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Plough Monday at Balsham is a record breaker

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Continuing their ancient tradition, the Balsham Ploughmen, accompanied by the Cambridge Morris Men, hauled the 200-year-old plough around the streets and performed their traditional dances along the way as they collected cash.

The money raised – £3,219.50 in total – will be split between the Balsham 2nd Brownies, Buttercups Community Pre-School and a village defibrillator.

Jules Scotland, part of the organising committee, said: "The Balsham Ploughmen would like to send their heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported Plough Monday this year.

"Despite the rain at the start of the evening, the stops were very well attended. We would like to thank Sam and Roger Plumb, Jo and Stan Stinton, Dave and Sue Arnold, Cazzy and Martin Walsh and Alex and Jolie Wright for their wonderful hospitality."

There are several theories as to the origin of Plough Monday, one being that following invasion in the ninth century it was introduced by the Danes as a form of tax.

However another theory, and one that bears comparison with the modern celebration, is that the custom was held to signify the return to work of the ploughmen after the Christmas break, thus beginning a new agricultural year.

On the preceding Sunday the plough would be taken to church and blessed, in the hope that the coming year would be fertile and prosperous.

Any money collected on the following night would be put to the cost of the plough light, a candle or rush light placed at the alter thus ensuring a blessing for all agricultural workers and their crops.

If you would like to receive more information about the Ploughmen or wish them to call at your house in 2018, contact balshamploughmen@aol.com