

Who are the Devil's Dyke Morris Men?

We have been entertaining people in and around the Newmarket and Cambridge area since 1981. The side takes its name from the Devil's Dyke, a large earthwork that stretches over seven miles from Woodditton to Reach. It was built in the Dark Ages, during the 6th or 7th century, to keep out marauding Mercians.

We present our dances in public during the spring and summer as an affirmation of the English tradition of music and dance which we hope you too will value and enjoy.

Tell me about the dances you do!

The Devil's Dyke Morris Men mainly perform dances that were first recorded in the Cotswold area. The term 'Morris' generally describes dances with a formal or ritual function, traditionally performed by a small practised set of same-sex dancers, usually male. This contrasted strongly with social dances, which were performed in more relaxed circumstances by both sexes.

The Cotswold Morris is characterised by a mixture of dances with either handkerchiefs or sticks. Dance styles are referred to by the names of the villages in which they were collected, and so you may hear us announce a dance 'from Fieldtown' or 'in the style of Bledington'.

Each village style has its own characteristics, but there are also very many dance figures, steps and movements common to all of them. Devil's Dyke try to maintain a high standard of dance and keep the styles as distinct as possible.

Could you dance at my event?

We are always happy to consider paid or charitable events. Because we all have other commitments, some notice is usually required, but if you think our dancing would enhance your event, please talk to the Bagman, Gordon Heald, on 01223 833983, or send an email to bagman@devilsdykemm.org.uk.



Hitchin, 16 July 2022

Have a go at the Morris!

Devil's Dyke Morris Men practice on Thursday evenings from the autumn until the end of April. We run special sessions at the beginning of the practice season so you can discover for yourself the great secret of how easy Morris dancing really is. By spring you will also have learned enough dances to be able to take part in our public performances.

We will be featuring 'have a go' sessions this year on Thursdays at the beginning of our practice season in September or October at 8 p.m., at the Bottisham Scout Centre, a converted chapel building on the south-western side of the High Street, CB25 9BB at OS grid reference TL54936025, in other words, on the left just 350 yards from the A1303. You will be made very welcome.

It's a good idea to wear trainers with good support for your feet and fairly springy soles. If you've got no large white handkerchiefs, we can lend you some. Around 9:45 pm, we repair to the White Swan in Quay for a much-needed drink. Your first one is on us!

If you would like to have a chat about this or get a lift to a session, phone Gordon Heald on 01223 833983. You can also visit our web site: www.devilsdykemm.org.uk

'Have a go' sessions coming up in September and October 2023!

Please see our web site for more information.



**DEVIL'S DYKE
MORRIS MEN
2023**

What's the history of the Morris?

Morris dancing certainly goes back to late mediaeval times—the word 'Morris' first appears in May 1448. We do not know what the name means, nor do we understand how or where it started. Many early records relate to performances at the royal court and in major towns. Out in the country, the Church supported it for many years, but it fell out of favour following the Reformation, and only re-established itself in the 18th century, mostly in rural areas. By the end of the 19th century, the Morris had become unfashionable, and almost died out. Cecil Sharp saw the Morris on Boxing Day 1899, and in 1905 assisted Mary Neal in beginning the present revival.

Why dance the Morris?

Primarily because it is fun! It is an excellent method of exercise, as you may notice from the men's faces at the end of a vigorous dance, and we visit many lovely spots at the best time of the year, and enjoy a thriving social scene. Equally important, however, is the feeling that we are preserving part of our culture. The Morris has survived for more than five hundred years, and we hope to pass it on to future generations.



Design: Nigel Strudwick, © DDMM 2023

Photos © Nigel Strudwick



Even the best plans go wrong!

Please check our web site (or Facebook or Twitter feeds) which will show you any updates

www.devilsdykemm.org.uk

MARCH

Sunday 26th Thriplow, *Daffodil Weekend* 12:30 pm

APRIL

Monday 10th Thaxted, by the Church 11:00 am
DDMM are guests of Thaxted Morris Men

MAY

Monday 1st Wandlebury 5:20 am
Commercial End,
The Royal Oak 11:00 am
Reach Fair 1:00 pm
Thursday 4th Chippenham, *The Tharp Arms* 7:45 pm
Thursday 11th Burwell, *The Five Bells* 7:45 pm
Wicken, *The Maid's Head* 8:45 pm
Thursday 18th Barrow, *The Three Horseshoes* 8:00 pm
Thursday 25th Carlton, *The War Memorial* 7:45 pm
West Wrattling,
The Chestnut Tree 8:45 pm
Sunday 28th Whaddon Whitsun
Celebrations 10:15 am

JUNE

Thursday 1st Horseheath, *The Old Red Lion* 7:45 pm
Great Wrattling, *The Red Lion* 8:45 pm
Saturday 3rd Thaxted Morris Weekend
Thursday 8th Soham, *The Carpenters' Arms* 7:45 pm
Isleham, *The Griffin* 8:45 pm
Saturday 10th Letchworth Morris Day of Dance 10:00 am
Thursday 15th Great Abington, *The Three Tuns* 7:45 pm
Linton, *The Dog and Duck* 8:45 pm
Thursday 22nd Harlton, *The Hare and Hounds* 7:45 pm
Newton, *The Queen's Head* 8:45 pm
Thursday 29th Duxford, *The Plough* 7:45 pm

30th June to White Rose Morris Men
2nd July 70th Birthday Celebrations,
Huddersfield area

JULY

Thursday 6th Meldreth, *The British Queen* 7:45 pm
Great Chishill, *The Pheasant* 8:45 pm
With guests Standon Morris
Thursday 13th Abington Piggotts,
The Pig and Abbott 8:00 pm
Joint show with Letchworth Morris
Thursday 20th Babraham, *The George* 7:45 pm
Great Chesterford,
The Crown and Thistle 8:45 pm
Thursday 27th Reach, *The Dyke's End* 7:45 pm
Stow cum Quay,
The White Swan 7:45 pm

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 16th Joint Morris Organisations
Day of Dance,
Norwich city centre 10:00 am

Postcode information for all these venues is available
via the events calendar at
www.devilsdykemm.org.uk.

This year we are supporting

The Rooprai Spinal Trust

The Rooprai Spinal Trust (RST) is an award-winning, entirely voluntary charity that helps paralysed individuals to access life changing specialist physiotherapy. Inspired by Marianne Rooprai, who was paralysed from the shoulders down a number of years ago and whose approach to dealing with a life-changing spinal cord injury has seen her twice voted one of the 100 most influential disabled people in the UK, the RST's physio scholarship programme started in Cambridgeshire and has now grown nationally.

To see more about how your help is making a difference, please visit www.rstrust.com or Twitter, Facebook or Instagram.

