

## 2016 programme of events

Monday 11th January and again in September: Visits to Harlaxton College of the University of Evansville.

Saturday 14th March - Show for Nottingham Ceilidh Club

Saturday 16th April - Newark Market Place - 11:30am

Saturday 23rd April - York - Joint Morris Organisation day of dance

Sunday 1st May - Robin Hood statue at Nottingham Castle - 5:20am dawn!

Monday 9th May – The Castle Pub, Nottingham (NG1 6AA) - 8pm  
The Roundhouse, Nottingham (NG1 6FS) - 9pm

Monday 16th May – Lincolnshire Poacher, Nottingham - 8pm - 161 Mansfield Rd, NG1 3FR



Monday 23rd May - Canal House, Nottingham - 8pm - 48 Canal St NG1 7EH

Friday 27th May - Oak Field School

Saturday 4th June - Thaxted Morris Ring meeting

Monday 6th June – Carpenters Arms, Dale Abbey DE7 4PP 8pm  
Royal Oak, Ockbrook DE72 3SE 9pm

Monday 13th June – The Star Inn, Beeston (NG9 1FX) - 8pm  
The Crown Inn, Beeston (NG9 1FY) - 9pm

Monday 27th June – Plough, Normanton - 8pm - NG12 5NN

Saturday 2nd July - Widmerpool - Best of British Summer Picnic - 4pm

Monday 4th July – The White Lion Inn Bramcote - 8pm - NG9 3HH

Monday 11th July – Trip to Jerusalem - 8pm - NG1 6AD

Monday 18th July – Spanish Bar, Ilkeston - 8pm - South St DE7 5Q

Monday 25th July – Sir John Borlase Warren - 8pm - 1 Ilkeston Rd, Nottingham NG7 3GD

Always check before attending.  
[Printed 14 April 2016]



# 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 adjacent to Nottingham Castle entrance. Dawn is at about 5.25 a.m. at that time of year! Our friends the Greenwood Step Clog dancers always join us; other morris dancers would be welcome.

We perform a local Plough Play on Plough Monday and at shows each year (funds permitting) at Nottingham Castle Museum. 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.

At the end of each season we donate the money we have collected to local charities.



## Interested?

If you are interested in finding out more, or in coming along to one of our practices for a taster session, please 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 Toller-ton, 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.