





NEWSLETTER - October 2016

Welcome to Issue 12 of the Rose & Castle Morris Newsletter. As Autumn takes over from Summer our dancing season also comes to a close. We have had an interesting and varied dance programme this year; more of that shortly. This does not mean that we will be hanging up our clogs until Spring next year as we still have one or two gigs to do:

Sat. 26 November - Stony Stratford's Xmas Lights Switch On Day 1.30-3.30pm

Sun. 1 January - Dancing in the New Year at the Boat, Stoke Bruerne from 12 noon

Vive La Belle (et très humide) France

(A Soggy Dance Trip to Verdun with Queens Oak and Rose and Castle Morris)

The 222nd anniversary of Lord Howe's victory over the French Fleet on the "Glorious First of June" saw 2 local Morris sides, Queens Oak and Rose and Castle, boarding a coach in Potterspury bound for the Dover ferry intent, not on fighting the French, but on blessing them with a large slice of English culture - while drinking as much as possible of theirs! What we didn't intend to do was take OUR weather with us but it came anyway - all the way.



"Lac Vert Plage"

Our destination, Dun Sur Meuse, is a small town in Lorraine, home to a holiday complex - Lac Vert Plage. This was to be our home for the next 4 days.

The holiday was well researched and organised by a small group from both sides with the invaluable assistance of local Mayor of Sivry-Sur-Meuse, Albert. The trip was carefully planned to combine lots of visits to local places of interest in this historic area with as much Morris dancing as possible.

The journey was long and wet but uneventful though our view of the refugee camp in Calais through the security fencing was a damp and sobering sight. We arrived to a warm welcome from Albert and a meal from the camp staff and were soon settled in our accommodation ready for our first outings the next day (Thursday) to the American memorial and cemetery at Montfaucon and to Verdun.



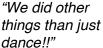
"First Dance-Out in Verdun to an appreciative audience"

The memorial was again sobering, I don't think many of us knew how great was the U.S. sacrifice in the 1st world war. Later we drove to Verdun through pouring rain arriving in front of the great memorial to the town's 1916 defenders built into the remains of the bastion protecting the Meuse bridge. Walking across the bridge to the town the 2 teams took it in turns to entertain a steadily growing (if somewhat bemused) crowd with our fine displays of Border and North-West Morris culminating in a danced procession back across the bridge to the quayside. Here we took ship for a very pleasant and sunny cruise along the river followed by another dance spot back in the town. Each time we stopped so, incredibly, did the rain but that evening the rain came down and flooded all the paths and road at Lac Vert Plage. We waded to the bar anyway.





"We did other



Friday we danced (on a bandstand) in the small market town of Stenay attracting a lot of interest from the numerous shoppers and café proprietors.



"Dancing on the Bandstand in Stenay"

From Stenay we travelled to the historic citadel of Montmedy and danced on the town square in the centre of the fortress between heavy showers. All very enjoyable and atmospheric and a fine scene setter for Saturday afternoon when we returned to the Beer Museum in Stenay for a further dance out (dodging some of the showers by using a marquee) where we were pleased to find that some of the audience had seen us dance the previous day - and wanted to see us again! This followed a serious morning visiting the citadel museum in Verdun (like Jorvik with attitude) commemorating the sacrifice of Verdun's defenders in WW1. We then visited the battlefields near the city where tens of thousands died. One whole area has been left as both museum and memorial, very poignant. The day ended with a barn dance at Lac Vert Plage for ourselves and interested locals. This was called by me, partly in pigeon French, with excellent music from Queens Oak's band and was enjoyed by all.

The holiday culminated with Sunday's trip to the Fete de l'Escargot (snail festival) at Sivry sur Meuse where we did several dance spots, tried the local wine and beer and (some at least) sampled the snails.

Again Mayor Albert was there to ensure we were happy, fed and well provided for. We ended the trip with an evening visit to a fine local restaurant in Dun before returning to the campsite bar. The sun actually shone brightly (though it did rain a bit).





'After our final dance-out at the Snail Festival

The journey home was again uneventful but punctuated by a short stop at the Canadian memorial at Vimy Ridge. Here we said our fond farewells to Rose and Castle's Australian melodeon player Danika who was embarking on a tour of Europe before heading home to Melbourne. It was dry all day.

A splendid trip which we thoroughly enjoyed and which hopefully brought a lot of pleasure to the people we met and danced for in Lorraine - and at least our rain only flooded some fields, the rest of France was being inundated!!!

John Green

OBITUARY – DAVID BLAGROVE

David Blagrove MBE, who passed away in August, was a musician for Rose and Castle in the early 1980's, playing Melodeon and Base Drum to accompany our dancing. A leading figure in the inland waterways movement nationally, David also organised a number of very enjoyable dancing tours on narrowboats for us. In his later years he still kept very much in touch with us. His jovial personality and repertory of comic songs were a regular feature of the pub session after our New Year's and St. George's Day dance-outs, and he would often drop in for a laugh and a drink with us in our Wednesday night after-Practice sessions in The Boat, Stoke Bruerne. Members of the Side in full kit were amongst the many mourners at his funeral in Stoke Bruerne Parish Church on August 24th. We shall not see his like again, sadly.

Interested?

We are always looking for new members (dancers, musicians & helpers) so if you think you might like to have a go, why not come to one of our practice nights (every Wednesday evening) from 8.30pm atStoke Bruerne Village Hall. You will be made very welcome.

or contact: Phil Lizius

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see:

www.rose-castlemorris.org.uk