

Type Two: The Public Spectacle:

These are often the most enjoyable events we do. Like pub gigs they are generally unpaid but sympathetic audiences are assured. So, beginners can again feel at home in taking part but there are also likely to be a few 'formal' dances in which you should only expect the more experienced dancers to participate. Events like 'Upton' or 'Rochester' fit into this group and, again, friends and family are welcome as there is generally no specific site involved.

Type Three: The Paid Gig:

Invariably the audience will have paid to get in and so they have a right to expect only the best performances. This does not mean new dancers won't get to perform, but your chances will be restricted to those dances which you can do well. Sometimes we get paid for these (e.g. at beer and folk festivals) and at other times we just get 'perks' - usually free entry (e.g. large music festivals or bike and boat rallies). At paid gigs, although family and friends are still welcome, they must pay the usual entry prices. This is an inflexible rule. No 'roadies', partners or whatever, are allowed a free ticket unless they are active participants in the performances.

Food & Drink Breaks:

On arrival at a gig, the first thing to find out is at what time the first dance spot is and, in the case of a large event, where exactly it will take place. At type 2 and type 3 events there will be some sort of organised timetable. Listen to what the day's dance organiser says and, if you go for a roam round, be back 15 minutes early each time for the next performance so that the dances can be organised.

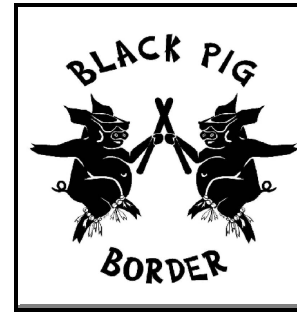
Similarly, food breaks will usually be specified. Please do not disappear off for lunch etc without checking with the dance organiser first. Schedules are always prone to change and you might be needed at a different time from what you have previously been told. Unexpected absence can cause havoc and frustration for the rest of the side, the day's dance organiser and the event organisers.

After the Gig:

At the end of the last dance of the day, we try and provide a 'photo opportunity' for the audience - so do not be in a rush to get 'off stage' - but, when it is all done with, that is the best time to socialise. If it is a weekend event (ie typically involving camping) you can expect some 'guided' social time if you want to join in with everyone else. Other than that...

Finally, it's all about having fun. If we're not having fun then we don't do it.

However, everyone agrees that the dancing is so much more of a 'buzz' when the audience obviously enjoy it too - so the better our performance, and presentation, then the more our fun - OK? (1v2 2019)



Welcome to Black Pig Border Morris

2. Your First Dance-out:

Let's get a few things straight from the outset,

1. We value all our members equally,
2. Musicians are just as important as dancers,
3. If you can do both, you're onto a winner!

This leaflet is about what happens at dance outs and how you need to treat each type differently. Some sections apply mainly to musicians, and some mainly to dancers, but please read and absorb it all so that you know what each other is supposed to be doing!

Getting Ready for the Dance-out:

Be sure where you are heading. If it is somewhere new to you check the details at least the day before. The Bagman will normally provide directions to the venue and give you a time to be there AND be ready. **DO NOT BE LATER THAN THIS!** Being ready means, in kit, face painted up, instruments tuned, sticks at hand etc. It also may mean that you will already have had lunch/tea/coffee/ventolin/beer etc. If children or animals need 'carers' make sure this is organised in time too. Oh, and don't forget to bring all your kit with you - a checklist is good, as is a large bag or holdall to keep everything in between events.

Do Not Pester the Squire or Dance Foreman (or whoever might be in charge on the day). Instead it is better to listen to what is being said and only then ask questions if you are still unsure of what to do. ("Listen very carefully, zay should say zis only wernce...")

You will find other members of the side very helpful and useful to get advice, however, your main job of the day is to do the best performance you can. No one will shout at you if you get things wrong. Everybody does at some time. The thing to remember that this is a performance in front of an audience who actually *want* to be entertained, so if you mess up spectacularly, even that can be turned into part of the performance - especially if you can embellish it in some way.

It is when the whole performance is over that you will probably get the best advice - ok?

(NB Swearing: Not everybody appreciates raw Anglo-Saxon so keep it down - especially at paid gigs and shows :-))

Getting organised:

For dancers: And musicians should read this too...

The first things you can expect to be told, or asked, is what dances you will be doing and, as a beginner, you will probably be given a specific position to dance in.

On dance-outs the dance organiser will not usually be the Squire or Dance Foreman but another member of the side who has taken on the role for the day.

The next thing everyone will be told, is where the musicians are expected to stand and also where the head of the set is and, therefore, at what angle the lines will be.

This is very important. Not understanding this is probably the single most contributory factor to people making mistakes. You are no longer in the practice room and so cannot use the usual landmarks to work out which way to go. So, actually think through the moves you will make, where you will be heading in each figure and, sometimes, whose place you will be taking next.

When it is your turn to dance, get onto the set quickly and without fuss. Do not walk across in between other dancers who are already in place but walk round the outside to your place. Do not chat or mess about with your stick(s) but stand quietly with sticks on shoulders whilst the Squire does the announcement of the dance. Do not heckle him or speak to the audience. Pay attention to him and pretend it is the first time you have heard the jokes!

Remember, we are there to dance. We cannot dance without music, but 20 people in the band and four dancing is not a dance performance - 20 people dancing and four musicians is much better - dancing has to have priority. As a rule, get ready to *dance* primarily and only join the band if the leader of the dance tells you to. Don't ask to. Remember, do NOT leave your kit on top of other people's instruments etc!

However, if you are told you are *not* dancing then you should join the band every time. Don't stand amongst the audience, stand in their view, or talk to people you know. If you play an instrument, play that. If you don't, then join in with the percussion (just bang a stick on the ground if all else fails) but take note of the point in the musician section where it says GO BEHIND rather than having an extended line!

For Musicians: Yes! Non-musicians need to read this as well!

A good tight band is essential to good dancing. When the band 'grew' a few years ago, previous officers outlined how this should be made up. This has not changed. I.e. squeeze boxes (and other loud 'melody instruments') in the middle with the big drum next to them. All other percussion on the same side as the drum, everything else (wind & strings) on the other side. It does not matter if this ends up lop-sided. It's the only way that works. A common problem is that the line of musicians gets

too long. At its maximum it should not exceed more than eight (or an absolute maximum of 10?). This is because of the sound delays and reaction times to the main beat, which can go off if the line gets longer. A band two, or even three, deep gives a fuller sound. If you are late joining the band, just GO BEHIND. It's not good enough just to fit in where you feel like it, or tag on the end. In the worst case, the dancers simply cannot step or stick in time. Sorting this order out is not anybody's particular job; it's something everyone should know and just do - ok?

Another important reason for not having an extended line is that the audience is frequently all around us and we do not want to spoil their view of the dancing.

Musicians should not have impromptu practices in front of the audience between dances - they certainly should not play over the Squire's introductions. They should establish in advance who is going to start to play each tune. Only in a few cases do all musician start playing at the same time (e.g. 'Bizarre' - or 'Much Wenlock' after the song). Usually one musician starts and then the rest join in at a specific point - generally when the dancing starts (e.g. 'Pig In The Middle' or 'Toybox'). There are however a few cases where the musicians may join in half way through the introduction (e.g. 'White Ladies Aston'). In NO cases should the musicians join in piecemeal when they feel like it!

However, at the end of the day, it doesn't matter how the band is made up or who starts playing first. All the dancers require is a good solid even beat on the drum (not a staccato one!). This must be at the right tempo for each dance. (Getting the tempo right is crucial and why we encourage all musicians to do at least one dance!) So, once the first musician has set the tempo for the drum, the dancers and other musicians follow. ie everyone then follows the drum - ok?

The Three Types of Performance:

Different types of performances have different audiences and therefore different expectations for each of us. As a new performer, you can expect different things.

Type One: The Pub Gig:

This is when we, as a side, will visit one or two pubs in an evening - often accompanied by, or as guests of, other morris sides. These are informal events and, as such, are a great opportunity for new members to learn how to perform. This is not the same as learning to dance because for the first time you will have an audience of people who know little about what we do. Sometimes, but not always, we get some free beer or food - so that is another incentive to take part! These are also good events at which to introduce family and friends to what we do so feel free to invite them along.