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June 2026

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Future Events 2026

11th July
Lyme Morris Day
15th August
Shakespeare Morris Day of Dance Ring Meeting
21st August
Saddleworth Rushcart Weekend
19th September
Harthill Morris 50th Anniversary Day of Dance - Invitation
16th October
Morris 18 - 30 Annual Weekend -Portsmouth
23rd October
Fools and Beasts Annual Unconvention

2027

9th to 11th April
JMO weekend of dance, Sheffield
4th to 6th June
Thaxted's 100th anniversary of its first weekend of dance

Please note, the JMO day of dance scheduled for the 3rd October 2026 in Reading has been CANCELLED due to unforeseen circumstances

Squire's Musings – June 2026

Another busy few months in the Squire's household – though perhaps not as busy as it could have been as we have been awaiting the birth of grandchild number 4 who is – at the time of writing – still keeping us waiting.

A couple of feasts in March at Devil's Dyke and Jockey (having to miss Letchworth as I can't be in two places at once!) and finalising the ICH submissions kept me busy. Over Easter we went to see Saddleworth's Good Friday tour – an impressive



number of new dancers, and a procession round a roundabout that I think they might struggle to recreate with a rushcart.

In May we, unfortunately, had to cancel our trip to Hastings Jack in the Green with the Appalachian due to sudden lack of numbers. Hopefully we can make it next year instead.



I was delighted to be invited to attend Moulton Festival this year – somewhere I have never been before. This was a great day; we really enjoyed it. I am told Anker now have a standing invite so maybe we can get a full team together for next May.

In the midst of this, we managed to join Shakespeare Morris to dance at Warwick Arts Centre one evening for the screening of Mother's Pride. This is a real feel good film with an affectionate take on morris dancing which we thoroughly enjoyed. (Can also recommend The Sheep Detectives if anyone is interested!)



At the beginning of June we went on our annual pilgrimage to Thaxted.



As a first, we had no team along so Jon and I offered our services as needed and spent

the day as honorary East Suffolk. The sun shone, our tour guide was excellent and appreciated that overheating and lots of dancing might be a recipe for disaster so we did a sensible amount of dancing with some excellent company from Colchester, Westminster and Chelmsford. Stand out from the weekend for me was the amount of young – and very competent -dancers present. Lovely to see such enthusiasm and energy. Yesterday, Anker took an emotional trip to Willey fete. This is a booking we take every year and, ten years ago, one of our number dropped

dead in the tea queue there after we danced. This year the village has revamped their village green and provided a bench dedicated to John as part of the alterations; so a special visit this weekend.

Looking ahead, large numbers of morris teams seem to be celebrating anniversaries so I am off to Colchester, East Surrey, Saddleworth and Harthill in the next few months.

Hopefully the weather will manage something between the 30 degree heat of Thaxted and the torrential downpours of yesterday.

Look forward to seeing you all out and about.

Emma

From the Bagman's Armchair

Early May saw the Moulton Village Festival, which was very well attended this year. The format was reassuringly similar to past years, with dancers pulling the 'May Queen' around the town in a carriage and dancing in various spots and pubs. The sight of Moulton, Thaxted, Adderbury Village Morris Men, Belle D'Vain, The Belles of London City, and Chelmsford Ladies, was spectacular. Of particular note was our extremely talented squire, Emma, and her husband playing the music for the Thaxted men, she did a magnificent job so thank you Emma. The weather stayed dry and much fun was had by all the whole weekend.



Lassington Oak celebrated their 50th anniversary with a tour of the Isles of Scilly this looked like a great trip out. They were based on St Mary's but also danced on Tresco, St Martins as well as in the port at Penzance and in the middle of the ocean dancing on the Scillonion ship!

The wonderful Westminster day of dance fell victim to a late date change, this was due to a political march in the same place and on the same day. This was a shame, but the organisers very sensibly did not want to be

caught up in the march or the propaganda that could have come with it. This led to fewer numbers on what is a magical day in the nation's capital.

Thaxted Morris Weekend arrived on the weekend after the second May bank holiday as it has for



99 years, a slightly downsized festival as they wanted to keep this year a little more manageable in anticipation of next year's larger 100th



anniversary festival. So only 270 dancers from 21 clubs this year. I will not name them all but notable was Silkeborg who came all the way from Denmark, it was also good to see Leeds back for the first time in many a year. The Friday night opened with a half hour peal of the church bells, then the dancing at the Star after dinner was a huge success, helped by the landlord selling all Morris people in kit beer at £2 a pint. The Saturday tours took place on 3 double decker buses, a coach, and a minibus, driving around the beautiful Essex villages and pubs, a glorious affair with music and singing between stops. In the evening Emma led the music and procession down the hill from The Swan to meet the other procession perfectly in Town Street. The show dances were wonderful this year with lots of time for mass dancing. The feast was held in the church, this is a stunning venue for a feast with



tables laid out in long rows reminiscent of Hogwarts! The second set of show dances followed, and then the evening show was ended with the sublime Abbots Bromley Horn Dance. The night concluded in the small hours with much merriment. The Sunday morning brought the procession up the hill and the traditional Morris Church service for

those with spiritual inclinations.

Greensleeves, in their centenary year preformed an offertory dance during the service and our very own squire of the Ring, Emma, gave a reading. Dancing



outside the Church afterwards was some of the best witnessed in a long while. More food, then the wind down of morris and social dancing with the community that at times resembled a painting by Peter Bruegel.



Colchester's centenary day of dance arrived at the end of June, with 13 and part sides on two walking tours of their beautiful and historic city. This was a cracking day out, the weather was scorching hot and heavy with humidity which gave the day a relaxed continual feel as dancers huddled together in shade and sought out the lightest of breeze for relief from the broiling sun. This was broken at the final procession and mass show by very welcome light rain. The evening meal

was preceded by an excellent jig from Freya Gentry and Genevieve Jennings of Colchester, two very talented young dancers and a credit to Colchester. The food was delicious and the company was charming. In all a worthy and memorable 100th anniversary with a feeling of strength and forward-thinking attitude that will stand them in good stead for their next 100 years.



Rob

Insurance – a plea

I am sure many of you have heard of the sad loss to the Morris World of Chris Dent who had taken over as our JMO Insurance Officer. As an interim measure, Mike Stimpson has stepped back to take over the role but, after 20 years in the post, is keen not to be in the role for too long.

Do you have any knowledge of insurance and can you step forward? In order to manage a handover, stage 1 would be to be copied in on emails for a period and work with Mike on the renewal of the policy in December 2026, then switch roles and copy Mike in on your emails for a period, and take on

answering questions from teams in all three orgs. You'll then run the show on your own, as part of, and supported by, the JMO Committee.

You will also get involved in handling any claims that come in and passing the relevant paperwork to our Brokers.

Anyone who would like to find out more can ring Mike any afternoon on 01923 770425 or email him at insurance@thejmo.org.uk.

We also need

- A club to organise the 2028 JMO day of dance
- A treasurer. Clayton was elected to the post of squire, starting next March, so we have a year to find someone to become treasurer. If you are interested, please get in touch.
- A south Midlands area rep as Geoff Pitt has too much on currently to continue.
- Members interested in joining the archive group. They are, in particular, looking for people who might have digital expertise, and people who might be able to help Geoff Douglas at the Essex Register Office with cataloguing boxes of archive material. Contact Matt Simons if interested.



Young Morris Dancers of the UK!

We need YOU!

The Morris 18-30 are proud to announce the
24th annual tour shall be at:

PORTSMOUTH

(Indoor camping in Petersfield)

From Friday 16th - Sunday 18th October 2026

OPEN TO EVERYONE

Please register interest by messaging
The Morris 18-30 Facebook Page to be added to
the WhatsApp group!



JMO Day of Dance 2027

Sheffield
9/10/11 April



Hosted by: **FIVE RIVERS MORRIS**



9 April 2027 to 11 April 2027

The JMO National Day of Dance is a collaborative event organised in turn by one of the three morris organisations in the UK – The Morris Federation, The Morris Ring, and Open Morris. The day of dance is a celebration of morris and traditional dancing held annually at a different location around the UK.

In 2027 the day of dance is on Saturday 10th April 2027 in Sheffield, South Yorkshire, hosted by [Five Rivers Morris](#) on behalf of the Morris Federation.

Five Rivers Morris would love teams to think about staying for the whole weekend, rather than just travelling in for the Saturday. They are developing plans around the main Day of Dance, which is likely to include music, singing, sessions, workshops and other folk activity from Friday evening through to Sunday.

More info and how to book a place:

For all the details of the weekend and how to book a place, see: <https://fiveriversmorris.org.uk/jmo-day-of-dance-sheffield-2027/>

Bookings open until Friday 12th February 2027.