

## Foresters bookings for 2018 season

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March – Belgrave Rooms 9pm

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April – Trip to Jerusalem NG1 6AD  
7:30pm

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> May – Robin Hood statue 5:20am

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> May – Sir John Borlase Warren NG7 3GD 8pm

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May – JMO Day of Dance, Peterborough

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> May – Canal House, Nottingham NG1 7EH 8pm

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June – The Crown, Beeston NG9 1FY 8pm;  
The Star 9pm

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June – Beeston Marina NG9 1NA 7:30;

The Boat, Dunkirk NG7 2NX 8:30pm

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> June – White Lion Kimberley NG16 2PQ 8pm;

Dewdrop Inn Ilkeston DE7 5TE 9pm

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> June – White Lion, Rempstone LE12 6RH 8pm

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June – Wedding at a brewery

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> July – Gate Inn, Kimberley NG16

2NG 8pm; Queen's Head, Watnall NG16 1HT 9pm

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July – Trip to Jerusalem NG1 6AD  
7:30

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> July - Plough, Normanton NG12 5N TBC 8pm

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> July – Spanish Bar, Ilkeston DE7 5QJ 8pm

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> October – Robin Hood Beer Festival

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> December – Bottesford Duck Race 11am



## The 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.

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.

As well as morris dancing we also perform a local Plough play. 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.

At the end of each season we donate the money we have collected to a local charity, currently Dove Cottage Hospice.



## 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 our squire Stewart on 0115-9169166 or email



[bagman@foresters-morris.org.uk](mailto:bagman@foresters-morris.org.uk)  
or visit our website at  
[www.foresters-morris.org.uk](http://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 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.

