



## The roots of Morris dancing

Since prehistoric times, dancing has played an important role in those rituals designed to celebrate the rebirth of spring, and ensure the fertility of flock and field. We like to think that English Morris dancing has its roots in such pagan practices, though the earliest documentary evidence dates back only to the time of the first Tudor kings. The origin of the word "Morris" is subject to much debate. There is an 11th century church with a depiction of what is thought to be a Morris dancer.

During later centuries, the Morris became an integral part of the seasonal round, with many villages, especially in the Cotswolds, having their own side with its unique tradition. By the end of the 19th century, however, the custom had largely died out and been forgotten.

The present revival may be traced back to this period, when collectors such as Cecil Sharp were inspired to gather information from surviving dancers and musicians. Their work forms the basis of much of the dancing seen today. Some teams, such as Bampton in Oxfordshire, have a tradition unbroken for centuries.

## The Chingford Morrismen

Our own tradition is less ancient. The Chingford Morrismen first danced out in 1962. Our own dances began to be developed soon after that, and we perform these almost exclusively. They are in the Cotswold style - six dancers to a set, using wooden sticks or handkerchiefs.

In addition to the dancers, you may see two further characters: The Fool, who adds an element of fun and encourages audience participation, whilst the ram "Goldenballs" is our symbolic beast, personifying the fertility aspect of the dance.

We also perform mixed and ladies clog dances from the north-west of England. These are based on dances from Gala Days and Rushbearing ceremonies in the cotton-mill towns, where clogs were worn for work.

The Chingford dancers can be recognised by the colours of red, yellow and green. Our badge is adapted from the old Chingford Borough arms, with elements representing Epping Forest, the "mighty" River Ching, and the county of Essex.

Most of our performances take place during the summer, at public houses, fetes and festivals. We are also to be seen at other times, notably every Boxing Day - where you can experience an original and topical "Mummers" play in Waltham Abbey, and High Beech in Epping Forest.

## How you can help

You may participate in this tradition, and ensure your own good luck by contributing to our collecting tin.

We hope that you have enjoyed watching us, and if you would like to know more about "Morris", or would like to see us again, please contact our "Bagman" (details below).

We especially welcome new musicians and dancers, whether experienced or beginner, to help us to keep this unique English tradition alive.

We practise on Monday evenings during school terms at:- All Saints Church Hall, Church Avenue, Highams Park, E.4.

CONTACT:- The Bagman (Club Secretary)  
H.E. Wilson  
21 Pilgrims Close  
Palmers Green  
London  
N13 4HX  
020 8882 1196

Please visit our web site at  
<http://chingfordmorris.org.uk>

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If you are interested in joining in please pass on your contact details to any member of the team.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Where to see us in 2011 -12

These are where and when we expect to dance:

Some of them may change, so do please check before travelling.

For the latest information please see our website:  
<http://chingfordmorris.org.uk>

### Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September

Brunswick Organic Nursery, Bishopthorpe 11am  
Blacksmiths Arms, Naburn York, Evening

### Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September

Three Hares, Bilbrough, York

### Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> September

International Evening, Walthamstow Assembly Hall

### Sunday 2nd October

Tenterden Folk Festival

### Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October

King Harold Day, Waltham Abbey

### Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October

The George, Woodford, 8.30pm  
Woodford Festival

### Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December

Waltham Abbey Folk Club

### Monday 26<sup>th</sup> December, Boxing Day Tour

The Angel, Waltham Abbey, 12 noon  
The Welsh Harp, Waltham Abbey, 12:45pm  
The Duke of Wellington, High Beach, 1:30pm

## 2012 - 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year

### Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April

St. Georges Day  
The George Woodford  
The Welsh Harp, Waltham Abbey

### Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> May, May Day Tour

The Mole Trap, Tawney Common  
The Forest Gate Inn, Bell Common

### Monday 7<sup>th</sup> May

Bocking Village Festival

### Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May

The Royal Oak, Kings Head Hill, Chingford



## Chingford Morrismen



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