

The Black Meet

Written by Steve Glennie-Smith

Thursday, 30 April 2015 21:33 - Last Updated Monday, 18 May 2015 10:41



The Silurian Border Morris Men of Ledbury hosted the Black Meet - a day of Morris dancing in the town centre last Sunday, April 26th. They were joined by Morris sides from all over the West Midlands, including Plum Jerkum from Warwick, The Iron Men from Ironbridge and The Widders from Chepstow. Eleven different groups danced at the Market House, the newly renovated Masters House, The Talbot and The Brewery Inn.



Black Pig Morris (left) and Wytchwood Musicians (right)

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The day started with a presentation to St. Michael's Hospice of a cheque for £1300, comprising £650 raised at Silurian's Wassail in Much Marcle earlier this year, match funded by Westons. The cheque was handed to Tricia Greenwood, a trustee of St. Michael's Hospice. Helen Thomas from Westons was present.

This annual gathering has been held for about 20 years in different parts of the West Midlands on the Sunday nearest to St. George's Day. Black-faced Morris sides mainly perform in the Welsh Border tradition, which includes dances from Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire. Some other such dances, for example Molly Dancing, originate from East Anglia. One particular element of these dances is that the dancers disguise themselves with black faces. The dances are lively and accompanied by a variety of musical instruments including melodeon, accordion, drum, brass, fiddle and sousaphone.

These dances were usually performed around Christmas time. Silurian has danced in Ledbury beside the Market House on Boxing Day for over 45 years. One of the major traditions that

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Silurian celebrates is the Wassail. This is a ceremony in cider orchards to mark the end of winter to thank the cider trees for their plentiful harvest of apples and to waken them to a new season of growth.

Next year's Black Meet will be in Much Wenlock. It will return to Ledbury in 2017.

Sides attending were:

Silurian Border Morris - Ledbury
Wytchwood - Wyre Forest
Black Pig Border Morris - Awsworth, Notts
The Widders - Chepstow
Iron Men and Severn Gilders - Ironbridge
Domesday Morris - Penkhull, nr. Stoke-on-Trent
Silhill - Solihull
Styx of Stroud Border Morris
Foxs Morris - Cookley, near Kidderminster
Plum Jerkum Border Morris - Warwick

All photos and video below by Maggie Thompson.



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Black Pig Morris (left) and Wychwood Musicians (right)



Black Pig Morris



The Widdere



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Silhill Morris (left) and Silurian (right)



Sheela Morris dancers in front of the Morris Centre. Embedded videos, you may watch it [here](#) .)



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