

## Weald of Kent Morris

We are often asked how and when Morris dancing started. There are many theories but nobody knows for sure. We do know that it is a very old custom and believe that it had its origins as a means of ensuring fertility for crops, animals and perhaps for our forebears themselves! Even today many believe that there is powerful magic in a Morris Man's hat and we would advise any young woman against wearing one.

The dances that we perform came originally from the Cotswolds but different forms of dance came from other parts of the country, notably ceremonial clog dancing from Lancashire and Cheshire and two types of sword dancing from Yorkshire, Durham and Northumberland. Cotswold Morris was traditionally danced by men and each village had its own style of dancing. Most Morris dancing had ceased by the turn of the century but luckily it was seen by the well-known folk song collector, Cecil Sharp and others who made notes on most of the dances that we do today.

Every dance has its own tune. The music was provided, in the earliest times, by the pipe and tabor. Later came the fiddle, concertina and melodeon and in more modern times, the piano accordion. The Weald of Kent Morris use all of these instruments for their dancing.

The first rural Kent morris tour recorded took place in 1589 and one of our characters is of similarly ancient Kentish descent. The Hooden Horse and his attendants were part of an old custom which came from the Isle of Thanet in East Kent - we took pity on this one and now he follows us everywhere. We hope he will not be too much of a nuisance to you - he means well.

Weald of Kent Morris was formed in November 1988 and first appeared in public on Mayday 1989. We practise in the church rooms Goudhurst on most Wednesday evenings throughout the winter and we dance locally throughout the summer.

Any potential new members will be made welcome. For information ask any of the members or telephone

Tim Dwyer on 01580 240414

email [timdwyer@wealdofkentmorris.org.uk](mailto:timdwyer@wealdofkentmorris.org.uk)



QRCode to our website  
Use with internet devices

*In the rare case of our not being able to perform, we don't want you to have a wasted journey – please check in advance with the publican or ring us or look at [www.wealdofkentmorris.org.uk](http://www.wealdofkentmorris.org.uk)*



## Programme 2016

# WEALD OF KENT MORRIS PROGRAMME 2016

To help you find us (and some of the best pubs in Kent!) the numbers shown next to the locations are their map references (from OS Map 188) and the postcode

Sunday 17th April	1.00pm	The Bell & Jorrocks, Frittenden (TQ815413, TN17 2EJ)
Sunday 1st May		<b>The 28th Annual Mayday Tour</b>
	5.30am	Traditional dawn dance
		Goudhurst village centre (TQ723377, TN17 1AL)
	9am	Horsmonden Green (TQ 700405, TN12 8JS)
	10.30am	Chapel Down Vineyard, Tenterden (TQ892301, TN30 7NG)
	11.45am	Oxney Vineyard, Beckley (TQ868257, TN31 6TU)
	1pm	The Milkhouse, Sissinghurst (TQ794375, TN17 2JG)
Wednesday 4th May	8pm	The Woolpack, Benover (TQ704482, ME18 6AS)
Wednesday 11th May	8pm	The Star, Matfield (TQ659419, TN12 7JR)
Wednesday 18th May	8pm	The Green Cross, Goudhurst (TQ709371, TN17 1HA)
Wednesday 25th May	8pm	The Walnut Tree, Yalding (TQ699504 ME18 6JB)
Wednesday 1st June	8pm	The Elephant's Head, Hook Green (TQ655358, TN3 8LJ)
Wednesday 8th June	8pm	The Elm Tree, Paddock Wood (TQ681441, TN12 6NJ)
Saturday 11th June	1.45pm	Goudhurst Fete
	3pm	Horsmonden Fete
Wednesday 15th June	8pm	The Bell and Jorrocks, Frittenden (TQ815413, TN17 2EJ)
Wednesday 22nd June	8pm	The Globe and Rainbow, Kilndown (TQ700353, TN17 2SG)
Wednesday 29th June	8pm	The Castle Inn, Castle Hill (TQ691423, TN12 7BN)
Wednesday 6th July	8pm	The Bull, Benenden (TQ807329, TN12 7NQ)
Wednesday 13th July	8pm	Chequers, Laddingford (TQ689481, TN12 9PL) <i>with Ravensbourne Morris Men</i>
Wednesday 20th July	8pm	The Lord Raglan, Rabbits Cross (TQ785471, TN12 0DE)
Wednesday 27th July	8pm	The Halfway House, Brenchley (TQ681413, TN12 7AX)
Wednesday 3rd August	8pm	The Peacock, Iden Green (TQ747374, TN17 2PB)
Thursday 11th August	8pm	The White Hart, Newenden (TQ834272, TN18 5PN) <i>with Cinque Port Morris</i>
Wednesday 17th August	8pm	The Hopbine, Petteyridge (TQ668412, TN12 7NE)
Monday 29th August		<b>Annual Lord Raglan Onion Festival</b>
	1pm	The Lord Raglan, Rabbits Cross (TQ785471, TN12 0DE)
Saturday 8th October		<b>The 10th Cranbrook Apple Fayre</b>
	11am'ish	Cranbrook High Street (TQ776361, TN17 3HA)
Sat. 10th December	Midday	<b>Marden Christmas Event</b>
		Marden village centre (TQ747444, TN12 9DT)
Saturday 31st December		<b>The Festive Tour (confirm detail on website)</b>
	Midday	The Globe & Rainbow, Kilndown (TQ700353, TN17 2SG)
	12.45pm'ish	Goudhurst Village Centre (TQ721377, TN17 1AD)
	1.15pm'ish	Star and Eagle, Goudhurst (TQ723377, TN17 1AL)
	2pm'ish	Peacock, Iden Green (TQ747374, TN17 2PB)

## Which one's Morris?

Throughout the summer it is likely that you will see many different groups of morris dancers around the villages of Kent performing in a way that has been witnessed by many generations. Unfortunately there are no known traditions originating in Kent but this does not hinder the local 'sides' who perform the dances of the Cotswolds, Welsh borders and other areas of England. The costume worn by the dancers normally reflects the roots of dance; Cotswold dancers would generally wear white clothing, or simple shirts and breeches, whilst the more flamboyant northern clog dancers sport spectacular festooned headgear and gaily coloured tops.

Traditionally the appearances of the morris dancers were linked to the major festivals of the year. The coming of summer, the harvest and Christmas present occasions for the local morris side to celebrate with dance, mummers plays and song. Indeed until the 19th century the morris was performed in village churches as part of the celebration of Christian festivals. In England the history of the morris may be traced back to the 15th century and its name may well derive from the word Moorish although the dances themselves are unlikely to have originated from Moorish traditions.

Some say that the actions of the dance are to scare away the evil spirits whilst encouraging the fertility of the land and the growth of the crops, the movements of the dancers being emphasised through the use of handkerchiefs, bells, sticks and swords. To ensure further attention dancers are often accompanied by the 'Fool' or a 'Betty' as well as a 'hooden horse', dragon or other such weird and wonderful creature. The origins of such attendants are as mysterious as those of the dance itself.

The music is played by a variety of instruments ranging from traditional pipe and tabor, (whistle and drum), to concertinas, melodeons, flutes and tuba. The tunes themselves include the widely known such as 'Country Gardens' as well as the more oddly entitled 'Lollipop Man' or 'Old Woman Tossed up in a Blanket'. A good deal of the tunes and dances that are performed by today's sides rely on the notes taken down by Cecil Sharp prior to the Great War without whose efforts many dances may well have been lost.

Most sides have a main dance season that lasts from the May 1st (at sunrise) through to the end of harvest, there then follows a winter period of practise.



For up to date information and a map of locations see  
[www.wealdofkentmorris.org.uk](http://www.wealdofkentmorris.org.uk)