

2024 Logbook of Thames Valley Morris

6th January - The Epsom Wells Community Centre were holding a Dancing Day as part of its re-opening programme and we were invited to demonstrate and teach Morris. We taught a couple of dances to around 25 people in several sets, some were quite good, other struggled but everyone had fun. Sadly it did not result in any new recruits.

24th February - Kennett Ale. The usual format of vividly coloured pickled eggs, followed by chilli (Mild, Medium or Hot) together with a range of dances from the numerous sides present. With the Ring Squire election forthcoming, the two candidates were present and each performed a jig.

09th March -Our own Ale, our first at the Claygate hall, with Ewell St Mary, Kingston Morris and Phoenix Clog present. We were not sure how many people we could accommodate at the hall, but it seemed to work and the home cooked food went down well washed down with a variety of ales.



22-March. -Adelaide Arms, Teddington. Alan wanted us to dance at his retirement party, so we had a pleasant afternoon performing several dances for his colleagues from the nearby NPL. He then announced that he would be back at work part-time next week – so we might have to repeat this event!

23-April. – Willoughby Arms, Kingston We were asked by Ewell St Mary to take on this traditional St Georges Day event for them as they would be too tired after a full day in London, but when we arrived most of them were there so it ended up as a joint event.

26-28th April - Weekend trip to West Quantoxhead - We joined Greensleeves and West Somerset Morris on an enjoyable trip to the West Country, sleeping in the Village Hall and dancing, with the help of various country members, outside Dunster Castle, in the Yarn Market and then on the front in Watchet on the Saturday, followed by a feast at the Windmill Inn. Whilst the rain held off this year it was freezing cold most of the time. Then on the Sunday, dancing outside the church after a service devised and conducted by Andrew, one of the West Somerset men who is a retired church cannon.



11th May - Horsham Day of Dance - After joining a procession through the town we were allocated dance spots outside the Carfax, then Pirie's Place and then Shelley's Clump, alternating with Phoenix, Pennyroyal Clog and Fishbourne Mill Morris. Then after lunch a ceilidh started in the Main Square, but we did our own thing and had a thrash on our own round the corner in the Market Square.

27th May - Brooklands Museum - After sessions of dancing under each wing of Concorde, we attempt a third session outside the cafe, but are driven inside by a heavy rain shower, so finish off our dancing in a room dedicated to Barnes Wallis and his inventions.

4th June - Stepping Stones pub, Westhumble - a joint dancing session with Rampant Roosters. Both teams send fairly strong sides, and once the rain relents we have a very pleasant evening of dancing.

11th June - Hare & Hounds, Claygate - A dancing session on our own tonight. Space is very cramped in front of the pub so we ended up dancing in the disabled parking space, luckily not in use for parking!



15th June - Garden party at Jenny Glaister's - A big thank you goes to Jenny for carrying on the lovely tradition of a party in her garden near midsummer's day. The weather was a little challenging this year, but we managed to get some dancing in between the showers.

19th June - Kingston Morris's midsummer tour - Joint dancing sessions outside the White Swan in Twickenham and the Barmy Arms with Kingston, Phoenix Clog and Green Man Sword.

25th June - Three Horseshoes, Laleham - A joint dancing session with Datchet Morris. It's getting to the stage in the season where it's difficult to get people out! Datchet have only 4 dancers and we have 6, but we manage to put on a reasonable show between us.

2nd July - Saddlers Arms, Send - We're dancing here with Fleur de L'ys morris to a reasonable sized crowd, some of whom we induced to join in with a mass Bonny Green at the end!

10th July We planned to dance with Phoenix Clog at the Old Plough – but the pub were showing the England Euros semi-final so we had to postpone.

13th July - Ewell Day of Dance/Claygate Flower Show - Bad traffic stops several of us getting to Ewell on time - including Dick and the sticks, so we are confined to handkerchief dances at the first couple of stops, outside the church in Ewell and then outside a new micropub called "The Ewell Tap". We only have a few dances to do as there are 6 different sides in attendance. Then over to Claygate for a couple of dancing sessions on the rec, where the Flower Show is in full swing. Then back to Ewell for a final dancing session in the garden of the 8 Bells, then on to the feast in the Church Hall.

25th July - Platform 3, Claygate - We managed to raise 6 dancers plus musicians to put on a joint show with Ewell St, Mary's, who had slightly more dancers. It was a bit of a drizzly evening, so not many people had come out to watch. The Landlord, Alex, had brewed a lovely caramel stout especially for the occasion!

29th July - Running Horse, Leatherhead - This was a joint fixture with East Surrey Morris Men, who rather puzzlingly have decided to disband after this year. This is sad as they still have some excellent dancers and were one of the sides who originally formed the Morris Ring. We alternated dances with them, then did a joint Bonny Green at the end.

6th August - Brickmakers Arms, Windlesham - We're dancing here with Yateley Morris, and alternate until about 9.15, when it's too dark to go on!

20th August - Croydon Night of Dance - Another difficult place to get to by car, and again we had to start outside the Oval Tavern with handkerchief dances due to the late arrival of the sticks. Again we were a bit short of

personnel, but our old musician James Denny helped us out by playing for us. Part way through the night, we moved on to the Builders Arms, and had another session of dancing there.

23-25th August - Cotswold Weekend - Withington was our base as usual, with accomodation in the Village Hall and in the field behind. Ian had organised an excellent tour for the Saturday, starting at the Royal at Charlton Kings (a pub we'd not danced at before) then going on to the Green Dragon at Cowley, the Bathurst Arms North Cerney (where we stopped for lunch), the Market Square in Northleach, then finally the Royal Oak in



Andoversford. We had to dodge quite a few rain showers, but despite the weather managed to get a fair amount of dancing in. Then we all headed back to the Mill in Withington for our evening meal and returned there at lunchtime on the Sunday for our final dancing session. A splendid weekend, and a good opportunity to link up with a number of our country members. We were also joined by Kathy from Kingston Morris who we subsequently managed to recruit into the side



31st August - Claygate Beer Festival - The scouts have converted the field outside their scout hut in Oaken Lane into a beer festival site with the aid of a number of hay bales, and we managed to find space between the bales for 3 or 4 sessions of dancing, interspersed with a bit of free sampling of various ales.

14th September - End of season Garden Party - Jenny Glaister has kindly invited us to have a final morris thrash in her garden. A mountain of food and drink has also been provided. So we manage a couple of sessions of dancing and plenty of eating and drinking.

5th November, Minutes of Thames Valley Morris Men Annual General Meeting

Present: Mick Jenkins (Squire), Phil Mundy (Bagman), Fran Smith (President), David Payne (Treasurer), Dick Keen (Woodman and Farrier), Phil Turner (Ragman), Alan Bull, Ian Campbell, Susana DOlivera, Caroline Edgington, Kim Gilbert, Kathy Turner. Apologies for absence:, Kate Jackson, Peter Jones

1. Roll of Honour: The Squire read out the names of deceased TVMM members: Jim Brooks, Tony Brown, Robin Cobb, Peter Dashwood, Amnon Derrenberg, Roy Dommatt, Ron Duncombe, Hugh Gibson, John Glaister, Siward Glaister, John Hall, Martin Jolly, Alun Jones, Norman Keam, George Lawrence, Edward Morris, Dick Mussen, Derek Paynter, Christopher Penton, Ted Perry, Gordon Ralph, Christopher Ridley, Simon Saunders, Christopher Seager-Thomas, Tim Sharpe, Cyril Smith, Gordon Smith, Mervyn Stanley, Mike Sugrue, Phil Sylvester, Bill Tofts, Steve Tovey and Billy Wakefield.

2.Approval of the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting: Approved.

Matters arising from the above Minutes: None.

3. Reports:

Squire: This has been another historic year for the side, starting with Kim performing an excellent Nutting Girl jig outside the Foley Arms on Boxing Day to join as a full member. Then we had our usual trip to Bracknell in February for the Kennett Ale, which this year seemed to be dominated by the presence of Morris Ring officials getting ready

for a contested election of their new squire. In March we held our own very successful Ale, attended by members of Ewell St. Mary's morris, Kingston Morris and Phoenix Clog. At the end of April, we had a weekend away in Somerset as guests of North Somerset Morris. The weather gods have not been kind to us on our trips to Somerset. Last time it poured with rain most of the time. This time it didn't rain but was bitterly cold.

May brought a trip to Brooklands Museum to dance under the wings of Concorde and try to dodge rain showers. Dodging rain showers was quite a common occupation for us in this wet summer, although the wet weather did relent for the day in July when we danced round Ewell as guests of St. Mary's Morris and also danced round the field at the Claygate Flower Show.

August brought a trip to Croydon to dance at Croydon Night of Dance along with numerous other sides, and then a trip to Withington for a very successful weekend, with an excellent tour on the Saturday arranged by Ian Campbell, and featuring some pubs we'd not visited before. Then Jenny Glaister kindly invited us to use her garden in Woodham for an end of season garden party in September.

Altogether a very successful season where we have not struggled for numbers as much as we have in the past. We've relied on our extensive repertoire of dances, and not introduced any new ones.

Bag: We had a full programme of events throughout the year though we still had to decline or cancel some events due to a shortage of numbers.

In total we danced out 24 times, 6 more than last year, though a number of the events were not public. We also included events such as Broadwood and Croydon that we had to pull out of in recent years due to lack of numbers. Generally numbers were better than last year and we rarely needed to dance with just 4 dancers.

Recruitment continues to show an improvement, and we have been fortunate not to lose any current members.

Our presence back in Claygate continues to improve our connections in the village. Hopefully the Claygate Beer Festival will become a regular event and increase our local exposure.

Treasurer: Accounts were presented showing a very small deficit (£120). Hall subs largely balanced the hall rental.. Income and Expenditure similar to last year, some minor differences due to timing of payments (Internet cost and Ring Fees). FS noted that we generally were not collecting at events, this was largely due to a shortage of people to do this, so hopefully we will be able to resume.

Sticks & Animals: *Sticks* – Plenty of sticks, problem is carrying to events. DK suggested that everyone carry own sticks. Agreed. *Beasts*. Beasts are looking forward to have more exercise as the number of available dancers increases. Investigating some modification to Shergar so that it can be used from a mobility scooter.

Ragman: Sufficient supplies to meet future needs.

4. Election of Officers :

Ian Campbell offered to take on the Bagman roll, provided that the existing bagman would assist for the first year. This was unanimously agreed. In the absence of other nominations the holders of all other positions agreed to continue

President: Fran Smith (his job is for life) **Squire:** Mick Jenkins **Bagman:** Ian Campbell (support from Phil Mundy) **Treasurer:** David Payne **Ragman:** Phil Turner **Webmaster:** Jan Lucas **Animals and sticks:** Dick Keen **Recruitment:** David Payne

The Squire indicated that having completed 5 years in the role, he would look to stand down next year.

5. Programme for 2025: The An outline for events for the year ahead was provided and generally accepted. The following issues were agreed.

- A pub event should be planned for each Tuesday unless there is an event planned for the preceding weekend.
- Tolpuddle should be planned for May rather than April (May 17th to be investigated)
- An additional Garden Party should be planned for October

6. Charity Donation (Boxing Day). Whilst provisionally at the 2023 meeting that we would look to support a local foodbank this year, it was decided that in view of increased cost pressures on Hospices that we would support the Princess Alice Hospice.

7. Alternative Costume. A proposal had been submitted by Peter Jones that the costume should be changed to include 'Breeches in a soft green corduroy'. After a very short discussion, this was unanimously defeated.

8. Any other business

a) It was felt that the Ewell DOD and Claygate Flower Show Day was not a success due to too much moving around. It was agreed that if the two events coincide this year we should only attend the Flower Show.

b) Kim Gilbert asked if the design for the Ladies costume could be kept open, as when the numbers of female dancers increase, some may want a change. This was agreed as it was in line with the original intention.

The Meeting closed at 2103 - and practice commenced.

Phil Mundy, TVMM Bagman, 6 Nov 2024.

30th November - Claygate lights up. We met outside Platform 3, did just 3 or 4 dances there, then moved on to the main spot in the middle of the High Street. where after another three or four dances, we were drowned out by a band and their electric instruments! So we leafleted to advertise Boxing Day and that we need new dancers.

19th December - Kingston Wassail at the Willoughby Arms. We joined Kingston Morris as their guests on a freezing cold evening in the back garden of the Willoughby Arms and did a few Adderbury and Fieldtown dances.

26th December -Boxing Day. We were extremely lucky with the weather, and large crowds followed us round from Platform 3, to the Foley, to the Hare & Hounds and finally to the Griffin. They may have come out to watch us, or maybe instead to sample the Brightwater Brewery's excellent Coal Porter brewed especially for the occasion. We had sufficient numbers that the Horse , Goat and Jester were all able to appear. Our collection this year was for the Princess Alice Hospice and we managed to raise £1016.

