



AGM 2021 Officials' Reports

Archivist

The archive is gradually being sorted so as to begin digitising it and therefore, hopefully in time, making it more accessible to anyone who might want to use it. I've made slightly slower progress than I would have liked due to personal reasons but am hopeful that over the course of the Winter I can make some good progress with it. I'm hoping that the first items I'll digitise will be the OM newsletters. If anyone should have any photographs, or OM material they'd like to have archived please do get in touch. I am hopeful that we can have items within the archive to represent all OM sides, past and present.

Lally MacBeth
Archivist

Area Representatives

Wales and North West Area Rep's Report for the Open Morris AGM 2021

2021 has been another year lacking in much dancing but I was pleased to see sides meeting virtually to practice or for a social gathering on a fairly regular basis. Sides have been inventive in creating socially distanced figures and making sure a set of 6 could dance outside with musicians playing from a doorway or an adjacent garden. Welsh sides were fortunate that they could gather outside in greater numbers, before those in England could. Unfortunately Cadi Ha could not take advantage of this as we only ever had 4 dancers at any one time! The Northwest was particularly hard hit with local lockdowns but I have not heard of any sides folding in the past 12 months. Indeed, recruitment seems to have been more successful than usual for some sides.

Indoor, in person, practices have resumed widely and sides appear to be adopting a fairly relaxed, though slightly cautious, approach with plenty of ventilation, minimal touching, social distancing and pre-practice Lateral Flow Tests. I think the pre-practice testing is the way forward to protect all our side members.

It's great to see sides performing out at small local venues and even festivals. Fingers crossed that next year will see us out, performing at pubs again.

Nicki Pickering
Wales and NW Area Rep

Central Area Rep Report

Teams in the Central area have by and large been quite active when restrictions have allowed them to do so, and have enjoyed the opportunities to do so. Theale Tattoo were able to practice on Zoom for the first part of the year, and resume socially distanced practices early on, as step clog doesn't need to worry about set formations! Shinfield Shambles also met early on when possible and danced out in late summer. Borderline were lucky enough to pick up some local new recruits just by dancing outside our hall. Wicket Brood have been taking opportunities to dance out towards the end of the year and seem to be in good shape. Overall, OM teams in the area have weathered the pandemic well so far and I'm very much looking forward to next season!

Jen Cox
Central Area Rep

OM East Anglian Area Rep Report to AGM 2021

Fenstanton Morris

From August 2020 the team met weekly on Zoom on our usual practice night for a social chat and doing the crossword. From May 2021 we reviewed dances on Zoom referring to past videos. In June we started practices in an open sided barn, the first time we had seen each other for over a year. A programme of dance-outs was arranged meeting up with other local sides.

28 July	Axe and Compass, Hemingford Abbots
5 Aug	The Quay, St Ives
10 Aug	Red Lion, Streatham
17 Aug	Three Horseshoes, Houghton
3 Sept	The Orchard Care Home, Ely
5 Sept	The Fox, Pirton
18 Sept	Ely Day of Dance
25 Sept	St Neots Folk Festival

20th September AGM

Our October Ale was considered too risky and cancelled.

Normal practices started on 1st October.

12 Members including 2 new dancers.

Robin James
East Anglia Area Rep

Open Morris Rep Report for Central South 2021

Another abnormal year in which the first half was dominated by Covid-19 and lock-downs. Again, I have not been able to meet sides in the flesh so had to resort to e-mailing sides in the Central South Region. Two sides replied so I checked the web for further news. This is a summary of what I heard or read.

Meon Valley Morris need a to be well rehearsed and physically fit to safely perform their style of dance. Lockdown precluded this, so, they took the decision to not do much until the lockdown ended properly and are expecting to be out again properly next year. They have done a few bits online and some ad-hoc stuff, and managed to dance out once this year at the Tenterden Folk Festival. Going forward, they are planning to add some more conventional (ish, they are MVM after all...) dances to their repertoire as they have a few friends who would like to dance out with them and the level of fitness and skill required to do their more acrobatic stuff is not easily transferrable. So, they will be doing a little more clogging to live music than they were.

Mr. Baker's Dozen continued with weekly zoom meetings doing quizzes and keeping in touch, then resumed practices outdoors in late May. In early July they enjoyed a weekend away at Cerne Abbas with some dancing included but minus the fete which was cancelled. Since then, they have resumed their normal weekly dance outs at pubs on the Isle of Wight.

My own group, Devil's Jumps Clog was able to get back to practices as soon as our practice venue reopened at the end of May under the rule of six. We don't do regular pub dance outs but did dance at the Southdowns Folk Festival at Bognor in September, supported by a local Morris side who provided extra musicians. The group is struggling a bit at the moment (not due to Covid) and are actively searching for extra musicians and dancers.

On the Isle of Wight, Bloodstone Border Morris were out performing from late July onwards and maintaining their numbers. Whitgar Morris are practising again and are actively seeking new members (where did I hear this before).

There are two more sides in my region, who I failed to contact and aren't particularly active on the web. Hopefully they are still going and I'll be able to catch up with them next year.

Clare Mach
South Central Area Rep