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## Newsletter No. 140

March 2026

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## Future Events

2 May	Westminster Morris day of dance * note new date*
29 May	<a href="#">The 99th Thaxted Weekend of Dance 2026</a> *Now full*
11 Jul	<a href="#">Lyme Morris Day 2026</a>
15 Aug	<a href="#">Shakespeare Morris Day of Dance &amp; Ring Meeting</a>
21 Aug	<a href="#">Saddleworth Rushcart Weekend</a>
16 Oct	<a href="#">Morris 18 - 30 Annual Weekend - Portsmouth</a>
23 Oct	<a href="#">Fools and Beasts Annual Unconvention - 2026</a>

## Squire's Musings – March 2026



Another busy few months for the squire, including Boxing Day dance out, Plough tour with the Bullockers, JMO AGM and various feasts – Winchester, Leicester, Kennet, Devil's Dyke. Thanks to all for the invites.

Most importantly, we held the ARM at Stafford. So, first, a big thank you to Peter Copley for his arrangement of this each year.

And now, a few notices, suggestions, advice and requests which arose during the day.

**Insurance** – Chris, who arranges the JMO insurance, would like teams to advise him if they are doing an overseas trip, or running a ceilidh, or using fire in their performance. He aims to get back to you within 10 working days (he is currently living in Islay so is quite remote) with any amendments / restrictions / etc.

**Area reps** – Paul Williamson agreed to replace Dave Loughlin in the North West, Jack Hawkes replaces Charlie Corcoran in the East Midlands. We would like to extend a huge vote of thanks to Dave and Charlie for all their hard work over many, many years.

**Black Books** – Cheesy has rather a lot of these he can sell you. Get in touch with him if you are interested.

**Updates** - Our esteemed webmaster, Pete de Courcy, would appreciate it if you kept him updated with events and days of dance so he can keep the website up to date.

**Fools** - The 23 – 25 October will be the annual Fools and Beasts Unconvention.

**Material** - We are trying to put together a directory of Baldrick Material Suppliers to help teams. A lot of baldrick ribbon has become very expensive these days, so if you know of anyone prepared to make it that we can add to the list, let us know.

**Archives** - The archive group, together with Jerry West from the federation are putting together a set of advice for member clubs on dealing with archives.

**Flags** - The Advisory Council would advise clubs that, if they are at all unsure about the intended use of the English Flag at events, they have every right to refuse to take part. Morris teams do not need to be linked to any political agenda.

## We 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.

**ICH** - Lastly, the JMO has been working hard on the submissions for the Living Heritage Inventory. You should all have had details about zoom meetings where you can put forward any ideas you have, and thank you for all your agreement and consent in us going forward with this.

Looking forward to seeing you all out and about this summer, hopefully with rather less rain than the winter has given us.

Emma

## From the Bagman's Armchair

As the weather improves and the daffodils start to bloom, bagmen up and down the country are scrambling to put the finishing touches on their yearly programmes, what events to confirm, what pubs to bless with a visit. Foremen are busy polishing their sides and feeling the weight of responsibility of the teacher, choreographer and planner. What dances are going in the repertoire? Have they practised the new dances enough before the ever-closer start of the dancing season? Squires are supporting and sorting keeping the side together, so all in all it's a busy and pressured time of the year for some.



With the coming of spring we leave behind the 'Ale' season - and with its mass dancing, food, and friendship, Letchworth Curry Ale will be my last of the season and a fine evening it always is (and curry will come out of your whites with the right stain devil).

The A.R.M. went well, the regional meetings were constructive and the afternoon meeting was skilfully chaired by Emma. The atmosphere in the room was positive and there seemed more younger faces than I've seen at an A.R.M. for many a year. The big news that came out of the day was the ratification of the succession of Clayton Francis of East Surrey Morris Men to the position of Squire after Emma's term expires. I would like to offer Clayton my congratulations and support in his future role. This does mean though that Clayton will be stepping down as treasurer; he will be missed in this role as he is exceptionally good at it. Nevertheless, we need to fill his shoes, so if you want to be considered for this role please contact Emma, Clayton or myself. Another highlight of the day was the wonderful Saddleworth Women's Morris and Clog becoming full members of the Morris Ring. The minutes of the A.R.M. meeting can be found below.

Lastly a huge congratulations to Ollie Simons and his partner Emily on the arrival of a beautiful baby daughter, Rosa.

## Greensleeves Morris Men – 100 Bus Tour

In January 1926 Greensleeves Morris Men had its inaugural practice. 100 years on and the club has been busy organising events to see as many friends, old and new, as we can during 2026. At one of our 2026 committee meetings David Cooling came up with the idea of kick-starting the year with a tour along the 100 bus route in London. Besides having some fun, the key idea behind the 100 bus tour was to publicise the club's centenary by writing and submitting an article to the CAMRA magazine, the London Drinker. This is not that article but we thought fellow dancers might be interested in what we got up to and worthy of publication on the Morris Ring Website:

(just click the link)<<: [Greensleeves Morris Men – 100 Bus Tour](#)>>

## Minutes from the 2026 Morris Ring Annual Representatives' Meeting

The ARM at Oak Farm Hotel, Hatherton (Watling St, Cannock WS11 1SB) on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

Emma Melville (Squire) chaired the meeting, and minutes were taken by Rob Evans (Bagman).

**Start Time:** 13:40

### **Attendees:**

Shakespeare Morris, Thaxted Morris Men, Exeter Morris, Adlington Morris Men, Golden Star Morris, Big Jigs Morris, Plymouth Morris, Richmond on Swale Morris, Stafford Morris, Kennet Morris, Yateley Morris, Letchworth Morris, Green Man's Morris, Anker Morris, Ravensbourne Morris, First Class Stamp, Rutland Morris, Stafford Morris, Whitchurch, Wath-upon-Dearne, White Hart, Devils Dyke Morris Men, Taylor's Morris, Saddleworth Morris Men, Knightlow Morris Men, Dartington Morris, Moulton Morris Men, Cambridge Morris Men, Saddleworth Women's Morris & Clog, Jockey Morris, Mersey Morris, East Surrey Morris Men, Uttoxeter, Heart of Oak, East Suffolk, Leicester Morris, Thelwall Morris, Hinckley Bullockers, The Illustrious Order of Fools & Beasts.

### **Also present:**

Andrew Knight (secretary, Morris Federation), Peter Celi-Stamp (treasurer, Morris Federation), Fee Lock (secretary, JMO), Steven Archer (treasurer, JMO) Jen Cox (Open Morris), and Anne-Marie Coomer (Open Morris).

### **Apologies:**

Leyland Morris Dancers, Royal Preston Morris Dancers, Icknield Way Morris Men, Bury Pace-Eggers, and Royal Preston Morris, Robin Springett, Benfieldside Morris and Sword, King John's Morris Men, Winchester Morris Men, North Wood Morris, Geoff Pitt.

**Minutes of the 2025 meeting:** see [Appendix 1](#)

The minutes were accepted as a true reflection of the 2025 ARM. Jono Millward (Harthill Morris) proposed. Charlie Corcoran (Leicester Morris) seconded.

### **1. Matters arising from the 2025 minutes:**

The DBS stated: anyone can get a DBS as long as that person not left alone with a child or vulnerable person. If they are to be left alone, the person needs an enhanced DBS check. This can be avoided if a parent/guardian comes along and be with the child or vulnerable person.

Barry Care (Moulton) said that DBS checks are time limited.

Clayton Francis (ESMM) can get a DBS for free if with another group.

There was an acceptance of Emma's statement to reword the safeguarding policy in regards to reputation.

### **2. Officers' reports:**

- a. Squire of the Morris Ring  
Accepted as written.  
Emma Melville gave thanks again to Peter de Courcy (Kennet Morris)
- b. Bagman of the Morris Ring

Accepted as written.

c. Treasurer of the Morris Ring

Accepted as written.

Clayton Francis asked if sides would please take up the grants. 2025 accounts will be available in the next 2 weeks.

d. Chairman of the Advisory Council.

Nothing to report.

e. Morris Ring Archive Group.

A brief report on the recent activities of the Morris Ring Archive Group was delivered by acting chair, Matt Simons. The past chairman, Chris Wildridge, left the group following the 2025 ARM, and Matt was appointed as his interim successor by the Squire. After more than ten years of loyal service to the group, the Morris Ring owes a great debt of gratitude to Chris, who maintained an excellent working relationship with the staff at the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford. The acting chair announced that he is unable to accept the chairman's role on a long-term basis owing to the burden of other commitments.

The MRAG met online in April 2025 to discuss the future of the group and decide upon their remit and priorities. First of all, they acknowledged the recent departure of Chris Wildridge and Gordon Blunt from the group and recorded their thanks for their service.

Responding to a proposal from Chris Wildridge to dissolve the group, the group was unanimous in deciding that it does in fact have a future. As such, the following priorities were agreed upon:

- A. Existing collections at the Essex Record Office: working together with the ERO to conserve and promote the MR Archive, as well as overseeing the transfer of the photographic archive in the near future.
- B. Continuing to manage accessions/collecting in a digital age.
- C. Acting as an advisory group to member clubs on how to manage archives and how best to care for them.

There is a need to appoint new members to the group, especially those with expertise in digital archiving and collections management. Job descriptions will be distributed in due course.

The acting chairman also announced with thanks the willingness of the Morris Federation to collaborate on various projects relating to archives. [Addendum: Jerry West of the Morris Federation joined the latest meeting of the MRAG by Zoom link.]

Matt Simons

Acting Chairman, Morris Ring Archive Group

f. Webmaster and publications:

Accepted as written. Peter de Courcy (Kennet Morris) offered help in publishing anything that needs sending out on the website.

g. Overseas Bagman.

Accepted as written.

Please send Lewis and details of any overseas trips.

Sam Egerton (Uttoxeter) said they have 3 interested in the Swedish trip mentioned by Emma Melville.

### **3. Election of Next Squire**

Congratulations to Clayton Francis on his election to the next Squire of the Morris Ring.

Emma Melville: We need a new treasurer. And asked would it be wise to find one and transfer before the next ARM to allow smooth transfer of bank accounts and information as it can take a long time. Emma Melville can appoint and ratify at next ARM.

### **4. Nominations of teams for Full membership**

*Saddleworth Women's Morris and Clog*

Congratulations to the Saddleworth Women's Morris and Clog (SWMC) on their election to full membership of the Morris Ring. Peter Austin (Jockey MM) showed support. Unanimous show of hands supportive of the SWMC joining the Morris Ring. SWMC will dance in at Saddleworth Rushcart 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

### **5. Area Representatives' Reports**

- a. East Midlands - Accepted as written
- b. South Midlands – *no report received*
- c. Northwest – *no report received*  
Paul Williamson (Mersey Morris) is prepared to be area rep for the Northwest region.
- d. Northeast - Accepted as written
- e. North - Accepted as written
- f. West Midlands - Accepted as written
- g. Eastern - Accepted as written
- h. Southeast - Accepted as written
- i. Southwest - Accepted as written

Charle Corcoran, Area Rep for East Midlands is sadly stepping down. We would like to thank him on behalf of the Morris Ring for all his hard work as an area representative. Jack Hawkes (Anker Morris) offered to take over from Charlie.

100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. South Rep wants the 100<sup>th</sup> in Thaxted, Thaxted would not be against this plan. Emma Melville wants to include the JMO in the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

Lou Osman (Devil's Dyke MM) suggested a directory of suppliers to help with the finding of fabric for kit, Emma Melville agreed.

Jack Hawkes (Anker Morris) suggested a look at area boundaries.

Pete Simpson (Jockey MM) boundaries have always changed in 18 years so is flexible, but area reps give voice to individual clubs.

Nigel Strudwick (Jockey MM) agrees with Pete Simpson.

Peter de Courcy (Kennet) said there is no mechanism to change area.

Paul Reece (Plymouth Morris) please let the area reps know if your sides contact details change or you get a new bagman.

Peter de Courcy (Kennet MM) if struggling to change details on the website then contact him.

Mike Garland (East Suffolk MM) agrees to all above but urges reps to know all sides.

Shakespeare bagman likes the website and thanks PdeC.

Steve Hickling (Big Jigs Morris) thanks his area rep.

## **6. UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage – consent**

Emma Melville went to the House of Lords and met Baroness Twycross from Headington, she was pro morris due to being from Headington.

Inventory in March.

Matt Simons (Cambridge MM) asked are events covered? Emma Melville - no, just the different Morris traditions. Barry Care (Moulton) - Matt's point is important so each team to register important events separately. Paul Reece (Plymouth Morris) - is mumming included? Emma Melville – yes.

Jen Cox (Open Morris) informed us about the process and that the level of detail has been decided by the consultation within the JMO. Jen Cox thanked Emma Melville for her work on the ICH project.

Fee lock (JMO) - The definition of English culture is vague and not even the people running the project had a definition.

Emma asked for a show of hands to ask if everyone present was happy to be included in the project. The hand count was unanimous.

## **7. Future Events**

Fools and beasts - Kent 23-25 October.

## **8. Date of next meeting**

March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2027

## **9. Any Other Business**

Pete Austin has bells and black books available, please buy some.

*It would be helpful if any AOB items beyond the usual event notices are submitted to the Bagman in advance of the meeting, if only so that responses can be prepared where appropriate.*

**Meeting Closed:** 14:46



Clayton Francis the Squire elect of the Morris Ring

