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# fedextra

The quarterly newsletter of The Morris Federation  
Summer 2017

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fusing the dance and music of  
Bharatanatyam and morris**





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**Morris-Natyam at Musicport World Music Festival Whitby, October 2016**  
Photograph: Ganesh Prakasam

**Do you have a great action picture of your team that could feature on the cover of FedExtra?**

Send a high quality image suitable to print in A4 portrait format, some background info about your team, details of where and when the image was taken, and the photographer's name to: [newsletter@morrisfed.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@morrisfed.org.uk)

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from the  
**editor**

welcome to the Summer issue of **Morris FedExtra**

I have greatly enjoyed the fine and sunny weather that we had at the start of the dancing season here in the south-west. Wessex Folk Festival (pictured above with *Dr Turberville's Morris*) was a great day, if a little light on the dancing. However, a weekend with *Pigsty Morris* at Priddy Folk Festival was much more involved, but well worth the expenditure of energy and sweat. So much so, I lost 2lbs in weight! (It didn't last long.)

Having always held a fascination with the more eccentric side of morris dancing, I was pleased to have the opportunity to attend the 'unconvention' of *The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts* in October last year, hosted by *Wyvern Jubilee Morris* around Wells and Castle Cary, with obligatory stop-off at a local cider farm included.

Fools/beasts are one of those aspects of morris dancing that is often remembered by audiences, but seldom given a moment's thought by the members of a side, so if you're interested in finding out more, or are an aspiring fool/beast, then take a look at pages 24-25 and consider attending this year's unconvention in Staffordshire between 27-29 October.

I found it a great opportunity to talk to those either experienced as fools or in handling beasts, and to find out how people came to get involved. I even got to dance with the fools' scratch side (both an honour and a privilege) and was awarded a badge and certificate as an Associate Member of *The Order*. Not quite a total fool... yet!

Happy lammastide!

**Sam**

deadline for next issue: **1 Sep**  
next issue publication date: **30 Oct**

## advertising rates

For the current rates and advert sizes, please contact the editor: newsletter@morrisfed.org.uk

You can also download a copy from the FedExtra pages on our website: www.morrisfed.org.uk

## useful info

Contact all Morris Fed members: broadcast@morrisfed.org.uk

Update your team's contact details: contacts@morrisfed.org.uk



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President's  
**prologue**

**Hello!** I hope you're all having a great dance season!

I've just got home from a wonderful weekend dancing with *Rivington Morris*, celebrating our 40th anniversary. Congratulations to all the teams who have, or are about to celebrate a significant anniversary!

Thank you to all the teams that completed the Morris Census 2017, and thank you again to Jack Worth for compiling, running and analysing the census. The high level summary shows that, 'The number of morris dancers in the UK is around 13,000, the same as in 2014. The average number of side members has reduced slightly (18.6 to 18.2) and the number of sides increased slightly (765 to 780)'.

Also, recruitment-wise, 'sides with more members tend to recruit more; sides that have more young members (under 30) and fewer older members (over 60) tend to recruit more; and sides that perform out more often tend to recruit more'. A full analysis will be available soon at [www.morrisfcensus.org.uk](http://www.morrisfcensus.org.uk)

Thank you also to The Morris Federation sides that attended the Joint Morris Organisations' (JMO) National Day of Dance (NDoD) hosted by *Leicester Morris* on behalf of The Morris Ring. Unfortunately I wasn't able to attend but I've heard that a great time was had by all.

The next JMO NDoD is being hosted by Open Morris in Peterborough on Saturday 19 May 2018. Looking even further ahead, the 2019 JMO NDoD is due to be hosted by The Morris Federation, and we are on the look out for a host team, so if you fancy hosting please get in touch.

Did you know that your team has a copy of The Morris Federation Members' Manual, which is full of really useful information? It not only defines The Morris Federation, including our constitution and the officers' roles, but also includes how to develop a constitution for your team, things to consider when running a day of dance, child protection policy, equality policy, etc. It is currently issued as a hard copy manual to new members, with additional copies available to purchase for

existing members. However, the committee are reviewing the content to bring it up to date, and we will then be publishing it to our website. New members will still receive a hard copy, and existing members will still be able to purchase extra hard copies, but we hope that by making it available online it will be more accessible to more members.

Our next main event is our AGM and annual Day of Dance in Hull on Saturday 23 September. *Beverley Garland*, *Green Ginger Garland*, *Makara Morris* and *Rackaback Morris* have been working hard to make it an event to remember, so I hope to see you there. Don't forget that you can still send representatives to the AGM even if you haven't been able to field a team for the day of dance.

Before then, I hope to see as many of you as possible over the summer festival season. I'll be at Newark Traditions, Warwick, Sidmouth (first weekend), Whitby, and Bromyard, so if you're there please come and say hello!

Happy Dancing!

**Melanie**

## diary dates 2017

### 16 September

The Lancashire & Cheshire Clog Dance Competitions  
Pendle Heritage Centre, Lancashire

### 23 September

The Morris Federation AGM  
Hosted by Green Ginger Garland, Rackaback Morris, Makara Morris and Beverley Garland, in Hull

### 7 October

SDU Longsword Tournament at the Goathland Community Hub

### 27-29 October

Fools & Beasts Unconvention  
Church Eaton, Staffs

Send details of events to:  
newsletter@morrisfed.org.uk

The Morris Federation is not responsible for events organised by external organisations

## guidelines for submission of articles

Please send articles as doc, docx, txt or odt formats. Articles over 750 words will be trimmed.

Please accompany all articles with at least three high quality images. Any images embedded in text should also be sent as separate attachments.

Photographs and illustrations should be jpg, eps, tiff or pdf, though other file types may be accepted.

Make sure you have appropriate permission to publish all words and pictures. Credit will be given to photographers, and captions printed, where provided.

keep it **social**





# MORRIS-NATYAM

**Morris-Natyam is a collaboration between English and Indian musicians and dancers, directed by Bharatnatyam dancer and choreographer Priya Sundar. When I got the call asking for my involvement in this project as the morris dancer and joint choreographer I was curious and clueless - I hadn't even heard of Bharatnatyam dancing!**

After working together with English and Indian artists for over a year now I'm amazed at how much I've learnt and proud of what we've achieved together.

At our latest performance in Carlisle, myself and Priya danced for a full hour and a half show, accompanied by live musicians. Currently the band features Mel Biggs on melodeon, Prathap Ramachandra on mrdingam (a type of drum), Vijay Venkat on flutes and Ramya Tangirala on vocals.

Morris and Bharatnatyam dancing are, at first glance, a surprising combination. Bharatnatyam is a Southern Indian classical dance style, featuring lyrical hand and eye movements, stamped rhythms and a bold costume with fan-like trousers.

Our starting place of common ground was a theme: the seasons. English traditional dances have many links with seasonal customs, both old and new, from dancing up the sun on May Day morning, to regular outings at events such as summer festivals and Christmas markets. Bharatnatyam is a narrative dance style, relating stories through gestures and expressions. In the spring we used this element to welcome in the Indian nature goddess Aranyani and link in the spring festival of colours, Holi.

We wanted to represent the diversity of English display dancing, so the show includes Cotswold, North-West, Border and Garland. Although the actual moves and steps of these styles are quite different to Bharatnatyam we found common ground

in the form of our dances. For example in 'summer' we both dance processional: I dance North West, and Priya's Bharatnatyam steps involve processing with a shrine. One of the most exciting parts of the project was sharing moves with Priya. I taught her how to rant and double step, some border sticking and Cotswold hanky sequences. In return she taught me new rhythms, how to use my eyes and move my head from side to side - using muscles I didn't know I had. For the final dance of the show we tied together all of these different elements,

dancing each others' moves as well as using various props which have English and Indian equivalents such as handkerchiefs/scarves, garland/Kavadi and bobbins/Dhandiya.

One of the more challenging parts of the project was finding a way to combine the music in a way that we could both dance to. Bharatnatyam music is structured very differently to our familiar 8 bar phrases and major or minor scales. Each piece has its own scale, or raag, which



Priya Sundar - 'Bee'



Priya Sundar - 'Flower'

LISA  
HEYWOOD



Lisa and Priya process together with a shrine

is like a collection of rules for which notes to use, and is usually structured in three parts, a slow, medium and fast speed - perhaps with a drum solo too for special rhythmic flair.

For much of the show I danced Cotswold, which presented a problem. Bharatnatyam dances tend to get faster as they get more exciting, whereas the impressive bits of Cotswold morris are the 'slows'. It definitely took some creative thinking about rhythms to get around this, but it all worked out in the end thanks to the hard work of our excellent and ever-patient musicians.

Seeing Bharatnatyam and morris dancing side by side made me think more about what morris is. A question that I'll always remember that Priya asked on the very first day is, "What poses do you have in morris dancing?" I racked my brains but few options came to mind because, for me, morris is movement - whether it be stepping, stick-clashing or jumping. Bharatnatyam shares some of these elements,

particularly the rhythmic footwork emphasised by bells. Although there are also many differences between the two styles, I think we've both learnt many things from each other that we'll take away and apply to our own dancing. I've already been thinking about the importance of where my eyes are focused and how my head is positioned.

I can't speak for Priya, but one of my favourite parts of the show is when she represents each instrument in the band, especially where she has invented her own hand gesture for the melodeon!

Keep an eye on the Morris-Natyam Facebook page for updates on future gigs:

@MorrisNatyam  
or get in touch to book us:  
[priya.dance@gmail.com](mailto:priya.dance@gmail.com)

Lisa is a second generation morris dancer who dances with *Nonesuch Morris* and *Black Hart*, and has performed with *Morris Offspring*.

## The Morris Ring folk play archive

A collection that consists of a vast range of material from the 17th century onwards, relating to folk plays and related subjects, including books and booklets, journal articles, audio and video recordings, unpublished works such as theses, dissertations and essays, and some ephemera.

The collection has been painstakingly assembled since the 1960s by Ron Shuttleworth who made it his aim to collect copies of everything that had been written on the subject of folk plays, and to provide access to the material to interested researchers.

Many of the works have been arranged in subject-based volumes such as 'Hero-Combat', 'Wooing Plays', 'Longsword Plays', etc., and a comprehensive database has been produced to enable researchers to navigate the collection.

Ron Shuttleworth was born in Sheffield in 1930 and brought up in Hathersage in North Derbyshire, eventually settling in Coventry in 1960. An interest in folk music and custom led to contact with folk plays and the establishment of the Coventry Mummers in 1966. His research into mumming developed into the beginnings of this collection, which was donated to the University of Sheffield Library (Special Collections Department) in July 2015. Researchers are now able to consult the material by request. Visit: [www.shef.ac.uk/library/special/morrisshuttleworth](http://www.shef.ac.uk/library/special/morrisshuttleworth)



## NORTHERN LIGHT

Judith Davison writes, "I've attached a photo of Rag Bag Morris dancing at dawn on 1<sup>st</sup> May. We're on the causeway to Lindisfarne (Holy Island). Are we the furthest north to dance out on May Day dawn?"

Sounds like a challenge for 2018! But if you've already danced further north on 1<sup>st</sup> May, then please send a photo and caption to: [newsletter@morrisfed.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@morrisfed.org.uk)



This article was previously published in 'Dancing On', the Open Morris Magazine, Spring 2017





Kirtlington Morris  
Photograph: Charlotte Dover

# KIRTLINGTON LAMB ALE

MELANIE  
BARBER  
INTERVIEWS  
BOB  
DUNLOP

## WHAT CAME FIRST, THE LAMB ALE OR KIRTLINGTON MORRIS?

It's impossible to say but probably the Ale. The first written record is in 'Ancient Tenures of Land and Popular Customs of Manors' by Thomas Blount, 1679. He reports, "a Morisco of men and another of women" at the Lamb Ale at Kidlington. As there's no other evidence for a Lamb Ale at Kidlington, and many subsequent references at Kirtlington, the location was probably a typo!

## ARE KIRTLINGTON MORRIS AN UNBROKEN TRADITION OR A REVIVAL TEAM?

### IF A REVIVAL WHEN DID THE ORIGINAL TEAM FOLD, AND WHY, AND WHAT BROUGHT ABOUT THE REVIVAL, AND WHEN?

The original team folded in the late nineteenth century. The last Lamb Ale in its original form was probably in 1862 when the local gentry, the Dashwood family, ceased their annual payment of £2-12s towards the costs. This reflects changes in social attitudes and fashion amongst the gentry - as Victorian respectability sought to organise more disorderly popular leisure activities.

The Lamb Ale was replaced by a Friendly Society Club Feast. There were three Friendly Societies in the village. The Dashwood family decided to sponsor the Club Feast instead of the Morris Ale. The Club Day included a fairground, stalls, processions and a brass band. Two contemporary accounts summarise

the decline of morris alongside the Club Feast:

"At about 1850 the new note in the nation affected all the simple pleasures. A holiday and a feast ceased once a year to loom so large and all-important as they had done. Therefore, when the village Friendly Society began to expand under the fostering care of Major Dashwood, the 'Lamb Ale' ... was made a secondary consideration. Finally, its initial date (Trinity Monday) was usurped by the Club, and the Club-day diners complained of the noise outside!" [Tindall Wildridge, 1912]

In 1877 George J. Dew saw, "a morris dance (now almost extinct in these parts) - a number of men dancing to the tune of a whistle and tambourine. Formerly they were dressed in light or white trousers or rather breeches, spotlessly white shirts nicely made for the occasion, a tall box hat on and jingling bells on the legs and wrists, but these



Lamb Ale Club Feast 1912  
Fairground, stalls, and brass band, but no morris dancers

at Kirtlington today lacked all such insignia."

The current team were revived in the 1979/80 season following research carried out by Paul Davenport, then of Green Oak Morris Men.

The first Squire of the revival side was Len Berry, Scoutmaster and local folk singer, with his wife Barbara who designed costumes and composed or adapted many of the tunes. They were aided by Tim Radford.

## WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR KIT COLOURS?

They are the horse racing colours of the Dashwood family, who sponsored the morris up to 1862. They feature in the morris costume, now at Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, which was purchased in 1895.

## WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KIRTLINGTON MAIDS?

Firstly there was a female morisco in the 1679 account. The Lamb Ales of the 18th and 19th centuries had a Lady of the Lamb, (roughly similar to a May Queen), with female attendants. In most accounts the chosen lady was the fairest or most virtuous young woman in the village. However Blount's 1679 account describes a contest of maids of the village with their thumbs tied behind their backs catching a live lamb with their teeth! The winning maid became the lady and got to keep the lamb.



AN OLDE WHITSUN CUSTOM  
On the Monday after Whit week, at Kidlington in Oxfordshire, a fat lamb was provided and "the maidens of the town, having their thumbs tied behind them, were permitted to run after it." She who, with her mouth, took hold of the lamb was declared the Lady of the Lamb. The lamb was subsequently the main dish at a feast that concluded the merry making.

1679 imagined in 1822 - Kirtlington maids with thumbs tied chase the lamb (engraving from 'The Book of Curiosities of the Great World', by Rev. T Platts)

## HAS IT ALWAYS BEEN A WEEKEND EVENT FOR THE VILLAGE?

No, the original Lamb Ales would go on for a week of feasting and dancing, including fund-raising tours to houses of the local gentry to supplement the Dashwood's sponsorship; £2-12s wasn't enough to cover the loss of earnings of six dancers and a musician! In its heyday 20 morris sides came to Lamb Ale including sides from Headington, Bucknell, and Bampton. Nowadays it is held over three days, with the village Lamb Ale Feast on Trinity Monday.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

PAUL DAVENPORT, JOHN FORREST, MIKE HEANEY, AND KEITH CHANDLER



Windsor Morris at the Lamb Ale 2017  
Photograph: Charlotte Dover



Hammersmith Morris at the Lamb Ale 2017  
Photograph: Charlotte Dover



Kirtlington Morris dance Bonny Green around the Lady of the Lamb, Bella Timms, 2016



Kirtlington Maids at the Lamb Ale 2017  
Photograph: Charlotte Dover



Chiltern Hundreds Morris at the Lamb Ale 2017  
Photograph: Charlotte Dover

## Clog Dance Workshops

This year's City Clicker's clog dance workshops will be held on:

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October**  
**10am- 4pm in**  
**Horfield, Bristol**

**Four different levels of class available**  
**Price £26 including tea, coffee and biscuits**  
**Light lunch available for £6**

For more details or to reserve your place please visit: [www.city-clickers.org.uk](http://www.city-clickers.org.uk) or email: [city\\_clickers@hotmail.com](mailto:city_clickers@hotmail.com)







# DR TURBERVILLE'S MAKES HEADLINE NEWS!

THE TURBS' FIRST DANCE-OUT OF THE SEASON TO JOINTLY CELEBRATE ST GEORGE'S DAY AND WORLD PENGUIN DAY (OUR MASCOT BEING THE CREWKERNE PENGUIN) RESULTED IN A FRONT PAGE PHOTO OF SQUIRE LIN TUNBRIDGE AND A DOUBLE-PAGE SPREAD THE FOLLOWING WEEK IN THE WESTERN GAZETTE, COURTESY OF PAPER PHOTOGRAPHER LEN COPLAND.

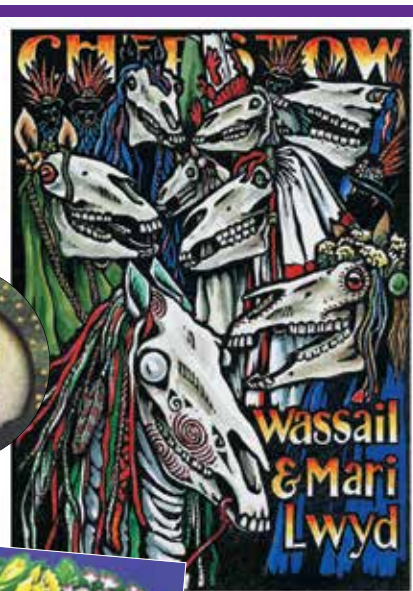
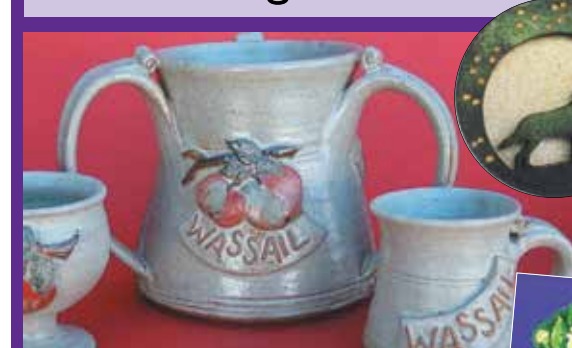
ANNABEL  
NORWELL  
DAVIS

May Day saw us once again in Somerton for the May Fayre. Perfect weather, a large crowd and excellent local cider. Happy Turbs!

You can find us enjoying the pick of Somerset hostelries on our Tuesday dance outs, covering the country from Cheddar to Dowlish Wake, plus festival outings at Wessex, Sidmouth and Swanage Folk Festivals.

We can also be found supporting our sister sides, *The Knights of King Ina*, and *Enigma Border Morris*. Visit: [www.turbs.co.uk](http://www.turbs.co.uk)

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# 40 YEARS OF MORRIS!

Over the next three pages, read about yet another four teams who are celebrating their anniversaries in 2017...



ANNE  
HAWTIN

## Ladle Laikers turn 40

**Betty Lupton's Ladle Laikers formed in the year of the Queen's Silver Jubilee**

The team took its name from a local character from Harrogate, North Yorkshire, who was responsible for ladling out the medicinal spa waters to visitors during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The team performs a wide range of English dances accompanied by live music and is inspired by a variety of morris traditions. Our kit reflects the national colours; red tights, white smocks, and blue dresses, and we currently have 19 dancers and six musicians, with some of the founding members still part of the team.

We celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in May this year with a weekend of dance held at various scenic venues around North Yorkshire, and were joined for the weekend by *Carlisle Morris and Sword*, *Two Step* from the northeast, *Ripon City Morris* and Harrogate's *Flag and Bone Gang*.

We began the weekend outside the stunning Ripley Castle, before moving on to the beautiful Valley Gardens in Harrogate, pausing for lunch at a local hostelry, and then continuing the dancing



through the afternoon. In the evening we celebrated with a ruby-themed ceilidh and were entertained by *Ripon Mummers'* latest hilarious production.

On Sunday we met again to dance at Fountains Abbey Visitor Centre, attracting a good crowd of onlookers in its spacious courtyard. We enjoyed our lunch in

beautiful sunshine in the garden of the 'One Eyed Rat' in the city of Ripon. Tearing ourselves away, we mustered a few more dances before succumbing to the calling of a cup of Yorkshire Tea and a piece of cake (or two) to complete the day, where we also bade farewell to our guests, thanking them for helping to make our celebratory weekend so successful.



Betty Lupton's Ladle Laikers celebrating 40 years of dance

We have enjoyed a number of other local dance outs this year but are currently looking forward to our next big event, dancing at Whitby Folk Week in August.

We send congratulations to any other teams who are celebrating their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and a big thank you to all the morris sides we have had the privilege of meeting and dancing with throughout the years. Here's to many more years of dance.



## Traditional British Clogs

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🌐 [www.facebook.com/philhowardclogs](http://www.facebook.com/philhowardclogs)



# 40 glorious years for Cuckoo's Nest Morris

Based in Brighton, *Cuckoo's Nest Morris* started this special year by hosting Brighton Day of Dance for which we were joined by 13 sides from all over the UK as well as guests from Sweden.



Held on a splendidly sunny Saturday in May, a fine time was had beside the Sussex seaside, all topped off by a most convivial evening party. The following day, a small group of survivors gathered in Lewes to conclude the fun with lunch and a very informal dance. As well as a full dance-out programme, (including our first visit to Wimborne Minster Folk Festival) we have other 'Anniversary Adventures' planned and early in July we headed to Cheddar for a weekend of dancing, which included Priddy Folk Festival.

We were founded in 1976 and danced out for the first time in 1977. Early recruitment posters show the side described as the *University of Sussex Women's Morris* and practices were initially held on the university campus. The first kit was a plain brown pinafore dress but this was soon replaced with Laura Ashley print floral skirts, brown waistcoats, white shirts, bloomers and straw hats. A kit that was very much of its time! In that first decade, Adderbury, Headington, Bampton, Eynsham and Sherborne were amongst the traditions danced as well as the more local 'Brighelmstone' – dances invented by *Cuckoo's Nest* members. It was during that first decade that we started our May Day morning tradition of dancing at Hollingbury Hill Fort with *Brighton Morris Men*.

By 1987, the side had added Bledington and Ducklington dances to the repertoire

as well as entering our era of international travel (to France). Kit now included red socks, while hats had been discarded. In 1994, the kit was completely overhauled and changed to individually coloured skirts and waistcoats, red belts with bells and ribbons, white shirts, and black socks.

Our third decade saw numbers diminish but

dedicated members of the side kept it going during a lean couple of years. Unsurprisingly the kit changed again, and we adopted the black waistcoats and individually coloured skirts that we wear today. During this time the repertoire extended to include Upton-on-Severn, Raglan, Basque and border dances. We also launched our first website.

Forty years on we have established our kit (fingers crossed!) and we continue to perform dances that are mainly from the Cotswold tradition while taking our influences from a wide range of places. We're accompanied by a band of musicians who play traditional and original tunes on acoustic instruments. In 2016 we became the proud holders of the Evesham Stick and this now accompanies us on our travels.

It's fair to say, that while we take our

dancing seriously we also know how to enjoy ourselves, and we've been fortunate to attract and keep dancers over the years. So as we go into our fifth decade, the future looks bright. We love continuing the morris tradition and are looking forward to many more years of doing precisely this.

We welcome new members, with practices held on Monday nights in central Brighton. Contact us via our website:

[www.cuckoosnestmorris.com](http://www.cuckoosnestmorris.com)

or our Facebook page:

@CuckoosNestMorris



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# Chesterfield Garland Dancers celebrate 40 years

"*Chesterfield Garland Dancers* have had the world at their feet for 40 years", so says *The Derbyshire Times*...

To celebrate the team's 40th birthday Bolsover Castle was chosen as a suitably majestic setting. We were joined for the day by many local teams: *Cock & Magpie* (mixed Morris) from Chesterfield, *Three Shires* (ladies clog) from Harthill, *Anstey Royale Chalfont* (ladies clog) from Leicester and *Yorkshire Chandelier* (ladies clog) from Sheffield. The weather started out grey and drizzly but eventually the mist cleared and we were able to perform at various points without being too distracted by the wonderful views and our grand

surroundings. Everything was rounded off with an amazing 16 couple Winstar Gallop, after which we retired to the local Blue Bell pub for lunch, more dancing, and to cut the cake.

*Chesterfield Garland* was started in 1977 as part of the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations. We dance traditional north-west clog dances but are constantly seeking out new dances and even writing some of our own (the most obvious one is called 'Chesterfield'). We wear brightly coloured dresses, black waistcoats and individually embroidered aprons.

Over the years, the team has travelled far and wide, entertaining thousands of people in China, Namibia, the US,

Italy, Netherlands, France, Germany and mostly recently, Spain. Aside from birthday celebrations, we dance where we can find Derbyshire Well Dressings.

We always welcome new members, both dancers and musicians and practise at the Methodist Church Hall, Jawbones Hill, Derby Road, Chesterfield, S40 2EN, on Tuesday evenings, 7.30 – 9.30pm, September to April.

Visit: [www.chesterfieldgarland.org.uk](http://www.chesterfieldgarland.org.uk)



MARGARET  
HERSEE



# Sweet Coppin reach the grand young age of 40

The group was set up by the wives of *Taunton Deane Morris Men* who felt they were missing out on some of the fun their partners were enjoying.

*Sweet Coppin*, the clog dancing team from Taunton in Somerset, now encompasses

ladies of all ages and backgrounds, with some male musicians.



To celebrate this milestone in our history we held a ceilidh and day of dance at Halsway Manor as part of the Manor's annual fete. The day of dance included other types of dance, provided by *Taunton Deane Morris Men*, *City Clickers*, and *Silver Flame Rapper* amongst others, who also provided workshops for members of the public to have a go at the various traditions. The

ceilidh was attended by many of the past members and friends of the group showing how strong the links and friendships keep going.

The whole event was a great success, and we all look forward to the next 40 years of *Sweet Coppin*! To find out more about our group visit: [www.sweet-coppin.co.uk](http://www.sweet-coppin.co.uk)



GILLY  
PHILPOT





Photograph by James Warner of Imago Memoria

# WAKEFIELD MORRIS FOURTH OSSETT BEERCART

JOHN  
EARNSHAW

After what has been our most successful Beercart Festival so far, we have now firmly established this Yorkshire tradition in the annual calendar of events.

Twelve morris teams visited from around the country, the furthest visitors being; *Beltane Border Morris* from Devon, *Customs and Exiles* from Wokingham in Berkshire, *Kettlebridge* from Kent, and *Hexham Morris Men* and *Hexhamshire Lasses* from Northumberland.

The beer festival opened in the Town Hall from 7-11pm on Friday and included 42 real ales, eight ciders, and for the first time a Prosecco Bar, which sold out! Hot food was available in the hall and a small folk band provided entertainment.

On the Saturday morning over 100 morris dancers and musicians hauled the Beercart around the two-and-a-half mile route in Ossett and pulled up in front of the Town Hall at precisely the prescribed arrival time of 11am.

Wakefield Morris then released 22 balloons in memory of the victims of the Manchester bombing the week prior.

The Beercart dance was performed, the ceremonial barrel of beer carried into the Town Hall and the dancing began in and around the Town Hall and Market Place.

For the second year running there was a market, which added to the numbers and general

whom had team photographs taken outside 'their' shop.

The dancing lasted until 4pm and the beer festival remained open until 11.30pm, with the beer virtually all gone by the end of the day.



Ripon City Morris • Photograph by Ben Potton

On the Sunday we decided to invite the visiting teams to join us for a dance display outside Cannon Hall near Barnsley, and provide a pie and peas lunch.

This idea worked really well and the seven teams that joined Wakefield enjoyed

the magnificent views of the Yorkshire countryside visible from the hall.

All in all a splendid time was had by all and after thanking the visiting teams for coming to our festival we bade them farewell and a safe journey home, after which Wakefield Morris returned to Ossett Town Hall to dismantle the beer festival and put it all away for another year.

It only remains for me to thank the Beercart Chairman, Sarah Haigh, whose unstinting energy and organisational ability made this

year's festival the success it was.

A final big surprise for us was that Ossett Beercart was nominated for an award in the 2017 Wakefield Business Awards under the People's Choice category. We didn't win, but to be nominated was fantastic and shows how the businesses and people of Ossett have taken the event to heart.

Don't forget next year's dates: Fri 1<sup>st</sup> to Sun 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2018.



Wakefield Morris • Photograph by Ben Potton

interest. A first for this year, 13 of the shops provided displays of the kit and colours of the visiting teams, many of



Hook Eagle at the Beltane Festival on the South Downs, May 2017

JONATHAN  
BUISSON

# HOOK EAGLE MORRIS

A roundup of events and dance-outs throughout May and June attended by the Hampshire border side.

Hook Eagle had a 'morris-a-thon' May Bank Holiday weekend. First off, we were invited to the Beltane Festival down at Buster Ancient Farm on the South Downs. The event culminated with the burning of a 30-foot-high wicker man showering everyone with sparks! This was followed by an enjoyable day at the Sweeps Festival down in Rochester where we kept ahead of the rain and danced until the late afternoon. Most of the side then managed to drag themselves out of bed in the wee small hours of May Day to dance at dawn outside the Phoenix Inn, before enjoying the second cooked breakfast of the weekend.



Wicker Man, Beltane Festival, South Downs, May 2017

The 'Master of the Beer Ceremony' is a new tradition aimed at raising funds for All Saints Church in Odiham, our next door village. On 13 May, Hook Eagle danced outside the church, in between forming an honour guard for arriving guests. Inside, Hart Male Voice Choir and the Odiham Military Wives Choir provided some beautiful singing, and much beer, wine and cheese was consumed by all. Finally, the combined choirs led the whole audience in

a flag-waving 'Last Night of the Proms' sing-along. Over £2,000 was raised to help church funds and to support work with refugees overseas.

For our back-to-back weekend of dancing at Winchester Mayfest (20 May) and Alresford Watercress Festival (21 May) we had to cope with all that the British weather could throw at us. Unfortunately, early sunshine turned to torrential rain, forcing us to spend a lot of time in various pubs, but we did manage to perform for the Mayor and Mayoress of Winchester and to dance inside the Great Hall. The Watercress Festival in New

Alresford is one of the side's favourite events, and its popularity with the crowds keeps on growing. In stark contrast to the previous day, the sun shone brightly and relentlessly. Hook Eagle took part in the parade as well as dancing in the High Street and in the lovely waterside garden at the Globe Inn by the edge of Old Alresford Pond. By the end of the day, most of the side were looking a bit sunburned as well as tired,



Hook Eagle at Hartley Wintney Festival, June 2017

but happy, and the watercress was as tasty as ever.

After a break for the late May Bank Holiday, The Eagles boarded their fun bus for a trip to the picturesque market

town of Dorking to take part in Boxhill Bedlam Morris Day of Dance on 3 June, dancing in and around the town and its many pleasant and well-stocked pubs.

Closer to home, we took part in the Hartley Wintney Festival on 10 June. Following the parade around the cricket ground, we made our way to the Belgian Beer tent and pronounced the Westmalle Trappist beers from Hartley

Wintney's twin town to be as refreshing as ever, before dancing some more in front of the beer tent and then enjoying one of the most quintessentially English of all village fairs.



# JMO NATIONAL DAY OF DANCE

Dance teams from across the three morris organisations took to the streets of the city of Leicester on Saturday 13 May 2017, for the annual national day of dance. The day was hosted by Leicester Morris Men and The Morris Ring.



Wharfedale Wayzgoose Border Morris  
Photograph by Jenny Cox



Robert Chisman, John Edwards and Knotty  
Officers of The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts  
Photograph by Jenny Cox



Trigger and the dragon  
Photograph by Jenny Cox



Tatterfoals Morris  
Photograph by Jenny Cox



Eddie Worrall - Squire of The Morris Ring  
Photograph by Mike Everett



Beorma Border Morris  
Photograph by Mike Everett



Rattlejag Morris  
Photograph by Jenny Cox



Southport Sword  
Photograph by Jenny Cox



Adlington Morris Men  
Photograph by Duncan Broomhead



The Maids of Clifton  
Photograph by Mike Everett



Berkshire Bedlam  
Photograph by Duncan Broomhead



Pecsætan Morris  
Photograph by Duncan Broomhead



Backanalia Border Morris  
Photograph by Duncan Broomhead



Leicester Morris Men  
Photograph by Jenny Cox



SIMON COSTIN

# The Museum of British Folklore

SINCE SETTING OFF ON THE ROAD IN A CONVERTED CARAVAN IN 2009, THE MUSEUM OF BRITISH FOLKLORE, THE AIM OF WHICH IS TO ESTABLISH THE VERY FIRST CENTRE DEDICATED TO THE SEASONAL CUSTOMS OF BRITAIN, HAS BEEN ON AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY...

The museum has produced a diverse selection of exhibitions, encompassing everything from fireworks in Britain, the influence of folklore on photography and its role in the birth of popular art, to the fascinating archive of sword dancer Trevor Stone and, most recently, a series of exhibitions featuring the popular Morris Folk: an ever-increasing band of hand-made dolls.

Morris Folk is a project which is particularly close to our hearts, as it involves practitioners in the making of the costumes which are a document of the plethora of amazing outfits worn by morris sides throughout the land, more of which, later.

Alongside curating exhibitions, we have run education programmes, working with different groups to engage them with British folklore, including secondary school design technology students, based in Stratford-upon-Avon, who produced artwork based on firework art, and undergraduate photography students at the London College of Communication, who looked at the morris dolls and the notion of the archive in the context of their own practice.

Through our travels and experiences, we have found that so many people are touched and inspired by aspects of British folk culture. This response has helped

to drive the momentum of the museum project and left us with the impression that the time is right to create a centre where the rich variety of these traditions can be explored and celebrated.

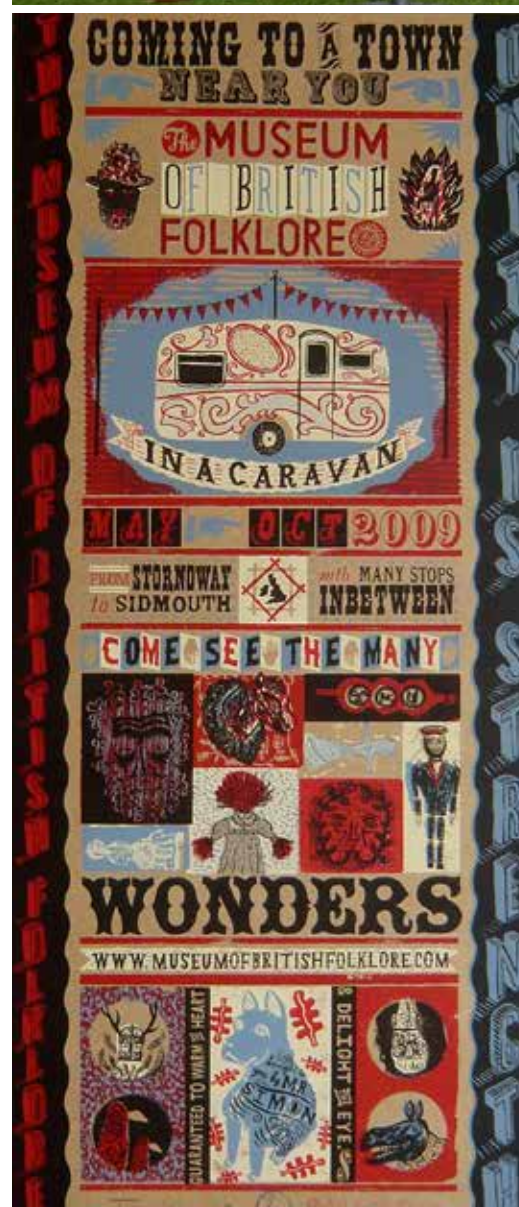
Eventually, we would like to have a building which includes a dedicated exhibition space, for both the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions, an archive centre for people, be they casual enthusiasts or PhD students, to study British traditions in more depth, a performance space and, of course, a restaurant providing delicious, locally-sourced food and drink!

This centre will most likely be based in the South of England, with its deep rooted folk heritage, transport links to London and the opportunity to collaborate with the many other art and history organisations based in the area. Such an ambition is necessarily long-term and, in the interim, we are hoping to establish a temporary home to enable us to test out ideas and forge links with the local community before embarking on the next phase of the project.

These are exciting times and we feel confident that, with the support of the folk community and beyond, we can achieve our dream of a permanent home for this often overlooked but hugely important aspect of Britain's history and culture.



THE CARAVAN THAT  
BEGAN THE JOURNEY IN 2009



MORRIS DOLLS  
CHRISTIE'S EXHIBITION, 2016



MORRIS DOLLS  
CHRISTIE'S EXHIBITION, 2016



THE HISTORY  
OF FIREWORKS IN BRITAIN

Currently, a large part of our work is to raise awareness of our plans and the morris dolls have been amazing in helping us to communicate what the Museum of British Folklore is all about. They embody the spirit and ethos of the museum: the belief that folklore is a living heritage that can be shared by everyone and the importance of involving people who participate in seasonal customs. We feel that it is really important that practitioners, the 'keepers of the flame', are actively involved with the museum, to give an authentic view of seasonal customs in the UK today.

We also collaborate with artists for whom British folklore is a continually inspiring subject, stimulating the creation of new work and bringing folklore to new audiences. For example, our show at the Towner Gallery, Eastbourne, showcased work by contemporary photographers, sculptors and filmmakers, who all use the traditions of Britain as a starting point for their work.

To develop the Morris Folk project, we are launching a crowdfunding campaign later this year. This will enable the making of more blank dolls to be sent out to morris sides and will culminate in an exhibition to showcase the new additions to the Morris Folk family, alongside the existing members - a selection of these have recently been on display in the Folk Art galleries at Compton Verney:

[www.comptonverney.org.uk/thing-to-do/morris-folk-dolls](http://www.comptonverney.org.uk/thing-to-do/morris-folk-dolls)

If you would like to contribute a doll to the collection, please email: [mofbf@clara.co.uk](mailto:mofbf@clara.co.uk) to ensure that your team is represented. We will be in touch with other ways that you can help when we launch the crowdfunding project. So, please watch this space...

Further information on our work can be found at: [www.museumofbritishfolklore.com](http://www.museumofbritishfolklore.com) You can also follow us on Twitter: @museumofbritish and Instagram: @museum\_of\_british\_folklore



# EFDSS Gold Badges FOR MARY AND MIKE WILSON-JONES

MELANIE  
BARBER



Photograph by Derek Schofield

**MORRIS FEDERATION MEMBERS, MARY AND MIKE WILSON-JONES, OF KETTLE BRIDGE CLOGS, RECEIVED THE EFDSS GOLD BADGES FROM MIKE NORRIS AND MALCOLM TAYLOR RESPECTIVELY, AT A GOLDEN CELEBRATION AT CECIL SHARP HOUSE ON SUNDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> MAY.**

Mike Bennett, who wrote Mary's citation started by saying, "Most recipients of the Gold Badge are used to seeing their names in lights above the title. Mary isn't. She served 14 years in that most anonymous of backroom jobs,

as company secretary to EFDSS, seeing the society through some of the biggest governance changes in decades."

Mike's citation was written by Dick Hobbs, who said, "Mike first joined the National Executive Committee of EFDSS in 1970 – at the age of 25 he was probably the youngest ever member. In 2001 he succeeded Philip Bloy as the Society's treasurer. He introduced improved financial systems, assisted with the new membership system and the recording of Gift Aid, and set up the first version of the online shop."

I had the privilege of attending the celebration, which didn't stop there, as Mike & Mary also celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary this year. Congratulations to you both!

*Expanded versions of Mike and Mary's Gold Badge citations were published in the summer edition of English Dance and Song, and the full citations can be read online at the English Folk Dance and Song Society website: [www.efdss.org](http://www.efdss.org)*

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# Who are the Knights of King Ina?

ANDREW  
KNIGHT

**THE KNIGHTS OF KING INA (KOKI) BEGAN WITH A SMALL GROUP OF DANCERS FROM DR TURBERVILLE'S MORRIS IN 2011. TAKING NOTES OF MUSIC, STEPS AND MOVEMENTS FROM THE EARLIEST RECORDED SOURCE, THE AIM WAS TO AVOID ONGOING DISCUSSIONS ABOUT HOW A DANCE WAS PERFORMED AND TO DEFINE A STYLE THAT DIDN'T SIMPLY RELY ON WHAT HAD BEEN LEARNED FROM OTHER TEAMS AND TEACHING STYLES.**

Popularity of jig dancing seems to be on the rise, with more sides and individual dancers both performing and learning jigs today than when Koki began. There are also two memorial jig competitions, the new Cliff Barstow Memorial Jig Competition in Yorkshire, and the long-standing John Gasson Memorial Jig Competition in Sidmouth.

Jigs allow a fantastic opportunity for those who wish to dance more, and to get out to festivals where a whole team may be unavailable. Koki dance out at a number of festivals throughout the year, and we

welcome jig dancers to join with us. Our musicians are able to offer most of the established jig repertoire. Email: [squire@koki.org.uk](mailto:squire@koki.org.uk) if you are interested in coming along.

The Knights of King Ina have also been running increasingly popular low-cost jig workshops for the past four years in the southwest of England, covering many of the Cotswold jig dances from across the main traditions.

We focus on safe practice and good technique, and do not aim to alter team styles but to enhance the



Photograph by David Steel

abilities of dancers. It is encouraging to hear from previous attendees that they have been increasing their jig performances while also improving their safe dance technique.

Our workshops are held in November and March, with the November workshop paced at beginner level and aimed at those either new to morris or dancers from other dance traditions who wish to gain a taster of Cotswold Morris, so no previous experience is necessary. Visit: [www.koki.org.uk](http://www.koki.org.uk)



## Jig Workshops

**Beginners: Sunday 19 November 2017**

**Progressors: Sunday 18 March 2018**

10am-4pm, Keinton Mandeville Village Hall (TA11 6ES)

For more info, contact **Andrew: 01458 223300**  
or email: [squire@koki.org.uk](mailto:squire@koki.org.uk)

**Book early to avoid disappointment!**



The next two Koki workshops will focus on the performance of the steps and figures in the Cotswold tradition of Sherborne.

A focus on health issues will be also covered, as performing moves and steps safely will enhance your dancing and (hopefully!) prolong your dancing life.

The November workshop is open to everyone but is directed toward beginners or those new to Cotswold Morris, as well as those who wish to try another tradition, or improve their technique by going back and revisiting footwork, arm movements, and body control.

The March workshop will be a progression on what has been learned in the November workshop and is suitable as a follow-on, or for dancers already familiar with the tradition looking to improve their performance.





# ONE STOP MORRIS SHOP

**YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED A NEW STALL AROUND AT FESTIVALS AND MORRIS EVENTS OVER THE LAST YEAR. JENNY EVERETT ASKED NATASHA BOJANOWSKI ABOUT HERSELF AND HER NEW ENTERPRISE.**

I was born into the folk dance tradition; my mum dances and plays. I started young with Ashley's Rise Junior Morris and I enjoyed dancing border, but my real passion is rapper. I currently play for Northgate Rapper, and I'll be joining Mabel Gubbins Rapper as a dancer in September. I'm looking forward to dancing again.

One of my life aims is to improve the standard and profile of English traditional dance. With this in mind, I set up One Day Rapper to help new people into the rapper tradition and to bring rapper into the public domain. This project will be 10 next year. Over 50 people have attended projects over the last decade and are now linked with 18 rapper teams.

It was because of rapper that the One Stop Morris Shop came about. It all started in 2010. I teach workshops in a variety of traditions and I wanted to

run rapper workshops myself. I needed to get in a job lot of rapper shoes so that people attending the workshop could borrow shoes and learn the style properly. I simply could not find what I needed, so I researched how to create a custom rapper shoe and make it available to others. I also custom designed a rapper shirt and these two products are unique to One Stop Morris Shop. Then I then got asked, "Do you sell hankies? Do you sell shirts?", and so it began!

We specialise in kit – clothing and shoes. I think it's important for the tradition to have a reliable supply of the correct clothing, shoes, and accessories – I'm very pedantic about accurate sewing, and I never go anywhere without a travel iron.

My aim now is that people can come to me and leave with everything they need. If I don't have it myself, then I can direct customers to

the people who do: clog makers, rapper sword makers, etc. If you don't see it, ask and we'll try and source it. I can even get you vegan bell pads made from neoprene.

Different items sell well at different events. At DERT (Dancing England Rapper Tournament) it's rapper shoes. We've just been to Chippenham Folk Festival where we sold a lot of white collarless shirts. We regularly sell face paint, hankies, and single bells for children and dogs. We are also seeing an increase in sales of complete sets of bell pads, made up ready for dancing.

In my non-dancing life I am a part time singing teacher and I also volunteer with South West Ambulance Service as a Community First Responder. I am just finishing my A-Level Maths (as a mature student) as I am going to university in September to study paramedic science.

My aim is to work part-time, so that I can be hands-on in the shop. I have two ladies that do a couple of hours a week for me: Lucy who helps me with my social media presence and product admin, and Georgie who helps with sewing: she managed to cut out 122 hankies in one day. I also have a small

**JENNY  
EVERETT  
TALKS TO  
NATASHA  
BOJANOWSKI**

A few of the many volunteers you will see when visiting the One Stop Morris Shop



army of volunteers, Jo is helping with event admin, and the amazing volunteer stall holders who you will see as and when you visit the stall. My husband, Joe, stays up late, gets up early, packs the van and occasionally drives through the night to get us to where we're going.

One Stop Morris Shop is a labour of love, and any money made is used to cover the costs of running the business. I aim to keep all products, both new and second-hand, as cheap as possible whilst providing a good standard.

We are out and about at lots of events and festivals, but if you want us at your event do get in touch. Visit our website: [www.onestopmorrisshop.co.uk](http://www.onestopmorrisshop.co.uk)



**ONE STOP  
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**By dancers, for dancers**

# THE HISTORIES OF THE MORRIS IN BRITAIN

A conference about morris dancing – was it really necessary? The Historical Dance Society thought so and, together with the English Folk Dance and Song Society, plus the support of the three morris organisations, many of the great and good of the morris world gathered for a weekend conference in Cecil Sharp House from 25-26 March 2017.

The Morris Federation was well represented by speakers, dancers, attendees and displays, with Val Parker opening the talks with her memories of *The Women's Morris Federation*. Sally Wearing presented a paper on dance and costume, and Chloe Middleton-Metcalf discussed the problems of wearing white trousers.

The talks covered a wide and varied range of topics, including Jacobean dance and Mr Isaac's Morris, the Travelling Morrice, Conrad Noel – the 'red' vicar of Thaxted – and the Thaxted Movement, John Forrest speaking about his book, and John Lewis on Roy Dommett.

Elaine Bradtke's paper on morris tunes was read by Derek Schofield and included recordings of Jinky Wells on cylinder and disc. Elaine then answered the audience's questions via a Skype link to her home in Washington State.

Entertaining and well appreciated dance displays were given by Hammersmith Morris on Saturday and Innocent Hare on Sunday.

Personal highlights from the weekend were Sue Allan's fascinating account of collecting dances in Cumbria, Lucy Wright's update on her current research on carnival morris, which accompanied her exhibition that was on display at Cecil Sharp House, and a challenging presentation on tangible morris objects. These could be articles in museums, plaques, street names, gravestones, pub names and pubs as dance venues, and badges

and other memorabilia that are not currently being collected by museums. Perhaps there is somebody or several people who would like to begin carrying out an audit to find what's out there? Or we could start a virtual collection – photos on a Facebook page? Let me know if you are interested: [archive@morrisfed.org.uk](mailto:archive@morrisfed.org.uk)

Finally, one fact from the weekend that may surprise some is that the tradition of dancing up the sun on May morning only dates back to the 1950s.

It is most encouraging that research into the morris continues. Long may it do so, and I will look forward to the proceedings being published by the organisers to remind me of all the bits I've already forgotten and to make it available to a much wider audience.



Hammersmith Morris • Photograph: Duncan Broomhead

**MIKE  
EVERETT**



# A most unconventional weekend of dance

**FOOLS AND BEASTS HAVE AN ANCIENT HERITAGE, HAVING BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH ROYAL AND NOBLE HOUSEHOLDS ACROSS THE CENTURIES, AS WELL AS BEING COMPÈRES AT LOCAL FESTIVALS OR ENTERTAINERS IN THEIR OWN RIGHT. OVER TIME, THEY HAVE BECOME LINKED WITH LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT INCLUDING MORRIS DANCING.**

Those taking on the persona of either fool or beast develop unique characteristics to suit their talents and personality. They primarily serve to provide a link between the dancers and the audience; to support the dancers, but not upstage them, e.g. making announcements, giving personal explanations, chivvying up the dancers, or entertaining and teasing the audience (especially children) between dances.

*The Illustrious Order of United Fools* was founded in 1979 as a result of discussions about the declining standard of fooling in *The Morris Ring*, and alongside mutterings that fools should be banned from certain *Ring* events. The name undertook the slight change to become *The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts* in 1980.

In 2004, it became open to all fools and beasts (who can apply to become accredited members) and supporters of the tradition who are non-fools/beasts (and can apply to become associate members), from across the three UK morris organisations.

Every year, an *unconvention* (previously *The Fools and Animals weekend*) is held, where attendees provide entertainment for the public, share experiences, discuss the merits of fools and fooling, and offer advice to old and new members.

I attended last year's *unconvention* hosted by Somerset's *Wyvern Jubilee Morris*, and enjoyed a fun and informative morris weekend, including a trip to a local cider farm, a day of dance around Wells market, the Bishop's Palace, and the cathedral, an evening feast and ale, plenty of time to share tales, stories, and other oddities, a workshop, short AGM, and finally more dancing in Castle Cary!

In addition to the instructive Sunday morning workshop, I sat down with a few of the attendees to ask them about how they got started and if they had any tips for those thinking of having a go...



Above: scratch side of fools

Right: Alan Cocker (Wyvern Jubilee Squire), with Shergar (Pete Austin - Jockey Morrismen)

Below: an assemblage of beasts

SAM ROSS,  
NEWSLETTER  
EDITOR



All photographs by Sam Ross

## Robert Chisman (Trigg Morris)

Scrivener/Convener for *The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts* has had his alter-ego Trigger Trotter (hooden horse) for over 25 years, "I used to morris dance at school when I was around 8/9 and really enjoyed it, learning all the moves and figures, but I didn't realise that it was morris dancing until some years later. I also used to hold puppet shows at school for charity. Now I combine the two, morris dancing with a puppet! I can do things that I would never do without Trigger."



I would like to give my thanks to the officers of *The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts*, Julian Kohler (Squire), Robert Chisman (Scrivener and Convener) and John Edwards (webmaster), the attendees to the 2016 *unconvention* and *Wyvern Jubilee Morris* for making me feel most welcome. Special thanks to Peter de Courcy for going through the archives to untangle the historical dates. All other background info taken from: [www.foolsandbeasts.org.uk](http://www.foolsandbeasts.org.uk)



## Christina Pritchard (Red Stags Morris)

Once a handler to Horace the Red Stag (hooded beast) for 13 years, Christina converted to being a fool six years ago when Horace was damaged, "Horace was great as I was completely anonymous and never spoke. I used to get children to frighten Horace, rather than the other way around. I am now a 'dancing fool', as I dance in and out of the set, but sometimes I will sit in the middle blowing bubbles, which amuses the children. Be mindful not to distract from the dancers; be aware of them, but don't get in the way, know the dances, and work out your timings to get into and out of a set. Be aware of new dancers and those who can't cope with something different happening within the set."

## Mark Bailey and James Oram (Exeter Morrismen)

Mark has been morris dancing for over 40 years, the past 15 of which he's been following in his late father's footsteps (John Bailey) as the side fool, "Being a fool is great for improvising, ad-libbing, teasing the dancers, talking to the crowd, working with kids, using sticks and hankies, but the dancing is always the main focus. Be mindful of your audience. Be yourself, but learn tricks and techniques and make



sure you know the dances of your team if you are going to interact with a set."

James has been dancing for 15 years and for the past two he's also taken on Dobbin (hooden horse) in order to get a break from the dancing, "As a younger dancer in the team, I often get asked to dance in every set. With Dobbin, I get to enjoy a different kind of interaction with the crowd and provide an eccentric aspect to the team. As a beast, it's really important to know how to communicate with your 'handler', for those moments when you need help and assistance."

## John Stait (Jockey Morrismen)

John has been dancing for 40 years, and acting the fool for eight years. He is also a Tommy, "I am the link between the dancers and the audience. I consider the audience to be very important and so aim to put on a good show. I talk to both adults and children, but don't interfere with the side, as it can destroy the dance."



## Clifford Marchant (Chanctonbury Ring Morrismen)

Ex-Squire of *The Morris Ring*, Cliff has been a fool for over 25 years and is about to retire, "I started by simply reaching out to the audience and it evolved from there. You have carte blanche to do anything so long as you don't get in the way, but you do need to go through your routines in practice so that the dancers are aware, plus being able to dance all the dances in every position is a must."



## Gavin Davison (Ripley Morrismen)

Gavin took the reigns of Hunleika (hobbyhorse) on Boxing Day two years ago, "I only wanted a go, but now Hunleika's a part of me. I still have a lot to learn, but it's a gas!"



If you would like to be put in contact with a local team that can help you, or you have any other questions regarding fools/beasts, then please contact Robert Chisman: [triggertrotter1@aol.com](mailto:triggertrotter1@aol.com)

## Top tips for fools and beasts...

### Know the dances

- If you want to be a 'dancing fool', then get to know the traditions and dances of your side inside out and in every position.
- Start with a few dances and work up to the whole repertoire.
- Only work with those dances you know really well when dancing out so that you can be confident in what you do.

### Practise!

- Try out your fooling routine during the practice season.
- Talk to your teammates and get them used to what you're doing.
- Let individual dancers know if you wish to shadow them.

### Dancing out

- Only fool with your own side/s and those you have practised with.
- Know your teammates and be prepared to dance in any position and at any moment, especially if a dancer suddenly needs to leave the set.
- Help new dancers who may lack confidence by dancing on the outside of the set next to them and talking/gesturing them through.
- Help the squire by encouraging dancers into the set for the next dance, rounding up those who may have wandered off, or giving foolish explanations as to why not all the dancers are currently in the set.
- If you're not dancing in the set, try to get the audience involved, especially children and adults that are dancing/moving on the sidelines.
- Don't detract from the dancers. Add to the spectacle and only deviate in the gaps between the dancing.
- Fools can look after beasts and get them out of tricky situations, especially with overenthusiastic children and confused dogs.

### Between dances

- Fill in the time while dancers are getting themselves sorted or need a short break.
- Dance around to keep the audience's attention.
- Have a set routine/gags in hand that you can draw on when needed.

### Remember!

- Even experienced fools/beasts can get it wrong by annoying the team or invading people's space.
- A hooded beast has no human face and can be scary to children and adults alike.
- Be aware of any height difference between yourself/your beast and small children, it can also be intimidating.
- Your self and your beast are two identities, never mix the two.





# Fools and Beasts Unconvention 2017

Hosted by Stafford Morris Men  
Church Eaton, Staffs  
27th-29th October 2017



Open to all budding or experienced Fools, Beasts and Morris Characters from any team from  
The Morris Ring, Open Morris, or The Morris Federation. A truly JMO event!

This year's Unconvention will be based at Church Eaton Village Institute Hall, High Street, Church Eaton, ST20 0AG and will involve workshops and Saturday bus tour to somewhere interesting. The Feast will follow either at the Institute, or at the Royal Oak. On Sunday we will have the AGM of course - your chance to have your say.

Accommodation is indoor camping; there may be provision for outdoor camping and motorhomes, to be confirmed. Please indicate at time of booking. Dogs may be allowed, also to be confirmed.

We have been able to keep the cost at £65 per person, which includes all meals except Sunday lunch, plus coach trip etc.

**Closing date for Applications 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

Yours,  
Robert Chisman, Scrivener and Convenor

Delegate 1)..... Email:..... Fool/Beast/Other.....

Delegate 2)..... Email:..... Fool/Beast/Other.....

Team:.....

Address for correspondence.....

Tel. Day:..... Eve:..... email.....

Any special dietary needs.....

We anticipate having ..... further applicants, if places available.

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## THE FANTASTIC BEASTS OF RAVENS MORRIS

ALAN  
HEAVEN

If you want wholly traditional morris, stay clear of Shiptonthorpe in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

The village (population 400) has its own morris side, but with a difference: a steampunk side who wear black corsets, painted leather coats, top hats adorned with goggles and all manner of clockwork paraphernalia.

"We're kind of Border, and kind of not," explains Squire Allen Spode (all members have steampunk pseudonyms). "Like a lot of sides we make up our own dances, but we are also a proper morris side with respect for tradition. We do a mean Cuckoo's Nest!"

The side includes two 'Fantastic Beasts', that came out together for the first time this summer at the seaside town of Filey in North Yorkshire, hosting its inaugural Steampunk Festival

in blazing hot sunshine.

For the Steampunk Cat the sun was a challenge. This is a puppet constructed using techniques from Chinese Lion manufacture, created following a performance the side did with the Chinese community. Both steps and drum rhythms follow the traditions, which makes it hot work.

"There are two of us inside and we try to keep the energy high while interacting with the audience," said Cat Dancer Shadowfall. The head is heavy and you have to operate eyes and ears, while the rear end dancer has to stay bent double and operate the tail. All while keeping the Chinese steps and moves."

The second beast had the biggest impact as it led a costumed procession along the sea front. This giant steampunk raven, with a wingspan the width

of a road, was carried by one person with two others on the wing tips.

All went smoothly enough, the band playing, a hundred or so people marching merrily, until the wind took hold of the bird and it began to soar higher and higher - along with those holding it.

As it became less of a puppet and more of a kite, a timely leap from Sir Jasper Essbend wrestled it back under control and saved raven and puppeteers from flying out to sea.

Ravens Morris perform all around the north. They were even seen in the York Mystery Plays, traditional medieval bible plays performed on carts drawn through the ancient city.

"Not many morris teams can honestly say they have had God in their side," smiles lady Miffy Lancaster. "Our Squire played him while the rest of

us became devils, demons and angels." All (except God) with morris dances, of course.



Ravens Morris' Steampunk Raven

Ravens Morris perform through spring and summer. They have around 25 members, including children, and welcome family members and friends to dress up and walk, sing or dance with them.

The music is powered by a pair of enormous drums, percussion, fiddle, cornet, squeezebox, and as much noise and rhythm as they can produce.

To get in touch, visit:  
[www.ravensmorris.com](http://www.ravensmorris.com)



Ravens Morris' Steampunk Cat





# MILLE COMPLIMENTI IN ESTE

One Friday night, after a fun-filled energetic practice, we noticed a group of Italian visitors in the pub, from Leek's twin town Este, a town in the Veneto area of Northern Italy.

Amidst the cacophony, a voice from Leek Morris called out, "I think we should go and dance there." Before we could say, "That's just a Winter's Dream", nine dancers and three musicians found themselves at Leek Bus Station on a cold Thursday morning in late September, joining members of the Twinning Committee to represent Leek at the annual Eurofest of Este.

the Hotel Beatrice and marched through the castle grounds, a little unsure of where to start our 'flash-mob' session. However, the warmth and friendliness of the people passing through the Piazza Maggiore soon made us feel at home, with everyone keen to talk about our Cotswold dancing and its traditions.

After lunch, (some forgetting that pasta is a starter in Italy) we had time for relaxation, watching terrapins, and basking in the sun. Later, some chose a free guided tour of the museum while others took in the ambience of the streets.

By Friday evening we were eager to dance the night away under the Union Flag in the Piazza, finishing with an evening meal shared with some of the community and representatives from other twinning towns. Of course, we had to dance and play for our supper and the sound from our musicians' instruments bounced around the courtyard with us.

Saturday was the official welcome of the new Mayor of Este, a rather lengthy process, but our dancing was much appreciated, especially our signature dance 'Hoarders'. Afterwards, when browsing the market stalls, we began to feel like celebrities as many stall holders wanted to be photographed with us, including the local optician wanting the 'spectacular' sight for his Facebook page.

On Sunday morning we were invited to the grounds of the Villa Benvenuti, where wine, salami, and bread sticks

were offered to all, followed by a coach ride into the Euganean Hills to visit the wine cellars.

By Sunday evening we were performing with gusto at the closing ceremony to a most enthusiastic crowd, with two elderly ladies repeatedly expressing the sentiment, "Mille complimenti!" (a thousand compliments).

Our final day was a trip to Venice. The early thunderstorm was quickly followed by a wonderful warm sunny day as we arrived in the spectacular city by train. There had been uncertainty as to whether Este had a train station, however, on our return journey we soon discovered that it not only boasted two, but that we'd actually caught the train a few kilometres out of town. Surely a dozen or so morris dancers couldn't go wrong? Still, no point in making a song and dance about it – the taxi was still running!

What a wonderful long weekend, full of fun, frolics and friendship – and a bonus for Leek Morris, of dancing in the sun!



Leek Morris dancing under the Union Flag in the Piazza

## JKL VIDEO SIDMOUTH FOLK FESTIVAL 1987-2004 NOW AVAILABLE ON DVD

**WOULD YOU LIKE ARCHIVE FOOTAGE OF YOUR TEAM DANCING AT SIDMOUTH INTERNATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL BETWEEN 1987 AND 2004 – 'THE MRS CASEY YEARS'?**

Bill Lankester, of JKL Video, now retired, is offering Morris Federation member teams the chance to buy DVD copies of the famous JKL Sidmouth videos for only £5 each. You may remember that Bill and his team filmed almost every aspect of the Sidmouth International Folk Festival, as it then was. If your team performed at the Arena, or on the Seafront, or perhaps you had entrants in the Ceremonial Dance Competition or the Jig Competition, then Bill probably has you on film.

JKL produced individual tapes covering many of the 'invited' teams each year. I know that includes teams such as Fosbrook's (1989), Bampton (1990 and 1999), Carlisle Sword (1990), Rumworth (1990), Sheffield City (1990), Seven Champions (1992), Great Western (inevitably!), Shropshire Bedlams & Martha Rhoden's (1995), Britannia Coconutters (2002), Gog Magog Molly (2003), amongst others. There are also videos of the morris shows: Frost & Fire (1996), Flashback! (1999), Flame! (2003) and Leap! (2004); and a 1990 two-tape set of Dancers of the British Isles.

They also produced compilation tapes of Street Singers and Dancers, and (separately)

English Folk and Morris most years. This usually included not only guest teams but also some of the busking on the sea front.

**JERRY WEST,  
NOTATION  
OFFICER**

If you have a JKL VHS video you can no longer play, now is the ideal time to get a digital copy for yourself or your

team archive. Or you could buy two copies and donate one to the Morris Federation Archive as a record of your performance style and dances at that time.

There is a snag - there is no index of performers (yet), so you have to know when your team danced at the festival.

If you know the year you can ask to see if there is a tape of your team (alone), or you can take a gamble - and it is only £5, or £10 for both after all - to see what the Street Dancers or English Morris recordings cover. If you know the day of the week and venue where the



Carlisle Morris at Sidmouth Folk Week

team danced then you can ask if JKL filmed that particular event. For instance, I suspect there are Arena show reels - morning, afternoon and evening - for most days for most years. There are also videos of all the foreign teams should you be looking for inspiration for a new dance...

To help gauge interest, initial enquiries should be made to myself, the Notation Officer: [notation@morrisfed.org.uk](mailto:notation@morrisfed.org.uk) Please note that this service is offered on an ad-hoc basis at present, so please allow 28 days for delivery!



Leek Morris dancing in the Piazza Maggiore, Este

All items considered as weapons (sticks) were stashed away in our trusty Squire's campervan, apart from the 'stomping stick' (lagerphone) taking up most of the luggage allowance! Despite a few exasperating moments at Manchester airport, when a melodeon was strip searched and a music stand was checked for hidden weapons, we all arrived safely.

Friday morning dawned bright, and saw us all putting on our dancing shoes and new socks for the occasion, We met at

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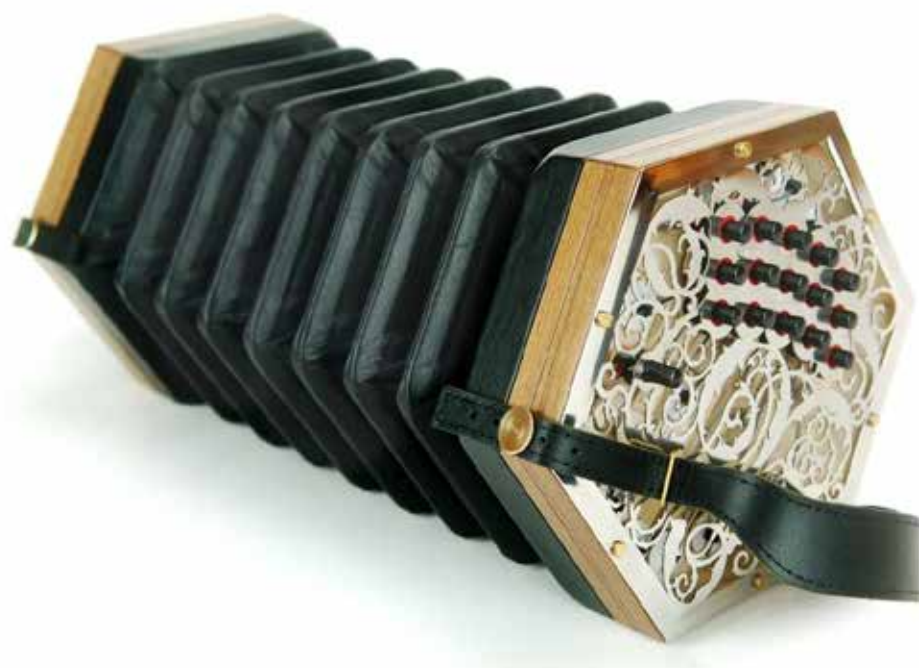
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## Paul White's DIARY

A question of kit. Who cares?  
And sparks flying in Hull.

jacket of silver and yellow and a bowler hat festooned with flowers, badges and beer mats.

Whisky – indeed any spirit – rarely passes my lips. But there was a time when I gave it a serious go. That's because I was living and working in Edinburgh and made up my mind to immerse myself in the local culture.

But after falling over one too many times I resolved that this was one Sassenach who was never going to make the grade. So whisky was out.

I learned to be very wary though, because a favourite game of some of my workmates – one in particular – was to lace others' drinks with a tot or two of the hard stuff and have a good old laugh when the extra alcohol kicked in.

But that didn't put me off getting to grips with other local customs and traditions. Scottish dancing for one. I joined a troupe and quickly got the hang of the steps and figures.

The kit – as you'd expect – was very tartanny. Tartan trews, tartan waistcoat and tartan cuffs and collar on a black shirt. Smart and impressive.

But I chose a different look.

Border was my way in to morris so I reckoned I should reflect my own heritage in my kit and chose a pretty fetching ensemble comprising black trousers, a fulsome tattered

They loved it! If ever I was unable to make a gig, there was a tangible air of disappointment. I still get emails from my fellow dancers recalling those good old days.

The kilt comes from another proud tradition that would never tolerate its style being corrupted in such a way. But border sides up and down the country let it happen without a murmur of discontent. Not that I've heard anyway.

As politely as I could, I asked a bloke why he chose to

He was driving his Mini but had failed to secure the roof rack properly. It was loaded with heavy camping equipment.

Jim liked to buzz along. We were following him and we stopped at traffic lights in the city centre. Green flashed on, Jim spun the wheels and set off at a pace. But the roof rack had other ideas. It slid off the roof, hit the tarmac and skidded along the road behind the Mini, sparks flying from its metal legs.

Come September I expect to amass a new set of fond memories, for we are heading to our City of Culture's Day of Dance. Unfortunately we won't be dancing because we have missed the deadline. But it promises to be a great day.

Set down here in Cornwall, we have a busy morris scene with all that encompasses. Great friendships and a steely determination to have a good time. But we don't see many sides from far afield.

Here's a chance to clap eyes upon dancers from all over the country and get a real morris transfusion. I expect to see sparks flying once more in Hull. Morris in great quantity, celebrating a grand tradition and set in a great city. So much to enjoy. See you there?



Have fun with your kit! Photograph of Rag Morris by Paul White

One half of the above story is true. The other half is a pack of lies.

Daft isn't it? It would never happen. But it does. Any morris gathering you go to you are bound to run into some bloke wearing a kilt.

Have I got anything against kilts? No. On the right body they look the business. And while there are some bodies that are clearly not designed for the kilt, that is not at the root of this rant. It's just that morris is an English tradition we are all proud of – and equally proud of that fact that the tradition is now to be found in many other countries around the world.

wear a kilt when dancing the morris – and when the kit as worn by all other members of his side was totally kilt-less. A mouthful of distasteful invective was the response. Lesson learned: I must be the one who is out of kilter.

I remember Hull as a vibrant city with impressive architecture and yellow phone boxes. It was also the city where Jim lost his roof rack in spectacular fashion.

Journalist, editor, ukulele player, and singer, Paul White has been dancing the morris since the year 2000. He is a founding member of both *Wreckers* and *Cat's Eye* in Cornwall, helped form *Couptrain Morris* (France) and *Turncoat*, and has also danced with *Lodestone*. Paul can occasionally be found in Europe introducing fellow campers to the joys of morris, using baguettes, umbrellas, or tent poles for sticks. contact: [pwhite420@btinternet.com](mailto:pwhite420@btinternet.com) twitter: @morrisbells or Facebook





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with your ideas and suggestions

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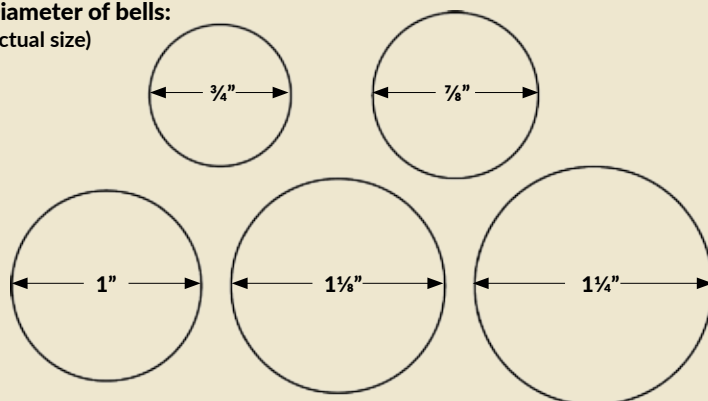
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