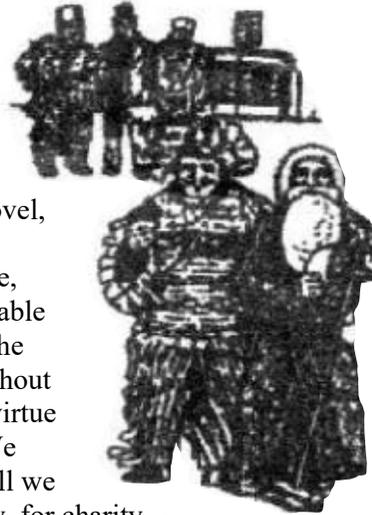




Away back in the last decades of the nineteenth century it was customary, in the North Dorset village of Sixpenny Handley, for the Mumpers to go round each Christmas to the principal houses, farms and inns to perform the medieval play of St George. The play is said to date from the 12th century and was not written but handed down verbally from generation to generation.

While Stourvale Mumpers perform the particular play from Sixpenny Handley, it is typical of the midwinter, death and resurrection types of play common in English villages up to about a hundred years ago. The erudite would have us believe that these plays are a survival of the old pagan notions of "sympathetic magic": the sun is supposed to observe our dead heroes come back to life and be inspired to follow suit and bring on the spring.

Like many of the traditional players, we wear suits of tatters and black our faces. These outfits were simply a crude disguise used to conceal the identities of the players while they begged for food, drink or money. (In Thomas Hardy's novel, "The Return of the Native", the heroine, Eustacia Vye, was able to take the part of the Turkish Knight without being detected by virtue of this disguise.) We still beg, but now all we want is your money, for charity -- 'tho the occasional mince pie does not go amiss.



Each season we give the money away, often to small organisations, sometimes to specific individuals, always with the emphasis on "local" and "children". We like to feel that our donations make a real difference, and we believe that those people we've entertained with our play and who've chucked their handfuls of change into our grubby hats would find their money well spent.

We give away ALL of the money we collect in the pubs during our winter season.

We detail some of our more recent donations overleaf.

December 2017

- Sunday 17th December
 - 1.00pm The Red Lion, Sturminster Marshall. BH21 4BU
 - 1.30pm The Woodpecker, Spetisbury. DT11 9DJ
 - 2.00pm Holme Bush, Corfe Mullen. BH21 3RZ
- Tuesday 19th December
 - 8.30pm Royal Oak, North Gorley. SP6 2PB
 - 9.00pm Fighting Cocks, Godshill. SP6 2LL
 - 9.30pm Horse & Groom, Woodgreen. SP6 2AS
 - 10.00pm Bat & Ball, Breamore. SP6 2EA
- Wednesday 20th December
 - 8.30pm Coventry Arms, Corfe Mullen. BH21 3RH
 - 9.00pm TBA
 - 9.30pm Charlton Inn, Charlton Marshall. DT11 9NH
 - 10.00pm Stour Inn, Blandford St Mary. DT11 9LH
- Thursday 21st December
 - 8.00pm Alpine Bar, Wimborne Square. BH21 1LT
(thanks to the Taphouse and Bierfass Oompah! Band for allowing us to interrupt their performance)
 - 8.30pm The Vine Inn, Pamphill. BH21 4EE
 - 9.00pm The White Hart, Wimborne. BH21 1JL
 - 10.00pm Wimborne Folk Club at The Horns, Colehill. BH21 7AA
- Friday 22nd December
 - 8.00pm Horton Inn, Horton. BH21 5AD
 - 8.30pm Drusilla's Inn, Horton. BH21 7JH
 - 9.30pm Barley Mow, Colehill. BH21 7AH
 - 10.00pm Cross Keys, Mannington. BH21 7JZ
- Saturday 23rd December
 - Midday onwards – Sixpenny Handley Brewery. BH21 5QP
 - 8.30pm Forest Inn, Ferndown. BH22 9PH
 - 9.00pm Kings Arms, Longham. BH22 9AA
 - 9.30pm The Dudsbury, West Parley. BH22 8SS
 - 10.00pm Owl's Nest, West Parley. BH22 8SS

Times are approximate at best – the later performances may be a little delayed by extra performances, mince pies, beers and such mundane things as road conditions.

The Mummer is not a creature to be constrained by mere time and space.

WHAT DID WE DO WITH THE MONEY ?

Most recently we contributed £1200 to a fund raising campaign for a young boy who was badly restricted by cerebral palsy and needed an operation, not available under the NHS, and that would greatly improve his chances of walking unaided. The campaign led to a successful operation being performed in the USA.

In recent years we've helped other children with cerebral palsy such as paying for a ladder and mirror to enable a four year old to clamber into his wheel chair by himself, and we bought a very special car travelling seat for another child. A three year old with severe epilepsy had to sleep in his parent's room - we bought a special sensor and alarm so that he could sleep in his own room. We helped fit out a children's area in the Lewis Manning Hospice in Poole. We provided support for Poole Kidz in Care; we bought an Ipad, a computer, a pin spot and colour wheel for three severely disabled children. We contributed to the Amelia-Grace Rainbow fund.

In earlier years Montacute Special School got some Weighted Blankets. "Coping with Chaos" got a ball pool with balls. Josh, severely autistic, got a special trailer trike that could be hooked on behind his mum's bicycle. We supported Mosaic in providing help for bereaved children. Two children, one with cerebral palsy, the other severely autistic, were helped with special communications kit. We helped to buy a very special stand for a severely disabled small boy to help him stand and sit; we bought a special computer for a quadriplegic youngster, a "Bubble Tube" for an autistic six-year old, an "Alpha Smart" machine for another autistic lad.

We paid for a trip to Holland for "special needs" kids. We bought a Karaoke machine for some 'Young Carers', a 'water play station' and a special car seat for two severely disabled youngsters. A handrail to help a little lad with cerebral palsy get to his garden, a bike for a little girl with severe disabilities and transport help for another severely disabled little girl. We've supported the Welfare Charity for children who are themselves disabled or who care for relatives, also the Avon Valley Opportunity Group for autistic and special needs children.

We spend the money for the benefit of local children, particularly where our few hundreds of pounds can make a big difference. We've given money both to individuals and to groups and organisations.



*For further information contact Alf Woodall
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or look us up at:

www.brmm.org.uk/svm



***"We hope you all have a Merry
Christmas and we wish you all a
Happy New Year".***

Little Johnny Jack



The Stourvale Mummers Christmas 2017 Programme

The team was formed in 1979 by members and friends of the Bourne River Morris Men.

We wanted to preserve the ancient tradition of the winter mumming play and, as a pleasant by-product, to collect money for the benefit of local children.

Over the years we have collected well over £30,000 -- the back page of this program gives some detail as to what we've done with the money.

We are very grateful to the many landlords and landladies who have welcomed us into their pubs and hotels; also to their customers, our conscripted audience, for their generosity with both applause and contributions to our hats.