

Slide No.	Description	
1	Title page	Brummagem Mummers
2	Group shot	How we started
3	Birmingham	Mention about being from Birmingham and the photos show shots of places we have performed.
4	Glorishears	Brummagem Mummers started out in 2001. Our members come from Glorishears of Brummagem Morris Dancers, a women's Cotswold Morris side based in and around Birmingham. (Brummagem is an old local name for Birmingham). There have also been a few guest appearances from friends and family members along the way.
5	Brummie Gems	Mention Brummie Gems Molly Dancers
6	Group shot	<p>Our original play was intended as a 'one off', as an entertainment for the interval of our annual ceilidh, but members enjoyed it so much we just carried on, and now we are heading for our 20th anniversary!</p> <p>Today I am going to look at how our plays and characters evolved, rather than looking at Mumming in a wider context. When we started out we were one of the first groups with all female performers. Some issues are different for women, for example, men dressing as women can initially be funnier than women dressing as men, so I shall concentrate on the development of our characters.</p> <p>Because our original aim was to entertain ourselves and our ceilidh guests, my priority was to involve all members of Glorishears who wanted to take part, so I added characters where necessary. Some members requested non-speaking parts, so these were also added. Rather than looking for a play and then seeing who fitted the parts, I looked at who wanted to take part and then looked for a play to fit them! I read an awful lot of Mummers Plays!</p> <p>When I introduce our play, I refer to it as 'an entertainment in the mumming tradition', then give a brief explanation of the tradition. I have been familiar with Mumming and Pace-Egging plays for as long as I can remember, but as we usually perform for a general audience rather than at folk events, some members of the audience can be a little bemused, so an explanation helps. (Yes, the acting is meant to be over the top and not very good etc.!)</p>
7	St George play characters	Our first play was a version of the St. George combat play, and because I needed to include everyone who wanted to take part, I needed additional characters. This meant that we had more players than most other plays – for our first performance we had fourteen! Some characters were non-speaking, and our

8	List of characters	<p>musician also played the Fine Lady, or it would have been a very long play! These were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Musician Roomer Father Christmas (Presenter) Mother Christmas St. George Our Villain (more about him later) The Lovely Princess The Dragon The Devil Devil Doubt The Doctor Zanni (doctor's assistant) A Ghost Fuss Pot The Fine Lady
9	Walk on video (click on play button)	<p>Mention video of us walking on and play video.</p> <p>All players were encouraged to interpret their character in their own way, and this has continued over the years - we have had some very interesting interpretations, with inspiration coming from popular culture, in true mumming tradition!</p>
10	St. George, Lord Litter et al	<p>Mention the characters shown in slide 10, then go on to slide 11.</p>
11	Lord Litter	<p>In that first play we all gave a great deal of thought to choosing a suitable villain. Many traditional villains might be considered inappropriate for a modern audience, and we were all anxious not to cause offence. We also wanted to avoid political figures. I'm not sure where the idea came from, but I created the character of 'Lord Litter', a grimy knight who lurks in the gutter and ends up in the bin! (I felt sure that no one would be a supporter of litter!)</p>
12	Roomer	<p>Some traditionally male characters were played as female, some kept as male roles, and this has continued as the plays have evolved. The gender of the character is left up to the player, and some roles have changed over the years. Some characters, e.g., the Dragon, have remained gender neutral.</p>
13	Roomer and Nora Batty	<p>Roomer has always been played as female, and one member played Roomer as Nora Batty from Last of the Summer Wine, the world's longest running sitcom. (Nora was well known for her hair curlers and permanently wrinkled stockings!)</p>
14	Meph 1 (Chris)	<p>The Devil was also always female, and was played by three different members over the years - all very different! (Our devil was Mephistopheles rather than Beelzebub).</p> <p>Our first devil was a rather seductive character in red stilettos, fishnet tights and short skirt (well it was 20 years ago!).</p>

15	Meph 2 (Sue)	Our second devil was a punk, in Doc Marten's with suitable punk attire and attitude! (I still remember the 'dirty' hanky – stuck together with paste. Our punk devil blew her nose in it, then used it as a Morris Dancing Hankie!)
16	Meph 3 (Niamh)	Our third devil was played as Mrs. Doyle from the comedy Father Ted – tempting the audience with very large cups of tea! (go on, go on, go on!). Mrs. Doyle was housekeeper to the priests who lived in the parochial house on the fictitious Craggy Island, and she constantly offered them tea, whether they wanted it or not!
17	Meph 3 and Mrs Doyle	
18	Lovely Princess	First slide is Debbie as princess, second slide is Tony as princess
19	Lovely Princess (Tony)	Several people have played the Lovely Princess – including the husband of one of our members who stood in at the last minute!
20	Dr Scrubs	There have also been several versions of the Doctor (who is also a Vet in our current play). The Doctor has appeared wearing hospital scrubs (with wellingtons), a suit and bowler hat, and also as a witch. This year we performed a lockdown play on Zoom and we actually had a real doctor – the husband of one of our members! <i>Mention woman dressed as man, dressed as woman.</i>
21	Dr Bowler hat	
22	Dr Witch	
23	Dr Brooks	
24	Dr Woman dressed as man etc	
25	Ghost sheet	Our ghost started out completely covered in a sheet, with dragging chains and other accoutrements, but a change of player gave us a very different 'Spectre of the Night' in a white wedding dress in the style of Miss Havisham! (With rather scary makeup!).
26	Ghost bride	
27	Lilo Lil	Some random characters also appeared – one of the first was 'Lilo Lil, based on the character from the 1980s sitcom 'Bread'. Lil was 'An absolute tart' (a quote from the series, not from me!). Our Lil carried a Lilo for our hero and villain to fall on! (Very handy in the winter!). The member who played Lil was very confident, and happy to engage in cheeky banter with the audience!
28	Lilo Lil from Bread	
29	Mild Bill	We also had Mild Bill Hitchcock, who had wandered into the wrong play, and an Elf and Safety Officer, who asked for a risk assessment for our hero's 'sharp sword'. She also advised the Fine Lady on Government guidelines with regard to safe alcohol consumption, but this advice was not well received!
30	Elf and Safety	
		We also had a Mysterious Warrior who came to the assistance of our hero. This part was written specially for a member who had considerable martial arts skills.
		Our current play
31	Robin Hood Group shot	We currently perform a version of the Robin Hood play. We still include all members of Glorishears who want to take part, so again there are random characters, including a herd of deer! They are:
32	Character list Robin Hood	Musician Roomer Father Christmas (presenter)

		<p>Robin Hood (our hero)</p> <p>Maid Marian (likes a drop of gin)</p> <p>Alfred, a tanner (our villain – out to steal the king’s deer)</p> <p>Little John – Robin’s right hand man</p> <p>The Doctor/Vet</p> <p>Doctor’s Assistant</p> <p>Dobbin (an elderly horse)</p> <p>Dobbins’s Keeper</p> <p>Jolly Jack Tar (a sailor who served with Lord Nelson)</p> <p>A random Bake-Off contestant</p> <p>Several Deer</p>
33	Robin Hood, Little John, Arthur Tanner	<i>Two slides showing heroes and villain of the Robin Hood play</i>
34	Jolly Jack Tar	I have always liked the character of Jolly Jack Tar – a sailor who served with Lord Nelson. Jolly Jack is a popular mumming character in the north of England. I grew up in Lancaster, so was used to random nautical characters turning up in plays that had nothing to do with the sea, so why shouldn’t Jolly Jack be in Sherwood Forest?
35	Dobbin	Another character in our current play is Dobbin the horse – Dobbin has various ailments, but is miraculously cured by the Doctor who is also a Vet. Dobbin is very much in the style of a pantomime horse (the costume made by one of our members!). Dobbin is a very popular character with our audiences – particularly with children, who like to stroke him! A couple of years ago we were in a procession and progress was held up because people were making such a fuss of Dobbin! (He regularly upstages the rest of us!).
36	Dobbin and Children	
37	Fine Lady (St. George)	Our musician (and Fine Lady) has been part of the play from the very first performance. We come in and leave to music and there are bursts of music in various parts of the play. In our current play the Fine Lady has morphed into a rather tipsy Maid Marian!
38	Maid Marian	A new character this year (in our lockdown Zoom version) is a random Bake-Off contestant – looking for Paul Hollywood! Paul also makes random appearances (in the form of a cut out) but they never meet!
39	St. George and Lord Litter	I haven’t said very much about our heroes and villains, but there wouldn’t be a play without them! Our villains have been played by the same member since the very beginning, and on one occasion she looked so villainous she wasn’t recognised by her own daughter! Our heroes and villains are played in the traditional way, and all ends well! (Will say more about our heroes and villains if time permits).
40	Robin Hood and Arthur Tanner	
41	Hornpipe Video (click on play button)	. Our play always ends with a short dance by a few of our players – currently it is a Hornpipe, led by Jolly Jack. At the end of the dance scores are held up, as per Strictly Come Dancing (with suitable comments! The Strictly reference was added as a topical item around twelve years ago – we didn’t expect it to become permanent! (Dancing with the Stars in U.S.). <i>Play the hornpipe video</i>

42	Zoom Mummers	<i>Mention our zoom mummers whilst showing slides 42 and 43.</i>
43	Zoom Mummers - cast	
44	Walk off video (click on play button)	
45	Happy New Year photo	<p>At Christmas time we end our play in the traditional manner by singing God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen and We Wish you a Merry Christmas, and at Easter time we open and close with a traditional Pace-Egging song. <i>The video shows us singing Landlord!</i></p> <p><i>Play the walking off video then show happy new year slide whilst reading the closing statement.</i></p> <p>Writing this piece has made me realise just how much fun and enjoyment we have had developing and performing our plays over the past nineteen years, and I'm pleased to say that our audiences have shared that enjoyment.</p> <p>Ann Simpson</p> <p>December 2020</p>