

IAN STEWART



**DOLPHIN MORRIS MAN
1968 - 2008 AND STILL GOING STRONG
CONGRATULATIONS**



The above caricature was drawn by Mick Scott in 2008 to celebrate Ian Stewart's 40 years as a Dolphin Morris Man

My Journey to Being a Dolphin

This is Ian Stewart's memories of his rise from his Glasgow roots, his musical and singing influences and achievements, his involvement with folk music at all levels and his eventual migration to England in search of work. His music continued to be a major influence in his life and that eventually led him to become a Dolphin Morris Dancer, musician, foreman and Squire and the longest serving member of the side. Those memories have been embellished where possible with the thoughts of a few people who know him. Ian was and remains an amazingly focussed individual and while all around him fall apart at the seams, throw their toys out of the pram and have their tantrums, he continues with his mission to keep the ship on an even keel and on a level course.



Ian's story begins: 'Might as well start at the beginning. I was born in 1940 in Glasgow, but when I was about two my parents moved to a small town called Carluke, just about where the Scottish coal-mining area meets farmland, and that's where I was brought up.

In those days, the Scottish Home Service on the "wireless" had some kind of traditional music on every evening of the week: country dance music, Scots songs, Gaelic songs, fiddle music, pipe band music, solo piping. Even as a very young kid, I just lapped it all up. My father was quite a good classical pianist, and my mother had played the fiddle at one time, but neither was at all

interested in folk music. So I guess my own enthusiasm for traditional music was just "wired in".

The local pipe band - the Carluke Caledonia - used to march around the town from time to time, passing the collecting-box around of course. When I heard them coming up the road, I used to go out and run along the road after them, so I could hear the music as long as possible. (I didn't know it at that time, but about 10 years later I'd be playing in the band).

When I was seven, my mother sent me to piano lessons. The piano teacher was "one of the old school". As far as he was concerned, his job was to teach me the names of the dots and all the funny signs that turn up on a page of music, and then make sure that when I played it I made as few mistakes as possible. The idea that anybody might possibly *enjoy* playing music had never crossed his mind. After a few years of this, I managed to get out of it, pleading pressure of schoolwork. But Willie Marr's teaching at least left me with the ability to "read the dots".

When I was about 14, I went off on my own to the Edinburgh Festival to hear the great Traveller singer Jeannie Robertson giving a concert. That's still one of my most treasured memories. Jeannie sang big ballads all evening. She just stood on the stage absolutely still and expressionless, and when she opened her mouth and started singing, all the windows in the hall rattled. No showbiz, no drama, just sincere singing. I thought then, "this is what traditional singing is all about", and I still think so.



Left: Jeannie Robertson

Below: The other lads looking for women to knock off with, while Ian practices on his chanter alone

Some time when I was about 15 or 16, I decided I'd like to play an instrument that I enjoyed playing, and the obvious choice was the bagpipes. So I went down town and joined the "Carluke Cally". My first teacher was the Pipe-Major of the band, and I was a keen learner. While other lads were out learning how to knock off with the women, I was sitting at home practising the bagpipe chanter - I used to practise between one and two hours every night.



After about six months, and a lot of nasty howling and wailing noises as I learned to keep the pipes going, I got to play out with the band. So that was the first time I performed with a group in public, collecting for money. I got to be one of the best pipers in the band, and for that reason they chose me to be the lone piper who played the "Flowers of the Forest" on Armistice Day one year. So that was the first time I ever performed an instrument solo in public.

Left: Ian demonstrates Floo'ers to a packed house at The Star, West Leake in 2006

I remember not being nervous, because "Floo'ers" is a very slow tune, so you have plenty of time to think what the next note is going to be. In fact my main memory is of being surprised how warm a garment the kilt is in very cold weather.

Right: Artists impression by someone who had never seen Ian





Above: Lonnie Donegan in the 1950's

By this time I was at school in Glasgow, and very conveniently, the College of Piping was just a couple of blocks down the road. So I became a student there, and they taught me solo piping while I still kept on playing with the Carluke band. When I was 17, I won the Scottish Schools Championship for solo playing of the March, strathspey and reel.

All this was before the "folk revival" started in Britain. In fact there was no need for a folk revival in Scotland, since folk music had never been away. However, some time around 1954, a guy called Lonnie Donegan had started up what he called "skiffle music".

This became a very popular kind of "do-it-yourself music", because to play it you only needed to be able to do three open-string chords on a guitar.

The BBC grabbed onto this, and every Saturday morning there was a program called "Skiffle Club", which I listened to riveted. *[The programme 'Saturday Skiffle Club' was allocated a weekly budget of £55 and it started its run on 1st June 1957 between 10 and 10.30am]*

At first the skiffle people mostly did cover versions of blues and folk numbers that had been done by the old American musicians like Leadbelly. But it wasn't long before some of the skiffle groups, like the Black Diamonds, realised that British folksongs could be done in skiffle style as well and I think that was where the "folk revival" mainly started. *[Saturday Skiffle Club was popular but the BBC's management disliked the American bias. "Too many American work songs" said one BBC executive, "Doesn't anybody know any British work songs?"]*

I think Donegan was one of the most important influences in bringing folk music back into the public eye in Britain, and he hasn't had enough credit for that *[The programme came under internal criticism for going over budget. For the first quarter of 1958, the show was £31 10s over and for the second, horror of horrors, £43 16s! No more Lonnie Donegan that's for sure. You save money by hiring a solo instrumentalist for 7 guineas]*

Myself and three other guys at school decided we'd form our own skiffle group, which we called the Mad Hatters. (And on stage we all wore flat hats - nothing new under the sun!) I got myself a cheapo guitar, the other singer also had a guitar, plus we had a tea-chest bass and a one-drum kit. Our first (unpaid) gig was at the school concert. So that was the first time I ever performed folk music with a guitar in public. I led on "The Bonny Lass o' Fyvie", and the next number was "Peggy Sue" done in the style of Buddy Holly.

By this time (about 1957), the "folk revival" had kicked off, and there was a thriving folk club in Glasgow. One of my mates from the skiffle group and myself used to go along there and play as floor singers - so that was the first time I ever sang in a folk club.



We did everything from Scottish folksongs to a very neat duo version of "San Francisco Bay Blues", trying our best to sound like Ramblin' Jack Elliott.

Left: *Ramblin' Jack Elliott*

In 1958, off I went to University. There was a very lively folk club running there, called the Heritage Society. They ran guest nights, which were pretty much like a standard night in any folk club, with a guest singer, and also ran "song sessions", that were more like the kind of sing-around that used to be held in the 'Brickies' in Leicester. The Heritage Society had a rule that you never repeated the same song twice at song sessions - so that was a good incentive to keep on learning new songs. There were some really talented singers and players in Heritage, and a lot of the songs I sing nowadays were learned from people there. There was no rule that you did the songs of any one country, but it was expected that you stuck to real folk music. So there was one singer from Israel who sang quite a few Cockney songs (well, he'd lived in London, which was where he'd learned them), as well as songs in Hebrew. Another was the son of a well-known collector of African songs and did all kinds of African styles on the guitar, though he himself was white. Most of us stuck to the songs of the country we came from, and that included Nigerians and Indian singers. A real great mix.

After I'd been around for a while, I got to be President of the Heritage, so that was the first time I ever ran a folk club. At the same time I was President of the Piping Society, which had the distinction of being the smallest Society in the University (it had four members, including me).

On one or two occasions, some of us who were regular singers in Heritage went out on paid bookings - the first one I remember was in Harlow New Town, of all places. So that was me started as a semi-pro singer. (I "did the clubs" from that time on, and was doing quite regular gigs and tours for the following 20 years or so. Some time about 1980, I just got tired of doing all the travelling, and gave up semi-pro work.)



Looking back on it, my time at University saw quite a lot of "might-have-beens" and near-misses, which if things had happened differently might have made a lot of difference to my "journey to being a Dolphin". One of my tutors was Kenworthy Schofield, who was one of the first Squires of the Ring, but I didn't know that at the time and had never heard of the Ring. I got to University in 1958, while William Kimber was still living just a few miles up the road in Headington Quarry, but I'd never heard of him either and I never heard Kimber playing, nor saw HQMM dancing, while I was in Oxford.

Coincidentally Kimber apparently never made any mention of Ian Stewart.

I did go several times to the ceilidhs that were held in the hall at the back of the Masons Arms in Headington, run by Jim Phillips, one-time Foreman of HQMM, but the Headington men never danced Morris there.



The first time I ever saw the Morris danced was at a ceilidh in town where the Oxford City MM did a spot. I wasn't impressed, and remember thinking: "This is just a crowd of middle-aged ponces, banging sticks on the ground and making arseholes of themselves."

OK, now I'm up to 1961, in which year I finished at University and went back to Scotland to start my first job, in Edinburgh. There was a flourishing folk club going in Edinburgh, where I became a resident and later ran the club for several years. Also in 1961, at a Festival Fringe gig, I met up with a fine traditional fiddler called Rab Purves. He and I worked out a few numbers to put into that show with fiddle and guitar, and after that we did club gigs as a duo.

John Whitelaw recalls that (sometime in the early 1970's) *'One year Ian Stewart and Rab Purves (fiddler) were booked to play in the New Year at the MSG (Manchester Sports Guild). Several of us went over to offer support. After a good session Ian piped in the New Year and by 1.00am they had finished their set and started the serious drinking. At about 4.00am Ian was seen leaving and was secretly followed to his car (a yellow Alfa?) which he loaded up and drove back to Kingston. Legend has it that, having got back home he failed to get his guitar out of the car and, at this point he realised that he was pissed!*

Some time along the line I'd joined EFDSS, and in early 1963 I noticed an ad. in the EFDSS mag seeking a Scots piper to join a party of dancers who were going to an international folk festival in Tunisia - no money on offer, but board and lodging all found.

So I replied to the ad. and they took me on board. It turned out that the group was going to do both Scottish country dancing and Morris dancing. I was the only Scot in the entire lot - all the rest came from around London area.

At the Festival, they'd do their Scottish dancing with the men in kilts and the women with their tartan shawls on, then they'd do a quick change and the guys would come out to dance in Morris gear. I played for the Scottish bit, of course.

Playing for the Morris was Harry de Caux. As I later found out, he was also the regular musician for Thaxted Morris (and he continued to be so until he had to drop out because of old age, many years later).

[Harry later joined ISCA Morris Men and can be seen here (below) at one of their May morning 'dance up the sun' events]



He didn't only play Morris; he also had a huge repertoire of English country dance, Playford, and European circle-dance music. I was really taken with Harry's playing, and asked him to make me a tape of his music after we got home, which he did. And of course I wanted to play that music too, so I got myself the same kind of box that Harry played - a Hohner Trichord GDA with some extra sharps and flats added at the foot of the keyboard - and taught myself to play it, trying to sound as much like Harry as possible.

So he was my first big teacher of Morris music, and the 1963 trip to Tunisia was probably where my "journey to being a Dolphin" began in earnest.

In 1966 I got the offer of a job at the College of Agriculture in Sutton Bonington, and decided to take it. So I emigrated. I lived first in digs in SB, and then in 1967 I bought the old school house in Kingston. Of course one of the first things I did on arriving south was to look for the nearest folk club, and the first one I found was the club in Leicester. (I think at that time they were meeting at the Dog and Gun in Enderby).

When I walked into the club the first time, the first person I saw was Martin Cummings, who'd been a keen member of the Heritage Society in Oxford. Small world, the folk scene! Martin introduced me to several members of the club, including Roger Grimes and Sue Burnett (who were later to get married, and then get un-married again). Also at the Leicester club in 1966, I met up with Griff Jones, who ran Lutterworth Morris. At that time, Lutterworth was a schoolboys' side, and Griff was their schoolmaster and taught them the Morris as well as playing the box for the dancing.

I was keen to get a chance to play Harry de Caux Morris tunes to a real side of dancers, and Griff was keen to get another musician, so bingo! I was in, and that was the first time I ever played for the Morris.

Even by this time, it had never occurred to me that I might actually dance the Morris myself. I thought the deal with Griff was that I'd play while the lads danced. But on my very first practice with them, Griff said (in his strong Welsh accent), "*Oh no boyo, if you want to play the Morris, you've got to dance it as well.*" So like it or not, I got put in the set at practices, and the first Morris dance I was ever taught was Milley's Bequest. However, during my time with Lutterworth, I never danced well enough to dance out, so showed up in public only as musician.

In that first year, Lutterworth went to Thaxted - we were on the Finchingfield tour, no less. That entire experience was a complete "gob-smack" to me. Spending the whole weekend in that magic atmosphere, and seeing some really good sides dancing the Morris, certainly got rid of my impression that all Morrismen were middle-aged ponces. Now I was really keen to dance the Morris myself, and I wanted to dance it well.

It was some time in 1967, I think, that I got word of a new folk club that had been started up in Nottingham, with a policy of "traditional music only". So up to the News House I went, and met Roy Harris and Lawrence Platt for the first time. I did one or two spots as a floor singer, and Roy then asked me to join the "window-sill squad", which I did.

Laurence Platt recalls his first meeting with Ian as, *'My earliest memory of Ian is almost preventing him from getting into the NTMC! It must have been late '67 or early '68 and I was looking after the door. In those days once 120 people had crammed into the upstairs room we were under firm instructions to let no one else in. Who should arrive at about 9.00pm but Ian who at that time was unknown to me and I told him that we were full and that if he came earlier next week then he could come in. But for the fact that Roy Harris, who has asked Ian to come to be one of the resident singers, was standing near and intervened the whole course of world history could well have been different!'*

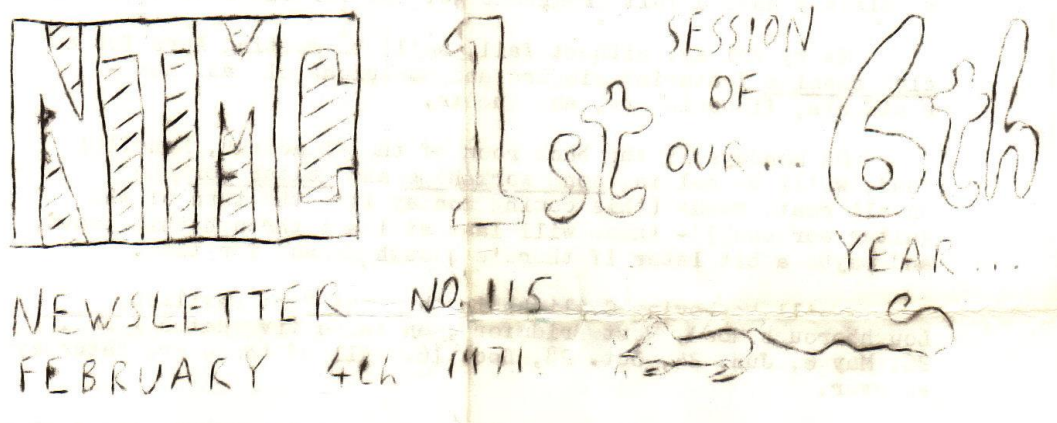
I don't really remember how the idea originated of having a Morris side attached to NTMC. I think it was probably Roy's idea in the first place. But there were enough of us keen on it to make the idea take off right away. I'd already been playing for Morris and was now keen to learn the dancing. Colin Shaw, also a member of NTMC at the time, had done a lot of Morris with a club down in the West Country somewhere (and had maybe even been their Squire or Foreman?), so he was a "natural" for our first teacher. Laurence and I were the first musicians.

Roy Harris says, *'I can hark back to those early days at the NTMC and remember how valuable to the club Ian was by way of his versatility on several instruments, and huge repertoire of tunes and songs. He was never stuck for the right piece to play or sing to help along the balance of the night's music. Ian was also as enthusiastic as he was skilful so it was no surprise that when the idea of a Club Morris side was floated he was first up for it, and of course he had double worth being both a musician and a dancer. I think it is marvellous that he is still active with the side, and I think his record should be publicised widely, he deserves the recognition.'*

Ian finished his story with "And the rest, as they say, is history. Or rather, is Archive!"

Ian's story of course continued beyond his write up, with forty years of being a Dolphin Morris Man. He continued to be a leading light at the Nottingham Traditional Music Club as performer, organiser and newsletter writer.

Ian's tell-tale logo on many of his newsletters was a mouse called Fred. The first appearance of Fred, (on newsletters so far recovered) is on issue number 115 dated February 4th 1971.



The numbering system of NTMC newsletters was random and often the same number would be re-used or there would be no number at all. Couple this numbering system with added guesswork and the researcher in the future can be excused for being confused especially if they only have a single copy or a few random issues.

The newsletters were never intended to last beyond the Friday night Club so it was not treated with scientific accuracy or to stand up to minute scrutiny. It was just a

newsletter that warned members of forthcoming events and that was that.



In 1969 Ian designed the NTMC Club poster and hundreds of copies were produced and delivered to folk clubs and venues to advertise the NTMC. This copy has survived and is in the Dolphin archive.

The 'NTMC' logo seen at the top of the poster became the logo that would appear at the top of every issue of the club newsletter.

The oldest copy of the newsletter that uses the logo that has been discovered so far is issue number 112 dated 14th January 1971.

Each year a special edition of the NTMC newsletter would be issued to describe the club and its workings and often had a description of the 'sill-squad' members. The 1971 'special' described Ian Stewart as, *'Singer of many songs and player of many instruments - melodeon, highland bagpipe, guitar and English concertina. A Scotsman, he draws music and songs not only from Scotland but from all over the British Isles. As well as Club programmes, he can provide music for Morris, Sword, Rapper, and country dancing (melodeon) and Scottish and Highland dancing (bagpipes). Leader of the melodeon workshop at the Keele Loughborough Festival 1970'.*

The NTMC newsletter number 117 dated February 18th 1972 had an offer of two free copies of the EFDSS magazine 'English Dance and Song' as Ian had had three copies sent to him instead of the usual one. It might just be coincidence that it included an article written by Ian about the NTMC.

NTMC— Five Years On

by Ian Stewart

January 1972, when this Midlands issue of "ED&S" is due to appear, also sees the fifth birthday of a very well-known Midland club—the Nottingham Traditional Music Club, or NTMC for short.

When NTMC was founded, one of the first things the club did was to issue a manifesto setting out details of its policy—and an uncompromising policy it was. Only traditional music and songs were to be performed—i.e., those from each performer's native country. Guest artists were to be booked only about once a month—and they were to be chosen on the basis of their musical ability, not because they were so-called "big names." High standards of performance were to be maintained. There was to be strict order and attention for singers and announcements. Neither the residents nor any other officers of NTMC were to receive any financial reward for their services to the club.

Many people on the Nottingham "folk scene" of 1967 were confident in prophesying that a club running to such a policy would have a short life—"three months at the outside" was one estimate. But now, five years later, NTMC is still very much alive, and flourishing mightily. A "full house" is the rule rather than the exception on Friday nights, and in the Spring of 1971 the club notched up an unbroken run of three months of full houses.

The policy declared in that 1967 manifesto is still maintained to the letter. Indeed, in some ways it has become even stricter. Guests are now not advertised in advance, and the club is moving more and more towards a policy of booking only performers from the oral tradition. High standards of performance are maintained—dauntingly high, some say; be that as it may, on most Friday nights more floorsingers come forward than there is time to hear, and the club prides itself on the strength of its chorus singing.

Like other leading traditional clubs, NTMC has diversified its activities beyond the actual club night. First to be founded, in 1968, was a Morris side, christened the "Dolphin Morrismen" after the pub where they refreshed themselves after their first practices. Next came a mumming side which, after several changes of name, became established as the "Owd 'Oss Mummies." (The Dolphin Men were admitted to the Morris Ring in 1971, and the Mummies appeared at the Loughborough Festival in the same year). The social dance is catered for by NTMC Ceilidhs, held several times each year. Outings are run to many traditional events throughout the country. The club conducts song workshops and guitar workshops, and members can get free instrumental tuition from the residents. A research workshop was formed last year, and has made progress in collecting traditional plays from the Nottingham area. The "NTMC Newsletter" is circulated in the clubroom each Friday—it recently reached its hundredth issue, and achieved the distinction of having a series of its back-numbers requested by the Local History Department of Nottingham Library! The club itself runs book and tape libraries for members.



A typical NTMC session, with the residents sitting on the NTMC windowsill—L. to R. Roy Harris, Laurence Platt, Roger Grimes and Ian Stewart.

Yet despite all these diverse interests, the Friday club nights remain at the heart of the club's activities—and enjoyment is the keynote. Nobody in NTMC listens to the singing with a notebook in his hand!

In five years, the club has developed some traditions of its own. The residents sit on a windowsill at one end of the clubroom throughout the evening, instead of performing from a stage. In defiance of the laws of arithmetic, the evening is divided into three halves, not two. At the close of each club night, everyone bursts into a chorus of "Don't forget your empty glasses, take your glasses to the bar!" sung to the tune of *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah*.

In many ways, a club like NTMC becomes a community in its own right. The NTMC members and visitors come from all age groups from students to pensioners, and from every walk of life you could mention. So far, NTMC has clocked up about half-a-dozen marriages, and the second NTMC generation is confidently expected any time now. As one member put it: "NTMC isn't so much a club—more a way of life!"

What does the continued success of NTMC, and traditional clubs like it, prove? Surely that traditional music needs no tainting-up nor watering down in order to appeal to a wide public. Properly performed, traditional music is not only artistically satisfying—it also, draws the people! When all the gimmickry of today's "pop-folk" industry has long been forgotten, traditional music will live and flourish as it always has done. With that thought in mind on the club's fifth birthday, we at NTMC raise our glasses to the *next* five years!

tradition our standard of dance improved by leaps and bounds. To be dancing in the team gave one a great thrill. The costume too was studied again and altered, thanks to the discovery of two line drawings in "The Illustrated London News," dated May 25th, 1850, which showed quite clearly the dress worn by the Morris men of the period.

Both the "Lichfield" and "Burton" Morris clubs are no longer in existence but fortunately the Lichfield dances are still being performed by other Clubs in the area.

Lichfield Dances

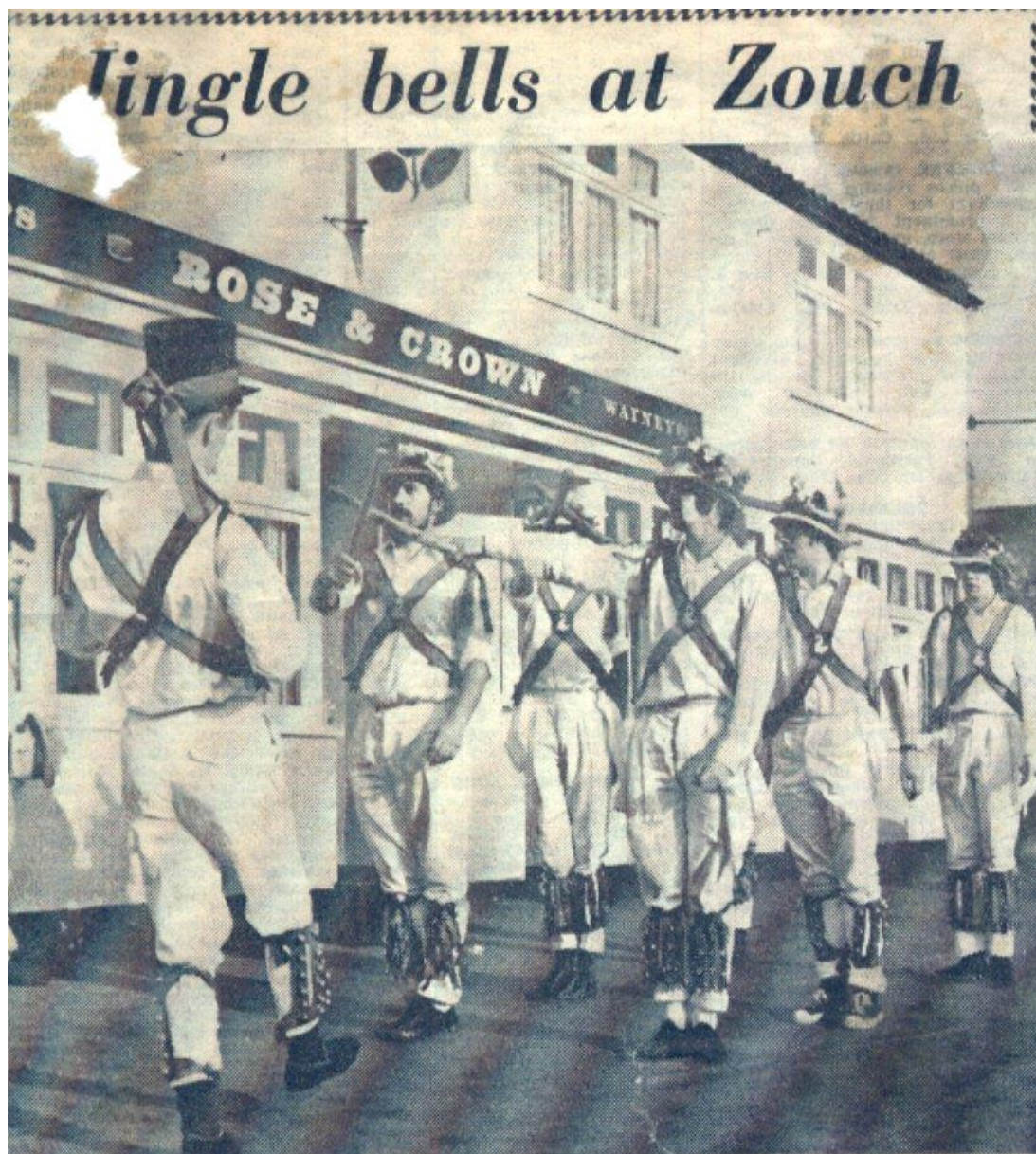
STICK DANCES: Ring 'o Bells; Vandalls of Hammerwich; Milleys Bequest; Nuts in May.

HANDKERCHIEF DANCES: Sheriffs Ride; Barefooted Quaker; Castling; Shepherds Hey (3-man jig); All the Winds (solo jig).

The 15th birthday special newsletter dated Friday 29th January 1982 mentions that over the years there had been few catch-phrases but that, *'Perhaps the most famous is Ian Stewart's "Handsome" usually after a good performance'* [George Kirk's "Well" also got a mention].

The earliest photograph of Ian in Dolphin kit appeared in a November issue of the Loughborough Monitor and relates to November 9th 1968 when Dolphin danced at The Rose & Crown at Zouch.

Ian is wearing the 'musicians' top hat which was shared between Ian and Laurence Platt. The hat had belonged to Ian's father.



Another photograph from 1968 or 1969 shows Ian playing for Dolphin at an NTMC ceilidh. This may be older than the Rose & Crown photograph but the date of the ceilidh is not known and Dolphin danced at all the NTMC ceilidhs, sometimes four or more in a year.

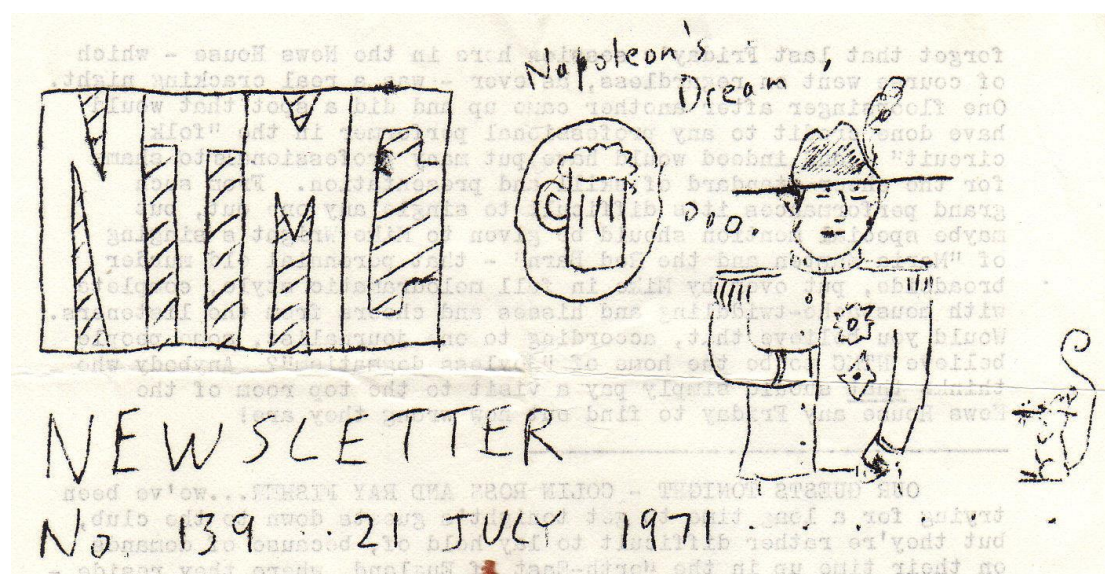


Colin Shaw recalls, *'Of course, one of the really good memories of Ian was the day we went to dance in Dudley. One of my old school friends was Taff Thomas who was at teacher training college in Dudley. He was organising a multi-cultural day of dance and we agreed to go. [Spring 1971]*

Unfortunately Roy Dyson was supposed to be taking four of us in his mini can and, on the day in question, he blew the head gasket. Being a handy sort of chap, he was able to set about putting a new one on himself and said that they would come over to Dudley when they could. I hitch-hiked over (in kit!) and Ian took himself there - and probably Bob as well, as planned, in his Lotus Elan.

We had a late morning of lots of Indian music and dancing and then repaired to the pub for lunch. There was singing, and Ian went back to the car and, to great applause, marched back in playing his pipes. He played quite a lot, I remember, and also drank a fair bit - to the extent that having done the afternoon part of the tour he suddenly remembered that he no longer had possession of the pipes. He had left them in the pub!

He drove back as quickly as possible, but the pipes had apparently disappeared down the road over the arm of some unknown local - and were never seen or heard again!



Above: Another appearance of 'Fred' in 1971. Ian Stewart wrote a final 'PS' at the end which explained, 'I know Napoleon's hat didn't look like that - but my life, I'm a singer, not a cartoonist! G'night, enjoy yourselves!'

Newsletter number 99 dated October 8th 1971 (a classic example of random numbering) finished with a re-run of an advert for sale of a record by 'Margaret Barry and Michael Gorman'. Ian wrote, 'Still the same great record, and still the same price - 50p. See the door squad if you fancy it. (The record, I mean. If you fancy the other thing, see the residents first). Cheers, see U next week!'

In 1970 on Thursday 21st May while on an evening pub tour the side performed in Kegworth and Zouch. While at The Rose & Crown in Zouch, we received via the landlord, an invitation to dance at a party being held at the Manor in Sutton Bonington. We arrived at the massive old building with some trepidation to find a host of people in evening dress. Immediately fed on vast quantities of food, we proceeded to dance outside the house, joined by a large number of guests. We had not intended to collect, but the Lord of the Manor had some inkling of the Morris tradition and insisted on it, starting the ball rolling with a large fistful of money. We were then led away and treated to champagne, and invited to stay for the remainder of the evening. It was only after much persuasion that the side was dragged away from free booze, and Bob Hine from a bird he was chatting up, to dance at The Rose and Crown, as we had promised'.

Terry Paling has a memory of being asked to dance at 'Gotham Manor' for a wedding where there was, 'booze and champers aplenty and salmon in aspic' which, 'I consumed more than was good for me'.

Ian Stewart recalls the event where, 'We all got pissed during the ensuing wedding party'. Ian also recalls that a bottle of the hosts wine left with the dancers, 'tucked under me jacket'.

Below: Ian seen in Dolphin kit but dancing with Leicester Morris Men in 1972 and dancing here at The Royal Oak, Great Glen [In those early days there was a lot of mixing and matching between the sides and Ian's talents were always going to be useful to whatever side he chose to 'help out!']



Andy Siddons recalls;

1. 'Ian was noted for parking in the multi-story car park in Nottingham, putting his bells on (big pads with big bells) and striding out to Slab Square to dance.

2. 'After I had left Dolphin and joined Hartley I remember coming back for a weekend, 1977 Jubilee Year, and Ian being the belligerent Scot upsetting the audience [and Ian Ambrose] at one pub with his "F**k the Queen" hat badge.

[When I asked Ian about this badge he recalled that 'it was not something to start a war over so I just put some tape over "F**k" and kept the badge on the hat'.]

3. The nutmeg 'overdose' must be known by everybody. Andy supplied a few more details when prompted and said, 'It was the swinging seventies (!) - drugs, rock'n'roll and adventurous cooking! We practiced at the Old School; Ian grew herbs in his garden and did his own cooking, always chillies, in the kitchen. Anyway one practice night (?) Ian wasn't there, he was in hospital with an overdose! Turned out the overdose was of nutmeg and we never dared ask him whether it was experimental cooking or experimental drug taking!

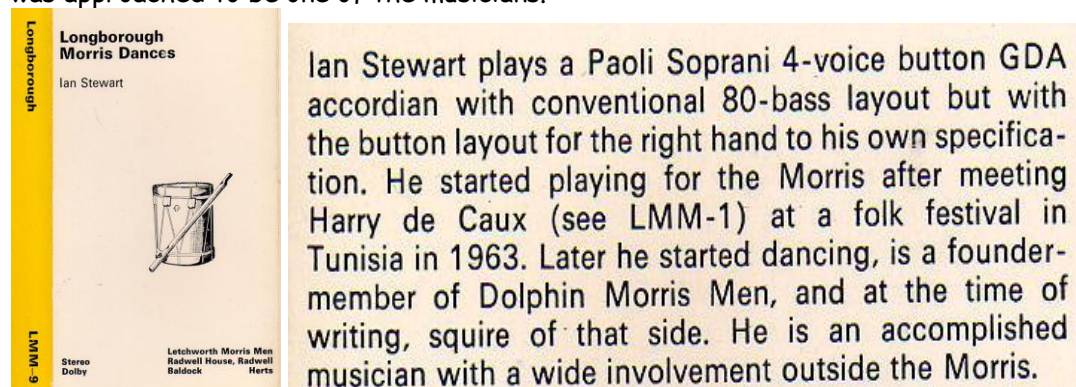
Mike Wilkinson adds that, 'I did not know Ian Stewart when this incident occurred, but have a clear memory of him telling me about it.

Nutmeg has hallucinogenic effects. Ian told me that he remembered hearing this so one day he decided to try it. He described adding a dessert spoonful of nutmeg to a glass of milk, stirring it vigorously and drinking it then sitting back to see the effects.

The effects were serious, and he needed medical attention. I think he needed his stomach pumped. Later the same evening we were talking of adventure activities and without really thinking I asked, "Do you have no sense of adventure at all?"

Ian's response was, "Well I drank a glass full of milk with a dessert spoonful of nutmeg in it and nearly died if that counts".

In 1978 as part of the Letchworth Morris Men's project to put Morris music on cassette tape, and make it available to sides to use at practice or to learn new tunes from, Ian was approached to be one of the musicians.



Above: The cassette cover and the short write up about Ian on the insert

Ian recalls, 'Yeah, about the Longborough tapes... this was part of a Ring project, and the guy who co-ordinated it and actually "directed" the taping sessions was called Bryn (Brian) Holeman, a very clued up guy and an excellent piano box player himself. I've no idea if he's still dancing, or even still alive come to that.

Anyway, about the recording: Bryn had chosen me because at that time DMM were specialising in Longborough, and I was known therefore as a player of Longborough tunes (not many clubs dance much Longborough, as you know). There were still a lot of Longborough tunes I didn't know, cos DMM didn't dance them, but the policy the Ring had was that if a tradition was included in the recording programme, ALL the tunes in the Black Book for that tradition had to be included in the tape. So I had to do some very fast learning of several more Longborough tunes. I was already playing the Soprani that I use now, and that was the instrument in the tape.

Another thing that Bryn insisted on was that there had to be a dancer dancing to the tune, every tune. It didn't matter if there was only one dancer (not necessarily a set), but Bryn held that you couldn't play good Morris to a metronome, and I'm sure he is right. So, none other than Sid Long volunteered to come along and be the one-man dancer for each dance. (So he had some learning to do as well!).

We went to Bryn's place, can't remember where but I guess it was somewhere near Letchworth (wherever that is). Bryn set up the mike and recording gear in his back room, which had a big window looking out into the garden. We couldn't have Sid in the same room, cos his stomping would have drowned the music, so he danced out on the lawn (there must have been some kind of speaker extension so he could hear the music), while I watched him and played "to" him as I looked at him through the window.

Bryn kept watch on the music in the Black Book and signalled to me how many repeats of each part to play, since of course it was difficult for me to tell that with only one man dancing.

What with fluffs, set-ups and fiddling around with mikes, wrong numbers of repeats, etc., it was a full day's work to record the whole list of Longborough tunes from the Black Book, but we did it, and all 3 of us finished up knackered. No beer during the day, of course! And no money, just the feeling of accomplishment for doing it.'



At Thaxted 1980 and while relaxing in his tent the above photograph was taken of Ian's 'Sunday face'.

Mike Wilkinson says, 'It was before my time, but I clearly remember Ian recounting the story with some pride. He was reclining in his tent (in his words)"stark bollock naked" when one of the lads appeared at the tent door with a camera.

As Ian said, proudly, "I only just had time to stick two fingers up before they took a picture".

When Colin Shaw left Dolphin to take up work in Manchester Ian Stewart took over the role of Foreman of the side, a position he was in sole charge of for a few years.

Eventually other members of the side would attend instructionals on specific traditions [John Sweeney on Lichfield (from Green Man in Birmingham) and Ilmington from Roy Dommett at Sidmouth Folk Festival and later with the Ilmington revival side].

Ian puts his knowledge of Fieldtown, Sherborne and he believes Longborough to the teaching of Bert Cleaver who Ian calls, 'The daddy of them all'.

Bert Cleaver says, 'I first met Dolphin in June/July 1970. A Ring Meeting had been organised in Nottingham by Foresters/Dolphin and I was Squire Elect [of the Morris Ring] at the time. The current Squire, John Venables, was going on a field study course with his pupils so asked me to deputise. This was unusual as the convention was (and I believe still is) that a former Squire should be asked. The meeting ran very successfully and I thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Shortly after I had assumed office the Bagman (Rusty - Ewart Russell) told me that Dolphin had applied for Ring membership so I arranged to visit a practice - probably in late Nov/early Dec. The practice was at Ian's house in Kingston. I was very happy with the result and recommended acceptance at the next ARM'.

Dolphin were accepted to the Morris Ring in 1971 and received the Staff of Office at the 1971 Ring Meeting held at Manchester.

The Morris Ring

Squire :
BERT CLEAVER
8 Rutland Park Gardens
London N.W.2
Tel. : 01-459 0560

Bagman :
EWART RUSSELL
50 Mile End Road
Colchester
Essex
Tel. : Colchester 5548

7th March, 1971.

Dear Roy,

It is with much pleasure that I write to tell you that the Annual Meeting of Representatives of Clubs Associated in The Morris Ring, at the recommendation of the Officers of The Ring, unanimously admitted to association

The Dolphin Morris Men, of Nottingham.

I expect you will tell me at which Meeting of The Ring - this year, I hope - the welcome opportunity to cheer the club as it receives its Staff will be given us.

I enclose a copy of the Constitution.

Yours sincerely,

Ewart

Bert continues, 'Over the next few years I was several times invited by Ian to take instructionals, always staying with him, and at some point honorary membership was awarded. Dolphin became frequent visitors to Chipperfield and all continued happily. I am sorry not to be more precise, but I keep no diary and 56 not uneventful years of Morris have put a strain on my memory'.

In a previous email to Mike Wilkinson Ian had outlined a few of his teachers and dancing influences over the years as:

Colin Shaw - when DMM started up, so for a few years after 1968. Colin taught a mix of dances, many of them being the ones we'd usually think of as "Ring standards" nowadays.

Lionel Bacon - came and did at least one teaching day for DMM on Bledington (early 70's, I'd guess), and my Bledington is very much "Bacon Bledington", with minor modifications which I think came from Jeff Terram, much later on.

Ralph Harrison - did a teaching day for DMM on Headington (also late 60s or early 70s), and likewise, my Headington is very much "Harris Headington", modified by going to several teaching days done by HQMM themselves, at Cecil Sharp House and elsewhere. But I stuck pretty much to 'Harris Headington', since I liked it and also realised that HQMM continually change their style.

Nobody ever directly taught me Bampton - but my Bampton is very much Shergold Bampton, or at least the Shergold Bampton which the Shergold side were dancing in the 1970s and 1980s. I used to go to Bampton every year, watch the Shergold men's style,

and come back to DMM and teach it. So in that way, Frankie Shergold was among my "teachers".

For a while, I was a paid-up member of Foresters (middle 70s, I guess), and it was Ted Ward (then their Foreman and/or Squire), who first taught me Fieldtown. He was a smashing Fieldtown dancer, putting a lot of emphasis on the "anacrusis". I also learned a variety of dances / traditions from a later Foreman and/or Squire of Foresters called Dick Rendell, a big guy who was very strong on "getting off the ground", using momentum (like when you come into the middle in Queen's Delight). And, of course, all the people who over the years have been teachers for DMM.



Ken Loveless was a big influence on me - but I don't think I was ever at an instructional where he was teaching a specific tradition.

He had a few slogans that he used to boom at us and the ones I remember are: "Dancing comes from the belly!" and "Keep loose legs!"

Above: Father Kenneth Loveless leads the Gate to Southwell through Nottingham in 1981

Mike Wilkinson recalls the Leicester feast of 1985, 'I was sitting opposite Ian Stewart during the meal. There was a lot of "horseplay" going on in the room (rolls being thrown etc) and there was a lively atmosphere. Being young and foolish, I hadn't picked up any warning signs that it might degenerate into something nasty'.

[There was an incident involving the Kesteven Morris Men and that is covered in 'The History of the Dolphin Morris Men Book II']

Mike continues, 'I can't be sure whether I flicked some cream off my spoon at Ian, or whether I made as if to do so. Whatever I did, Ian's response was to pick up a big dollop of cream on his spoon and pretend he was about to flick it at me. We were sitting not far from Kenneth Loveless, and Kenneth missed whatever I had done, but saw what Ian was doing. In his distinctive loud rolling tones, Kenneth declared these exact words (with a twinkle in his eye): "Jock Stewart! I'm surprised at you, my boy!" Ian curled up with embarrassment like a choirboy caught reading "Razzle" in church'.

Ian Stewart recalls, 'And I can still remember those very words that Rev Ken addressed to me as I prepared to flick the cream (I wasn't just pretending, I really meant to flick it) - but my face must have turned very red as Ken ticked me off in his best Deaconly manner'.

[In preparation for this tribute piece I requested memories and anecdotes about Ian and I introduced my message with; 'Ian has been, and continues to be, a stalwart of the side and has maintained a vision that has been at the backbone of all things Dolphin. Teachers have come and gone but all have acknowledged Ian as the fount of Dolphin continuity and look to his agreement when it comes to style and changes that have come along from time to time'.]



Dai Lees response was, 'I've given a bit of thought to this, and I'm a little surprised that I've not got any particularly wacky recollections of Ian. But actually, I think that's what I remember as one of Ian's great strengths - he didn't bugger about a lot, he was just reliably *there* quietly doing a really good job for the side and being a good friend. And the key word is reliably: Ian was one of those blokes who

form the absolute backbone of any group, and for Dolphin he was brilliant. I've realised that I took his musicianship for granted - and that's because he was (and presumably still is) such a fantastic musician that you didn't need to think about it. If Ian was playing (or singing) you never gave a thought to the possibility of mistakes, you just enjoyed it and got on with doing your own bit as best you could. If Ian was there, you knew you'd be all right. I also remember Ian being very, very good company and extremely patient and helpful to a bumptious and probably very irritating 17-year-old beginner. I was somewhat in awe of him as the man who welcomed us ("as ever") to NTMC but Ian was one of the Dolphin Men who made me feel welcome and secure in the side. Quietly forceful when necessary, really committed to doing things well and a damned good bloke, after 35 years I still remember him with the greatest affection. Thanks, Ian. May your Soprani never grow wheezy'. Dai Lees



Dave Walters responded to my request with, 'You are right about Ian's very central role in the direction the team has taken. I always think of Dolphin as Ian's team, no matter who is Squire and regardless of who is teaching what traditions that year. Ian has never taken his eye off the ball when it comes to his dedication to getting us dancing in the style he wants at the level of quality he is looking for. Unfortunately, some members of the team have yet to work out what style he's looking for, but Ian takes the long view and just keeps guiding and nudging us to keep us somewhere near the right track. No matter how poorly we sometimes dance we definitely look like Dolphin, and

that Dolphin look is a result of Ian's hard work.

Of course, he's also a great musician to dance to - and to listen to. Dolphin is lucky to have a good selection of good musicians but again it is Ian who is always consulted to see if the pace is right, or the emphasis in the right place.

He's also a very private man who, until fairly recently, has not revealed much about his life outside of Dolphin. When I first joined the team I found Ian a bit difficult to talk to - partly my own lack of confidence and partly a feeling of not being quite sure what he was thinking about - was he analyzing me? I think the turning point came with his marriage to Hicky. He seems to have softened a lot: we now know about his love of cats, his obsession with good ales, and he's even developed a sense of humour.

One thing about Ian that is a big bonus is his ability to dissect, and give a calm and reasoned response that always seems to defuse a situation, clear up a misunderstanding or just put an end to a brewing disagreement with one of his 'I have spoke!' proclamations.

I must admit that most of my strongest memories of Ian are from times when he has taken his love of good ales a little too far. In particular on the second Jersey trip when, at the end of a very long night of beer and calvados, we decided on a whim to dance the Roast Beef of Old England - we had never danced it before and the only words we knew were those in the title, and Ian was almost incapable of standing. It started quite well,

at least as far as the foot up, but then went totally to pot. Ian just stood rooted to the spot playing a tune a bit like the one we wanted with a big grin on his face and a puddle of spilled beer at his feet. Shortly afterwards he staggered up the stairs to his quarters in the school matron's room for a good night's sleep. He didn't get it - ten minutes later Dolphin and others decided to do a Conga up the stairs, down the corridor, through his room and out again.

Another time was at Bristol's Ring Meeting. At the end of the night Ian got himself all ready to walk the few miles to his lodgings (having not fancied a night on the floor). We were just saying our goodnights when Ian went to pick up his melodeon case and just toppled over it, ending up sitting on the floor beside it. I don't know the rest of the story, but Mike and (someone else) had an eventful late night walk across the docks and red light district to escort him to his bed.

Ian doesn't get away with us for too many weekends these days but the thing that I remember from almost every away-trip is that he always turns up at the very last minute. Derbyshire weekend, Chipperfield, whatever - he will emerge from his tent just as the bus is revving up to leave.



Regarding Ian's walk through the red light district Spout says: 'At this point, Ian S's presence of mind seemed to desert him, as did his equilibrium. He alerted Dolphin to this with a reverse pratfall of Loveless-esque proportions, but he declined assistance, explaining he didn't heed any help. Martin and I walked Ian the two miles back to his hotel, and returned to the hall at about 12:20am'.

Mike Wilkinson now adds, 'The Ring Meeting was based at a large college. Most of us were indoor camping. Ian Stewart chose to book himself into a small hotel at the top of a hill near to the Clifton Suspension Bridge. Late on the Saturday night, he was completely drunk. He fell over. He then decided to go back to his room. He refused all offers of assistance and just set off walking. Martin and I set off behind, following at a discreet distance. He was in full kit, and staggering. After a while we made ourselves known, and he had forgotten that he had told us not to follow him. The first part of the walk was along a dual carriageway or ring road. Then we ended up down in the red light district, at about 11:30 on a Saturday night. There were druggies and prostitutes everywhere, and there we were, three drunken men in Morris kit, trying to look nonchalant.

I remember us finding a cat which looked like it was going to cross a busy road. Ian felt that it was his intervention which persuaded it not to. I think I even heard the old atheist say, "Thank God" when the cat stayed on the pavement!

The last stretch of the walk was up a steep hill. We got to Ian's hotel and took him as far as his room. By now, Martin was desperate for the loo, and his revenge on Ian for forcing us to walk 2 miles through the city was to leave the loo in such a state that entry without a gas mask was inadvisable. Martin and I then walked back about 2 miles to the college, arriving in the wee small hours.

There is much that could be written about Ian Stewart. Everyone could write a sentence or two about his commitment, focus and tireless devotion to keeping Dolphin on the right path and about his quiet but tangible authority. It is very evident when Ian misses a

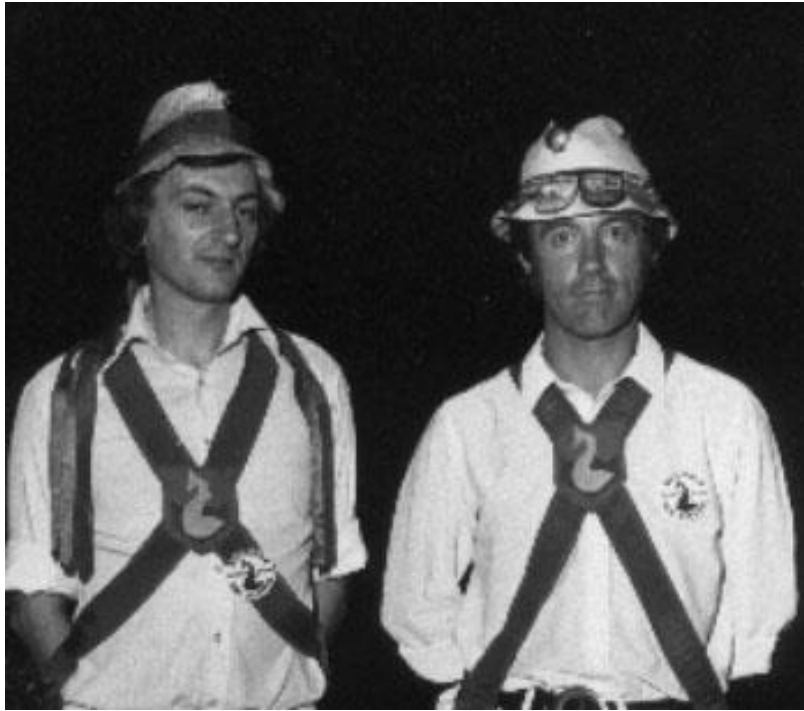
practice that the discipline loses a little of its edge and as Dave Walters has said the men of the side look to him to keep to the true path, and that no matter who the Squire might be, we all (including the Squire's) try to maintain the standards that Ian would set himself. Ian's quiet authority comes from over forty years of involvement with the Morris, his vision for what he wants from the side, his own technical skills of dance, music and song and his ability to embrace change while still not allowing frivolous ideas to take root.

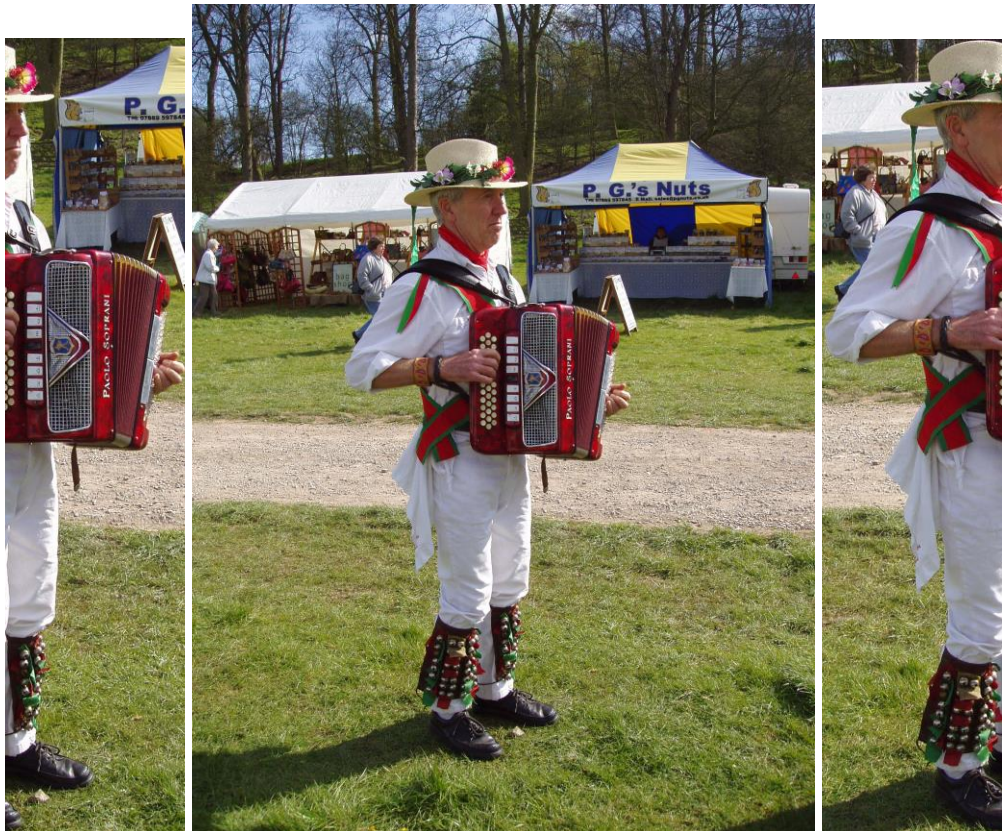
There are many 'one liners' from his many AGM reports over the years and tales of his love of beer but as he would say at practice, "I think that is pub business gentlemen".

Some photographic memories showing Ian at his best









THE SCRAPBOOKS, AGM REPORTS AND PHOTOGRAPHIC FILES CONTAIN MANY MORE REFERENCES TO IAN'S TIME WITH DOLPHIN AND WILL HOPEFULLY CONTAIN MANY MORE IN THE FUTURE.