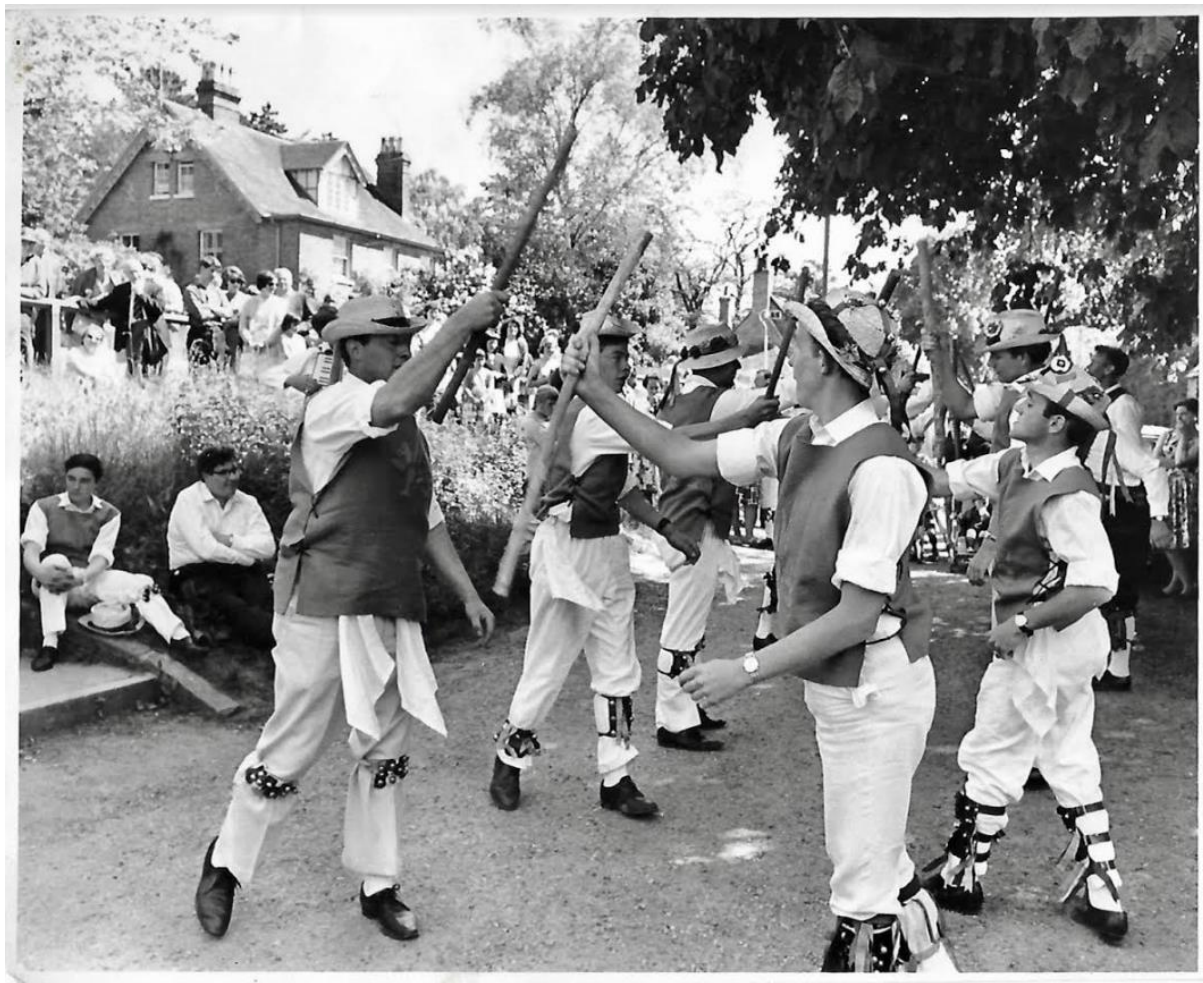


# **The Ian Hermon Collection**

Ian, one of The Originals, has presented the side with a collection of photographs and other memorabilia from the early days of Icknield Way



1996: Goring - Seated Colin Pearce, Jim Lyne. Dancing- left front to back Reg Hart, Bryan Wickham, Graham Pearce, right front to back Ian Hermon, Dickie Evans, ?



1966: IW dormobile outside The Cottage, Denchworth Rd



1966: Barn dance at Buckland Village Hall

Above left Graham Pearce, right Ian Hermon

Below left Ian Hermon, centre Graham Pearce, right Reg Hart







Report in local paper

Left to right- Tony Paddock, Graham Pearce, Bob Hart, Ian Hermon, Colin Pearce, Brian (Dickie) Evans, Fool is Derek Hunt



1967: left to right – Colin Pearce, Bryan Wickham, Alan Glaysher, Tony Archer, Brian (Dickie) Evans, Tony Wickham, Tony Paddock, Ian Hermon, Graham Pearce



1967: Left to right- back row Tony Archer, Bryan Wickham, Bob Hart, Graham Pearce, Ian Hermon, Tony Wickham: front row Colin Pearce, Alan Glaysher, Brian (Dickie) Evans



1969 Whit Monday: Ian Hermon in full flight (Joe Marns playing)



# There's nothing fluffy about these Morris men from Wantage

WITH handkerchiefs flopping and bells on their knees, the Morris dancers leap out in early summer like seasonal flowers.

And almost, some people think, as prettily.

This week and next there could be, according to the English Folk Dance and Song Society, as many as 500 teams, hopping and prancing in their colourful costumes on English village greens.

They are often to be found near a pub because dancing the "Trunkles," "Swaggering Boney," "Step and Fetch Her" and "Lumps of Plum Pudding," to name but a few, can be thirsty work.

But is it a man's work? Well, women are not considered sufficiently magical to take part.

Morris dancing is associated throughout the centuries with fertility and virility. It is not surprising that Women's Lib has made an impact on this lively rite in recent centuries.

## Fluffy

There have been a few women's sides who have performed what the folk experts call "fluffy Morris." But it is generally left to men to master the intricacies of such steps as the beetle crusher, hockeback, crossback and twizzle.

There is certainly nothing fluffy about the Icknield Way Morris Men, a seven-year-old side comprised of former pupils, now mostly in their mid-twenties, of Icknield Secondary County School, Wantage.

Although one member is 46, and another a schoolboy of 16.

The former deputy head of the school, Miss Mary Shunn, now retired, has passed on her enthusiasm for folk and barn dancing to her old pupils. She used to take dancing classes even during lunch hours.

So most of the Icknield Way dancers learned their first steps as schoolboys. A few of them had a chat in a pub one evening and talked over the idea of taking to the road.

That is how their side began. And they are still open to recruit a few more fit men.

The leader is called "the squire." Ian Hermon, a 26-year-old estate agent, and an ex-squire himself, recalling the pagan origins of Morris dancing, described the grim fate that was the destiny of another key man, the fool.

"Going back, they used to torment the fool and get him drunk. Then, at the end of the day, they ran their swords through him."



Members of the Icknield Morris Men at their practice night at the VC Gallery, Wantage.

The present Icknield fool, Ian Castle, 21, a hairdresser, of East Hendred, has won cups for old time dancing and has no intention of meeting the same end.

## Fool

"I get out there and give them as good as they give me," he said.

And he has to perform a special fool's dance, to give the rest of the side a break. He also mixes with the audience and belts them with an inflated pig's bladder, another Morris tradition.

The current squire, Tony Paddock, a 24-year-old bricklayer's foreman, has special duties while dancing with his team.

"I call out 'foot up, half-jip or half-hay,'" he said.

These and other calls are obeyed by his dancers who go through whatever movements the dance demands. And the effects can be striking.

But Morris dancers have their critics.

"The younger generation think we're a load of pansies with bells on," said the squire.

"They don't know what they're missing."

Any other voluntary organisation has its hon. secretary. The Morris

dancers each pay £1 subscription to their bagman, Colin Pearce, a 27-year-old assembly worker who builds sports cars at Abingdon.

His workmates pulled his leg about Morris dancing, but he and another assembly line worker, also a Morris dancer found a way of silencing them. They danced without music during a tea-break, against a background of incomplete MGs.

"We got two pieces of muttoncloth and gave a demonstration," the bagman said. "They could see that Morris dancing is tougher than they thought."

That shut them up.

The man who wears a battered top hat and makes the Icknield men's music is a councillor, 46-year-old Joe Marns, a Londoner by origin and a librarian at Harwell.

Mr Marns, 46, learned the Morris music from Miss Shunn.

"She had a collection. I borrowed them, copied them and learned them. It was a fair amount of homework."

He knows about 40 tunes — two of his favourites are "Black Joke" and "Queen's Delight."

The mystery of why some men go Morris dancing can be explained.

"Some people go fishing or playing tennis," Mr Marns said. "This is a unique ac-

much of the refuse was put into a trailer by the traders, one of whom then took it away for the council to dispose of.

## Man collapses and dies

Mr Ivor William Wordley, 60, of White House, Bishop's Cannings, near Devizes, collapsed and died in a garden shed at his home last Wednesday night.



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1974: Downs School

Above left to right Bob Hart, Graham Pearce, Brian (Dickie) Evans, Alan Glaysher, Ian Hermon

Below left to right Bob hart, Tony Paddock, Ian Hermon, Alan Glaysher





# The Old Boys who became the new Morris Men

IT IS STRANGE how many since the original War Morris Men gave their first public display in the quiet village of Chalfont.

The performance was a large affair, and it was held in the village hall, with the Morris Men, some of whom were in their 70s and 80s, giving a display of their art.

The Morris Men, who are now in their 70s and 80s, are a mix of old and new. Some have been dancing since they were young, while others have taken up the art in later life.

There have, of course, been a few women's sides, but these are not the Morris Men. They are a different tradition, and their costumes are different.

The Morris Men, who are now in their 70s and 80s, are a mix of old and new. Some have been dancing since they were young, while others have taken up the art in later life.

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year old Tony Haddock, a local boy, is one of the new Morris Men.

He has spent some time dancing with his team.

"I can't tell you how much I love it," he says. "There are some who are older than I am, but they are still dancing."

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SCOPE





## *Dancing along the gallery*



**Do you  
remember  
when..?**

REMEMBER when Ian Hermon (left), who is now in charge of the Fire Brigade at Wantage, and Tony Paddock, along with other members of the Icknield Way Morris Men, performed in the old Victoria Cross Gallery.

W.G. & H 18/11/82

Nostalgia Article 1982



1960s Following the IW van up Newbury St.

Left to right – Bob Hart, Brian (Dickie) Evans, Colin Pierce, Joyce Evans (later Hermon), Ian Hermon, Bryan Wickham



Icknield School's Longsword Dancers