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The usual explanation for the blackened face is that it was for *disguise*, when out-of-work labourers and farmworkers sought to supplement their income by a bit of anonymous dancing and begging.

It was traditionally done using soot.

Whatever the theory, modern Border sides certainly do not attach any racial significance to the blacking of their faces and accept the explanation of "disguise" for the tradition.

Following an incident in January 2017, Sajid Javid, then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, made clear that he saw no racial connotations linked with this tradition.

He tweeted –

" **Proud of traditional Morris dancers from Alvechurch (in my constituency).**

"They are as racist as I am #PloughMonday

Eddie Worrall (Squire of the Morris Ring)
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