

TVMM LOG – 2020

9th January 2020 - Although it was a few days after Twelfth Night, our friends at Ewell St. Mary's Morris Men decided to hold their annual wassail at the Willoughby Arms in Kingston tonight, and invited us along. A team of 6 Thames Valley dancers crammed into a very crowded pub with many Ewell men (one of whose musicians, Alan Mead, kindly agreed to play for us), sides from Black Swan Border Morris, Phoenix Clog, Kingston Morris and a singing group, and a very enjoyable evening was had by all.

Saturday February 15th, Kennet Ale A good contingent of us took up Kennet Morris Men's annual invitation to their ale and had an enjoyable evening despite (or perhaps because of) the complete lack of the usual chocolate-covered sprouts this year. There were many mass dances called, and fewer show dances - in fact only one per side before the feast (we chose British Grenadier Oddington) and one after (Ring o' Bells Lichfield with our friend Stephen Archer of the Ravensbourne Men making the eighth man).

Friday February 28th - Bagman's Night Out. A number of the Men, some together with their Ladies, assembled at the Wheatsheaf in Esher for an enjoyable dinner, with drinks provided by the Bag funds.

17th March - At a sparsely attended practice night at All Saints Church Hall it was decided that as medical experts were advising everyone to stay at home in order to try and arrest the spread of coronavirus, future practices and fixtures should be cancelled until further notice.

24th March - Our enterprising bagman has organised the first ever Thames Valley video conference using facilities on the Zoom website, so, with beer by our side, we pretended we were in Marneys having a well-earned pint after a particularly arduous practice session. The disadvantage (although some no doubt regarded it as an advantage) was that no dancing was actually done. The evening was such a success that it was decided to repeat it every Tuesday night for the foreseeable future, and also to include some of our country members who live too far away to attend practices, but who could join us from the comfort of their own armchairs.

7th July - Jenny Glaister has very kindly offered the side the use of her very large garden in Woodham for practices every Tuesday night, and so 8 dancers and 2 musicians took the opportunity to blow away much rust. Certain anti-virus precautions were taken, such as dancers retaining the same stick all evening and substituting a different figure for hands round. The rain more or less held off, so the evening was a great success, helped substantially by the President producing from the boot of his car a barrel of excellent Moondance Ale. It was decided to repeat the experiment on future Tuesday evenings, weather permitting. Meanwhile, the country members were continuing with their Tuesday night Zoom session.

Saturday 29th August - "Not the Cotswolds" garden party in Woodham. This is the weekend when Thames Valley would normally be travelling to Withington to dance all round the Cotswolds. It isn't possible this year because of coronavirus, so Jenny Glaister stepped up to host a party for all who would normally be there. This proved a very successful event, with lots of musicians and enough dancers for two sets!

Tuesday 15th September - Return to All Saints Hall. Practices at the hall are allowed to resume.

Tuesday 20th October - Back on Zoom. Our return to the hall was short-lived. New restrictions mean we're back on Zoom, and so it continues for the rest of the year.

Monday 2nd November Thames Valley Morris Men AGM at 20.00 on Zoom.

Present: M.Jenkins (Squire), P.Mundy (Bagman), F.Smith (Treasurer), D.Keen (Woodman and Farrier), P.Turner (Ragman), J.Lucas (Webmaster) S.Allo, A.Bull, I.Campbell, C.Stokes, D.Payne, J.Walsh, R.Aitken, T.Cawdron, J.Elkins, R.Kalinowski, P.Jones, M.Vardy, J.Denny (part),

Apologies for absence:, B.Heaton

Roll of Honour: The Squire read out the names of deceased TVMM members: Jim Brooks, Tony Brown, Robin Cobb, Peter Dashwood, Amnon Derrenberg, Roy Dommett, Ron Duncombe, Hugh Gibson, John Glaister, Siward Glaister, John Hall, Martin Jolly, Alun Jones, Norman Keam, George Lawrence, Edward Morris, Dick Mussen, Derek Paynter, Christopher Penton, Ted Perry, Gordon Ralph, Christopher Seager-Thomas, Cyril Smith, Gordon Smith, Mervyn Stanley, Mike Sugrue, Phil Sylvester, Bill Tofts and Steve Tovey.

During the last year we sadly lost our President, Chris Ridley. Due to the COVID restrictions it was not possible for the side to attend his funeral, though some watched via video link.

The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting were approved. No matters arising.

Reports:

Communications: John Walsh advised that a lot more of the archives, logs and music had been added to the website by John Elkins & himself.

Sticks & Animals: At the beginning of this year, I had hoped to cut some sticks at Woking Palace, but the site was flooded. By the time it had dried out, lockdown happened, so no sticks were ever cut. However, I have a fair number left from last year, plus some cut by Julia so I expect to have enough for 2021 if we ever get out again. I also have a stock of some 20 lightweight sticks for if we get asked to teach Scouts, etc. We only danced out twice since last AGM – Boxing Day and the Not-Cotswolds, and no sticks were broken at either event.

The beasts have been feeling most neglected this year as they only made brief appearances at Boxing Day and Not-Cotswolds. No repairs or modifications have been necessary. I would welcome extra beast-riders, particularly on big events like Boxing Day. The crowd expects to see both animals, and there is only one of me. (Dick Keen)

Ragman: Phil Turner advised that there were a number of requests for new kit, but he held sufficient supplies to meet these.

Recruitment David Payne explained how he tried to engage audiences, and Mick Jenkins advised he had contacted Esher College, but they had no related courses.

Treasurer: Total income-£1,938. Apart from the only bag on Boxing Day £423 (which we donated to Woking Hospice), a refund of Morris Ring overpaid subs £65 and a £40 donation from Woking Palace Association our only other income was from Annual and Hall/Practice subs totalling £1410 (last year £1613).

Total expenditure-£2,231.98. Of particular note:- Donations £923 (last year £543.22 being the Boxing Day Bag). Hall Hire £680 (last year £1,200), Web Costs £134.98 (last year £217.32). We have been over-charged /now negotiated to £72 a year.

I have ignored the Income and Expenditure figures for last year which are substantially higher as a result of the French Trip and a total of seven bags.

Bank account balance - £2,641.64 (last year £2,935.62)

We are in a sound financial position and TVMM should be proud that despite a difficult year we have donated £923.

I hope the Men vote to continue our EFDSS and Morris Ring Memberships. The side have been members of both organizations for approaching 70 years. The Morris Ring have waived subscription charges for 2021 due to Covid.

It is almost certain that there will be no Boxing Day Bag and if that is the case it was decided after a vote that we will donate £300 to Woking Hospice. (Francis Smith)

Bagman. It has been a strange year. Since the 2019 AGM we have only danced out on 4 occasions, Claygate Light-up, Boxing Day, Ewell Wassail and the Kennett Ale. In addition, some members assembled to celebrate the 'Not the Cotswolds' event.

All hall practices had to be suspended due to Covid restrictions in March, resuming in September only to be suspended again in October. The side's IT expertise was however increased as we switched to Zoom for 'practice' and whilst we struggled to practice any dances, we did manage to continue the drinking and talking 'practice', and were able to include Country members who would not normally be able to attend. Some practice sessions were held outdoors during the summer months as we were unable to dance out.

There were some positives in the year. We gained two new members, Simon, a novice, and Ian, an experienced dancer who first turned up at last year's AGM. The lockdown period also gave time for the two Johns to update the archives. Mick and I also improved our skills in the understanding and interpretation of Government regulations! (Phil Mundy)

Squire Wow! What a very strange year it's been!

It started normally enough, with the side dancing in Claygate to mark the turning on of the Christmas lights, and then dancing round the village on a very rain-affected Boxing Day. In true Thames Valley style, the conditions were braved and all 5 pubs were visited and danced at. A remarkable £420, given the conditions, was collected for Woking Hospice. The side were very pleased to welcome David Payne into full membership after he danced the Ladies' Pleasure Fieldtown jig at Platform 3.

In January we joined Ewell St. Mary's Morris Men at their annual bash at the Willoughby Arms Kingston, then in February we travelled to Bracknell for the Kennett Ale, but deplored the lack of chocolate-covered sprouts on the menu this year. Thames Valley mustered 7

dancers and a musician, and welcomed the assistance of Stephen Archer from Ravensbourne which enabled us to put on Vandals of Hammerwych as a show dance. At the end of February, the bagman hosted a very successful night out at the Wheatsheaf in Esher.

Practices at All Saints Church Hall continued until 17th March, when it was decided to suspend them and also cancel all fixtures until further notice in view of the rapid rise in coronavirus cases. Instead, the bagman set up virtual pub sessions on Tuesday nights on the Zoom platform. The one big positive about this was that we were able to invite the country members to join us, and we were very pleased to see quite a number of them from week to week.

Then in July, with the pandemic starting to abate, we received the very generous offer from Jenny Glaister to use her garden for outdoor practices, and we held very enjoyable weekly practices there from 7th July to 1st September. Also, although we were unable to travel to Withington over the August bank holiday weekend for our annual Cotswolds weekend, we held a wonderful party in Jenny's garden on the Saturday, and sufficient local and country members turned up in whites to enable us to have two sets dancing at one stage.

On 15th September, we were allowed back into All Saints Church Hall for weekly practices, but only managed 5 of these before further restrictions were imposed on Elmbridge Borough, and the hall was closed to us again.

Our apprentice, Simon, has been making good progress with his dancing and additional sessions in Fran's carport in Ash have helped with this. Also we have been lucky to have had Ian, an experienced dancer from Ravensbourne, join us on quite a few occasions.

Looking forward, we are hoping to run a few more practices in the garden on weekend afternoons, and, other than that, not much planning can go on until the present coronavirus restrictions are lifted. (Mick Jenkins)

Election of Officers : Following the sad death of President Chris Ridley earlier this year, the Squire and Bagman took soundings on a replacement. Fran Smith was offered the role of President and accepted. Fran has decided to step down as Treasurer after 17 years. David Payne was nominated in this role. There was no competition for the remaining officer positions and the incumbents were re-elected by acclamation:

President: Fran Smith (his job is for life) **Squire:** Mick Jenkins **Bagman:** Phil Mundy
Treasurer: David Payne **Ragman:** Phil Turner **Webmaster:** Jan Lucas **Animals and sticks:** Dick Keen **Recruitment:** David Payne

Programme for 2021 Phil M advised that it is very difficult to plan at the moment, but many events cancelled in 2020 are likely to be rescheduled in 2021 if possible, so our plan is to mirror the cancelled 2020 plan.

Any other business

a) Fran Smith proposed that Bank signatories should be revised to be the current Treasurer, Squire & Bagman. Agreed.

b) Peter Jones Proposed that the kit should be amended to allow Breeches to be worn. After a short discussion, this proposal was defeated by a significant majority.

c) Options for Boxing Day were discussed. John Elkins suggested that in the event that we are not able to dance at all, that a notice should be displayed in Claygate announcing that.

The Meeting closed at 20:50

Phil Mundy, TVMM Bagman, 4 Nov 2020.

TVMM LOG – 2021

Tuesday 18th May - open air practices resume. After a winter of contact only via Zoom, restrictions are eased enough for us to take up Jenny Glaister's kind offer to use her garden again. A successful practice, despite a number of rain showers, so it is decided to continue every Tuesday.

Sunday 20th June - Hampton Court Food Festival. Our first paying fixture of the year sees us dancing in the gardens of Hampton Court, close to a Sambrooks beer tent! We danced for three sessions in the afternoon, with six dances per session.

Saturday 10th July - Claygate not-very-Flowery Show. The Claygate Flower Show committee were determined to put some sort of event on this year without the usual flower and vegetable competitions, and asked if we could tour the village. So we danced in the Parade outside the, sadly shut, Platform 3, in the newly landscaped back garden of the Foley Arms, at the Hare & Hounds, outside the Village Hall, and at the Griffin.

Tuesday 27th July - The Stepping Stones, Westhumble. Normally we would spend most Tuesdays of the summer dancing at various local pubs, often with other sides. This is the only Tuesday we've managed this this year. A very enjoyable evening was spent dancing with Rampant Rooster, a mixed side from Dorking, although there were many more dancers than spectators!

Friday 27th to Sunday 29th August - Cotswold weekend. A small advance party settled down in Withington Village Hall on the Friday night, after an evening at the Mill. The main army, including our brigade of country members, arrived on the Saturday, and toured four local pubs, namely the Bathurst Arms at North Cerney, the Green Dragon at Cowley, the Plough at Prestbury and the Craven Arms at Brockhampton. Then on the Sunday there was the usual lunchtime session at the Mill, before everyone left for home.

Sunday 5th September - Shalford Village Fair. On a beautiful sunny summer's day, we send a strong side (8 dancers plus 2 musicians) to dance at a massive village fair a bit reminiscent of Claygate Flower Show at its height. The organisers seem more interested in having us appear in the press photos than in us dancing, and wave us out of the arena after three dances! But in true Thames Valley style, we adjourn to the nearest hostelry (the Queen Victoria) and have an extended dancing session outside its frontage.

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Thursday 9th September - Woodhay Village Hall - company executives' bonding day. John Walsh, Phil Turner and Mick Jenkins earned enough to pay for our practice hall from now until Christmas from an engagement from an events company we've worked with before. Four teams of eight company executives competed with each other in orienteering, cycling, kayaking and morris dancing. We taught them some of the rudiments of Lads-a-Bunchum Adderbury and marked them on their performances. The teams were meant to cycle

at intervals to the Village Hall for their instructional. The first team did well and seemed to enjoy themselves. A member of the second team had an accident and fell off his bike, then the whole team got lost. The three of us hung around the village hall for three hours, then finally had to coach each of the last three teams in quick succession in only about 15 minutes per session - not nearly long enough. Still, it was an interesting day out.

Tuesday 14th September - Triumphant Return to Claygate. Almost ten years after being kicked out of our practice hall behind the Foley Arms, the side is back practising in Claygate again. After being let down by the church wardens of All Saints Weston Green, our bagman has secured a booking for us at the Youth Club hall in Elm Road, and we held a successful practice here for the first time tonight.

Saturday 18th September - Angela Coombes's Commemoration party. Angela was one of Thames Valley's earliest groupies. She was a great friend of the side and in fact was a leading member of John Glaister's Countryside Morris team. She died in 2012, but her daughter Mary planned to hold a party last year to commemorate what would have been Angela's 100th birthday and her own wedding. Because of Covid restrictions the party had to be postponed until today, and a crack team of one musician and three dancers helped to give the party a Thames Valley flavour by performing some strange 3-man dances and then getting most of the guests to join in a "Bonny Green".

2nd/3rd October 2021 - Tour of West Somerset. A party comprised of Fran Smith, Alan Bull, Dick Keen, Phil Turner, Phil Mundy, Robin Aitken, Robin Kalinowski and the squire embarked on a tour of West Somerset organised by Brian Heaton in conjunction with West Somerset Morris. A team from Greensleeves Morris also attended. A large coach was arranged to take all the dancers and musicians from their base at St. Audries Village Hall first of all to Watchet, where there was dancing on the sea front, then to Washford, where we danced in the village centre, then to Minehead, where, as the rain was lashing down by now, permission was obtained from West Somerset Railway to dance on one of the covered platforms of Minehead station, and finally to Dunster, where we danced next to the fine old market building. A certain Digger Glaister was in the audience in Minehead, where he now lives, but unfortunately not in whites! The evening was spent feasting, singing, playing and drinking in the nearby village of Bicknoller. On the Sunday morning, those who had recovered sufficiently from the previous night's carousing attended a service at St. Audries Church led by Andrew Hazelwood, one of the West Somerset Men, a retired vicar. Thames Valley had been asked to dance in the middle of this, and performed Bampton Trunkles in a very restricted space near the pulpit. Greensleeves had been asked to dance outside the church as the congregation left the service, but their contribution was cut short by yet another rain shower.

Tuesday 2nd November Thames Valley Morris Men AGM at Claygate Youth Hall.

Present: M.Jenkins (Squire), P.Mundy (Bagman), F.Smith (Treasurer), D.Keen (Woodman and Farrier), P.Turner (Ragman), A.Bull, I.Campbell, J.Elkins, S.Saunders, J.Walsh,

Apologies for absence:, B.Heaton, P.Jones, K.Sargeant

Roll of Honour: The Squire read out the names of deceased TVMM members: Jim Brooks, Tony Brown, Robin Cobb, Peter Dashwood, Amnon Derrenberg, Roy Dommett, Ron Duncombe, Hugh Gibson, John Glaister, Siward Glaister, John Hall, Martin Jolly, Alun

Jones, Norman Keam, George Lawrence, Edward Morris, Dick Mussen, Derek Paynter, Christopher Penton, Ted Perry, Gordon Ralph, Christopher Seager-Thomas, Cyril Smith, Gordon Smith, Mervyn Stanley, Mike Sugrue, Phil Sylvester, Bill Tofts, Steve Tovey and Billy Wakefield.

The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting were approved. To be amended to refer to Jenny's garden as our practice venue. No Matters arising.

Reports:

Communications: Nothing to report

Sticks & Animals: As dancing was limited, no sticks were broken during the year. The Goat made brief appearances at Claygate and in Somerset. No repairs or modifications have been necessary. Dick would welcome extra beast-riders, particularly on big events like Boxing Day. The crowd expects to see both animals.

Ragman Phil Turner advised that Ian, and Mick Sargeant had been kitted out this year, but he held sufficient supplies to meet future needs.

Recruitment No report. There were few opportunities for recruitment this year.

Treasurer Accounts presented. There was a small surplus even though a donation was made to Woking Hospice in lieu of our Boxing Day collection (which was not possible this year).

Bagman. It has been yet another strange year, although we did manage a bit more dancing than last year. Since the 2020 AGM we have danced out on 7 occasions.

Having practiced in Jenny's garden when we were permitted in the early summer, we were in shape for our first public performance at Hampton Court in June, followed by a somewhat limited Claygate Flower Show and a night out with the Roosters in July. Things then picked up a bit later in the year with the Cotswolds at the end of August, events at Shalford and Palestine in September, the season finished with a tour of Somerset at the start of October. Our main problem was finding other sides to dance with as most were slow to restart.

Hall practices resumed in September, but due to a mix up at All Saints Church, we had to find a new venue. Fortunately the Claygate Hub (Youth Centre) had just opened to outside hirers, so we returned to Claygate after 10 years

Numbers are still lower than we need and we are having to modify dances to fit 4 more frequently. It was good to see John Hare at practice in the summer as well as several country members at the Cotswolds and in Somerset (Phil Mundy)

Squire Our archivist John Elkins has told me that there was massive duplication last year between my report and the Bagman's report, so I won't fall into the trap again of detailing all our activities for the year. I would like to repeat one thing I said last year, though, which is that I am extremely grateful to Jenny Glaister for the continued use of her garden for our practices during the summer.

In the past, Squires have reported on the standard of dancing, and whether this has gone up or down. I'm afraid I can't be very positive here. As a Squire, I ought to be something of a role model when it comes to dancing technique. But although the mind is willing, the body is

definitely weak, and I am acutely aware that I'm increasingly lacking the vigour with which the dances should be performed. Age is creeping up on most of us, and it seems to me that unless we have a massive infusion of new blood it'll just be a question of staggering on for another couple of years at most. So, how do we attract this new blood? Is there an argument for going mixed – a tactic which revived the West Somerset side, with whom we spent the most enjoyable weekend last month? Could we recruit anyone who attends the Youth Club here? I leave these questions open for discussion. The most positive thing I can say is that I have really enjoyed dancing with you guys over the last year, and I wish I were happier about the side's long term prospects. (Mick Jenkins)

Election of Officers: There was no competition for any of the officer positions and the incumbents were re-elected by acclamation:

President: Fran Smith (his job is for life) **Squire:** Mick Jenkins **Bagman:** Phil Mundy
Treasurer: David Payne **Ragman:** Phil Turner **Webmaster:** Jan Lucas **Animals and sticks:** Dick Keen **Recruitment:** David Payne

Programme for 2022: The Bagman sought views on events for the year ahead, and in particular how to celebrate our 70th anniversary. The following suggestions were agreed.

- Tuesday Dance outs will generally be with other sides
- We should dance more in Claygate
- Cotswolds and Somerset to continue, but France not to take place this year.
- Anniversary – Extend the Claygate FS day to include other sides and dancing in / around Claygate and followed by a feast. A second event for the past and current sides, with families, along the lines of 'Not the Cotswolds' to be held.

Any other business

a) Peter Jones - Proposed that the kit should be amended to allow Breeches to be worn. After a short discussion, this proposal was defeated with one in favour, all others against.

b) DK asked for Cakes for Boxing Day.

c) PM suggested part of the Boxing Day Bag could be given to a Claygate based charity, possible the Youth Club. Agreed in principal. JE to check local needs.

The Meeting closed at 20:40

Phil Mundy, TVMM Bagman, 10 Nov 2021.

26th December, Claygate As ever, the first big occasion of the dancing year was Boxing Day when, despite a poor weather forecast, the weather was very kind. Large crowds came out to watch, so much so that, when we reached the Hare & Hounds, the only space left to dance was the disabled parking bay, so we must apologise to any disabled drivers who were unable to park. Ian Campbell danced a very proficient jig to dance in to the side, and we ended the day tucking in to vast plates of chicken wings provided by the very kind landlord of the Griffin.

TVMM LOG – 2022

14 March – letter to the Queen TVMM sent the following letter to the Queen.

“Your Majesty, I write on behalf of Thames Valley Morris Men (TVMM) to send our greetings and congratulations on achieving your remarkable Platinum Jubilee. TVMM were formed in 1952 and our first public performance was at the Claygate (Surrey) Flower Show in June of that year and where we are due to dance once more this coming June. We are a small but established organization. This year is the platinum jubilee for TVMM. The side have for many years been members of The Morris Ring of England and also of the English Folk Song and Dance Society of which your late sister Princess Margaret was a loyal supporter. All of us involved with TVMM wish you continued good health and happiness. Ma'am, long may you reign, Francis Smith, President, Thames Valley Morris Men”

A reply came on April 12th: “I send you my grateful thanks for your kind message on the occasion of the Seventieth Anniversary of my Accession to the Throne”. ELIZABETH R”.

29th March – A Sad practice. The Bagman relayed the news that our newest recruit, Simon Sanders had died of a massive stroke whilst visiting family in Poland.

2nd April - Yateley Day of Dance: On a cold April day, a strong contingent from Thames Valley gathered on the green outside the Dog & Partridge pub in Yateley for Yateley Morris Men's day of dance. Also there were 5 dancers from Jack Straw's, 4 from Fleet Ladies, and two men from Kennet. We'd been promised lots of mass dancing, but apart from being asked to join a mass Bampton Quaker - a dance we'd not tried before - and a final massed Vandals of Hammerwych, we took it in turns to dance, and then shiver! A free barrel of beer provided by the landlord and loads of sandwiches provided by Yateley helped combat the cold!

23rd April - St. George's Day in Claygate: Along with other clubs and societies in Claygate, we were invited to set up a stall in the village hall with the aim of attracting new members. The bagman did sterling work setting up and manning this, and handing out leaflets, and a crack team danced outside the hall at various times during the morning.



24 April - Claygate Cricket Pavilion: A small side of four dancers and two musicians turned out for this short spot for the opening of the new Pavilion building. We did about three dances in an arena area before discovering that the audience could not hear the music, even though there was a microphone. We also spotted that there were a number of young children alongside trying to copy us, so a change of tactic for a big 'Bonny Green Garters'. This was probably the biggest BGG seen and was highly successful, with maybe around 30 youngsters, mainly 5 -8 year olds, but all girls! Is there any future in Claygate for a Men's side?

10th May - Saddlers Arms, Send: A very pleasant evening dancing with the ladies from Fleur de Lys morris, and featuring a rare appearance by James Denny! Watched by a fairly raucous group of young locals, who were persuaded to join in the dancing towards the end!

24th May - The Stepping Stones, Westhumble: A thankfully dry evening which followed a showery day was spent dancing with Rampant Roosters and a Border side from Carshalton. As only 5 of our dancers turned out and the other sides were dancing exclusively stick dances, we concentrated on 4-man waver dances, which worked reasonably well, particularly after we mastered the knack of getting into position for a 4-man hey!

4th June - Withington Fete: A crack team (!?) met at the Bathurst Arms in North Cerney and danced outside on the gravel before moving on to the Mill in Withington for more dancing and a nice lunch generously provided free of charge. Then on to Withington Manor where a traditional fete was taking place in honour of the Queen's platinum jubilee. More dancing took place followed by tea and cake! Then it was back on the road home.

16th June - Platform 3 Claygate: A strong team from Ewell St. Mary's morris joined us for what is becoming a very enjoyable annual fixture. The landord did his part by generously providing the dancers with his well brewed ale free of charge all night. The teams danced alternately, but also managed a couple of joint mass dances.

18th June - Datchet Day of Dance: It's good to be back in Datchet again for their day of dance after a gap of three years. It followed the traditional pattern of a short dance on Datchet Green, more dancing on the platform of Datchet station, then a train ride to Windsor, where the six teams participating split up into two groups and toured the town dancing in various spots, before meeting up again to take a train back and dance on the green one final time.

25th June The TVMM 70th party at Jenny Glaister's The event started with a few members turning up on the previous day to erect a couple of tents, as the weather forecast was not good. Ever done a 3D jigsaw? On the day there was unbroken sunshine. The side and followers provided extensive picnic food, cake and drink. Around 20 present and past members turned up along with their families, and several who could not appear sent messages.

*Dear Phil and all my friends at TVMM, I am sorry I cannot be with you this evening but wish you all a very happy evening and congratulations for keeping the side going for 70 years. All the best, Blue Skies to all. Jim Barclay

*Alas ...I'll be in the wrong country. I find stacks of photo's of Thames Valley of the 1980's and 90's as I sort through boxes. Everyone looking remarkably energetic, most people

looking slim. Good memories! Pass on my best wishes and let the horse and goat know they are not forgotten. Martin Kiff

Please convey my apologies - a friend of ours lost his wife suddenly and we are going to an event to support him. I am sure you will have a grand time and I send you all my very best wishes. Phil Underwood.

*Hi Phil, Hope you all have a great day. Thinking of you and all friends that I know. Enjoy, Robin Kalinowski.

*Please accept my apologies for not being able to join the team tomorrow. We are a fine club and one I am proud to be a member of. Long may we all continue to do the Morris together! Sue and I wish you all well tomorrow and we have our fingers crossed the weather gods will be kind to my wonderful clubmates! Yours in step, Tim Cawdron
P.S. Loved our Presidents message to & from our Queen!

*Hi Phil the bag hope all's well with T.V.M.M. sorry to say I wont be able attend the 70'th birthday party but hope you all have a great day. Give my regards to all team members and I hope I might be able to come out and find you all one day. Regards Bill Ellis (A.K.A Mad Bill)

*Greetings Phil and Fran, With regret I shall not be able to make the party next Saturday afternoon. All plans have been laid but I am not able to leave Glen in her present state and she couldn't possible travel. Please give my best wishes and congratulations to all the club and camp followers. I also began my morris experience with the St. Helens Morris Men! (none of us over 18 year of age) which was founded in 1952. I have such happy memories of Thames Valley and it's exploits and so much wanted to toast the future of the club and members. Wassail, Brian Heaton

9th July - Claygate Flower Show We are joined by strong teams from Ewell St. Mary's, Phoenix Clog and Rampant Rooster plus a single dancer from Spring Grove and Terry, an ex-Heston Boys dancer who has occasionally danced with us, for our 70th Anniversary dance at the Claygate Flower Show. Our first dance was Jim Brooks Oddington, in honour of the man who got the team together in the first place 70 years ago. Before the Flower Show we had danced on the terrace in the garden of the Foley Arms, and then outside the Griffin. Afterwards we visited the Hare & Hounds for more dancing, and then the Claygate Youth Club hall for more dancing, drinking and singing.

14th July - Rampage Event - Isle of Wight. Rampage, the Events Company who have employed us before, commission us to teach morris to six teams of executives in Yarmouth Village Hall in the Isle of Wight. Messrs. Turner, Keen and Jenkins attempt to teach the rudiments of Lads-a-Bunchum Adderbury to executives employed by Grocery Aid, which is apparently a charity set up to assist workers in the grocery trade, with varying success!

26th July - The Plough, Stoke d'Abernon. A very pleasant evening was spent with Phoenix Clog at the Plough, one of the few pubs still owned by the Permain Group, who have been very welcoming to us in the past. True to form, we were greeted this time with a number of jugs of ale!

9th August - Holy Trinity Church Claygate. The church are holding a garden party today for the benefit of elderly local residents, and we help provide the entertainment which is well appreciated, before repairing to the Griffin for much needed refreshment.

6th September - Foley Arms Claygate. Before restarting our winter practices, our swansong for this season is at the Foley Arms, where we dance until it gets completely dark!

27th September - Restart practice for the new season

11th October – Practice started early with a session for the Youth Club before our Practice. On this occasion there were fewer Youth Club members present than on our earlier session, but that enabled us to work more closely with them with amazing results.

8th November Annual General Meeting, Claygate Youth Hall at 20.00.

Present: M.Jenkins (Squire), P.Mundy (Bagman), F.Smith (President), D. Payne (Treasurer), D.Keen (Woodman and Farrier), P.Turner (Ragman), A.Bull, I.Campbell, J.Elkins, J.Walsh,

Apologies for absence:, R. Aitken, T.Cawdron, J.Denny, B.Heaton, P.Jones, K.Sargeant, C. Stokes

1. Roll of Honour: The Squire read out the names of deceased TVMM members: Jim Brooks, Tony Brown, Robin Cobb, Peter Dashwood, Amnon Derrenberg, Roy Dommett, Ron Duncombe, Hugh Gibson, John Glaister, Siward Glaister, John Hall, Martin Jolly, Alun Jones, Norman Keam, George Lawrence, Edward Morris, Dick Mussen, Derek Paynter, Christopher Penton, Ted Perry, Gordon Ralph, Simon Saunders, Christopher Seager-Thomas, Cyril Smith, Gordon Smith, Mervyn Stanley, Mike Sugrue, Phil Sylvester, Bill Tofts, Steve Tovey and Billy Wakefield.

2.The Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting were approved. There were no matters arising.

3. Reports:

Squire: May I start by saying what a privilege and pleasure it has been to have been the squire during a very eventful 70th Anniversary year.

Practices continued throughout the winter, and then at the end of March we received the shocking news that our apprentice Simon Sanders, who had attended most of the practices up until then, had passed away while on a trip to Poland. He had finally seemed to be getting to grips with some of our dances, and a few days later, at Yateley's day of dance on 2nd April, we danced one of his favourite dances, Balance the Straw, in his memory.

Soon after that, our Bagman worked hard to put together a display stall in the Village Hall at the Claygate Club Fair, and we did a couple of sessions of dancing outside the hall. The hope was to attract some new local members, but unfortunately none materialised.

It was decided to visit Withington in June this year, when a fete was being held to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, rather than on the traditional date at the end of August, and we

danced at a couple of pubs and then at the fete, before demolishing a quantity of home-made cakes.

We spent very enjoyable evenings at the Saddlers Arms with Fleur, the Stepping Stones with Rampant Rooster, the Plough with Phoenix Clog, and Platform 3 with Ewell St. Mary's - the generous landlord providing free beer for dancers at the latter.

Jenny Glaister held what I was told was a very successful 70th Anniversary Garden Party for us attended, I gather, by a number of our country members. I was unable to go due to my daughter having the temerity to get married that day.

Our actual 70th Anniversary was at the Claygate Flower Show in July, and we made sure we performed the dance Roy Dommet taught us at Jim Brooks's funeral in honour of the man who originally got the side together to dance at the 1952 Flower Show. Ewell St. Mary's, Rampant Rooster and Phoenix Clog all sent strong sides, and we held a cracking Ale with them in the evening.

Practices eventually restarted here at the end of September and we've managed to get quite a bit of practice in since then. We haven't, unfortunately, managed to attract any new recruits, and I do worry how much longer we will be able to keep the side going if this doesn't change.

Bagman: After two restricted years, 2021 -22, saw a return to normality - though still with a few hangovers from the past problems. Arranging events was somewhat difficult as many sides were reluctant to arrange dates as they were not as ready as us to get dancing again. Also many organisations delayed their planning of events until the last minute. This meant that events often got rearranged or cancelled.

We also struggled with numbers, and some events had to be declined or had to take place with less than a full side - so it was good that we learnt some dances for 4. Other sides clearly had similar issues, and whilst our 70th anniversary day was a great success, the numbers attending from other sides could have been better. On the other hand, the 70th party for members and families at Jenny's was very well attended and it was good to see lots of past members there - and some can still dance!

In total we danced out 18 times, almost back to the level of 2019 (26 events).

Our presence back in Claygate has helped improve our connections in the village -and we danced in Claygate 8 times - far more than usual, plus a couple of sessions with the very enthusiastic Youth Club members. Sadly this has not yet led to any new members.

Treasurer. Accounts presented. There was a small deficit even though extra costs were incurred with the 70th celebrations. Hall subs roughly cover payments, though with fewer numbers there is a small shortfall on this.

Sticks & Animals: The sticks are in good supply as less damage has occurred due to the absence of the hard hitters. The Animals have been little used as, with fewer dancers, the opportunities to use them have been limited.

Ragman: Sufficient supplies to meet future needs. A new jacket is needed for Ian.

Web: Site has been improved with the addition of more music by John Walsh

4. Election of Officers :

There was no competition for any of the officer positions and the incumbents were re-elected by acclamation:

President: Fran Smith (his job is for life) **Squire:** Mick Jenkins **Bagman:** Phil Mundy
Treasurer: David Payne **Ragman:** Phil Turner **Webmaster:** Jan Lucas **Animals and sticks:** Dick Keen **Recruitment:** David Payne

5. Programme for 2023: The Bagman sought views on events for the year ahead. The following issues were agreed.

- We will meet every Tuesday. On weeks where there has been a weekend event, or when numbers are low, the meeting will just be for a drink (in a pub or at Jenny's) rather than dancing.
- Cotswolds and Somerset to continue, but the Cotswolds to be on a different weekend. (Either early September or when there is a local event).
- Saturday / Weekend events to consider – Horsham, Oxford, Ewell, Wallingford Bunkfest, and (of course) the Claygate Flower Show.

6. Change of Name

The following motion was proposed by the Squire.

"The members are keen for the club to be as inclusive as possible, and therefore agree that the club's name be changed from "Thames Valley Morris Men" to "Thames Valley Morris". This change to take effect immediately".

There was much discussion, with some concerns that a change of name would lose the side's history, but a general recognition that something was needed to be done to open the side up, or it was unlikely to continue for much longer. As a result the discussion became more one of should we just say we are now a mixed side and welcome all members – men and women. It was felt that, provided that we were welcoming to women, and that was clearly noted on handouts, website, etc, the name did not need to be changed at present.

A revised motion was proposed that "The side will openly welcome all members (men and women) as full members of the side. The name of the side will remain unchanged." This was carried unanimously.

7. Any other business

a) Peter Jones - Proposed that the kit should be amended to allow breeches to be worn. After a short discussion, this proposal was defeated with one in favour, all others against.

b) PM suggested that the Boxing Day Bag could be given to the Claygate Youth Club. Hopefully they would also help in the collection process. This was agreed and it was also agreed that a £300 donation would be made to Woking Hospice.

c) PM suggested that we take up the Ring offer to refund costs for a Card reader. Agreed.

d) FS suggested that we make a donation to EFDSS in response to their appeal following the reduction of Arts Council funding. This was rejected as several members felt the EFDSS had lost touch with its membership.

The Meeting closed at 2200

Phil Mundy, TVMM Bagman, 7 Dec 2022.

26th November - Claygate lights up: We danced for around 40 minutes at Platform 3 to a good crowd gathered for the switch on of the Christmas lights. Occasional breaks were taken to enjoy the beer provided by Brightwater (Platform 3). We also used the event to leaflet the crowd in an attempt to recruit new members.

10th December – Presentation to Esher History Society, Holy Trinity Church, Claygate.

John Elkins and John Walsh gave a presentation on the history of Morris Dancing with particular reference to Thames Valley Morris Men to a large audience, none of whom rushed to join the side. John W. danced Nelson's Praise in kit. Among those present were Roger and Marsden, an occasional past TVMM member and his wife Jill, who had been in the clog dance troupe organised by Mick Jenkins which had danced many times with TVMM. Also present were Madge Cole, wife of John who had been a firm friend of Cyril Smith and one of her sons, who had been taught Morris dancing in a group of schoolboys by Cyril.

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