

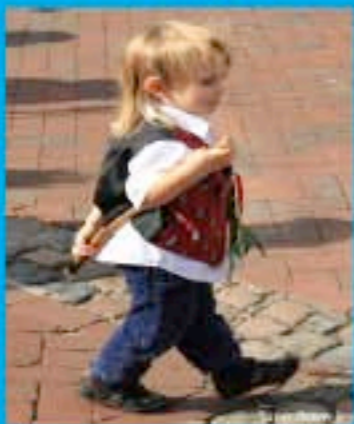
What is Morris Dancing?

The Morris Dance is extremely old. Although the earliest written reference is in parish records of the mid-16th century, it is certainly much older than that, as elements of the tradition appear to be of pagan origin, though later adapted for Christian society.

The dance seems to have been performed originally at the yearly sun festivals of Autumn, Winter and Spring. These were all fire festivals, where men would burn the bones of a sacrifice (usually a horse) and dance around this "bone-fire" (or bonfire) wearing elaborate costumes and with faces blacked to hide their identity. These dance rituals were for the men only, as tending fires was for women only. One man would tend the bone fire disguised as a woman; this character is known today as the "Molly".

Although both Church and State have often disapproved of these traditions, and sometimes even outlawed them, the common people have kept them alive. Like all living things they have changed with the passage of time. Different styles have arisen in different parts of the country at different times. At one time all the dancers blacked their faces – perhaps one reason why they came to be called "Moorish" (Morris), as they were thought to be black-faced Moors.

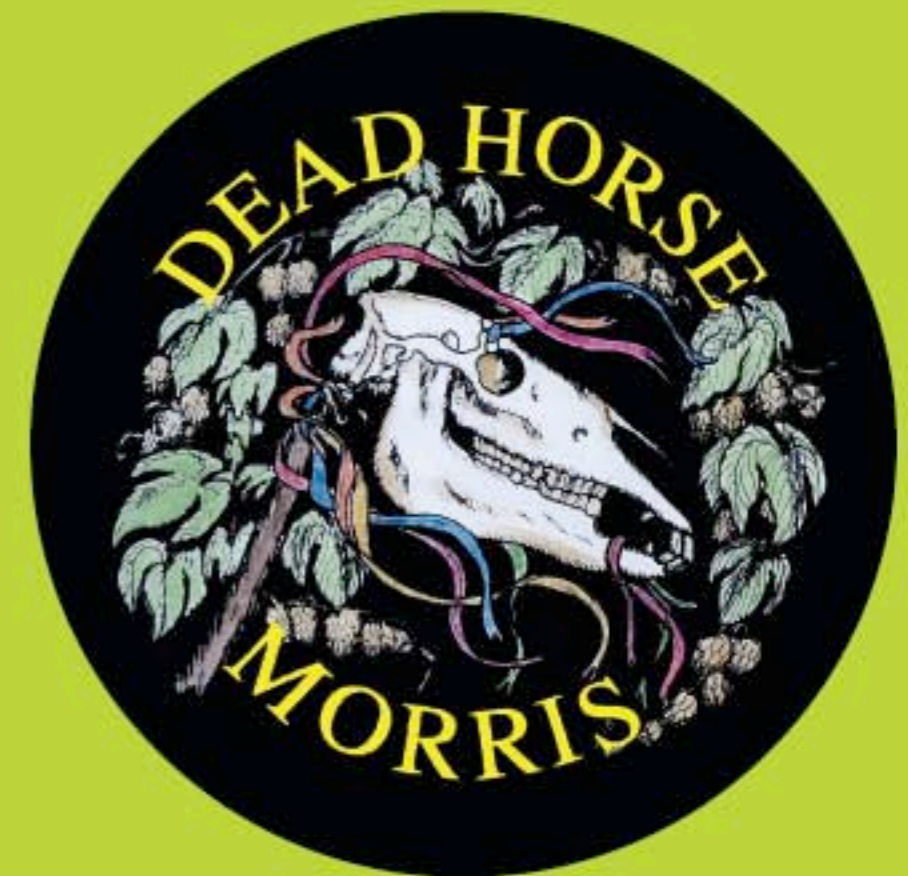
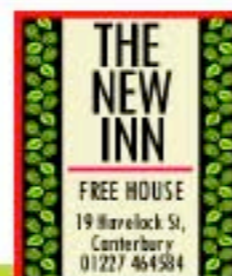
Comparatively few Morris teams still use black-face today, mainly because it was illegal during the time of Cromwell. The form of Morris usually known as Cotswold and typified by bells, baldricks and handkerchiefs dates from just after this time, when Morris was revived along with the Monarchy. The Morris Dance is still the traditional dance of England, with more than 1000 sides performing all across the country.



Who are Dead Horse?

Dead Horse Morris Men and their new women's side the Broomdashers hail from Whitstable in the County of Kent. Despite our name and the fact that we have been performing for 24 years, we are still very much alive and entertaining audiences across Kent and beyond. We dance a regional style of the traditional English Morris Dance, although our hobnail boots and sticks lean more towards the "Border" style and "Molly Dancing" than towards the better-known 'bells-and-hankies' Cotswold style.

We dance around our home town of Whitstable and the area of the north Kent coast that extends from Thanet in the east to Faversham in the west. Our season starts on St George's Day (23 April) and finishes in September, with another outing on Boxing Day. Our Morris kit of hobnailed boots, corduroys and cheese-cutter caps, with ribbon-decorated waistcoats, is based on the old dress of local fishermen when decorated for special events. In addition to the traditional dance, we are renowned for playing traditional music, singing traditional songs and drinking traditional ale!



DEAD HORSE MORRIS MEN & THE BROOMDASHERS



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Programme 2010

PROGRAMME 2010

All evening stands begin at around 8pm, but note this is GMT (General Morris Time). Stands are rarely cancelled, but feel free to ring one of the contact numbers to check.

April

Friday 23rd – St George's Day: Whitefriars Centre, Canterbury 12-2pm

Friday 23rd – St George's Day: Fordwich Arms, Fordwich 8pm

May

Saturday 1st May – Dawn Rising: Whitstable Harbour 5.10am

Saturday 1st May – Herne Bay Vintage Car Show, Herne Bay 11am

Sunday 2nd – Sweeps Festival, Rochester

Monday 3rd – Whitstable May Day with Oyster Morris

Wednesday 12th – The King Ethelbert, Reculver

Weekend 14th - 16th May – Powderkeg Weekend, with The Powderkegs, Bedford

Thursday 20th – The Plough and Harrow, Oad Street, with Boughton Monchelsea Morris

Wednesday 26th – The New Inn, Canterbury, with Wolf's Head and Vixen Morris

June

Wednesday 2nd – The Flying Horse, Boughton Aluph, with East Kent Morris Men

Wednesday 9th – The Hop Pocket, Bossingham, NR Canterbury

Thursday 17th – The Anchor, Faversham, with Maenads

Saturday 19th/Sunday 20th – Maldon Festival of Morris, Essex

Wednesday 23rd – Walking Tour of Canterbury

Wednesday 30th – Half Way House, Challock, with Rabble

July

Wednesday 7th – The Red Lion, Stodmarsh

Wednesday 14th – The Shipwright's Arms, Hollowshore

Saturday 24th/Sunday 25th – Dead Horse Ale: Whitstable

Wednesday 28th – The Ship Centurion, Whitstable, Shanty song & music night

August

Thursday 5th – Sunday 8th – Wickham Festival, Hampshire

Wednesday 11th – The White Horse, Chilham

Wednesday 18th – The Rose Inn, Wickhambreaux

Wednesday 25th – The Fitzwalter Arms, Goodnestone

Bank Holiday Monday 30th – Day of Syn, Dymchurch

September

Saturday 4th / Sunday 5th - Faversham Hop Festival

Sunday 19th - Farming and Country Festival, Farming World, Faversham

October

Saturday 2nd – Tenterden Folk Festival

November

Saturday 27th – Mayfield Blacksmith's Procession

December

Sunday 26th – Whitstable Mince Pie Tour



Interested in dancing or joining our happy band of musicians? We practise during the winter months in Whitstable on Monday evenings. If you can tell your right foot from your left and can count beyond three then you are already streets ahead of most of us and would be welcome to join us. No experience necessary, talent probably a handicap.

Find out more about Dead Horse Morris Men and The Broomdashers and check stand times and latest news at www.deadhorse.org.uk

For further information, or for bookings, please contact Emma Standen: 01227 749908 or Lesley Hoad (Captain): 01304 823331 Or email Dead Horse Morris at: flogging@deadhorse.org.uk

