



SQUIRE: Emma Melville
Email: squire@themorrisring.org

BAGMAN: Rob Evans
Email: bagman@themorrisring.org

TREASURER: Clayton Francis
Email: treasurer@themorrisring.org

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Future Events - 2025

16th August

Stratford-upon-Avon Day of Dance Morris Ring Meeting 372

Join us for a fabulous day in Stratford-upon-Avon, from 10am-4pm, dancing at the riverside Bancroft Gardens, Shakespeare's Birthplace and other spots around the town. There will be no cost for the day of dance as Shakespeare Morris will cover the cost of performance permits, and food/drinks will be for you to purchase from the large number of eateries throughout the town.

22nd-24th Aug

Saddleworth Rushcart Weekend Morris Ring Meeting 373

Once more to West Yorkshire we go. (I'm not getting into an argument, the white roses throughout Uppermill are pretty strong evidence).

13th Sept

Ripley DoD Celebrating 100 years of Morris Dancing in Ripley Morris Ring Meeting 374

A Day of Dance will take place in Ripley on Saturday 13th September 2025. The day will be run on JMO lines with sides dancing around the town. There will be plenty of opportunities for refreshment during the day with sides catering for their own needs. To assist in planning, sides are requested to indicate interest by email to ripleymorris@hotmail.com (link sends e-mail) with the subject Ripley 100 by January 31st 2025.

24th-26th Oct

Illustrious Order of Fools & Beasts Unconvention 2025 (Otley, W Yorks), hosted by Wharfedale Wayzgoose Border Morris

The Saturday tour will be around Otley and Harrogate. There will be the usual mix of workshops plus the AGM on Sunday. Unfortunately, due to rising food and transport costs, the fee has had to be increased to £90; this includes Friday supper, two breakfasts, Saturday lunch and Feast. Please contact Robert for pro rata prices for a part weekend. Children under 16 half price! E-mail: triggertrrotter1@aol.com Closing date for Applications 10th October 2025. See Morris Ring website for form.

Squire's Massed Dances

The following are the massed dance choices I would like to see people doing together over the next two years.

Vandals of Hammerwich (Lichfield) (In chorus, show both times)

Lads a Bunchum (Adderbury)

Laudnum Bunches (Headington)

Valentine (Fieldtown)

William and Nancy (Bledington)

Young Collins (Oddington)

Riggs of Doom (In the style of Bampton) - this is a special privilege to be able to include this dance written by Utrecht Morris and I have included the music below for those of you unfamiliar with the tune. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ByJUXfZ4LQ8>

v0.2.1 20160525

13. Riggs of Doom Bampton

Frans Tromp (2002)

A(AB)4

♩ = 150

(wordt vervolgd op volgende bladzijde)

13. Riggs of Doom

(vervolg)

Dans ontworpen door Mik Lammers (2002).

Contact your area rep if you need help and support with learning any of these dances.

Cheers

Squire's Musings – Greetings from Emma Melville

Having now been 'in the job' for nearly 6 months, I thought I would let you know how I am getting on. I started with a couple of feasts – Devil's Dyke and Letchworth – where I discovered how heavy the badge is to wear for an evening and whether my daughter-in-law's beautifully created ribbon kept it high enough to avoid getting in the way of the accordion bellows.

You'll be pleased to know it does, so both badge and bellows should remain unscathed for the next two years. Having danced some Appalachian in it at Evesham, I am less sure about my teeth!

Over Easter I visited Saddleworth for part of their Good Friday outing. A lovely day amongst friends but I am so pleased no-one has ever expected me to judge hats, the creativity involved is breathtaking and I think they all deserve prizes.



I then went along to see Horwich's last hurrah. A wonderful day and so good to see so many North West sides. I remember watching Horwich at Saddleworth Rushcart many, many years ago along with Clitheroe and Preston Royal and Wrigley Head, so it was brilliant to see that new teams are keeping the tradition alive and well in the North West.

I was honoured to be invited along to the unveiling of the memorial to Johnny Burke. Unfortunately, a day's teaching followed by a parent's evening meant I missed a lot of the event but thank you to Stafford and Uttoxeter for making me welcome and for showing me past and present memorials.

On top of all this, I have been out and about with my own sides.

With Anker I have been to Westminster and had our own St George's Day of Dance (meaning, sadly, that I missed the sight of 1000 morris dancers in Stockport) as well as a day in our home town of Nuneaton to celebrate 50 years. With First Class Stamp I have performed at Chippenham Festival and Evesham. With Dolphin I have been out and about a couple of times with Greensleeves on their annual meet up.





A highlight of the year so far has been leading the dancers down the hill at Thaxted. Over the past 50 years, I have seen a huge number of Squires of the Morris Ring do this - including my dad and brother - and it was very special to be able to lead the walk down that hill and then MC the massed shows. (Nobody mention buses and tractors!)

One thing I have learnt is that I am fairly naïve when it comes to

understanding how the media works. When ITV rings up and says they would like to interview you, they don't mean give them a list of dates and tell them where you are dancing out. They mean TOMORROW, to go out on the News at 10, and can you just dash round and organise a side of dancers to be part of the filming. Massive thanks to Anker who stepped up to the plate and managed an entire team, on a day and at a time they never usually dance.

So, quite stunningly, in one week, I managed article in the Sunday Times (picture is one Joe Oldaker took for the team alongside the official guy doing the (hundreds of) pictures), piece on News at 10, and a morning spent doing 'local radio'. Also fascinating. A Teams meeting is set up which you join and then any local radio station who wants to can join the meeting and stake a claim on a ten minute slot to ask you questions whilst broadcasting their show. So I managed 6 different local radio stations (not necessarily 6 different sets of questions!) in the space of an hour. [My headteacher has been brilliant, if slightly gobsmacked, about my range of reasons for requests for time out of lessons.]



an
a
slot

I have also been working with the JMO as the question of face paint has again reared its head. There is an article in this newsletter on the matter.

So that's about it for now. I am looking forward to a day in Stratford with Shakespeare, Saddleworth Rushcart, Ripley's centenary day of dance, Peterborough's day of dance and Whitchurch's day of dance (and those are just the ones I know about so far!)

I hope to see you out and about and maybe some of you may join Anker at their 50th feast on the 8th November.

Enjoy the summer. Emma

From the Bagman's Desk

Dear Friends

This is the first report from the armchair of the new Bagman, having danced in at the Thaxted weekend. Dancing in at the Thaxted weekend seemed an appropriate time and place; I have to say I was very humbled at the reception I received from all the people who witnessed the occasion. The 98th Thaxted weekend was a triumph again this year; with just over 350 dancers, it was at capacity. Notable this year were the 90th birthday celebrations for Joe Hobbs, a Thaxted man who still dances well and regularly. He has been with the Thaxted men since the early 1960s. In this, his 90th year, he plans to climb the outside of the Thaxted church tower on the August bank holiday Monday in whites and with bells on. John Jenner of Cambridge Morris Men also celebrated his 90th year. John has not missed a Thaxted Weekend for 70 years. Cake was presented to them at the feast, one in Thaxted colours and one in the livery of Cambridge. New for this year was Chris Todd exhibiting his wonderful morris-inspired artwork at the Thaxted Guildhall. Mass dancing, merrymaking, food and friendship were evident all weekend, and even dancers that had not been before were swept along in the spirit of the weekend.



Westminster Day of Dance once again was fantastically organised and a real treat to attend - I challenge any dancer from outside of London not to feel like 'Dick Whittington' and be overwhelmed by the feelings of awe dancing around Westminster. Dance spots like Trafalgar Square and Westminster Abbey are simply breathtaking to say the least, as well as historic and cosy little pubs tucked away in hidden alleys. It was amazing again this year.

Biblical rain at Wimborne sent most of the dancers scurrying to the pubs two by two; dancing and tunes were had and the day was saved.

In early July we were hugely proud to see several representatives from Ring sides joining in with the Pride march in London.

The beginning of August is a time for Sidmouth with all its colour, noise and bustle. Lassington Oak, Greensleeves, Dartington, Plymouth and Earlsdon, to name but a few, were there in both official and unofficial roles. The John Gasson memorial jig competition is a highlight of the Sidmouth event with some wonderful dancing on display from all of the morris organisations. Personally, it has been a wonderful if tentative two months as I find my feet, and I would again like to thank everyone who elected me to the Bagman position ... hope to see you in Saddleworth if not before.

Rob Evans

Face-paint Revisited

Firstly, we would like to say a massive thank you to all those sides who have taken serious consideration of how they might look to the wider community and have made alterations to their face make up when they dance out.

It has been fantastic to see all the wonderful colours and patterns – there are some amazing artists out there.

The observant amongst you will work out that there is a ‘but’ coming.

But, the JMO committee is, unfortunately, still receiving and settling complaints.

Our guidance asks for you to consider the impact of your make up on a reasonable observer but do bear in mind that such observers may have faced racism in every walk of life for all their life and may not be willing to give you the benefit of the doubt or brave enough to approach you to determine if you really are racist or not.

WE know you are not. Someone who has faced intolerance from various quarters may be less certain of our motives.

So, can the JMO committee suggest you consider the following questions when looking at your make-up.

Firstly, do I have to cover my entire face?

The best way to avoid any complaints or misunderstandings is to do only partial make up or maybe even use a mask instead.

If, as many teams do, you wish to adopt full face make up then consider these three questions.

- Are the colours chosen sufficiently light / different to black that this is obvious even in poor light or from a distance?
- Does the pattern chosen show sufficiently that there are other colours than black involved whatever angle the photograph is taken from?
- If the weather is wet or the wearer gets hot and sweaty will it remain obvious that there is a pattern or several colours?

This might seem excessive caution and considerations, but recent events have shown that these are the questions that councils, festival organisers, event organisers and newspapers will be asking. And if they don't like the answers they come up with then they will not be asking your team to perform.

It is also the case that they will be scouring your websites so it may be prudent to avoid photos of your past make up choices in public areas that are visible to people beyond your own membership.

All of this is not meant to be heavy-handed but aimed at preserving the positive view of morris – both among the public and event organisers.

As we started by saying, there are an amazing range of colours and patterns out there. Let's make sure that we stick with this in order to delight all observers.

Thank you

Emma, Jen, Pauline

JMO committee

Morris Ring Grants 2025

Proposal: Grant Scheme for the Promotion of Morris Dancing in the UK to Full Members of the Morris Ring

Introduction

- Morris dancing is significant in the UK's cultural heritage
- We must acknowledge the current challenges facing Morris dancing: ageing demographics, lack of funding, and evolving audience engagement, viewed as fringe
- Introduce the concept of a grant scheme as a potential solution to revitalise Morris dancing.

Proposed Grant Tiers

- Outline three grant tiers:
- Tier 1: Small Grants (< £1,000)
- Tier 2: Medium Grants (£1,000 - £3,000)
- Tier 3: Large Grants (£3,000 - £5,000)

Merits of Each Grant Tier

- Tier 1: Small Grants (up to £1,000)
 - Accessibility: Lower barrier to entry for smaller Morris teams and possibly individual dancers.
 - Targeted Projects: Ideal for funding specific needs like workshops, Days of Dance or publicity materials.
 - Encouraging Innovation: Provides opportunities to experiment with new ideas and approaches to promoting Morris dancing.
- Tier 2: Medium Grants (up to £3,000)
 - Supporting Growth: Enables established teams to expand their activities and reach new audiences.
 - Community Engagement: Funds projects like festivals, specific regional events with significant impact, school outreach programs, and collaborations with other local organisations.
 - Preserving Traditions: Help with the research and documentation of traditional Morris dance forms.
- Tier 3: Large Grants (up to £5,000)
 - National Impact: Supports initiatives with a wider reach, such as national tours, training programs for instructors, or the creation of online resources.
 - Long-Term Sustainability: Funds projects that address the long-term challenges facing Morris dancing, like developing youth programs or establishing permanent performance spaces.
 - Raising the Profile: Enables the creation of high-quality media content that showcases the diversity and dynamism of Morris dancing.

Evaluation and Impact Assessment

- Establish clear criteria for evaluating grant applications:
 - Artistic merit
 - Community impact
 - Sustainability
 - Innovation
- Develop a framework for measuring the impact of the grant scheme on the vitality of Morris dancing in the UK.

Conclusion

- Reiterate the importance of investing in the future of Morris dancing.
- Emphasise the potential of a grant scheme to revitalise this unique cultural tradition.
- Call to action for stakeholders to support the implementation of the grant scheme.

Additional Considerations

- Inclusivity: Ensure that the grant scheme is accessible to all Morris dancers, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or ability.
- Sustainability: Encourage grant recipients to develop projects that have a lasting impact on the Morris dancing community, local, regional and national.
- Collaboration: Foster partnerships between JMO, Morris teams, possible funding organisations, and other community groups.
- Limits should be in place of no more than £10,000 given in grants in any one year to make this sustainable over a number of years given our deposits on hand and be fiscally responsible to reduce this in line with accepted limits.
- Exclusions: it is NOT the intention of these grants to be in any way targeted for the use of what would be regarded as a Sides running costs ie kit, bells, hats, programme printing, hall hire, subsidy for transport to events, fuel, accommodation, camping etc
- Future ONLY. This does not apply to funding for current events, i.e. 2025
- Availability. Full members ONLY up to date with subscriptions

Application Process

Sides are to submit a written application to the Treasurer via this [Google Form](#) outlining;

- What Grant is being applied for
- What type of event/programme/workshop/DoD it is
- Its aims
- Expected audience
- Expected duration and impact
- Any special considerations

This will then be discussed between the Officers and a decision made, ideally within 10 days of receiving the application and the transfer of monies made within 5 days after agreement with the Side.

Post Event Feedback

It is important that the MR receives feedback from the Side as to the success or otherwise of the event via this [Google Form](#)

What was its impact?

What was the size of the audience?

How do you gauge its success?

Has it grown the Morris?

What would you do differently?

How would you improve it?

Can this be replicated?

This framework outlines the potential benefits of a grant scheme to promote Morris dancing in the UK. The proposed grant tiers offer a range of funding options to support a variety of projects, from small-scale initiatives to national programs. By investing in the future of Morris dancing, the MR ensures a vibrant cultural tradition that will continue to thrive for generations to come.

Clayton Francis

Treasurer Morris Ring

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"A plea from the Overseas Bagman"

Hello, fellow humans...

I recently took over from the excellent Mr Worrall as Overseas Bagman. So far, I've been in touch with the Overseas sides by email, I've visited a non-Ring side in Sweden, I've met up with Utrecht when they spent a weekend dancing out with Yateley Morris Men in the UK, and I am due to go on a morris tour in France organised by North Wood Morris at the end of the month... But the world is a big place, and morris gets everywhere, so I need a little assistance in familiarising myself with morris on a global scale.

I was wondering if I could ask for your collective help. I am interested in international morris relations and experiences. I would like to know about your side's morris experiences outside of the UK and your relationships with other sides, events and organisations overseas.

I am particularly interested in whether you have ongoing relations with sides based outside of the UK. Is there a non-UK-based side who your side visit or who visit you? My experience of these international relationships is that they are not bound by which organisation a side belongs to, rather they exist due to history, happenstance, or quite simply friendship. I'd very much appreciate if you could let me know if your side does have morris friends overseas.

Additionally, I am also interested in the excursions that UK-based sides make over the seas. Do you have regular locations, or regular events abroad that your side attends? What are your experiences? I know that such visits can often be associated with town-twinning schemes, and I know a few instances of this, but I'd like to know more.

As Overseas Bagman I am interested in the experiences of sides outside the UK who dance the morris, but I am also interested in the experiences of UK-based sides when they pick up their passports and breach our encircling waters. If you do have any information or experiences that you would like to share with me then I'd be very grateful.

If you would like to share anything with me then please email me at:
overseasbagman@themorrisring.org

Additionally, if you are planning on heading overseas, and you wouldn't object to carrying a hairy pipe-smoking Scotsman as an additional item of luggage, then please let me know.

Yours to the last whisker,
Lewis Elliot
Overseas Bagman

Morris For All Badges

The JMO exists to promote co-operation between the three Morris organisations on matters of mutual interest. Two key aspects of the JMO's remit are to promote a positive image of Morris and to encourage more people to take up Morris dance. With this in mind, the JMO Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group met up with Rob Tidy fairly soon after the fabulous JMO Stockport Day of Dance which Rob played a huge part in getting together, to discuss some new ideas.

It's clear Morris dancers make the best ambassadors. Most new dancers come via friends or from talking to dancers during a show. Among the many positive aspects of taking up Morris dance, perhaps the most important are enjoyment and a feeling of belonging.

The 'Morris for All' badge is designed to be worn when dancing out, to give that message of welcome, and to encourage people to talk to dancers. 'It's great fun, you could do it, and you would be made welcome'.

And this is a message we can promote most strongly across the diversity that exists within the Morris world. Individual teams may have their specialisms and restrictions, but working together we can help people find their ideal team in the area.

Wear the badge to get the conversation going and to celebrate our world!

A 30mm soft enamel badge with butterfly clasp pin fastening. Design by the JMO's EDI group born out of discussions with Rob Tidy. The badge's colours and the slogan promote the idea that Morris welcomes and can be enjoyed by people of all ages and backgrounds.

Available to purchase for £1 (to cover costs) from Ring, Fed and Open reps (Ring - Matthew Turvey, matthew.turvey.89@hotmail.co.uk, I'll make sure to be at big events either personally or by way of a volunteer stand-in!)."



Best wishes,
Matthew Turvey

John Jenner at 90

In June 2025, John Jenner celebrated his 90th birthday. A stalwart of the Cambridge Morris Men since 1955, John served as Squire for a combined 9 years and as Bagman for a total of 37 years. Though he retired from dancing in public a couple of years ago, the CMM continues to benefit from his enormous breadth of knowledge and insight — after 70 years of continuous active involvement with the side, John is the longest serving member throughout our 100 year history. Over that time, he has provided consul to dozens of Morris Ring officers and also served for many years as East Area Representative. In fact, the original meeting to draw out these areas took place in John's house where lines were drawn across a large map unfurled on his dining room table.

At our centenary feast at Christ's College last October, we honoured John's extraordinary contribution by conferring upon him the title of "Fellow of the Cambridge Morris Men", a position created especially for the occasion. A second surprise came at the Thaxted Morris Weekend this year when the host side presented John with a birthday cake in CMM colours.

On behalf of the Cambridge Morris Men and the wider morris community, I'd like to congratulate John on his 90th birthday with thanks for his support, past and present. "For he's a jolly good fellow and so say all of us!"

Matt Simons
Squire of Cambridge Morris Men
East Area Representative of the Morris Ring



A Newsletter for the East Area

Following the success of occasional e-newsletters in other areas, July saw the launch of 'The Eastern Angle', a newsletter for the east area. Bagmen of all sides in the area should have received a copy by email on 9th July. It will also soon be available to download from the Morris Ring website.

The deadline for the next (Michaelmas) edition is 14 September.

Matt Simons
East Area Representative for the Morris Ring



The Rep's Ramblings

I am pleased to introduce this new venture for member clubs of the Morris Ring in the eastern region. The concept is by no means original but imitates a format pioneered by west midlands area rep, Matthew Turvey. Since *The Morris Ring Circular* fell into abeyance in 2019, there has been no formal channel for clubs and individuals to share their news so area newsletters are beginning to fill the gap. I hope that you will accept this publication as *your* newsletter and embrace the opportunity to share news with your friends in the east.

Those who know me will not be surprised at the title, *The Eastern Angle*, which is born out of my professional interests as an historian and penchant for wordplay. Whilst several of our clubs are situated outside the historic kingdom of the Eastern Angles, I hope that you will afford the editor (or should that be editor?) a degree of poetic licence!

My aim is to produce four full editions each year, issued on the traditional quarter days — Lady Day (March), Midsummer (June), Michaelmas

(September) and Christmas — with shorter bulletins appearing on cross-quarter days (Candlemas, May Day, Lammás, All Hallows). However, as this midsummer edition has been slightly delayed, there shall be no Lammastide issue this year.

The success of this publication will depend on the availability of material — that is where you, dear reader, come in. I am keen to receive news and commentary from clubs and individuals. Though I would prefer to keep the content relevant to our area, I am willing to consider contributions of any kind. Reportage or creative responses in prose, poetry, or picture are equally welcome. Copy for this edition has been collated from various websites and social media profiles. I would be most grateful for any feedback on this newsletter: tell me what you want to see.



Continue to Flourish!

Matt



Multum in parvo: Squire, John Barsby, with Rutland Morris award from the High Sheriff of Rutland for 'great and valuable services to the community, presented in March

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Deadline for Michaelmas edition: 14 September
Submissions: matt.j.simons@icloud.com

Notices

It is that time again when we have to think about electing a squire to succeed our current squire Emma at the end of her term of official office in 2027. The Election will be held at the A.R.M. in March 2026.

The process will be the same as always, a candidate should be proposed by a full member side with a letter of proposal no longer than 250 words. The candidate should also write a statement of no more than 250 words. The proposal should be submitted to the Bagman of the Morris Ring by the deadline of November 30th 2025.

ANKER MORRIS MEN

This year Anker turn 50. Joe Oldaker tells us something about it:

1975 In this year Coventry Morris Men gave a striking display of Morris at the Nuneaton Folk Club's weekly meeting, and this prompted the enthusiasts present to propose a new team be set up in Nuneaton. An inaugural meeting in September laid the groundwork, when it was decided to have only male dancers, and the team had sufficient numbers to practise and people prepared to take on the roles of Squire, Bagman, Chancellor and Foreman.

1976 By July 1976 the team had sufficient expertise to perform at the Nuneaton Hospitals League of Friends Fete, when the Mayor joined in.

Anker chose Blue and Silver Grey baldricks, the Borough colours. The ribbon was, and is still, specially produced by Toye Kenning in Bedworth. For the first year the team did not wear hats, but on St George's Day 1977 they had been kitted out with black "three-quarter Stovepipes", specially made in Atherstone, trimmed with blue and grey ribbons. On that occasion the then Squire brought a red rose for each man to wear in his hat to celebrate St George's Day, and this was liked so much that a red fabric rose in the hat was introduced.



1977 The team turned out on New Year's Day at the Old Chequers in Bulkington. The repertoire was limited for obvious reasons, but men from Coventry Morris had taught the men and one or two danced with the novices to help.

From then on the team expanded the repertoire, and worked at polishing the standard of dancing, and in **1981** were admitted to membership of the Morris Ring.

Through the subsequent decades, men joined and others left, and the team developed friendships with other

groups locally and around the country, travelling to Weekends and Days of Dance. During the Summer Anker visit pubs around the area every Wednesday evening in lieu of practice.

In **1984** the Morris Ring celebrated its Golden Jubilee in the Midlands, and Anker hosted a number of teams for the event, with dancing around the area culminating in a huge Feast for all at the Metropole at the NEC.



In **1985** the team spent a long Easter Weekend in Belgium as guests of Piloni Morris Men from Braine-le-Chateau, and danced in Brussels, Le Mans and Jemappes, with a high spot at Waterloo where a dance was performed to the tune “British Grenadiers”.

As Nuneaton’s “home team”, Anker have regularly performed at the behest of the Borough Council, both on special occasions and as Saturday morning “entertainment in the Borough” for the public in Nuneaton and Bedworth.

During the 1970’s and 80’s the Council supported a yearly “Folk in the Park” event in July, where local folk performers and dancers appeared on a Sunday afternoon in Riversley Park, and Anker were a fixture there.

They also appeared regularly at the Bedworth Folk Day from 1978 onwards – this was arranged by the local group of the English Folk Dance and Song Society in co-operation with the Council, as the Bedworth Civic Hall was used.

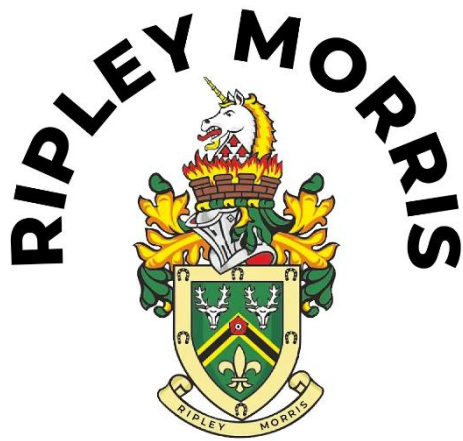
In 1999 our hat-makers in Atherstone closed down, so our hats are now more conventional top hats, not “stovepipes”.

2000 As the team celebrated its Silver Jubilee in this year, a Meeting of the Morris Ring was organised in Nuneaton, with visiting teams from all over the country coming for the weekend, and three coachloads toured the area dancing during the Saturday, finishing in Bedworth, and going on to a Feast in Eton School. On the Sunday there was a Massed Show in Riversley Park.

2015 The Fortieth Anniversary saw another Meeting of the Morris Ring, based in Bulkington, with dancing by a dozen visiting teams in Nuneaton and Bedworth, and then in the surrounding district. An evening Feast was held at Weston Hall Hotel. A Massed Show was mounted on the Sunday at Coombe Abbey.

2025 In spite of reduced numbers, and occasional fitness problems as the dancers get a little older, Anker are still going strong. The Golden Jubilee this year is a low key affair, with dancing in Nuneaton Town Centre to celebrate.





100 years of Morris dancing in Ripley 1925-2025

Morris dancing began in Ripley in 1925 with the formation of the Ripley Folk Dance Club, with both men and women practicing traditional Morris, Sword and Country dancing and performing out as separate male and female sides.

The club's guiding force was Stanley Evans, a schoolteacher who became Headmaster at Hartshay Council School in 1928. He was not only a founder of the Ripley Folk Dance Club but also a key figure in the wider English Folk Dance Society (EFDS) movement.



He attended the inaugural Derbyshire branch meeting in 1926 and served as its secretary for 18 years. Evans' leadership extended to major regional events. The club's first recorded competitive appearance was in 1928 at the Buxton and North Derbyshire Musical Festival, where Ripley placed impressively across several dance categories, including Morris.

Performances were frequent and varied — from local fetes and well dressings to the Children's Folk Dance Festival in Ripley, which once boasted over 500 young dancers.

The team trained rigorously and were often led by experienced instructors like Arthur Hobson and later Imogen Holst, daughter of composer Gustav Holst. These connections ensured that Ripley's standards were among the highest in the country.

Starting in 1934, Ripley dancers took part in annual countywide tours, performing in towns and villages with music from piano accordions and gramophones — even a loudspeaker van! In 1936, they danced at the first regional EFSS festival in Nottingham's Albert Hall, representing Derbyshire with distinction.

By 1949, the name "Ripley Morris" had begun to appear separately on programmes and festival schedules. The team still operated within the Ripley EFDSS Centre but was increasingly recognised as a Morris side in its own right. At the Festival of Britain in 1951, Ripley Morris performed a full day of dance, travelling by bicycle from Ilkeston to Nottingham with stops at Ripley and Trowell — a feat of endurance and enthusiasm!

In 1952, they took part in the 38th Morris Ring Meeting in Tideswell, performing dances in traditional styles such as Bampton, Ilmington and Headington.

Despite a strong start, Ripley Morris faced challenges. By 1963, the side folded, with many members moving on to other teams such as Foresters Morris Men and Derby Morris Men. However, this was not the end. Ripley's legacy endured in memory and influence — particularly through dancers like Chris Canner, Robin Record, and Sam Taylor, who continued the traditions elsewhere.

In 1981, Brian Rose and his son Paul's enthusiasm brought the Ripley Morris phoenix back to life. Inspired by the local folk scene and supported by Mansfield Morris, they launched a recruitment drive that brought together dancers from Amber Folk Dance Club, Kerygma Folk Team, and the Ripley Wayfarers.



With Keith Giddens as the first foreman and Mick Peat as Bagman, practices began at Fritchley Congregational Church Hall. It was here that the side's unique style was forged — possibly aided by the Flotex carpet specially donated by Giddens' employer to withstand the beating of sticks. Ripley Morris was revived as a men's side, with the ladies establishing the Ripley Green Garters.

Ripley Morris became a member of the Morris Ring of England in the 1930s and resumed its membership in 1983. Ripley Green Garters are members of the Morris Federation. Ripley Morris dance Cotswold Morris and continue the local tradition of Guising, whilst Ripley Green Garters dance North West Morris.

Ripley Morris quickly established itself again, performing locally and joining long-standing friends like Mansfield Morris on May tours to Sherwood Forest. The team evolved, but always with respect for the past. Members from the original team, including Sam Taylor, re-joined or attended feasts well into the 1980s and 1990s.

Recently, practices moved to



Sawmills Community Centre, but a return to Fritchley in 2019 marked a symbolic homecoming and a renewed link to the group's roots.

Today, Ripley Morris continues to dance with pride, representing nearly a century of folk tradition in Derbyshire. From schoolteachers and concertina players to fathers and sons learning together, Ripley Morris has always been about more than the dance — it's about community, heritage, and joy.

To celebrate 100 years of dance, Ripley Morris and Ripley Green Garters will be hosting a Day of Dance in Ripley on Saturday 13th September 2025.

Opportunities remain for additional sides to join us on 13th September. If your side fancies a day out in Derbyshire on 13th September Ripley Morris and Ripley Green Garters will be delighted to welcome you.

To get your side on the list please contact through ripleymorris@hotmail.com with the subject Ripley 100.

Mick Buckley. Ex everything Ripley Morris

Bob Pick Organiser in Chief Ripley Morris

Ronda Sims Ripley Green Garters

Morris Ring Publications

Matt Simons: Editor of the Morris Dancer
matt.j.simons@icloud.com

On-line Links:



The main MR website with millions of pages stuffed to the gunnels with all you need to know about the MR: <https://www.themorrisring.org/>

The Morris Ring Google Group (MRGG). Private Forum for debate or announcements. <https://groups.google.com/group/the-morris-ring>

Contact the Morris Ring Bagman to register to use.

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

Morris Ring Twitter: <https://twitter.com/TheMorrisRing>

Call for Contributions

Any items of urgent Morris-related news, please send to me at bagman@themorrisring.org for inclusion in the next Newsletter.

If you have any photographs, you can send them to Duncan Broomhead, the Morris Ring Photo Archivist (duncan.broomhead@btinternet.com).

Charlie Corcoran, the Keeper of the Morris Ring Log Book, is keen to receive stories about Ring events, both the formal and the quirky (Charliecorcoran7@ntlworld.com).

