

2011 programme of events

Sunday 16th January: Plough Play 2pm at Brewhouse Yard; 3pm at the Castle

Monday 7th February: 8pm Private show at Harlaxton Hall

Saturday 23rd April: St George's day show 11am - 1pm Market Square, Nottingham

Sunday 1st May: 5.25am: Dawn dance at Robin Hood Statue, Nottingham Castle

Monday 2nd May: Sherwood Forest event at the Visitor Centre, 12 noon procession from Edwinstowe, then at the Visitor centre and Major Oak

Monday 9th May: 8pm Spanish Bar (South St, Ilkeston DE7 5QJ)

Monday 16th May: 8pm Golden Fleece, Upper Broughton (LE14 3BG)

Monday 23rd May: 8pm World's End (Lowdham NG14 7AT); 9pm Cross Keys (Epperstone NG14 6AD)

Sunday 29th May: Hoveringham Tractor Show

Monday 30th May: Wellow Maypole 11.30 - 2.15, then Rufford Abbey

Monday 6th June: 8pm Carpenters Arms (Dale Abbey DE7 4PP); 9pm Royal Oak (Ockbrook DE72 3SE)

Monday 13th June: 8pm Royal Oak (Car Colston NG13 8JE); 9pm Durham Ox (Orston NG13 9NU)

Monday 20th June: 8pm Crown Inn (Beeston NG9 1FY); 9pm Johnson Arms (Dunkirk NG7 2NZ).

Monday 27th June: 8pm Chestnut Tree (Sherwood NG5 2EL); 9pm Bread & Bitter (Mapperley NG3 5JL)

Saturday 3rd July: 2pm Lenton Abbey show 2.30 and 3.30 (NG9 2SN)

Monday 4th July: 8pm Malt Shovel (Shardlow DE72 2HG); 9pm Steamboat (Trent Lock NG10 2FY)

Monday 11th July: 8pm Trip to Jerusalem (NG1 6AD); 9pm Lord Nelson (Sneinton NG6 OGE)

Monday 18th July: 8pm Newcastle Arms (Nuthall Road NG8 5DW); 9pm Old Peartree Inn (Bulwell Lane NG6 OBT)

Saturday 23rd July: Meeting of the Morris Ring of England at Rutland

Monday 25th July: 8pm The Ferry, Wilford NG11 7AA

Sunday 2nd October: Caravan & camping weekend at Newark

Saturday 15th October: Robin Hood Beer Festival, Nottingham Castle



Foresters Morris Men

The Foresters Morris Men are based at Nottingham in the UK, near to Sherwood Forest, and so we have Robin Hood as our logo. The club was formed in 1952, and was the first morris side in Nottingham. It is still the best!

We dance the dawn on 1st May every year by the statue of Robin Hood near Nottingham Castle entrance. Dawn is at about 5.20 a.m. at that time of year! Our friends the Greenwood Step Clog dancers always join us; other morris dancers are welcome.

We perform a local Plough Play on Plough Monday and at shows each year at Nottingham Brewhouse Yard Museum and the Castle. Plough plays are an English tradition unique to the



East Midlands, and are mumming plays performed traditionally on Plough Monday (the first Monday after Twelfth Night).

We also perform another Mumming play which includes the character "King George" at events related to St George's day.

We enjoy singing traditional English unaccompanied songs when the opportunity arises, with our nationally renowned singer Ken pitching everything on the high side.



Interested?

If you are interested in finding out more, or in coming along to one of our practices for a taster session, phone our

- Bagman Eric
on 0115-9786858
- or Squire Stewart
on 0115-9141061

or email

- bagman@foresters-morris.org.uk
- or visit our web site at
- www.foresters-morris.org.uk



The history of the Morris



"Morris Dancing" is a term applied in many parts of England to traditional seasonal customs of various kinds. Since the early 1900s many customs have ceased to exist, and revival teams have been formed whose objective is to preserve some of these customs. Morris dancing is referred to in the Nottingham City archives of 1530, but nothing is known of the dances performed; we just know that ale was consumed, paid for by the City authorities.

Our repertoire consists mainly of dances from the Cotswold villages, the region around Oxford and Stratford-on-Avon, dances which in times past were performed as a spring ritual. Each village had its own dances, tunes and style of dance. The dances symbolise work, fighting, and fertility. We wear white to signify our purity, bells to frighten away the evil spirits, and use handkerchiefs to pass the magic of the dance out to the audience. The audience is also expected to participate by donating towards the collection, which ensures that the giver has the luck of the Morris for the coming year.



The traditional music was provided by a three-hole pipe and tabor (drum) or a fiddle. Nowadays the concertina, melodeon and accordion have all found a place.



Plough Play

Mummers' Plays have been performed in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland for hundreds of years. They are short ritual plays that mark the end of the old year and beginning of the new and are based on the legend of St. George and the Seven Champions of Christendom. All the characters (including women) were traditionally played by men. Dialogue was passed on by word-of-mouth and over the centuries the real significance of the original story was lost, making present day performances very entertaining but virtually meaningless to most audiences. Nottinghamshire's own folk drama was a play performed in January in most villages on Plough Monday by local farm hands and known as a Plough Play. Our play uses words from local plough plays from Tollerton, Long Bennington and Staunton; over the years of performance it has become well and truly our own.



Sword dances



Modern British styles of linked sword dancing -- long sword and rapper from northern England, and the dance from Papa Stour in the Shetland Islands -- are well known to students of folk dance performance. There is a considerable amount of information on British sword dancing of various types from the late 18th-20th centuries; but there is very little older material. The Foresters perform sword dances from the north-east of England, in which men perform intricate manoeuvres while remaining linked together in a circle. Our version comes from the Newcastle-on-Tyne area, and involves five men with flexible swords fitted with rotating handles. Other dances from the Yorkshire area involve six or eight men dancing with rigid swords.