Dear Friends,

I can’t remember a January busier in my morris career – Wassails and Plough Sunday/Monday events seem to be happening everywhere of late! If your side is involved in one or more of the above, I hope to come and see you soon. Thank you to Flowers of Ilmington Women’s Morris for their superb Wassail on Friday 6th January, a fine pub and great company to share it with!

Sadly, I had to admit defeat and miss Jockey’s Plough Tour, with the continuing Rail strikes and two young children – but I was chuffed to see super pictures coming back from the event and glad a number of sides made it.

Finally, a big thank you to Whitchurch Morris (South Midlands Area) for making me welcome at their Plough Sunday event in Oving, the delights of the ‘Roger Comley brass section’ were on full auditory display!

I look forward to seeing a few more of you at the Fleece Inn Wassail amongst others!

Best Wishes,
Matthew Turvey
West Midlands Area Rep
Morris Ring

News from West Midland Sides

Coventry Morris Men:

Photos LtoR: Chineurde, Hearsall, Laudnam Bunches, Penshaw, Peopleton

- CMM had an enjoyable Boxing Day starting in Kenilworth Castle with Chinewrde Morris, moving on to the Queen & Castle pub and then to Stoneleigh to do the “warm-up” spot before Coventry Mummers performed the Stoneleigh play. A nice sunshiny day with good crowds at the Castle and Stoneleigh and a visitor from America at the pub who had come all the way over to see us (OK she was staying in Birmingham but lived in Utah usually!).
- In addition to the usual Border and Headington dances (the latter to celebrate Sharp’s first experience of the Morris on Boxing Day 1899) we were able to dance the Hearsall (5-man) and Penshaw (4-man) sword dances with the assistance of Will Pound who danced with us for a few years before he became famous.
- In January we are looking forward to dancing at a small-scale Community Wassail at a walled garden in Allesley (Coventry) on the 7th and our annual Sword Tour in Coventry City Centre on the 14th when we will be joined by Black Annis Morris from Leicester appearing as a Molly side.

Faithful City Morris Men:

photo: FCMM at The Talbot @ Knightwick on Boxing Day 2022, foreground the Winning Hat

- Boxing Day 2022 at The Talbot @ Knightwick an appreciative crowd enjoyed judging our hat decorations on a lovely sunny day
- Coming up Plough Sunday/ Farmers Market at The Talbot on 8th January 2023 at the invitation of the new local Reverend
Jockey Morris:
- December 31st – We performed at a New Year Ceilidh featuring The Ceilidh Band at the Bear in Bearwood.
- January 1st – Despite quite a few members of the side being away on Christmas/New Year breaks, we joined Alvechurch Morris as usual for their New Year’s Day bash. Always an enjoyable day with good mates and a fine way to start the year.
- January 7th is our Plough Tour in Birmingham. As in autumn we’ve clashed with a rail strike, so we look forward to seeing who of our fantastic guests make it!
- Also, on January 7th Jockey reps will be heading over for the evening to Stafford Morris Feast. Again, a nice meetup with some good friends. We then have three or four weeks before Feast season resumes…

Shakespeare Morris:
- Our last dance-out of 2022 was Stratford Victorian Market – a good crowd watching, despite being particularly cold!
- Our mummers have been very well received in 12 different locations throughout November/December, thank you to all who came and supported – arguably our best mumming season to date!
- Superb Christmas dinner had at El Greccos in Stratford, a super Boxing Day spent at the Fleece Inn, Bretforton with Pebworth Morris and folkies in the ‘Pewter Room’ for carols and session - and all wrapped up by our New Year’s Day Danceout in Clifford Chambers where we were joined by an Icknield Way man, thank you for joining us in our Stanton Harcourt dances!
- We are holding a recruitment day on Sat 28th Jan 10:30am-4pm at Clifford Chambers Village Hall – come along!

Stafford Morris:
- A rather quieter month than normal for Stafford as we didn’t have as many Christmas Dance Outs as normal. We managed to dance at Ye Olde Dun Cow in Colton, which is a favourite of ours as local to the late great Jack Brown. Some dancing followed by a few songs and a good time had by all.
- We then had a social night, something we’ve not done for many years. A lovely meal at a local Indian Restaurant followed by dancing.
- I’m writing this just prior to Stafford’s 2023 Feast, so either I am hoping it goes well, or for readers, I am pleased to say it went well.

Uttoxeter Heart of Oak Morris:
- Our annual feast will be held at the end of January and invitations will go out in early 2023.

Morris and Folk Events this month:

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<td>With Ragged Oak, Plough Monday Weighbridge Inn, Alvechurch B48 7SQ</td>
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