The History and Development of Dark Border Morris

Dr Chloe Middleton-Metcalfe

A MORRIS FEDERATION DIGITAL PUBLICATION 2021 REVISED 20.4.2026

Contents

Introduction 2

The Popularity of Dark Border 5

The Border Revival and Creation of Dark Morris 7

The Appeal of Dark Border Morris 14

Conclusion 18

Appendix .....

Content Warning

Readers are advised that this document contains images and references to white people wearing black face make up. These images and references reflect the reality of public performance at the time that this research was conducted.

As this paper was written after the article "To Black up or Not to Black Up" was published in the *Morris Federation Newsletter* (Winter 2013 pp.6-8) available here: https://www.morrisfed.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/2013-winter.pdf the practice of applying black face make up within morris dancing is not discussed in detail in the following publication.

The Morris Federation wants to make clear that no form of racism can ever be acceptable in morris dancing. Since 2020 The Morris Federation has refused membership of any person or team who uses full face black makeup. The Morris Federation welcome dialogue on the topic with anyone who has concerns or questions these can be sent to secretary@morrisfed.org.uk

Copyright Statement: Unless stated otherwise all the photos in this publication were taken by Chloe Middleton-Metcalfe. All rights reserved. Whilst you are able to download and print a copy of this paper for personal use, no part of this paper should be uploaded to any website or digital retrieval system, without prior permission of the copyright owners. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior permission of the copyright owners.

Copyright © The Morris Federation 2021. Copyright © Chloe Middleton-Metcalfe 2021.

Introduction[1]

In this stand-alone article I present a history of the dark border[2] morris genre and consider reasons for its apparent popularity. In addition to secondary sources I include anonymised quotes from interviews with sixty border morris dancers and/or musicians.[3] I commence by exploring the concept of 'dark morris' and use statistics to suggest the number of dark morris teams extant in 2016. I then outline the history of this genre's development before finally turning my attention to suggesting some reasons for the apparent popularity of this contemporary folk dance genre. This article assumes that the reader will have some prior knowledge of English revival morris dancing, such as an awareness of the three principal regional styles, and some working knowledge of the historical debates about female participation. As I have written on the subject elsewhere, this article deliberately avoids discussion about either the propriety or the origins of face blacking in border morris.[4]

The concept of *dark* draws upon wider British usage which in turn extrapolates the principle meaning of little or no light. My definition of *dark morris* focuses principally on costume choice and genre. To qualify, teams must self-professedly dance in the border morris style and use costumes which are either predominantly black, and/or other dark colours (particularly purple, blue, and green). These costumes might include items of gothic, metal or steampunk associated attire. Importantly not all teams who fit my definition will self-identify as 'dark'. In labelling the same phenomena, others have used *Goth* or *Pagan*[5] morris, and there is conflation between these categories, however I have selected *dark* as a more general label.[6] In music studies *dark folk* is already a recognised category for which Pagan and folklore researcher Andy Letcher records the following alternative labels: 'strange folk, wyrd folk, twisted folk, nu-folk, alt-folk, prog folk, psych folk, folkedelia, acid folk or post folk'.[7]

---

[1] Thank you to all the dancers and musicians who were kind enough to consent to be interviewed for this research. All the original interviews conducted for this research have been referenced within the text using this anonymised key. I(Interview): W/M (Gender): D (Date of interview): R(Reference number).

[2] As it is good grammatical practice not to capitalise *morris*, I have made the deliberate decision not to capitalise border or cotswold either. In the context of this essay these words refer primarily to a dance style rather than geographic location. Exceptions have been made when quoting from secondary sources.

[3] Interviews were conducted at Bromyard Folk Festival in Herefordshire (2015), and Chippenham Folk Festival in Wiltshire (2016). In total I interviewed 60 dancers and musician primarily from the following border teams: Silurian Morris Men (est. 1969) from Herefordshire; Boggart's Breakfast (est. 2001) from Sheffield; Enigma Border Morris (est. 2014) based in South Petherton, Somerset; Wreckers Border Morris (est. 2000) from the Tamar Valley, Cornwall; and Bath-based Tatters and Tails (est. 2012). I also interviewed one member of Mayhem Border Morris (est.2015) from Somerset.

[4] Metcalfe, Chloe. 'To Black up Or Not to Black Up? A Personal Journey', *Morris Federation Newsletter*, Winter (2013), pp. 6-9. Available at: https://www.morrisfed.org.uk/portfolio/newsletter-winter-2013/ [accessed 1.7.21].

[5] Within this paper Paganism is understood to be a broad group of religious movements including Druidism and Wicca which look back to the pre-Christian world for inspiration. This approach is based upon: Doyle White, Ethan. 'In Defence of Pagan Studies: A Response to Davidsen's Critique.' *The Pomegranate* 14,1 (2012): 5-21.

[6] Moreton, Cole. 'Hey nonny no, no, no: Goths and pagans are reinventing morris dancing'. *The Independent*, 11.5.2008. Available at: www.independent.co.uk [accessed 14.10.14];
Edmead, John. ' Goth – An Evolving Style?' *Morris Federation Newsletter* Autumn (2009) p.8. Available at: https://www.morrisfed.org.uk/portfolio/newsletter-autumn-2009/ [accessed 1.7.2021].

[7] Letcher, Andy. 'Paganism and the British Folk Revival'. In: *Pop Pagans: Paganism and Popular Music.* ed. Weston, Donna., and Bennet, Andy. 91-109. Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2014. p. 106.

When interviewed a number of dancers used a darkly-aligned range of vocabulary to describe their team's style of dance:

> Chaotic I suspect would be the first word […] the dances have got a lot of energy and vigour but not too much technical skill [is] required. It's more about the energy, and a sort of controlled shambles. I think the audience sometimes wonders what this crowd is doing, and then they [we] disappear again. So it's [a], slight sense of shock.[8]

> It has been described to me as anarchic border, I quite like the anarchy side of things but it is organised anarchy. The end of the exercise in my book is to honour the tradition, but I want it to be fun, I want people to see us having fun. I like shocking people, I like the, I love the wall of sound that we have, the band just keeps getting bigger and bigger.[9]

> It's kind of like the dark side of morris it's more like I wouldn't say its evil, I'd say it's like, it's just got more umph but its definitely, like darker, and we work a lot with solstices and things like that […] A lot of it is to do with how we look so, we have a very dark kit, we don't black up but we have sunglasses and we have one other colour and black. I think that's the main thing […] we're very shouty, yeah, its not very girly.[10]

As a label *dark* morris has been publicly embraced by some dancers. In July 2020 the 'about' section on the Facebook page for Beltane Border Morris (est. 2001) read: 'Think Morris dancing is all bells and hankies and tea with the vicar? Think again. Welcome to the Dark Side of Folk.'[11] In 2011 one dancer and musician for Stone the Crows (est. 1994) picked the address *darkmorrisdancer* for her blog on the subject.[12] Similarly Rob Elliott, formally of Silurian Morris Men, subtitled his 2017 memoirs *Tales of Dark Morris from the Wild Welsh Border*. The 2018 poster for The All Hallows Gathering (also known as The Dark Gathering) held outside the Boscastle Museum of Witchcraft advertised that the event would include the 'dancing of the dark morris' featuring border teams such as the evocatively named Beltane, Domesday (est. 2012), and Wolf's Head and Vixen (est. 1995).[13] A number of names appear to be selected because they sound appropriately dark and/or because they relate to local geography, history, or folklore. For example, Bloodstone

[8] I:M:12.9.15:R8.
[9] I:W:29.5.16:R57.
[10] I:W:29.5.16:R56.
[11] Facebook Page 'Beltane Border Morris' https://www.facebook.com/BeltaneBorderMorris [accessed 10.7.20].
[12] Blog 'Dark Morris Dancer' Available at: https://darkmorrisdancer.wordpress.com/ [accessed 19.5.21].
[13] Museum of Witcraft and Magic 'All Hallows Gathering'. Was available at: https://museumofwitchcraftandmagic.co.uk/event/all-hallows-gathering-2018/ [Accessed 1.12.18]. See also: All Hallows Gathering. Available at: https://allhallowsgathering.com/about/ [Accessed 1.7.21]. Interestingly just four years after its foundation, this event was described by the *Daily Mail* as a 'popular folklore tradition' which: 'Dates back to 1450 when peasants rose up against [the] rich dressed as "servants of the queen of the fairies"'. Southworth, Phoebe. 'Folk dancers defend their ancient tradition of painting their faces black with charcoal as part of a traditional Cornish Halloween festival' *The Daily Mail* 28.10.2018. Available at: www.dailymail.co.uk [accessed 3.11.18].

Border Morris (est. 2009) from the Isle of Wight took inspiration for their name from a local woodland called Bloodstone Copse. [14]

The arrival of dark morris dancing into the real world has an interesting parallel in popular fiction. In Terry Pratchett's comic fantasy discworld series *other* morris (later called *dark* morris) is danced to a silent, internal drum beat with noiseless bells and black clothing. In Pratchett's novel *Wintersmith* (2006), which was later made into a concept-album by folk-rock band Steeleye Span (2013), the dark morris dancers in black clothes are the counterpart to the more familiar morris dancers in white, who are inexorably linked to the arrival of summer. Only four years elapsed between the publication of Pratchett's *Reaper Man* in 1991 (which featured *other* morris) and the formation of the first dark morris team in the real world - Long Barrow and the Lost Women in 1995. Whilst some teams have attempted to reconstruct discworld dancing, dark morris has largely evolved separately from Pratchett fandom.[15] If not a direct influence perhaps both Pratchett and the dancers were responding to a wider cultural zeitgeist.

Tatters and Tails Border Morris at Chippenham Folk Festival in 2016

[14] Other names which draw upon similar themes include: Maenads (est. c2007); Medusa Gothic Morris (est. 2005); Mythago (est. 1990); Raving Maes (est. c2006); Screeming Banshees Gothic Morris (est. 2013); Stone the Crows (est. 1994); Shadow Hunters (est. 2015); The Widders (est. 2001); Way of the Wyrd (est. 2011); and Wild Hunt Bedlam Morris (est. 1991).

[15] A number of teams have actually re-created Pratchett's other morris. Examples include: Jack Frost Morris (NZ); Ravenswood's 'AntiMorris' at a Terry Pratchett Book Signing in 2000 (USA); Dr Turbervilles at a book signing by Terry Pratchett in Wincanton 2003 (UK); The Mossybacks from Seattle (USA) reconstructed dark anti-morris in 2004 and 2005; The Recently Traditional Fictional Morris (USA); and a team created to perform Dark morris at the Discworld convention *Nullus Anxietas III* in 2011 (Au).

The Popularity of Dark Border

Statistician Jack Worth's Morris Census gives data for the general popularity of morris dancing amongst the estimated 753 sides. In the 2020 findings Worth concluded that whilst cotswold is still the most popular style amongst morris teams, it is declining, whilst border is growing. In Worth's census teams who dance border as their primary style make up approximately 38% of teams (in 2020), whilst another 13% dance border occasionally.[16] Alternate figures are proposed by John Swift, using data drawn directly from the three morris organisations (The Morris Federation, The Morris Ring and Open Morris). He suggested that in 2019 there were 119 exclusively border teams and a total of 243 who do some border, this represented 29% of the 842 teams in his calculations.[17]

In June and July 2016 I compiled my own database of border teams. I included sides with current membership of one of the three aforementioned morris organisations, or sides that had active websites or a Facebook page updated within the last year (See Appendix). Sides were included if their primary or secondary dancing style was border. Echoing the morris census findings that border was becoming increasingly popular, I noted a rise in the number of such teams established in each decade. Of the 153 teams extant in 2016; 18 had formed between 1950-1979 (many of these had started out as cotswold style teams), 27 in the 1980s, 34 in the 1990s, 32 in the 2000s, and 38 from 2010-2016.[18] I also analysed geographic region, concluding that with 47 border teams the South East had the greatest number, but as the South West is less populous, although it has fewer teams (only 32) these represent more border dancers per head of population than any other region in England.[19] I then proceeded to analyse the team's costumes using pictures or video data. I divided the costumes into five main types based on what was worn on the torso.

	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	2010-16	Unknown	TOTAL
Gothic					2	3	4	2	11
Colourful	2	1	8	14	15	9	15	1	65
Black		1	2	4	13	18	15		53
Other			2	7	2	2	3	1	17
Historical		1	1	2	2				6
Unknown							1	2	3
TOTAL	2	3	13	27	34	32	38	6	155[20]

[16] Worth, Jack. *Findings from the 2020 Morris Census.* 2020. Available at: https://www.morrisfed.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Findings-from-the-2020-Morris-Census-as-at-202012.pdf [Accessed 20.5.21].
[17] Swift, John. 'Expanding a Repertoire: Leicester Morrismen and the Border Morris.' In: Peter Harrop and Steve Roud. (eds), *The Routledge Companion to English Folk Performance.* London: Routledge, 2021. pp.295-314. p.309.
[18] Of course, this data excluded teams which had already folded.
[19] Where 15 was taken as an average side size. Statistics from the Office for National Statistics Website 'Population Estimates for UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2015' (Released 23.6.16). Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/ [accessed 9.10.16].
[20] Two teams had different costumes for the men and women and have therefore been double counted.

Explanations

- "Black" the colour black was used with or without additional colours;
- "Colourful" colours excluding black were used on the torso;
- "Other" teams use cotswold or north west morris costumes;
- "Gothic" teams use Victorian or medieval inspired costumes (without rag jackets) in black, purple, and dark green;
- "Historical" costumes had a historical theme.

This data suggests the start of a sartorial dark aesthetic in border morris in the 1990s. In this decade 13 teams were formed whose costumes contained large amounts of black and/or were gothic in style. This was a large jump from the 1980s when only three teams had elected for predominately black attire and the majority had selected colourful costumes.

Boggart's Breakfast at Bromyard Folk Festival 2015

The Border Revival and Creation of Dark Morris[21]

Dark morris is a sub-genre of the border style. The term *border* was coined by E.C. Cawte in his 1963 article 'The Morris dance in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire'.[22] Thus, the *border* was initially a geographic reference to the English counties which border Wales. Cecil Sharp, first director of the English Folk Dance Society had mostly collected morris dances from the South Midlands. By the 1930s this type of morris had become known as *cotswold* morris.[23] It is widely commented upon that Sharp thought that the morris dance from the Welsh borders was 'degenerate'.[24] This appears to be a slight elaboration from his published opinion. Whilst he did state that morris dances (from all localities) could easily 'degenerate into a disorderly romp',[25] of the dance in Worcestershire and Herefordshire he stated that they exist only 'in a state of decadence'.[26] The meaning of decadence has changed over time, in this context it would have referred to a general decline in quality.

Cawte's article appears to have sparked an interest within the established cotswold-orientated morris scene. One of the individuals to take up the border baton was engineer and rocket scientist Roy Dommett. He recalled:

> When I became involved with the morris the only dance from the counties beyond the Cotswold Edge widely known was the Upton on Severn stick dance which had been published by the EFDSS in a booklet. One of the sides that I was in about 1960 did the handkerchief dance based on Miss Karpeles article in the EFDSS Journal. Nearly all the other dances were inaccessible in mss, especially Miss Karpleles' but she allowed me to copy several dance notations and she also talked to me about them.[27]

Dommett prepared a leaflet on the subject called *Other Morris* and ran a number of courses on non-cotswold dance in the mid to late 1960s. These included workshops at one of the Advanced Morris Weekends held at Halsway Manor in Somerset[28] and for an English Folk Dance and Song Society residential staff conference. At this time there was

---

[21] For more information on the border revival see: Swift, John. 'Expanding a Repertoire'. See footnote 17.
[22] Cawte, Edwin C. 'The Morris Dance in Hereford, Shropshire and Worcestershire'. *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society* 9:4 (1963):197–212.
[23] Needham, Joseph. 'The Geographical Distribution of English Ceremonial Dance Traditions.' *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society* 3:1 (1936): 1-45.
[24] e.g. Hutchings, Ashley. *Rattlebone & Ploughjack.* [LP, 1976], BSO BSOCD353, 1997, CD; Anderson, Andy. *Border Morris: A Brief Outline.* The Morris Federation. 2nd edition, 1997, p.3; Elliott, Rob. *The Fool and His Dancers: Tales of Dark Morris from the Wild Welsh Border.* Rob Elliott, Leominster: Orphans Press, 2017, p.29; BBC Radio 3, *Sounds of Dance: English Folk Dance.* First Broadcast 13.4.2019.
[25] Sharp, Cecil. *The Morris Book Part III.* London: Novello, 1910, p.8.
[26] Sharp, Cecil. *The Morris Book Part I.* London: Novello. Revised Edition, 1912, p.21. Thank you Matt Simons for locating these two references.
[27] Dommett, Roy. *Roy Dommett's Morris Notes: Volume 7 Border Morris Material.* Initially from the Advanced Morris Weekend California 5-7.9.1997. Re-printed by 'Hello Folk' Available at: https://www.cdss.org/elibrary/dommett/volumes6-10/vol7/DommettMorrisNotesVol7.pdf [accessed 27.9.2]. p.8.
[28] Established by Bob Bradbury, the first weekend in 1963 or 1964 was run by Nibs Matthews. These weekends ran annually until 1970 whereupon they seem to have become more sporadic. One was hosted as late at 1984 and was advertised by The Morris Federation's Newsletter 6.3.1984 p.18.

much scepticism regarding the authenticity and therefore propriety of female cotswold teams, and border morris dances were seen by Dommett as being: 'some easy morris that could be used in mixed sex situations'.[29] Tubby Reynolds, an influential folk dance organiser in and around Bath, teamed up with Dommett to run workshops on the historical border style at Ledbury Town Hall in January 1972. They had the specific goal of introducing this type of dance to existing teams in the vicinity, who were currently dancing costwold morris. As a direct result a few local teams started to incorporate the historical border material into their repertoire, and The Original Welsh Border Morris Men were formed in 1973.[30] Its membership included Dave Jones and remains an occasional side who dance out collected border dances on the Saturday before Christmas.[31]

Using historical material collected by others, Dave Jones started to teach local dances to his side Silurian (est. 1969) from Ledbury (Herefordshire). Silurian had originally formed as a cotswold side, and took their name from the Silures, an ancient British tribe from South Wales.[32] Dave Jones then sought out traditional morris dancers including Bill Scarrott from Pershore (Worcestershire), and proceeded to uncover additional information about early 20th century dance practices. In the late 1970s Jones ran a morris instructional (or workshop) for the West Midlands Folk Association, which he later repeated for The Morris Ring in 1979. As historian John Swift has noted, this was an important moment for the border genre, as the inclusion of this material in 'the familiar surroundings of a Morris Ring instructional would have made the assimilation of the material much more palatable.'[33] In a revised form, notes disseminated at these events were published as *The Roots of Welsh Border Morris* in 1988. Building upon Jones' research, Silurian learned more collected border dances and eventually dropped the cotswold style altogether.

The Silurian side initially danced border morris in an adaptation of their cotswold kit, adding blacked faces and a waistcoat with long ribbons in red, white, yellow, green, and blue. One side member recalled that the ribbon colour choice had a symbolic significance: the 'whole idea was to subtly represent the four elements, air, earth, fire and water'.[34] In 1979 as part of their re-incarnation as a solely border team Silurian adopted

---

[29] Dommett, Roy. 'Morris, Evolution, Sidmouth: 150 years of people watching the morris' (2004) v2.1. Available at: http://www.great-western.org.uk/dommett/sidmouth.pdf [accessed 7.10.16];
See also: Buckland, Theresa Jill. 'Liberating Tradition: Gender Politics in Late Twentieth Century English Revivalist Morris Dancing.' In: Stavělová D. and Buckland T.J. (eds), *Folklore Revival Movements in Europe post 1950. Shifting Contexts and Perspectives.* Prague: Institute of Ethnology, Academy of Sciences, 2018. pp. 311-330.

[30] Dommett, Roy. 'Border Morris Notes', 1983. Available at: http://www.opread.force9.co.uk/RoyDommet/BorderNotes/Introduction.htm [accessed 9.10.16].

[31] Swift, John. 'Expanding a Repertoire' p.289-299. See footnote 17. The website for the Original Welsh Border Morris, containing a brief history of the team is available at: https://welshbordermorris.blogspot.com/p/ears-2013-and-still-counting.html [Accessed 27.8.21].

[32] Elliott, Rob and Deshmukh, Vas. 'Silurian – Greater Than the Sum of Its Parts'. In: *Morris – The Good, The Bad and The Ugly.* 38-45. Proceedings of a one-day conference. Cecil Sharp House 16.4.1994.

[33] Swift, John. 'Expanding a Repertoire' p.301. See footnote 17.

[34] Elliott, Rob. *Don't Blame Me: I'm only the Triangle Player.* Worcester: Square One, 1991. p.14.

costumes modelled on those worn by the Upton-On-Severn traditional side in 1925.[35] In addition to the blacked up faces this new look included black trousers with bells sewn to fabric strips which were tied underneath the knee, and a black bowler hat decorated with fabric and badges. Rather than waistcoats, rags were attached directly onto white collarless shirts to which was added sashes worn over the shoulders. Tailcoats were added at a later date[36] and former member Rob Elliott evocatively described how the coats gave the team: 'a unique and offbeat appearance […] like a squabble of roguish vultures'.[37]

It was not just attendees who benefitted from Roy Dommett's workshops, as his notes were often copied and disseminated within the morris fraternity. Influential musician and cotswold morris dancer John Kirkpatrick acquired a copy of Dommett's leaflet *Other Morris* and used the notes, alongside Cawte's 1963 article, to create material for what would become one of the most prestigious border teams: The Shropshire Bedlams (est. 1975).[38] Dommett recalled that until the arrival of The Shropshire Bedlams most interpretations of the historical material has been 'unimpressive'.[39] The Shropshire Bedlams were launched shortly before Silurian adopted the border style full time and their appearance is said to have helped 'galvanise' Dave Jones into collecting further information.[40] A sense of The Shropshire Bedlams' influence is given in this 1983 description by Dommett:

> The impact of the Shropshire Bedlams on their first visit to the Sidmouth Folk Festival cannot be exaggerated. The tremendous showmanship and sense of fun, elements largely missing from Festival Morris, grabbed the attention and suddenly the dances made sense. At the time the vast majority of the morris [dancers/sides] had neither access to such material or even any real knowledge of the traditions involved, so no wonder the Bedlams were the centre of attention.[41]

[35] It is not an exact replication. The most well known picture of the Upton-on-Severn team taken in 1924 by Pete Fox (Available at: https://themorrisring.org/tradition/upton-severn [accessed 14.6.21]) shows a soft brimmed hat, rather than a bowler. There are a number of other differences, most notably in the trouser style.

[36] Metcalfe, Chloe. *Rags, Bells and Baldrics: A Study of Morris Dance Costumes Past, Present and Future.* Unpublished BA Dissertation and Supporting Research File, CD. Central School of Speech and Drama. 2012. Copy at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, London. Information in the supporting research file under 'Silurian'.

[37] Elliott, Rob. *The Fool and His Dancers.*p.209. See footnote 24.

[38] Kirkpatrick, John. 'Bordering on the Insane: Confessions of a Shropshire Bedlam' *English Dance and Song.* 41.3 (1979) pp.12-14. p.13.; Dommett, Roy. 'Border Morris Notes', 1983. See footnote 28.

[39] Dommett, Roy. 'Border Morris Notes', 1983. See footnote 28.

[40] Elliott, Rob. *The Fool and His Dancers.* p.263. See footnote 24.

[41] Dommett, Roy. 'Border Morris Notes', 1983. See footnote 28.

Silurian Border Morris Men at Bromyard Folk Festival 2015.

Shropshire Bedlams at Sidmouth Folk Week 2014.

As well as re-creating source dances the Shropshire Bedlams also created new dances inspired by the historical material.[42] Their influence can be seen in the adoption of a similar costume style by many sides. Because of their high profile, elements of the Shropshire Bedlams' costume (particularly the rag jacket, disguised face, and feather-adorned top hat) in time came to represent the 'typical' border attire. In 1973, the year that John Kirkpatrick had moved to Shropshire and been inspired to form his own team, Ashley Hutchings (founder member of influential folk-rock bands Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span) became inspired to make an album. *Rattlebone and Ploughjack* focused solely on the hitherto marginalised styles of border and molly dance. It was released on Island in 1976 and in the process introduced border morris to many folk-rock fans and propagated the idea of border as: 'the most degenerate form of ritual dancing that had survived into this century'.[43]

1976 also saw a display of border morris at the prestigious Sidmouth folk festival. This was a one-off event organised by the Magic Lantern street theatre group headed by story-teller Taffy Thomas. The Magic Lantern group re-created the Brimfield dance using collected notation and created costumes based on a 1909 photograph of a traditional team from Brimfield, which shows men with blacked faces wearing an array of fancy costumes including clown outfits and a police uniform. Over in one night The Magic Lantern toured their act at all the festival venues, and festival historian Derek Schofield recalled had a 'lingering impact'.[44]

Another early border team were The Witchmen from Kettering (Northamptonshire) who were established in the early 1980s. Initially their costumes were quite similar to the cotswold sides from which many of the founding members had come, with breeches, amber socks and hats adorned with flowers.[45] As founder member Terry Dix described, over time The Witchmen's membership became more varied with new dancers joining from outside the folk community who were attracted to the 'spectacle'.[46] In time the flowers disappeared from their hats. The Witchmen were one of the first sides to openly cultivate an alternative identity. In 2021 their web page title was 'The Witchmen Pagan Morris Dancers' and the page included links to the folk band Hex and a section on their members' tattoos, with images of Green Men, Celtic knotwork, and pentagrams.[47]

---

[42] Kirkpatrick, John. 'The Shropshire Bedlams.' *The American Morris Newsletter.* 23:1 (2000) Available at: http://www.johnkirkpatrick.co.uk/mo_ShropshireBedlams.asp [Accessed 10.9.16]; Kirkpatrick, John 'Bordering', 1979. See footnote 36.

[43] Hutchings, Ashley. *Rattlebone & Ploughjack.* [LP, 1976], BSO BSOCD353, 1997, CD.

[44] Schofield, Derek. *The First Week in August Fifty Years of the Sidmouth Festival.* P.93 (Sidmouth: Sidmouth International festival Ltd) 2004. See also Swift, John. 'Expanding a Repertoire' p.209. See footnote 17.

[45] Metcalfe, Chloe. *Rags, Bells and Baldrics: A Study of Morris Dance Costumes Past, Present and Future.* Unpublished BA Dissertation and Supporting Research File, CD. Central School of Speech and Drama. 2012. Copy at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, London. Information in the supporting research file under 'Witchmen'.

[46] The Witchmen. 'History: A Walk on the Daarkside [stet]'. Available at: http://witchmen.com/history.html [accessed 1.7.21].

[47] The Witchmen. Available at: http://witchmen.com/ [accessed 19.5.21].

Mr Trill's Brmfield Men. The original photo was taken in 1909 outside Orelteon Manor by Ella Mary Leather. This digital copy was provided by The Morris Ring.

The Witchmen at their Winter Solstice Celebrations held at the Queen's Arms, Orlingbury December 2019. Photograph by Bill Hewitt.

Journalist Caitlin Moran's evocative description of her encounter with the team in 2005 demonstrates the influence presentation can play on the audience's interpretation of the performance.

> The Witchmen, the Hell's Angels of Morris dancers, dressed in black and amber, spiked with pheasant's feathers and wielding big sticks […] a sudden realisation that this is what, until very recently, being English had all been about […] hundreds of years of this: peasants in the middle of winter, without antibiotics or telegraphs or thermals, pretending to be witches and warlocks and Straw Bears until the spring finally came […] wild drunken joy, fear, cheap, deep magic [...] And the dancing - stomping, hearty, ramshackle.[48]

In the early 1990s the short-lived border side Long Barrow and the Lost Women from Kent were the first to dance in all-black outfits. In a local newsletter dancer Philip Kane retrospectively explained his attraction to the Long Barrow team. For Kane this team's appearance and style was markedly different from the perceived effeminacy of cotswold morris and, more generally, popular British 'traditions' typified by the royal family and high culture:

> Traditions in this country, too, were meant to be all pomp and circumstance, the Queen and the Last Night of the Proms, that kind of thing. Certainly not a bunch of middle-aged blokes bearded and beer-bellied, prancing around with hankies and dainty jingling bells. Morris dancing was both obscure and ridiculous and definitely, absolutely, not something I would ever do [...] At least that was the case until I met them […] a group of Morris dancers swathed in black, wielding big sticks instead of hankies and dancing with a primeval energy that would send a shiver up the spine.[49]

In 1995 some members of Long Barrow went on to form Wolf's Head and Vixen who also sported an all-black attire. A pleasing link to the final section of this article, which examines the appeal of this contemporary folk dance genre, can be found in a 2008 team interview with *The Independent.* One of the members of Wolf's Head and Vixen discussed the influence of rock culture on their performances and noted that, like the Witchmen, a number of their members did not come from a 'folkie' background.[50] So why does this interpretation of morris dancing have such broad appeal?

[48] Moran, Caitlin. 'Cry God for Hairies, England and Straw Bears'. *The Times.* 14.1.2005.
[49] Kane, Phillip. 'Wolf's Head, Vixen and Me: Philip Kane's journey to the dark side.' *Medway WOW* April (2011):10-11. Available at: https://issuu.com/sue-davis/docs/wow_medway_april_2011 [accessed 30.10.16].
[50] Moreton, Cole. 'Hey nonny no, no, no: Goths and pagans are reinventing morris dancing.' *The Independent*, 11.5.2008. Available at: www.independent.co.uk [accessed 14.10.14].

The Appeal of Dark Border Morris

Morris dance has never managed to shake off The Doctrine of Survivals. This was a 19th century anthropological theory popularised by James Frazer in *The Golden Bough,* a now widely discredited text, which linked all aspects of folklore back to a pre-Christian past.[51] The events which teams participate in can lend weight to such ideas.[52] For example many sides dance at dawn on the first of May. This practice appears to have started in the 1960s,[53] but it is frequently described as having pre-Christian origins.[54] Once border morris, and more specifically its aesthetically 'dark' interpretation became established, the appearance of these teams became the foci for their own mythic histories. One popular argument is that border must be the oldest form of morris from which other styles evolved because the costumes of teams are made of rags and the collected dances are choreographically simple.[55] This argument can be dated back to at least 1976 when Ashley Hutchings suggested that border and molly dances provide an insight into 'the oldest, most basic, least civilised antics of our dancing ancestors'.[56]

The standard border costume itself, popularised by the Shropshire Bedlams, also appears to support culturally darker tropes and a greater anti-establishment mythology than other forms of morris. One interviewee linked border costumes back to the poor of the feudal past:

> I understand that in the distant past border morris was actually danced by the peasant class, and the reason a lot of them black up is because in the past cotswold used to be done by the aristocracy and so is very clean and white and the border morris came to life out of the peasant class who were generally wearing rags and who were generally dirty and scruffy and they blacked their faces in order that their employers, the land owners, didn't recognise them. But with our team we don't mind being recognised because we are no longer peasant class so we go with the clean face but, so, I like that bit of anarchy.[57]

---

[51] For an accessible summary see: Middleton-Metcalfe, Chloe. 'Morris Dance as Ritual Dance, or, English Folk Dance and The Doctrine of Survivals'. (2019) Available at: http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/religious-studies/?p=845 [accessed 10.7.20].

[52] When I attended summer solstice celebration at Stonehenge in 2012 two different morris teams danced at dawn amongst the 14,000 revellers.

[53] Judge, Roy. 'May Morning and Magdalen College, Oxford.' *Folklore,* 97,1 (1986):15-40. pp.33-34.; Stanfield, Norman. *Rough Music, Rough Dance, Rough Play: Misrule and Morris Dance.* PhD Thesis. The University of British Columbia. https://open.library.ubc.ca/media/download/pdf/24/1.0066479/1 [accessed 12.4.18]. p.51.

[54] For example the BBC Radio 4 documentary *Dancers at Dawn* by Martin Green (first broadcast on BBC Radio Four on 29.4.21) whilst making clear that there is no historical evidence, does allude to this connection, and discusses the practice as a ritual. Similarly, on 2.5.21 *The Sunday Times* (p.14) juxtaposed an image of a burning wicker man, surrounded by drummers in border style green rag jackets (taken at Butser Farm, Hampshire) with a picture of a cotswold morris dancer dancing the sun up at dawn (taken at Eccles Pike in the Peak District). The caption states that these two events 'mark the Beltane festival – Gaelic May Day – yesterday.'

[55] Salter, Mike. *All About The Morris*. West Malvern: Folly Publications, 2013. p.28; Elliott, Rob. *The Fool and His Dancers.* pp.12-15. See footnote 24; Rickman, Phil. *All Of A Winter's Night.* London: Corvus, 2017. p.90. After finding out that I was a morris dancer in the Bell Inn, Bath in 2013 I was confidentially told by a non-dancer that there were two types of morris dance. The type with the rags was the oldest type, the white clothed sort coming later.

[56] Hutchings, Ashley. *Rattlebone & Ploughjack.* [LP, 1976], BSO BSOCD353, 1997, CD.

[57] I:W:29.5.16:R48.

The use of disguised faces also adds to the border mythology and has been linked not only to the feudal poor and the working classes but to criminal activities:

> Morris dancers in coal-mining towns and villages on the Welsh border would smear their faces in coal dust, wear black hats and black coats with strips of cloth sown [sic] onto them, and then go out to dance and collect money. And they'd round off the ensemble by sticking pheasant feathers in their hair, to proudly proclaim that they were poachers too. It was a very effective disguise then, and it still is now.[58]

Similarly, an article in *Pagan Dawn* suggested that 'there is much to commend the idea that Morrismen may well have used their numbers and the sticks they carried to coerce donations from an unwilling audience and were therefore wise to hide their faces'.[59] These are but three examples of what is a wider oral circulation of these modern myths.

Dark border morris provides a visual and physical contrast to the longer established and better known cotswold morris[60] which has a history of being lampooned in the British media.[61] One interviewee explained her enthusiasm for border thus:

> I much prefer it to cotswold [...] I think it's because when you say to people about morris dancing and they sort of think of twiddly hankies and things. And I quite like the fact that this has got [pause], and maybe it's because it's black, you know. I think there is something about everything that [her team] does it's got a really, really a positive energy and it's, it's really quite obvious by the response of people watching us. [62]

Another promoted her team by comparing it to the cotswold based stereotype of morris: 'If you don't like morris dancing you will probably like us and bring ear defenders'.[63] An open dislike of cotswold style morris has become normalised amongst some border teams. Epitomising this antagonistic attitude in 2013 border morris dancer Martin Ware commissioned leather badges with a skull and 'Death before Cotswold' text which were primarily sold to border morris aficionados.[64] However a large number of dancers dance both border *and* cotswold; 36/60 of my interviewees had been, or were, in multiple sides many of which did cotswold morris.

The creation of dark morris should be contextualised within the wider normalisation of gothic, punk, metal, and Pagan sub-cultures. Heavy metal developed out of the rock and psychedelic sounds of the mid-to-late 1960s, whilst contemporary gothic culture evolved from the punks, glam rockers and new romantics of the 1970s and 1980s. The 1960s and

---

[58] Bell, James. 'Chapter 69: Morris dancing. Borderline racist?' Available at: https://jamesbellcentral.net/2014/10/15/chapter-69-morris-dancing-borderline-racist/ [Accessed 15.10.14].
[59] Young, Dave and Latham, Angie. 'Siding with the Pagans.' *Pagan Dawn* Lammas-Mabon, 192 (2014) pp. 23-24.
[60] Some discussion of how the genre's have a different dance aesthetic can be found in: Ashman, Gordon. 'With One Bound They Were Free' *Lore and Language* 6.3 (1987) pp.105-116. See also: Swift, John. 'Expanding a Repertoire' p.305. See footnote 17.
[61] e.g. 'The Godiva Affair' *Dad's Army*, Series 7 Episode 4, BBC1 Television. First Broadcast on 6.12.1974; 'St Boltophs Country Dance Team'; *The Two Ronnies.* BBC 1 Television Series 5 Episode 4. First broadcast on 25.9.76; 'Bhangraman fights the evil morris dancers' sketch. *Goodness Gracious Me.* BBC 2 Television Series 3 Episode 6 First Broadcast on 31.1.00.
[62] I:W:29.5.16:R51.
[63] I:W:13.9.15:R21.
[64] Facebook Page 'How Many Morris Dancers are on Facebook?' Available at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/82385077841/ (post made on 3.8.13, Accessed 1.7.21).

1970s saw the publication of books about alternative spirituality aimed for a popular readership. Paganism became more publicly visible, and by the 1990s shops specialising in Pagan literature, New Age clothing, herbal remedies, and associated artefacts were a common sight on Britain's high streets.[65] In general, negative attitudes towards metal, gothic, and Pagan culture had declined significantly by the 1990s.

A number of disparate sources have linked enthusiasm for morris dance with contemporary Pagan belief.[66] In one ethnomusicology paper the author goes so far as to state that: 'If Morris dancing is pagan, then it stands to reason that modern Pagans should Morris dance'.[67] 12% of my interviewees expressed a Pagan-aligned faith, whilst those with a Christian faith made up 10% of respondents. This is a much higher level of Pagan faith and lower level of Christian faith when compared to the 2011 national census.[68] However religious motivation was not given by any one dancer as a direct reason for their involvement. Religiosity was not always linked to Pagan ideas either, one dancer recalled the 'absolutely magical' occasion of morris dancing in Bath Abbey with 'Christian morris men' to the organ and church bells.[69]

As with Paganism, there appears to be a number of connections between dark border morris and alternative music. Stone the Crows attended the Rebellion punk festival (Blackpool 2016 & 2018) and featured in a music video for the punk band Ten Foot Wizard. Similarly, the 'Border Bedlam' duo Huginn and Munin (est. 2018) appeared at a folk-metal event - the Festival of Dance or Death (Camden, London 6.4.2019). The online Facebook page for Beltane Border Morris indicates the musical preferences of at least some of its members, listing Guns N Roses and Swiss folk metal band Eluveitie

A member of Beltane Border Morris with 'Sisters of Mercy' T-shirt. Photo taken at Dartmoor Folk Festival in 2016.

[65] Lewis, James. 'The Pagan Explosion.' In: *The New Generation Witches: Teenage Witchcraft in Contemporary Culture,* ed. Hannah Johnston and Peg Aloi, 13-23. Surrey: Ashgate, 2007.
[66] Elliott, Rob. *The Fool and His Dancers.* p.74 See footnote 24; Spracklen, Karl and Henderson, Stephan. 'Oh! What a Tangled Web We Weave': Englishness, Communicative Leisure, Identity Work and the Cultural Web of the English Folk Morris Dance Scene'. *Leisure/Loisir*, 37, 3 (2013): 233-249; Young, Dave and Latham, Angie. 'Siding with the Pagans'. *Pagan Dawn* Lammas-Mabon, 192 (2014) pp. 23-24.
[67] Letcher, Andy. 'Paganism and the British Folk Revival'. In: *Pop Pagans: Paganism and Popular Music.* Weston, Donna., and Bennet, Andy. (eds.) pp. 91-109. Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2014. p. 105.
[68] In the 2011 UK census, some 57,000 people identified as Pagan, representing about 0.1% of the population. Many within the Pagan community believe census data to be an under-representation of the true numbers. 59% identified as Christian. Statistics from the Office for National Statistics Website 'Religion in England and Wales 2011' (11.12.12) [accessed 26.1.19].
[69] I:W:29.5.16:R49.

amongst its favourite music artists.[70] The photo which illustrates this section shows one team member at Dartmoor festival in 2016 wearing a Sisters of Mercy T-Shirt as part of his kit.[71] Heavy rock/metal music is now an established part of British culture, and some individuals who came of age enjoying the precursors of metal music in the 1970s were active morris participants at the time of my research. However, an enthusiasm for rock and heavy metal music was only evident amongst a minority of the individuals I interviewed. Only 23/60 reported having enjoyed metal to varying degrees whilst a further 7 reported enjoying rock or punk music rather than metal. Added together fans of these genres only represented half of my respondents.

Although the continued prevalence of the idea that morris dancing is linked to pre-Christian ritual does attract some individuals with a Pagan world view and/or interest in alternative cultures, there must be other commonly held reasons for the popularity of *dark* border morris. In short, border morris, and perhaps dark border more specifically, is seen as representing a modern, contemporary style of folk dancing. In an interview with Cole Moreton of *The Independent*, members of Wolf's Head and Vixen stressed that their priority was to create a dance which appealed to contemporary society, they did not intend to make a specifically gothic side.[72] Similarly one of my interviewees described his team's style as being 'border morris version 2':

> Where I think we are enacting a tradition is that we are doing something that is entirely our own and that's the tradition. I don't think in the distant past cotswold or border morris sides thought "ooo we've got to be genuinely border". They did what they did, they did their village's dances and made it their own, so in that sense we are tapping into that side of the tradition.[73]

Another interviewee whose team wore a predominantly black costume with face masks described their team's style of dance as 'jolly border' and disassociated from the term *dark border* and 'all these young goth sides which have sprung up'.[74]

Anthropologist Daniel Miller explored the rise in popularity of black clothing in everyday attire since the 1980s. He suggested two reasons for this trend: the normalisation of modernism in design which promoted rational, simplified dressing practices and secondly, the rise of individual dressing freedom which led to increased personal sartorial anxiety.[75] Individuals create their own safety net of clothing which they know is considered to be publicly acceptable. Many then become loath to move beyond the boundaries of tried and tested clothes and as a result shun more experimental bright colours. These broader societal considerations should be taken into account as teams' costume choices are often decided by negotiation between members. Black became an increasingly common costume choice in the 1990s for a number of performative English folk dance styles and it is possible

[70] Facebook Page 'Beltane Border Morris'. Available at: https://www.facebook.com/BeltaneBorderMorris [accessed 12.11.18].
[71] When this dancer consented to be photographed he told me that it is team policy never to smile in photos.
[72] Moreton, Cole. 'Hey nonny no, no, no: Goths and pagans are reinventing morris dancing'. *The Independent*, 11.5.2008. www.independent.co.uk [accessed 14.10.14].
[73] I:M:13.9.15:R13.
[74] I:W:29.5.16:R38.
[75] Miller, Daniel. 'The little black dress is the solution. But what's the problem?' Available at: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/anthropology/people/academic-and-teaching-staff/daniel-miller/little-black-dress-solution-whats-problem [accessed 27.4.21].

that the *Riverdance* phenomenon was responsible for popularising its use.[76] The choice of black was perhaps elevated amongst border teams due to the use of black face paint which was worn by many border teams in the 1980s and 1990s. Due to its tendency to smudge onto garments the use of such face paint is likely to have precipitated the use of black or dark coloured costumes.

Conclusion

Dark morris evolved from the border revival of the 1970s which was part of a wider neo-traditionalist surge of interest in regional morris styles. Border offered an interpretation of morris dancing which was visibly different from cotswold morris, and created an alternative version of English presentational folk dancing. The appearance of border morris dancers with disguised faces and ragged jackets created myths which fed upon the pervasive notion of morris as an ancient ritual dance. The 1990s saw the increased normalisation of alternative and Pagan culture and this cultural liberalisation created the foundation for the wider societal acceptance of dark morris, which appealed to those who had an interest in Pagan/alternative cultures, as well as individuals who were attracted to a more contemporary style of English folk dance.

Wreckers Border Morris at Chippenham Folk Festival in 2016.

[76] Metcalfe, Chloe Elizabeth. *Historicism and Modernity: English Folk Dance Costumes for Clog and Sword Dancing.* MA Dissertation. Bath Spa University, 2013. Accessible at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library.

Appendix: Border Morris Teams

Compiled in 2016 this is a table of morris sides whose primary or secondary dance style was self-defined as border.

Key	
/	No information
EE	East of England
EM	East Midland
G	Guernsey
INT	International
L	London
NAT	National
NE	North East
NW	North West
SE	South East
SW	South West
WM	West Midlands
YH	Yorkshire & Humber

Name	Gender	Region	Established	Costume
Acorn Morris	W	YH	1978	Other
Aelfgythe	W	WM	2009	Black
Alton Morris	W&M	SE	1979	Colour
Alvechurch Border Morris	M	WM	1989	Colour
Angle Twitch Morris	W&M	SW	/	Colour
Anonymous Morris	W&M	SW	2010	Colour
Armaleggan	W&M	SE	2000	Black
Babylon	W&M	SW	1995	Historic
Bakanalia Border Morris	W&M	EM	1991	Black
Bare Bones Border Morris	W	EM	1985	Historical
Belles & Arrows	W&M	SE	1977	Colour
Belles & Broomsticks	W&M	Guernsey	1984	Colour
Beltane Border	W&M	SW	2001	Black
Beorma Morris	W&M	WM	2012	Black
Bideford Phoenix Morris	W&M	SW	/	Other
Black Adder Clog Morris	W&M	WM	C.1974	Colour
Black Bess Border Morris	W	SW	1997	Historic
Black Jack	W&M	WM	ND	Colour
Black Pig Border Morris	W&M	EM	1986	Colour
Black Sheep North Dales Morris	W&M	NE	1989	Black
Black Swan Border Morris	W&M	L	2013	Black
Blackpowder Morris	W&M	SE	2012	Black
Bloodstone Border Morris	W&M	SE	2009	Gothic
Bodicote Morris (Rhubarb Fumble)	W&M	SE	C.2006	Other

Name	Gender	Region	Established	Costume
Boekka	W&M	SW	2010	Colour
Boggart's Breakfast	W&M	YH	2001	Black
Bollin Morris	W&M	NW	1970s	Colour
Border Urban Morris Side	W&M	Wales	C.2009	Black
Border Reivers	W&M	Scotland	2016	Black
Borderline (Devon)	W&M	SW	2007	Black
Borderline Morris	W&M	SE	2007	Black
Boughton Monchelsea	W&M	SE	1978	Colour
Bourne Borderers	W&M	EM	1992	Colour
Bow Brook Border	W&M	WM	2014	Colour
Box Hill Bedlam	W&M	SE	2012	Gothic
Braybrooke Morris Dancers	W&M	EM	1988	Other
Brooms Bricks and Bowlers	W&M	SE	C.2013	Gothic
Calleva Carousel Morris	W&M	SE	C.2014	Colour
Carreg Las	W&M	Wales	1992	Colour
Catseye Morris	W&M	SW	2005	Black
Clerical Error	W&M	Wales	1991	Black
Cobbled Together	W	EM	/	/
Cock & Magpie Morris	W&M	EM	1988	Other
Cogs and Wheels	W	SW	1995	Colour
Cuckmere Morris	/	SE	/	/
Customs and Exiles	M	SE	2009	Black
Dark Horse Morris	W&M	EE	1995	Colour
Datchet Border Morris Men	M	SE	1961	Black
Dartmoor Border Morris	W&M	SW	2001	Colour
Dead Horse Morris	M	SE	1986	Black
Deorfrith Morris	W&M	SE	2011	Other
Domesday Morris	W&M	WM	2012	Colour
Dr Turberville's Morris	W&M	SW	1982	Other
Elephant up a Pole	W&M	WM	C.1989	Colour
Ely & Littleport Riot	W	EE	C.1990	Colour
Enigma Border Morris	W&M	SW	2014	Black
Eryri Morris	W&M	Wales	1981	Colour
Exmoor Border Morris	W&M	SW	1998	Colour
Fiddlers Brook	W&M	EE	1987	Other
Fishbone Ash	W&M	SE	1995	Black
Flagcrackers of Craven	W&M	YH	1988	Colour
Flash Company	W&M	YH	2000	Black
Foxs Border Morris	W&M	WM	1999	Colour
Freaks in The Peaks	W&M	NAT	1989	Colour
Gong Scourers	W&M	SE	1995	Black
Green Dragon Morris	W&M	EE	1993	Colour
Grimspound Border Morris	W&M	SW	1994	Black
Guith Morris	W&M	SE	2010	Other
Happenstance	W&M	SW	2010	Colour

Name	Gender	Region	Established	Costume
Heb Enw Morris	W&M	Wales	2008	Colour
Hobo's Morris	W	SW	1994	Black
Hook Eagle Morris Men	M	SE	1991	Colour
Hunters Moon Morris	W&M	SE	2001	Black
Ironmen	M	WM	1976	Black
Isambard's Gasket Rats	W&M	SW	C.2012	Colour
Isca Morris	W&M	Wales	1976	Other
Jet Set Border Morris	W&M	YH	1999	Gothic
Kenninghall Morris	W&M	EE	1999	Colour
Kent Korkers and Pork Scratchin's	W&M	SE	1982	W:Colour M: Black
Kern Morris	W&M	NE	1989	Other
Locos in Motion	W&M	NE	C.2000	Black
Lodestone Border Morris	W&M	SW	2005	Colour
Loose Women	W	SE	1983	Colour
Maenads	W	SE	1991	Colour
Makara Morris	W&M	YH	2006	Colour
Martha Rhoden's Tuppenny Dish	W	WM	1975	Colour
Mayday Morris	W&M	WM	2012	Colour
Mayhem Border Morris	W&M	SW	2015	Black
Medusa Gothic Morris Dancers	W	YH	2005	Gothic
Minster Strays	W&M	YH	2003	Colour
Moonshine Border Morris	W&M	SE	2010	Gothic
Motley Morris	M	SE	1981	Colour
Mucky Mountains Morris	W&M	NW	1989	Other
Mythago	W&M	SE	1990	Black
New Forest Meddlars	W&M	SE	1990	Other
New Moon Morris	W&M	SE	2014	Other
OBJ Morris	W&M	SE	1996	Black
Oojah Kappivvy	W	SE	2003	Colour
Pedants' Revolt	W&M	EE	2009	Colour
Pensans Morris	W&M	SW	2010	Black
Plum Jerkum Border Morris	W&M	WM	1986	Colour
Poacher Morris	W&M	EM	1995	Black
Powderkegs	W&M	EM	2001	Black
Pretty Grim	W&M	EE	2000	Gothic
Priory Morris	W&M	EE	C.1996	Black
Queen's Oak Morris	W	EM	1984	Colour
Rabble Folk Theatre	W&M	SE	1993	Colour
Rackaback	W&M	YH	2011	Black
Rag Morris	W&M	SW	1981	Colour
Ragged Phoenix	W&M	SE	2014	Black
Ragged Robin Morris	W&M	INT	2014	Black
Raving Maes	W	YH	/	Gothic

Name	Gender	Region	Established	Costume
Red Stags Morris	W&M	SE	1968	Colour
Rumold Morris	W&M	NE	2012	Colour
Screeming Banshees Gothic Morris	W&M	SE	2013	Colour
Shadowhunters	W&M	WM	2015	Black
Shinfield Shambles	W	SE	1994	Colour
Shropshire Bedlams	M	WM	1975	Colour
Silhill Morris	W&M	WM	C.1982	Colour
Silurian Border Morris Men	M	WM	1969	Historic
Spirimawgus Morris	W&M	SE	2012	Black
Steampunk Morris	W&M	SE	ND	Gothic
Stone the Crows Border Morris	W&M	NW	1994	Black
Styx of Stroud	W&M	SW	2012	Black
Sutton Masque	W&M	EE	2014	Colour
Tatters and Tails Border Morris	W&M	SW	2012	Black
Thakeham Morris	W&M	SE	1991	Other
The Broomdashers	W	SE	2008	Black
The Original Welsh Border Morris Men	M	WM	1973	Historic
The Tattered Court	W&M	SW	C.2016	/
The Widders	W&M	Wales	2001	Colour
The Wild Hunt Bedlam Morris	W&M	SE	1991	Black
Thieving Magpie	W&M	YH	2006	Black
Tinners Morris Men	M	SW	2005	Other
Tyler's Men	M	L	1982	Historic
Way of the Wyrd	W&M	EM	2011	Black
West Somerset Border Morris	W&M	SW	2015	Colour
Wharfedale Wayzgoose	W&M	YH	1994	Colour
White Horse Morris	W&M	SW	1950	Colour
Wicked Belly Morris	W&M	SE	2011	Gothic
Wicket Brood Border Morris	W&M	EE	1994	Colour
Wickham Morris	W&M	SE	1980	Other
Wild Oats	W&M	SW	2003	Colour
Wild Thyme Border Morris	W&M	SW	2010	Colour
Winter Warmers	W&M	SE	1986	Colour
Winterbourn Down Border Morris	W&M	SW	1978	Black
Witchmen	M	EM	C.1982	Black
Wolf's Head & Vixen Morris	W&M	SE	1995	W: Gothic M:Black
Wreckers Morris Border Side	W&M	SW	2000	Black
Wychwayz Border Morris	W&M	SE	2001	Black
Wytchwood Morris	W&M	WM	2010	Colour
Yorkshire Coast Morris	W&M	YH	c.1970	Colour
Red Leicester (Leicester Morris Men)	M	EM	1953	Colour

END