect this not only now , but also for the fore-see-able future ; (I did send such a paragraph to Linda for the Facebook page) .

Besides playing the Dharbuka hand-drum / possibly other drums , Chris is prepared also to have a go at the " **Barking** " / Announcing , which would be great , allowing me the time ***I need*** to sort out my H-G and dance cards and to co-ordinate with the dance-leader and the rest of the band .

Personally , I 'm in no way suitable for the Barking / Announcing role
(only doing it when no-one else will take it on) ,
and I have discussed Chris 's offer with Murray , who is quite happy to be a
" Reserve Barker " for the events for which Chris (should he fill the position admirably) is unable to present .
However , Chris has yet to be seen / heard in this role ;
I 've suggested that the day at The Victoria , Beeston would be a good place to give it a go , being mostly other local dance sides .

Besides the **15** Mortimers dance-out events , and **32 +** Mortimers practices
(I missed a few weeks off my list) ,
the band have had 7 evening practices of their own (8 last year) .
Presently arranging some more for this winter season .

During Sunday practices , use of the side-room = OK , but only when no " canned " music being played in the main hall .
However , the band can only properly explore useful work at band-only evening practices .

Non-the-less , it would be useful to update the recordings of all dance tunes ,
including several new ones ,
firstly to update the **audio on the website** ,
(I also need to update the A's and B's lists)

secondly so that a source of tunes is available (on CD , Mp3 or whatever) should the dancers ever be wanting to practise when no lead musicians are available ; it ***could*** happen .

" *The times they are a-changing* ……. "

Mortimers Style Up-Dates :
We will be looking at the possibility of buying a new-style gazebo (to be discussed later) , and I think Vicky is up-dating the processional banner ,
or at least , the method of displaying it ,
and the dancers are reviewing their kit /

Plus ...several of us have been talking about
up-dating the image for the band ,
now that the present image and clothing are of disparate / various styles , wearing out and looking jaded **:**

The new style should be such that it is attractive to prospective younger / newer members whilst still being modish for older members ;
it would need to be at reasonably low cost for all income levels to be able to afford it , and widely accessible .
All ideas considered .
A semi-military-chic style has been proposed already .
We can discuss this at band practices (yet to be arranged) .

Although I have another year in post , anyone can take over now if they particularly want to ;
I 'd have no problem with that .
I definitely will want to hand over to some-one else next year , if not sooner .

Keith . Sept. 2012.