

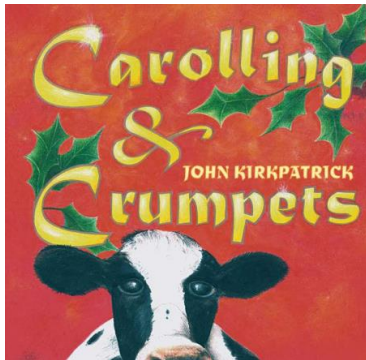
The Morris Ring North Area Newsletter

December 2024



Hi Folks,

Festive greetings and a boozy welcome to the December 2024 Morris Ring North Area Newsletter. Apologies for the delay in getting this edition out. Stuff just got in the way.



Last Christmas (got you – you’ve just been Wham’d) I reported that as December commences, I start playing my favourite Christmas album – Carols and Capers by Maddy Prior & The Carnival Band. Well, I was advised in return to check out John Kirkpatrick’s Carolling & Crumpets. It’s very different from the Prior album, and I am thoroughly enjoying listening to it and will do so for a long time to come – even after Christmas. A lively and exciting set of tunes and songs.

Thank you, Peter de Courcy (Morris Ring website editor and regular fool), an excellent recommendation and it is now a key feature of my festive season. Check it out, folks, if not already familiar with it.

Many of you will now be in the throes of the practice season and will now be enjoying your Christmas/Yuletide Morris activities. Our regional activities list has been updated – please see individual side updates later in the newsletter for details of our festive frolics and mischief. For a national view I recommend the exhaustive summary in the Morris Ring website: [Traditional Morris Events: Christmas | The Morris Ring](#)

Thank you to all that have sent in contributions and, as usual another plea to the other sides to also send your photos, news, and events to daznugent@sky.com to include in this newsletter.

These newsletters are uploaded onto the Morris Ring website and are accessible via the Publications tab on the front page and will most likely be available for decades to come so will be an appropriate method to record some of your side’s memorable moments for posterity. See link: [Area and Sides Newsletters | The Morris Ring](#)

Please can I remind you of the Morris Ring ARM on Saturday, 1st March 2025. Last year we had four sides represented from our area, and we all had a great time – but I will always seek greater representation. It is a fun weekend and could be a nice thank you from your side’s members to your hardworking officers supporting you throughout the year by sending them to represent your side. Details in Morris Ring News below.

2024 was the 90th anniversary of The Morris Ring, and also the 50th anniversary of one of our regional sides, Lord Conyers Morris Men (and, coincidentally, the 500th anniversary of the death of the very first Lord Conyers – William Conyers of Yorkshire, 21 December 1468 – 14 April 1524). Lord Conyers will be celebrating 50 years of performing in public throughout 2025 with a celebratory 50th Anniversary Tour (posters, t-shirts available at the merch stand).

Also 2024 has also been the 100th anniversary of the death of Cecil Sharp.

As we move into 2025 this newsletter will revert back to the traditional Morris Ring logo without the centre 90.

Wishing You All a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

Kindest regards,

Darren Nugent,
Morris Ring North Area Rep
daznugent@sky.com



Morris Ring News

Save the date: 1st March 2025, The Morris Ring Annual Representatives Meeting. We had a good attendance from our area this year - the best one in years. Let's try and get more of our sides attending. Save the date and stand by until more information is available.

Please start making plans to reward for your officers by subsidising their attendance at The Morris Ring ARM.

The Morris Ring has been asked by EFDSS if we would publicise their Christmas 2024 fundraising campaign which runs from 3 to 10 December. [EFDSS Christmas 2024 fundraising campaign | The Morris Ring](#)

Morris Ring Events:

18th January 2025, The Morris Ring Jigs Instructional "Probably the Best Cotswold Morris Workshop in the World" (is it sponsored by Carlsberg?)

1st March 2025, The Morris Ring Annual Representatives Meeting

26th April 2025, JMO Day of Dance 2025 hosted by Adlington Morris Men – Stockport

30th May 2025, Thaxted Morris Weekend

22nd August, Saddleworth Rushcart Weekend

13th September, Celebrating 100 years of Morris dancing in Ripley

Please see the excellent Morris Ring website for further details.

Morris Ring website: [The Morris Ring |](#)

The Morris Ring on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheMorrisRing>

North Area Side News / Upcoming Performances

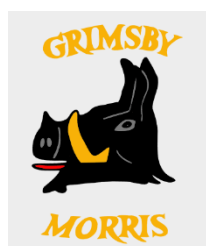
Green Oak Morris Men



Green Oak Morris have had recent success at recruitment. In the past they had run a couple of “Give it a Go” nights but hadn't managed to recruit any members. The angle they had focused on previously was keeping a traditional form of dance alive.

This time they changed the focus to having fun whilst doing a bit of exercise. They attracted 2 people to their latest “Give it a Go” night. One was already a member of Sheffield City Morris who lived locally, but the other person was a possibility. His wife had seen the press release for the give it a go night and encouraged him to go along. He showed a lot of interest, and Green Oak are delighted that he's kept at it for a few weeks since! Another person who joined us recently did so through word of mouth from one of our musicians. They also regularly engaged with our posts on Facebook. They are now a regular face at practice nights and valued members of the side.

Grimsby Morris



- [Boxing Day Tour 2024](#)

Thu, 26/12/2024 **This event is confirmed and the details are finalised.**

- [Plough Sunday](#)

Sun, 12/01/2025 **This event is planned but not confirmed. The details have yet to be finalised.**

See link for list of events: [Events | Grimsby Morris](#)



Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers



From Facebook:

“Do you have a free evening on the 19th December? Fancy an evening of carols and other festive shenanigans? Then please join us for an evening at the University Arms. 197 Brook Hill, Sheffield, S3 7HG, between 5:30pm and 7pm. This is a free event and all are welcome! (Drinking optional, not required)”



Boxing Day is a major date in the Handsworth calendar. The team has performed at its spiritual home in Woodhouse and Handsworth every year since 1963. This fixed day replaced a much older tradition of dancing in mid-winter going back to the 1800s. Their Boxing Day performance is a key part of many people’s Christmas traditions, with spectators travelling from near and far to make up crowds numbering in the hundreds.

Check their [Facebook event page](#) for updates.



Harthill Morris



Harthill Morris are currently learning a dance they've never performed before in their (almost) 50-year history – a dance originally created to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, and one they will feature as they approach their 50th anniversary.

They have already commenced their Christmas performances with an appearance under the gas lamps at the Kelham Island Victorian Christmas Market. This is a great atmospheric event to start the festive season with magical music and merriment along with other local brass bands, musicians, choirs and carollers, and, of course, Santa and his elves. Full report next month.

Harthill Morris musicians also supported the service in All Hallows Church at Harthill to celebrate the unveiling of the Christmas Well Dressing at 3pm, last Saturday, 7th December. And there was a special Harthill Morris Christmas Tree with knitted (or is it crocheted?) hats – each one individually based on different members of the side's own personalised bowler hat.

Again, photos and report next month. But here's a festive picture for our current Christmas season.

Harthill Morris will be up to their usual mischief at the two Harthill public houses on Boxing Day – 11am at the Blue Bell, 12noon at the Beehive – bringing fun, Morris dancing, traditional singing, festive drinking, and more merry-making and tom-foolery! This will be their 49th consecutive Boxing Day performance without a single break.



Lord Conyers Morris Men



Lord Conyers have been busy.

On Saturday 2nd November they successfully retained their champion status at the Sword Dance Union (SDU) Longsword Tournament 2024 at Northallerton, in the “sword dance as a second language” category.

They have now won this category for the second year in succession, but as a bonus this year they also were runners up (to Handsworth) in the “Own Dance” category.



“Here’s a right bunch of posers with the two certificates.” [Their words, not mine – Ed.]



A week later, on 10th November, Lord Conyers had a celebration evening to mark their 50 years in existence upstairs at the Duke of York, Wales, Rotherham.

It was on Tuesday, 13th November 1974, that a few members of Kiveton Folk Club arrived an hour before the club opening time at the Lord Conyers Pub in Wales (no longer in existence) for their first practice under the tutelage of John Ledbury. The Folk Club is still going and one of Lord Conyers attended the club on the actual anniversary date – 13 November 2024 – and performed a medley of Morris tunes to mark the actual date.

After 50 years of service, John Ledbury, their Foreman of Dance since the beginning, decided to stand down from that post for a well-deserved rest. So, the side voted him in as Squire instead (alongside his “Fool” duties – though that takes no effort!).

Left – John Ledbury with engraved whiskey flask and a single malt to put in it! As you would expect, John didn’t open it up and share.



On Saturday, 21st December, Lord Conyers will hold their annual Christmas “Wassail” at the Duke of Leeds (from 1.30pm), which will include dancing outside, then singing and drinking inside. Then at 4pm they perform their haunting horn dance at the Trysting Tree, on Kiveton Lane, near Todwick.

Wakefield Morris



From the side: “We have had a quiet two months as far as dance outs go but we haven’t been idle.

In addition to our normal Monday night practices, we have had two successful Sunday practices, one in October and the second towards the end of November.

Our guest members, both dancers and musicians, have travelled from as far as Grimsby, Chester, Sheffield, Leeds, Durham and Northamptonshire and their time and efforts in travelling and practicing with us is greatly appreciated.

The practice in October saw our band members ages vary from age 6 to 79!

At one of our Monday October practices, Alison from Wakefield Hospice joined us to help us celebrate raising £4,500 for the Hospice from this year’s Ossett Beercart.

Since we started organising the Ossett Beercart Festival in 2014, we have now raised over £25,000 for the Hospice and we would like to say a massive thank you to all our helpers, sponsors, performers and attendees who have made this happen.



Plans are well under way now for the 10th Ossett Beercart in 2025 which will take place from Friday 30th May to Sunday 1st June.



Our next dance out will be on Boxing Day at The Kings Arms, Heath Common, Wakefield, WF1 5SE so do come and join us if you fancy a break from all the festivities.

Wath Morris

On Friday evening, 15th November, I was honoured to attend the Wath Morris Annual Dinner at the Swinton Masonic Hall in my role as Morris Ring North Area Rep. The Squire of the Ring was also in attendance as the Guest of Honour. It was a wonderful evening – clearly a lot of work had been made for it to be such a special evening. I had a great time, and it was a further honour to sit with the Wath Squire and the Ring Squire, the food was very enjoyable and plentiful – as was the beer. Below is a picture of our Great Squire of the Ring preaching his wisdom with great passion as Jono Millward from Harthill Morris looks on menacingly. [Photos from Wath Morris Facebook page.]



And the quality of the entertainment was exceptional. I've been to a few Morris dinners in my time, none had after dinner entertainment as varied and polished as they have at Wath Morris. Every performance, from the first solo singer, to the duos, harmonisers, the instrumentalists, the comic folk song monologue, and all in between were such high quality performances. It was a shame the evening had to end.



Thank you, Wath Morris, for the invitation and creating such fun evening. Please invite me again.

Wath Morris Christmas performances:

17th December – Mumming Tour of Barnsley

19:00 – Meet in town centre TBA

22nd December – Wath Fire Festival

18.30 Carol Service at Wath Parish Church – Incl. seasonal songs from Wath Morris

19.30 Morris Dance Display outside Church – Punch provided by church / friends

19.45 – 8.15 Procession of lights from Church to Rugby Club stopping in Wath Town Centre (Sword and Border)

20.30 FREE Fireworks Display at Rugby Club

21.00 FREE Seasonal Songs & Mummers Play, at the Rugby Club. Food available at the Rugby Club.

22.30 (ish) Finish

16th December – Boxing Day Tour

10:15 – Dance in Wath Town Centre

10:30 PROMPT – Bus leaves Wath Town Centre

10:45 ish – Dancing outside Post Office, Wentworth

11:30 ish – Singing in Rockingham Arms (Front room on the right)

13:00 – Short dance spot outside Rockingham Arms

13:15 – Procession to George and Dragon

13:30 – Border, Sword, Mumming & singing outside George & Dragon

14:45 - PROMPT – Bus leaves to return to Wath

15:00 – Wath Rugby Club: Dancing, Singing, Games & (hopefully) food put on by Rugby Club

4th January – Wassailing

Details TBC.



North Area Sides - contact and social media details

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X: https://x.com/GreenOakMorris?t=EfCaMc_pgSRdVBtwrNManQ&s=09
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Great Yorkshire Morris Bob Carter bjcarter@ntlworld.com
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The Morris Ring

The founding National Association of Morris and Sword Dance Clubs