

# Westminster Morris Day of Dance.

To Westminster for the Westminster Morris Day of Dance. A dozen Morris sides dancing around seven sites in Westminster. Due to a late start from staying up to watch the northern lights, and being half asleep we concentrated on the first of two sessions in Trafalgar Square.

In no particular order these are a couple of photographs intended to be some escapism into music and spring; however the seamy side of life has a nasty habit of elbowing its way in.



The band accompanying Ravensbourne Morris from Kent; the hurdy gurdy is not seen often and was remarked upon.

This is Thaxted Morris, founded 1911, part of a very strong tradition of music and arts in the village of Thaxted in Essex. If you have never seen Morris dancing most dances start with the side coming on in one or more rows, they advance and retreat, they may reel off, and dancers form up in pairs to interact. Many dances have that format.

This pair were a small boy of about 9 and a gentleman of maybe 80. If they were not granddad and grandson they ought to have been. All sorts of positive thoughts about tradition and family and apprenticeship came to mind.





Some sides have a animal mascot, which gives some lucky soul a chance to dress up on a hot day inside a papier-mache costume of a hobby horse, or a dragon, or a crocodile. They can then caper round the outside of the dancers, interact with the crowd, or as here have an impromptu game of football with a discarded bottle while the ladies of Dacre Morris from Lewisham danced a serious dance.



The regular stand of the Iranian dissidents was in its usual spot on the corner above the square; watching Englishwomen dancing freely either as a group or with men while a flag saying Free Iran fluttered in the distance was food for thought. Then there was a racket of drums and shrieking and Long-live-the-intifada-death-to-the-Jooz Scumbag Morris (not) hove into view along the western edge of the square. Mindful of the incident on 21st October 2023 when the Hamas supporters occupied the square against police instructions causing the evacuation of the Joint Morris Organisations Day of Dance I watched their progress. But a much small group today was



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Hosts Westminster Morris, National Gallery left; St Martin's  
in the Fields right

***Photographs E Weatherwax London May 2024***