



Area Representative Reports to the 2025 AGM

Central Area

The Central Area continues to be a bustling hub of morris activity, with pub night meet up between teams a key feature, and plenty of large and small festivals and days of dance.

We're looking forward to hosting next year's JMO Day of Dance in Reading, which has got some great locations for dancing as well as a thriving local folk and morris/dance scene, and we hope we'll see lots of OM teams there! Details will be announced as soon as we have them!

Jen Cox

Central Area Rep
November 2025

Central South Area

The number of Open Morris sides in South Central is now down to five. Mr. Baker's Dozen have again enjoyed a busy summer programme on and off the Island. Whitgar Morris have renamed themselves as Whitlander Morris and are now dancing Cotswold and Welsh Border plus dipping their toes into the new tradition of Street Dance! Guith Morris are still going but have gone very quiet.

Meanwhile back on the mainland, Devil's Jumps have had a busier year than some, dancing at Romsey's Beggars Fare and Winchester Mayfest among more private events. We also have a new member. Meon Valley Morris on the other hand seem to be having a quieter year.

Clare Mach

South Central Area Rep
November 2025

East Anglia Area

Open Morris activities have been rather quiet this year and we weren't able to attend the JMO in April but Fenstanton Morris have been active on our pub nights meeting up with other East Anglia teams.

Our sad time was when we lost to illness our treasurer, Tim Ward but celebrated his life in his hometown at an event attended by many Morris friends dancing in kit.

Other events attended included;

26th December Boxing Day

19th April St Ives Day of Dance

1st May dance at dawn

Walking tour in Cambridge

Hemingford Abbots Flower Festival

King's Lynn Heritage Open Day

5th July Lobster Potty Morris & Folk Festival, Sheringham

12th July Ely Foik Festival

25th October Red Cuthbert Ale, Bedford

Robin James

East Anglia Area Rep

November 2025

East Midlands Area

- St. Katherine's Morris and Allington Morris have disbanded and although I've had no notification, Alford and Scotch Mule have disappeared from the members list. but Restless Soles have appeared
- I attended DERT in Peterborough
- I met up with Lady Bay Revellers at the Insomaniacs Ball in February
- I was dancing at the Sheringham Potties Festival with Braybrooke Morris so couldn't attend the Gate to Southwell where some of the other East Midlands sides were performing
- Braybrooke has had a very busy year with several paid events but weekly danceouts in the Summer continued, on the whole, to attract very little attention
- At various times throughout the Summer Braybrooke danced with Bakanalia, Cobbled Together, Corby Conspiracy, Coventry Morris, New St. George, Northampton Morris, and Rutland Morris Dancers as well as attending the Potties Festival
- Corby Conspiracy continues to suffer with too few members available at weekends but did manage a couple of unpaid charity events. Again, weekly danceouts are suffering from pubs concentrating on the restaurant trade.

On a personal note, my deputy and I have handed over the squireship of Braybrooke to joint Squires, Ben Ryan-Murphy and Dan Ashford.

David Ball

South West Area Rep

October 2025

North East Area

I am not pro-active in my role as area rep for the north-east, mainly because I am wheelchair bound and travelling is often difficult. I do however make an effort to introduce myself to all Open Morris sides I come into contact with throughout the year.

My main highlight this year has been hosting (as a member of Wharfedale Wayzgoose) the AGM Weekend for The Illustrious Order of Fools and Beasts. We danced, paraded and entertained audiences in Harrogate, Otley and Ilkley culminating at "The Cow & Calf" on Ilkley Moor. The day finished with a hearty rendition of "Ilkley Moor Ba'tat" on Ilkley Moor.

Malcolm Hills

North East Area Rep
November 2025

South West Area

A brief introduction to myself, for those that don't know me. My name's Liz Wozniak and I've been a dancer with Beltane Border Morris for 10 years. Before then I danced with my own side, AngleTwitch and before that Exmoor Border and Bourne Borderers – you can see the theme here – I'm not a Cotswold dancer, although I've picked up a few dances in that style and a few Molly dances on the way, too.

As there was a vacancy for the SW Rep last year I put myself forward and here I am. I can report that it's been a quiet year! I started the year thinking I might get round to seeing some of the OM sides in the SW performing but our own morris schedule kept me pretty busy. So I struck upon the last minute idea to contact all the sides and ask if they could give me some positive feedback about their year – and, happily, I've had a good smattering of responses.

I can, therefore report that:

Old Town Twelves (Plymouth) love the fact that their dances are rooted in place and time: they enjoy linking their dances to stories of their past, to give context in public performance and to engage passers-by who probably know very little about morris. "Our thing is to dance locally and one group we have supported is the Tulgey Woods Sanctuary, which is a local community group where green space, nature, culture and local community cohesion is the essence of what they do. We love to support them and dancing for a first wassail, in the city of Plymouth makes us proud of what we do", writes Alison Chapman.

"The other element of our side is friendship: we are an eclectic bunch from all ages and walks of life (from our 60s to 20s) and we are home to local people and we represent many equality strands. We go out for days out, we regularly meet at folk sessions and like to see new music and theatre together. We especially love trains and buses!!"

Plymouth Clog write that they collect for charity - currently SW Blood Bikes. They've experienced injury and illness this year but have managed to recruit 3 new members (although more would be welcome) and are moving to being a mixed side, having redesigned their kit in 2023.

Beltane (Chudleigh/Dartmoor) can report that this coming year is their 25th anniversary and celebratory ideas are being discussed. They are looking for a festival abroad (maybe someone has some suggestions?) that our huge gang can attend. Fortunately they haven't had any recruitment issues and have an active dance membership of around 30 to 35 members. The side have participated in some filming for the BBC this year but until the programme is aired in the spring, are absolutely bound to not breathe a word about it. All will be revealed in due course. Interestingly, our very own Hetty Bevington, OM Secretary, was helping to keep us in order in her work capacity on set.

Hetty also dances with Tatters Morris in Redruth, Cornwall and they enjoy having children dance alongside the adults.

West Somerset Morris celebrated 60 years of dancing this year. They had a 2 day tour throughout West Somerset with their guests Taunton Deane MM, Sweet Coppin (Clog) and Chalice MM. They report that they've recruited new, younger members both dancers and musicians that have kept them on their toes. And, like others above, have collected for Charity.

Bill Davies of Cynewulf Morris (Lyme Regis area) writes that they have had success in joining their local Co-op Community Sponsorship scheme. They've been given £1200 this year and, in past years, have had grant funding from Waitrose Community Scheme. This is a great tip and all sides could try this avenue of funding in their local area.

Of the 15 sides based in the area, I've had 6 replies although I was not able to contact two of the sides.

Thank you very much to the sides that did respond. I think it's great to hear morris news and lament the fact we don't currently have a magazine editor in place.

Liz Wozniak

South West Area Rep
November 2025

Wales and Northwest Area

2025 has been a mixed year for sides in Wales and the Northwest.

A few sides in the NW are really struggling for numbers or practice venue and are holding on in the hope of better times, but not meeting or performing.

Other NW sides have had a little success with recruiting, or at least holding on to members, with regular pub dance outs during the summer, sometimes with each other. Mucky Mountains probably win the prize for best recruitment, with 4 new members last year and another 4 this year!

Our newest side in the area, Hoylake, started up last December, have already danced out on several occasions, including fielding 20 members at the JMO Day of Dance, and have a settled core of 12 regulars now. Some of us can only wish for such a turnout! In Wales, Cadi Ha joined in the All Wales Weekend, which was resurrected after a long hiatus. We were the only OM side there, but can recommend it to the other Welsh member sides.

Cadi Ha have also enjoyed a recruitment bonanza over the past 12 months after many years of staggering along, often without music or sufficient dancers to perform even our

trademark 4 person dances. We have picked up a musician who is new to morris, but is brilliant. We also have 6 (yes 6!!) new dancers - 5 under 30 and one an ex Squire of Eryri Morris, returning after a 30 year hiatus. All picking it up well and mostly dancing out already.

Don't lose hope - there are closet morris dancers out there, even among the youngsters!

Nicki Pickering

Wales and Northwest Area Rep

October 2025

West Midlands Area

Morris dancing has continued in the West Midlands - in fact it has been quite a busy year! With various days of dance, the usual pub dance outs and the cross organisation "Bulls in the city" day of dance and sculpture trail to really put Morris on the map in the Midlands.

This trend is set to continue next year as well, with DERT being hosted in Birmingham - exciting!

Craig Simmonds

West Midlands Area Rep

November 2025