

**Roy Dommett's Morris Notes**

**Volume 9:  
Articles About the  
Morris**

Compiled by Roy Dommett



**Roy Dommett's Morris Notes**

**Volume 9:  
Articles About the  
Morris**

Compiled by Roy Dommett



The material in this volume was left by Roy Dommett for redistribution at the Advanced Morris Weekend, Sept. 5-7, 1997 held in Campbell, California. The weekend was sponsored by the Bay Area Country Dance Society with help from the Gadd/Merrill Fund of the Country Dance and Song Society. This is a compilation of material printed and published by "Hello Folk."

"Hello Folk" publishes research and compilations of folk dance material from  
10, Attlee gardens, Church Crookham  
Fleet, Hampshire, GU13 0PH

All material has copyright as indicated and further reproduction requires permission from the holder

For further information contact Randall Cayford c/o Bay Area Country Dance Society, P.O. Box 22165, San Francisco, CA 94122



# Roy Dommett's Morris Notes

## Volume 9

### Articles About the Morris

What you didn't know about the morris	1
Beginners & Morris Basics Workshop	17
The Cotswold Morris Workshop	33
Do it yourself by Douglas Kennedy	41
On playing for the Cotswold morris	49
Tweaking Tradition: Cotswold morris workshop	67
Bacca Pipes Jigs Workshop by Simon Pipe	69
Broom Dance Workshops	73
Sport Injuries	83
The Sources of Our Dances	89
A Deeper Look at Morris Topics	127
On the Early History of the Morris	135
Influences on the Morris	147
New Directions	161
The Traditions Stylized	163
Adderbury Sing and Stick	167
Delivered Longborough talk	185
Longborough Morris - Context of a Recovery	189
Characters and the Cotswold Morris	215
Roots of Clowning	221
On Clowning and the Morris	227
Black Face Minstrels	243
The Morris Dance in Wales	247
The Singing Game	253
Stick Games	257
Ministry of Silly Walks	263
The Princesses Royal	265
The sponsored Whitsun Ale of the Late 20th Century	269
Robert Dover, Dr William Brookes and All the Olympic Games	275
Playford and the Country Dance	299
Custom in Conflict	327
Whitsun in Oxfordshire in the 19th Century	341
Morris Dancing in the South Midlands	381
Continuing Researches into the South Midland	399

# WHAT YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE MORRIS

## What is Morris?

The Morris is an event. It involves dressing up together with a performance of dance in public, possibly with simple accoutrements such as bells, handkerchiefs and various length sticks. The term has been used to cover a very wide range of styles, but recognisably having a common spirit. It is *traditional* in that the form owes little to 20th century social or art dance. It is a means of personal expression through organised, practised group movements which make limited, but not insignificant, technical demands on the participants. The historical morris may have been spread initially by an involvement in civic pageantry and then other local festivities, but, because it has an inherent flexibility of use, it later developed a life of its own, dependent only on private patronage and largesse from the public. The history of the morris is a mirror to the changes in society, being peripheral and dependent, reflecting the continual natural adaption to new circumstances. The modern claim of continuity is attractive, although by necessity any link is tenuous, and there is little to connect any aspect of it with the morris of only 150 years ago. Its basic simplicity allowed it to absorb and transmute elements of other *customs*. The content and the appearance is not prescribed and is now certainly a *folk art*.

Despite a century of academic searching, there is still no evidence to support a postulated direct link to any ancient pagan or fertility rite. Some people would claim that there *must* have been something before the morris under another name. What ever it might have been, if it ever existed, its function in society was absorbed by the morris, not the other way round.

This booklet is primarily concerned with the *Cotswold* form of the morris, but it is not the geologist's definition of the area as this 19th century morris only extended through Oxfordshire north of Oxford, and spilled over into the edges of the neighbouring counties of Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire. The southern area, once associated with the forest, particularly Wychwood enclosed and cleared in the middle of the 19th century, contrasted with the emptier stonelands further north, and the styles of the morris appear to have varied as well. The dance form has adapted since World War One to social conditions throughout the British Isles and spread abroad to English speaking communities as well as to Denmark and Holland. Today the creative part of the morris has resurfaced and most teams have unique repertoires and/or interpretations of the common stock.

The performing arts are ephemeral, needing to be constantly recreated to exist. The morris is about its performance not history.

This paper is based on a lifetime's interest and a close following of relevant research.

## The Beginning

The hard beaten ancient paths around prehistoric monuments and the discovery at Stone Carr in Yorkshire of deer horns modified so as to be worn are suggestive that dance or some similar organised activity has been with us for a long time. It would appear that its universality is fundamental to human societies. The emotional and subjective side has much in common with other activities that involve practiced movement skills as diverse as the martial arts and the making of music. The difference between the morris and *folk-life* survivals, such as superstitions and songs, is that the latter depended only on one-to-one transmission, whereas the morris requires a consensus group to perform and another to watch, and its very existence is dependent on acceptance by the local community.

Some things never change. The continued throwing of money into wells or fountains is nearly as old as coinage itself. We forget how precious and poorly understood were sources of unpolluted water before the public provision of piped supplies from the end of the 19th century. It has been too easy to see the concern as superstition or even to be religious. Ideas live on as they are adapted to new circumstances, as an extreme example, obligations were once placed on settlements to provide hides in medieval forests to allow the watching of does fawning. These could have inspired the chimney sweeps later for their similarly constructed perambulating *Jack-in-the-Greens*. The problem in tracing back the contributing threads to the morris is in recognising what has been lost and replaced over time. A difficulty exists when people relate the later performance to the older and probably irrelevant motivations.

The word *morris* was first used in the 12th century for community celebrations following the stages of reconquest of central and southern Spain from the Arabs, and where the morris or *morisco* still occurs annually between *Christians* and *Moors*. But these little resemble our morris. However they are now just for fun, unlike the sectarian rituals in Northern Ireland, as unhappily all the Moors were ejected or forcibly converted by the reign of our Henry VIII, during the lifetime of Catherine of Aragon. The earliest surviving mention in England is from the end of the 15th century, occurring before the social changes initiated by Henry VIII, which grew out of the dissolution of the monasteries from 1536. The dancers were sometimes mentioned attached to the Robin Hood Games. These in turn had followed the themed King and then the May Game entertainments, which were simple and often participatory sports similar in spirit to modern fetes, but perhaps less sophisticated and uninhibited with more horseplay and vulgarity. Think of the older Robin Hood stories and the number of times someone falls into water!

England was invaded by the Saxons and then the Vikings and Normans but nothing like the morris survived in their home territories to suggest that they might have brought the morris with them. There is no evidence that such existed in Celtic communities except where introduced later as part of their Anglicisation.

The early form of morris is thought to have come to England via the various involvements with the continent, perhaps from what is now Flanders, Belgium and Holland, once the Spanish Netherlands, where similar sounding words had been used for their equivalents. In those days such places were closer by sailing ship than most of England was to London by horse. England in the late Middle Ages was to be thought of as only an off-shore island and a source of basic

commodities, rather like modern ex-colonies. We gained a considerable range of new technologies, many crops, and our modern business methods from Flanders and Holland during their Golden Age, which contributed to our Agricultural Revolution. That part of Flanders now in France has only been French for a limited time. During the last war the Germans saw them as more German than French and ruled them with Belgium. Incidentally a Dutch history of the early morris was written during WW2, but was not allowed to be published by the Nazis because of the mentions of the English!

Another example of the debt to the Netherlands is probably the earliest form of cricket, first mentioned at Guildford in 1598, believed brought by immigrants, along with words like *krikets* and *stomp*, which also developed into a singularly English pastime.

### The Wide Distribution

Across Europe there are males who dance to show off, for socially acceptable boy-meets-girl encounters, for good luck visiting or the feel-good factor. Similarities with aspects of the English morris abound. Recent contacts with the folk performances in Rumania show that most of our folk expressions have an analogue there, without there having been a positive historical link, because both cultures have exploited almost all the things that simple people can easily do. In America the Spanish stopped many unacceptable native ceremonies but soon found it expedient to replace them, therefore they taught them the Spanish morris and the *matashin*, or stick dances, a separate style in the 16th century and then not part of the morris. These dance forms can still be seen in Arizona and Mexico performed by people of both Spanish and native descent. Troupes of men in northern Nigeria, on the other side of the Sahara from the Moors, still process in late medieval armour organised and looking like the morris. The link may have been two way as there are similarities between the appearance of some west of England *hobby-horse* customs and their supporters and West African performers. Not all such possible relationships are understood as yet.

We recognise many recent male dances in Spain, Portugal and Southern France as belonging in the morris family. The Basques have some that appear even more like ours. On the losing side in the Spanish Civil War, they then shared their dances between the men and women to help preserve their ethnic culture as they were officially scattered around. This very ancient race, with a language that predates the Indo-European group, consider that they gained their dances from passing peoples. The English kings held Aquitaine, what is now France south of the Loire, from the 12th to the mid 15th centuries, on the pilgrims' route to Santiago de Compostela. English armies or regiments commonly fought as mercenaries in the Reconquest and the other wars in Europe, and some settled in the cleared interior of Spain. But the best connections were in the fishing fleets off Newfoundland and the mountain of very rich iron ore mostly exported to Britain. Commercial and social contacts were not surprising. The best long weapons for the Tudor English infantry were imported as *Morris Pikes* meaning to a Moorish design. However persuasive past suggestions that the morris was first brought by notables, such as Eleanor of Aquitaine, John of Gaunt or even Catherine of Aragon, are not supported by any evidence and the dates would be wrong. But Henry VII was exiled in France before gaining the crown and could have been exposed to a form of the morris there, at least it was performed later at his court in England.



There is no mention anywhere of any ritual significance in the morris at this early or any later period, nor that it was in anyway associated with a survival of an older culture. The then Christianisation of the country is hard to grasp now after centuries of *dissent* and *reformation*. Before the Black Death about one in a hundred of the population was in regular, monastic or minor orders, and the church was by far the largest landowner. Supposed survivals were not. The modern view is that what is now called the *old religion*, wicca or witchcraft, like the masons' stories of the origins of the craft, has mythical roots created from the 17th century onwards, even though they both have a complex set of rituals, performed with great seriousness and guarded with secrecy. That something is not as ancient as is claimed does not invalidate its current form and achievements. Far from being a folk expression the morris was at first also in the repertoires of professional or quasi-professional troupes. The literary evidence indicates that it was first recorded in England in towns where the court would often be, then it spread as a popular entertainment across the country. Something in attitudes changed because it began to meet official hostility and had eventually to depend on private patronage. In any age the cost of newly outfitting a dancer was high and beyond normal pockets when everything was hand made, often representing at least a man's month's income.

During the 19th century the morris was thought of as contemporary with Shakespeare, and only by the turn of it was the idea of older roots hypothesised. A limited amount of *morris* appeared in the theatre. Until 1840 the morris was regarded as a continuing popular activity, but after it was one that was only *remembered*.

### The Form

Early English references are for three formations of the dances, solo, a ring with a central person, and two-by-two. Solo morris dancers were last seen in Surrey, at Puttenham, and in Sussex, near Horsham, but there is no longer any indication of their style and the dances. Dancing in a ring survived in children's games, as did so many other former adult play activities. The early form had an individual, usually a woman, standing in the centre and the rest dancing in an uncoordinated manner around her in a circle. The Basques in their *sauts* simultaneously perform in a ring complex steps to the demands of their leader. But the form of a circle is so simple and obvious that its common occurrence could arise from independent invention rather than any long term survival.

The *two-by-two* form is a processional, as at Helston and in the West of England Furry dances, and as once at Shaftesbury and in Parkhurst Forest on the Isle of Wight. It is a natural for any custom involving travelling or visiting, particularly when it is for mixed couples. As a form it was so familiar that early Quakers were accused of going out like Morris dancers because they went in preaching teams of two! This simple format survived in to 20th century ballroom and sequence social dancing. There is suggestive evidence that processional forms grew out of the medieval Guild activities, with their dressing up in a common manner and going to church or chantry in ever grander ways with music and spectacle. The devotional orientation switched to secular forms of expression following the Reformation. The procession with symbolic displays on wagons, today suggestively called *floats*, is probably as old as the vehicles. In the early Middle Ages the culmination would be a replica ship, the largest and most impressive

thing known to the people of the time, and manned, as today, with men and women dressed fantastically, to be known as *a ship of fools*. The modern style Carnival procession probably dates from the middle of the 19th century, one of the earliest in the south being at Shaftesbury in Dorset, with its tradition of jokey posters in the style of contemporary theatre bills, giving comic names to all the entries. Carnival still pulls a community together and attendance is a social statement of local allegiance. The public visibility and good feeling generated by processions was and still is exploited by club and church walks, and even in the revivals of *beating-the-bounds*.

From the number of references, the early morris was at a peak by the beginning of the 17th century and was dying away by the Civil War and the following Interregnum. The Puritans did not oppose dance or music, or even maypoles, but did object to its performance intruding into Sundays and to it occurring in the church. The division of the country into supporters of the King and of Parliament appeared to be as much determined by the people who wanted either a serious or a festive approach to life, particularly outside of work and especially on the Sunday so called day of rest. The Puritan legacy of Sunday is only now being eroded under modern circumstances.

The Restoration appears to have deliberately encouraged a *revival* of older remembered celebrations, including seasonal bonfires and the morris in central England, where the new dioceses formed by Henry VIII appeared not to have prosecuted the morris to extinction, as happened elsewhere.

*Set* dances involving a finite number of dancers, from four to eight, appeared in 17th century social life as *Country Dances*. They were probably adopted by the morris some when after the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, because there are many obvious similarities. The dances of the country people were likely to have been the reels and stepping, as explained by Thomas Hardy. The name *Country* was not a reflection of a folk origin but of its lively contrast with the formal Court dances. Even today we talk of Town and Country!

Social dance is for participation not watching. But there have always been some more elaborate display dances for showing off skills which required both training and practice. As the older dances fell out of fashion they would be remembered only by the elderly and the country folk and were then *collected*. Many have been recovered and become the *stock-in-trade* of modern local folk groups all over Europe. In England the Old Time Dance community rather than the English Folk Dance Society preserved many Victorian and Edwardian set and couple dances, such as the Quadrilles, Lancers (1850), Valeta (1900), Military Two Step (1904), Boston Two Step (1908), St Bernard's Waltz (1913) and Gay Gordons (1915), known for years as *party* dances. They have moved off into modern *sequence* dances, whereas the folk dance world built on the remembered *longways* dances of Old and New England. Other party dances which have reached a folk status were the Palais Glide (1928), Lambeth Walk (1937) and Knees Up Mother Brown (1938).

Although stick dances are now common, they were not once, appearing to have diffused down from the Midlands, where it may well have been known as the *Bedlam Morris*. Their modern popularity is due to the undoubted impressiveness linked with only limited demands on the dancers' technique. There has been no connection with sword or other military drills, despite the wide experience of them by country folk, or with the one time English Martial Art of cudgels.

## A Country Sport and its Decline

The morris is dependent on the social structure of the communities served. In the middle ages attention was more focused on the church and the vast number of clerical orders with only a small aristocracy. The secularisation led to a growth of minor gentry, and the funding released led to the *great rebuilding* of houses and farms. The development of a genuine middle class provided a wider base for patronage but also led to the greater separation of classes and more exploitation. Land owners moved into other areas for income and became less concerned over the impact of land exploitation and the consequent depressed conditions for workers. The second half of the 19th century had a series of wet years with bad harvests and with the importing of cheap staple foods it led to many emigrating, but they did not take their dances with them.

It has been a common experience since the 16th century that native community-involving customs are seldom maintained by immigrants to the new countries.

The Cotswold Morris flourished until the start of the 19th century, supporting events like fund raising Church and Morris Ales, then Village Friendly Society Club Days and similar occasions, as well as having an annual outing in their own locality at the recognised holidays about May Day, Oak Apple Day or at Whitsun. In England this was a slack time of the agricultural year before the first hay making. There were several widely known annual events which had the morris attending, the Cotswold Olympick Games on Dover's Hill by Chipping Campden and Kirtlington's Lamb Ale are examples which still occur. But the Much Wenlock Olympic Games started by Dr Brookes in copy of Dover's Games never had the morris, because for example the local dance tradition was a mid-winter not a mid-summer activity. The morris was noted as present at some major celebrations, such as the laying of the foundation stone at Blenheim Palace and an heir's 21st birthday at Stowe House. Later the growth of *improving* Victorian alternative activities such as flower and produce shows also provided performance opportunities, although they also drew off potential participants.

It was a period of growth of ideas of independence and self help and the beginning of confrontational politics. It perhaps started with the degradations of the Speenhamland system of Poor Law and included Chartism, the village Friendly Societies, which grew into national organisations, and Trade Unionism, with its eventual spread into the agricultural areas. The Cotswold morris had mostly collapsed by the mid 19th century, although we now know that it faltered on in many places, even up to World War One.

In towns it had become customary for groups from some occupations to parade and dance for gifts or *boxes*. The chimney sweeps brought out the jack-in-the-green and the milkmaids their garlands, often a tall portable structure decorated with any shiny things. These disappeared for the same reasons as Christmas boxes for tradesmen and now tips for waiters, because of the modern connotation of charity rather than being deserved.

In north western Europe, when looking at the full content of a culture, it always appears to be changing. The *loss* of customs and other *traditional* non-essential behaviour is a part of the natural progress of adapting our society to current opportunities. Tradition is a lagging but still a moving window on to any society.

The morris is not immutable but a heritage and not to be treated as if it should be in a museum.

At Lichfield in the 19th century the morris led the perambulation by the winning candidate at parliamentary elections. At Banbury they chaired the disadvantaged fool of the Adderbury morris in a protest against the limitations of such elections. Elsewhere, particularly in the towns in the Thames and Kennett valleys, there were regular *elections of Mock Mayors*, one of which at Abingdon still happens on the Saturday nearest the 19th June, the date of the old horse fair, involving the inhabitants of Ock Street, and organised by the local traditional morris.

The 19th century saw the morris as one of the relics of 18th century life, coarse and leading people into disrepute. Those who recorded such comments now appear to have been biased. Others saw them as nostalgic survivals. The 19th century rediscovered chivalry and the developed *correct* attitudes for gentlemen such as fair play and the value of *improving* behaviour. The *women question* exercised them as to the proper place of women as in the home and not in the workplace. It became less acceptable that young or married women appeared in public displays. It is not surprising that there was little reference to women in the morris in the 19th century, although a third of those mentions of the gender of dancers in Tudor and Stuart times implied that they were mixed. However most women in the 19th and early 20th centuries went into *service* at thirteen, with only half a day off per week, and aimed to be married by twenty one.

In its decline the social background of the dancers fell. At one time farmer's sons were proud to join, but by the end they were mostly farm labourers dancing for the money, and linked by family and workplace rather than dance skill. But the atmosphere had changed and dancers spoke later of giving up because it *got like begging*. The running costs of a dancer were not trivial, new shoes, bells in dutch metal at 6d a time and a dancer might need thirty six or more, so most were dependent on patronage or inheritance.

We have today some knowledge of only how twenty three teams or *traditions* danced out of several score that are known to have existed in the Cotswolds. Each was deliberately distinctive with variations on only a maximum of seven *steps*, which were simple movement sequences, and built around four to six regularly included *figures*, each with a descriptive title. Those that survived longest were actually associated with what were thought of as small towns rather than villages, for example at Abingdon, Bampton, Brackley and Chipping Campden. The old teams would be linked by name to their current leader and where he lived or could be contacted, thus they could appear to drift around their catchment area.

Most would have been irretrievably lost if it had not been for the local responses to Queen Victoria's Jubilees and later national celebrations.

### Rediscovery

The morris was not the first of the dance types now considered traditional to be discovered. The old maypole was a tall decorated post which could be danced around as a symbol of rights and licence, not fertility. The plaited ribbon form, familiar now for a hundred years, was, along with garland and other ribbon dances, part of the stock in trade of entertainment arrangers. It diffused into

schools via teacher training colleges with the invention about 1880 of May Day with May Queens and other Victorian make belief.

On Boxing Day 1899, a team of dancers from Headington Quarry by Oxford, appearing out of season to raise some money for themselves, went up to a cottage and met Cecil Sharp, who was staying with an aunt. He had taught at the Adelaide Music Conservatoire in Australia for a while and on return had had a post tutoring royal children. He was just starting his monumental collecting, publishing and lecturing about English Folk Song and was soon to become a national celebrity. In 1905 he was approached by Mary Neal, who had founded the Esperance Club for young seamstresses in London and who was teaching them Sharp's folk songs, to ask if there were any dances. He had none but put her in touch with William Kimber, the musician he had noted years before, and she went to visit him and invited him to London to pass on his dances directly. The public displays by the Esperance Club from that December soon led to the teaching of these morris dances throughout the country, but mainly to girls. Many an old lady has remembered learning *Beansetting* at school.

Sharp started to assist the Club, but Mary Neal and her colleagues had become involved with the Women's Suffrage Movement. She had campaigned against social injustice, the Boer War, food adulteration and the like. Several of her colleagues were involved in the violent WSPU protests. Through a dispute over standards and accuracy of reproduction, Sharp was led to form the separate English Folk Dance Society, based at first at the Chelsea Polytechnic, which amongst other topics trained Physical Education teachers, and he worked hard to have English dance and song included in school activities. But even Sharp had been a theoretical Socialist of the Fabian sort.

Although a great debt is owed to Cecil Sharp for capturing details of the Cotswold Morris of the mid 19th century, he largely ignored dances that were or had been done elsewhere. Other collectors such as Clive Carey and friends of Mary Neal, George Butterworth and Tiddy, colleagues of Sharp who died in the WWI, and several men since, particularly Professor Kenworthy Schofield and Dr Russell Wortley, also recorded extensively. Documenting the social background and identifying the 19th century Cotswold performers had to wait until Keith Chandler's recent books. A modern assessment of the origins, growth and decline of such activities are given in the books by Prof Hutton of Bristol University.

The morris was practiced between the World Wars by essentially clubs of professional people and by working people as members of EFDS local evening classes. Skills were judged by the award of certificates and medals. It was the Society's aim to give the dances back to the people but it largely failed because the time was not yet ripe, and the participants were too few. In 1924 the idea of morris *tours* was evolved then as well as the modern roles within a club of *Squire* and *Bagman*, rather than the more traditional names of Captain and Secretary. Morris dinners with guests became *Feasts*, and with dancing *Ales*, reworking old concepts into new usages. By the mid 1930's there were enough mens' sides in England to form the first linking organisation called *The Morris Ring*.

The *revival* of morris was exported to the USA, especially to the Appalachians where Sharp had collected so many presumed ancient English songs, but also to Australia and New Zealand. There is a record of a morris visiting America very

early in the history of settlement but it did not stay. The establishing of colonies in New England, Virginia and the backlands of the Appalachians occurred in waves, attracting people of different types and drawing on particular regions of the UK. They went as families and not communities, and, despite the attempts in Virginia, did not recreate the old social structures needed to support seasonal visiting, nor were there the need for public exertions for maintaining *rights*, as was an explanation for some seasonal customs in England.

### Other Forms of the Morris

There was another form of morris in the Forest of Dean in west Gloucestershire. It was a summer dance, perhaps related to the Cotswold one, but it died too soon to be recovered. A unique feature was that it was often accompanied by a swordsman with one or two swords which were manipulated to amaze the crowds.

There are other English dance *traditions* to be seen today, most of which have reappeared in the last twenty five years. What might be older than the Cotswold morris are the *long-sword* dances surviving in Yorkshire with six or eight dancers in a linked ring, but these are seen infrequently in the south. The *sword* is a rigid wrought iron bar, not a true sword, of the sort that a blacksmith had carried for centuries as the raw material which could be transformed into whatever was needed, including fighting swords on demand in periods of crisis. Today ceremonial swords are made from steel bars that are initially one foot by one inch by half an inch. More likely to be seen is the short-sword or *rapper* dance of Durham for only five dancers and one or more comic characters, which is a derivative dating from the availability of flexible spring steel in the 18th century. Sharp found most of the sword dances and his final assistant Maud Karpeles many of the other forms of morris dances after his death in 1924.

Sword dancing was mentioned as long ago as 1389 in Bruges. It has only occurred in northern, western and central Europe. The hey-day of references was the 16th and 17th centuries. In Britain the first was to it in Edinburgh in 1590. No single region, people, social group or occasion ever appeared to have a monopoly. But early comments did not describe the dancing but sometimes mentioned fencing masters and could easily have been about fighting simulations or dancing over swords on the ground. From 16th to 18th century detailed descriptions it is difficult to tell if linking hilt-to-point in an unbroken circle was an element of the dances. Except for one mention in the Basque country (1660) the first clear mentions of linking anywhere across Europe occurred after 1770. The figures commonly given were a long snaking line, bridges, roses or platforms and fencing. Dancing in a line, as thread-the-needle and other simple forms, is very old and has survived in adult and children's games into living memory.

Common now are the *Border Dancers* and *Molly Dancers* who perform in a style derived from the 19th century performances on the English side of the Welsh Border and East Anglia respectively. The collected Molly was essentially country dances of the recent past. The Border used country dance figures interspersed with stick tapping movements. The common feature was that the dances were simple, needing very little practice beforehand, and were usually variable from outing to outing. Once to be found over the twelve days of Christmas, and the related Plough Monday, there were no survivors of old groups to show how it should be done, and most of what appears is a modern invention since the mid

1970's, including the rag jackets, which were once an indication of extreme poverty. Neither form has a history similar to the Cotswold morris and cannot claim any great age, although they do! Some kind of ploughing ceremony existed in 1413 but nothing else is known. The teams have been very creative with their dances and adaptive of ideas from all sources, for example, *The East Acton Stick Dance* is from an early Tony Hancock ITV broadcast! Few of the eleven Border dances actually collected are in use today. The emphasis is on patterns of movement, not on steps and movement skills, and the participants compensate with yells and lively action.

The most obvious feature of them today is the face painting. Once the wearing of masks were common in entertainment. *Blacking Up* was always considered exotic, even Henry VIII and James I's Queen had done so, but there is no mention of it with any of the morris, except the sword dance, until well into the 19th century, by then the minstrel troupes were already popular. Disguise to avoid recognition and a full face colouring that was frightening were hardly the way to ensure monetary gifts and repeat invitations. All over face cover is disturbing, which is why clowns have designs, and has been associated with those up to no good such as poachers or with covert operations such as the recent SAS. The 1731 Act and subsequent renewals made blacking or even covering the face sufficient evidence of intent to poach or cause mischief. The rather different black face of the sweep was considered lucky, although such are no longer to be seen. Colour prejudice in England fell sharply after the abolition of slavery. Black face is also seen as not politically correct because of 20th century racial sensitivities, largely engendered in the UK by the US attitudes imported during the two World Wars. Before then coloured people were recognised as exotic and servants would be dressed grandly. They and those performers in black face would also be called Ethiopians and Nubians. So popular was minstrelsy by the turn of the century it was the most common form of entertainment available in London. After World War One it became a typical amateur entertainment replacing many older traditions until overtaken by the *concert party*. However today it does have the advantage that it reduces gender identification in mixed sides and so does not distract from the enjoyment of the dances. Different cultures have other attitudes. *Black Peter*, not Santa Claus, visits children in Holland and gives presents on 5th December.

Sometimes called morris are the folk plays, which might include an element of singing and dancing. The most common has been the Hero-Combat involving Father Christmas, King George who fights a Turkish Knight or two, a doctor who restores him, and other characters. The plot is minimal, the objective is humour. In the Midlands there was the Wooing Play and in the north a play associated with the sword dance. The evidence is that the Wooing Play existed in its modern form from about 1760. The earliest recorded Hero-Combat was in the 1730's. As the surviving chapbook plays date from 1757 it is suggested that all plays may have had a literary origin. All earlier references to mummers and players do not indicate the nature of the performance. Dr Cawte has shown that "dying out" is one of the main qualifications for any traditional custom! He further showed that customs recorded since 1800 are generally found in different parts of the country from those recorded before.

Then there is the north western morris, mostly in Lancashire and Cheshire but extending into Yorkshire and the Lake District, once a processional dance and at first associated with the annual taking of rushes on carts to church for floor covering. festivities which grew from the middle of the 19th century like Rose

Festivals and Knutsford May Day provide many new performance opportunities. The dance form grew in popularity during the second half of the 19th century. It suffered great losses of dancers during the first World War and was restarted often with teenagers or children. It is now a well developed folk art with its Carnival Morris Troupes, Jazz Bands and Acrobatic groups. Many of the older dances have been collected in recent years and learnt by adult groups. For many years it has been performed wearing clogs, and for the men breeches, although these were never the common people's *dressing-up* in its first heyday. But now nostalgia is the mood and performers feel that it is right. There is no recognised English national folk costume, to compare with pearly kings and queens, because the dress of the ordinary folk did not lag sufficiently behind current fashion.

### Appearance

The *bells* are worn below the knee, around the ankle, on the shoe or the sleeves to accent the rhythm of the movements. The skill of the team can be judged by the degree of simultaneity of the jangle. There should be one or two rings to each *step*, depending on the style pursued. Once bells were more musical, being made of better metals than today's, and could be selected for pitch, so one could tell which dancers were not on the proper foot! Pocket handkerchiefs were invented for Richard II. The *morris hankie* should be larger, more the size of a neckerchief. They are an extension of the hand and arm allowing a greater expression, and probably with less effort! The *sticks* are nowadays of various woods, although willow is considered best. Once they were normally painted and each dancer provided their own. The distinctive crossed sashes or *baldricks* were once a common decoration, often in some local colours. They were easy to wear and provided places to attach ribbons and rosettes without damaging their ordinary clothes. Suggestions that such things were to frighten devils, wake up the earth and promote plant growth are fun but unsupportable.

The dancing should be lively, with good springy stepping, not just barely lifted. It is the *jumps and capers* which are characteristic of the Cotswold Morris, some of which are done in slow time to allow of a greater effort in leaping.

### The Music

The oldest instruments used for the morris were the *pipe and tabor*, being a three hole pipe played with the left hand and a small drum. The pipe or whistle is seldom heard today because its volume does not compete well against modern background noise. Cheap violins did not become available until the middle of the 19th century, and the concertina and other *boxes* based on Wheatstone's free reed, not until the end. Other instruments are often used now, flute, banjo, accordions, even bagpipes, and various rhythm instruments, such as drums, tambourines and bones.

Playing for the morris is different from anything else. The dancers usually know what they are going to do better than the musicians, and do not need to be led. As the individual steps vary in timing and stress, they need the music to reflect what they do, a mnemonic, not to constrain them. The dance can be brisk, but no more than at four bars in five seconds, which is suitable for the inexperienced or non athletic. More skill does allow of slower speeds, but only at a loss of *foot-tapping* excitement in the music, and often a lower rate of movement effort. As dancers get older and less athletic, the slower speeds can look pathetic!



The tunes used are mostly in the old rhythms of hornpipes, polkas and double jigs. Only a few, such as Trunkles, Shepherd's Hey and the Morisco, are very old, but many others of the widely known tunes are 100 to 300 years old. Few modern tunes are usable because the main stress in the morris movements are on the strong beats and so much of 20th century popular music emphasises the off-beat. There is also copyright and the Performing Rights Society!

### The Characters

There are a number of tasks associated with a public show which may be handled by supernumeraries or *characters*. The necessary one is of *leader*, announcing to the audience, choosing the next dance, calling the names of the movements to remind the dancers, thus allowing for flexibility and a control of the *show*. The most obvious will be the *fool*, dressed differently from the dancers, from a circus clown to a tooth fairy or whatever takes their fancy. This person sort of represents the audience in *dealing* with the dancers. But they should know it all and be able to step in anywhere. The fool's role is much older than the morris, but is made difficult because they are heirs of all the types of comedy that have been created over the years in circus, pantomime, radio and TV. The traditional gags were more like now unacceptable horseplay. Likely to be missed are the *collector* who works through the audience, but who can be talked to at length, and the *ragman* who discretely looks after the coats and equipment.

Today another character, the *hobby-horse* or other animal, is likely to be met, although they have had no part in the morris of former years since Tudor times. They were reintroduced to the morris at the end of the 19th century by antiquarians. These are representatives of the class of *beautifuls*, meant to be admired as much as causing fun or mayhem. They are also much older than the morris. The English tradition has at least three forms, the two legged *tourney horse* which has a simulated rider with dummy dangling legs, the *stick animal* with a person underneath a cloth holding the head for manipulation on a short pole, and a similar design with a longer pole that can rest on the ground so that the carrier becomes its back. None was like the child's toy leg across riding *cock-horse*. Sometimes tourney horses had heads and jaws that could be worked by strings. Today you might see one designed to appear as a camel or ostrich, with a flexible neck that can be steered. Beginning to appear again are *giants*, once common on their own, only that at Salisbury survives, but they are still common in Flanders. Of the modern ones there are two in Alton.

There are *Horses* which have never be associated with the morris, at Padstow, Minehead, Combe Martin, the *Hooden Horses* in Kent, the *Mari Llywd* in Glamorgan, the *Old Tup* in Derbyshire, and the *Ooser* with a bull's head in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire.

### Today

The morris is no longer just another working class way of supplementing income. It has to attract attention by the quality of the performance and not assume that audience respect is due because of some inherent antiquarian value.

History shows a continual reuse of old activities. The occasions for performance have changed markedly. In most of the English traditions a team learnt a single

dance which was enough for all performance opportunities such as they were. Now the teams are clubs meeting regularly throughout the year and wanting a wider repertoire for which they draw widely. Few of them dance for the money, but give the surplus to charity after paying for necessary expenses such as the rehearsal hall.

The morris may appear in competitions and art festivals but it is essentially non-competitive. There are a few other activities which provide similar social situations involving peer groups such as bell-ringing and choirs.

In the past the dances were transmitted orally and were therefore rather localised. Invention was a significant part of all the traditions although that was forgotten by academic folklorists. The middle aged leaders, Kimber, Wells and Bennett, were always trying to introduce new material to their teams. Today communications, travel and freedom allow international contact and good dance ideas can spread quickly around the world.

The morris is an art that exists only in performance and has to be continually recreated. Natural spontaneity ensures that it never exactly repeats. As a group activity it should reflect a consensus of those actually dancing rather than some absolute standard.

A major challenge is that the older caring attitudes about the morris are being lost by the practitioners for whom it is no longer a source of pride or an expression of prized individuality. The same problems exist for the traditionalists in martial arts when contrasted with the modern combative element. The growth of *sport* as leisure and a business has emphasised new attitudes, a new motivation for the seeking of excellence but also a trivialisation of the activities, reflecting changing degrees of commitment.

The major problem facing the morris and many charity raising organisations and other such activities is the relative lack of young people and the growth of the number of fortysomethings. Young people are now too busy with too many demands on them, besides the generation gap in attitudes. It is the older person, with lessening family responsibilities, more time and money, and fitness who finds expression through the morris.

At one time everywhere in England was within reach of some annual or regular event which allowed them to relax and enjoy themselves, either as participants or onlookers. Today it can be difficult to find a morris side dancing out, as few of the clubs have regular annual spots where they can be found on some easy to work out date every year. However there are many festivals which bring groups together from all over if there is an interest in just seeing a variety.

The dancers enjoy clinging to myths and love to tell the tale. The spiel is to be enjoyed but not believed! The worst aspect of claiming pagan roots is that modern practicing pagans actually believe them!

Under the right circumstances the morris is magical! The dancers get a lift, the audiences feel good, and the morris is often welcome at weddings, parties and fetes. It needs to be intimate and not lost in remote spaces far from the watchers.

## **Women and the Morris**

There is an estimate that there are about 10,000 people in the British Isles performing the morris, which makes it comparable with many other active hobbies. The limitation is determined by the density of practicing clubs and the overlapping of catchment areas, which has greatly increased with the widespread availability of so many of what were once very local traditional styles with their different performer appeals. Women started dancing morris forms regularly in public from the mid 1970's when suddenly it was realised that it was acceptable, although for a while they only did dances not used by the men, and yet still met considerable hostility, now mostly gone. Many such deeply held views are Victorian and need reevaluation. A consequence was the growth of other morris associations, the *Morris Federation* which was begun to represent women's morris and is now open to all, and *Open Morris* which was reaction to the apparent conflicts between the first two organisations. The cooperation between them all now is close and they do continue to reflect the different needs of clubs.

No one will deny that there are some physical differences between men and women. Sex was a discovery made long ago by single cell animals from which all subsequent evolution became possible. For various reasons there are no surviving indications of traditional dances which were considered the property of or characteristic of women, so the known dances and their modern derivatives are shared. But the differences in height, build, strength and cultural ideas of what are suitable forms of movement ensure a different end product. There have been many indications of what men thought women's dances should be like, mostly ladylike! But women often work together better as a group, and can move around quickly and can seem to fly through the air on capers, if their choice of costume allows it, so that it is not worse but an alternative. In England women usually opt for a skirt whose extra movements can be eye catching. However it is difficult to produce a costume that dances well and can suit a variety of sizes and shapes.

### Warning

Unfortunately morris dancers are no more socially skilled than any other, often appear to be less, and will unwittingly show bad manners by standing in front of their audience, imagining they are invisible because they are in costume, turning up late compared to the poster advice, indulging in *in-jokes*, being more interested in talking than dancing, etc. Large bands will stand in a long line in front of the dancers and the audience being danced to! These are all the habits arising from the way in which they practice, forgetting to do it then as they would intend to do it out. Spectators should remind them of good manners, in return for the courtesy of not moving around or off during individual dances and disturbing those that are watching. Standing in front of people, especially the less mobile elderly, to take photographs, or just to be closer, also gives offence to many.

### Towards a Theory of Morris

Human behaviour is inordinately complex, but a satisfactory theory for the morris has to answer three key questions.

- a     **Why do humans engage in such activities.** We have no idea whether a morris like activity or organised religion came first.

- b** Does it account for its persistence through the various stages of society's development. It is essentially conservative.
- c** Can it explain the apparent diversity of activities under the common title. What is the common element?

Morris is a form of sport. The arguments for ritual origins apply to sport in general not morris in particular.

file : backgrnd.wri.6

Roy Dommett and Fleet Morris  
10 Attlee Gardens, Church Crookham,  
Fleet, Hampshire, GU13 0PH  
Version 26th August 1997



## BEGINNERS & MORRIS BASICS WORKSHOP

The origin of this material was a workshop for Cotswold morris beginners at Sidmouth. The time available was insufficient directly to produce good dancing, but it did allow of explaining what they were trying to achieve.

To the "Experienced" Leader - If you do not work consciously on "dance" technique yourself or perhaps do not even know what this means, then you might not be well equipped to teach others who have difficulties, and you may be passing on bad practices and even creating confusion. It is therefore a potential handicap for a foreman not to have available analyses of the objectives, emphases, stresses and timings of movements, and to be entirely dependent on just "showing" what to do.

The normal club environment approach to beginners can take two or three years to develop a proficient Cotswold dancer, but better training methods based on a greater understanding could speed this up. However like in many sports, some degree of fitness and experience should be developed as well.

### WHILE STANDING

Beginners - Other dance specialities expect to explain the whys and wherefores of their technique to participants, but this is not so currently in the folk dance world. The "traditional process" is claimed, but it supposes that locally there exist the good dancers on which to model. Although it can and has worked as a club policy, it is risky and it is often used as an easy option or as a cloak for inexperience or, at worst, ignorance.

Cotswold Morris is not disciplined in the same manner as the Clog Morris. Its characteristic allows greater personal expression through the dance movements. The beginner needs to be helped to develop a mix of body control (motor skills), and expression through action, and to learn the techniques of recognising and remembering movement sequences.

The first problem for a teacher is in seeing what is being taught from the beginners point of view. The training needs to have exercises that give the beginner a vocabulary of actions and words to which they can relate their attempts at the movements.

It is often forgotten by the more experienced dancer that beginners have a problem with the jargon, and with both the observation and perception of movements, so that they do not remember what they have been shown after a while without some reinforcement, say by extra description or explanation. In particular they are confused by the unspoken differences between nominally similar movements within dances, let alone those between 'traditions'. But the teaching techniques used need to avoid the risk of being bored or lost by too much talk.

We can only learn 'what-we-almost-know', therefore we must build from existing experience, learning and adding one thing at a time, trying to build up relevant movement habits, not just by saying it once, but through using sequences that can act as a continual reminder.

It is important to present visual images to learners, reinforced with words. I think that part of the general learning problem of translating the words heard into movement is due to the two halves of the brain, with their different skills, having to communicate across their boundary. Another trick of focussing attention onto the key elements came from Douglas Kennedy who always spoke of the need to present new movements both in "close-up" (detail) and in "long-shot" (overall impression).

**Warning** - We perceive our own movements on a different basis from how the apparently same movements look when done by others. One's own gestures are often much smaller and jerkier than we imagine. Actors on the stage theatrically exaggerate every day gestures to make them appear normal when under the undivided scrutiny of an audience. It is noticeable that people can appear physically "larger than life" when being closely followed, one is often surprised to find how small performers are "in real life". Actors are also trained to observe accurately and to replicate what they are shown when in "close-up", as on the TV or the films, but ordinary people unfortunately copy with a significantly smaller movement. A common personal experience that has occurred when teaching the Longborough high hand waves, actually a wrist movement, but often dancers move their hands to follow the motion appropriate to the handkerchiefs, showing that there is a mental image or movement analysis problem. Over a number of generations of foremen the quality of movements within a club can degrade very noticeably. It is good to work sometimes in front of a big mirror, ideally in a dance studio, but deep office or school windows can be adequate substitutes.

This note is written in the form of a workshop in which dancers try the movements as they are discussed, in order to appreciate the points being examined. Such a workshop should start by recognising that there will be potential anatomical problems, leading to aches, pains and stiffnesses, that can or may have already arisen, eg from the dancers' slight faults in physique, say because of small dimensional differences between each leg.

**Feet** - Walk around to get the feel of normal 'pronation', the natural inward rocking motion, as the foot rotates from heel to toe. One can tell if the movement is abnormal by examining the worn edges of heels or soles for evidence of any over-compensating action. 'Orthics', a form of shoe insert, are available commercially for the correction of anatomical faults, eg to straighten joints.

**The Turn Out** of the feet when standing is a part of the old style of movement, which remained fashionable for 300 years. In this sense the morris can be a museum! It can have significance - McCorquadaile in the Wembley Olympics in London 1948, missed a medal in the 100 yds by less than a yard, experts said because of the distance lost by his foot turn out whilst running. Also in this 17th century style there was the swaggering swing of the leg when moving either forward or back, which action allowed room for the wearing of fancy boots with lace tops etc. The movement is still inherent in the morris backstep of several of the village traditions.

**Stretching and Warm-Up** - For both achieving the freedom of movement and the avoidance of injury, it is very desirable to start with a stretching and warm up activity. Not a vigorous warm up, one should still be able to talk naturally to a neighbour whilst doing it. One should also include a short

warm down at the end of a dance period to avoid subsequent stiffness, to remain feeling invigorated and not exhausted.

Beginners tend to tense all their muscles, so they exhaust easily. Their new movements are achieved by counterbalancing muscular forces, and this is not the same as a normal control of movement. We should work to avoid this tightness by "loosening up" the actions and relaxing the inessential muscles, but this requires building confidence. Such an approach produces a visible difference in the movements, which is the 'body language' by which we can recognise "experience" in a dancer.

## UPS & DOWNS

**Vertical Jump** - Just try making one without using the major thigh muscles. The attempt demonstrates the need for an initial bend of the knees, the "plié", an action once considered so basic that it was simply called "the movement". Most of the effort and hence the velocity into a jump comes from using the big muscles in the thighs. The maximum height reached is helped by a rolling up on the toes with a full extension of the foot, as the rise comes from this roll-up plus the body's velocity that has been achieved when finally leaving contact with the ground. That part of the height gained in the air is severely limited by gravity, which pulls one down rather rapidly, so that the actual time out of contact with the ground is rather short. If the use of foot extension on the rise is deliberately limited, then it may not be being used by the dancer at the landing. The risk on landing is then that of jarring the leg joints, leading in the long term to the damage of cartilage and ligaments. The number of "g"s experienced in this can be as high as three. One can practice avoiding slapping the ground by practicing landing quietly in a short series of jumps.

The apparent achieved height is partly an illusion. An audience sees the total body/head rise and fall, including the drop while in contact with the ground before and after the jump, which will be to below the normal standing upright starting posture position. The clearance off the ground is exaggerated by the bending and lifting of the legs.

**Jump** - To explore the use of the arms, first swing them up together while jumping, from having the hands just behind the hips, till they are well up in front of the body and higher than the head. The opposite, of a swing down during the jump, feels quite different and less height is managed - more appropriate to a standing long jump! Incidentally this used to be a Much Wenlock Olympic (the heir to Dover's Cotswold Olympic Games at Dover's Hill, Chipping Campden) as well an early Modern Olympiad event.

What is role of the arms? After all, all control is ultimately only through contact with the ground. How does this small mass effect the amount and quality of movement? It is a dynamic effect. One major interaction comes with the swing up of the arms, the total force (reaction) onto (from) the ground is increased while the arms accelerate, and the body leaves the ground with more total momentum, ie velocity.

Once off the ground the path of the body's centre of gravity is determined. All that can be varied is the relative position of the body's parts to it. Remember also for later that half the time off the ground is spent in the



upper quarter of the trajectory (near apogee, if one is a space freak!). For achieving the maximum height, as measured by the head's rise in the jump, one must bring down (decelerate) the arms before reaching the top of the leap. The additional 'apparent' height comes from the downward shift of the overall centre of gravity relative to the head.

For the appearance of a higher jump, it can be made to appear to last longer by holding the 'pose' instead of wriggling the body and arms till the toes are touching the ground again and one is starting into the plié, a trick that can be seen to be used in the ballet. Gravity does not allow one to actually float!

There is a team problem which arises from aiming to get people of different sizes to appear to bob up and down together. It is easy for shorter people just to rise less, whereas all should rise the same. Therefore a consensus has to be found on the height to be reached while extending the foot. Shorter footed people have to work harder! A useful practice technique is to form a circle facing inwards, with each dancers arms extended sideways so that their hands are resting on their neighbours' shoulders. They can then be sensitive to relative height and timing differences as they dance together. For the convenience of making progress in a workshop the leader should mix the experience in a set but aim for groups of similar heights. They have to be told of the problem with a greater mix. The togetherness is what makes kolos and other ethnic and historical chain dances so exciting even when very simple in content.

There is a naming problem that can confuse beginners because "jump" is used variously to mean the take-off, the movement from take-off to landing and the just the landing. Often morris dance notations will refer to a "step-&-jump" meaning a jumping off of a step and then landing. If it ends "feet-together" it means landing on both feet, placed side-by-side (1st position).

Posture is important and it is visible all the time to the audience, not just while dancing. They see the implied 'body language' and it should say "eager". At rest one should be upright with a stretched not slumped neck and be balanced on the balls of the feet. Bringing the weight back onto the heels for a 'rest' introduces the problem of achieving snappy acceleration or 'drive' into the next move, because one is no longer 'poised'. The overall impression then looks slack and suggests sloppy morris.

There is the issue of the best height for heels on shoes, as yet unresolved. The optimum position for the foot is with its heel just off the ground and this is reflected in shoe design. But shoe heels reduce the flexure available at the ankle joint. In England there is commonly a difference in the choice of shoe heels between the sexes. Heels reduce the height achievable. Most European folk dancers favour a very light weight dance shoe, equivalent to those used by the Scots, with little or no heel - but one must remember that the Bluebell Girls, Can-Can dancers and hoofers like Ginger Rogers could achieve quite a lot on high heels! It is important to practice in similar shoes to those used to dance out.

A rigid torso seems characteristic of the Cotswold morris. There are traditionally few flexible movements of the body other than a twist about the near vertical with some of the 'side steps'.

**Turns** - To examine the significance of 'roll inertia', start with some non-travelling jumps, and try simple jumps (start with a 180° turn, to end facing the opposite way). First keep the arms down at one's sides for a few jumps, then to keep them fully extended out to the side for some more, (both are hard work, showing that the arms actually do have a role), then finally draw them in while turning, usually one finds that one overshoots! Normally arms are used quite naturally, ie without conscious effort, to control the turn and landing, including an initial wrap of the arms in the opposite sense to the turn. Such arm control to compensate for ground friction in a turn while in continual ground contact should be part of the morris man's technique for performing galleys and hooks.

Keep the body straight in a jump. Of course one must thrust up through one's centre of gravity to avoid tumbling in the air, but this does not mean sticking the stomach out or arching the back. Such body movement is ugly, and, while having no ground contact, is difficult to control, as well as being a significant contributor to injuries. Aerial contortions go with gymnastics, high diving and tumbling to music, but not with the morris!

Although small the head is a mass that significantly affects the dynamics of one's body movements. One action to avoid carefully is the drooping of it during a jump. Get someone to watch what you do. Stretching the neck up and looking forward would look much better, and is a fundamental tenet of the Alexander techniques for better health.

**"Spotting"** is a technique for obtaining stability in a horizontal rotation. Fix the eyes on a distant point and let the head initially lag the turn, then snap the neck round, say to the final direction if doing a 180° turn. Surprisingly, one is less likely to sway in the turn. It must be something to do with the role of the inner ear in providing an attitude reference. Conventional dance pirouettes, ie turns with foot-to-ground contact, are not part of the Cotswold morris. The equivalent turns are the galleys and hooks.

**Breath** - This should be 'abdominal' with an outward stomach movement, not pulled in as one breathes in, as this leads to 'stitch', because then the diaphragm is working the wrong way. The pain is actually the muscle spasms. To avoid it, it helps to take some deep breaths before starting, these also assist both poise and readiness. Actors use this technique to control their nerves before stage entries. Once a woman at a workshop concentrated so hard that she did not breathe at all during a dance, she went blue and had to be taken to a hospital for some oxygen treatment to ensure recovery!

**Timing** - We go back to the jump to bring more of the elements together and illustrate by trying the 'up-&-out' Longborough type arm movements. Start with the elbows bent at right angles, the upper arms almost horizontal and out at the side of the body, and with the hands out by the sides of the head at ear level. Raise the hands up, straightening the arms and opening them out during the jump, to end, on the landing, with both the arms horizontal and out to the side of the body.

Where does the beat of the music come in a jump? Certainly to just touch down on landing on the beat - but when on the take off? Surely not as one loses contact with the ground? The note of the music is of necessity of finite length as it has to be heard, the "beat" is the maximum stress

perceived at its leading edge. The maximum physical and musical effort is on the beat, but a full movement is across the beats, hence the physical and psychological appeal of dance as a form of self expression. To get the effort timed accurately there must be anticipatory preparatory effort. Jumps need preparation, they need time to accelerate the body, and, as a jump is usually longer in the air than a step, the musician often stretches the music to suit (and of course never catches up again!).

Jumps (and turns) on the move require consideration of additional technical points about the appropriate body tilts to be used. These are dynamic situations requiring a more subtle understanding of motion. A forward drive into a travelling movement comes from being off balance, thus one should land from a jump leaning into the direction in which one wants to move off.

The initial emphasis so far has been on jumping because it leads to a desired style for the 'morris stepping'.

## TRAVELLING

The movement possibilities are determined by the floor surface and the Cotswold Morris follows the style of stepping that was first developed at the Renaissance. James Burke's TV series and his book "Connections" discussed the change in building style following a worsening of the average weather in the early Middle Ages and the consequential appearance of flatter floors as social life moved indoors. Before the change, the most available flat surfaces were the barn threshing floors, realistic for community social dancing as the surface has to be consolidated, but not for ritual dancing.

Unfortunately there is another naming problem as "Step" is used colloquially both for a single movement and for a sequence of them.

**Step** - The basic movement is a quick change from the weight on one foot to onto the other. The style was described in the earliest dancing books and was not a knee lifting like the medieval 'clod-hopping'. The knee lift that is typical of the traditional English country dancing and other seasonal dance traditions presumably developed to avoid physical contact with partners and neighbours on small crowded dance floors. Start by standing on the ball of one foot with the other in the air, about the length of the foot in front of the supporting foot. The free foot is kept about horizontal and relaxed during the movement and neither curled up ('Turkish Harem') or pointed down ('Schoolgirl Ballet'). Really it is irrelevant to practice stepping on one spot as one is seldom dancing without travelling, and then only with some special emphasis. A little thought will show that real movement sequences involving stepping usually start from jumps or otherwise having the feet together, but this introduces complication at a first teaching of the steps which can be avoided. Although it is natural to start practicing with very little lift, the early development of a reasonable amount of spring in the step is essential. It puts the meaning into the phrase 'weak-kneed'!

In the Cotswold Morris it is customary to have the musician play a 4 or 8 bar phrase as a 'Once-to-Yourself' before starting to dance. It focuses the dancers attention, captures the audience and allows the team to check and absorb the speed and rhythm. I like it long for workshops but short for public performances. Practice in a club as you intend to perform out.

**6/8 Jig Time** - Begin with two "steps" per bar (almost capers, which are the same action as a 'step' but with a greater lift and a more exaggerated arm movement) - also start off from standing on one foot. To keep them 'symmetrical', ie with equal effort off each foot, start by accompanying them using circular waves of both arms, at one per step, with the stress or emphasis on the upward rise or "lift". "Up" in a step or a spring takes longer than "Down" due to the directionality of the effect of gravity. The tune's rhythm is important. Compare a jig in 6/8 with a hornpipe in 4/4. There is less life in dancing the latter as the more even rhythm constrains the body rise that is possible. True polkas, as distinct from polka tunes played as hornpipes, have an irregular rhythm (they fit the clog morris polka well) and are best avoided with beginners, because they induce bad dance habits. Marches in 2/4 or 6/8 have a different feel yet again.

What is a good morris tune? It needs to be able to be played to fit the effort profile of the movement sequence, in particular to stress the lift on the first beats, and not effort on the off-beat. Modern tunes do not lend themselves to matching this movement characteristic.

The traditions surviving into the 20th century have acquired an off-beat emphasis, with a strong movement on the weak beats (in practice this is a rhythm originally called a Schottische). Although no Ragtime or subsequent popular musical style has stuck with the morris (ignoring some individual and limited examples eg **Eclectic Morris**). It has led to the villages teaching a basic single step with a foot lift up and a kick forward style, which is not the classical stepping style recognised by Sharp that has been introduced here.

The jig rhythm encourages hops. Starting from the simple capers, put in the hops, still keeping the action symmetrical with each free foot travelling forward the same distance and the body rise being the same off of either foot. The drive is off the ball of the foot, just as for the jumps.

Look out of a window and watch the relative motion of the horizontal frame or bars against the scene as an indication of ones own body motion. There are 4 rises per bar, the first and third are larger than the second and fourth. Hence these main beats are called the "Strong" and those in between the "Weak" beats.

To get a feel of the meaning of differences between "traditions" and of the problems facing beginners, try this simple stepping with appropriately different arm movements.

- |   |   |                    |
|---|---|--------------------|
| 1. Down & Up                                | both arms in parallel,<br>in vertical plane | (Hinton)           |
| 2. Alternate Arms                           | as in exaggerated walking                   | (Chipping Campden) |
| 3. Forward Flick                            | of both hands together                      | (Bampton)          |
| 4. Low Circular Waves<br>in vertical plane  | forward facing, at side,<br>at hip level    | (Brackley)         |
| 5. High Circular Waves<br>in vertical plane | at mid chest level                          | (Badby)            |

Note the feeling of a "help" on the UP part of the arm movement. Thus the character of the movement as perceived by the new dancer will depend on the tradition being taught.

**Arming Sequence** - Do it first without stepping but simulating the body bounce. Beginners can have a problem of coordinating arm, leg and body movements new to them so there is some value in a little practice of these separately. Because of the additional problem of stepping and arming coordination, practice arm sequences alone for a while to obtain the flow, but not for too long, as they are slightly modified by the body actions when actually stepping. Note that there is an opinion that good dancers would not move their hands in front of their face as this would cover an important informative part of the image being presented to the audience.

A **Left Foot Lead** is of medieval origin. Then they danced in a linked curved line and moved first to the left and then to the right. To go with the sun was lucky, to start to windershins, as supposedly did witches, was not. The left foot lead, as with the military march, is natural because it allows a thrust off of the nominally stronger right foot to get moving smartly.

Left handed people are at a little disadvantage in the morris. Some such dancers can be slower at picking up directional calls. The major problem of course is with using the right hand for holding and manipulating sticks.

Form a set of 6 dancers, in two files of 3, numbered 1, 3, 5 (the "odds") in the left hand column, and 2, 4, 6 (the "evens") in the right, as facing "up" towards the music.

Perhaps a word is needed about the morris compass. "Up" is towards the musician who conventionally stands at the "top" end of the set which has already been defined as by dancers numbers 1 and 2. "Down" is the other way, towards the "bottom" of the set. Confusingly "Up-and-Down" are also used for arm movements. Facing one's opposite is "in" or "across the set", and turns in that direction are "inward". The contrary is "out" and the turning is "outward".

Attempt dancing something very simple but illustrative, deriving here from Chipping Campden's "Constant Billy". The following is a condensed dance description. For a better understanding of the terminology, try consulting the Morris Federation's published "Glossary of Terms".

Face one's opposite across the set for the playing of a "Once To Yourself", then in the last bar jump and turn 90° in the air to face left, odds facing up, and evens facing down. The whole set dance a complete "whole rounds" clockwise in 8 bars, ending as at the start by facing across the set, and continuing by approaching one's opposite in 4 more bars, ending the move with a jump to stand with one's feet together side by side, and facing one's opposite. Now clap hands with the opposite dance as described below, then dance past one's opposite, passing by the left shoulder. Turn to the right in the opposite's starting place to face back and approach again etc. Repeat the crossing and clapping a few times, then end the dance with the "whole rounds" figure again.

(The Clapping is,

bar 1 both own hands together in front of one's chest, partners clap r+r,

bar 2 both own hands together again, partners clap l+l,

bar 3 both own hands, clap both own hands together behind one's back,

bar 4 both own hands together, finally r+l & l+r simultaneously

: in the obvious but brief notation used by Sharp and Bacon)

**6/8 Double Step** - This is 3 quick changes and a hop, "1 2 3 hop", with the 'lift' on the hop. The broken rhythm ensures an unequal rise on the 4 movements. Lack of thought can lead to an uneven forward kick - it needs to be an equal distance with either foot. The 'correct' travel forward was once a bone of contention in the national press between rival collectors!

There are "Double" and "Single" steps, the terminology comes from Tudor times when they were called a double and a single (or simple).

For the Single step the lead (first strong beat of each bar) is always off the same foot through a musical phrase. For the Double there is a changing, ie alternating, lead.

The double step in 4/4 feels different to that in 6/8. There are several rhythms conventionally given a 4/4 (or 2/4) signature - often called schottisches, hornpipes, rants, polkas, measures or marches. Each produces a different feel to the dance movements, once the dancer is sensitive to them, because of the differing time constraints on the "lift" that is possible in the stepping. The simple rhythm is not precise because Morris musicians typically stretch the melody's rhythm to better fit the morris movements. The exercise above should be repeated with the same set of arm movements. The alternate arm swinging is difficult to fit to double steps!

One of our difficulties is that we assume that the morris is usually danced with a classic form of the double or single steps and for many traditions this has to do by default of better knowledge. Unfortunately where we know something of the manner of performance and of its local teaching there does appear significant variation.

For single stepping ("hops") :

**Bampton :** lift foot upwards, then kick forward and down off the top of the lift, and the bells ring twice on the off beat at the acceleration and deceleration of the lower leg - "pedalling".

**Campden :** ditto but a longer forward thrust of the free leg and aiming at only one ring of the bells giving a very "broken" rhythm.

**Bidford :** the first move is a kick forward, then a lift as the foot is brought back - "back-pedalling".

**Headington :** leg kept fairly straight throughout, movement made quickly and the posture held for the hop.

The contrast with other seasonal custom styles can be emphasised, eg the Flamborough Long Sword and some Border styles with their high knee lift and

no kick forward, and the common current Border interpretation of drawing the free foot back so that the kick forward hardly passes the supporting leg.

The short time out of contact from the ground reflects the power of gravity, therefore one should fully exploit using the foot extension and the initial and final bend at the knee to control height and speed. The question of speed of the dance coupled with achievable stepping height is a matter of the physical effort level that can be maintained.

There is a problem in persuading most people of the degree of effort involved in performing the morris.

**Fitness** - This consists of three elements, stamina, flexibility and strength. Most of us are not physically fit! Something more than a once a week session is considered by experts to be necessary to achieve and maintain a modest level of general fitness (three 20 minutes sessions is often recommended). How many people have the time or the inclination to exercise vigorously three times a week? Only the committed few. But you can not store up fitness, if you stop exercising the benefits gradually disappear. The typical once weekly morris practice therefore is inadequate on its own. Other sessions of perhaps different physical activity (not exercise) should be added, such as brisk walks, swimming, cycling etc. It is important that you feel good afterwards so that it is kept up. You may of course have specific needs which may have to be met by an organised training schedule. Given our national lethargy, few people are at risk of doing too much!

There should be a concern for the state of balance of the muscles that resist gravity. The back and leg muscles develop with dancing, therefore the opposite muscles need strengthening - the abdominal (eases back pain), the thigh area (eases knee pain) and the shin area (eases shin splints).

**"Shin Splints"** is a common complaint and it arises from abnormal strain and stress on the muscles and tendons that lift the forefoot, control the toes, and absorb shock and stabilise the foot during foot plant on the floor. Often the condition comes from being unused to being on the balls of the feet, or from over-striding, from tension during the foot swing, leaning forward or not having well cushioned shoes, ie dancing on too hard a floor for the footwear. Even experienced dancers have this condition when they dramatically increase their activity or develop muscle imbalance.

There are several alleviating actions that might be taken. Wearing thicker soled shoes, not slapping the floor with the foot sole, having a more upright posture, and relaxing the free foot when it is out of contact with the ground. Alternatively, or additionally, using stretching exercises for the calf, hamstring and Achilles tendon, exercising by lifting objects with the toes, and checking that clothing is not too tight around the legs eg from elastic bands or bell pads (or practicing in unsuitable jeans or other tight clothing).

The pain could be an indication of a more major condition so it must be taken seriously. The major clue is the time it takes to subside. The worst condition needs an operation within hours for complete recovery!

**Actions on Injury** - The best advice is, if it hurts, its telling you!

Strains and sprains are best dealt with immediately by ice packs (even the commercial equivalent of frozen pea packets), and blisters by puncture and plasters, but not by removal of the skin.

At a guess, of all the sports, Cotswold Morris has an affinity with Basketball, because of the turns in the running and jumping and hence a similarity of rotational stress on joints and muscles not so usual in other sports. More examination of the relevant experience in other sports could be done to the advantage of understanding the physical problems associated with the morris eg footwear, types of injury, and fitness training. Athletic shoes are often designed with jogging movements in mind, with cushioning of the heel which takes the impact in gentle running, rather than any cushioning of the ball of the foot that takes the battering in the morris.

A Sequence of Steps should be seen and practiced as the basic unit of movement. It involves integrating the jump and usually significantly different forward and back steps.

Try a simple "Princess Royal", a very basic jig but from no village in particular. It is best learnt by following someone demonstrating it.

The order is Foot-Up, Jig, Plain Capers, Jig, Slow Capers, and a final Jig, using the conventional terms for the steps and sections of the dance.

**Foot-Up** = 6 double steps, 2 single steps used as backsteps and a jump, landing feet together.

**Jig** = long open sidestep to the left (2 bars) and to the right (2 bars), 2 double steps on the spot, "cross stepping" for 2 bars, left foot crossed over right, both apart and crossed again, then pause for a beat. In reverse, right foot crossed over left, apart and cross again and pause. 2 double steps on the spot, 2 single steps as backsteps and a jump (12 bars in all).

**Plain Capers** = 8 Plain Capers on the spot, 2 double steps, 2 single steps as backsteps and a jump.

**Slow Capers** = 4 slows to the same tune but played somewhat slower for the first 4 bars. Cross the feet, first the left in front, then the right in front, bring the feet together and jump forward, landing with both feet together. This is done 4 times etc, with arm movements corresponding to the feet : 'out to side', 'keep out', 'up-and-over' to 'out' again.

The angle between the feet, when the heels are close together and the toes apart, has to be sufficient to allow twisting of the individual feet on the balls, so that the heel of the foot being twisted inward can clear the other supporting foot. In the classical ballet the customary turn out is very large and it needs a training from an early age to achieve the joint mobility. In Old Tyme dancing it is 90° (originally perhaps to avoid treading on the hems of long dresses), and this was normal in social dancing till an English Modern Ballroom dance committee, led by Victor Silvester in the early 1920's, decided on a parallel stance. In the morris the turn out matters in some sidesteps and backsteps but not necessarily during the basic



"stepping". The turn-out looks particularly 'tidy' when standing still.

**Backstep** - A similar body movement to that in the ordinary stepping but with different emphases. The rise is much less and there is a stronger sink down. This applies even to the accompanying waves of the arms. One should now attempt the Fieldtown basic stepping and arming sequence with the figure of eight path wave of the hands during the backsteps of "out-in-out".

**Capers** - The next energetic step to be met is the caper from one foot to the other. The Cotswold tradition is distinguished from others as having dances with 'jumps and capers'. From one point of view a simple caper can be thought of as arising out of the basic 'double-step' when one individual step is so strong that it is not followed by a step or hop on the next weak beat. A series of these energetic changes are called plain capers. If after landing on the other foot, the caper is followed by a hop on that same foot, then the sequence is called a **Half Caper**, or sometimes a **Spring Caper**, and during a sequence of them the lead is always off with the same foot. If it is followed by a change of step it is called a **Furrie or Furry** and during a sequence of them the lead off is off of alternate feet. Capers off and onto the same foot are seldom met in the Cotswold Morris.

The choice of the accompanying arm movements to be used with the plain or half capers, eg "up-and-down" or "down-and-up", affects the stress, feel, and appearance of the movement.

**Double Step Sequences** - In a finer analysis each individual step has a different subtle emphasis. For example to incorporate the travelling, one must accelerate, move, decelerate, stop, reverse, etc. finally stopping again. The body rotates and leans forward and backwards as a function of the needed acceleration and deceleration, particularly during the backstep and jump. The body slopes to move, using gravity again, to move one's centre of gravity forward, then one moves the feet to stop falling over, the same principle as satellites in the earth's gravity field. Some authorities say that one should lean forward during a backstep which is never a rushing movement and does not need the same degree of drive, but does need the preparation for the final jump.

One needs to note again the rotation of the body in the air to prepare for moving off from a jump, often a difficult point to appreciate. Be aware of landing a foot's length behind the stationary position. This allows a snappy move off. Practice by standing with the heels against a line on the floor and on the jump land with the toes against that same line (the feet now being entirely on the other side).

## THE REST

Let us end the exercises described by trying a Longborough style sidestep dance. The dance is constructed of 4 figures, each followed by the same chorus. For this workshop, the figures are danced with a 4 bar stepping sequence which is essentially the same, other than being a mirror image, for both halves of the figures. The sequence is a double step and a jump moving forwards, then backsteps (or single steps), and another jump moving back.

The figures are,

- Foot up** - all face "up". After the Once to Yourself, dance the defined sequence, turning "outwards", away from one's opposite, to face "down" on the second jump. Repeat the sequence facing down, but turning "inwards", the 'easy way', on the second jump, to face one's opposite.
- Half Gip** - all face across set. Dance past each other, passing right shoulders and then retire backwards to place along the same path, then repeat to the other side of one's opposite passing left shoulders.
- Back-to-Back** - as half-gip, but having passed one's opposite, move behind them to be able to retire backwards passing the other shoulder. Repeat going past the other shoulder.
- Whole Gip** - as back-to-back, but on the first jump, turn to face back across the set, then single step forwards, passing by the same shoulder, to the jump to face across again. Repeat in the reverse direction.

Each chorus is a sidestep sequence followed by a half hey that inverts the order of the dancers in the set, which sequence is then repeated to bring all the dancers back to where they started the chorus.

**Sidestep** - It is probable that each village had its own interpretation of this "step" sequence. The feet could be crossed or apart, the body turned a little or a lot, with one arm or two in use, and the handkerchief action be at different levels and of the various types often based on wrist actions. The sidestep can be long (2 bars) or a mixture of sidesteps, double steps and jumps. For Longborough the turn out of feet is maintained throughout the sidestep. The feet are crossed over with the heel of the leading foot close to the toe of the rear one, and the body is turned about 30-45° following the direction of the crossing of the feet. The leading arm only is raised, and this fairly straight up past the ear. Like in all Cotswold traditions, the sidestep should be performed very energetically. For this practice cross the feet for one bar, dance a double step straight, cross the feet the other way, and dance another straight double.

The traditional Cotswold morris does not have movements that "drive" the body into the floor. However many sides teach sidesteps with a pronounced dip in the arm wave and with the body. People have to make up their own mind as to what is acceptable within their own team's performance.

In the **Half Hey** the opposite dancers work in pairs. It is described in sequence but performed simultaneously. The top pair turn out and dance down the side of the set to the bottom place. They must turn and come down the set quickly such that the jump in the second bar can be made travelling sideways. The stepping in the third bar is a galley, not backsteps, with the dancers rotating and moving out to the final place. At the same time the middle pair follow the top pair, in the first half hey moving to the top of the set, but turning out quickly so that the jump can be back to where they started. The middles should leave just enough space between themselves and the tops to let the bottoms pass through. The bottoms face down and turn out to come up to the top, going behind the tops, but in passing front of

the middles.

Diagonals lines in body actions are more interesting to watch than verticals. The recent drift to vertical arm/hand movements in developing new traditions can only be justified in terms of appearing different rather than in being artistically better. Be conscious of leading sidestep hand movements with the wrist, also control the direction of the eyes which often affects posture, particularly of the head. The smile is an important visual with many gradations of interpretation by the audience, so it must appear genuine and not forced.

Work now with an experienced dancer if possible on examples of the various side step arm gestures from Cotswold traditions. The similarities and differences must be pointed out.

**Mechanics of Movement** - These are often not at all simple, for example consider what happens in high diving competition, tumbling and the landing of a falling cat. We have met the effect of arms in jumps and roll inertia in a jump and turn. Drive in the galley or hook comes from reducing the roll inertia during the rotation. By starting with the arms extended, the body tilted into the turn, and the upper part of the free leg raised, the roll inertia can be 4 times that when the body is vertical and with the arms at the sides. As the dancer turns the arms are brought in, the body made more vertical and the free leg lowered. The lower part of the free leg is twisted once or twice in the turn and this motion can be used to help the dancer to turn. Of course different villages had different detail in their ways of performing this movement.

## ALL IN

**Long and Short People** - Traditionally teams were lucky if they had 6 good dancers, they were often pleased to have 3 to put on one side (nearest the audience). Such teams perhaps encouraged a spread in individual performance which covered the unavoidable lack of uniformity. Disparity is a problem. As dancers work primarily in pairs, matching within the pairs is an obvious possibility. The proper dimensions of a set reflect the average dancer's size with typical fingertip-to-fingertip separation in both directions. Consequently short people have to scamper around and long people can amble.

**Men and/or Women** - There are obvious physical differences, in average height and body weight distribution and physical strength, but the major effect in mixed sets is of the women's smaller feet, for the same overall height, making matching of the shape of the vertical movement difficult. There are also differences in postures and positioning between the sexes ('body language' again). Women can have a lower self-esteem, which shows up in behaviour during public performance and in weak stick handling. Awareness of the problems can lead to corrective action to overcome all such consequences which are mostly cultural and not physical.

**Team Issues** - There are concerns that arise from being in a team. For example there is the rhythm, speed and togetherness of the stick tapping. Sticking choruses seem to have the problem of achieving acceleration into the next movement, dancers often forget to be up on their toes and to make a preparatory lift into the "off". The musician needs to allow "space" in

the tune for the dancers to pick up speed.

Many sides let themselves down with their exits and entries, and even as they prepare for 'Once-to-Yourself' before the dance starts, but also in the manner in which they behave immediately after 'all-in' or 'all-up' at the end of a dance. This is not a point that can be addressed casually. The problem starts with sloppy discipline in the practice room which is carried over to public performance because no one stops to think that it is inadequate. Remember to practice all that has to be done when out, all the time, so that good behaviour becomes the norm.

**Dance is Style** - Remember the importance of body language and be aware of being on 'stage' and visible all the time.

The details of style are "personal" as well as "club" and will need a direct one-to-one working out between the beginner and their teacher. Dancers have to learn to spread the physical effort over all the muscles, using the shoulders and back as well as the arms and legs. The similarity is with the professional craftsman, eg like a carpenter working with a plane.

There is no substitute for observing other morris dancers and sides critically both for the lessons on their good and their bad points. Much can be learnt from recognising what is wrong about other performances!

Many of the points made here in detail are incorporated in brief into other single tradition descriptions by the author.



# THE COTSWOLD MORRIS WORKSHOP

## INTRODUCTION

Quite often the dancer called upon to run a short Cotswold Morris workshop at a Festival or on a course has had little experience of teaching movement or of teaching people, and this lack can be complicated by a common failure to recognise that a public workshop is fundamentally different from a typical club practice, in that all aspects have to be covered in the one occasion. There is also the disadvantage that one is unlikely to know anyone present closely. But the attendees at a workshop have paid and have an expectation both to learn and to enjoy the relatively brief instructional. The following advice draws on 20 years of experience to present an example of what appears to be a successful approach to the task.

If the workshop is with beginners they need not be underestimated. They should be expected to be prepared for it to be difficult, so the leader's task is primarily to present the dancing clearly. The range of difficulty over the traditions is not great to the uninitiated. The problem is to the presenter in getting it over. Choosing something "easy" and letting it become a romp is a disservice to the morris. It has been found practical to teach the complexities of the Sherborne tradition to people with no preconceptions of dancing the morris. The converse is also true, dancers who may be quite confident and competent at their practiced traditions can still act like inexperienced ones when faced with something new, and might even have more difficulty than a newcomer to the morris because it is different.

That a tradition has been worked up in a club is not necessarily an adequate basis for a good workshop unless that is the specific objective, and, the teacher both understands what has been done in the club and can be articulate about it. Naturally when well done the exposition of the insights obtained is fascinating to all. All the same, the leader should have considerable familiarity with the chosen tradition, not just picking it out from a book because of the desire to avoid their own team's dances. It is a common courtesy to explain to the group the background to what is going to be done, whether it is based on someone's teaching, a club's performance, a personal interpretation or a development of ideas, otherwise what is done will be of little use to the recipients afterwards because it can not be related to their experience of other teachings.

Workshops need skills, knowledge and preparation.

## PREPARATION

Not suprisingly there are a number of things to think about before the workshop starts that are easily overlooked.

1. If the workshop is going to need sticks, ensure that a supply is going to exist, even if you or an organiser has to go out into the local countryside with a saw.
2. You need a musician. They will probably like to know what is expected in the way of tunes and an indication of your proposed method of working. If a full range of a tradition's tunes are needed they may need to be

learnt although the musician will still have to adapt them to your as yet unknown needs on the day. Otherwise the musician must combine the skills of being able to read music and follow you simultaneously. The precise melody line is less important than the correct phrasing. The speed that you will want is probably the most important facet to agree beforehand.

3. Good dancing needs good music and this is especially valuable at a workshop. This does mean not accepting any odd musician, and making it clear at the start that bands are not acceptable out of consideration for the dancers, as they obscure the rhythm, the phrasing and the critical fitting of the music to the movements of the dance by the official musician. If you need volume, it should be obtained by amplification not by numbers of instruments. Dance workshops really are not the place for inexperienced musicians to learn tunes or to pick up style. You can tell when they are inexperienced, because they will believe that playing is a good idea and will not understand your reasons for saying it is not.
4. Microphones may be essential to handle a large crowd, but their use needs a special technique which has to be worked out beforehand. Also you may have to modify your normal approach to overcome the problem of being rooted to one spot and to meet the difficulties of moving larger masses of humanity. Having experience as a social dancer caller can help in giving confidence in handling people, but the much greater degree of technical detail required for the morris leads to the need for a different approach to its teaching.
5. The venue itself may cause problems. If the floor is unsprung, it will be hard on the balls of the feet, so that dancers will not spring around for long or appear to be lively. The acoustics will affect who can hear and how well they can dance to the music. You have to understand the place's acoustics before the start, or the dancers will lose those all important first few speeches before your delivery becomes generally intelligible. Learn to speak slower than in normal conversation, relax the throat muscles between words to avoid getting hoarse, and do not use too many words to pad out the explanations, no matter how much you like to hear the sound of your own voice.
6. The preparation of some background material on the tradition to present during the workshop will help enliven the occasion.

#### POLICY IN THE WORKSHOP

Any method followed must be based on synthesis, building up from the elements, as the average dancer does not have the developed skills to learn from the top down by mimicing a total demonstration as can professional actors or dancers.

Implied in most of this advice is that it is a single tradition workshop. This is not absolutely essential. However each tradition has a peak intensity in its teaching and multiple presentations are very challenging if the dancers are not to leave confused at the end of the workshop.

Each tradition needs its own approach, depending on the relative importance to be given to the basic movements, the complexity of the figures or the

variety of the "steps". However it is important to start with basics, meaning the posture, the jumps and the plain stepping that go with the tradition under examination.

The attendees, many of whom have never met or heard you speak before, need the opportunity to get used to your voice, mannerisms and the technical jargon, which can be quite confusing at first. Therefore having introduced yourself, talk for example about posture, balance, the feet turning out, stepping sequences rather than individual steps, and the technique needed in jumps and plain capers. Any emphasis on basics is never wasted and this allows the dancers to become attentive and builds up the group experience that allows them to work together later. Speak clearly, in an interested sounding voice, that is, be warm, relaxed and not harsh.

One could start with a stick dance, but few Cotswold traditions have such and it is an essential point that it is a handkerchief tradition. It is worth emphasising to the group that the morris handkerchief is of neckerchief size, not men's pocket hanky, being a full half yard on a side before hemming, not a foot. The size and weight of the traditional piece has a significant effect on the character of the dance. The additional complexity coming from carrying a stick should be faced later. Beginners especially are usually dreadful at handling a stick, on their first meeting with the morris, when not clashing it, as they do not know what to do with their arms and legs, let alone the stick. Do not confuse the ease with which a stick dance can be done after a little experience with those first few minutes when all is novel. Do not think either that because a simple stick dance is apparently rhythmic and fun that everything else is eased. It could be losing some of the progress already made through allowing some laxity in the other basics.

The essential aim is to build steadily, not overburdening learning at any stage, and in such an order that bad habits are not generated by letting dancers "fill-in" for the things not yet explained, for example hand movements. Dancers should only be expected to think explicitly about one thing at a time, so "habit" patterns must be built up to carry those things that have to be remembered throughout. It is impractical to expect everyone to remember everything and keep it all in practice through the workshop. The instructor may have to salve their conscience by saying clearly, at least once, all the things that have to be said.

Gaps in the teaching, especially early on for rests, are dangerous both in allowing attention to relax and in letting other matters come into conversation. The availability of drinks in a short workshop can also be disruptive to progress. One must capture the attention and hold it. Talk through a rest and do not let the attendees physically or mentally wander. This is one occasion for the use of background material. Judging the pace in a workshop is important and momentum must not be lost by too long a gap in the dancing, by too little recapitulation allowing the growth of confusion or by too little control of the spread of bad habits in the dancing. The leader should have the equivalent of a "script" or plan to work from, but of course they must also be prepared to modify the content by watching the dancers, all of them. It is a good trick to watch their faces for their reactions. This has to be a conscious effort as normal social conventions limit the amount of "eye contact" between people who are interacting in a face-to-face situation.



The teacher should have analysed beforehand what is to be taught to ensure that there are no hidden problems. As an example, when teaching basic stepping, do not start the dancers from a "feet together" because the very first movement must then be untypical, as somehow a foot must be raised to put it immediately back onto the ground. Putting too much detail in at the start can also be counter productive, as long as it does not mean that something would have to be unlearned later. The trimmings, like any flicks of the handkerchiefs with the arm movements, or variety in phrase endings etc, can be picked up on a reprise.

Never suggest that anything is other than the instructor's fault.

#### FORMAT OF THE WORKSHOP

There are two approaches to presenting a tradition. The first to be described is that which has been used most frequently, because it fits to the majority of my teaching engagements. Another method is discussed later, as are the particular problems of working with unusual groups.

I start with the basic four bar stepping sequence where possible, of say two double steps, backsteps and a jump, rather than working on the individual steps separately. It seems especially important to get the dancers to think in "sequences" and to build up these as habit patterns, rather than trying to construct the sequence from its component parts, at the stage of the workshop when they are having difficulties with everything. The stepping sequence needs linking with the arm and handkerchief movements as soon as practical to gain the essential balance of the body to help in dancing and expression. It is this basic step and arm sequence that must become automatic early on in the workshop.

The leader must recognise that there are technical difficulties and that they must not be hidden from the dancers or skirted around or any easy alternative found. It is wrong to devalue the tradition. Peter Kennedy once said that the EFDSS considered inventing a beginners tradition for public workshops so that the more complex "real" ones could be worked at at more leisure in a club atmosphere. It was not followed up as it was realised that something important of the morris could be lost. But the modern reconstructions of the Ducklington, Stanton Harcourt and Wheatley traditions were kept simple with this use in mind.

The easiest way to reinforce the basic sequence is to learn the figures (CF = common figures) that use the basic sequence without confusing the issue with choruses (DF = distinctive figures). Those figures where the stepping is different, for example having a galley instead of a backstep, can be learnt next. It is found that building up a dance figure by figure with the choruses in between is overall slower, because of the greater variety of steps and movements usually introduced and so having to be remembered and practiced together. Even without the choruses many dance skills can be encouraged and suitable technical points made.

By now you have had to introduce the idea of a set of dancers, usually six in number and arranged in two lines. Many workshop venues are too cramped to allow the full space for a set with everyone up, but it must be pointed out that the usual size is finger-tip to finger-tip separation both along

and across the set. This not only neatly copes with various sized people or different age groups, but indicates what is sufficient room for figures and for working with one's opposite in choruses. The instructor should give some thought as to how the number of sets formed should be arranged for mutual visibility. It must be remembered when demonstrating that facing the dancers makes you a mirror image of what you want them to do and that some people will only be able to visualise their own actions if they see you facing the same way as they are. Of course you then can not see their progress or problems!

Do not worry about very large numbers of dancers because they will expect you to take longer to organise them. Unfortunately with large numbers it is not so easy to stop everything for the odd dancer or set going wrong and you may have to store the necessary comment or advice or recap of what they missed until the end of the particular exercise being danced. The danger to the instructor is in just following a few of the sets rather than looking around for the problems. It is all too easy to "prompt call" based on a set doing well. It is no disgrace of course in such situations to have a few stewards to assist you. I do find that in small workshops I do give more attention to the set with the local squire or foreman or workshop organiser in it, on the assumption that they are the ones who have to get the most out of the occasion.

The figures can be assembled in stages, walking through, stepping through, perhaps in slow time without music with you calling the steps in sequence. The value of having learnt the step sequences earlier will soon be apparent. One aim is to build up the dancer's awareness of where the opposite dancer and the others should be. Few new dancers have any experience of dancing in a team and there are a number of points that will have to be made several times during the workshop about working together. Keeping the "lines straight" is one such, there comes an automatic "set consciousness" for experienced dancers, but others will benefit from the suggestions on who should be watching the lines or adjusting position. Comment can be made, for example, about the length of the steps, the matching of the surge forward on the strong beat, on how much forward movement there should be off a jump into the next figure, so that the workshop is aware of the points and can use them to dance together. The danger in aiming for set cohesion is that it must be some sort of compromise, possibly expressing the lowest common denominator of the set's dancing ability.

There is no doubt that some things can be left to look after themselves, but, in general, drawing conscious attention to some point makes its achievement and retention much more likely. Attention should be drawn to "space" and the need to be aware of how it changes during figures, for example rounds, perhaps by walking dancers through it slowly with attention on the relative spacings rather than on the steps, so that the shape can be preserved in the full speed movement.

Remember also that figures feel different from the various places in a set so there is the possibility and desirability of moving dancers around during the workshop if they look as if they can cope with it. The move can be used as an excuse for a recap of a movement without losing the pace of the workshop. Some clubs like to move dancers around frequently in their practices so that they are not wedded to one position.

Just like a social dance caller, it is necessary to be able to prompt call at the right moments during the dance, not so far ahead of the new movement that the dancers break into it too early or that they forget what you have said before they get to it, nor too late for them to actually think what it is that you mean. Somewhere about the end of the 3rd and beginning of the 4th bar is about right. Think out the key words to be used so that they are effective reminders, and do not ad lib too much as it will just be verbiage and distracting during the dancing. Dancers with some experience will know a jargon which may not be yours, so avoid slipping into a short hand too soon.

When one gets into dances, these continue to practice all the figures and the constant repetition of them in each dance helps to fix them further. Getting the choruses correct is not so important as they seldom include key elements of the tradition, except for the sidesteps and the slow capers. As confidence builds on the floor it is possible to return to the figures and improve them. For example, the size of the loops in the hey can be changed so that the other dancers have the time and the space to get round. This does matter if the tradition has the half movement done in two bars so that the other two bars can be danced facing one's opposite. It is probably the heys that evolve away the most from what is first taught.

In fairness to the dancers it is desirable to start on dances with standard structures such as the universal sidestep-and-half-hey-repeated chorus. These are the "whole set" dances in which all dancers are moving all the time. Then possibly it would be wise to do the stick dances before embarking on dances with abnormal structures or which include the slow capers. Slow capers are not difficult to do and they are easy to teach if emphasis is given to clear presentation, to balance, and to where the "effort" in the series of movements is supposed to be put. As with all teaching, it is important to be clear on all the details and not to forget to mention key points at the right time.

#### WORKSHOP TIMING

It is my experience that a workshop as short as one hour or less or as long as two hours or more is difficult to programme and give the attendees satisfaction, unless they are quite expert and are being given a polish. About 1½ hours seems ideal to me for introducing a single Cotswold tradition. It should take about half an hour to get the first complete dance going to a modest standard. It should take another hour to give a fairly comprehensive presentation of the rest of the tradition. If the workshop goes on for more than 1½ hours, then one starts a reprise of dances done. At the end it is helpful to run through, perhaps briefly, the key points made during the workshop and to note the special characteristics of the tradition. Finally it makes for good will if you can stop on and talk afterwards, perhaps going through a notation with someone. I can not recommend the spending of most of a workshop on one or two dances so that they appear to have been learnt thoroughly, unless the sets are nearly all drawn from particular clubs so that the dance has been learnt as a club rather than by the individual who then has to take it back. It is my experience that no matter how well a dance seems to go at first teaching, it is not learnt until the dancers have gone through it a number of times at successive club practices.

**ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES**

As said earlier, each tradition needs its own approach. Some do not have much variety in the range of extant dances. One way is to accumulate dances from sides that have been created in that "tradition", although this is not always acceptable in a public workshop presenting traditional dancing. Another way is to concentrate on the distinctive style of the traditional movements at the start. By beginning with jigs the problem of mixing personal movement awareness with a spatial awareness of others is postponed till some skill in control of one's body is achieved. It can minimise self consciousness and maximise confidence. The traditions from Bucknell and Sherborne suit this method. A key must be in being a rather skilful dancer in order to demonstrate the movement elements.

An occasional engagement is the teaching of a dance or two to an adult organisation or at a school, as part of a talk or a folk related event, where there is little possibility of a follow up. The group, whether helped by regular dancers or not, will recognise that it is being given something simple or simplified, but seldom wants a challenge. This is a case where fun is more important than accuracy. Success can be obtained by the inverse of what has been recommended for formal workshops, starting with a stick or handclapping dance and learning the chorus first as a rock around which to build the rest.

Children are often very good mimics and one should start by trying demonstrating movements without too much explanation. The morris can be too challenging for small children. Remember that children are used to a particular way of being taught from school and to a short time per session.

**PROBLEMS**

1. It is frustrating to see dancers forgetting or even apparently not trying to do what is asked. Sometimes they have already learnt it before differently, they may not even recognise your teaching as different, and perhaps they are not going to change just for you, not even as a courtesy to the other dancers. One must never lose one's temper or shout or take issue. Simply state at the beginning of the workshop the basis for the teaching and request cooperation from the experienced dancers. If it is an interpretation or in some way not the strictest orthodoxy, you ask the dancers to try it and allow them the privilege of rejecting it all if they wish, but after the workshop, not during it. In the morris world as it is, the final arbiter on what is done in public is the club, not the workshop instructor, and they are at liberty to change everything later if they chose to use anything of what you have taught.
2. It is difficult for the instructor to remember the problems of actually being a beginner. They are uncoordinated, unused to moving relative to other people or to listening, either to you or to the music. The work in the class should be intensive, but aimed at enjoyment, so as not to kill further interest. Beginners try to exercise control by rigidity of limbs, stiffening all their muscles, and jerky not rhythmic movement results and it is very tiring. Further it does not allow proper balance in jumps, especially when a turn is required as well. The classes may need loosening up right at the start of the workshop. Practice jumps, teach

"spotting" in turns and emphasise that the head and arms should be steady in a turn and not jerked or snatched as the dancer will lose balance.

3. In the bustle and confusion people are not all that clear on which is their right or left, particularly with regard to turns, so do not be afraid to push or help them round. Their mental block is in translating your words into movement and the push can short circuit the problem for them. The English avoid physical contact with strangers, but in the workshop you are sharing yourself and building up an intimacy.
4. The mix of ability in the workshop is quickly recognised but can not be planned for, nor is it easy when dancers are in mufti to know if they have common origins. One has to be aware that it may be better to let the dancers form up with people they know, or people of their own standard. However poor dancers tend to get up late, hide in corners and sometimes desperately need to be spread around and helped by the more experienced. Usually beginners welcome being able to practice along with experienced dancers.
5. Working against you always is the feeling dancers get for a consensus within a set so that dancing together dominates over doing what you have asked. Sometimes you can see a deviation spread around the workshop from set to set, if it starts being done confidently by one set. Of course the group feeling for dance is actually what one wants cultivated - except in your workshop! But it is what they finally dance together that they remember and take back to their clubs, not what you have so carefully coached. It comes as a surprise the first time you are quoted as being the authentic source for their oddities!
6. The allowing or encouraging of the wearing of bells is a difficult decision, even though the sound is essential to the morris and enhances good dancing, because the noise cuts across the instruction. Modern bells jangle, not at all like the 19th century musical tinkles, and people do fidget. On the whole bells encourage a trend to average dancing rather than to steadily improving one's dancing. It would be nice if some logical way could be found to introduce bells some way through the workshop.

#### ACHIEVEMENT

I think that the way to judge the success of a workshop is to listen to the degree of togetherness, rhythm and phrasing that can be heard in the dancing by the end of the session.

V 2.0 © 1990 R L Dommett

## DO-IT-YOURSELF

The personal aspect of dance-leadership supplementing the information contained in pamphlet No 1 'Handing-On' compiled by Douglas and Helen Kennedy and published by the EFDSS.

A Guide to enable folk dance leaders to tune up their natural dance technique. This personal aspect of leadership was omitted from the pamphlet 'Handing-On' as not everyone need be interested in the inner secrets of folk dance action.

We have written this guide not only to help the leaders to help themselves, but with the hope that their increased effectiveness will improve folk dance technique generally. The leader must be careful not to 'teach' this 'tuning up' directly to his pupils. He should keep the 'inside' knowledge as the leader's asset which is at the back not in the front of his mind when presenting dances. He must aim always at giving the best picture of the dance for this visual picture is the leader's most potent 'medicine', remembering that the average folk dancer, as with the general run of ballroom dancers, is content at first with his own standard of performance, mediocre as it may be.

The observations that follow are based upon our appreciation of traditional processes and methods in folk music, song and all types of folk dance. These always reflect a whole-heartedness and utter absorption in the expression. Nothing is done just for effect or in the pursuit of some aspect of beauty, but everything is concentrated on living the part. Beauty is undisputably present in the easy sureness of performance in the economy of action and the dignity of bearing that accompanies true skill, but above all in having something important to say and saying it with complete sincerity.

Folk dancing is something more than just walking about to traditional dance music, but it must be built upon the basis of everyday human action and must preserve that naturalness. The word 'dancing' calls up a vista of moving particles, and as applied to a person one pictures sparkling eyes, a buoyant air, with the body 'lit up' and all the particles in a state of excitement. This condition one sees in native primitive dancing and in some folk dancing, but for a large proportion of folk dancers in England the chief satisfaction seems regrettably to be limited to mastering the unusually rich variety of figures and patterns. It is only the few who get 'lit up' and sparkle. 'Sparkle' is a quality that seems to have been gradually declining with the march of civilisation. No doubt this quality and other 'folk' qualities of dance have been better preserved among the country folk themselves by the conditions of rural life, with its calls upon bodily vigour and its education of bodily skills and dexterities. Can these disappearing qualities which are associated with the folk tradition be recaptured even in the all-pervading urban outlook and circumstances of today? We suggest that the remedy lies to hand in the recreative properties of the dance itself. These include the youthful energies which constantly seek outlet and appear as jive, rock and roll, and other forms of relatively unbridled rhythmic dancing practiced by our young people today. These energies can be harnessed and guided through folk dance channels to increase enjoyment and improve performance. Folk dancing when 'lit up' is completely infectious, prompting onlookers to join in. From long experience we are convinced that this infectious element of 'good dancing' is best transmitted through the visual picture of dancers in action. Such transmission has always been the traditional method of passing on style and character in performance from generation to generation. In

these days of ubiquitous TV, presentation by the visual method is as readily acceptable and more appropriate than ever. Verbal descriptions of dance-action by themselves are quite inadequate, and any talk about folk dances can't describe much more than the form, where you go, which way you come back, and practically nothing about what is happening to you while in transit. This internal happening the leader and teacher must know about and be able to show vividly by dramatising his own actions. Therefore his own dance action must be as good as possible and look robust, yet effortless, rhythmic and fluent, still keeping his own personal idiom.

Our aim here is to prompt the individual leader to conduct his own self-analysis and try and do his own tuning. He can improve the tuning of his instrument, his own body, to speak with such effectiveness that a dance group, observing him demonstrate dance action, gets the right idea of its style and character more or less unconsciously. He must clearly remember that this analysis is a private examination of himself and we repeat that he *must not inflict directly this inner knowledge upon his group.*

Alongside his own infectious dancing he must of course see to the other requirements that affect the responses of the group. Congenial surroundings, persuasive music, relaxed atmosphere of enjoyment and a gay light-handed touch, all help to free the passages for dance impulse. It is not, however, sufficient to place the onus wholly upon the music, which after all is only a part of the the basis of dance expression.

Passing on dance quality by infection can be done in a number of ways. In the case of Morris and Sword Dancing, when the leader often is dealing with a set at a time, his own performance within the set is his best method of tutoring. In the larger social dance gatherings he has to 'dramatise' the qualities in the picture so that the infection can reach further out into the whole company. He will be all the more effective if he can find ways of making his own music, or even just rhythmic sounds, to match his movements. For one thing, this enables him to show action 'in slow motion', an essential aspect of his visual picture of the dance.

The self-analysis which is recommended should be made by the leader in private, and when practising he should recollect that he is not really a soloist, for his actions must be shaped to fit his partner and be related to the movements of other couples in the set.

"Do-It-Yourself" may be conveniently summarised under four technical sections which we will develop in more detail later. These are :

1. *Wholesale (Holism)*

The whole person is involved in actions, whether small scale or large scale, with the power of the whole body behind them.

2. *Float on Air with Propulsion*

The propulsion of a buoyant, elevated and air conscious body.

3. *Feeling Ahead*

The bodily skill which depends on anticipation of movement (feeling the next action in advance).

4. *Joining in, or Participation*

The spread of infection from part to part in the body, from partner to partner and to others in the dance, and ultimately to whet the appetite of onlookers to join in and be part of it.

## THE BASIS OF ANALYSIS

### 1. *Wholesale Holism*

The dancer's instrument is his whole person, body and soul. All of it must not only be able to 'speak' but the action, large or small, must spring from the centre. As an old Morris Dancer had it, "It isn't the legs as does the dancing - it's the 'hitch-up' of the body". The hitch is not just a physical lift. With that goes the inner lift - the sense of elation. This wholesale character in folk dance movement is not unfortunately as general as it should be. Too much of what we see is leg action and even that is confined to motion from the knees downward. Coupled with this restricted gait goes the discouraged posture of downcast head, sagging shoulders and lack-lustre expression. Such prim, half-hearted movement is the very antithesis of folk dance tradition. 'Dancing' implies the participation of all bodily particles in an animated exercise. So long as all parts of the person are capable of taking a share not all parts need be equally involved. But the feeling of animation must pervade all parts. Even when action is limited to a minor gesture, such as a laugh, a wink, a handshake or a clap, the gesture, to be expressive must be warmed by the participation of the whole person, who is then 'putting his heart into it'.

### 2. *Float on Air with Propulsion*

The 'natural' dancer (and the well trained one) works from high level and descends from that level to brush the ground lightly or powerfully with rhythmic step tracery. He knows that he has to be up before he comes down to register his footfall with the beat. The layman's false picture, very prevalent, is that he must launch himself up with the beat instead of landing down with it.

With a buoyant carriage not only are the legs freed for wholesale action, but the 'hitch-up' enables the supporting foot to start its drive with a comparatively weightless body already on its way. The pulsation spreads from the body centre out to the extremities undulating through the joints to the feet. Freed from the usual 'daily' burden, the body at once gains a new sense of poise. The head, balanced sensitively, also ceases to be a burden, and immensely heavy as it is, now helps to guide and control the bodily action, giving it added power if need be. Meanwhile, shoulders, neck and arms all share in this more skilful balancing act and each part learns to carry its own weight. A dancer so elevated and poised finds a new and almost cat-like facility of movement.

The good dancer is also more conscious of the air, the medium in which he moves, just as a swimmer entrusts himself to tangible water, and treats it as a friend, rather than as a foe to be brushed aside, so the buoyant and elevated dancer moving more above the surface of the ground, gets some support from his more tenuous medium. The higher ceiling in which the dancer floats gives him the scope to drop to ground level with steps of strength or tenderness according to mood. Moreover there is within the dancer a ballooning faculty enabling him to rebound back into his air ceiling. This ballooning gives the appearance of effortlessness so characteristic of all fine dance action. To launch his person into the air and to keep himself on the rebound requires the skilful propelling movement of the supporting foot, a fact which is often not understood. Next we need to encourage the fullest scope of leg action so that the thighs as well as the lower part of the leg participate. Mountain folk habituated to walking uphill are noted for the full scope and buoyancy of their step. Those who live in flat countries, and even more, the city dwellers, are content with a



restricted action, from the knee downwards, particularly noticable among women.

### 3. *Feeling Ahead*

It takes an appreciable time for a feeling of movement to reach from the centre to the extremities. A slap in the face, to be dramatic, depends on the build-up of emotion that triggers off the act of slapping, the 'flow' of the slap proceeds with a growing crescendo that reaches its climax with an effect that is all the more remarkable for its delay and because by this time it is expected. The sensitive mover can anticipate each movement through the faculty of knowing what his body is going to do before he acts. Knowing the feeling, he can even safely leap before he looks. By comparison with such anticipation your quick 'thinker' is slow. This impulse of anticipated movement, so characteristic of all animal life, is in us in danger of becoming extinct, a fact most noticable in folk dancing. As grown-ups we learn to stop and think. When we apply this attitude to such a primeval act as dancing we develop anxieties as to details of our dance journey and can't enjoy the travel. Dance, as children know very well, is an enjoyable adventure in expression and they relish every particle of motion on the way. This old enjoyment of our early ancestry has to be regenerated as an essential part of dance experience. 'Knowing' beforehand what a movement feels like becomes largely a matter of practice and experience. With the growing knack, one recovers also the sharper sense of rhythm and the combined skill shows up in a noticeable absence of effort. Traditional folk dancers never appear to be grappling with a difficulty. Rather they look as if something was gripping them. This picture of easy effortlessness is rather different from the view prevalent today of dance as a synchronisation of a piece of movement with a measured piece of music, and showing as a concentration of willpower to keep the action in time. Such effort in fact is ill-timed, for it wastes energy instead of conserving it, being against rather than with the waves of rhythm. The dancer then, instead of being lifted and thrilled by the waves, fights for his passage.

### 4. *Joining in, or Participation*

Participation in dance is another of the primeval sensibilities tending to wither under the stresses of modern life. The all-pervading warmth or elation felt by the animated dancer should be not only shared with his partner, but also with the company that composes the dance set. Such a sharing of 'life' within the dance set increases the depth of participation which then becomes strong enough to melt the crust of any shy and self-conscious ones who find it so hard to forget themselves when just on their own. In the exchange of moods with others in lively participation these shyer ones find loss of self a suprisingly easy matter. Such dance experiences are commonplace, but even so they often exceed all expectations, for the powers and energies that can be unleashed in dance participation can be prodigious. It is the harnessing of these energies that produces real team-work. This energy of expression, when set free, refreshes and recreates not only the dancers themselves, but it affects the musicians, and they in turn are stirred to new inspiration.

The effect on the onlooker is to prompt him to join in and it is this compulsion that accounts for the tenacity of the folk dance and which has kept it alive in a world that has in other respects grown far away from country life and country custom.

The ritual folk dances - the Morris and the Sword dances - without this effect on the onlooker, become meaningless exercises.

## DO IT YOURSELF

### *A catechism for the leader to test himself*

We have set out this more detailed analysis in the form of common failings (which produce a mediocre standard of performance) together with certain questions to test existing levels of performance with a view to improvement.

#### ***The Body as a complete dance instrument***

If any part of the body is 'left out in the cold' and does not participate it may well be a hinderance to the full expression of dance, which always comes from the body centre.

(Common failings : Actions confined to legs and feet. Not using the complete limbs, limiting arm actions to forearm and hands, (eg.clapping), limiting leg action to the part from the knees downward. Restricted movement is often due to anxiety or doubt of ability to cope with forms and patterns and to get these completed in the requisite time)

1. Do you feel your dancing increases your animation?
2. Do you start all your movements with an actual swing of the body or with the sense of body weight?
3. Can you 'track' flow of movement from the centre outwards? Does your movement flow right out through thigh to foot and through shoulders and arms to hands?

#### ***Buoyant carriage takes the weight off the feet***

Elevated poise 'lifts' the level and helps to keep the body alive and relieves feet of their burden.

(Common failings : Passive carriage, bent head, lifeless arms, lack-lustre eyes and a generally sagging aspect often 'gone' at the knees)

1. Can you extend your body without exaggerating and thus starting the sense of lift and relieving weight from legs? (Egg out of egg-cup)
2. Do you habitually look out at eye level or do you feel it safer to watch the ground?
3. Are your arms passengers? Can you use them (carry them) so that they help buoyancy without being flamboyant?

#### ***Air-borne and Air-conscious***

The air is friendly to the 'good dancer' as water is to the good swimmer. It is not to be ignored or regarded as an obstruction to be thrust aside.

(Common failings : If the dancer fails to 'breast it' and 'float' he tends to bob up and down and drop like a stone 'denting' the floor surface when he seeks to be forceful. Without the power of delayed approach he misses the pleasure of 'poetry in motion')

1. Are you conscious when moving?
2. Can you reach your high level in time to drop onto the first footfall?
3. Can you do this for instance in the Schottische step with continuity in the alighting, or are you content to take a step and hop, soon tiring?
4. Do you know how to delay this drop-on-to-ground in dancing to gain expressiveness - like swearing - Bl...ast! or for a tender approach, like placing the best teacup on the shelf?

5. Is you body poised above the working leg and foot, so exercising control for lightness and power?
6. Can you vary your dance passage in speed and strength so that your motion 'talks' (intelligently) in phrases?

### ***Propulsion***

Positive 'drive' is needed for the initial impulse and for continued motion - like a guided missile. This drive comes directly from the supporting foot. The dance-walk step calls for this conscious propulsion, more forceful in the American Western-style of square dancing. There is more time to give zest to the step and propulsion in the Hornpipe rhythm than there is in the fast Reels and Jigs.

**(Common failings : The failing of putting out a foot to take a step, the body trailing after with no propulsion)**

1. Can you transfer your walk into expressive dance with a chuckle before each footfall?
2. The 'Pas de Basque' step is the essence of propulsion. Can you propel yourself off your stationary foot, from rest?
3. Are you conscious of the two beats in the 'Rant' step and can you vary the emphasis to suit North Country and South Country dances?
4. In all the double steps, can you give added expression to the second pulse?
5. Are you satisfied that you invariably propel yourself into dance and keep moving with propulsion?

### ***Feeling Ahead***

Dancers must 'feel' before they leap ; as the eye in reading is in advance of the utterance, so the 'sense' of dance gesture is ahead of the action.

**(Common failings : The inexperienced dancer almost invariably seeks to coincide his dance step with the metrical beat. For true dance movement this is too late, the time for expression being expired before the feeling of it has begun)**

1. Does your body 'know' the action that lies ahead in every movement?
2. In clapping do you anticipate the climax of the handclap and give it feeling and meaning, or do you aim to coincide the clap with the pulse, which usually has the effect of hurrying the rhythm?
3. When dealing with a partner can you (as the man) give your partner the warning sense of anticipation and confidence in movements such as Promenade and other forms of leading?
4. Can you also give anticipatory warning in turns and spins?
5. Can you (as the woman) be ready to follow and give the necessary weight and momentum? : but not too ready!
6. In the pivot swing, can you anticipate and rotate head, shoulders and upper body smoothly round, making partner share this feeling before you move off the propelling foot?
7. Have you had waltz trouble, which usually arises from the lack of feeling of anticipation? Can you again rotate your shoulders and those of your partner with the anticipated pressure off your supporting foot before taking the sequence of waltz steps which, when started correctly, tend to

take care of themselves?

### ***Participation and Teamwork***

In the folk dances the teamwork grows out of the human actions of individuals infecting each other, stimulating them all to a higher level of performance. The absorption in the shared experience does not mean coming down to a common level, but on the contrary, unleashes a new source of hitherto untapped energy (as in various forms of sport).

(Common failings : restricting expression by conforming to a common drill - dressing straightlines etc instead of expanding into the surge of the communal rhythm)

1. Do you share your rhythm with the rest of the team?
2. Do you enjoy the sense of sharing movements with your partner in a country dance, or do you isolate yourself?

NOTE : The guidance given above is directed at social folk dancing in the true folk dance tradition, based on the relationship of man and partner. In England however the dances have also been widely used in children's and adult education, where dancers are frequently of one sex. Nevertheless, our advice in general applies also to leadership in these fields. Our written descriptions may read with a cold-blooded effect, but they must not be allowed to discourage the light-hearted amateur. Technique should be taken with a grain of salt, for it is essential that the leader, at all costs, preserves his own light-heartedness and the sense of fun inherent in the social folk dance.

Finally it must be again emphasized that this guidance is only for personal use and that the leader should never endeavour to impart it directly on social occasions.



# ON PLAYING FOR THE COTSWOLD MORRIS

## INTRODUCTION

Many years ago Michael Gorman, a well known Irish fiddler based in London, was asked about how to play the fiddle. He demonstrated the finger positions for the notes. The problem here is the same, where to start and what to assume is already known. Thoughtful players have many insights, some of which can be difficult to communicate, and others for lesser musicians to understand. Unfortunately it is a golden rule that one can only learn what one almost knows. Most morris musicians have little formal tutoring so I shall assume that we can start discussing some of the simple basics. The morris musician has to develop a sympathy for the movements to which they are playing. Fitting the music to the dance requires some analysis of what the morris movements are about.

## BASIC RHYTHMS

Let us accept that tunes are divided into bars, and have key signatures. Now let us consider what morris tunes are and separate them from what they are not.

Morris tunes are usually either in 4/4 or 6/8. Detailed tune classifications usually depend on the playing speed and the number of notes in a bar, leading to such titles as, Reels, Rants, Polkas, Hornpipes, Step Dances, Cake Walks, Schottiches, Measures, Marches, or to Single, Double and Triple Jigs. There is no universally agreed nomenclature system.

(diagram)

Probably the decline of the morris in the 19th century saved it from keeping up with social dance musical fashions. There are polkas used, that can be thought of as improved hornpipes, but very few waltzes outside of Adderbury where singing was a significant factor in defining the repertoire, thus there are no dance equivalents to the Mediterranean Jota or the Northern European Ländler or Oompah type. The morris has never lent itself to rhythmic complexities like some of the dances of the Basques or eastern european countries, and possibly the Midland Bedlam Morris. But it does have echoes of the distant past in particular dances, like the galliard (eg "God Save the Queen") and the 6/4 hornpipe in the various "Sherborne Jigs" or the "Shepherd's Heel and Toe" at Headington, and the 9/8 (slip jig in Ireland) tune for "Beaux (Rose) of London City".

(tune)

(tune)

There is little in common with other English folk dance traditions such as solo step and clog dancing, except in the use of elementary phrase endings or breaks, and the simplest of heel and toe stepping for a special version of

one typical dance. It did not acquire complex choreography. However I feel that it is a pity that English folk dance never caught onto rhythm types that the Old Time world reaped like the slow saunters, or walking dances, which could be very useful for providing contrasts in modern shows.

Most morris tunes are in 4/4 or common time and use the hornpipe rhythm,

(diagram)

The bars are usually thought of as divided into 8's,

(diagram)

but they are played "broken". Musical notation normally indicates this as

(diagram)

but it is not played as broken as that, except at Chipping Campden, the more accurate representation being a half way form in 12/16, ie without the dots,

(diagram)

This matches the good "jaunty" playing exhibited by Kimber and Wells.

Step dancers use hornpipes also but differently and they break the bars into sub-units based on the percussive rhythm of the steps. As the basis is a "tap" rather than a weight change step dancers need to recognise finer divisions of the bar. Thus a bar of 4 crochets can be danced as 8 quavers

(1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &) called a "duple time hornpipe", or in triplets

(1 & a 2 & a 3 & a 4 & a) called a "triple time hornpipe", or semi-quavers

(1 an & e 2 an & e 3 an & e 4 an & e) for complex steps.

Thus there is no allowance for body movement and a requirement for very even playing, not the morris idiom at all! But the concept of duplet and triplet division of bars is in fact the inherent difference between common and jig time tunes.

To preserve the feel of a "polka", if following English country music principles, care must be taken to emphasise the proper phrasing when playing them as they were originally written and played in 2 bar phrases. But I think that this also is taking the music outside of the morris idiom.

It would be expected that military marches were familiar to countrymen when many of the local volunteers had bands and every settlement had to ballot to determine who served in the militia. "Brighton Camp" was very common, as in the form "Girl I Left Behind Me" it has become the traditional tune for a regiment leaving a posting, but few other regimental marches seem to have made it into the repertoires, other than "Warwickshire Lads" at Ilmington, the Cheshire Rgt "March Past" at Eynsham and "Jockey to the Fair" from the Yorkshire Rgts.

(tune)

(tune)

Marches are properly in 2/4 or 6/8 (Sousa). An example of the later is "Liberty Bell", the Monty Python signature tune, which is not typical of jigs for morris, but excellent for clog, as the Cotswold morris does not have skipping or high knee lift stepping. Whitehall reorganised the Army regiments on a territorial basis in the late 19th century and from about 1880 required them to have a march with a local flavour, possibly too late to influence the tradition.

If a morris tune is not in common time it is a jig in 6/8! It has an underlying asymmetric pulse,

It does not mean that jigs are all played as single jigs, ie,

(diagram)

rather than

(diagram)

although this is an acceptable simplification when desired,

(diagram)

A good musician allows one to dance comfortably, but energetically not slackly, to fit the natural rhythm of the movement rather than forcing it. Too rigid a four-square rhythm muzzles expression in the morris. Even the above discussion implies too great a regularity because the 4 beats in the bar are actually not evenly distributed, not only are the weak beats retarded towards a jiggy rhythm, but the amount depends on the strength of the dancer's preceding movement. Thus it is impractical to write it down exactly because it would be too complex to follow. It is better to find "rules" for massaging the rhythm from an examination of the dancer's body motion.

#### DANCERS BOUNCE

The reality of natural movement is that it is not even and it has to be constrained to make it smooth.

Whether in 4/4 or 6/8, the dancer recognises 4 pulses in a bar regardless of the number of notes actually played. The morris step reflects that there are two stresses called "strong beats" or "on-beats" a bar and that the other two are "weak" or "off-beats". The following discussion assumes that dancers are skilled enough for the topics to matter.

First, there is the normal emphasis on the first beat of each bar. It is a strong beat for the dancer where the main effort or "drive" is made. But if the music over emphasises it, it can drive the dancer into the floor producing noise rather than lift. The effect is then similar to having "on-beat" drumming.

Second, the final beat of the bar and sometimes its step is deemphasised or even suppressed. The danger is that it might lose the body "lift" at that point. The 2nd and 4th beats in a bar are the "weak" or "off-beats", but



they are significant because they are where important lift or elevation of the dancer occurs, particularly on the last beat of a morris double.

Body movement is not even across a note or a bar because there is the continual starting and stopping from the reversals of vertical motion at the contacts with the ground. It takes longer to rise up off the ground than to fall back, unless special care is taken, and the total time allowed depends on the emphasis being given to the particular step. Think of skip steps. This natural asymmetry partially explains why jigs are more exciting than reels for Country Dancing because of their better fit to a natural bouncy movement. The degree of brokenness is related to the effort being put into the dancing or to the effort being demanded by the playing.

To understand something of the realities of movement the musician should perform some basic exercises.

Start by considering the simplest basic movement, 2 springy, jaunty dance-walk steps per bar with the weight on the balls of the feet, and no heel touch. Judges of jig dancing competitions sometimes placed their hands under competitors heels to be sure they were properly off the ground. Increasing the effort for height develops the movement into "capers", producing "plain capers" at 2 a bar. Alternatively, accenting the off-beat with a body lift or inserting a hop produces the hop-step or "single" step.

(diagram)

Try dancing in a room in front of a window with cross pieces at eye level and observe the bar's apparent movement against a distant background as a measure of vertical movement of the head and hence one's body centre of gravity. It should be found difficult and unnatural to move so that the eyes remain steady. Comfortable dancing makes full use of flexing the instep.

Ordinary walk	(diagram)	level of c of g
---------------	-----------	-----------------

Dance walk	(diagram)	body lifts by flexing foot still touching ground
------------	-----------	---

Hop	(diagram)	
-----	-----------	--

Sink to get full lift from foot and ankle	not a full drop
--	-----------------

Morris Double Step	(diagram)
--------------------	-----------

really	(diagram)
--------	-----------

Movement is determined by contacts with the ground, and Newton's laws of motion apply. The higher one goes the longer it takes. The converse should be that the slower one plays the higher one should go, not the longer one stays in contact with the floor. Normally dancers "cheat" by sinking, bending their knees, to extend the range of movement without necessarily increasing the time out of touch with the ground. The stopping of the downward motion, the reversal of direction and the acceleration up off the ground is done primarily by the spring in the foot and ankle. The energy

absorbing motion at stopping can be done faster than the acceleration, where one has to produce a force and do work. The thigh and knee contribute more to the larger, longer capers, when dancers bend at the knees.

There is a natural egocentric view which has movement spreading from the body. Although helpful for forming good images, the realities of the mechanics of movement have to be taken first.

A larger than normal movement requires either more time or more effort to keep it within the normal time bounds. Either way the note is accented as a memory jogger. As a general rule there should be a note for every step in the dance, and probably for each hand movement. It is not true conversely that every note has a step. Carried to the extreme was the Abingdon "Maid of the Mill", properly a jig with 6 notes to a bar, it was played for a while at half speed in 3/4 so that the "1 hop 2 3" went across the normal bars thus,

(tune)

The 20th century fashions in social dance have emphasised the off beat, in the morris this occurs at the kick of the free foot on the hop. There is an strong element of this in the single stepping traditions that have lasted into this century. Their dances can be done to ragtime and later popular rhythms.

One has to try and get an underlaying pulse going in the playing.

#### BASIC PLAYING

Jig, 6/8 time, is normally written, (diagram)

The "weak" beat as defined above is the last of the triplet.

To produce a "pulse" it is played with the middle of the triplet unstressed, (diagram) ie, played "in passing".

Poor morris dance music often comes from over emphasising this extra note. Of course the opposite is true for other dance idioms such as step or Irish dancing, where the feet not the body movement dominates the requirement.

To fit natural body lift it should be nearer to, (diagram)

However one does not play phrases endlessly without variation. A typical change is to shift emphasis during a phrase, for example to show the switch in stress between a double step and a back step by playing one,

(diagram) and the other (diagram)

Because public performance is rehearsed not spontaneous interpretation of the music, the musician establishes manners of playing that act as mnemonics for the dancers.

There are tricks to develop drive and excitement in the music. For example Ravel's "Bolero", used by the ice-dance champions Torvill and Dean, builds up tension without accelerating. The adjustment is in how it is being played. It uses more broken rhythm, more staccato or "snap" and more volume (but not just as noise). One can wallow in the sound from a 40 piece brass band but be shattered by a rock group at the same decibel level.

Some village traditions has their own characteristic basic step, each needing its own rhythmic subtlety. The essential differences found in just the single steps ("1 h 2 h") are,

Brackley, Hinton, Headington - a stiffish leg,

Bidford - on hop foot drawn back and lifted - giving "back-pedalling",

Bampton, Chipping Campden - raise free foot up on the step and kick it forward on hop - giving "bicycling",

All differ on the degree of hesitation on the weak beat and thus the brokenness needed in playing the tunes. It is difficult to comment on double steps as there is less traditional evidence. Cecil Sharp considered that there was a classical older version which he described, but, from the little surviving knowledge of the manner of performance, there must have been small differences. The imposing of a standard interpretation of how to play morris tunes is a major cause of clubs failing to make the differences between traditions appear in their dancing.

6/8s in 4/4 - Occasionally collected tunes such as "Constant Billy" (Minster Lovell), "Gallant Hussar" (Bledington) and "Old Woman Tossed Up" (Sherborne) are supporting evidence of how tunes were played in a very broken rhythm elsewhere when the informant gives it thus,

(tune)

(tune)

(tune)

## PHRASING THE DANCE

The dances are usually constructed of 4 bar phrases of movement which shape the dance, and this basic unit of music has to be reflected in the playing. There is not the regularity in the playing of the tunes that might be expected. The music must "stretch" at jumps, changes of direction and driving off.

A few traditions consist of long sequences of a basic step, perhaps ending with a break of 3 or 4 strong beats. The finishing action of a figure, here called a "break" after the term in step dancing, may be in the same speed and rhythm as the basic step, as at Brackley or Eynsham. If it is a simple

jump or a very emphatic pause and jump, as in some Abingdon and Chipping Campden dances, the movement takes longer and the musician has to allow the dancer "air". The stretching out of particular notes to fit the movements ensures that it is not useful to practice following a metronome, because the musician should fall behind in discrete bits.

But nearly all figures consist of strings of different movements. The most common dance phrase is 2 double steps (1 bar each), 2 backsteps (a step and a hop each, 1/2 bar each), a step and a jump to land with the feet together, ie

l, r, l, hl/r, l, r, hr/l, hl, r, hr/l, Ω, ft tog, -, //

The rhythm of the double is not quite that of the single steps. The single is in this case a back step, which normally contrasts in style, energy, and hand movements to the normal basic step. Along with the jump in the 4th bar there must be small variations in pace throughout the phrase. A more complex set is,

l, r, l, hl/ft tog, Ω, j, (r)/l, -, hl, hl/ft tog, Ω, j, -, //

The springs, Ω, in bars 2 and 4 and the rhythm of the galley in bar 3 depend on the tradition. At Longborough and Fieldtown the movement of the galley goes through smoothly and the beats are very regular, even if the tune is written in 6/8. At Sherborne the galley is a step forward and then a turn on the hops so that there is a spring through the weak beat and the hops are emphatic. Note that there may be a deemphasised step or hop on the final weak beat of a bar preparatory to the next movement, especially if it is a particularly strong one. As it is small, it needs to be delayed, ie be late. This shows in a series of "spring capers". These are single capers, one to a bar, thus,

/l, Ω, r, - /l, Ω, r, - /

In practice they often include a preparatory hop ("half capers") or a change step ("furries"),

hr/l, Ω, r, hr/l, Ω, r, - / or /l, Ω, r, l/r, Ω, l, r/l, Ω, r, l/r, Ω, l, - /

noting that the last of a series only has the preparatory hop or change step if there is something immediately following. The height and rhythm of the half caper depends on the tradition and its quality is related to the associated arm movements.

Spring capers can be timed as (diagram) or (diagram) depending on the tradition or the club.

A tradition like Fieldtown makes a great deal of these preparatory movements throughout the dances. Others liked to be "clean" and unfussy.

Extra bounces can be used keeping the vertical motion going rather than limiting them.

(diagram)

It is essential that the musician finds out the club preferences. A caper is a high spring onto a foot, while the free foot does something. "r, Ω," can be written as "R, Ω," to emphasise the effort. A subtlety with 4 plain capers at the end of a movement is whether they really are 4,

/1, r, 1, Q/R, Q, L, Q/R, Q, L, -//, or 3, 1, r, 1, h1/r, Q, L, Q/R, Q, L, -//  
and play it accordingly.

About the one thing that is certain is that the morris is never, never played quite as written!

A problem of the professional dance is that it aims for continuous variety and this encourages dancers to move gracefully from one pose to another, and there is little that the conductor can do working with an orchestra to follow the dancer. The contrast with the morris idiom needs more exploration. The revived Greek dance is worse in that the poses are derived from classical but static illustrations.

#### SPEED

The normal speed for a Morris used to be 96 "strong" beats a minute, 48 bars or a 4 bar phrase in 5 seconds, which is easy to follow on a clock or watch with a second hand. This speed has been found all round the Cotswolds by the older collectors. Slightly higher speeds have been observed, eg at Bampton, "Brighton Camp" seemed to be played faster. Some dances have been collected somewhat slower, down to 80 beats a minute or 4 bars in 6 seconds. This is more in line with modern practice where all the team have dance skills. The tradition thought itself lucky when it had 3 good dancers so its performance was conditioned by the numbers of inexperienced men. It is possible to dance as slow as 72 beats a minute given a "large", energetic step, usually a single step, as done for example by the "Shropshire Bedlams". To dance slower requires control and its is desirable to practice so as to produce large emphatic movements and to develop a style, but the product is not necessarily the best for appealing to the public during its performance. While control is being developed, the optimum effect may be produced at higher speeds where the appearance of faults are minimised and the speed of the music is itself exciting.

Music is a physical thing. It has immediate effects on blood pressure and pulse rates, pumps up the adrenalin levels and makes breathing quicker and more irregular, without having to do anything. Tempo itself can be used to excite or tranquilise. For most people a tempo of 75-80 beats a minute is neutral. If faster than 80 it becomes stimulating, if slower than 75 it is saddening. This "neutral" tempo is obviously connected with a whole group of body clocks, all normally at about 75-80 beats a minute, that control such activities as heartbeat. The body clocks of young people tick faster than those of adults and they will remember things as having been "slower" when they were younger when actually they were not! An exciting speed is when the heartbeat and so on from the exertion match the speed of the music. Experience gives dancers both better control and less over all exertion, however beginners over exert, and hence react better to higher speeds. Excitement is a balance between effort and speed and rhythmic playing.

We all know that music is used in ordinary life to promote effects on us and to provide Pavlovian triggers to elicit right movements and right attitudes. We also know that there are tricks with melodies to induce emotions. Thought should be given to why some tunes are so satisfying to dance to and also why there are not that many Morris tunes. A good tune has to fit the

morris step with a rhythm that provides both the stress and lift when it is needed, the antithesis of the modern off beat rhythms, and it also needs good phrasing, the opposite of the rumbling along of most country dance tunes. It is a common experience that recalling the tune is an easy way to remember a lost dance's movements, although the opposite is more difficult. It must be conditioning because over various villages quite different movements are fitted to nominally similar tunes.

Where a dance uses what is basically a Country Dance dance-walk, the music is naturally played faster to achieve the same overall level of excitement. Country Dance music, jigs and reels as used by the various national folk dance societies, aim at 100-120 beats per minutes. Rapper is faster and the long sword at Loftus is faster still, but these are only 2 walking movements to a bar not the 4 of Cotswold Morris. There are two Rapper styles of different speeds recognised, the "steady" and the "crash-bang-wallop", but the basic stationary stepping or "shuffles" can be performed at a great pace if desired. From experience, at about as fast as I can play!

### STICK DANCES

There are two problems generated by the dancers which ought to be removed at practices but often are not.

First, Speeding up during the tapping.

The dancers need to develop larger arm movements to fill up the music. If the musician follows the dancers they will gallop away with the dance. Sometimes the dancers can not hear the music because of the clatter of the sticks, their concentration on the movements, or because they are having fun. The musician must be prepared to say something, especially at the club practices but also to the foreman when out, if it is very bad, and to play to hold them back by emphasising key beats and hesitating. For example a typical "Shepherd's Hay" should be played as,

(tune)

Second, Moving Off

As the tapping sequence is usually done when either stationary or stepping on the spot, the dancers need time to accelerate into the next movement. Dancers should be encouraged to rise onto their toes in preparation for the move off and not to stay fixed with weight on their heels. It is necessary to hold off the music a little, and it is best done off of a last emphatic stick tap. To achieve this it requires consistency in playing to keep the team together. The time needed depends on the height of the jump and the distance that has to be reached, ie on the set spacing.

I think that the Bedlam Morris, whose territory overlapped with the northern extent of the Cotswold Morris, was a fantastically dressed tradition which relied on sticks and stepping to compensate for an absence of music other than drums.

## TUNES

The persons who were the sources for the traditional tunes are very few and not many of these were actually musicians. The recordings available today are of a handful of players only.

Kimber (Headington, concertina), Wells (Bampton, fiddle and melodian), Clarke (Bampton, fiddle) but recording not very accessible, Bennett (Ilmington, fiddle) and Robins (Bidford, fiddle) in US Library of Congress collection.

The morris idiom is different from any other dance form, and strictly one can not read across from other English country players' styles without hard evidence that it should. The older recordings show very straightforward playing, quite unlike what we have come to think of recently as English country music. Elements of English country playing styles may date back to the Bach's time when players were expected to improvise. There is a suspicion in my mind that this style for the morris is a creation of the 20th cent with a flowering since WW2.

The collected "traditional" tunes did not necessarily come from musical people, or from a good memory, nor were recorded simultaneously with any dancing. This explains poor variants of the tunes, rather than the unusual ones, which experience suggests are likely to be authentic. Better variants can be used to improve the presentation of the morris, but unusual versions can only be used with caution because of the false impression that can be given, especially if the tune is well known to the public, like 'Brighton Camp'. There is little evidence of multiple collection from the same source or from different sources in the same place. What there is suggests that individuals were usually consistent, but that different people from the same village could have significant variants.

(tune)

(tune)

The collected names of tunes are not consistent from village to village. Some teams used the same tune for more than one dance, and others, eg Fieldtown, has two different tunes with the same name.

(tune)

(tune)

Tunes are phrased to fit the dance movements, hence most have 4 bar units. Where the tune is intrinsically 8 bars long then, as at Fieldtown, the dance could be constructed using extended dance phrases to match. A similar problem was met by the City of Winchester morris when working with brass

bands for music,

The collectors noticed the deviant tunes, the unusual lengths, eg "Black Joke" with its extra 2 bars on both the A and B parts. It was so popular that it spawned a whole set of Jokes of different colours of which the "White Joke" was used at Fieldtown for a heel and toe dance. Mason's "Highland Mary" at Stow had a 7 bar B, "Old Hog or None" (Brill) a 10 bar B, "Warwickshire Lads" (Ilmington) a 10 bar B, and "Saturday Night" (Badby) a 14 bar B. The oddest tune collected was the "Princess Royal" from Withington.

(tune)

(tune)

(tune)

Most tunes have 2 parts of 4 or 8 bars length, and a few, "Crunkles" and "Step and Fetch Her", have 3. Only with Bidford "We Wont Go Home Till Morning", Eynsham "Jockey to the Fair" and Withington "Princess Royal", is there a third part that is recognisably taken from another tune. Another mixed tune is "Nuts of May" from Lichfield. Changing tunes during a dance was not a normal practice, and used only as a joke.

(tune)

(tune)

(tune)

## LEARNING

The first step is getting to know the melody. One should avoid playing from written music for dancing except perhaps in the very early days of a side practicing a new dance and even then poor playing can kill the side's enthusiasm for the particular dance by making it uninteresting or even difficult to perform. Knowing the melody means being able to whistle it or sing it without being committed to a final rhythmic interpretation and not being wedded to a bit of paper. Chose a key that is easy for the instrument. Most people play boxes in G, especially if it has limited basses. Most collected tunes are written in the mss in G (#) regardless of how they were actually found. A few are commonly played in D (##) where it is necessary to keep within a restricted instrument range. Fiddlers find it



easier to play in A (###) and brass instruments in other keys.

Have separate music practices to learn the tunes. At team practices one should be observant and following the dancers, not struggling to reproduce a melody. However it is a common experience that once a few tunes have been learnt in the idiom, then others come quite quickly.

Reg Hall once commented on my playing that all the tunes of one class sounded the same and suggested that I aim to make each have an individual character. John Kirkpatrick and Alan Whear have taken several different ways in music workshops to show the need to and value of getting under the skin of a tune and make it your own.

What does this mean in real terms? First avoiding the music sounding as if it was provided "by the yard". One finds which notes have flexibility in pitch, where grace notes and other musical embellishments can fit, what notes that might be dropped on occasion and when accents can be used that are not essential for the dance.

Choosing new tunes is difficult. It has to be satisfying to play over and over (and over) again at practices as well as outside, and still come over as interesting. Somebody else's weird tune may not work for you! Tunes are normally played as first heard and they are not often massaged to fit the morris, although Shrewsbury Lasses have a "folk" version of "Radetzky March". There are a few tunes in minor keys, "Princess Royal", "Cuckoo's Nest" and "London Pride" but even these exist in major versions which seemed preferred today.

#### STANDARD VERSIONS

A study of extant lists of tunes and dances from traditional sides showed a very limited tune repertoire. There are less than 20 tunes that can be considered common throughout the Cotswolds, 7 almost universal and 10 probably used by more than half. By studying list of dances from the old teams it seems that an average repertoire was about 17 dances of which 7 could be jigs, a proportion very unlike that of modern dance troupes.

So some tunes are very common and standard versions can be deduced.

(tune)

(tune)

(tune)

A few of these standards allow of more working out. An example is "Shepherd's Hay". There are composed variants - eg Percy Grainger's arrangements - and strange versions - eg Fieldtown "Signposts".

(tune)

When playing melody instruments together it is often worth thinking of second parts. The chord sequences of most tunes are very simple so that classic tunes like "Shepherd's Hey" can fit. If you like to be more adventurous, try "Good King Wenceslas"!

## INSTRUMENTS

There was a very fine article on the history of boxes in ETHNIC, a long time ago magazine which ought to be reprinted!

Pipe and tabors were mentioned in history long before the morris appeared by that name. In the 19th century they were commonly called "whittle and dub". The "three hole" pipe is capable of a full scale when played with one hand. It seemed that the art of making pipes was largely lost in the western Cotswold morris area in the 19th cent and this was responsible for the disappearance of active players.

Bob Potter of Stanton Harcourt was a famous player who "could almost make un speak". Potter played for the morrises for many miles around. Robert Brooks had made a whittle and dub at Bampton before 1820 while living at the Dragon Inn. When he left, they remained in some drawers in the possession of Barber Brooks who sold them to Potter. Potter lost his dub at Stanton and it was believed that it went back to Bampton along with a pipe and another broken black one which had been Potter's. When he became too old to play he lived in Oxford and died about 1895 and was buried in Stanton. The broken black pipe, thought to be of early 17th century make, came to Jinky Wells who gave it to Mrs Helen Kennedy, the wife of Douglas. She had the mouthpiece repaired by Arnold Dolmetsch and it was used a model by Loius & Co, instrument makers of Chelsea. Helen gave one to Joe Powell of Bucknell. He could not get on with it, "that damned woman from London", and Francis Fryer borrowed it to try and change the tuning. The Basques have a similar instrument, but with a different tuning, which became commercially available as "galoubets" at the end of the 19th cent and Joe Powell of Bucknell had had one like these. Its basic scale was CDEF# rather than a natural F. For some years, 1923-36, Powell made tabors for the EFDS from cheese boxes.

Nelson of Steeple Aston was considered a magnificent player of the pipe and tabor at Bucknell. He had one failing, he was sometimes so drunk that he could not play at all. At Stoke Lyne they showed collectors the tree where they tied him up when he was too drunk to stand. Jim Timms of Bicester and Ned his brother at Kirtlington had also played. Ned was buried with his drum and fife. Powell obtained Jim's instruments and began to play because of Nelson's failings. He claimed to have learnt from old Tom Hall of Islip and old Joseph Woods of Deddington about 1860, but picked up tunes from Nelson. The collectors found his tunes too uncertain to write down, and "when up a tree" he always drifted into "Maid of the Mill".

Fiddles were an ancient instrument also, but more difficult to play and expensive to own and not really readily available till cheap machine made examples became available in the 19th cent. The free metal reed instruments

followed their invention by Wheatstone but the concertina, melodian, accordion and mouth organ arrived too late to have had a significant influence on the 19th cent morris although the melodian in particular has become THE instrument in the last 20-30 years.

Important in considering variants is the instrument originally used, such as a fiddle, as at Bampton or Fieldtown, a pipe and tabor, as at Adderbury, Brackley or Bucknell, or a melodian, as at Abingdon. The succession at Abingdon was Thomas, Fryer, Bardwell, White and each insisted on the melodies being passed on correctly note for note, but they each played rhythmically quite differently. The instrument puts a character onto the tune which reflect its strengths and weaknesses. It affects the intervals and range within the melody rather than the rhythm, as that is dictated by the dance. Harry Thomas of Abingdon during the 1930's was an example of adaption of tunes to suit a one row melodian, from the singing of older Abingdon dancers who remembered their tunes as played on a fiddle by Gypsy Lewis. The old villages sides were often short of musicians and good players did the rounds of local sides and anyone who could play a few tunes was pressed into service. In a period when people prized individuality the old players expected to have and to play their own versions of the common tunes where ever they were and they sometimes, as at Stow, gave collectors the way other musicians "turned" the tunes.

One has to consider whether some dances are really wedded to their tunes, or if it was just easy to dance to them. As the known village dance styles are all different, obviously the tunes are adjusted to suit and this is the only justification for calling the collected tune for a dance the "correct" version. The aim however is to know why the tune is played that way as good playing needs an understanding of the particular dance. Each Cotswold side has a few, and only a few, tunes unique to itself. These often turn up as alternative tunes for the common dances. The character of a dance is somewhat dependent on the tune. The most extreme example of variation is the Heel-and-Toe dance around Stow-on-the-Wold which was danced to "General Monk's March", a hornpipe, "Oh Sussanah", a polka, and "We Wont Go Home Till Morning", a jig. More common is the multiple tune for the "Handkerchief" or sidestep-and-half-hey-repeated dance as at Bampton, where variation in speed was used as well as in rhythm to provide contrast. Consciously dancing to the tune makes each a different experience. Old sides may well have had to make do with what ever the musician could play. In some villages, Bidford and possibly Sam Bennett's Ilmington, there was no direct relationship between the stick tapping and the tune, the foreman varying it at whim to suit the rhythm offered, and also to catch the side out!

Melody is not really the important factor - instruments are played for the rhythm. I find it difficult to extract the tune from a pipe and tabor sound. Traditionally the pipe provides the rhythm and the tabor or dub is "rolled" or "tattooed" to generate the excitement - compare this with the excitement of the drumming at Combe Martin and Padstow. To do this players would use a short two headed stick.

Attack or the sharp edgedness of notes is most easily provided with a fiddle by the nature of the action of the bow, although some clasical techniques may have to unlearn for the morris. A banjo can produce a similar effect. A box is played with the bellows. Accordionists like to play "interesting"

runs on the basses, probably because they are otherwise embarrassed by the proliferation of buttons. It usually distracts. The melodian with its very restricted basses is effective for morris and accordianists should be encouraged to emulate.

### TRADITIONS

One has to recognise that the Cotswold morris was divided into two, that in and around Wychwood Forest (fiddle dominated at the end) and that North East of Oxford on the stone (always pipe and tabor). The purist avoids mixing elements from the two areas. To be able to "handle" the various traditions we have to stylise them, without regard to how the old dancers saw them. Each tradition has its own interpretations and therefore an influence on how the music for it should be played.

Some traditions allowed a sink down on the first strong beat of a bar till the heel almost touches the ground. The knee also bends a little, but rotation of the knee or thigh joint by its nature does not produce much up and down movement. The drop allows a "stronger" lift. Fieldtown and Sherborne are often danced this way. The shape of the movement being different, the playing must be slightly different as well. Beginners used to be taught the fundamental morris step using an aid or support, which could be a pair of chair backs or hanging from a barn beam or standing between the rails of a sheep dip, to get the weight off the feet while learning the quick change. The technique used to teach at Ilmington and Longborough and the style expected aimed at making the first steps of a double very similar and the drive on the first strong beat was indicated by concentrating the forward movement of the travel on this beat.

Single stepping essentially allows more lift than double stepping and the music tends to be slower and the halves of the bars played similarly.

(diagram)

Old dancers around Stow were asked about the apparent differences between the old sides. They said that Bledington liked to dance low and Longborough high. This implies quite different playing styles because of the difference in lift (speed) and the phrasing (hesitations).

A characteristic of the revived Ducklington is a "snatch" arm movement between the double stepping and the spring capers, this movement needs a note in the playing of the melody to help the dancers at the right moment.

(diagram)

Small differences in the playing for different steps, which help the dancer through, are not reflected in musical notations. For example in the corner crossings in the various "Trunkles", the playing depends upon whether it is a morris step, sidestep, or half capers. Even if the fine differences escape the musician, the music can be played like,

for the morris step (diagram)

for the sidestep (diagram)

and for the half capers (*diagram*)

One stretches the tune at the jumps to allow time for the movement and for the body control.

### TEAM PRACTICES

Does the team dance to the music or does it just happen at the same time?

A club, dancers and musicians, should practice as they intend to perform when dancing out. Musicians should be encouraged to play during exits and entrances, the "ons and offs". If these are undisciplined it makes it difficult for the musician to contribute and it breaks down the continuity of a show. The volume should stop or drown conversation during the dances and hide the post mortems in the middle which seem to occur too often when outside.

A suggestion to help rhythmic movement is to sing or whistle, rather than play, in a very jaunty style while the team is walking through movements, so as not to obscure anything the foreman wants to say.

Getting people to dance "together" can be frustrated by having dancers of wildly different heights.

Ask the foreman to give warning of a tune that is not frequently used. Beware of having demands for odd tunes sprung on the musicians in public.

Novice players should be encouraged to play alone, perhaps for particular dances aimed at helping them play for the movement better rather than as a team practice of a dance.

Practices should give everyone, especially the musicians, a lift to make it worth while coming. That involves some commitment and interest rather than just providing a service!

### CAPERS

It is the jumps and capers that distinguish the Cotswold tradition from all others.

Each sequence of movements takes 2 bars worth of tune. The music is usually the normal tune played at roughly half speed. How much slowing down depends on the tradition and the steps of the caper. Each "caper" has a preparatory movement(s) and a single high spring. As this spring is higher than others in the morris it needs longer. It is necessary to follow the individual dancers in this. It is not a problem as normally only one or two dancers are doing this together. When a side does a dance like "The Rose" from Fieldtown where they all do them together, it must be expected that they rehearse to actually be together to a standardised timing.

The "beats" played should fit to the peak efforts, so the rhythmic structure of each caper will vary and depend on the overall style of the tradition, which includes the arm movements which determine where the stress actually

occurs,

## JIGS

It was common for particular jigs to be associated with individuals and no one would dream of dancing someone's party piece when they were around. Odd length tunes had an appeal and were easy to remember for collectors, "Princess Royal" 12 bar B, "Nutting Girl" 16 bar B and "Jockey to the Fair", typically 10 to 14 bars, but as few as 8 and as many as 16 bars have been collected for the B music.

(tune)

(tune)

(tune)

Jigs can be composed to interesting tunes eg "Come to the Fair" a composed song tune, "Rondo" the last movement of Mozart's 4th Horn Concerto, and "Monks Gate" collected by Vaughan Williams near Horsham and published as a Sussex Mummers Carol.

(tune)

(tune)

(tune)

Although these are essentially a display of the dancer's skill, the musician has a key role. There needs to be an understanding before the jig starts on who is leading who, because the musician and the dancer can not both follow - this is an unstable situation! Normally the musician should expect the dancer to follow, except on the slow capers. Some people learn dances by rote, responding to the specific tune. They can have trouble following an unfamiliar musician. Many dancers like to cover a fair bit of ground in a jig and the music needs to be slower to allow this, otherwise it will degenerate into a run around.

## BANDS

Tempo is not the only way of controlling excitement. Volume and quality of the sound is also effective. Playing for the morris is traditionally a solo

activity in the Cotswolds, but not in the Border Counties or the North West. With a percussion or a brass band the instruments provide different interlocking musical parts or rhythms and as long as the volumes are balanced there are few problems. Care is needed when more than one melody instrument is played together. First, perceived volume is logarithmic in effect so doubling the sound or energy increases the effect only by 40%. Balance is still important. A good player can be allowed to dominate but a poor one just annoys the dancers and irritates the audience. Second, the major problem that is often not recognised is the blurring effect of melody instruments playing together. Some players try to exert their presence by extending the notes and even running them together. This is a negation of playing to the dancing. Even with care, different musicians do not play exactly the same and, to produce the same overall effect, each must play more staccato. As this normally allows one more punch on each note the volume level benefits as well.

Clarity is needed for the dancing, the music being an adjunct to the dance. In a group, the tunes will normally be played in simpler versions and the rhythmic subtleties already described will be submerged. Is it worth it? With "boxes" basses should be simpler as well.

Great care is needed in playing with someone from another side, especially when it is not your side dancing, as the nuances will be different, being those of a another group of dancers, and one musician has to lead. Do not assume that another musician plays either the collected tune or your version for the dance. Always ask to join or wait to be asked to play together. Do not expect to play at a dance instructional as the arranged musician is probably fully occupied making the effort to provide exactly what the instructor is doing or demanding and is providing for the ease of the dancers all the fine detail of rhythm and emphasis which the person learning the tune has not started to be aware exists. An inexperienced or differently experienced musician just clogs up the air.

#### COMMENT

I have played an accordion for many years, but I only claim insights not definitive messages. From the above it should be obvious why we should think of club house styles rather than traditions. Can a team really support 2 or more distinct styles of dance? Or is it that any set of 6 dancers plus musician is unique and that this individuality is the objective of the performance of the morris?

V 2,1 ©1990 R L Dommett

# **Tweaking tradition: Cotswold morris workshop Sidmouth 1996**

**Leaders: Simon Pipe and Mark Rogers**

**Workshop notes by Simon Pipe**

An increasing number of respected commentators are urging nowadays that the morris should move forward - perhaps even re-invent itself. At the same time, they caution against "wild excess" and speak of the need to stay faithful to what has gone before, and draw strength and stability from the core tradition.

Creating new dances, even new styles, is one approach to the challenge of giving the morris new appeal. But where does that leave the "traditional" material? Many dancers have great reverence for the material collected by Sharp, but much of it has limited interest for an audience. Traditional dances are often repetitive and frankly, boring. One answer to this might be to "tweak" them, expanding on the original concept but exorcising some of the repetition. The aim of this workshop is to see how that might be done.

The workshop will begin with a group session, examining a "problem" dance or two, and then participants will be asked to break off into teams to tackle individual dances. It won't be necessary to be familiar with any particular traditional style - if necessary, the dance can be translated to another style.

The idea is not to have one or two people in each set dictating to everyone else. It's suggested that each group should start by discussing problems and solutions. Initially, all ideas should be given an uncritical hearing, so that everyone can feel they are contributing. Ideas breed ideas, and one person's half-formed notion may inspire someone else's. Trying ideas out will suggest more still.

There won't be time to produce complete dances or complete solutions, though time can be saved by not dancing figures such as foot-up, if they're as-standard, when trying ideas out.

There may be more than one solution - try as many as possible. It is very easy to dismiss an idea that sounds unworkable, but which would actually be extremely effective. The person who dreamed up the sword-fight in *The Three Musketeers* may well have had a hard time persuading anyone it could work.

Try not to get bogged down in minor detail. If tackling a conventional stick dance, which has the same sticking in every chorus, repeated every time after a half hey, it's only necessary to have a broad idea of how the sticking can be varied (ideally while retaining some essence of the original every time); you may also need to spend time tackling the problem of having an over-worked half-hey.

It's frequently said that an idea needs to be simple if it is to work and endure. One way to achieve an impression of complexity without over-taxing dancers' ability to learn is to use familiar rules - for instance, always using slows or figures in the same order, even if they're changed in some other respect. A standard column dance might be transformed if the slows are danced, in at least one chorus, on the move - so use a familiar pattern, such as the hey.

One justification for keeping simple dances is that they're useful for beginners. In reality, few beginners dancing out in public are so raw that they cannot manage a sticking routine that develops with every chorus. You can always have two versions of a dance - simple for teaching, interesting for performance.

Your favourite side-step-and-half-hey dance may well look and feel lovely, but that's no reason why it can't be exposed to scrutiny. You can always decide to leave it as it is - you can't change every dance at once.

## **Some thoughts on repertoire ..... for after the workshop**

Don't simply look at individual dances - you need to see them in the context of your overall repertoire (meaning those dances you perform regularly, rather than those which you could perform, but don't). It may be worth doing an appraisal of your repertoire, so you can identify which dances most need work, and what the potential is even for dances that are quite good. This can be a fairly casual assessment - or if you think team mates will read it, a written analysis. This would be especially valuable for teams that perform only a few dances - when every one counts.



Some teams may perform forty different dances in several traditions; others only ten, in one style. But if those ten are full of variety, and exploit the tradition to the full, which team has the richer repertoire?

You may think Ascott/Fieldtown Glorishears works just fine the way you do it, and you may be right (though it's probably better for the dancer than the audience - it has a lot of repetition). However, you could try dispensing with conventional figures, so that the set never need form the familiar six-person rectangle. There's a practical reason for doing this - it's easier to make the walk-round circular if it starts out as a circle. But there's another reason - if every other dance in your repertoire is based on the rectangle, then having one or more dances that avoid the rectangle altogether creates interest, for audience and dancers (to say nothing of the poor musician).

Of course, conventional half-gyps won't work in a round set (though unconventional ones might). But heys *can* work, and of course there's always rounds.

Ah, you say, but Glorishears is already very distinctive. True enough. But if you don't want to make Glorishears a circular dance, you're still left with a valid idea - so apply it to another dance. Most corner dances would look much "cleaner" and less cramped performed in a circular set.

There's not much point creating a dance if it's going to be very similar to one you already perform. You won't be able to do both in the same stand. In many of the core traditions, nearly all stick dances are identical except for some very minor variation in the sticking. Give us variety! If two dances are largely alike, "tweak" one - or drop it.

Are there gaps in your repertoire? If so, perhaps you could create or adapt a dance to fill the gap. So you need to think about the elements that are possible within the traditional framework, and note those you're lacking, and those you have in abundance (now there's an idea - a dance with buns).

Consider the various "shapes" in the traditional morris: columns; corners; dancing in a circle; dances with heys; possibly dances in a line; those in which one dances across the set; dances with cast-outs; dances that finish with everyone in the centre. And of course, a Morris On and a Morris Off. Which are you missing?

Then consider the steps - you may have several dances that feature slows, but do you ever have all six dancers performing slows together? The impression created is quite different. How about a heel-and-toe dance? And so what if your tradition doesn't actually have a heel-and-toe step? Invent one! If you want to be authentic, seek inspiration from associated styles (eg for Ascott, look to Fieldtown). Twizzles? Leapfrogs? Some steps are versatile - in several traditions, an Upright Caper can be danced in its simple form, or with a leapfrog, with a twizzle, even with a galley. How about chest-bounces? What other potential does your chosen tradition offer in this way, as yet unrealised? Exploring such possibilities is an entirely logical way to extend the range within a style - it's *almost* natural evolution.

Your repertoire may contain plenty of rounds and lots of slows - but do you ever dance the slows in the rounds?

Look also at sticking, if you do it. If you don't do a stick-throwing dance, there's a gap yearning to be filled. What about overhead sticking, as in Adderbury Lads a-Bunchum? It could be argued that Cotswold Morris is crying out for new things to do with sticks. Why not a stick-twirling chorus? It doesn't have to be taken seriously. Hand-clapping ought to be a winner - the "other" dance the audience can recognise, after "the stick dance" and "the hankie dance". Yet hand-clapping isn't popular, despite scope for humour, spectacle (high-kicking under-the-leg stuff), or even contrived violence (face slapping). A simple but entertaining clapping dance can bring a bonus for the audience - you can get the kids up to do it with you.

You could virtually invent a dance simply by drawing up a list of elements you'd like in your repertoire, but lack. A hand-clapping corner dance with twizzles? Get the tune, and you're half-way there.

### **It's all a matter of opinion .....**

You may be inspired by some of things written here - but your team mates may not. There ought to be something in these notes to cause any team to view its repertoire critically, as all performers should do. But if you want to push for changes - especially if you're not a foreman - do so gently. You may have to overcome suspicion from people who think you want to "ruin" the tradition, and people who have little awareness or concern when it comes to considering the audience, or the need for the morris to evolve ..... for whom tradition (whatever they perceive that to mean) is justification enough for what they do. It's important to be sensitive to those feelings.

# Bacca pipes jigs workshop

## Sidmouth 1996

**Leaders: Simon Pipe and Mark Rogers**  
**Workshop notes by Simon Pipe**

*It would be helpful if dancers could read the introduction before the workshop; the rest of these notes are intended to serve as an aide memoire, and to expand on the workshop.*

### Introduction

This workshop is one of a series of four exploring ways of making the most of the Cotswold Morris repertoire. The teaching pace will be demanding and participants should be experienced dancers, though not necessarily with experience of Cotswold Morris.

All four workshops are also designed to seek new ways of performing the morris, giving it a modern dimension with greater appeal to more-sophisticated audiences, whilst keeping faith with tradition.

The name "bacca pipes" refers to clay (tobacco) pipes, in this case in the long-stemmed churchwarden style. Two churchwardens are placed on the ground in a cross formation, and the dancer executes a series of steps over them. Though there are obvious similarities with the Scottish sword dance, the character of the bacca pipes jig is very different.

At present, bacca pipes is seldom performed, despite presenting an opportunity to introduce diversity into a team's repertoire. Six bacca pipes jigs are noted in Bacon's Handbook - none of them will be taught here. Instead, the intention is to show dancers how to create new bacca pipes jigs using traditional and newly-invented moves. It's expected the workshop will use only one basic step, with possible variations.

The workshop will be structured so that patterns on the pipes start easy and become more complex. A considerable time will be spent consolidating the step, which may seem difficult at first. Dancers who find it easy are asked to be patient. Once most dancers have the step solid, the intention is to work at a rapid pace. Novice dancers are unlikely to keep up.

It is also the intention to teach as many moves as possible during the workshop: this will rule out any prospect of teaching an entire dance. The view is that participants should tackle the challenge of creating their own dances after the workshop. It's felt that doing this is an important part of developing a dancer's insight and skill.

### Workshop structure

#### **basic step**

rounds, move right only

repeat, two dancers on same pipes ("doubles")

side-across, move right only

repeat, doubles

side-across, move right only - dancer A only (4 bars), B only (4 bars, from N), then both dancers (8 bars)

side-across, moving every bar (ie on to right and on to left)

(note: if dancing side-across doubles, moving every bar, one dancer must use left-foot lead).

past-present-future

reinforce: side-across right only, rounds right only, ppf - all doubles.

inward turns

rounds, move every bar (repeat as doubles)

side-across every, inward turns

side-across every, reverse half-way (demonstrate only)

**step variations:**

heel-toe-step-kick

halves (tap every other beat: tap right, kick (and step), tap left, kick)

heel-toe halves (as halves, but tap right heel, tap right toe (and step), tap left heel, tap left toe)

quarters (tap every beat: tap right (and step), tap left (step), tap right, tap left etc)

heel-toe-heel

heel-toe-heel, rounds (can also be done side-across)

wide turns

back turns

tap-behind

walkovers

setting

hopscotch

## General notes

The following notes all refer to the style and approach taught in the workshop. They will not necessarily be true of traditional dances.

The basic step is: tap right, kick right, step on to right, kick left;

and repeated left: tap left, kick left, step on to left, kick right.

The supporting foot leaves the ground in a hop or step between every beat; so in a four-bar phrase (ie half a figure), the supporting foot is:

l l r r | r r l l | l l r r | r r l l |

..... in other words, hop, hop, step, hop; hop, hop, step, hop; hop, hop, etc

The dancer will always be positioned at the beginning of each bar in one of the segments, named for the points of the compass - NSE or W. Generally, it's easiest to assume the free foot is tapped in place (ie, tap N if the dancer is positioned in N), unless specified otherwise (as in past-present-future). The supporting foot should be about 18/24 inches from the centre of the pipes; the tapping foot as close to the crux as can be managed without hindering the flow of the stepping.

The dancer will usually be facing approximately towards the centre of the pipes on the first beat of each bar, though some variation may make the dance more interesting.

Each phrase, or figure, should always start and usually finish at the dancer's "home" position. For solo jigs, this is South (the musician notionally being position-d North, but standing away from the pipes). Where two dancers share the same set of pipes, home positions may vary according to need.

A right-foot lead is used here, except, possibly, when two dancers are on the same set of pipes. "Right foot lead" means the right foot is tapped at the beginning of the phrase. It's up to the individual whether to tap the heel or the toe, but for some figures one may feel more suitable than the other. For variety, a dance should probably use both heel and toe.

It may be helpful to remember that there are really only two basic patterns of movement possible on the pipes: "rounds" (moving one place to the left every step, say), and "side-across" (or "across-side"). It's also possible to perform a variety of steps while remaining in one place. The interest in the dance is created by using variations in the stepping and changing the frequency of movements, having more than one dancer on the pipes, and by introducing special steps, such as country-dance "setting" or hopscotch, and by doing some stepping away from the pipes.

Bacon's Handbook of Morris Dances says there are no arm movements in traditional bacca pipes jigs. However, arm movements make the jig more flamboyant. It's suggested that they should be out to the side, in a shoulder-high balance, rather than forward-and-down as in, say, Fieldtown morris. Different patterns and steps should suggest different arm movements - it's a matter for experiment and personal taste. Arm movements need not be used throughout the dance.

The bacca pipes jig can easily be allowed to look like a low-energy dance. It is most impressive if the stepping is crisp, well-defined, and energetic, with kicks moderately high. Otherwise it can be lacklustre. There is a reason for the decline of the bacca pipes jig! Again, bold arm movements can create an impression of energy.

For novelty's sake, the dancer can "slap" the free foot with his hand. The easiest way to do this is to draw up the free foot on beat two, after the tap, and slap the heel with the opposite hand (right foot, left hand), slapping in front of the weight-bearing leg; then step on to the foot that has just been slapped, as normal. However, it is possible to work in three slaps without changing the basic step (ie tap, kick, step, kick). In beat one, tap the ground; in beat two, left hand slaps right foot as already described; in beat three, the dancer steps on to the right foot, and the left foot is slapped by the right hand, behind the body; in beat four, the left foot is slapped by the left hand, still behind the body. From beat five, the whole thing is repeated, except with the left foot tapped and then slapped by the right, etc.

It's obviously easiest to create interest with more than one dancer. Two dancers can either share one pair of pipes, or dance side-by-side - very effective, especially in complex moves that may appear random and improvised in a solo dance, but it's important neither dancer makes a mistake! Two dancers on separate pipes could either work in parallel, or facing in opposite directions, or even in mirror-image. Or maybe all three .....

The patterns taught in this workshop all involve stepping directly over the pipes; for added interest, performers should aim to include figures in which they step away from the pipes, perhaps in large circles or in a figure-of-eight. Such figures give an opportunity to make eye-contact with the audience, which is difficult (but not impossible) in more intricate patterns.

Speed: faster probably means more impressive, as long as it is not so fast that the definition in the stepping is lost. For performances under pressure, slow it down!

A good finish is desirable. One possibility is to dance four bars of "rounds" (say S, E, N, W) followed by four bars of side-across (S, W, E, S), stepping to N on the final or penultimate beat, into a finishing "pose", facing away from the pipes. Or simply finish at S, kicking out boldly on the final beat.

Music: most of the 19th century dances appear to have used Greensleeves (not the ice cream van version). Any tune in 4/4 time, with two distinct phrases of eight bars (or four bars repeated) ought to be suitable. Note that in many morris tunes, the second halves of the A and B music are virtually identical, which is not ideal for bacca pipes.

The dance need not be performed over pipes, but any alternative objects that rest more than an inch off the ground (say, two brooms or morris sticks) will restrict the speed and range of stepping possible. Roy Dommett recalls seeing a gardener performing a similar jig over crossed parsnips (I think it was parsnips); the Seven Champions Molly Dancers famously performed over the spread-eagled legs of two men from the audience, sitting back-to-back on the ground. Another possibility would be to dance barefoot over two crossed roses, with the thorns intact. And on the Morris Dance Discussion List (on the Internet), the following question was recently asked: "Has anyone ever done it with a banana skin"?

Equipment: genuine clay churchwarden pipes are expensive - roughly ten pounds each. And they break! There is a maker who can supply them for dancing, with a metal rod down the stem. Lenny Leggett of Frome Valley Morris has made excellent "fake" metal pipes, which bear all but the closest scrutiny and can be bent to sit well on uneven surfaces. The advantage of fake pipes is that the stems can be made longer than was traditional, which can be more effective. Parsnips can be obtained from specialist suppliers (greengrocers).



# Broom dance workshop

## Sidmouth 1996

**Leaders: Simon Pipe and Mark Rogers**

**Workshop notes by Simon Pipe**

*It would be helpful if dancers could read the introduction before the workshop; the rest of these notes are intended to serve as an aide memoire, and to expand on the workshop.*

### Introduction

This workshop is for experienced dancers, though not necessarily with experience of Cotswold Morris or Molly Dancing. The workshop will be partly improvisational; participants are encouraged to experiment, with a view to creating their own broom dances in the future.

It will be possible to participate using a stick if no broom is available. People with brooms may be asked to share them, at least some of the time.

**Safety warning:** please be aware of the people around you. Do not swing your broom in any way or attempt to perform even simple balancing tricks unless you are certain the space around you is completely clear and everyone is aware of what you are doing - in other words, only do it if you're asked to demonstrate. If the weather is suitable, it should be possible to practise such moves out of doors.

**Please also take responsibility for your own safety. If you're working near an idiot, move.**

This workshop is one of a series of four exploring ways of making the most of the modern morris repertoire. Though broom dances are not readily associated with Cotswold Morris, Bacon's Handbook of Morris Dances notes that Abingdon has a broomstick dance, and Sam Bennett of Ilmington was a solo broom dancer. Broom dances have been recorded in various parts of the country, including Dartmoor, and they're particularly associated with Molly Dancing.

All four workshops are also designed to seek new ways of performing the morris, giving it a greater appeal to modern audiences, whilst attempting to keep faith with the spirit of the tradition. Though traditional notations do exist, this workshop will not use them; the intention is to show dancers how to create new broom dances, based on traditional elements of the form. The workshop will use very simple stepping (in morris parlance, single- and double-steps).

Participants will not be taught a complete dance, ready for public performance; however, a dance of sorts will be created to show how moves can be pieced together. The view is that by tackling the challenge of creating their own dances, in their own time, dancers also develop their skill and insight.

If you have come to this workshop wearing a long, slender evening gown, you may regret it.

### The basics

Broom dances can feature some or all of the following:

- balancing the broom
- sweeping
- swinging the broom
- passing the broom under the legs
- passing the broom around the body
- twisting (or "rattling") the broom
- twirling the broom
- stepping with the broom on the ground
- throwing or kicking the broom into the air
- special tricks (eg leapfrog over the broom, jumping "through" the broom)
- novelty moves (eg "riding the broom", or using the broom as a crutch, a la Long John Silver)

Some moves incorporate more than one of the above. Swinging and twisting the broom are distinctly different, but both can be done simultaneously.

Within any figure, it helps if the stepping becomes more elaborate/skillful/impressive as the figure progresses. As a rule of thumb, if the audience has seen a particular move four times, try to vary it thereafter.

Some of the ideas suggested here have never, as far as the author is aware, been used in performance.

## Sweeping

This is what brooms are for, remember? Doing a broom dance without sweeping might serve as an obscure artistic statement, but one really ought to use the broom to its full potential. A figure spent simply stepping round and sweeping can be good for audience interaction, with scope for elements of foolery ..... brushing between people's legs, polishing shoes, assaulting the musician, and so on. As an opening move, it can help establish the performer's territory. Odd sweeps can be worked into other moves - for instance, a quick brush can be fitted in after passing the broom under the leg. Also, the dancer can try twisting around whilst sweeping ..... turning the body through 360 degrees, perhaps, while continuing to sweep in the same direction.

## Floor work

Dances often commence with the broom placed on the ground, while the dancer executes a sequence of steps along the length of the handle, or - less commonly - around the head of the broom. For this to work with very simple stepping requires the skill of a characterful dancer, able to use personality, perhaps, to create the appeal. It's probably more effective to devise moderately complex or clever stepping. These examples will work with the dancer facing along the line of the handle (shaft):

- 1) Hopscotch. A step from a children's game, but you may find this version difficult. Start with both feet on the ground, astride the handle; then step on to the right; then on to both; then on to the left. Easy so far - but to be effective, the right foot needs to be placed on the *left* side of the handle (when the left foot is free), and the left foot on the right side. Furthermore, the upper body should NOT move from left to right with each step. Not so easy! For elaboration, try the same stepping, but when the weight is on the right, tap the toe of the left foot on the right side of the handle, behind the supporting foot, and repeat the other way round. Or try both feet astride, then three hops on the right foot - on the left side, the right, and back to the left. Then both feet, and three hops on the left foot.
- 2) Cross-jumps. Start with both feet on the ground, astride the handle. Then a small jump, and land with the feet crossed, right foot on the left side, left foot on the right. Then back to feet-astride, then cross the feet the other way. Make it more elaborate by going straight from right-across-left to left-across-right, or by turning 180 degrees and then 360 degrees through the air between each step.
- 3) Bacca-pipes step. Nimble heel-and-toe work is appealing, as long as it's reasonably elaborate and stylish - for instance, tapping the free heel or toe on every beat, perhaps so the right foot taps to the left of the broom shaft while the supporting left foot is on the right of it. Also, with the supporting left foot on the right side, the free foot can be tapped *behind* the supporting leg, on the left side of the handle. Confusing ..... but nice.

A clever step dancer might achieve some percussive effect by shuffling and tapping the feet on the handle itself.

## The pick-up

Floor work presents the dancer with a problem: picking the broom up at the end of the figure. Simply stooping down to pick it up is too easy! For this reason, it's probably best to feature only one floor-work figure in a broom dance.

One pick-up method is to place the foot on the head of the broom and apply pressure so the handle rises up, ready to be caught. The danger is that the dancer will get a bloody nose (but the audience will get a good laugh). So try it facing away from the handle (credit to Julian Drury for devising this).

An alternative is to place the broom head with the brush on the floor, so there is a space at one end between the shaft and the ground. Work a foot into the gap, find a balance position, and briskly raise or kick the broom up, and take

hold of it. It may be possible to catch the broom and add in a quick twirl as a finishing flourish before the next figure.

A third technique: facing away from the brush, grip the handle of the broom between both feet, about 12-18 inches from the end; jump, flicking the broom handle into the air, catch it between the legs. This enables the dancer either to swing the broom through the legs and into another flourishing twirl, or to "ride" the broom, cock-horse-style, which may get a laugh. It's a matter of taste .....

If you *must* simply pick the broom up, it may be more stylish and less ungainly to squat down, Cossack-style, by bending at the knees at the hips, rather than by simply leaning over. While you're down there, why not toss in some Russian stepping?

## Passing

Some of the most interesting things you can do with a broom involve passing it under your legs and around your body. Once you start exploring, myriad possibilities present themselves, some only slightly absurd. Ideally, you *should* explore, rather than simply going for the obvious moves. But to help you on your way, here are some pointers.

- 1) In or out? Different effects can be achieved from *inward* and *outward* passes under the legs. Passing from the right hand, under the right leg is an inward pass, ie, towards the centre of the body, or line of vision. Right hand under left leg is an outward pass, ie, away from the centre. This assumes the broom is passed from right hand to left. In an outward pass, the free leg is projected forward and then across the front of the body. This can be more elegant than the forward thrust in an inward pass, which sometimes has all the grace of a dog cocking its hind leg. An outward pass can also facilitate the exchange from hand to hand, because the leg can be swung over the broom from side to side. If a double-step is used (right, left, right, hop, or right, hop, left, right), the dancer can effectively perform a closed side-step between passes, which can be attractive.
- 2) The step. A single-step (right, hop, left, hop, etc) obviously allows twice as many passes of the broom as a double-step. However, the double-step can be easier to achieve, and more stylish. A combination of the two within a figure will help sustain the interest, because the stepping will become more impressive: so four or six double steps, followed by single-step passes to the end of the figure. A full figure of single steps means sixteen successive passes; unless some kind of variation were introduced (such as speeding up the music), this would be needlessly tedious. If double-stepping, the dancer may find it easier to put the hop at the beginning of the step (right, right, left, right, etc), especially if time is needed at the end of the figure to prepare for the next set of stepping. Double-stepping can also give scope for more ambitious moves, such as swinging the broom around the body between each pass of the broom under the legs.
- 3) Technique. The less the dancer has to bend down to pass the broom, the better. A stoop is inelegant, and not impressive. Therefore, the kick of the free leg needs to be as high as possible. A good bend at the knee - for both the supporting and kicking leg - will help here. Regular stretching exercises - not just during warm-ups before dancing - will also help. Dancers should beware of kicking very high without warming up. It's also important that the handover from one hand to another is not hurried or snatched, especially as this brings a high risk of fumbling the exchange. In fact, there's plenty of time for the handover, even in single-stepping, if the free leg is immediately kicked high on the first beat of the pass (beat one or three of the music), and kept high on the second beat, perhaps with a little extra kick to sustain the height. The leg can be brought down to become the weight-bearing leg just in time for the next beat. It's not necessary for the leg to achieve full height on beat one.
- 4) The pass. Simply slipping the handle from hand to hand is the obvious and safe way of doing it. But it's also possible to toss the handle from side to side, if it's done quickly - there should be no height to the toss. This only works if part of the broom, probably the head, is resting on the ground. If the head of the broom is on the ground, a flashy way to do it (but one that needs practice and good timing) is to toss the end of the handle forward; as it falls towards you, kick the free leg high, as for an outward pass, and thrust the receiving hand under the free leg (left hand under left leg), catch the falling handle, and whip it out of the way in time for the free leg to fall. This is called an under-the-leg catch.
- 5) The broom. Can be held in normal sweeping position, brush on the floor, but there are enough alternatives to allow every other figure of the dance to be a passing figure - helpful for giving the dance a conventional A-B-A-B structure. A common technique is to lift the broom off the floor and hold it horizontal, passing it under the legs from side to side. This can be a cumbersome manouvre if the broom is always passed, say, head first, and then



twisted between passes so it is also held head first for the return. However, if the dancer has the strength, its obvious difficulty can add to the audience appeal, especially if double-step passes go into single-steps. It's made easier if the broom is passed head first from one side, but handle first from the other, with no awkward twists in between, but this might look too easy. With double steps, the really ambitious dancer could try twirling the broom, majorette-style, between passes. Alternatively, the broom can be placed with one end on the ground and held completely erect, so the dancer has to kick very high to achieve the pass. This can be done first with the brush on the ground, then with the brush in the air, which is slightly more difficult. A nice touch is to release the broom during passes so that it is free-standing, with the brush squashed into the ground, some brooms can be persuaded to stay upright, in a perfect, unsupported balance. This looks great, but probably can't be relied upon.

- 6) Anti-static. It's possible to swing the broom around the body between passes, or do passes whilst travelling along the ground, sweeping. The dancer doesn't have to remain static. Dancers should spend time playing with their brooms: it may take many sessions for a brilliant idea to emerge.
- 7) Foot-note. If you want to be really flashy, it's possible, in passing figures, to catch the broom with the foot, rather than the hand. The author's own broom dance includes such a figure. Work it out for yourself!

## Swings

Nothing difficult here: swinging is simply a matter of holding the end of the handle and turning the broom around the body, fully extended. It's useful because it's a very big movement. You can either keep the handle in one hand and swing it over your head and round, or you can pass it from one hand to the other behind your back; or both, within the same figure. Be warned, though, that it's easy to lose your grip if you swap the broom from hand to hand, meaning the broom goes flying towards the audience, probably at the eye-level of the cutest child. Practice makes for a better grip, but how's your public liability insurance?

## Twists

Start with the broom in the conventional sweeping position, and then, with a firm grip on the handle, draw it in a circle around the body, passing it over the head in the manner of a helicopter rotor, at all times keeping it in the same hand. As you do so, watch the head of the broom: with each complete circle, the broom twists through 360 degrees. This twist can be deliberately accentuated by applying spin at the start of the swing, especially if one begins with a bold sweep outwards to propel the broom into the air. Obviously, the twist can be created in either direction, though experiment will show which is most comfortable. If there isn't space to swing the broom, the same effect can be achieved if the dancer turns under the broom handle, in the way the a woman turns under her male partner's arm in jive dancing. Or the dancer can turn one way while swinging the broom the other. A combination of twisting and sweeping makes a good figure in its own right, but twists can also be applied to other techniques; it's even possible to twist the broom while passing it under the leg.

## Twirls

Stand with the broom in your strong hand, with your arm held out to your side and raised 30-40 degrees above shoulder height. The brush should be 18-24 inches from the hand, so the point of balance is slightly towards the brush. The broom handle should be as near as possible in line with the arm.

First, allow the broom head to fall so it hangs vertically, behind the line of the arm. Do this by relaxing the grip very slightly so the shaft is held between thumb and forefinger, not too tightly, and by turning the palm towards the sky/ceiling. The brush should fall through a curve, as if following the circumference of a circle.

Try this in front of a mirror or large window, or watching your shadow, so you can be sure the fall is curved. If it isn't, the broom shaft may not have been sufficiently in line with the body.

Once you've achieved this - possibly after one attempt only - repeat the drop, but this time boost the motion of the broom so the brush continues on its path, up past the shoulder and out again to its original position. This may take two or three tries, gradually increasing the boost. You've now completed one "shoulder circle".

For the second twirl, or shoulder circle, the brush should fall in front of the arm, and up and out in the same way as before. To facilitate this, the palm should be turned back, instead of up. Make sure, before you try this, that the head of the broom isn't going to make contact with your own head!

If using twirls between under-the-leg passes, it may be necessary to draw the brush towards your head and then project it upwards and outwards.

## Throws

One way to throw the broom is simply to hold it roughly horizontal, with the palm roughly upwards, and project the broom into the air in the manner of a drum major.

It's also possible to throw the broom from a twirl. As the brush comes out of the second part of the twirl, in front of the arm, simply project it skywards. The broom should turn through roughly 360 degrees. This takes practice to become consistent, which it needs to be for public performance, but it needn't be dangerous in responsible hands. However, you can expect to get hit on the head a few times before you become comfortable with this. If anyone has to suffer for your art, it should be you, not the audience.....

It would be possible to create a figure from twirls and throws: (bar 1) right hand twirl, (2) throw, (3) left hand twirl (4), throw, etc. Or simply create a figure of twirls with a single throw at the end.

## Kick-ups

These are spectacular, but best learned direct from someone who's proficient. Any juggler who works with clubs will know the principles of the kick-up - it's much easier with a broom, and more impressive (jugglers who do club-swinging will also know how to do the twirl).

## Balances

Audiences will be more impressed by a simple balance-the-broom-on-the-palm gag than by anything you do that is actually difficult. This most certainly is not remotely difficult, except possibly when you first try it. Simply stand with your partly-outstretched palm facing up, held a little below shoulder-height, place the tip of the broom handle on the palm, with the brush in the air, and balance it. Simple. Note, to recover the balance when you start to lose it, it may help to lower your palm quickly. Now do it while stepping. Practise appearing to lose control over the broom, so it starts toppling towards the audience, and then heroically recover the balance just in time. They'll love you for it.

There are other ways of balancing a broom. With the palm balance, try boosting the broom vertically into the air, and then catching it with the other palm, keeping it balanced. This takes more practice.

It's also possible to balance the broom off the elbow (out to the side) and the knee or the foot. This latter can be very effective in a low-ceilinged room, or on a windy day. With a little practice, it's possible - even helpful - to keep up a steady hop throughout this balance.

The author's own broom dance starts with a vertical head balance. The combined height of broom and dancer is approaching ten feet - it looks good. The height of the broom and the width of the head make this balance relatively easy (the author is particularly bad at balancing other objects). Start by learning the palm balance. When you're ready, place the tip of the handle on your forehead, roughly at the hairline (if you have one). Stare directly at the head of the broom and adjust the balance as in the palm balance. You will need to walk forwards and backwards - learn to do this from the outset. If allowed to fall freely, there should be very little risk of the broom poking you in the eyes. It will hit you on the head from time to time, but the pain passes. A woolly hat may be a good idea. Learn how to get out of the way.

The broom can also be balanced horizontally. Try this on the foot ..... in fact, try catching it on the foot, in a horizontal balance. This can also be done with morris sticks. The trick is to draw the foot quickly up to meet the broom, and catch the handle with the foot is descending, to lessen the impact.

Foolish dancers should try a horizontal balance on the head ..... and then spin the broom, helicopter-style. It should be possible to manage things so the broom always falls to the same point.

## Jumping the broom

Can lead to childbirth (as part of a traditional marriage ceremony) ..... unlike leapfrogging the broom, which can prevent any prospect of it. You simply grip the shaft of the broom with hands about shoulder width apart, and jump through the circle they create. If your back bends sufficiently and you can jump more than six inches off the ground, you can do it; if not, you can't. It looks daring, but it isn't really: if it came to a choice between letting go of the broom or landing flat on your face, which would you choose? There you are, then. One suggestion - if you're not very brave, try practising with rolled-up newspaper first.

## Leapfrog

Rest the broom on the ground with the shaft held vertically and the brush high ..... and leapfrog over it. *This is not recommended* ..... and besides, it only looks good if the broom is tall in relation to the dancer's own height. The author "invented" this move because he couldn't jump the broom, but he weighs well under nine stone, uses a very strong broom, and can jump high enough to avoid putting much of his negligible weight on the shaft. He never, never tries this unless someone else is nearby, preferably medically qualified. And it scares him every time (just a little).

## Structure

Broom dances can look like a succession of ideas strung together, with no particular logic. It need not be so, though the structure may not be obvious to the audience. The author's own broom dance begins with a preamble (head balance, fancy work passing the broom handle from foot to foot, and then a tricky under-the-leg routine), ending with the broom kicked high into the air. Thereafter, the dance follows the conventional A-B-A-B structure for six figures, alternating between under-the-leg moves and twisting moves. A logical construction will help you remember which bit comes next - learning the dance can take almost as long as the initial creative bit.

## Two's company

A two-person broom dance presents so many creative, spectacular and comic possibilities that there's no point even starting to describe them here. The answer lies in creative play ..... have several improvisational sessions, simply messing about with the broom and seeing what ideas emerge. Don't simply intellectualise ..... time spent "doodling" will produce fresh possibilities. Not all will work; be prepared to scrap more than half your ideas, even after you've spent a long time practising. The same goes for solo dancers.

## But that's not all .....

It's possible to go on playing around for ever. At some stage you do actually have to piece together a dance, work out how the different elements go together, shuffle them around a bit until they work, and learn to perform it. It doesn't have to be brilliant - once you have a structure, you can embellish and change it. Don't be afraid to throw some figures out to make way for better ones. And equally, don't ever regard your broom dance as "finished" - leave yourself open to new ideas, and let it evolve. It'll help keep you interested.

Being able to execute all the figures doesn't mean your great work is ready. You then have to add the style that turns it from a functional demonstration of skill into a living, characterful dance. If it ain't that, it ain't nothin'.

Your broom dance need not be fabulously clever, especially if you perform it well. Even a simple dance will help bring variety to a dance show. In fact the less complex and demanding it is, the more likely you are to be able to dance it with flair. If you're going to create a masterpiece, though, you must be sure you will have plenty of opportunity to perform it - unlike most other jigs, a difficult broom dance needs regular practice if you're to keep it in roadworthy condition.

But then, a good broom dance is worth all the effort you put into it ..... (probably).

*For further thoughts on creating new solo dances, and broom dances in particular, visit the following site on the World Wide Web: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/PaulMillennas/simepipe/htm>. Paul Millennas's own pages make fascinating morris reading .....*

Dear Simon,

Here are some comments on those of your workshops that I attended which might be of some future use to you. In general the attendees were poor on posture, balance and dance technique and I assume that providing a good model is very valuable, if attention is drawn to it.

#### BACCAPIPES

There was proper encouragement to construct their own dances but too many would not have any real idea of what was a suitable length and variety. The value of existing dances is that they provide an indication of what people have got away with in the past. I have assumed that a dance needs about five figures before it gets too long.

You concentrated on one basic stepping rhythm, and hardly mentioned the broken or cross tapping rhythms. I would have mixed them in a dance for greater contrast. Perhaps this is wrong. I have not seen a very exponent of that approach for comparison to form a judgement. There is also the issue of where to use more complex Heel-&-Toe steppings, without appearing to be a step dancer. I understand that the English step dance world has a growing interest in dances dependent on stepping but using implements, which you might be able to exploit.

Real long clay pipes (church warden's) are quite late in origin. My friend David Cooper who demonstrates pipe manufacture at the Amberley Chalk Pit Museum in Sussex finds that there are tricks in the manufacture of long pipes that have been lost and he and his contacts are trying to rediscover them. Then he may be able to make and sell a dance pipe with a solid core. At present they cost about £10 a pair, but they often have a slight twist along the stem.

The baccapipe competitions at Bampton used to spread flour or sand under the pipes so that the toe or heel taps left marks from which the closest without touching the pipes could be used to judge the winner. I remember seeing winkle-pickers being worn in the pubs!

I remember seeing men dance with their bodies more over the pipes than stretching their legs forward, so that seeing the pipes was more difficult, and giving the impression of not looking down. But I never saw anyone dance blindfolded, as done with the egg dances, where it was a matter of precise length of step to avoid treading on them.

I mentioned that a US side Rural Felicity from Brasstown in farthest North Carolina often danced entirely in simultaneous pairs, and that in this year's English tour they had a version for six, with the pipes placed in a circle. They start on the inside, and do a foot up and back outwards between the pipes, then a figure over the pipes facing out, then a dance round going once around their own pipes and then around the outside of the circle of pipes two places to end facing inwards, or at least on a diagonal. They then did another figure over the pipes, danced around these pipes once and moved round two more places outside but ending inside the ring facing out. Ad lib.

More thought is needed about arm movements or positions during the jig. The high scottish position looks effective, the opportunities for arm swinging seem limited.

## BROOM DANCE

To be comprehensive,

Papworth's dance included rattling the head of the broom by rotation claiming that it was a commonly remembered Cambridge feature.

I have seen men jump over the broom between the two hands holding it, forwards and backwards a number of times. Also raising the stem up their back and over their head to the front without letting go. Several people use the broom like a Fool's Jig stick, passing it under the thighs head first followed by the handle and rotating it to pass it back under the other thigh.

Some dancers roll the handle in contact with the body around the waist or neck horizontally or spin it overhead like a helicopter. Others use it like a band's drum major, spinning it in front, throwing it up, or dancing round using the broom like the long baton, placing the butt on the ground and moving past it whilst moving the other end to and fro.

At Bampton towards the end they use the broom as a crutch, with the head under the armpit and the leg on that side wrapped around the handle. Sometimes they go round like this doing half or spring capers.

## DOUBLE JIGS

This was the least effective workshop. Also I unfortunately, as with all the others, had to leave before the end because of other commitments.

Most dancers would have difficulty with the "track" discussion as to them this goes with the "tradition" being followed. On the whole you did not distinguish between the commonly recognised different traditional styles. There are differences when the tradition involves cross-over sidesteps.

Of the patterns of dancing double jigs I think that you missed,

Sherborne : one dancing round the other so that both were active.  
Bledington : facing and dancing half movements in turn as in *Shepherd's Hey*.  
Ducklington : alternating the foot-up and caper sections but dancing the "jig" (sidestep) part together.

At Bampton the two dancers dance together the "jig" a few times deliberately matching movements and style regardless of what they had done individually before. This usually looks effective.

I disagreed with remarks about tunes with 4 and 8 bar phrases and their influence on the dance as this really depends upon how the tune is played. It is often true if the tune is rendered as published, but I believe that the musician has to play to what is danced, which would mean for a "four" bar A that the first time through it is unresolved and this leads immediately into a repeat which is. It also applies to eight bar A's in traditions like Ducklington where the dancer wants two four bar pieces.

What might have been considered in the context of jigs is the question of slow capers or jumps. Some traditions do not have them, being like at Adderbury a matter for the individual. Others, as danced, hardly emphasise the jump, although jumps and capers are what distinguishes Cotswold Morris from the others. There are other jumps available, as used for example by cheer leaders. That dancers are interested in more variety is shown by the

incorporation of collected ideas such as turns in the air, adding the galley leg shake, etc., even though these were not normal dance features.

There are a number of jig ideas that could be exploited. One that I used to do started by "explaining" that I met an old Bampton dancer sitting in a pub and when he got up, having been challenged to a jig, I found that he had only one leg. I then danced *Old Tom of Oxford* entirely on the right foot to demonstrate. Another is doing the Bampton *Fool's Jig* with two sticks, substituting clashing for passing the stick. It allows of much more complex clashing patterns. We use the tune for *Captain Pugwash*. Yet another fun possibility is to use *Widdicombe Fair*. The dance is like *Lady's Pleasure*, but the naming of names part is danced to a hockle backstep ending with four plain capers. The idea is that the hockling is extended ever more by stretching the tune for each repeat so that the dancer disappears further each time and has to make greater efforts to return on the plain capers.

There appears to be an attraction to dance to tunes of odd lengths, eg, *Black Joke*, *Princess Royal*, *Jockey to the Fair*. This suggests exploiting tunes which have an odd length or rhythm in a bar, such as "The Sussex Carol" or have an extended last chorus which can be capered out such as "Hey Ho Come to the Fair". That it has to be practiced and may not be easy for another to pick up makes it individual. Of course you could consider a tune in 5/4!

I hope that something of this might be of use,

Best Wishes,

1. Move as given - step up twice & step across back  
repeat other side  
the same ft., then repeat same foot.
2. Hold point & step - step - then head still  
rotate body to make head settle in girth.
3. Pass back end legs under, out, over
4. Balance back as given - as apt, then C. L.
5. Pass as foot's job - head low.
6. Turn in front as down under,  
the old head as between  
now body at least low.
7. Down head into angle as of head  
to any 1/2 way, repeat the same
8. Turn move at and

# SPORTS INJURIES

## INTRODUCTION

These are notes made during an evening lecture at the Farnborough Sports Centre, Hants. The speaker Colin Campbell has been in medicine for 9 years. As a sportsman he was attracted to sports problems and has been associated with sport medicine for 5 to 6 years. The talk could have been called "Sports Injuries for All". Information on such injuries was not readily available. The talk was particularly concerned with identifying the immediate actions to be taken but covered the longer term rehabilitation issues.

Colin read much of the material from prepared notes, as he was not accustomed to giving formal lectures, but he quickly got carried along with his own enthusiasm. He used an overhead projector with vufolds for both headings and illustrations.

## STRAINS AND SPRAINS

Strains occur in muscles. Four grades were identified. (1) slight... (3) damage to sheath at edge of muscle, which eventually shows as a bruise, (4) tear.

Sprains occur in the ligaments, which is the inelastic soft tissue which surround joints. The knee is the most complex of the body's joints and its stability is maintained only by the soft tissue.

There are two types of injury,

1. Violent - the person is instantly out of action.
2. Stress - the person tends to continue to be active so that the injury is worsened. This is an insidious effect.

An "acute" injury becomes "chronic" after 4/5 days. By this time one should see a doctor. If there is any doubt, ask for an X-ray, as it is important to distinguish between bony and soft tissue injuries, and, if possible, eliminate the possibility of it being bone damage, such as a crack. Doctors seldom volunteer an X-ray, but there is no longer a cause for concern for one off X-rays at modern irradiation levels for infrequent examinations. Because doctors have little experience of sports injuries, one must be prepared to ask to see a specialist. Where possible, only deal with specialists who are state registered or who have relevant professional qualifications.

## COMMON CAUSES OF INJURIES

### A. Training

1. Volume - why work too often?
2. Intensity - control the loading by planning the work, and allow for climaxes in activity.
3. Poor Technique - it could be a posture related problem, especially with back injuries. Perhaps one needs a personal coach or one should join a club to share one or



pick up from other members the right advice in passing.

One needs mobility exercises regardless of the sport being followed.

4. Poor Equipment - for example wearing inadequate foot wear or using the wrong equipment.
5. Explosive Stretching - especially when the body is cold. It is important to warm up and work up mobility before beginning structured activity. Tissue will stretch when warm, but one must avoid stretching it when it is cold.

#### B. Failure to,

1. Mobilise before structured activity,
2. Stretch before and after,
3. Familiarise the local muscle group,
4. Jog before and after.

One must not stop immediately following the peak activity. It is important to taper off. The acid level that has built up generates pressure and hence pain that can still be there the next day. The tapering down activity should not include violent activity such as jumping exercises. It should be done at a relaxed level, such that one can talk comfortably to someone else whilst doing it.

#### C. Other Causes

1. Excessive use of one surface, for example running on a road camber. There is a need to give the legs a change.
2. Anatomical faults. Knee problems are usually related to feet problems. One must check for feet being canted, for slightly different leg lengths, and for the body being carried tilted.
3. Failure to maintain physical condition.

#### FOOTWEAR

The important problem points of footwear are met in modern sports shoes.

1. Correct Length.
2. Correct Width.
3. Midsole and Insole - sole needs hardened edges for stability. Insole should be shock absorbing.
4. Rounded Heel - of value when the heel meets the ground first in step or running.
5. Achilles Tendon Protector - may need to be cut off if rubbing.
6. Heel Cap Stabiliser - solid heel cap for support. Squeeze it to show if adequate support is provided.

7. Varus Wedge - inside shoe, is additional shock absorbing material, in a layer under the heel. Its value depends on having heel on ground impact in the activity.
8. Tell.
9. Lacing Method - avoid fancy lacing methods, lace over the top to take pressure off the upper foot.
10. Correct Shoe for the Event - eg a shoe's stitching is dependent on its use. One can not play football in a running shoe.

It is important to have a rigid upper, it helps to combat foot faults. The upper ought to be tailored, along with the inner sole, to the individual foot of course, using a plaster cast etc, with the foot in the 'neutral' position.

When a shoe is placed on a flat surface it should not be possible to rock it from side to side.

Boots do not supply significant support to the ankle (or to the calf). When skiers started using longer boots the breakages were not fewer, they just moved higher up the leg. In many sports ankle ligament protection is needed against impacts. However the trend is still away from protection (eg shin guards) and to low cut boots to allow more movement at the ankle. But basketball players are exploring longer boots because of the adverse effects arising from the high jumps involved. It is suggested that taping for better support would be more effective if a weakness was suspected. This would be done by taping down the side of the leg, from well up the calf, down under the instep and up the other side and then fixing it by taping around the lower leg at two or three levels.

## WARNING SIGNS

### A. Dull Ache

1. Tightness of muscles - obvious the next day.
2. Slight strain - small tear in muscle fibres.
3. RPI - behind or around the kneecap. A nagging, constant pain which can be foot defect related.
4. Tendinitis - problem may be created in the exercises. When mild, it is felt in the morning, but eases off later because of an increase in heating.
5. Sprain - slight tear in the ligaments. These have a poor blood supply, so it is difficult to act to enhance their healing.

Heat sedates. It does not otherwise help in recovery and is superficial.

**B. Sharp Pain**

1. Ruptured tendon.
2. Severe tendinitis.
3. Partial tear of ligaments, especially at the knee and the ankle. It bleeds internally, swells and gets worse unless treated.
4. Closed (ie undisplaced) fracture, held in place by the muscles, but needing plaster.
5. Stress fracture, may be a partial break, and have a gradual onset. It could be a week or more before it could be recognised on an X-ray. It will show up on an X-ray after 3 weeks.

**C. Headache**

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 1. Hangover | - a problem of dehydration. To minimise or avoid, take a glass of water before going to bed etc. |
| 2. Cold     | - an ice pack on the head reduces the pressure, (it is old fashioned but it works).              |
| 3. Flu      | - is a killer as it attacks the heart. Absolutely no exercise during its occurrence.             |

**D. Lethargy**

Feeling run down. Note that it may be a mineral deficiency.

**BLISTERS**

The best treatment is "puncture-and-tape" for a rapid cure.

Cut the blister skin, but not with a pin or needle, as the hole will heal too quickly, using a scissors or razor. Get the fluid out and then cover it with tape, preferably Zinc Oxide which is best, both over the blister and with a reasonable amount either side, like 2 inches. Leave it on for several days to keep the skin in contact. Replace it only if it is very dirty or is lifting off, and one can keep it on through showers etc. As there is no significant broken skin, there is no risk of infection. If one is prone to blisters, put tape on before hand. Avoid pads directly on the blister as pressure is not helpful. One may pad around it, if necessary.

**COURSE OF ACTION**

1. Advice and Examination.
2. Treatment, this includes advice and rest.

Injuries to the head and neck must be seen professionally without delay.

Spinal problems can show up through effects appearing in the shoulders and the wrists. Do not ignore the true cause, because of the risk of loss of mobility and/or strength in the limbs etc. Analyse for the source of the injury.

**TREATMENT**

1. Identify the cause where possible.  
It may be footwear (see footwear above), technique or inadequate warm up.
2. Ice. Roll crushed ice into a damp cloth (tea towel) and apply to injured area for 15-30 minutes, twice a day. Ice baths are similar in effect except that continual immersion is impractical. Say for a maximum of 12 minutes in 6 two minute sessions.
3. Compression - by bandages or 'tubigrip'. It should be both over and above and below the injured area. This means well above and below. Get past the muscle bulk so that it does not peel back.
4. Elevation - raised to assist drainage of waste products away and allow oxygen and nutrients in. A bed base raised only a few inches will quickly assist lower limb drainage. Get the feet up at work etc.
5. Stretching - a progressive activity. It needs to be gentle and sustained, positions being held for 20-30 seconds.
6. Training Programme - reduce the normal programme if possible or use an alternate programme.

During the first 48 hours one can use anti-inflammatory drugs such as aspirin (if you are sure you do not have side effects) or Brufen and attempt to reduce the stress.

Heat has only a sedative effect. It is superficial, being confined to skin layers. It does NOT help as it does not get to the other side of the muscle.

The need in treatment is to get the nutrients to the injured area, so all the modern technological approaches that are effective lead to this. Body movement is essential to move the body fluids around.

**RETURN TO FULL ACTIVITY**

This can be done when there is a return to a full range of movement, strength and FULL confidence.

**REHABILITATION**

The worse thing is to feel sorry for yourself.

Most injuries are stress related. There is a need for a recovery programme physically tuned to the sport activity being followed. The problem with such injuries is their gradual onset and the consequent slow adjustment to it that goes on.

1. Identify the cause of the stress. Then find which is best for you - REST (inactive) versus RELATIVE REST (can be very active).

One can not train through an injury, but it is important to do something to maintain a standard of fitness.

Injuries are usually asymmetric and produce a weak side, so there is a need to get it back into balance or it will create new problems. One should assume that if there is an injury, there will always be a problem on the other side. For example an ankle injury will produce an adverse effect loading the knee of the opposite leg.

## 2. Exercise Therapy - a range of movement exercises.

A number of exercises were shown that stretched muscles. The general principle in doing them was to hold a position for 10 secs, increase the pressure for another 10 secs, and yet again, for 30 secs in all. Do 4 or 5 repetitions but move out of the position for 2 to 3 secs in between.

- a. down on one knee, the other against chest, body leaning forward, stretch leg out behind, arms straight down and hands supporting on ground. Press down to stretch thigh and hamstrings.
- b. lay on back, pull leg, by grasping under knee, up to chest, keeping other leg flat on ground.
- c. lay on back, curled up, and rock forwards and backwards, for the back muscles.
- d. arm supported running, if there is a bar, for 15-30 sec bursts.
- e. half squats, arms up and hands behind head on neck, good for thighs.
- f. Steps ups, onto a bench or chair, for thighs and calves.

Always make an exercise of good quality, otherwise it is a waste of effort.

## 3. Ankles

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| First step  | - no load, mobility exercises. Remember plaster accelerates muscle wasting.              |
| Second step | - static exercises - rocking, or circling of the upper body with the feet on the ground. |
| Third step  | - cycling, jogging on spot.  |

A sprain may be repeated without a proper programme for recovery.

## 4. Elbows

The extensors can be damaged when holding an implement, either by gripping too hard or having a wrong handle size for the hand.

## 5. Heart and Lung Fitness

Swimming, cycling and circuit training, in that order of effectiveness. Swimming is very good, say twice a week.

A pulse rate of 85 is appropriate to normal daily activity and a 120-140 level due to exercise. 150-160 is called the steady state work rate with training effect.

V 2.0 © 1990 R L Dommett

SIDMOUTH LECTURE 1994

"THE SOURCES OF OUR DANCES"

INTRODUCTION

This is a performer's view of our essentially English dances, presenting an extended view of the different sources and the backgrounds, only limited by the authors' experience. They are classified under the accepted names for the forms of regional seasonal dance. This document may help dancers to appreciate what of our heritage is out there to use and cherish. The known core of each tradition type may appear to be very distinctive but in reality the dance styles and implements shade gradually into the neighbouring traditions.

Comments, contributions and corrections are welcomed to make this more useful.

Although there can be much satisfaction gained in composing dances, it is also a sound principle to improve an existing one by dancing better, perhaps more expressively and more dramatically, or in a more structured manner, as far the tradition allows. It should not be a concern whether the dance is old or new, but only if it is good and suitable. Teams with poor judgements on dances will make mistakes on choices and interpretation whatever is available. The saving grace is that such groups seldom last because they fail to gain any personal satisfaction. For performance needs it is better to start from actual interpretations rather than collector's notes. The collector alone is responsible for publishing or lodging notations somewhere accessible and to arrange for its preservation in performance. Very seldom is there a record of a "correct" way of performing a dance in existence or of all the details necessary for its replication, other than of its ground patterns. The reality was that dances were often somewhat variable and adjustable in performance.

The dances taught at workshops are important as their leaders normally select the best elements of the material from which they are drawn. Dances at workshops should be considered inspirational rather than preordained. For teams with established non-Cotswold repertoires, it is realistic to expect them to ignore duplicate movements that already occur in dances in their repertoire, and to substitute others. Alternatively existing dances could be periodically reviewed, perhaps combining the best movements in order to keep the number of dances in practice within bounds.

It is commonly, properly and ethically accepted that certain dances are the "property" of the performers. Some of the dances, such as the Great Wishford Faggot dance and the Bacup nuts, are so distinctive that even when avoiding the actual movements in the original any exploitation of the form is recognised as a copy, rather as are any attempts at the late Wilson, Keppel and Betty's Egyptian Sand Dance. The existence of most of the older living traditions is precarious, and the use of their material can be life threatening. Often dances have been collected on such understandings as that either they are passed on or are kept within a particular group. Such wishes have to be respected. Some dances are recovered or reconstructed only with great difficulty and the collectors have some "rights" in obstructing their further uncontrolled propagation. However also to be avoided is over protection. There is a danger that to guard for example the Bacup garland dances the exploitation of the quadrille formation for other dances is

inhibited. Contact with the tradition is a two way process, it is inspirational to those without their own inherited dances, and it helps to provide the interest that has kept the tradition alive. A caring and sensitive approach is required, although it has to be said that some urban sides do not understand it.

### EARLY MORRIS HISTORY

The geographical distribution of Britain's dances was first mapped by Joseph Needham, and then in greater detail by Alex Helm, Dr Cawte etc. Although there can be no significant changes in the areas identified for each type, the picture is being filled out by more regional studies.

The references to early morris were first collated usefully by Barbara Lowe and then expanded and further exploited by John Forrest in *Morris and Matachins*. The *Early Morris Annals* is a comprehensive index of surviving documents that mention the morris from 1500-1750 and which has already been the basis for a number of examinations of specific topics. There is perhaps still an outstanding need for publishing a summary of the accumulated evidence on early costume. New document discoveries continue but cannot overturn the overall picture. Keith Chandler's books cover the Cotswold Morris till 1900. Unfortunately there are no equivalent published studies of performers or leaders elsewhere. Much has now to be done to complete putting these appreciations of the morris into their proper social contexts. There are gaps in that knowledge, eg the general position of women in society in the early nineteenth century before Victorian attitudes developed, when the various traditional dances forms were flourishing. Getting the morris of the twentieth century into focus is an ongoing task, even just to identify and examine the relevant themes.

An obvious approach to establish the roots of a known history is to start from what is sure and work backwards. In this manner the threads that come and go and which change its character can be recognised. The evidence has been studied thoroughly back to Elizabethan times for most social and artistic issues and now a data base exists for the records of the morris.

Unfortunately classical schooling and a religious upbringing concentrates attention on the further past, so too many folk theoreticians made the intellectual leap over the Middle Ages in order to postulate origins. As the vast array of traditional activities could not be related to the early Christian practices about which the people have been educated since the Reformation, the only rational explanation available to them was a pagan origin, whatever that was intended to mean. More recent studies of the growth of dramatic performance, music, song, and festivals have shown that there was a steady elaboration since the Norman Conquest, but that the flowering was in the two centuries from 1350, from the Black Death to the Henrician Great Plundering and the Edwardian destruction of late medieval Catholic practices, followed by a consequential great shift of customary activity into secular usage. That the morris appeared in processions and at games from 1500 is not surprising as the equivalent community behaviour before had been absorbed into the church and guild processions, pageants and the like. It is here that the next search for evidence should concentrate. Furthermore we must seek for the continental analogues as England was on the edge of culture at this early time and greatly influenced by popular fashions from abroad. The degree of contact is greatly underestimated today.

There is considerable evidence that the pre-Reformation church accepted many beliefs and actions by its people which had analogues in pagan and classical societies, but this is not proof of a continuity of practice, only of a persistence of a common need for which such activity appeared to be a solution. Very similar practices exist again today although seldom recognised as having a similar basic motivation.

The threads that have probably contributed to forming the early morris are many, but none is acceptable as the primary source. They were the traditions of the jester and jongleur, the morisco in Spain, the group military training techniques with music copied from the moors, the being employed as mercenaries in foreign places, the royal and the aristocratic intermarriages, the cultural influence of following closely Burgundian, French, Flemish and even Spanish fashions, the intimate trade contacts with Flanders, Holland, Gascony and Spain, the extensive use of south German Mining engineers, the effect of the Corpus Christi processions by gilds at all levels, the civic pageants and even the King, May and Robin Hood Games.

Although the morris leaps into attention apparently fully developed, we do not know what form it took. In the period 1450-1600 three forms of dance appear in the records, the men dancing independently in a circle around a woman, the dancing two-by-two in procession and the chains of dancers often with hands linked. All those forms have persisted in children's games and still occur to a limited extent in adult celebrations. The early morris was with kerchiefs, never sticks, was danced in elaborate coats because that was compatible with the fashion, but not with blacked faces, and was not associated with a particular period of the year. The Matachin with sticks appeared afterwards but as a distinct form.

What would make the morris different from any previous form of dance expression? Its format and probably the sound of its music. Before 1700 there is insufficient information to tell if there were any regional differences in what was done. After 1700 there is sufficient continuity in the references for it to be a reasonable deduction that Cotswold morris only slowly evolved and never had features commonly found elsewhere by the end of the 19th century. The earliest references to the other "traditions" are all significantly later. The distributions of known sites and of dance content suggest strongly that a diffusion process operated for all.

Even if a seasonal bells, sticks, handkerchiefs or disguising solo or group dance form called something else and hitherto unnoticed and unexploited by the contemporaries was found to have existed in earlier times it would still be essential to show that there was continuity through the late Middle Ages.



## A NON-COTSWOLD MORRIS

## 1 NORTH WEST : LANCASHIRE

The older forms of the dance were associated with processions and rushcarting. By the end of the 19th century stationary or stage versions of dances had been developed and some of the existing notations are of dances that are from this period. It was recognised by Dan Howison and Bernard Bentley that the older dances found in the Manchester area included step-&-turn figures throughout. There are variations in style of the dance across the North West, geographically as well as with time, including the details of stepping, the pattern of arm movements and the choice of implements that were carried. Clogs and breeches became normal morris wear after they stopped being common working wear as such a looking back became expected. There must have been many ways of dancing the polka step in use, as a wide variety of stepping can be seen at any Carnival Morris competition today.

The earliest dance team was probably Godley Hill who went to the Knutsford May Festival in its formative days. There are four notations extant, Graham who saw the side, Esperance Club who brought Robert Brookes to London, Maud Karpeles who encouraged a short revival about 1931 and Crompton who collected it locally and used to dress the part. They differ in detail but all are reflections of the same dance at different dates, and none is a complete notation. Graham also obtained a Failsworth dance, which differs considerably from that given much later to Julian Pilling by one of the dancers actually present. Sharp and Gardiner mss both have a notation of Mawdsley, which dance was taken to a Keswick school and a simpler notation for eight dancers from there has also survived through the Esperance Club. Maud Karpeles collected further dances, Royton and Abram Circle which she published, as well as Knutsford, Mossley, Peover and at least six others. Her Royton combined the two elements of polka'd figures and stepping sequences and appeared at the time as a pinnacle of the NW dance. Manley inherited the tradition, maintaining its flexibility of order and adding several new and ingenious figures. The Royton style has been exploited by others, including an interpretation of a fixed sequence called Oldham by the Manchester MM. Fred Hamer had started to collect a few of the Lancashire dances when he became blind.

In the 1960's a number of collectors in the Lancashire area pooled the results of their activities, eg. Dan Howison, Julian Pilling, Roger Marriott and Bernard Bentley, and their collection of notations existed in a limited number of sets of volumes of mss, including by the Manchester Morris Men. It had not been their intention to publish them, although local revivals were to be given access, but the collection has been exploited since by others for workshops. Julian Pilling classified the known dances into major and minor forms and pointed out that modern teams should not dance just the major items. This urge to do only the "best" bedevils the presentation of all traditions, even though experience shows that simple dances are acceptable to the public as part of a show.

I fell across a few dances in the 1960's, a dance from the Northwich area from a Mrs Hepple at Tilehurst, Reading, a dance from Runcorn and Widnes from Mrs Wilson, a girl guide leader at Bourne End, near Maidenhead, and a dance by a girl's team at a hospital fete near Preston.

Little has been systematically published. Pru Boswell has covered the older material from the Lancashire Plain and the Horwich area and Trevor Owen some from his own collection. A list of individual dance notations that have been printed and may be accessible is given in the currently out of print Vaughan Williams Memorial Library's Introductory Bibliography by Mike Heaney. Mostly the dances have to be seen in performance by local clubs such as Colne, Horwich, John O'Gaunt, Leyland, Preston Royal, Rumworth, Saddleworth and Whitworth amongst the many men's sides, as well as by the women's and mixed teams. Some individuals have the knack of collecting. Garstang discarded their original set of dances, probably because so many had been copied, and composed new dances. At one time Knutsford, Aston-under-Lyme and Blackrod were widely known amongst modern sides.

Very often recent dances have been arranged to fit around a few collected fragments. It is difficult to tell and doesn't really matter. There appears to be an enormous reservoir of dance ideas.

### 2 NORTH WEST : CHESHIRE & OTHERS

Whereas the Lancashire morris is essentially an urban form, the older dances from Cheshire are rural. David Robinson has taught a number of Cheshire dances both from his own collecting whilst leading Bollin, and drawn from the Manchester collection accessed and taught by..... (?). The local tradition began with the "Cranford" and "Gaskell" troupes of young women at Knutsford. The members spread out over the plain and the dance was developed with different changes and additions, perhaps as at one place introducing a new figure every year. The interactions between teams probably were the reason for the many different ways of getting into and out of a popular "windmill" figure. Very large sets and sixteen plus dancers to fill the available space was the norm, although seldom seen today in club performances. It is interesting to see adult sides recreating dances only done before by children.

In most places dances went with leaders and not places and could be taken around as they moved. The English Electric Stafford dance is an example, associated with a works team, that was taken south. Wigton is an example of the dances that developed in the industrial part of Cumbria.

The Carnival Morris community is managed by the several Carnival Associations which help organise events and that have no equivalent in the rest of England. There have been large number of teams and hence dancers and dances involved, all in a traditional environment. It is poorly documented and largely ignored by those so far recording the folk world.

### 3 YORKSHIRE LONG SWORD

Long sword dances have been mentioned in Europe back to the 14th century and in Britain from the 16th century. The earliest "swords" must have been the standard strips of iron which were the basic material used by blacksmiths for most of their work, which included the making of swords at times of conflict. The European dances are poorly known in the UK and this makes interpretation of the English tradition difficult. For example why are there no English dances which raise the fool on the lock from which position he can harangue the crowd?

There are 27 dances notated well enough for performance, including **Papa Stour** and the **White Boys** dance from the Isle of Man. Only six of these are now active. The full set of dance notations developed by Ivor Allsop are expected to be published on his behalf by Tony Barrand. The dance sets were for eight or six with the former number possibly the older size. The Papa Stour dance was the only one for seven. It is mostly a Yorkshire tradition centred around Sheffield in the south and the Yorkshire Moors in the north. Although most of the Cleveland dances are in mining areas, and those furthest north were encouraged to perform during the between the wars depression, they are also within sight of the sea. Where the long sword and rapper territories met they show similarities in figure choices, an argument developed in an article by Dr Christopher Cawte.

The dance figures are a mix of clashing baskets, linked hilt-and-point movements of various complexities, and different "locks", meshing the swords together so that they be displayed without falling apart. These are combined with other movements such as rolls, and reels and cross overs that are danced unlinked.

Several new dances have been created. Trevor Stone is the most active collector, recorder and encourager of the long sword both in the UK and Europe. There are a few English specialists in other dance rich regions such as northern Spain and the Basque countries. There is another key figure in New York.

#### 4 GARLAND

Garland dances are widespread in Europe, but not very common outside of Austria. They exist in many forms but the oldest are assessed to be those which appear to have once been sword dances and in which due to local laws the garland replaced the swords. The ban led to the use of foliage covered hoops, cooper's barrel hoops and even ropes between dancers. To be more impressive the numbers of dancers involved can be rather large and the dances interminable in length. In most places the garlands are a inverted U-shape, and can be exploited as a frame for the head and top of the body. Some German and Basque garlands are the size of garden archways with spikes on the bottom ends which can be struck into the ground when desired. In Austria many are rigid and small, of "A" frame or "Δ" triangular shape, as well as complete circles. The later is appearing in the West Country. The earliest clear English reference available was in a stage ballet. Earlier references to garlands are to a different type of object that is not a dance implement but something that is carried to accompany a party of dancers or singers, who are perhaps "bringing in the May". These are close in concept to the heavily flowered garlands on a stave pole, such as are used on Tutti Day at Hungerford and also was used by some Friendly Societies instead of permanent stave heads. Garlands could mean also slack streamers or decorated ribbons, like skipping ropes or even flower arrangers or decorators swages.

By the mid 19th century garland dances were appearing as part of the stock in trade of the dance display choreographer, along with plaited ribbon maypole dances and theatrical morris, and might be seen on the stage, in at least one classical ballet, at the pleasure gardens and at revels. The **Brittania Bacup** and the original **Whitworth** garland dances probably date from early in Queen Victoria's reign but most surviving English dances seem to be late Victorian or Edwardian period compositions. A particularly well known one is the "**Victory**" dance from Knutsford which was danced with a slack garland, like flower decorated skipping ropes, now preserved in performance by Poynton Jemmers.

## SECOND DRAFT

Garland dances are still part of the repertoire of children's dancing schools and a waltz garland was performed at Knutsford May Day in 1982. This dance was done with small rigid framed garlands which allowed quick and easy change from linked to stand alone formations. Apparently a simple published U-garland dance was circulated amongst Girl Guide troupes after WW I and parties went out collecting along with a maypole. This was in their period of "sharing" dances and games from many cultures and the source is currently unknown. There is photograph of school girls with U-garlands and a team with a plaited ribbon type of maypole at Alton, Hants, at the end of the 19th century.

The only English garland dance to include linked movements is the "Rose" recorded from a college team from the Sunderland area at an inter-college folk event in the early 1960's, and apparently created and taught to the leaders when at school a few years before by an ex-long sword dancer from the Cleveland area north of Whitby who did not believe in women doing the traditional men's dances. Originally intended to be danced by twelve or more, it is now often done with eight with loss of scale, and even by six. English Miscellany used a character carrying a separate object who passed through the figures at appropriate moments to fill out the tune. Although it was done at the fast long sword walk, the dance has been developed in both rapper like running and slow polka stepping versions to suit different club requirements. There are similar linked dances in Spain, Flanders and Provence. The dances in Flanders are geographically closer to the south of England than those of the North West!

English dances seem to include bows, made from the waist but keeping the head up, as at Bacup, Blennerhasset and in the Mayers "Maze" dance at Lancaster. Garland dances have not attracted fancy stepping sequences, although one like a Three Hand Reel was composed by Jean Piper for Minden Rose of Alton. Within a club's repertoire there is always a need for a variety of rhythms and speeds from waltzes to polkas, and it is not unusual for a team to change the collected or acquired material for the sake of the balance within their shows.

A good garland dance uses the garland as part of the dance, rather than carrying it just to look pretty. They can be waved from side-to-side, laid on top of each other, or even used to catch other dancers. However garlands have been added to existing dances such as the reconstruction of **Mrs Hepple's Dance** from Northwich. There are now in circulation a number of composed dances, ranging from the four handed **Sweet Garland** dance, seen danced by Wessex Woods, the five handed dance by Plymouth Maids, the six handed **Tina's Dance** by England's Glory, up to the **Wain** for fourteen. This is one of very few dances with one garland shared by each pair of dancers. It is now a much longer dance than when first seen at Sidmouth danced by a visiting Flemish team as English clubs have added good figures. Several garland dances have been composed in Australia, New Zealand and in the USA. I have seen interesting garland adaptations of Playford dances such as *Newcastle* and *Hey Boys Up We Go*.

Garlands can be made of a variety of materials - plastic domestic water pipe is just about the right diameter and flexibility and was first suggested by Tony Barrand of Boston University, USA. Some teams have used hoola-hoops, but cane is desirable if the garlands are to be clashed, or even wood steamed to a permanent shape if weight is not a concern. A set of garlands in basket wickerwork has been seen. Decoration is very much a matter of the team's personal taste. A light weight seems to be an important criterion, specially if

## SECOND DRAFT

someone has to carry eight or twelve of them around.

### 5 DURHAM RAPPER

Eleven dances have been collected and published, but only one or two traditional sides are now active. Several other teams are known to have existed and their dances might still reappear. The rapper dance is a specialised subset of long sword, with the performers remaining linked for most or all of the dance, which is suitable for indoor practice and performance. It could not have appeared until suitable flexible spring steel became available during the Industrial Revolution. Nowadays suitable material has become difficult to find. The stepping, now considered essential to its presentation, may have been added quite late in its history. The flexibility of the swords has allowed many complex movements to be created and each of the better teams could well have had a knowledge of thirty or more figures, either handed down, stolen or worked out, although many were just variations on a theme. It is assumed that teams on a pub tour would have had a flexible figure order so that the dance could be adjusted to the audiences. Performances in modern shows tend to follow fixed orders to minimise the risk of errors. As the dance spread further from its point of origin it became simpler, more with variations on fewer ideas, a typical diffusion model. There were two recognised dance styles, the "steady-and-let-everything-be-seen", and the "crash-bang-wallop" where it all happened too quickly to be followed.

No full and proper topological analysis has been completed and published of figure possibilities and those that do exist have not been classified, so that possible "missing" movements within the idiom could be discovered.

Dancers tend to need to be able to do the figures instinctively, hence the usual habit to practice only in one position in the set and not to have a large number of spare dancers, so producing what is in effect a club within a club.

### 6 WELSH BORDER MORRIS

The term, unknown to the public, was coined by Dr Cawte in the *EFDSS Journal* to cover the seasonal performance in the Welsh Border counties of Shropshire and Herefordshire, which are in England not Wales, but extended to include the non-Marches, non-Cotswold county of Worcestershire. There are eleven dance notations in existence but no traditional group surviving to act as a role model. They come from Brimfield, Bromsberrow Heath, Dilwyn, Evesham, Much Wenlock, Peopleton, Pershore, Pershore Not for Joes, Upton on Severn, Upton Snodsbury and White Ladies Aston. There is no consistency in style or movements between dances. The typical team at least towards the end should be thought of as existing for a particular occasion with a minimum of practice, rudimentary costume and compensating for deficiencies in artistic content by noise both from the performers and from a band containing as many percussion instruments as could be mustered. Dances exist for from three to twelve dancers and the content could be dependent on the number of men available, as at Brimfield. Early references suggest that the Border Morris differed from others because of the larger numbers involved. The dances collected from a particular place could vary quite markedly between informants, as at White Ladies Aston, reflecting a flexibility from year to year. Sometimes a gang would have only one dance, sometimes two, or as at Malvern and with the Pershore Not For Joes, an indeterminate set of figures. The common features are the rather short sticks and

a high single step akin to the local country dance step neither of which are followed today. Details like starting foot rules and phrase endings are missing.

The current revival is twenty years old and has introduced the rag jacket costume, blacking faces and noise, and is filling a niche not otherwise occupied by the other accepted traditions, as it involves the more boisterous conduct often frowned upon in the past. The Silurian MM had interpreted the available material and sought to preserve the traditional style and features as far as they can be deduced. An alternative image has been promoted by the Kirkpatricks with the Shropshire Bedlams and Martha Rhodens Tuppenny Dish where the limited material has been consolidated, systematised and extended. New ideas have been developed using all the local titbits. Through them there is a modern image of the Border Morris, boisterous, more than usually exhibitionist, noisy dancers that are rag jacketed, all of which owes much to the spirit of the past but not to the substance. The rag jacket is worn by most sides now that its implication of poverty is now forgotten, and made in bright or exotic materials which did not exist in the historical period. The idiom translates well to men, women and mixed sides. Many other specialist sides have a Border dance or two to broaden their repertoire and to exploit the contrast with the Cotswold jumps and capers.

The limited source material has led to a more than usual degree of invention and there are teams that are in the style with entirely recently composed repertoires, some of which are extremely successful as dances. However it would be wrong to count all such sides as "Border" as a catch-all classification, some must be considered as Street-Dancers or Dance-Troupes with no obvious roots for their dances in the traditional forms.

The Bedlam Morris is a poorly defined historical form which might have been the West Midland dance or related to it. On the Northamptonshire side of the Border Morris distribution it existed separately and alongside the Cotswold handkerchief form and it may be from that or the Matachin that the concept of stick dances diffused south. I would suggest personally that the references could imply that the dances were not done to a melody instrument and relied on the rhythmic effects of stepping noise and drumming to generate excitement, as in native traditions elsewhere in the world.

### 7 EAST ANGLIAN MOLLY

This has to be seen as two traditions, the old Cambridgeshire style and the new of the Seven Champions. Neither used sticks or wore bells, nor normally carried handkerchiefs..

The dancing used to centre on two opportunities,

1 Plough Monday : The team could consist of ploughmen dressed as Molly Dancers, led by a Lord and Lady, who was a man, perhaps with a plough. It was said that it took two good women to dress a Molly Dancer (but only one bad one to undress him?) and a good deal of time would be taken up the evening before going out in dressing up. The team would perform during the day and then dance in the evening in the pubs in their ordinary clothes without their costumes and, as desired, including women in the set, treating the dances as social dances. Only men did the Molly within living memory.

2 The Village Feast : The pubs would open up the bars for dancing. Perhaps it would be for the Benefit Club and the club night consisted of a supper and dance, but it was quite different from the Molly centred occasion. The "Feast Dances" would be the same in form but not necessarily done in the same spirit as for the Molly, particularly as they were then danced mixed.

The Molly was once widespread through inland East Anglia although few traces of the dances have been recovered. Sharp saw the dancing near Littleport by Ely. Six men wearing white shirts, ribbons, sashes and box hats, danced a "set" jig. Some account of the Cambridgeshire Molly dances were first published by Needham and Peck in 1933. They wrote of the dancing around Cambridge and Ely as separate groups. Near Cambridge at Girton, Histon and Comberton the team was six dancers, one of whom was a Bessy or Molly, plus a musician and several cadgers. They would carry handkerchiefs and wear a form of wide baldrick with many rosettes.

At Girton the dances were *College Hornpipe*, *Birds a Building*, *Smash the Window*, *Double Change Sides*, *Gypsies in the Wood* and *Soldiers Joy*. Around Ely the best known was at Little Downham, because it was the longest lived, where the dancers dressed in ribbons and flower decorated hats. There was usually only four dancers in the final years so they danced couple dances, including tangos. They claimed to have had country dance figures and a four hand reel. At Haddenham it was said that broom stem dancing was done by the plough party and that elsewhere near Ely four and six hand reels were danced.

Russell Wortley and Cyril Papworth have published on the Camberton dances. Papworth in "*Polka Round*" taught a broom dance derived from members of his own family and the Feast Dances, *Birds a Building*, *College Hornpipe*, *Cross Hands Polka* or *Special Molly*, *Gypsies in the Wood*, *Six Hand Reel*, *Up the Middle and Down the Sides*, and *We Wont Go Home Till Morning*. He gave a consistent style for the dancing using a "Cambridge Polka", a 1 2 3 hop which is three small hops and a lift, bringing the free knee fairly high in front, but being light on the ground. A booklet "*...for a bit of sport'...*" by Richard Humphries summarised much of the known information, but also suggests that Sam Bennett's *Lively Jig* was obtained from a local man who had come from Little Snoring near Fakenham in Norfolk.

The first attempts by outsiders to present the old dances in their villages in the old style was not well received, as they were about the least spectacular dances that can be offered. Perhaps the approach was wrong as the successors have been successful. There has been a marked regional interest in East Anglia in the tradition, and many teams can be seen in January at Whittlesey Straw Bear and some locally on Plough Monday tours.

The Seven Champions are as authentic as treacle mines. These are widespread in folk lore, although every place believes it is unique, and the stories are most likely to have been inspired by finding underground tar pits rather than molasses! The team is all about style and discipline, at its best more like a music hall act rather than an amateur road show. They have gone for heavy boots and a stamping step, slow deliberate stepping and non social dance interpretations of common country dance basics such as the swing. Starting from collected dances, their repertoire has developed in so many ways and they are very successful on the Festival and Day-of-Dance circuits.

## 8 NORTH DORSET AND WILTSHIRE STAVE & RIBBON

**Stave** : During a search for mentions of details of rural ceremonial costumes I found in Friendly Society records a little information about the dances done at some of the places that included dance as part of their annual perambulation before their Club Day church service and feast. Club walks are also mentioned in Barnes' poems and in books and some details have been appeared in print.

At **Stourton Caundle** the material is a list of dance first and second parts which translated well into figures and choruses, at **Fifehead Magdalen** a list of titles of dance to be practiced some of which could be traced to printed dance books, and a brief description in a newspaper account of a dance at a wedding outside the church at **Buckhorn Weston**, and finally odd dances described in mss such as Maud Karpeles' **Seend** in Wiltshire.

The material has been given to southern sides who wanted to dance something local, Abercorn, Bath City, Bourne Bumpers, Flaming Morris, Fleur de Lys, Dorset Knobs and Knockers, Magog, Puttenham, Royal Manor and Somerset Maids. Some have been done by Shropshire Lasses and by Ursa Major, whose leader uses them effectively with workshops for young people. They are also part of a few US women's sides repertoires. All these sides include dances which have been modified as well to provide more variety. In Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire the club staves mostly had a brass stave head, further east they were usually wooden. The surviving South Harting Club uses willow with decorations carved into the bark, but the Nether Stowey women's club only carries posies on their walk. Staves can be from three to six feet in length, made in one or two pieces. Nearly all the mentioned active sides have produced their own special stave heads. Somerset Maids have a set of twelve originals from different places, Dorset Knobs and Knockers have copied the local club's.

**Ribbon** : A simple "Ribbon" or "Pocket Handkerchief" dance was fairly widespread and at least in the south of England well remembered, both as a social dance novelty but also as used in processions or during displays at fetes. One such notation was published by Sharp in his *Country Dance Books*. At East Coker it was called **The Morris Dance** and photographed. A few other collected dances have been noted as "could be performed with ribbons", and in practice they are unforgiving of mistakes and need a special technique for performance. They have proven difficult but not impossible to invent. Ribbon dances are part of the European tradition, and quite novel dances have been shown by visitors at Sidmouth, including a Russian dance for twelve, another dance rather like a slack garland dance, and a Provence dance with a tall man in the centre acting as a support for one end of every garland, but the figures are not maypole like. Ribbons have been used in the classical ballet.

**Maypole** : Plaited ribbon maypole dances are another part of the 19th century cultured repertoire. They spread into school use through the White Ladies Teachers Training College from 1880. At the turn of the century there were a number of publications giving figures, sometimes called dances, although only five or six are in the only widely available book by W Shaw. A recent publication is by the leader of the schoolgirl team of Broughton in Hampshire. There are over twenty figures spread through the older instructional booklets found by Anne-Marie Hulme and Roy Judge, and clearly there are many other movement



possibilities. The largest maypole known had four rings of dancers, although two is normal. It may be noted that few of the surviving figures exploit the rotation that comes with one ring on the commercially available pole. Anne-Marie has shown that closed, pole-wrapping plaits and open tent-like figures can be combined by the inner and outer rings of dancers respectively performing them simultaneously. In practice it is found that as few as twelve dancers and ribbons on a fixed ring somewhere up a flagpole is an adequate minimum, and even as few as six dancers, holding two ribbons each, for stage performances in stage plays such as *Cider with Rosie*.

### 9 DERBYSHIRE

The dances performed at the wakes at **Winster**, **Tideswell** and **Taddington** do not fit into the other categories. They are processional dances with at Winster other stationary forms. The first two are still active, but the latter is described in an *EFDSS Journal* article, although not with a very explicit notation. Winster was seen and published very early in Sharp's collecting period, and the simple dances were often used in mass displays by the EFDS because of the spectacle value of the numbers of dancers that could be involved. The local Winster tradition has had a number of stops and starts and the dances have changed sufficiently at each renewal for the current team to have more than one version of some of the dances in practice. These differences are insufficient to worry any other side. The **Taddington Club** dance has been described in the *EFDSS Journal*.

### 10 LICHFIELD in Staffordshire

In the 19th century the morris was employed to form part of the procession of the winning candidate at parliamentary elections. Early this century the local boys truant school provided a team for a processional dance. In the 1950's mss and tunes were received by members of the Men of Mercia Morris. A few details such as the pushing away of feet in *Nuts of May* were confirmed by local informants. The dance notations were interpreted, shown and taught widely. The major difficulty found was interpreting the hey which is now twice the length indicated. The club split over the dances forming the Burton on Trent and Lichfield morrises and now the tradition centres on Green Man and Stafford MM with there being occasional Lichfield Morris outings. The Marlborough side in Vermont, USA is one of best interpreters of the style and is one of the few teams to have added good dances to the corpus. Pig Sty Morris have grafted Basque stickings very effectively.

It was once believed that the old side was gathered to meet some collectors, possibly Charlotte Burne and friends about the end of the 19th century. It was difficult to accept that they would have noted the dances so concisely and such a manner that we could still interpret them at this time, because of a lack then of an agreed morris terminology for another ten years. Unfortunately the paper of the mss has a watermark that was not in use until many years later and so could not be of the age claimed. A potential cuprit has been identified by Roy Judge but is difficult to accept, and the whole issue should be considered for practical purposes as not proven either way.

The dances could be interpreted several ways, in a near Cotswold style, as a Border dance or even as part of the NW tradition, as dances had been brought south into Staffordshire, with appropriate adjustments to otherwise ill described

steps and posture. That the dances appear in pairs could have suggested that the sources were various West Midland dancers from different villages. One dance now in circulation was that made up for an occasion when the reconstructions were being demonstrated to "experts" and they were invited to spot the odd one. Only recently have clubs realised that the relationship of choruses and figures is not cast in concrete, and that more effective displays can be choreographed.

### 11 FOREST OF DEAN

The tradition in the Forest of Dean was a summer morris, unlike its northern Herefordshire neighbour, and yet different in character to its eastern Cotswold neighbour. What is known, mostly anecdotes, has been published by Russell Wortley in *English Dance and Song* and the relevant extracts from the Sharp mss in *Morris Matters*.

The sources mention a fool, a man-woman, a sword-bearer who would flourish his swords and a flag-bearer accompanying the dancers. The sets could be six, eight or more strong. Although a few tune titles have been noted only the handclapping chorus of one dance has been collected.

## B COTSWOLD MORRIS

Many of the "villages" were in fact considered at one time to be small towns with markets and other expected town facilities.

### 1 ABINGDON

The first outside contact with the Abingdon dancers was by Mary Neal who visited the town and invited the older Hemmings brothers to London to teach at the Esperance Club, and dances were published in the *Esperance Morris Book* Vol.1. The collection was credited to Mrs Tuke who was also the treasurer of the WSPU. Bill Kimber when asked by Sharp to look for traces of the morris claimed it did not exist although later he appeared to have been a close friend of some of the Abingdon men. Sharp saw a side in 1910 and notes and tunes are in his mss. He did not collect from their regular musician Gypsy Lewis. He visited again, this time with Maud Karpeles, after WW I and gained more information, also recorded in his mss, although he apparently confused his informants, and the published Princess Royal is probably a mixture of dances. Sharp arranged for a public collection at a London show to buy William Hemmings a new concertina, although he played a melodian.

A Travelling Morrice tour following an EFDS Summer School met people who knew of the morris but only anecdotes survive in the appropriate TM log. Schofield met Tom Hemmings in 1936 following the Wargrave Ring Meeting and gathered some of the tunes. Major Fryer was made president of the revived Abingdon Club in 1937 and in 1938 circulated some dance notations, deriving mostly from Tom Hemming's memories, and a few tunes collected from local players. Harry Thomas, a one row melodian player, developed his own versions of the tunes in the late 1930's and these were followed by Major Fryer, Len Bardwell and subsequent musicians. Peter Kennedy recorded and published an audio tape of Major Fryer. A notable change at the revival was from a 123h to a 1h23 step. The team gained traditional drawings of notations of some of the dances, including pre-WW I versions for enlarged sets, the so called **Royal Morris**, which have been interpreted and danced on special occasions by Mr Hemmings Morris. There were supposed to be twelve dances in all.

Further dances were remembered, although like *Maid of the Mill*, not necessarily agreed until many of the older dancers had died, and for many years only five or six dances were in practice. Others were created from Jack Hyde's initiatives such as *Constant Billy*, based on a memory of a demonstration by Tom Hemmings while working in the Ock ditch, *Duke of Marlborough*, from a local social dance and the jig *Shepherd's Hey*, an interpretation of Bill Kimber's jig. *Gentleman Jack* was a dance arranged in his memory after his death during a visit abroad by the team. A full description of the broomstick like dance once performed over the Mayor of Ock St's sword to start shows/visits was not recovered. The sources of the dances are now being forgotten or is being replaced in the club by folk lore.

Only Jack Hyde remembered a few old songs or country dances.

### 2 ADDERBURY

There are two sources. Miss Janet Blunt and her friends collected morris, country dances and songs from William Walton over a number of years and passed copies

of the mss to other people, including Sharp. The four copy sets surviving differ in detail. She arranged for Sharp to meet Walton when he went up to London in 1919 and Sharp was able to extract detail that Blunt may have missed. Sharp's publication owes nothing to Blunt's mss and he ignored the dances to previously popular songs. There was further information in the Sharp mss that was drawn from by Fred Hamer and published in *ED&S*.

The Blunt notations fail to distinguish between Foot-Ups and Foot-Downs and Processional-Up or Down. Because there was some doubt about the accuracy of the later Sharp published notations, as at Abingdon and Brackley, the Adderbury dances have been reconstructed also only from the Blunt evidence alone, as is performed by the current Adderbury Village team. Most sides ignore the declared flexibility in the dance sequences and the alternative figures used.

Adderbury has become a widespread initial teaching tradition and has acquired a number of modern choruses. Tim Radford with the Adderbury club has created a number of new dances which have been published in both his and the Morris Federation booklets.

Songs from the Blunt collection have been drawn from for a book. The country dances contain nothing exciting but have to be read in order to understand the morris notations, otherwise it is quite easy to misunderstand them, as sides have done in interpreting "Cross-Corners" as a corner figure when it was a hands-across or star movement. She also collected many tunes of Basque dances and postcards of their costumes.

### 3 ASCOT-UNDER-WYCHWOOD

No one particular collector obtained a complete description of a dance. Sharp was introduced to local dancers by Tiddy and Sharp collected in 1911 some set dances and jigs which notations were copied and circulated, eg. as held by Ralph Honeybone. The notations missed the details of the arm movements. However some of Tiddy's youngsters who had learnt the jigs, eg. Ralph Honeybone, Mr Townsend, and even Mrs Edwards, had shown them with various degrees of success to collectors in the 1960's, particularly to the OUMM who had their annual feast in the village in what was known locally as Tiddy Hall and which is hung with pictures of Tiddy's teams, and it is their movements which has been taken as a guide. However their performance of exaggerated cross-back-steps looked as if they had been influenced by the then current EFDS taught Headington style having been their main dancing tradition. Mary Neal and Clive Carey mss has some remarks about the style of the dances, so it must be assumed that they had had contact, perhaps during one of their Cotswold visits. It is from the later that the concept of a left galley in the middle of the other forward and back figures was derived.

Westminster MM had been the first to reconstruct the *Balance The Straw* from the Sharp mss and this in passing on became the source of the modern Fieldtown *Balance the Straw*. Williams mss had a little material which could be interpreted, and the Sharp mss has a long list of dances once done. See the annex of this paper.

The modern interpretations show a number of families, Bath City to Bristol to Kemps Men, Hugh Ripon to Herga and then Coventry from whom a number of

## SECOND DRAFT

sides derive, Dommett to Cup Hill and from them to Taunton Dean, also to Ring O'Bells of New York and Glory of the West. Royal Liberty appear to have had an independent start. All these sides have created new dances.

### 4 BADBY

There was only one source, Ephraim Cox, and one collector, Butterworth in 1913. Fred Hamer made enquiries after WW II but only gained anecdotes. The few dances were accompanied by a list of titles and some tunes from other people. The tradition has been adopted by a number of sides, for example Moulton, Oyster and Windsor, and has had many good choruses added to it.

### 5 BAMPTON

This has been a continuous tradition, regularly observed, unusual in that several families have been involved concurrently in its transmission, and in having two independent sides since 1926 and three more recently, identified as Shergold's, Woodley's and Wixey's. These sides have significant stylistic differences. It has been a common experience that the details of a dance are a consensus of those dancers out on the occasion and that a wider tolerance of individual style exists.

The earliest published material is some tunes published at the end of the 19th century by Percy Manning. A earlier mss tune book of a William Giles exists which contains melodies that we would recognise as used in the morris. Sharp engaged Wells to come to Stow in August 1908(?) to teach the dances and this formed the basis of his mss and first publication. Alfred Williams collected songs from dancers and published them in *Folk Songs of the Upper Thames*. There were visits to Bampton on the Bank Holidays and Clive Carey recorded the detail of the dancer to dancer variations pre-WW I at Bampton and the tunes during the visits of Bampton dancers to London. Clive Carey's friend another Williams, who's daughters were well known Cotswold cyclists, also made extensive notes on the dances although he lacked a concise notation.

Sharp went to Bampton in 1919 and noted in his mss the obvious changes, the dancing now being much closer in detail to that which has been seen since. There have been a number of short bank holiday accounts published since which usually made the point of the variability in what was seen. The break in 1926 produced two teams whose dancing style and interpretations grew apart slowly. Wells himself had had a number of jigs which he had used of which shortened versions are in circulation, including *Flowers of Edinburgh* which was danced and played simultaneously. He also wrote a valuable history of the tradition as he understood it.

In the mid 1930's Bampton was "rediscovered" as a traditional source. It was realised that the EFDSS taught version was rather theoretical, that it was how it "ought" to have been and was a long way from what was being seen at Bampton. This partly explains the old erroneous story that Bampton "change it every year". There is much in the general dancing in the Bampton style outside of the village that cannot be traced to an origin in the village either in mss notes of observations or on films. The dances and tunes were recollected by Schofield, Peck and Ganniford by visiting the Wells team at Bampton in August 1936. Wells was asked to give Ring Instructionals though he had only been an occasional no.4 dancer and was noticeably different in dancing style from the rest. From these

## SECOND DRAFT

contacts Dr Peck, the Ring Recorder, produced a small draft handbook. There were also a number of films taken in the 1930's which have been indexed by Keith Chandler. Using dance title lists produced by Jinky Wells in interviews with old dancers produced memories of dances no longer in practice, some of which were clear enough to be included in Dr Bacon's handbook. Also the music mss has produced a number of tunes that Wells had played. More recently the village teams have revived versions of some of the older dances, although not all have been recovered, particularly a double jig with each dancer having two sticks.

The two sides amalgamated during the war but they broke apart soon after Wells' death. The major observable difference appeared to be in what tune went with each dance. The "Old Uns", who were by then the boys nursery team as Arnold Woodley had been responsible for much of the training, stopped when Arnold started his illnesses and did not begin again until the early 1970's. This revival introduced further differences between the two sides. By then people had started recording with notes and film and collating with earlier mss. Arnold's side split again through an internal disagreement during the weekend in London when invited to an Albert Hall Show along with the Shergold's, and on the following bank holiday the older dancers turned out led by Alec Wixey.

Many recent village dancers have been singers or players, even forming country dance bands, but little of them has been recorded. Wells was taped by the BBC and Peter Kennedy and Bertie Clarke by Russell Wortley. No one appears to have recorded Sam Bennett's versions of the Bampton tunes when he played for the "Old Uns".

The observation of dancers spread over forty years shows that the dancer's age is a dominant effect in changing people's body language rather than any differences in how they had been taught when they joined. There are a few sides who have reproduced the village style well, usually copying the Woodley team. The Royal Ballet School, Frome Valley and Binghamton in the USA are examples. It has not been a tradition to which sides have added dances, although the club at Palmerston North, NZ, have arranged some for nine dancers.

### 6 BIDFORD

The village side was recreated in 1886 by D'arcy Ferris and danced on and off till WW I. The dances done must have included some based on old Bidford ones, certainly others derived from the Bledington area, perhaps a few from Ilmington, and maybe from other dancers asked to dance with the young men when they first started. Ferris' mss show some attempt to record the material. MacIlwaine and Sharp saw them dance in 1906, which was the first field collection of morris, and some dances appeared Sharp and MacIlwaine's first *Morris Book* and in the *Esperance Book*. Sir Benjamin Stone had photographed the side in action and the originals are in the Birmingham Central Reference Library collection.

Graham's book can be interpreted if it is realised that everything is described from the point of view of a watcher not a dancer, that all repetitions within dances are ignored, and that the later dances demonstrated to him were considerably shortened as well. The Library of Congress has recordings of the playing of Robins the musician made by US visitors pre WW I.

In 1955 a local boys side started by using Graham's book and also consulting several people who had learnt or were being taught the dances before WW I.

## SECOND DRAFT

They wanted the chorus to occur in the half figures and well as with the half heys, also the sidestep-&-half-hey dance was called *The Handkerchief Dance*, and all the various stick tappings were called *The Stick Dance*, because the foreman could chose or invent the chorus after the start of the dance. These persons defined a manner of performance which was kept up for a few years and which was taught and maintained later by Holden Goldens. With the demise of the local boys side, the tradition was transfered to the Shakespeare men at Stratford on Avon, who have made replicas of the old costumes and dance in Bidford on Trinity Monday. They have a new and powerful interpretation of the dances.

### 7 BLEDINGTON

Sharp met Benfield and Hitchman, the fiddler and fool, in 1909 and published dances in the first edition of the *Morris Book IV* which were naturally more like the "young" team's more recent style. Tiddy and Butterworth visited the old team leaders and their "old" version was published in the *Morris Book V*, although no supporting mss on the dances has been found. Sharp also saw Richard Bond in 1923 who gave him some tunes.

The TM met Benfield and gathered some tunes and dances. His portrait appears on the cover of Peter Kennedy's *Fiddlers Tune Books* taken from J Robertson's magazine the *Countryman*, still being published from Burford. Benfield had a number of songs. He played different versions of tunes to those that he sang! The TM also talked to other young Bledington dancers, particularly the No.1 George Hathaway, who unfortunately by 1937 was very arthritic, and details of their style of dancing emerged. Some information appeared in the *EFDSS Journal*. The "young" style became popular after WW II through Russell Wortley, although his interpretation of "hooking-to-rule" did not catch on.

### 8 BRACKLEY

Sharp went to Brackley before WW I in 1910, but found the dancers he met difficult to work with at that time, and he was sent to John Stuchbury at Hinton, presumably as the oldest surviving dancer in the area. Sharp's mss notes old and modern versions of *Shooting*, the former was published in the first edition of *Morris Book III* and performed at least once named in a programme as a Hinton dance as well as a Brackley one. When the volume was revised there were included dances collected in 1922 from Brackley, and some of the existing Hinton material in his mss was changed to be consistent with the more modern style.

Fred Hamer recognised that there was a large difference and in his *ED&S* and an *EFDSS Journal* article included all that was known of both traditions.

Brackley dancers had been met by the TM in 1927, and a special visit by Schofield, Peck and Putterhill made in 1937 gathered information about the dances post WW I. Fred Hamer met the survivors about 1954. Bedford MM became the reference performers of the dances and led a number of Morris Ring workshops. There was a boys side at the college which eventually led to the present Brackley club. Windsor and Phoenix are women's sides who interpret and extend the tradition.

### 9 BUCKNELL

The dancers in the Bucknell area were discovered by Butterworth in 1912 and his

## SECOND DRAFT

notes on the dances and a surviving diary of the collecting existed and have been published. He had difficulties with some aspects of the dances, eg. the backsteps and the heys as well as problems in obtaining any tunes. Powell played the pipe and tabor, but not very well, and frequently drifted off into *Maid of the Mill*. Sharp was asked to come and see what he could make of it. His mss is mostly of detail rather than full dances so it is presumed that the publication in the Morris Book was a joint effort. The meetings of the TM with the dancers and Powell over the years has only brought out a little information, mostly snippets about jigs, although for a while Powell made tabors for sale through the EFDS. Unfortunately Schofield's notebook on his Bucknell and Fieldtown collecting was loaned to Arthus Peck and has not been seen. It was later realised by Major Fryer that Powell played a pipe in the Basque tuning and not in that given him by the EFDSS, which was based on Potter's pipe owned by William Wells of Bampton.

The local revival is a women's side whose style is a good reflection of the recorded detail.

### 10 CHIPPING CAMPDEN

Sharp did not see the men's side dance to record the morris, but the musician Denis Hathaway arranged for a boys side to perform in 1910 and be noted, and their dances were reasonably close to that done by the men since 1932. The dances were supposed to be interpretations from watching Longborough along with some of the old Campden morris. Certainly Longborough figured in the titles of most of the dances given to Sharp, including the stick dance. Until recently the team has had five dances, although the titles appear to have shuffled around compared to the norm elsewhere, and has introduced a *Processional Off* and recovered *Old Woman Tossed Up* in recent years. Campden, like Abingdon, have asked that other sides do not perform their dances in public, a common wish that has been expressed by both Headington and Bampton over the years.

### 11 DUCKLINGTON

Some dances were outlined in Sharp's *Morris Book* but not in sufficient detail for performance. Mss has scattered information which had to be coordinated but it was short on details of steps and hand movements. Having met a man known to Joe Buckingham of Bampton who claimed to dance his father's jigs and who did perform a *Jockey to the Fair* and part of *Princess Royal*, his movements were grafted on to the mss dances, despite or perhaps because of them being very Bampton like. The mss would indicate a much more Fieldtown like style which path has been followed by the current village side.

### 12 EYNHAM

A young side was seen by Sharp and then an older side brought together from whom he collected and published the *Eynsham Morris Dance*. The team was seen several times later and Sharp's field notes record attempts to note other dances. During the revival in 1937 after a break of a few years the side regularly performed two dances separated by their mummers play. They said that earlier in the century they had done the morris in the daytime and the mummers after 6pm. Major Fryer saw the side on several occasions and noted the dances done, to find that the order of figures was flexible with many options of what to include or exclude, and that a variety of tunes were in use. Enquiry in the village in the



early 1960's established that other dances were recognised and some had indeed been at least practiced, such as *Constant Billy*.

The revival of the village side enabled them to recover dances from older men and now there is quite a large repertoire drawn from their memories. The side has also attempted some stick dances.

### 13 FIELDTOWN

Henry Franklin was the main source of the dances for Sharp. Henry was not completely sure of all the dance details but he knew some dances that derived from neighbouring villages. His dances were unusual in containing some with double length figures.

His much younger brother Alec was seen by Schofield and the TM and he gave them many tunes and dances, some of which were published in the *EFDSS Journal* in 1928 but others may still be missing. Mentions exist of other dances such as a *Jockey to the Fair* which were danced or sung to visitors, but the details do not appear to have survived.

Also met have been survivors of the local boys team who had danced Headington dances and could still form a set and perform forty years later.

Because of the popularity of the tradition some dances, such as *Balance the Straw* and the *Valentine*, which are modern inventions have become almost universal.

### 14 HEADINGTON QUARRY

This was first learnt from William Kimber at the Esperance Club and notated and published from the dancing of Florrie Warren by Sharp and MacIlwaine. Sharp revised and extended the collection for the second editions and in parallel Mary Neal published the dances as taught by Trafford to the Club in the *Esperance Morris Book*. A booklet was also produced by Miss Herschel based on the dancing of young Dandridge who was being taught by Trafford for that purpose at Headington. In the Sharp-Kimber correspondence it is clear that Kimber looked for dancers and dances for Sharp and that a few of Kimber's dances were strictly not from Headington.

In 1936 Schofield realised that Kimber disagreed with some of the *Morris Books* so he and Ganniford recollected the dances and tunes and produced a draft handbook which did not get published because of the war. When Quarry was formed after WW II a number of changes to the dances and further dances were introduced.

Kimber's morris and country dance tunes were recorded and issued.

### 15 HINTON-IN-THE-HEDGES

See under Brackley. Whether Hinton and Brackley were separate traditions or the same one but fifty years apart should be no concern as there is nothing that can be done with such information to affect the dances. The "tradition" is of course short on dances and only Swindon has appeared to have developed new choruses.

## 16 ILMINGTON

The variety of historical Ilmingtons that have happened were not appreciated till recently. Sharp published in 1912 a reconstruction of the morris as he believed it would have been in the 1860's based on the oldest memories and this was the basis of all interpretations until the Morris Federation instructionals. Jockey MM were an influential exponent introducing a more effective cross-&-turn movement. Because of Sharp's public criticism Sam Bennett recollected the dances and taught what he considered was the old form. Schofield taught Sam Bennett's final version of the tradition to Oxford City but it did not spread far until it was taught to Morris Federation sides at workshops. The many variations are described in Dr Bacon's handbook. The Ilmington village team has looked at the tradition as it was after Sharp's interpretation but before Sam Bennett's sides. The indication that the tradition at first included galleys has led to exciting experiments in interpretation.

## 17 LONGBOROUGH

"Harry" (Henry) Taylor was met by Sharp who learnt the dancers by mimicing. Some were published in the *Morris Book IV*. Clive Carey met Taylor in 1913. Rolf Gardiner met him in 1923 and was told how the dances were collected and about some of the errors that existed in the published material. The TM met him and were taught dances and received tunes from George Joynes who had helped Sharp and had later noted tunes from Taylor's eldest son. Some was published in the *EFDSS Journal* for 1930. Other Longborough, Lower Swell, and Stow dancers were met but none contributed much on the dances.

Butterworth's mss contains some dances labelled "new" which are otherwise unreferenced in any other source, such as a *Staines Morris*, which if authentic should have been valuable ammunition in the pre-WW I statements and arguments. Douglas Kennedy did not think that Butterworth was the sort of person who would have created dances.

That Denis Hathaway of Chipping Campden told Sharp that the stick dance was a *Longborough Stick Dance* suggests that they may have had one, perhaps after he had stopped dancing. Then again there are stories extant about sources misleading Sharp.

Of the modern teams Westminster were noted for their smooth performance and high dance skills (as well as the trained in mime unicorn) and Old Spot for their energy, although the frantic hand waving was not what D Kennedy had meant about Taylor's dancing.

## 18 ODDINGTON

There was only one source for this tradition, Charles "Minnie" Taylor of Church Icomb. He had on occasion walked over to Ilmington and danced jigs with the men there. He was first met by Clive Carey in 1913 and then by Rolf Gardiner in 1923 and finally by the Travelling Morrice. He claimed to know the Bledington, Longborough and Sherborne traditions as well and from him were gained some of the Bledington dance choruses. Only the information gathered by Carey on Oddington survives, that by the TM has not been found, although it was thought to be with Dr Arthur Peck. Carey found that Taylor's performance was variable

and the slow capers were noted in a number of forms. Their performance has had to be rationalised for performance and thus there are two or three distinct choices that can be taken.

The tradition was first revived by Thames Valley and they have provided a number of Instructionals in the last thirty years. Other sides who have developed the tradition were Belas Knap who had a set of dances based on the others known in the Stow area, Jorrocks who have a slow and very athletic interpretation, and Sarum.

### 19 SHERBORNE

There is only one major source, George Simpson, first seen by Cecil Sharp as early as 1908 as he was considered the best dancer. Other collectors and sources have only added titbits, eg. a brother James, Albert Townsend, Thomas Pitts and the youngsters at Upton. Sharp saw Simpson several times and here first learnt the morris by mimicing. It has been suggested that only Simpson used the odd double step. Sharp published some dances and jigs and others were printed later in the early *EFDS Magazine*. Russell Wortley found that Simpson had been recorded as using more elaborate arm movements in one of his jigs and has translated that interestingly into their use in set dances.

Swindon, Pilgrim, and Bowery Boys (New York) have added new dances and Bluemont (Virginia) have explored new formations.

### 20 STANTON HARCOURT

Thomas Carter working for Percy Manning met a dancer Joseph Standlake at Yarnold about 1901 and collected brief notes on choruses, typically, like Graham at Bidford later, ignoring repetitions. These indications have to be expanded to fit the music and there is room for inspiration. The Williams mss described laboriously a *Nutting Girl* and had a few tunes. As one or two are exactly the same as those collected elsewhere there has to be some doubt as to their correctness for Stanton dances.

### 21 WHEATLEY

Headington have said that their old gang used to hang around with the Wheatley dancers and had expected the dances to be very similar, but they are not.

Sharp made several attempts in 1921 to collect full dances from A Gomme but by then simple dances missing elements common elsewhere were of little value for publication. Major Fryer with the Wargrave men met an informant at Maidenhead after a show who claimed that their dances were wrong and taught them different stick tapping sequences to their Headington and Adderbury dances. Such material was reconstructed by Thames Valley and taught at Ring Instructionals and also used at early Morris Federation workshops and published as their first Instructional book.

Performance, particularly by the village side, shows that the lack of intermediate forward and back figures is no handicap, especially when they can exploit the existing figure with either ordinary stepping or spring capers. They have added a couple of dances to their repertoire, *The Windmill* and *Ladder Hill*, after local features.

### Reconstructions using very little evidence.

There is a difference in character between the morris in the Forest and on the Stone and the flavours ought not to be mixed. Regional characteristics have been explored in another paper.

#### 22 BESSELS LEIGH

A member of the OUMM produced a brief account from a book about this village's life before it was cleared away for a big estate. The morris could have and probably did come from Abingdon, but the wording suggested a different dance style including snappy turns and cross back stepping, which have been incorporated into a tentative reconstruction.

#### 23 BRILL

A number of tunes, including the song *Old Hog or None*, were collected by Sharp in 1912 and used recently by the Long Crendon MM to compose dances for their village play.

#### 24 KIRTLINGTON

Many Neal had Hawtin to dance in London in 1910, but no details of any dances have survived. There was a limited amount of dance mss in Sharp's collection derived from William Pearman in 1922. It was possible to find more in his field notes which defined a *Trunkles*. This information was used by the OUMM who for a period regularly danced at the Lamb Ale. Paul Davenport worked up the available material with Green Oak of Doncaster and his deductions exist in a paper. He contributed later with Tim Radford to establishing the initially small repertoire of the revived Kirtlington village side. In particular he, or a local schoolmaster, contributed the dance for the young girls to perform around the Lady of the Lamb in a rather distinctive revived Greek dance style which remains very popular with those who do it.

The team has been steadily expanding its repertoire of handkerchief and stick dances using tunes locally composed, especially by Barbara Berry of the Portway Pedlars.

#### 25 NOKE

There is enough mss information in Sharp mss from 1909 to indicate a possible dance notation to a *Bonny Green* tune which has been interpreted by Mike Heaney.

#### 26 NORTH LEIGH

There is enough information in the Sharp mss to suggest the form of the tradition and likely dances and this has been developed by the North Leigh side and reported by Mike Heaney. They have also generated versions of dances known from neighbouring villages.

## SECOND DRAFT

**New Traditions :** There are many. Known to me are,

Bath (Limpley Stoke), Broadwood, Cardiff Men and Women, Chantonbury,  
Chelmsford, Dartington (Filkins), Duns Tew, Frome, Headcorn, Kemp's Men,  
New Esperance, Plymouth, Redbornstoke, and Sheffield.

## C OTHER DANCES OF INTEREST

### 1 ISLE OF MAN & OTHER DISPLAY DANCES

The **Isle of Man** had a rich dance tradition, two sets of which has been published by Mona Douglas. Others are kept alive by dance troupes on the island and some of which may be seen in Woodfidley's repertoire, including the *Isle of Man's Servant's Hiring Dance*. They include solo jigs, duets, display dances for eight as well as more social dances. The dance *Mona's Delight* is very morris like. There is a morris like dance for six, each with two short willowy sticks which ends with a lock around the musicians head and a long sword dance from the *White Boys*.

The **Irish Mummers** in Wexford usually knew a couple of longways dances with duple minor progressions which would repeat until the leader, distinguished by a bishop's mitre, had gone down the set and regained the top. This was still much shorter than the play which was often so long winded, and in English, that they didn't bother.

The **Welsh** have a number of dances, mostly remembered by a source at Nantgarw, which used to be performed at fairs by semi-professional troupes. The descriptions have been interpreted, but to me they are not to be very close to the originals. However I know that this is very difficult having tried to make a dancable display item from the elements of dances in Thomas Hardy's mss and in a book of Hampshire Gypsy songs and music. One year a team of young Welsh girls performed a garland dance at Sidmouth.

The **Cornish** are also recovering and creating a dance tradition, using local versions of dances such as broomstick and three hand reels. Each year at the Cornish Gorsedd young girls perform a "flower" dance.

### 2 SOLCS, DUETS etc

The following list are culled from a wide variety of sources and traditions. Some are very old.

**Solo** : Dances for one are solo "jigs". A fairly comprehensive list includes Cotswold Morris jigs, *Fool's Jig*, the *Captain Pugwash* version with two sticks, *Baccapipes*, various Crossed Sword and other implements dances, Broomstick and related dances including those with walking sticks, other poles and flails, Egg and Candlestick dances, the *Isle of Man Dirk Dance*, Lichfield's *All the Four Winds* with 4 hats, Step dances including hard shoe and clog in various regional styles, various Sailor's Hornpipes, Highland and Irish dances, Sword or Cutlass Drill (eg. as in the Forest of Dean), Baton twirling, Rhythmic gymnastics with apparatus (eg. a stick and ribbon or a decorated hoop), jigging and twirling by a Hobby Horse (eg. Minehead) or a Jack-in-the-Green. There have been seen some improvised dances seen which used such long apparatus as a Friendly Society Stave or a pitchfork. Most of the above can be performed by more than one person simultaneously. There are also suitable jigs from abroad, such as those danced by the Basques or the Hungarians. Most need practiced skills, just as do comparable circus activities, such as stilt walking, unicycling and juggling.

**Duets** : Dances for two include the double jigs. Cotswold morris jigs can be danced by both persons together, with or without an element of competition, or

by taking turns, either walking round between turns to fall in behind, or by facing through out and alternating, as the Bledington's *Shepherd's Hey*, or even by dancing different movements simultaneously as in the Sherborne tradition. Most of the solo dances mentioned have dual versions. In the past I have seen two dancers from Chipping Campden and I have heard of two dancers at Eynsham creating a double jig by dancing as much of set dance as the two could manage. There are a few display mixed couple dances, eg. one from the Isle of Man. There are comic or fun dances from Europe, eg. *The Ox or Student Dance* from Scandinavia and the Fool's Jig like dance from the Baltic States for two sharing one long pole. The choreography of Irish pair dances is worth study for inspiration. There are also free form traditional dances such as that done by the Teaser and Hobby Horse at Padstow. A dance for two each with two sticks from Wells at Bampton has been lost but such exists from Guam. Even the Maori sitting down stick dances might be considered.

**Trios :** There are a few recognised morris dances for three, eg. *Shepherd's Hey* from Lichfield and the *Old Man's Dance* from Chipping and Dolphinholme, Lancashire, other than three dancing a solo jig in a ring facing inwards or out, and a number of Three Hand Reels. Some of the Ducklington dances are in effect jigs done as set dances with the figures performed two by two, and they can be done as one side of a set with only half a team.

**Quartets :** There are a large number of variants of Four hand Reels, including those usually done as social dances, eg. *Sidbury Reel* and *Forest Reel*, but also several that were done with various sizes of sticks. Some teams such as Plymouth MM and Headcorn have developed dances to have complete four handed dance traditions. Some dances for eight can be done in "half". *Lively Jig* from Ilmington, *The Faggot Dance* from Great Wishford and a *Four Handed* from Beaminster are older dances. There is a *Buffoon* with sticks or swords from the Tudor period. There are comic dances such as the Scandinavian *Skobo* and the Victory Morris *Four Old Men's Dance* and a traditional stick dance from the Sussex Mummers like *Over the Sticks* and Scan Tester's *Walking Stick Dance*.

### 3 SKITS AND HUMOUR

There are a few collected or composed English dances which are intended to be humorous and which exist within the dance traditions already mentioned. Probably many such were ignored by the early collectors. This may have been because the ideas were familiar through party games and stunts or that they were rather rough or even coarse. There is now a much wider range of items available as part of the introducing folk material into the recreational field, with many similar items from Europe, which can be assumed to have been known in England in some form because of the similar cultures and contacts over the centuries.

Such behaviours seem to have existed at least as far back as the Games of late medieval times. Sharp mentions dances or stunts at Adderbury (*Buffoon* and athletic feats), Ilmington (*Buffoon*), Fieldtown (*Mrs Casey, Jug by the Ear*), Headington (*Willow Tree*) which are not just involving the fool or brief actions in the dances such as appearing to jump on one's opposite's feet in *Jockey to the Fair* at Abingdon. Modern comic performances have grown around *Monks March*, *Swaggering Boney* and the *Maid of the Mill* from Eynsham.

#### 4 MEDIA

Just because a dance has been created to support a comedy show or as a comic interlude in a folk based entertainment, that is no reason to ignore it or its ideas as they reflect an image of the morris to which the public is supposed to relate. An example was the morris dance in Dad's Army which became a whole act in the touring stage version. The extracting of ideas for and from such material is probably in the tradition of 19th century theatrical morris. At least one such dance, the *East Acton Stick Dance*, taken from an early Tony Hancock TV show is proving very popular. Others come from Russ Abbot, the Two Ronnies, the Bruce Forsyth Show and even a ribbon dance from a TV production of the Gilbert and Sullivan Mikado. These were similar in concept to the humorous dances which were presented by the EFDSS in their Albert Hall Shows in the 1960's.

#### 5 OTHER PLACES WITH DANCES

##### Abbots Bromley

Six sets of reindeer horns are hung in the local church and removed only for the annual perambulation to Blithfield Hall and back. They have a back-up set for other outings. The originals have been carbon dated to the early middle ages although a dance was first mentioned in the 16th century as used for raising money. The form of rounds, challenge and cross over is similar to surviving accounts of dances elsewhere without horns and so could be the only real Tudor Morris Dance that we have. We tend to forget that the earlier adult games, sports and dances, had more in common with more modern children's than adult activities.

It is simple, repetitive and the team covers many miles in the day. They regularly use a variety of recognisable tunes, but Robinson's evocative tune not for a long time, if ever, as it was unknown within the memory of those alive at Sharp's visit. This tune has been used by the EFDSS and Thaxted for more theatrical presentations where it adds to the magic of the occasion.

There has been little exploitation of this implement, presumably because of the encumbrance of the sets of horns. It is performed at Thaxted following sunset. Rolf Gardiner spoke of doing a more elaborate dance at Fontmell. Thames Valley do one and so does Ellington. The latter had fibreglass copies made of a set in a museum only to discover later that it was on display as the largest spread known! Horns were featured in a children's play on ITV some years ago but although the performers learned by carrying upturned chairs to simulate the horns, on the TV they had the horns attached to their headaddresses, as the prehistoric relics from Stone Carr in Yorkshire may have been used.

##### Bacup Nutters

The Bacup team dance with garlands and also with wooden nuts. In the dances these are held in the palms of the hands, as well as attached to the knees and to the right hand side of the waist belt. Nutters were more common in the nineteenth century and a similar group is known to exist in Provence. At Bacup they have four forms of the dance, one in a quadrille which is very seldom seen in performance, a full version danced in a line of eight, or shortened sequences in



sets of four, and finally as a processional with two groups of four working along the road sides, alternately stopping and performing extracts from the longer sequences.

### Castleton

A simple dance by girls is performed in association with the evening procession on the 29th May in the viillage at the various stops made by the garlanded King and the Queen.

### Cockney London

We all recognise what is supposed to be the Cockney style dancing. It appears in routines in well known cine films such as *Mary Poppins*, *Half a Sixpence* and *Oliver*. There may have been dancing associated with the various Jack in Green, the May Morning Milkmaids perambulations, and the "wild bunch" at Hitchen.

### Helston

A simple processional dance in couples danced around the town several times during its day, starting at 7 am, 10.30 (children), noon (formal) and 5 pm.

In the mid 19th century there were *Furry Dances* in at least half a dozen other towns. Such dances continue to occur. Newquay now has one in July.

### Minstrel Troupes

In the early 19th century the blacked up nigger minstrel was created and until WW I it remained one of the most popular forms of stage entertainment, with its own show structure, style and rules. It contained a mix of song, music, dance and playlets, before the development of the equally well forgotten Concert Parties and Pierrots. In the early 20th century it was commonly done by local amateur groups, often following the death of the local mummers, and was a favourite method of raising funds, and which are also now defunct. The TV Black and White Minstrel Show did not follow the traditional format.

### Mummers

Some mummers plays end with a simple dance. That from Keynsham is interesting.

### Nantgarw Morris

One of the Nantgarw dances, remembered from just north of Cardiff, was for men only and appeared to be morris like. The dance has been reconstructed a number of times incorporating increasing detail and the most elaborate version is performed by the Cardiff MM.

### St Ives

Every five years on the 25th July children perform a dance around a pyramidal monument and process to the town in memory of a local man, John Knill, who left money to support such a celebration.

### Salisbury

There was six man dance team that came out up to WW I with the Giant and Hob-Nob where three of the men dressed as women. The surviving tune is a version of *Oyster Girl*. The dance used may have been different for each outing.

The Johnny Jacks were local children dressed in rags and with straw around their shins who shuffled and jigged in the street gutters whilst collecting money.

### Shaftesbury

To pay the fee for drawing water from a neighbouring manor the towns people used to process with dancing to meet its balliff carrying the Bezant, now to be seen in the local museum, decorated with shiny things. The subsequent feast became too expensive for the town so it was replaced with what they claim was one of the first modern carnival processions in England. There have been periodic revivals of the older event with participants dressed in appropriate costumes.

### Sussex/Surrey Solo Morris

A sole dancer was seen by Lucy Broadwood at her home near Horsham, dancing in a grotesque manner and accompanied by a blowing of his own trumpet.

Dancers are also recorded from Puttenham, near Guildford, but they stopped because one insisted on being buried in the costume.

### Yardley Gobion

From the turn of the century there was morris at Yardley led by Thomas Cadd who had used elements of the Brackley morris but also apparently movements learnt when working in the North West, as could be deduced from Mary Neal's description of the basic step. Although something is known about the performances, the collecting of the dances was effectively inhibited by Maud Karpeles publishing Sharp's view of this morris as unauthentic, and now it is too late. There is a dance in circulation which has been interpreted in various styles but which is believed to have been composed in the 1960's, possibly by the OUMM.

### Yorkshire Moors

Paul Davenport has collected memories of dancing, with figures like the miscellaneous ones of the Long Sword, and has published suggested possible reconstructions of the tradition.

## CONCLUSION

Most people's knowledge of the past is fragmentary and quite insufficient to properly judge the validity of most arguments presented about origins and purpose. One difficulty is that some theorists are ignorant of the breadth of material that is available and relevant. The worst feature is that most people see the differences as evidence of uncertainty, being unable to grasp that much of what has been said had been proven to be wrong or rather doubtful, whereas the situation is unclear because of the current state of finding and interpreting the right information for its very complex background. That they want to believe in certain explanations is a fascinating issue, but little to do with historical accuracy.

Issue Draft 1.0      © October 1994      R L Dommett

Issue Draft 2.1      © February 1995      R L Dommett

# SECOND DRAFT

## ANNEX A

### KNOWN TUNES OR DANCE TITLES WITHOUT NOTATIONS

in addition to Dr Bacon's handbook

Titles underlined are those for which versions ought to be identified.

#### 1 VILLAGES WITH OTHER KNOWN REPERTOIRE

*Abingdon* : Other dances believed to have existed were Shepherd's Hey as a set dance and Greensleeves, which was what the 1937 team first called the Squire's dance. There was possibly Lumps of Plum Pudding and Old Mother Oxford, although this is used as an Introduction to Princess Royal. A modern invention is Gentleman Jack (Lord of the Dance).

*Adderbury* : Hail the Chieftain is mentioned and such a dance has been created by the Adderbury Village team. The Adderbury team dance The Bell, Old Woman Tossed Up, Stourton Wake, and Shepherd's Away, amongst others, using tunes played by the church carillon, titles from former Longborough men interviewed by Blunt at Bloxham and by developing a processional. Adderbury have introduced Betty Windsor, Cobb's Horse, Cuckoo's Nest and Little Town of Bethlehem.

*Ascot-Under-Wychwood* : The list is not unsurprisingly very like that at Fieldtown.

There were also the following,

*Handkerchief* : Blue Eyed Stranger, Dear is my Dicky (double dance), Gallant Hussar (single dance), Glorishers (leapfrog), Lads a Bunchum and Maid of the Mill.

*Corner Dances* : Old Trunko (*Trunkles*), Old Woman Tossed Up.

*Heel and Toe* : Marlborough.

*Sticks* : Constant Billy, Moll in (of) the Wad, Polly Put the Kettle on, Shepherd's Hey.

*Jigs* : Balancy Straw, Black Joke, Flowers of Edinburgh, Old (*Mother*) Oxford and Princess Royal.

*Badby* : Titles listed are,

First Morris, Second Morris, Balance the Straw, Bobbing Joe, Broad Cupid, Cuckoo's Nest, Flowers of Edinburgh, Saturday Night, Trunkles, plus two untitled tunes.

*Bampton* : Jinky Wells used several tunes, not all recorded,

The Dear Old Home, Forestry Keeper's Daughter, Harvest Home, Polly put the Kettle on, The Tinkers Hoard, Tommy Make Room for your Uncle, Wait for the Waggon, When the Sun Goes Down.

Also earlier tunes known from Mannings and Carter were, Black Joke, Bob and Joan, Cuckoo's Nest, Handsome John, Old Woman Tossed Up, Soldier's Cloak, Willow Tree

## SECOND DRAFT

**Bidford** : The following have been listed, mostly likely coming from Trotman who came from the Bledington area.

Black Joke, Cock O'The North, Jockey to the Fair, Maid of the Mill, (Old) Molly Oxford, Morning Star, Saturday Night, Old Trunkles, Valentine, In Wooden Shoon.

Introduced by D'arcy Ferris was Merry Go Round to the Morisque tune.

**Bledington** : Sharp had Sweet Highland Mary as a stick dance.

**Brackley** : The old full list was,

Round Morris : Broad Capers (Cupid).

Handkerchiefs : Belle Isle's March, Black Joke, Bonny Green Garters, Cuckoo's Nest, Jockey to the Fair, Lads a Bunchum, Lumps of Plum Pudding, Maid of the Mill, Old Woman Tossed Up, Queen's Delight, Room for the Cuckoo, Saturday Night, Trunkles, 29th May.

Sticks : Balance the Straw, Beaux of London City, Bobby and Joan, Constant Billy, Country Gardens, Greensleeves, Mad Kaiser (Muller or Parson), Rakes of Marlow, Rodney, Shepherd's Hey.

Jigs : Lumps of Plum Pudding, Old (Mother) Oxford, Princess Royal, Shepherd's Hey.

**Bucknell** :

Set dances : Down in the Meadows, Lads a Bunchum, Rodney, Step Back.

Jigs : Jockey to the Fair, Johnny Long Gone to the Fair.

**Ducklington** :

Set dances : Old Woman Tossed Up, Shepherd's Hey.

Jigs : Balance the Straw.

**Eynsham** : The current village side dances,

Brighton Camp, Cock O'the North, Constant Billy, Eynsham Poacher, Eynsham Stick Dance, Feathers, Figure Eight, Highland Mary, Maid of the Mill, Jockey Off.

**Fieldtown** : Jigs : Greensleeves, Highland Mary, Jockey to the Fair.

**Headington** : Old dances mentioned were,

Banks of the Dee, Bob and Joan, Cuckoo's Nest, First of May, Jacks the Lad, Lillee Dale, Maid of the Mill, Queen's Delight, To Rodney We Will Go, Saturday Night.

Jigs : Devil Amongst the Tailors, Lumps of Plum Pudding, Princess Royal, Shepherd's Heel and Toe.

**Ilmington** :

Set : Abraham Brown, Cross Legged Caper Out (Cross Caper), Ilmington High Jinks, The Keeper, Saturday Night, Six and Clasp, The Warwickshire Lads.

Jigs : Lumps of Plum Pudding, Shepherd's Hey.

The village side dance in addition,  
Highland Mary, Haste to the Wedding.

**Kirtlington** : The following have been mentioned,

Glorishears, Jockey to the Fair, Lumps of Plum Pudding, Princess Royal, Shepherd's Hey.

These are currently danced,

*Handkerchief* : Bonny Green, Buxton's Court, Crow on the Willow, Glorishers, Lumps of Plum Pudding, Maid of the Mill, Muriel Dashwood, Old Woman Tossed Up, Saturday Night, Trunkles, Tinker's Ditch.

*Stick* : Forest Feathers, Hollow Tree, Molly Minns, Nuts and Berries.

*Jigs* : Barbara's Jig, Jockey to the Fair, Princess Royal.

**Longborough** : *set dance* Leapfrog, *jig* Highland Mary.

**Oddington** :

Gallant Hussar, Greensleeves, Nutting Girl, Shepherd's Hey, Sherborne Jig.

**Sherborne** : A set dance done to Greensleeves.

**Stanton Harcourt** : Constant Billy, Jockey to the Fair.

**Wheatley** : possible tunes were Lumps of Plum Pudding and Princess Royal.

2 OTHER COTSWOLD VILLAGES

The following are known tunes or dance titles for which there are no corresponding dance notations.

**Blackwell :**

*Processional* : Hey Diddle Dis

*Set dances* : Blackwell Morris (*London Pride*), Constant Billy, Cuckoo's Nest.

*Jigs* : Broom Dance, Greensleeves, Nelson's Praise (*Princess Royal*), Old Molly Oxford, Shepherd's Hey.

**Brailes :**

*Set dances* : Blue Eyed Stranger, Constant Billy, Galley Out, Hey Away, Trunkles.

*Clap dances* : Jolly Waggoners, Shepherd's Hey.

*Jigs* : Baccapipes, (*Old*) Molly Oxford.

**Brill :**

Bonnets so Blue, Greensleeves, Haste to the Wedding, Mrs Casey, Old Hog or None, Princess Royal, Shepherd's Hey.

**Field Assarts :**

Cockey Brown, The Cuckoo, Cuckoo's Nest, Greensleeves, The Hay Morris, Moll of the Wad, The Old Rose, Trunk Hose (*Trunkles*), White Jock (*Joke*).

**Filkins :**

Constant Billy, Cuckoo's Nest, Hey Diddle Dis, Highland Mary, Maid of the Mill, Old Woman Tossed Up, Princess Royal, perhaps Bobby and Joan.

**Minster Lovell :**

*Set dances* : Constant Billy, Lumps of Plum Pudding, Trunkles.

*Jigs* : Jockey to the Fair, Old Mother Oxford, Princess Royal.

**Noke :**

Balance the Straw, Bonny Green Garters, Greensleeves, Leapfrog, Rosin the Beau.

**North Leach :**

Baccapipes, Constant Billy, Jockey to the Fair, Lumps of Plum Pudding.

**North Leigh :**

*Set dances* : Black Joke, Boys of the Bunch, Constant Billy, Mrs Casey, Old Woman Tossed Up.

*Sticks* : lots of stick dances.

*Jigs* : Princess Royal, Sweet Highland Mary.

The village side dance in addition,

*Set dances* : Finstock Glorishers, Old Tyler, Rosin the Beaux

*Sticks* : Balance the Straw, Black Joke, Moll of the Wad, Month of May

## SECOND DRAFT

### ***Shipton-on-Stour :***

*Set dances* : Buffoon, Constant Billy, Cuckoo's Nest, Flowers of Edinburgh,  
Greensleeves, Haste to the Wedding, Highland Mary, Jockey to the Fair,  
Lumps of Plum Pudding, Old Mother Oxford, Old Woman Tossed Up.  
*Jigs* : Princess Royal, Shepherd's Hey, Sherborne Jig.

### ***Tysoe :***

Balance the Straw, Buffoon, Jockey to the Fair, Old Woman Tossed Up,  
Shepherd's Hey, Trunko (*Trunkles*), Young Collins.  
No jigs.

### ***Withington :***

Greensleeves, Lumps of Plum Pudding, Princess Royal, Rose Tree.  
No stick dances.



## SECOND DRAFT

### ANNEX B

#### LONG SWORD DANCES

These are the collected dances appearing in Allsop's Book. There are other more modern dances to be seen as well.

Dance	Major Source	Published
Ampleforth	Sharp	Sword Dances Part 3
Askham Richard	Sharp	Sword Dances Part 3
Bellerby	Karpeles	EFDSS J 1928
Boosbeck	Douglas	Three More Yorkshire Dances
Escrick	Sharp	Sword Dances Part 3
Flamborough*	Sharp Neal	Sword Dances Part 2 Esperance Morris Book Vol 2
Goathland*	Ridden	Folk Music J 1974
Greatham	Peacock	EFDSS J 1956
Grenoside*	Sharp	Sword Dances Part
Handsworth*	Sharp	Sword Dances Part 3
Haxby	Sharp	Sword Dances Part 3
Helmsley	Sharp	mss
Hunton	Karpeles	EFDSS J 1928
Kirkby Malzeard	Sharp Kennedy	Sword Dances Part 1 EFDSS J 1947
Kirbymoorside	Sharp	mss
Lingdale	EFDSS and Dommett Films	
Loftus*	EFDSS and Dommett Films	
North Skelton	Sharp Kennedy	mss EFDSS Pub 1931
Papa Stour*	Scott Johnston Johnson	Notes to "The Pirate" The Sword Dance Sword Dance of Papa Stour
Poppleton	Sharp	mss

## SECOND DRAFT

Riccall	Pickles Cawte	mss Folk Music J 1971
Salton	Sharp	mss
Skelton	Sharp	mss
Sleights	Sharp	Sword Dances Part 2
Sowerby (Thirsk)	Sharp	mss
Stillington	Sharp	mss
White Boys (Isle of Man)	Stowell	mss
Wigginton	Sharp	mss, dance as at Haxby

\* = traditional team. It is asked that these dances are not performed in public although they could be learned for pleasure.



## **A DEEPER LOOK AT MORRIS TOPICS**

### **THE BODY**

#### **The Smile and Other Body Language Issues**

Types of smile  
Posture and poses  
Gestures

#### **The Anatomy of Steps and Movements**

Muscles  
Loads

#### **Stretching**

#### **Why Use Only a Few Jumps?**

Different possibilities  
Preparatory movements  
Spotters

### **THE IMPLEMENTS**

#### **Handkerchief Control**

Size and weight  
Wrist movement  
Positions, candles  
Floating, flicking, off-beat stress

#### **Sticks and Sticking**

## TECHNIQUE IN STICK DANCES

No matter how good the technique one must start with a good stick. Willow makes the best sticks as it gives a good sound, is resilient and splinters safely. It should be cut over long, after the sap has stopped rising, and stored for six months or more horizontally on the flat to prevent bowing. Green wood is untrustworthy. It should be cut to the required length when needed. In the 19th century morris one usually provided one's own stick, on pain of a fine. They were often painted and shorter than normal today.

The grip is mostly with the thumb and forefinger, the rest of the hand provides the control and rotation. The fingers should tighten their grip at the moment of impact with another stick. This allows a good sound, bounce and control, and is safer because of the lack of a follow through movement. Hits should normally be upward, not across or downward. Clashes can be preceded by a large arm movement and rotation of the stick for effect but large movement does not mean great force.

Adderbury sticks are somewhat longer than other village's and are held and used differently. In "singles" the stick is held in the middle by the right hand and the stick is moved by a combination of rotation of the lower arm from the elbow and the fingers and the wrist. In "doubles", held in both hands, the butt pivots in the left hand which only moves a little, while the right hand does the stick rotation. The right hand slides along the stick as is necessary for each movement.

The worst performed and ugliest movement in the morris is the turn to face away from one's opposite and raising one's stick in both hands overhead to receive a stick hit. Thought must be given to the associated foot movements for balance and appearance. The body posture should be upright and not bent backwards. The stick should be held up in the air above the head and not behind it. This ensures that the hitting stick is not aimed at the head. A similar principle works for offering a stick up horizontally in front of the body. It should be high enough that the stick appears to cover the eyes of one's opposite when looking across the set. It is not part of the morris to hide the stick tapping from the audience, so all tapping should be reasonably high, and impacts points should be at eye level or above.

Dancers should listen to the music and follow the phrasing in tapping. They can avoid speeding up by making larger movements between taps. Pushing the music shows inexperience and possibly a lack of constructive practice.

The sticks are carried in different ways for each tradition, vertically in front, vertically at the side with the arm down at the side with the tip either up or down, or horizontally, the choice usually depending on the stick length. Whether the stick is swung with the normal or a reduced arm movement in stepping and jumps is also dependent on the tradition. The choice should be dominated first by safety and then by appearance considerations.

V 1.0 © 1985 R L Dommett

Foriegn experience with woods  
Noise and splitting

**Bells**

Where to wear, ankles, knees, wrist, clothing  
Materials, Dutch metal, old sets, number on pad, cost  
Use at practice  
Number of clangs - start and end of accel and decel - role of ribbons

**Rosettes**

and ribbons and baldricks and costume

### SOME OBVIOUS FAULTS OF MORRIS DANCERS

If you are honest, who on earth wants to watch second rate morris through choice? Explanations about spirit and enjoyment and gaining experience, although true, are just excuses, not justifications!

#### 1. Weak Posture and Fitness

To put height into stepping requires strength and this has to be developed in the correct muscles. It takes time and some understanding in training. Stretching, exercises and warm-up as well as cool-down should be appreciated and exploited as needed. Do not be afraid to ask similar relevant experts in fields other than morris dancing.

Pulling the stomach in and raising the rib cage gives the dancer a sense of elation as well as elevation. A slack body leads to a slack mind and to slack dancing.

Tucking the head down in jumps is common, obvious to the audience and bad body language. One should have a straight, proud back, not a curly one - it comes back to raising the rib cage and not being afraid to raise the arms away from the chest.

#### 2. Weak Stick Tapping

The stick should be used as an implement, it is a tool, not an extension of the hand like a handkerchief. It should be wielded with a full arm and body movement, with confidence and vigour, with a good preparatory swing but controlled to the clash to avoid a significant follow through. Accidents happen through lack of this particular control. If this is thought undignified, unnecessary or for women unfeminine, then you do not understand the Cotswold morris, and you probably play lousy tennis and can not chop wood!

Stick tapping should be seen. The impact point should be at head level or above - the audience stands behind the dancers and needs to see what is going on - it also reduces the chance of accidents.

Women sometimes move in a way protective to their breasts thus inhibiting good arm movements, good clapping and good stick tapping. They sometimes hunch forward and swing their arms across their body providing a poor body language message. Arm movements should always be large and expressive, and the hands well away from the body at hits, claps etc. The technique has the same objective as stage movements - to look normal to an audience, it has to be exaggerated in performance.

#### 3. Set Too Small

A Cotswold set should be spaced at outstretched fingertip length in each direction. It should be necessary to stretch out to clash sticks in figures. One should have a take a positive step forward for handclapping with one's opposite.

A small set is often due to how the side fits into its practice room. In

this and other things a set should deliberately practice as it intends to perform in public.

A narrow set can be due to laziness in practice. It also goes with making little effort and slow acceleration into figures so that the dancing lacks life. In other words "dull". Cotswold morris is dependent for its effect on jumps, capers and drive, and this does not necessarily mean speed.

#### 4. Too Many Dances Too Soon

It takes time to make an effective dancer, and it is unfair to burden the memories at the expense of working on dance basics. Who wants to watch a load of mediocre dances? It is really better than nothing?

At one level, interest is maintained by novelty. Initially this can be achieved by having variety in the material, but later on by the variety in the occasion in which the morris is used. An understood, structured programme of learning should overcome the need for endless dance fodder. Keeping a balance during the learning of techniques and dances requires skill from the foreman. New sides and new foreman should realise when they need help, advice or guidance.

Variety in a show is desirable, but the idiom is very limited, whole set v. corners, handkerchiefs v. sticks. How many Trunkles can you use?

Dancing out is part of the making of a dancer. It should not be delayed but it should be introduced with care.

#### 5. Attention to Basics

Principles are no substitute for good dance basics. Most cant about the "tradition" ignores that the tradition had very good and experienced examples to copy, and that the teachers in the traditional sides in this century at least, have been insistent on good grounding.

A constant review of basics is important as dancers do improve and their technique can be upgraded. Perhaps the commonest problem is avoiding inflexibility.

#### 6. Self Discipline

Do you remember the following?

- a. Talking in the set and delaying Once to Yourself or missing calls.
- b. Begging the sixth dancer to come and dance.
- c. Arguing in public, especially having post mortems as soon as the dance stops.
- d. Temper and other emotional outbursts.
- e. Bad behaviour in pubs. It is not your pub, and you have obligations. Who likes to see men or women the worse for drink? Why is there a need to emphasise public drinking?
- f. Making social or political points. Whatever your personal beliefs the Morris is no place to sail against accepted conventions. There is a responsibility to all morris not just your own.



## 7. Honesty

Because it is recognised that many people dance better and make a better show if they care about their dances, it is accepted without adverse comment that sides go their own way, make their own choices of how things should be done and develop a club style. This was never intended as a manifesto for anything other than better dancing, but sometimes it is used to justify abuse of our heritage.

The way dances are sometimes passed on makes one wonder, we all know of workshops that reflect more of the leader's own ideas than tradition, often people are not honest about what has been changed or developed from the original. Finally care is not taken to see that the dance has been learnt, or noted accurately, even when the learner actually wants a particular interpretation.

When performances are only a faint reflection of the original, it is suprising that announcing a place of origin continues as a convenient label. It mystifies the audience who will hardly have heard of any of the places, and, as most dances went with leaders and the dancers who performed them were drawn from a territory, it was not strictly correct. It puts an unnecessary barrier between the dance and the audience. Are the dancers ashamed of having dances of their own? It is suprising that sides do not often chose local names to identify themselves nor introduce local associations into their dance titles. The dance movement is not wedded to a tune, otherwise there would be only ONE tradition.

## 8. Costume

The choice of the word to describe what is worn reflects an attitude, "costume" is a theatrical term, "kit" suggests an issue as in the forces, "gear" to be exhibitionist in, "regalia" is an add-on. Whatever it is called, it is seldom chosen with the needs of dancing in mind. Often it is fixed before the side can dance and know what is suitable. One does not hear of new sides going to look at others to see how the clothes dance! The choice is not often related to the clothes that are practiced in. Jeans and trainers, like a smooth sprung floor, are no preparation for dancing outside. How far the dance clothes and trimmings have to be simulated, for example wearing bells, in practice sessions should be considered.

A general issue is that fat is difficult to hide whatever the sex.

### a. Men

One of the Puritan complaints against the morris was the selling of favours and liveries, in today's terms buttons and teeshirts, so little have things changed! Early references to the morris in England commented on the elaborate coats. Some dancers insisted in being buried in theirs' as their most expensive possession, perhaps like the heirloom type of folk costumes in Europe. Having something special to wear does not mean that it was worn for the dance. Today the cost dominates the care that clothes are given.

At one time clothes were white or rather light. Concern for cleanliness, changes of whites, and brushing off the dust of dancing, was once common. The Victorian fashion was for many rosettes and tied ribbons and fancy baldricks which did little for showing the movements of the morris, but perhaps did wonders for sexual attraction in those times. Is it still a factor?

The modern image can be quite untraditional, with the proportions of the clothes almost appropriate to marionettes. A beflowered and badged straw hat, beard, an appliqued tabard or waistcoat over a baldrick, loose breeches, large bellpads with great rag tufts, ribbons, beads, and a beer mug - no wonder they dance low to the ground.

#### b. Women

Should women wear breeches or trousers? The audience sees most of the dancing from the rear. Bums are the extra fat that develops at puberty. Women's dress has evolved to cover this shape attractively. Some of us are old enough to remember the ribald comments when women first started to wear pants. Some of the observations are still true but the clothes are better fitted now. However I would admit that many sides manage to look great.

A good skirt is as effective as a second pair of handkerchiefs. Petticoats prevent seating - round buttocks may look nice but they do not need to be emphasised. Petticoats, an apron or a long lined tabard provides the weight to prevent distracting riding up. If the skirt is very long it restricts the choice of movements and removes the point of others. Usually something has to be done deliberately to compensate, eg noise with the feet or emphatic jumps.

The advent of the bra liberated women by allowing them to participate in active sports without embarrassment or discomfort. We do not believe that anyone can come up with a good aesthetic reason why breasts should fly around in the morris. Wobbling flesh is distracting where ever it is on the body.

#### 9. Footwear

Height in the heel of shoes throws the weight back and this is poor for the Cotswold morris. To maintain the appearance of the morris step with the soles parallel to the ground, that is not to curl the apparent shape and look comical, requires that the toe is pointed downwards, which strains the leg in the wrong way. A heel reduces the shock absorbing travel of the foot and ankle muscles in landing from steps, jumps or capers. The strain on muscles is greater, the risk of injury higher, the stepping can look abnormal and there is not the distance for acceleration to get the body up off the ground or smartly into movements, and the "guts" goes out of the morris.

Sports shoes generally protect the heel from shock, what is best is the aerobic shoe design with its protection for the ball of the foot.



# ON THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE MORRIS

## ON THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE MORRIS

From the writings of noted authorities such as Sharp, Kennedy and Alford to the many morris handouts there is a similarity, with much speculation and a grasping at straws, and explanations developed from the minimum of fact. There is nothing wrong with speculation based on hints or general principles to provide a range of hypotheses to guide the search for the roots, but none of this should masquerade as the reality without some support, and even with credible arguments the real limitations of the evidence should be emphasised. We must be cautious in claiming too much and being found to be wrong later. The worst scholarship is that which parades some probably perceptive insights as "almost certain", without putting the effort into finding any evidence that others can explore or develop. The postulators' usual major problem is the "thousand year gap", the lack of evidence to link any records with the periods where the authors want to place the origins. A proper method is to trace it back through time, however this approach often narrows the options, because of the problem of recognising influences that have waned. It is believed that any activity carried on in a social context owes something to many threads out of the past, so that some forward tracing from potential contributors to discover if they actually did is also an acceptable practice. Like humour, which today has acquired characteristics from all the popular forms of the past.

Because the English are both insular and unused to admitting to outside influences, and the folk world is often unprepared to accept an early downward diffusion of ideas and techniques through society, I have watched for evidence that these processes could have been significant. The process shows up in fashionable social dance which has always been international, from the earliest records to today, because of people's mobility, and it is the relics, locally remembered and stylistically interpreted that form the corpus of the recovered folk dance. The seasonal, dressing up and so called "ritual" dance has drawn on the social dance where the form allows it, and it is in the use and exploitation of implements where the two are separated. The modern international folk festivals bring foreign teams together and, even though the tendency is to show off the peculiar and spectacular, the similarities are too great for coincidence. Where it is possible to see or read of a local European tradition in depth the visual matches to English traditions are even greater.

The issue is when and perhaps how did the early dance concepts diffuse? Fashion, armies, specialist industries, immigrants and tribal movements such as the gypsies are possibilities. There had long been a belief in the literature for a Spanish Connection and 80 years of the morris revival has failed to substantiate an alternative. Eleanor of Aquitaine, John of Gaunt and the Black Prince with the English King's Angevin empire which persisted in Gascony till 1453, Catherine of Aragon and their entourages might have provided the cultural links but there is no hard evidence and the dates seem difficult to reconcile as primary causes<sup>2-4</sup>. The morris did appear at the court of Henry VII, and he was exiled in Brittany and Paris where the French companies of fools and lords of misrule were active, and this is a possibility, even though the earliest English references are from 1458 and 1466. Various European countries claim reference to what they interpret as morris or an associated activity before the English sources appear. However there is no examination in English of the early European references or of the etymology of the European words for the equivalent activities to consult.

If the surviving European dances are compared with the choreography of the English dances then the relationship is far less convincing. A common mistake made is in assuming that all the elements of a "tradition" are of similar age and also that descriptive words still mean the same thing today. For example "Bedlam" meant mad and now by association with assumed typical behaviour in a madhouse means noise. The early collators <sup>6</sup> found that the dance forms when mentioned were not those to which we are now accustomed. The first expansions of the data base reported by John Forrest <sup>6</sup> and Mike Heaney did not change the picture. The dances seemed to include the mediæval chain dances, the circular dance around a central figure who was often a woman, and the processional done two by two. The latter was so common that a later pamphlet <sup>7</sup> c. 1659 compared Quakers with Morris Dancers as they went out on preaching tours in twos. It is not easy to distinguish professional performances in the records. The Earl of Berkeley's players, according to the Gloucestershire Notes and Queries, travelled the country between their regular commitments able to produce plays, bringing in the may, triumphal entries etc and of course the morris.

Why is there little pre-16th century? Even if potential evidence was generated uniformly with time, it is the nature of things that less of the older material would be around. Then what is recorded depends on what is of interest, but remember that social conditions from the Black Death (1349) till the War of the Roses (ended 1485) were different from earlier times and different again after the dissolution of the monasteries 1536-40. But it is as likely that it was not there to be noticed. How does one find negative evidence? It is partly by knowing for what one should be looking and partly by showing that the type of evidence did not occur in other fields either.

Any hypothesis has to be consistent with the facts. The advent of the "Annals of Early Morris" <sup>8</sup> data base is a massive step forward. It provides about 800 instances of some sort of reference to morris. By its sheer comprehensiveness there has to be careful consideration of the class and source of the individual data when using the data in the tables to draw global conclusions. For example Kemp's Nine Days Wonder warrants 12 entries and many need to be ignored as appropriate in an analysis.

How realistic is it as a statistical sample of the references that once existed? Mentions of the morris are rare. The material is only glimpses and snatches. There are many known gaps in the official record series from which the total notice taken can be estimated, assuming that the known references are representative in numbers and dates, by a simple scaling dependent on each source. These are mostly indications of actual performances. Books and ballad sheets were registered but they are more difficult to exploit, however they usually refer to a generalised performance not to an actual one. There is a problem in extrapolating the geographical distribution unless there are records from places in the UK that have not been examined yet, perhaps for example through being stored abroad but this has been faced and some highly important conclusions have been drawn by Forrest and Heaney which could be used as guidelines. The Annals do not indicate where they have searched, only where they have been successful. Whatever there is still to uncover it can not alter the picture of the morris that has emerged. However the morris can not be divorced from its setting and there is much that needs to be understood about its relationship to the Games and to early drama. This has been partly addressed by others when independently interpreting the Robin Hood material <sup>9</sup>.

## WHAT WAS IT CALLED?

The Annals classified the sources under four types :

- a. morris : all words that end in the sound /s/ : moreys, mores, morrice, morisse
- b. moorish : all words that end in the sound /sh/: moorish, morish.
- c. moresque : all words that end in the sound /sk/ without a following vowel sound : morisk, moruske.
- d. morisco : all words that end in the sound /sk/ with a distinct following vowel sound : moresco, moresca.

## DECADE SPAN

Name Class	a	b	c	d	a'	b'	c'	d'	E
1501-10	13		4		12		4		1
1511-20	12	1	3		10	1	3		12
1521-30	29		1	1	28			1	
1531-40	10				10				
1541-50	8	1		1	7	1		1	
1551-60	23			1	21				
1561-70	23	4		1	21	4		1	1
1571-80	35				29				3
1581-90	51	4	2	1	36	4		1	3
1591-1600	78	4	1	4	36	4		2	24
1601-10	67	1	1	3	44	1	1	1	18
1611-20	62	2	3	6	39		1		18
1621-30	44	1		5	28	1		2	12
1631-40	47	1	1	4	27			2	14
1641-50	16				4				5
1651-60	36	1	1	4	22		1		3
1661-70	34	1		17	28	1			3
1671-80	22	3	1	4	13				7
1681-90	15	1	1	1	9				2
1691-1700	7	1	1	2	4			1	1
1701-10	15	1		5	10			1	1
1711-20	22				11				8
1721-30	28	1	1	3	17				1
1731-40	18	1		1	15	1			
1741-50	13	1	1		13	1	1		
TOTALS	728	30	22	64	494	19	11	13	127

First the references are dominated (728:116) [type (a) : types (b+c+d)] by the words like "morris" and not by those that have often been seized upon for origin explanations. It is significant to consider the type of source that uses the more exotic names. From about 1600 many of the usages were found in dictionaries which can be assumed to preserve the less usual words and also to quote from previous publications. An analysis of the actual phraseology of the dictionary entries might be interesting. Incidentally a 1811 "Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue" defines "morris off" politely as "get you gone" making it the equivalent of rather more vulgar modern expressions! If the use of the words in dictionaries (29:37), music titles (17:18), plays, masques and entertainments (66:12), poems, madrigals and ballads (46:3), prose humour (31:2), polemics and sermons (27:1), and dance books (7:0) which show an awareness of the morris by educated people but whose particular usage may be a conceit derived from their intellectual background and are not reports of what performers called their activity, then the totals are those of the right hand side of the table (494:43). The totals are not consistent because of multiple data entries, or because they are like Kemp's.

A closer look at the "moorish" family shows that half of the 21 non dictionary usages are from two places, Plymouth (4) 1567-70 and St Columb Major (6) 1588-97. There is reference to jackets and bells but not to dance type or music. Not unexpectedly of the 30 dictionary citations 23 have multiple type descriptions, but none quote a specific setting, place or date of performance, or mentions the music, but 7 of the 8 that mention a dance type refer to a combative format.

Occasional usages occur throughout the period considered and do not cluster early as would be expected if the exotic names derived from a recent origin. It suggests that we search for the origin of the morris within the "morris" family of words, and see the other words at best as minor threads.

#### WHERE AND WHAT

The type of source varies with time and this has been used by Forrest and Heaney <sup>10</sup> to gain several valuable insights into the history of the morris, which are summarised in the next paragraph.

*Some venues have more importance than others. Royal and noble locations are paramount at the outset (1510-40), quickly overtaken by urban (1540-1600), which in turn are usurped by village (1600-1720), with private houses beginning to make inroads as the period ends. The trends for who gives financial support are very similar going from the state, to guilds mostly in the London area, the church, local towns and villages and finally individuals and households. The key role of the church in the transformation of the official attitude to the morris is plain. From being supportive in the 16th century, there is an expansion of church legislation against dancing coinciding with the shift of dancing from urban to village settings, except in a small area of the south Midlands, so that the later shift to 'private' support appeared largely in that area. There are intimations of a classic pattern of diffusion. From 1450-1630 there was a general expansion from the London region, then there was a marked thinning over the whole area (1630-90) consequent on a period of some secular (1570-1600) and then intense church prosecution (1600-30), followed eventually by a renewed support away from London, most notably in the south Midlands. They confirm the lack of a real link between Maid Marion, the Hobby Horse and Robin Hood*



An early reference<sup>11</sup> has Henry VIII showing off 'Jane the Quene' at the 1536 City of London Whitsun festivities by watching the setting of the City Watch, involving a torch-lit procession of 2000 men and hundreds of constables in scarlet cloaks, and it was claimed in later years that it included morris dancers and elaborate tableaux, but Mike Heaney has stated that this one of what has to be classified as a spurious reference.

Diffusion as a process for folk activity that requires community acceptance was seen later. Thomas Hardy recalled the Country dance form spreading into the social life at the common level in Dorset about 1840, the Fletts established the spread into the Highlands and Islands in living memory. The National Museum of Wales<sup>12</sup> has documented the spread of the "French Custom of Bringing in the May" into mid and north Wales. Some fashions, such as the plaited maypole, have spread very quickly, given the right circumstances.

The late concentration of the morris to the south Midlands is suggestive of the growth of the morris form there as a village enterprise. The zone free of persecution does not match any particular county or diocese. The south Midlands shires were set up by King Edward the Elder in 911-2 for the defence of the realm and although they have engendered much local loyalty more recently they were not well matched to natural or social regions. Until the dissolution of the monasteries (1536-40) the south Midlands was in the Lincoln (formerly Dorchester) diocese then Henry VIII divided it into the new bishoprics of Peterborough (including Northants) and Gloucester in 1541 and Oxford in 1542. The civil war saw the loss of church courts.

Those sources which are from entertainment, excluding reading, for example plays, poems and songs, are totaled in column E and they show a peaking into common parlance from 1590-1640, matching the apparent maximum in events, with a marked turn off with the Commonwealth and the Restoration, matching the change from records of a formal role for the morris to a popular entertainment. One difficulty in making comment based on the Annals is that there is no comparable related material readily available in a similar form<sup>13</sup>, for example on other dance forms or drama. Quite a few references can not be considered contemporary to an event because of the nature of the source and this makes detailed interpretation of the decadal data suspect. Forrest and Heaney analysed in 30 year spans which equals a generation. Only 77 of the total tabular entries, that is only of order 10%, mention the dance form and only 23 relate this to specific places and these are insufficient to suggest that there might have been regional differences. However it is possible to perceive a change with time.

	circle			files			combat	mixed	solo
	ring	centre	maypole	proc	2 file	1 file			
	a	b	c	d	e	f	h	g	i
1511-1547		3					1		1
1579-1629	1	2	5	5	4	1	6	8	8
1650-1690	1		4	2	6		3	7	2
1702-1736					11		3	9	1
TOTAL	2	5	9	8	21	1	13	24	12

In the time gaps there is nothing! Of course the elements recorded are those that caught the attention and there could have been multiple dances, and mixed forms, and there could have been links between the processional, two files and combat forms. Treating these as a group would suggest an origin for the later Cotswold form. However the Abbots Bromley Horn dance with its procession in pairs, circling and challenging which could look like serpentine heys and the combative forward and back and crossing, could fit many descriptions so we must beware of hindsight seeing what it wants! Interestingly nearly a third of the sources after the "set" dance appeared mention that they were mixed!

Playford first published The Dancing Master in 1651 as an answer to the prevailing condition in which many people stayed at home and where cut off from the dancing schools, and his books circulated widely in England, France and America. The characteristic form of three "Introductions" followed by a figure repeated or three unique figures has no known antecedent yet nearly 70% of the first edition, in all formations, had this structure. Also they may have been taken for granted and have been used even more frequently than the Playford volumes state explicitly. The interest is that this feature corresponds roughly to the later Cotswold Morris structure as well. There is no linking evidence except the similarity of date and the likely ubiquity of the form in the 17th century, and its persistence till the development of the Assembly rooms which took dancing into a social atmosphere away from the family and servants home environment.

#### ITS APPEARANCE

Over 200, a quarter of the references, quote some aspect of the dancers' costumes, but there are very few near complete descriptions. About a half mention bells and a third the coat or jacket and all the other elements are at under 10%. Bells and Coats occur mostly before 1630. Was this significant or just the effect of a greater familiarity existing so that such features could be taken for granted?

Out of 218 occurrences the following counts are found, Bells (116), Coats and Jackets (70), Hats (25), Feathers (19), Shoes (18), Handkerchiefs and Napkins (14), Ribbons (11), Shirts (10), Sashes and Scarves (10), Swords and Weapons (8), Baldricks (3), Belts (2), Sticks (1).

The lacks and absences are equally interesting. The morris was not a stick tradition? At the beginning of the 17th century only members of the landed ruling class were allowed to carry weapons and the meaner sort of people and servants were even normally excluded from serving in the militia. Incidentally do the 19th century crossed baldricks, as suggested by Douglas Kennedy, owe much to the uniforms of the army, militia and volunteer companies of the late 18th and early 19th centuries?

There is no mention at all of the blacking of dancers faces! The study of masking in other cultures and its degenerate face painting forms suggests that masks would have had a larger role in England at some time than appears evident now in our folk cultures. This needs further investigation.

There is tremendous amount of relevant background material accessible now that can put the development of the morris into its contemporary social

context, as was intended by the publication of the Annals. It was probably important that from 1620-1650 there was great financial hardship, economically amongst the most terrible in English history, that from 1641-1660 there was no effective censorship, and there was a great overturning, questioning, revaluing of everything in England. It is unrealistic to produce a detailed bibliography, but there are entry points via agrarian, economic and industry histories and I enjoyed Calder's book <sup>14</sup>. Some very relevant background points have proved to be very difficult to research. Just how many people died in the Black Death cannot be calculated but it was probably between a quarter to a third of the population, and the impact on the structure of society is unclear, but half the clergy perished in Oxfordshire and two thirds of the villeins in the Witney manor, and it has been noted that some village populations at the first census in 1801 had only recovered to their former levels.

Technology development can give historical clues. Modern ribbon making started at the beginning of the 18th century and centred on Coventry. What were the few references to ribbons about before that time? When were small bells suitable for morris costumes first mass produced, surely they were not all hand made?

The wealth released by the dissolution of the monasteries combined with a growing shortage of building grade timber led to the "Great Rebuilding" of the 16th century in stone and brick and the rise of the County Gentry. After the Commonwealth and the Restoration, the 18th century saw a great new building <sup>15</sup>. Where there were at the start a few big houses and manors, at the end there were a large number of prosperous houses and farms to encourage good-luck or box-seeking visiting. Some counties like Northamptonshire lost the 'parish gentry' of the 1640's due to the growth of large landed estates and this must have influenced the nature of the patronage available there for the morris. In 1705 music, morris dancing and about a 100 buckets, bowls and pans filled with wine, punch and ale accompanied the laying of the foundation stone of Blenheim Palace.

A noted characteristic of a cultural diffusion process is that it is found that there is the largest variety near the origin and the minimum of variety or complexity near the edge but it is more vigorous there, being newer. The available evidence about the content of the south Midland dance from 1860 has been analysed <sup>16</sup> and it is very suggestive of there having been a spread even within that morris.

Little explored as an influence is the long period of contact with the trend setting cultural leading north Europeans, the Burgundians, Dutch and Germans <sup>17</sup> as well as the north Italians. The peak of wool export was the mid 14th century and then it changed to the export of cloth through to the 16th century, mostly organised by the Dutch through Antwerp, who also organised the export of Spanish merino wool from the ex-moorish areas. Because of the restrictive practices of the town guilds, English cloth making had spread to the villages by 1400. The Cotswold broadcloth was much in demand on the continent by the late 15th century while it was still of high quality and much was exported undyed and undressed. The Dutch came to the fairs and set up collection depots. The wealth it brought to the Cotswolds can be seen everywhere in its buildings. It would be interesting if the guilds that later sponsored the morris were found to be associated with the northern European trade. Technology was being imported from Holland in the 17th

century, the Dutch draining the fens, and the heavy four wheeled wagon and the first stage coaches came from Holland, along with cabbages and turnips as stockfeed, the new "clovers", clover, lucerne, trefoil and rye-grass, and the best madder plants for dye. Even commercial crops came to England through Holland, such as tobacco and hops. The best 19th century morris bells that I have heard were expensive in their time and either appearing silvery or reputedly made of "Dutch Metal" which was an alloy of copper and zinc made in thin sheets to imitate gold leaf. Equally important was the establishment in England of large groups of Protestant refugees due to Catholic persecution on the continent, eg following the St Bartholomew's Day slaughter of the Huguenots in France and the war that continued against them till 1640.

New research<sup>18</sup> in Dutch Archives suggests that the Glorious Revolution of 1688 was under Dutch duress, London having been under Dutch military occupation for 18 months. There seems much still to be understood in our history!

#### COMMENT

By analogy with elsewhere in the world, a young man's spring celebratory dance should have existed as long as there was the time and opportunity for its performance, as showing off, boys-meets-girl and lack of money for ale are universals. We should look for the similarities within the peripheral behaviour of more modern morris men. The morris with its relationship with patronage needs large socially structured communities and without it dancing elsewhere in Europe has been inward looking and self indulgent and not geared to public show. So that people dressed up, danced and celebrated seems very reasonable, although any continuity with historical or even modern morris is problematical, the morris absorbing such elements into some new manifestation.

Cecil Sharp and his followers developed their ideas on the history of the morris in the wake of Frazer's Golden Bough<sup>19</sup> with its massive collection of unrelated facts linked by some concept of a common human experience. The reality is much more complex and the generalisations do not stand modern examination, even though modern research suggests that all our societies might have had a common origin 200,000 years into the remote past.

Published history is all about the big things and themes. Getting at the history of ordinary people is a new phenomena with a long way to go. It is hard to visualise the past, we need more films like "Far from the Madding Crowd" to give appropriate images. In detail it was so different from today, isolation, silence, dirt, insects, monotony, as most work was solitary, was before powered machinery and before sealed surfaces, most people were close to poverty, and everything was seasonal and life itself highly dependent on a successful main harvest, without benefit of the modern understandings of the whys and wherefores or access to world wide supplies.

I have had to change my perceptions of the early morris, particularly with regard to the peak of interest from 1580-1630, and that Kemp actually was exploiting a popular activity and King James' exhorting was not just an appeal for a return to old ways. It does not provide a background for the other English Morris traditions, which must therefore be more recent, but these can be explained in terms of 19th and turn of century activity, except

yet for that in the black-face stick-based Welsh Marches Counties, but the history of blacking up, from poaching to minstrel troupes, at the popular level needs more exploration to decide where the initial impulse arose <sup>20</sup>.

R L Dommett

#### REFERENCES

1. Blair "Early Medieval Surrey"  
Alan Sutton Pub & Surrey Archaeological Soc 1991  
Shows how detailed understanding of a period is being built up.
2. Falkus & Gillingham "Historical Atlas of Britain"  
Granada, London, 1981
3. Barraclough & Stone "The Times Atlas of World History"  
Times Books, London 3rd Edition 1989
4. Charlotte M Yonge "The Story of the Christians and Moors of Spain"  
Macmillan, London 1878/9
- Russell "The English Intervention in Spain & Portugal in  
the time of Edward III & Richard II"  
OUP, Oxford, 1955
- Lomax "Reconquest of Spain"  
Longmans, New York, USA, 1978
5. Lowe "Early records of the Morris in England"  
J.EFDSS Vol 8, No 2, 1957
6. Forrest "Morris and Matachin"  
CECTAL, Univ of Sheffield, 1984
7. Audland "The Innocent Delivered out of the Snare" (1658)  
mentioned in "The World Turned Upside Down"  
p 245 by C Hall, Penguin Books, Middlesex, 1975.  
The original is available in the Quaker Library, Birmingham.
8. Heaney & Forrest "Annals of Early Morris"  
CECTAL, Univ of Sheffield, 1991
9. Keen "The Outlaws of Medieval Legend"  
Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1977.
- Wiles "The Early Plays of Robin Hood"  
D Brewer, Cambridge, 1981.
- Holt "Robin Hood"  
Thames & Hudson, London, 1982.
10. Forrest & Heaney "Charting Early Morris"  
Folk Music Journal, Vol 6, No 2, 1991

11. Fraser "The Six Wives of Henry VIII"  
Weidenfield & Nicholson, London, 1992  
quoting  
Wriothesley "A Chronicle of England during the Reigns of the  
Windsor Herald Tudors from AD 1485 to 1559"  
ed. Douglas Hamilton Camden Society, 2 volumes, London 1875.
12. Owen "Welsh Folk Customs"  
National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, 1968
13. Westfall "Patrons and Performers : Early Tudor Household  
Revels", Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990.
14. Calder "Revolutionary Empire"  
Jonathan Cape, London, 1981
15. Cantor "The Changing English Countryside 1400-1700"  
Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1987  
  
see also the series The Darwen County History Series, Phillimore,  
London under individual county titles as  
"A History of...."  
  
The Making of the English Landscape, edited by  
W Hoskins, Hodder & Stoughton, London under  
individual county titles as "The .... Landscape"  
  
The Buildings of England, edited by Pevsner &  
Nairn, Penguin Books, London under the individual  
county name.
16. Dommett "Contrasting the Cotswold Traditions"  
Lecture at the Sidmouth Festival, August 1992.
17. Otto Von Habsburg "Charles V"  
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1970  
  
Hay & Law "Italy in the Age of the Renaissance 1380-1530"  
Longman, London, 1989  
  
Holmes "The Oxford History of Medieval Europe"  
OUP, Oxford 1992  
  
Fulbrook "A Concise History of Germany"  
CUP, Cambridge 1990  
  
Israel "Dutch Primacy in World Trade 1585-1740"  
Clarendon, Oxford 1990
18. Israel "The Anglo-Dutch Moment"  
CUP, Cambridge 1992.
19. Frazer "The Golden Bough"  
One volume abridged from 1922 edition  
Macmillan, New York, 1963

19. Buckland "The Tunstead Mill Nutters of Rossendale,  
Lancashire"  
Folk Music Journal Vol 5 No 2 1986
- Reynolds "Minstrel Memories : the story of Burnt Cork  
Minstrelsy in Great Britain from 1836 to 1927"  
Alston Rivers, London, 1928
- Marshall & Jean "Jazz Dance, The Story of American Vernacular  
Dance"  
Stearns, New York, 1968 (chapters 5 to 8)
- Toll "Blacking Up :  
The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth Century America"  
OUP, London, 1974.
- Paskman "Gentlemen Be Seated"  
Clarkson Potter, New York, 1976.
- Rehin "Blackface Street Musicians in Victorian London  
and its Resorts"  
Journal of Popular Culture Vol 15 no 1 p 19-38  
Summer 1981,
- Pickering "White Skin, Black Masks : 'Nigger' Minstrelsy in  
Victorian Britain"  
in "Music Hall : Performance & Style" edited by  
Jacquelin S Bratton, in "Popular Music in Britain"  
series edited by Dave Harker & Richard Middleton.  
Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1986
- Emery "Black Dance from 1619 to Today"  
2nd edit Dance Books, Cecil Court, London, 1988.

# INFLUENCES ON THE MORRIS



# AN INTRODUCTION TO INFLUENCES ON THE MORRIS

by Roy Dommett

**INTRODUCTION :** Recently it has seemed to be important to look at what is happening with the morris today from the inside, how it is and why it is, and to consider what have been the driving influences. The exercise should force consideration of what is the "dance tradition" now and its interaction with wider aspects of our traditional culture and attitudes. It has been an implied, if unrecognised, objective of the "revival" to accept and preserve the meaningful elements of traditional behaviour in its broadest sense, but the developments in the last 20 or 30 years have challenged successfully many cultural assumptions in the revived morris, as well as there having been an unprecedented period of expansion and creativity.

We should start from recognising that those participating in the morris have different motives and points of view from the academics who have been recording it.<sup>(1)</sup> Historically, to most observers the people they were looking at are thought unmindful of the "true" significance of what they were preserving so they are not questioned about something they "clearly did not comprehend". Thus written accounts strongly reflect the interests of the recorder and ignore the viewpoint of the performers, for example in why they indulge in a particular activity at that time of the year or of their life, and what they experience while doing it. We remember that any use of such written material must include consideration of who produced it, for whom, with what intent, and against what background of understanding.

**THE RANGE :** The full list of significant influences on the morris would be rather long, and should include some items that many will not have considered before. It is realistic to mention only a few. A key point that emerges is that much that is culture based will have to be disentangled.

**THE PAST :** The "Past" is comprised of those images that affect our behaviour and judgements.<sup>(2)</sup> It is at best a rough approximation because it is unknowable in detail without direct personal experience. It is unfortunately mostly a mirror of our own prejudices. Every so often the concept of the past becomes too far out of step with the needs of the time and we have to seek what fragmentary truth can still be found in history.<sup>(3)</sup> Some such background material is being published by Mike Heaney (pre-1750) and Keith Chandler (post-1750). The past does not to be real to influence, consider the continued impact of "cowboys and indians". Poverty and money supply dominated the late 19th century for dancers and the suffragette issues and the status of women were critical to many who initiated the present revival.

We all have blind spots. We are embarrassed by and discount the past social upheavals that were actually so important to those involved and therefore we do not see the impact that the attitudes, and the battles, have had on us, even though they may seem irrelevant to today. The Trade Union struggle<sup>(4)</sup> was significant because it grew out of the loss of customary behaviours which had made working life tolerable, and with it the denigration of the dignity of labour. The Enclosures, the Poor Law and the growth of Charity lowered the standard of living of the labourers so that their "betters" saw the morris more in its role of begging and encouraged the villagers into

other more "improving" activities. Poverty became a crime! These issues from the recent past are still painful and perhaps too close for us to be comfortable with what they mean. It has also been easy to accept without question the conventional appreciations of issues by the uninvolved educated classes and leave the high ground of comment to those with the more extreme views.

The collectors were influenced by earlier views of history now known to be inadequate, and global interpretations, such as Frazer's "Golden Bough", which are now seen as psuedo science, as casting the net so wide and yet so shallowly is poor research and the conclusions reached are erroneous.

**THE RESPONSIBILITES :** We must respect the past, the present and the future.<sup>(5)</sup> We owe an enormous debt to those who used to perform the morris, both in what they did and how they did it. We should have deep concern therefore for our roots in the morris. We have found from practical experience that there is a need for wider associations and for caring about our collective image. It has led us to tap existing experience, to pass on our knowledge and understanding and to be supportive. We have not solved at the club level how to monitor and perform at the same time. To obtain constructive comment and avoid back biting the task is often delegated to a "foreman" with the controlling sanctions of an annual review and possibly an election. Some of the aspects of the morris that leave us unhappy today arise because some sides are apparently unconcerned for others. This is difficult for those clubs whose unspoken objective and hence behaviour style is inward rather than outward looking! Unfortunately there can be two approaches to any activity. It is a fact of traditional life that if something is worth doing it is often done twice, reflecting these conflicting inward and outward community motivations, for example as with the well known two Horses at Padstow and Minehead, and Adderbury-for-the-Village and Adderbury-for-the-World.

**THE MORRIS ROLE :** To set the morris into context, it is a typical minority activity, with limited appeal, comparable today in numbers, about 10000 active persons, to Archery, Bell-ringing, Carnival Morris for teenage girls and Judo. Why do people join any of these activities? It seems mostly fortuitously through personal contact. Our product requires collaboration with the result being greater than the individual contributions, unlike most competitive sports, without a real role for the outstanding performer except out of the team as a "character". We dance for the "pleasure", not for the "fun", which would imply a romp and not skill and expression. To explain its level of popularity there has to be a concept of a catchment area, or access to a group, which determines the density of teams on the ground and limits the number of contacts. By spreading into different regional "traditions" it has been possible to tolerate a much greater territorial overlapping. There is no real problem of "overdancing", except for lazy sides who seek ready made audiences at very popular sites, as it is common experience that there not enough teams to meet all the possible engagement opportunities. It is natural to teams to come and go, to survive they have to be continually recruiting.

The morris used to have an expected supportive role in community occasions. At one time no election declaration at Lichfield was complete without the band and the morris dancers.<sup>(6)</sup> Sometimes it "acquired" an independent

custom and made its own. The "swearing on the horns" for newcomers at halts on drovers routes, such as at Highgate in north London, has echoes in the horns and mazers cup of the Abingdon regalia. Often the dancing would be all that was left of an event and it becomes the focal point of a special day, for example with the loss of the May Day ceremonies at Bampton and the transfer to the Bank Holiday. This can appear today as a "day-of-dance" but it does not have a community base, unless it reestablishes a recognised custom such as the Whittlesey Straw Bear<sup>(7)</sup>, the Isle of Thanet Hoodening or the Combe Martin Hunting of the Earl of Rone.

The morris expresses something fundamental for all of us. Conventionally it is described as primitive and pagan although it is not. There are still things which are important which are difficult to talk about. Such topics were even more critical for primitive peoples, for example the key role of the Sacred Clowns for the Pueblo Indians of the USA.<sup>(8)</sup> Think of the problems that western society had in talking about psychological concepts before the jargon was formulated when it had to be done by cross reference to specific examples in literature or in folk tales. Because the positive role of morris like activity is largely unrecognised, the folk world has sought for motivation and justification in the past. Precedent is a powerful argument to give licence for behaviour which otherwise is difficult for members of a community to do themselves. Sometimes these feelings lead to a nugatory interest in the so called "old religion" or in the "new age" with their unsubstantiable ideas and rituals.

**OLD AND NEW :** But how was it? So much was actually quite different in appearance and behaviour, dress and musical instruments, occasions and show content, including a subservience to "betters". So much was not recorded that we just do not know the detail of the dance, not even the typical stresses and emphases in the dance movements, let alone the acceptable tolerance on them. Trying to grasp the social setting is equally difficult. How did the audience react? Was it as reserved as today? Our society and motivations have changed, for example in the role of money for the morris and the different types of peer groups now formed, but it is suprisingly "convenient" to ignore that it has publically, although our major task has to be to continually reestablish the position and status of the morris.

What is the truth? What was the old repertoire? What were the popular dances? The link with the past is both fragile and emotive, and sometimes used as a tool to impose concepts on our fellow dancers. We have to take the links from the old dancers to the collectors to the teachers and to ourselves on trust. But the future will get the morris from us, not from inadequate records. Roots may still be evident in a few places, but their circumstances have seldom been very relevant to the rest of us. They are the oddities, they survived.

We have passed through the last phase of dance material revival, using up even the scraps of information. The corpus for some dance traditions is very small. There have been only eleven recognisable Border dances recovered. We are now on our own, with an ever widening range of interpretations and inventions. We stylise traditions yet fail to capture the actual movement quality differences between them. Because of a lack of an absolute reference, it is now acceptable to ask visiting clubs at Festivals to teach what they do. But the morris is like the classic drama,

ever capable of new presentation and of leaving memories of great performances. However the situation is not that there has been an "unfortunate" gap in the tradition and we are now back into the natural progression. The world around has changed and is more aware and demanding.

**SMALL GROUPS :** Probably the dominant forgotten influence on the modern morris is that it is performed in small groups.<sup>(9)</sup> Yet working together thus is little understood by those involved. They must have something in common to be in the club at all, but it is not the reasons of family, workplace or the other commonalities of the past. There is no formal training in our society for the stabilising consensus interacting in a peer group. One gains a limited and very specific initial experience out of the home in our teenage, but the typical family, no matter how large, is a mechanism aimed at developing and preserving individuality in a structured situation. The workplace is also normally hierarchial. No wonder many clubs seek a management structure that reflects their experience of being led, rather than that of finding a consensus way. The danger is that the most developed personality dominates and wins. Mrs Thatcher (News Weekly 20.4.92) thinks that a consensus style waters down what could be done, "it is the absence of principle and the presence of expediency", but the morris needs continuity. There is difference in the approaches, the needs and social perceptions of the two sexes that will be mentioned later.

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENTS :** The modern Folk World has a tendency to be self contained and be independent of the great outside, but general public attitudes are significant in considering the wider issues. The morris has to be acceptable to the community at large if it is to be performed on the street. It is there on sufferance. It is not a medium though which to raise or fight social issues. Mary Neal and Cecil Sharp in their own ways both failed, because they were exploitive and were unable to recognise its community role.

An aim of the revival was the ill understood "to give it back to the people". In a sense this has happened at the individual and team level, but there is still little sign of its widespread incorporation into community celebration. To become involved required a sustained commitment, 8 to 10 years before it is noticed widely, and control of the event is never to be achieved or even desired. How often do sides try something for a year or two and then give it a miss? There are successes where the contribution from the morris is appreciated. Public visibility can be gained by dancing in fetes and carnival processions but so often sides feel exploited and little appreciated, forgetting that initially they are just a novelty to the organisers.

Typical examples of community involvement can start with Oak Apple Day at Great Wishford which is a village celebration of ancient rights with a key contribution from four women dancers. The revival of the hobby horse and associated activities at Combe Martin has been completely taken over by the towns people and one has to be a local to be more than a spectator. Annually on mid summer eve the Gloucester MM encourage the Burford Dragon procession, which is a long centipede supported by the local school, which ends with a service at the church. At Moulton and Chipping Camden the morris pull the Queen's carriage in the town carnival processions. You can always find the Ilmington MM once a year when they dance in the village gardens on the Sunday when many are open to the public through the national

gardens scheme.

The efforts of the limited number of men from 1924-1939 laid a foundation for the growth of morris activity between 1950-1970. This made the morris known and acceptable on the street, where its like had not been seen for nearly half a century at least, but only as a part of a man's world. It also set a style of squire, bagman and feast based on the Cambridge practice which has little to do with the older tradition. What has changed in the twenty years since is that there are now independent, successful, mature womens morris teams, where before there were none. It has brought forward in its wake all the issues associated with gender differences which have arisen from evolution and breeding but primarily from our cultural history.

**HISTORICAL :** To consider what this means required some consideration of the changing status of women in society. Although many people are still conditioned with the Victorian attitude of a woman's place being in the home, it is important to realise how far some things have changed here within just a few decades. The feminist press has already worked over all the points worth making, although they may be unfamiliar to the morris world.<sup>(10)</sup> Women have been seriously disadvantaged and exploited, till the 1920's in the UK.<sup>(11)</sup> Going into service at 13 and being married at 21 was the general expectation. Courting or any other social activity was made difficult with only a half day a week free. Women's rights were once limited and males controlled the finance and property. There were very few Friendly Societies for women, although the "Women's Walk" is still an annual event at Nether Stowey. Only in special circumstances was it socially acceptable in Victorian times for women to perform as did the morris, for example the May Day town perambulations of the Milkmaids, and then only with male chaperones. There were two separate worlds with men's and women's things, and the two hardly touched, let alone overlapped, and there was little understanding across the boundaries. It does not help today to overcome prejudices that the attitudes of ordinary people to the performing arts are usually old fashioned, like in other so called "trivial" subjects people inherit views and seldom update them. Consequently questioning that women should be doing the morris is still a common experience. There is still a need for social acceptance, but at least we are living in a growing post-patriarchal society. However no one queries using children, it being presumed that it is good for them.

Women have played a valuable part in supporting the surviving dance traditions, particularly within the Morris families such as the Hemmings at Abingdon and the Tanners at Bampton. There is very little anecdotal evidence from the 19th century, as no one appeared to be interested in recording it. Of course what is considered important has been changing throughout the history of collecting the morris.

**ANTAGONISM :** There has been considerable ill feeling from the men in the recent past. It was sexist as it was to preserve privilege rather than reflecting an essential truth. The emotions involved were akin to the cross cultural fears that exist in mixed societies, because of the conflicts between traditional and modern roles. Some of the arguments have had a foundation in a genuine concern over what the quality of the product was going to be. Some men felt threatened, perhaps because of a suspicion that the women could achieve higher standards through greater commitment, or of a

dilution of the product through lower standards and a multitude of teams, or possibly a fear of women who could organise themselves, and somehow be uncontrolled. To avoid some head on collisions there then grew the concept of performing "acceptable" traditions, those dances little used by the men. It has had the unexpected effect of enriching the morris world rather than diluting it. But it avoided the real issues.

One point I noticed in my early workshops was that the men "knew" when they could not do something being asked of them, whereas the women would always try and offer something no matter how inadequate. A cultural effect that appeared confusing to me for a long time.

Boys and girls grow up in what are essentially different cultures, so that talk between young men and women is actually a cross cultural communication<sup>(12)</sup>, outside of courting for which neither are prepared. Men see the world as having a hierarchal social order of power and acceptance, and life as a struggle to preserve independence and avoid failure. Women see themselves as individuals within a network of connections. Life is seen as in a community, and their struggle is to preserve intimacy and avoid isolation, in a world of hierarchal friendships.

Therefore English men and women are conditioned to be socially different. The problem in our society comes when male is seen as normative and female as departing from it, and there is only a short step from "different" to "worse".

**AESTHETICS :** Women's morris is a different product. Size is the most important factor, and to a lesser extent shape, particularly the fat and wobbly bits. Being smaller and slender can make them and their morris appear childlike. It does affect their choice of effective dances. Culturally women are thought to have a lower self esteem, although it is not at all sure that this is a weakness, perhaps it is self confidence that is meant, and this also often conditions the choices of movements, dances, occasions etc, where it is easy to hide in a crowd rather than be exhibitionist. Women can produce exciting drive through speed but it does not duplicate male power and strength. I speak of course of the better men's teams only. Unfortunately women are conditioned on posture, to be protective with their arms and to avoid open leg positions. A factor that seems important to me is that women tend to have shorter feet for the same overall height and this significantly affects the shape of the movement in stepping. Of course large differences in height can be even more dominant. Why don't we learn more from the ballet about such matters? But when mixed sides have similar heights, dress and facial disguise the sexual differences fade away, suggesting that they are conditioned rather than real. There is a contradiction in that the morris is expected to be manly because that is the public image, yet women are criticised if they dance like men. The image to be projected is still not clear. There are other important social constraints. Women on average have a lower tolerance to alcohol and the sight of tipsy women is still not considered pleasant.

**ROLE IN THE REVIVAL :** There was an early involvement of upper middle class women in recording British folklore. The activity required independent means in the days of the labour intensive everything lifestyle. But the first applications found were for the relief of drudgery, the Esperance Club was

for young seamstresses, and as an art form. Cecil Sharp reputedly had ambitions. Full credit should be given for the EFDS to the Karpeles sisters and their devoted friends and its growth out of the Physical Education movement.<sup>(13)</sup> The efforts of the early leaders were directed to social objectives, with a successful attempt to infiltrate the school syllabus, those poor captive school children again, but with the consequence of a movement dominated by teachers and the concept of classes and a progression through standards and certificates. It was inevitable for the period because the society to which it really belonged was being rejected. The image projected was either "olde worlde" or athletic. The community status of the leaders did not match that of the old performers. Cecil Sharp taught music to children in the Royal family. The mutual incomprehension continued until the 1944 Education Act changed the average social background of the educated classes. There was within the EFDS a reaction against the multitude of women, although in my experience of the old style EFDSS Festival the women usually danced much better than the men, but they did not dance out. It led to the Travelling Morrice from 1924, although this was also bound up with romantic views not hard realities.<sup>(14)</sup> One offshoot was cultural regeneration with Rolf Gardiner, the Springhead Ring and the magazine "North Sea and Baltic". Another was the non-political "Kibbokift" concerned with open air camping, woodcraft and love of all lores of nature, founded by John Hargreave in 1920 when he was HQ commissioner for Woodcraft and Camping for Boy Scouts, some of which he later turned into the fascist Greenshirts or New Social Credit Party.

In parallel with the revival of the morris was a movement started at the Whiteladies College at the end of the 19th century which introduced the May Queen, formal May Day celebrations and plaited ribbon Maypole dancing to school children, and which appear in so many of the recently published sets of local historical photographs.

We have an ambiguous attitude towards children. Several customs have ended with them as the final custodians, with the begging, as with "Penny for the Guy", gradually becoming community unacceptable. The Carnival Morris has been a true folk dance for many years, although largely dismissed by the revival because it involved girls only and is therefore inaccessible, and yet the dances from the earlier generations are now the stock in trade of many teams dancing in the NW style.

When the Ring Advisory Council first discussed the issue of women's morris all those present admitted to owing a debt to one woman or another for teaching, playing, organising and even dancing. Yet they could not bring themselves to go against what was perceived as the "RING" members attitude.

It is difficult to see how to make a judgement about the essential maleness of the morris. Like having women priests in the Church of England, it is not appearing amenable to rational argument, but indicates that there are deeply felt culture based considerations. Similar difficult emotions exist over abortion. It does not have to be so and other perceptions exist.<sup>(15)</sup> In the ancient world priest and priestess had different but complementary roles. Surely in our society women have a role without exceptions while the population consists of roughly equal numbers of men and women.

TWO DECADES : I like to think of Griff Jones as the flash point for women's

morris as it was his refusal to have women in the beginners workshops at Sidmouth that sparked it off. Bill Rutter arranged for (Tubby) Reynolds and myself to run a series called "Serendipity" that included "women's ritual dance" which introduced material not then in circulation.

The women's sides started to form in the mid 1970's when it was socially appropriate. It was the Laura Ashley Country Style with long skirts period which led to some pretty sides, as long as they didn't dance! There were some major problems, how to find an acceptable costume that could both be danced in and still produce a suitable image, how to get effective training and leadership, and to deal with the antagonism. Such as the threat by the Ring to join any new organisation and swamp it. Maurice Sutherland's view of one organisation that accepted any side that cared enough to want to dance out was too liberal for the time. Some of us believed that if women were going to dance, then they must dance well. There was a quality of movement in the women's sides of the mid 1970's, especially as seen on the first Morris Federation tours, that showed a lack of feeling for the genre.

There is this gulf between the sexes when they are acting in peer groups. Role models impose behaviours from early childhood. The social interaction problems between the sexes as they commonly exist arising from education and life experience are only beginning to be overcome. But it is also known that the normal small differences in the individual sex hormone balance affect one's interests and performance. It is therefore dangerous to generalise when considering individuals. We must encompass what we are, not penalise, and allow the expression by both sexes of their sexuality.

**CHANGING ATTITUDES :** The open hostility from the men's sides led to refusals to appear at the same festivals. The media has helped to fester the problems, a good example being how they edited the Saddleworth Morris interviews for TV. The attempt to form an association of the Cotswold sides that were in the Cotswolds, which seemed to be needed in the 1980's, floundered over the issue of whether they should be included or not, even though the number of women's sides were then and now very few and the only value of the linkage was that it should be comprehensive. The tour of England by Ring O'Bells from New York showed up to those following them around that a number of women's sides were at that time being treated as second or even third class citizens by their male associates. Fortunately the next generation of dancers saw it all differently and there is now collaboration on technical matters and the difference between the three morris organisations is valued.

It has happened as issues such as covert sexual harassment began to be recognised as an unacceptable rather than a normal part of our culture. Domination and rejection are further manifestations. It is sad to see twin sides out with the women in effect being bossed about by a man, because of a lack of understanding of the "cultural" gulf.

"Teasing", the traditional joshing of young women by older men, frightens because of size, age and sex differences, and now we expect different norms of behaviour: as long as it works both ways!

Innovation is normally a self limiting extension to a repertoire as it is difficult to work in new material while there is a steady turn over of



dancers. Every performance is a mix of the historical and contemporary, it is a product of its time. Dancers usually find the spontaneity of each occasion is the attraction. In the limit every performance is an unrepeatable expression of the six particular participants. People adjust movement to accomodate politely to each other just as they do with accents.

Hopefully the new generation of dancers have different expectations and there is spirit of cooperation, of sharing individual events and making some compromises, but I hope that it is not forgotten that the traditional male and female cultures also had strengths and virtues which should be preserved for the value of the enriching experiences they too can provide. But they are two dimensional concepts in a three dimensional world.

**ACHIEVEMENTS** : The women's contribution this century has revolutionised the "Folk World" in song, music, social dance and finally the morris. Hopefully we have heard the last of thde descriptor "ritual" which, despite the romantic bleatings, had no part in the morris that we have inherited. When it all started it was not at all obvious what the women's morris would turn out to be in the long term. Now they have found what suits them from largely within the collected traditions but with different emphases.

In the Cotswold morris there has been concentration more on those dances without the big jumps and capers. The drivers must be costume, for example a disinclination to expose underwear, size, when short a relatively high leap is not particularly impressive, motivation, it requires fitness and effort and a degree of self discipline, and the lack of good models, bootstrapping a side can be a slow process. All these factors are cultural.

The North West style with clogs has allowed large sets, pretty costumes without the problems of the Cotswold morris and a much shorter learning curve as the technical difficulties are fewer. The women seem to accept the formality of the dance patterns and the possibility inherent in the anonymity of a crowd, and, outside of the NW, avoid the showmanship and projection which seems crucial to the adult idiom, although this can spill over into an aggressive almost masculine style. Sometimes the costume chosen is that for a young woman or older girl even though many of a team are mature.

Linked with such dances is sometimes a desire to be "more feminine", expressed in the choice of costume, in dancing some if not all of the dances in shoes, and performing with implements such as garlands. The dances are then drawn from all over the world as the local traditions were very thin. The design and decoration of the garlands has been a folk art!

Not everyone fits into these catagories and it has been a blessing of todays popularity that most dancers can find a group whose style fits their own needs. The Border tradition has grown to be expressed as wild and sometimes grotesque with teams that vary from rag jackets or skirts to groups that would not look out of place in halloween celebrations. The sword dance traditions have not been exploited by the women and they are more commonly danced in the USA where the old EFDSS enthusiasms still linger. The visiting US side Half Moon won the 1991 Sidmouth Ritual Dance Competition because their Papa Stour actually captured a feel for a ritual. Finally there are a few dance troupes that defy classification which would a suitable study for a future meeting.

**CONTRIBUTIONS :** What has been the contribution? Would the morris world have stood still and it been as it was, or would most of what has happened have happened anyhow? It is a pointless question as I feel that as society has been changing since the 1960's what happened was inevitable. The way we have got to the present may have been dependent initially on particular individuals but it did not take much expansion for the morris world to be "out of control" and to develop in a natural way with little effect from the limitations of the dances then available.

It is the number of sides around that has meant that no Cotswold traditions are neglected now. One example of good manners was the general avoidance of the living traditions. The needs of the women's sides has caused a growth of garland dances and other fragmentary material such as the Dorset Stave, although this has arisen from a strong interest in what was "local". In the 1960's it was difficult to generate interest in the men's North West morris and only Royton was accessible. A small group of collectors was active and 30-40 dances were known by the early 1970's, although there was little intention of publishing them or making them available, even within the NW. However the NW was the only tradition still collectable and it appeared to take the advent of women's sides to generate a new group of collectors.

Women's team often have had different needs, perhaps to be distinguishable from other sides, or because of the social role they were meeting and the repertoires and organisations consequentially contrast. How and where they perform can vary from men's teams because they fit into the community differently and tap other opportunities. Its really not suprising.

**THE FUTURE :** We will have to be careful to distinguish the details of the way that it is, and agree what is unfair and unreasonable and to recognise that there have been unavoidable social differences, and not to exploit them by disadvantage and harrassment. Some of the cultural problems are English and not sexist. Our expected standards will be higher as we become more knowledgable about fitness, injuries, learning and teaching and the essential tricks of the trade of body language. We should not ignore the value of perceptions from other fields.

There will be reappraisals as preconceptions and inadequate interpretations are recognised. Many people would be suprising by how poorly supported by facts has been a lot of conventional published history. The breadth of current research is illuminating much that is relevant. There exist<sup>(15)</sup> classic examples of the consequences of accepting conjectures as fact and not cross checking evidence in pursuit of wish fulfilment thinking.

There are topics to be done or researched. Perhaps we should look closely at what we mean by ritual and whether the morris ever contained any element of it. We will need to examine the past and future community role of the morris. Perhaps it does not have the central role that I believe in. We need to develop a better dance element vocabulary. Our culture is weak in specifying aspects of movement and in this educated age that could be a penalty. To better understand our morris, to separate what is fundamental from what is cultural, we need to know more of the morris transposed abroad and of the European analogues. We need to understand the relevant moments of history when the cultural influences that have helped mould the world in which the morris fits appeared or changed, for example a quarter of Spanish

words are of Arabic origin and a thread in the source of the morris must be the Reconquest and the involvement of the English in that part of Europe.

History teaches that we are always in a time of change, although it might appear almost cyclic. We are moving into another crisis period based on too great a demand on accessible natural resources. The difference this time is that we are all much more knowledgable and more concerned, yet we have not resolved the conflict of the continued over exploitation of the many nations by the few. Attitudes, needs and resources will continue to alter so that the morris, which sits on the edge of the great movements of history, in its content and role will need to evolve.

## NOTES

1. B Pegg "Rites and Riots" - Folk Customs of Britain and Europe.  
Blandford Press, Poole. 1981
  - 2(a) J Plumb "The Death of the Past".  
Pelican, Penguin Books, London. 1973
  - 2(b) B Aldis "Galaxies Like Grains of Sand".  
Panther, London. 1960/1979
- "Time is like an element which can be solid liquid or gas in that it has three states. In the future it is a veiling mist. In the present it is a flux we can not seize. In the past it has solidified and become glazed. Then we call it history. That it can show us nothing but our own solemn faces, it is a treacherous mirror reflecting only our limited truth. So much is it a part of man that objectivity is impossible, so neutral is it that it appears hostile."
3. A Howkins "Reshaping Rural England" - a Social History 1850-1925.  
Harper Collins, London. 1991
- An excellent modern survey of the influences in the period of the decline of the morris.
- 4(a) J Dunbabin "Rural Discontent in Nineteenth Century Britain".  
Holmes & Meier Pub, New York. 1974
  - 4(b) M Ashby "Joseph Ashby of Tysoe" - 1859-1919.  
Cambridge University Press. 1961
  5. I used to campaign for such a declaration to be the only requirement for clubs to join any of the associations.
  6. R Judge Private communication of draft article on the Lichfield Morris and its recovery.
  7. G Frampton "Whittlesey Straw Bear".  
Cambridge Libraries Pub, Peterborough. 1989
- A typical modern publication summarising local historical evidence.
8. P Beck & A Walters "The Sacred" - Ways of Knowledge, Sources of Life.  
Navajo Community College Press, Arizona. 1977
  9. K Pearson "Introduction to Group Dynamics".  
(editor) Joint Board of Christian Education, Melbourne. 1986
  10. A Neustatter "Hyenas in Petticoats" - a look at 20 years of feminism.  
Harrap/Penguin 1989/90
  11. The position elsewhere is seldom considered, see for example,
    - (a) D Ingrams "The Position of Women in Middle Eastern Arab Society",  
in "The Middle East" - a Handbook, edited by M Adams.  
Anthony Blond, London. 1971 edition

- (b) T Zinkin      **"The Position of Women in Asia",**  
in "Asia" - a Handbook, edited by G Wint.  
Anthony Blond, London.      1965 edition
12. D Tannen      **"You Just Don't Understand" - Women and Men in**  
Conversation.  
Ballantine Books, New York.      1990
13. E Björkstén      **"Principles of Gymnastics for Women and Girls".**  
Churchill, London.  
Used at the Chelsea College of Physical Education.
14. R Gardiner      **"The Travelling Morrice".**  
North Sea and Baltic.      High Summer, 1938.  
  
"In the spring of 1924, two of the morris men conspired to give the  
side a taste of the real thing. They poisoned the imagination of their  
fellows with the charmed names of Longborough, Bledington and  
Sherborne. It was like talking to the home stranded Crusader about  
Jerusalem and the Holy Land. In this mood the Travelling Morrice was  
born."
15. P Ucko      **"Avebury Reconsidered from the 1660's to the 1990's"**  
et al      Institute of Archaeology University College of London  
Unwin Hyman, London      1991

## NEW DIRECTIONS

Growing older, I regret the wilder extravagances masquerading as morris today.

Developments in the morris world this century have been based on some false impressions of the past whose impact are only now being appreciated. Collectors concentrated on the oldest, playing down the creative elements in the idioms, recognising the urge to improve as part of the traditional process, although obviously denying it for the "inexperienced" revival, but not seeing the variations found between teams as showing the equally important desire to be different, even though this was evident in the Cotswold villages where the morris had stops and starts. "Modern" dances and tunes, such as *The Rose Tree* at Bampton, were ignored as untraditional, as in effect were all young dancers and their performances. To older dancers long familiarity brought an apparent stability for which there is little hard evidence.

The received traditions include many dances which have been well honed for performance and this root material can only be distorted or ignored at our peril. However they are not intended to be only for museum-like reproduction. Today we do not know how accurate is our knowledge, we do not know how complete are the surviving repertoires or what were the popular dances, and we do not know how satisfied the older dancers were with each of their individual dances as remembered. Our judgement is based on a perception that the really great material for the performing arts is that which allows of continual regeneration and new insights within an accepted framework.

It is the nature of "new" things to be explored in many ways, eg the Border Morris since its recreation in 1975, not necessarily all successfully. When a dance tradition was "living", eg as in the North West, the variety was found to develop over a relatively short period. Once the "novelty" stage is passed, dance idioms settle down, as did country dance formations by the 18th C, and as has Carnival Morris and Formation Dancing more recently, often within self imposed limitations and having an emphasis on quality not freakishness.

Living dance is not static but adjusts to today's needs, which cannot closely match those of the past. Modern performances are built around shows which hardly existed in the 19th century. Unfortunately the number of recorded dances are insufficient to produce satisfying repertoires for the many attention competing clubs that now exist. Repertoires also need "light and shade", ie contrast.

Where might the "leading edge" be pointing?

**Cotswold** : Introducing a new chorus only changes about one third of a dance and its style still remains within the local idiom. Good dance ideas are invariably simple but hard to find. It is all too easy to be complex, making it slow to learn, difficult to practice and seldom "borrowed" by others. Part of the future has to be with the "new traditions", probably with fresh easy patterns rather than steps. For them the problem in achieving any impact remains in providing documentation and workshops, otherwise they die with their club.

**Border** : This is still evolving and remains largely raw and frequently inward looking and self indulgent. There will be more ordinary public resistance to the excesses of behaviour, especially to the yelling and the more ridiculous dress. In general the dances need to be shorter, with more structure and greater attention to dance and presentation skills. The successful sides seem to be those built

around "themes" or "house styles", which brings them into line with minstrelsy and street entertainers rather than the morris.

**North West :** The tradition was of a single processional/stage dance. The problem today is of having several in a contrasting repertoire. The dances often appear to come "by the yard", appropriate to unstructured procession performances, but not to more static audiences. Unfortunately most older dances use common movements and appear repetitive in performance, but introducing a few "Gee Whiz" figures is not enough compensation, although that was the traditional style. Because of the technical limitations of the idiom, novelty will always be important in order to keep the interest up in dance rather than event orientated groups.

**Long Sword :** This appears as only a limited idiom whilst the dancers remain linked, although in fact not many of the possibilities have been explored, especially with regard to timings within movements. This is one area where insights from European analogues could be most illuminating. While there are some fresh dances being created, new lock forms or methods of their assembly have been little explored. It is possible to form one with only four rigid swords and there are many proper possibilities for greater numbers which are not so symmetrical as those with which we are familiar or that are patterns within patterns. Dances which depend more on the manners of forming and the patterns of swords displayed may well have been within our tradition.

**Rapper :** This is a dance idiom which like step dancing cries out for some systematic work on establishing and cataloguing the possibilities, as most collected dances are sets of contrasting figures, and this does not highlight what can or cannot be done within the limits of the linked topology.

**Molly, Stave, Garland and the Rest :** These are weak English traditions with material akin either to the other traditions or which have been largely dependent on country dances. They depend for their survivability on contrast with other idioms and in having a unique style. There is considerable printed dance material out there from which choreographies can be quarried, and that was the traditional approach! Who can compose fugues, in which pairs of dancers perform the same steps and patterns but several bars delayed?

**Music :** Band skills are still minimal. There is a need to think about how the Irish tradition was used in Riverdance. Also, to consider the inspiration that can be gained from the "early music" of up to the end of the 17th century.

We need an honesty about the past, but also a respect, and a recognition that inexperience usually leads to mistakes.

Remember to take a long view, if it is not very good it will not last.

## THE TRADITIONS STYLISED

In the 19th century all the sides appeared to have a common repertoire of tunes and dance movements through sharing musicians, dancers and meeting at Ales and competitions, yet each achieved individuality. Today we chose to emphasise certain aspects of a tradition and to stylise it to distinguish between them in practice and outside performance. What features should be brought out? What makes each tradition different?

Many dancers are initiated to the morris through learning "simple" traditions which get them moving without much demand on them in terms of technique. Such are seldom relearned when the dancers have become more proficient, so they are often performed just as first learnt. Of course they need just as much skill to present as any other tradition, especially as much must be made of what limited features the dances do have. Equating of complexity with desirability of performance is a product of the practice room, because simple dances have been found satisfying to dance to the public and most of the tradition that survived into the 20th century was simple.

### BIDFORD

The sources are the Ferris mss, Graham's book, Sharp's mss and book, Stone's photographs, local memories and the performance of the local boy's side in the late 1950's. Apart from Graham describing everything from a spectator's point of view, no source is complete in itself. The locals insisted in the 1950's on a vigorous single step, which starts with the classical kick forward but then the foot is pulled back by lifting up to produce a "back-peddalling", perhaps an influence of the boots that were once worn. There is no backstep, but the jumps are high, and the sidestep has the feet in line with no body turn.

Unlike most other traditions, there was flexibility in the figure order, the choice of figures and the performance of the choruses. Informants said that the "handkerchief" dance which used the sidestep was done to many tunes, and the "stick" dance baton tappings could be chosen by the foreman at the time. The opening figure could be foot-up, both long and short, dance-facing, or rounds. The final figure could be "spiral", foot-up, perhaps fast, whole or half-rounds. The intermediate figures could be done ad lib, even the same one over and over again. Besides the spiral, which is a morris-off that doesn't, the interesting figure is the "in-&-out-hey" in which the middles only move forward and back to avoid the ends doing a normal hey. There is of course also a normal hey. Locals have insisted that the 4 bar chorus movements follow the halves of every figure and not just the half heys.

"Devil Among the Tailors", and "Heel and Toe" ("Monks March") tunes have been obtained but not the dances. Some of the dances are unusual. "Princess Royal" is a jig adapted for a corner dance and includes the tradition's only slows. "We Wont Go Home Till Morning" is a simple dance like "How Do You Do" (Headington Quarry) but it switches to the chorus of "Cuckoo's Nest" at the end for handshaking instead of having a reconciliation corner movement. "Bluff King Hal", a major version of the "Staines Morris" tune, is very unusual for a Cotswold dance, having a logical structure going from column to line of 6, to ring of 6 and rings of 3 and back to line of 6 and column. It would not have been out of place at Chipping Campden, but for the holding



hands in the rings and the bows. Fitting the dance to the tune and trying to improve the nods aesthetically have exercised many modern sides.

The Shakespeare Men have developed another satisfying way for the tradition and interpreted the uncertain dances. They have copied the old costume and dance in the village on the former celebration date of Trinity Monday.

## STANTON HARCOURT

The reconstruction is based on a verbose description of "Nutting Girl" in one mss and over-brief chorus descriptions in another. Repetitions, similar moves by the opposite, or mirror moves do not get mentioned. For example

the handclapping in "Princess Royal" which is given as

r+l	r+l	r+l	
l+r	l+r	l+r	b

probably means

r+l	3x,	r+r	3x,	l+l	3x,	b	3x!
l+r							

Following Williams mss, there is no jump half way through dance-facing, cross-over is done right shoulders but left shoulders coming back, the forward-&-back is facing opposite not side-by-side as in half-gip, the middles go up towards the music every time in the half heys and the rounds at the end open out before the caper-in. The backstep in all the figures is done facing opposite, including in the half heys, so that the hands are out at the side and almost touching in a line along the side of the set. It is deduced that there is no stick clashing on jumps in the figures.

"Greenselves" and "Nutting Girl" are "goey" dances, the former is not a usual tune for a set dance. Attention should be given to standing upright in hitting one's opposite stick. The stepping in "Nutting Girl" is done facing up every time, it is very vigorous with larger arm swings than normal, and the step is like Eynsham with possibly a pronounced slap down of the forward foot in the "sidestep". In the "Nightingale" there is a choice of to turn or not when receiving hits. The song tune "Nightingale Sings" fits the dance, with the odds hitting the evens 3 times, the evens holding their stick horizontal, the odds capering and hitting on the middle beat of the bar, then a half hey and in the repeat the evens hitting the odds. A suitable tune for the "Clock" is "Grandfather's Clock", but as said before the clapping intended is uncertain. "Beanplanting's" tune is something like Badby. "Brighton Camp" is a piece de resistance, but it must be learnt from different positions. It is recommended that dancers keep turning to their right between clashes. Invented dances are "Jockey", 4 bar sidestep like "Nutting Girl", a whole-hey and 4 plain capers, and "Constant Billy" with sticks, like bars 3-4 of "Brighton Camp" done twice. Datchet and Pilgrim have created new Stanton dances.

Most dances will be seen in variants. The commonest change is to "Princess Royal", quite often filling the B out with a whole-hey rather than the next figure.

## WHEATLEY

The sources are Sharp mss, Major Fryer mss and the current side. It used the singlestep and a backstep. The hands went up and down, with the arms well bent at the elbow, from near the waist to above the head, with emphasis on the first strong beat of each bar. The lift that this gives the body is

exaggerated in the half-capers, which are always off the same foot. Because the first move is a "lift", there is nothing in O2YS. The figures are only foot-up, whole-rounds and whole-hey. Each is danced with 6 bars of hopstep and then the backstep and jump, that is, no break at half way. The hey can be repeated without pause, and the dancers can change to half-capers, and the whole-rounds continued by dancing back anti-clockwise to place, this also can be switched to half-capers. The order is not fixed other than starting with a foot-up and ending with whole-rounds and all-in.

Some of the dances were described to Fryer in criticism of Wargrave doing Adderbury and Headington versions. "Room for the Cuckoo" is the simplest dance and used for the boys and beginners. "Shepherd's Hey" is interesting because of the stepping inserted in the clapping chorus and the clapping instead of stepping at the end of figures. The stick dances have simple bold movements, without half heys! The tunes are all a little different from the norm, the "Processional" is a derivative of "Brighton Camp" and "Trunkles" may be a "Hunt the Squirrel". For a team just over the hill from Quarry and who used to go around in the same gang, the dances are suprisingly different.

The current side shows how well these dances can be presented. They have created "Ladder Hill" and "Windmill".

In its last days the side went out with a concertina, drummer and only three dancers, which could explian the limitations of the collected dances.



# ADDERBURY SING AND STICK

## Background

Adderbury sang old songs and other popular town songs of the day, often executing some of their stick movements whilst they sang the choruses. They did this to keep the crowd quiet while they were resting themselves. Sometimes they danced as they sang.

Janet Blunt (1859-1950) lived in Adderbury from 1892. She with the occasional help of friends, Mrs Elliot Hobbs, Miss Kennedy and Miss D C Daking, collected songs and country dances from 1907-1919, the morris only over the 1916-18 period. Several copies of her mss were made to pass to other people, such as Cecil Sharp who appears to have ignored it, which differ in details, so all have to be consulted. The Blunt collection was used by Michael Pickering for a thesis and a book "*Village Song and Culture : A study based on the Blunt Collection of Song from Adderbury, North Oxfordshire*" published in 1982 by Croom Helm, London. This puts the material fairly into its context of period and locality. Keith Chandler considers the people involved in his books.

The major informant on the morris was William "Binx" Walton (1837-1919), at least a third generation morris dancer, and, with his brother, a well known local singer. The village orchestra was disbanded in his boyhood, but he sang treble in the church choir. He had a difficult teenage as his father was convicted of two counts of theft in 1844 and died in 1848 soon afterwards, so William was in the workhouse until apprenticed to a bricklayer and builder. However he became a lifelong bell ringer from the age of 15. He married a girl from Coventry in his early 20's, when he was probably already a morris dancer, and he claimed that he was its leader from about 1860 to its end just before 1880. He had four brothers who were also morris dancers. In the 1881 census he was a builder and shopkeeper, in the later 1880's and 1890's he kept The Wheatsheaf public house in East Adderbury until 1899 with an attached shop. When Blunt first met him he was a vigorous and upright man full of dance as can be seen in the Blunt photographs. He met Sharp and Karpeles in Hampstead, London on the mornings of 25th and 19th March 1919 by Janet Blunt arranging for him to visit a married daughter. He died in that September aged 83. Sharp said he was hale and hearty, rather blind although he can hear well, walk with a firm step and sing with a strong baritone voice. At first it was difficult to get his memory back and it was only by degrees that he was able to recall the different evolutions with their many technical details, despite Blunt's success over the previous few years.

In the 1950's and 60's the Sharp and Blunt mss material was rationalised for circulation to be consistent with the existing Sharp publications. From the 1970's the various slightly different copies of the Blunt mss were treated as independent descriptions widening the interpretation possibilities. Unfortunately 1919 was in the period that Sharp appears to have pressurised informants, as at Abingdon, Brackley and Wheatley, and his interpretations can not be completely relied upon if there is alternative evidence.

## Style

The handkerchiefs, half a yard a side, had two opposite corners tied and held between thumb and forefinger. The hand movements were not very stereotyped

but varied considerably, although always within certain limits. The arms were held in front of the body, the elbows curved and held well away from the sides. The movements were "counter-twists" in rather large vertical circles or ellipses. On the first beat of a bar the movement was outwards going down and then up. Sharp elucidated that they could be a slight upward pull using mainly the wrists when the hands met dropping in front on the 3rd beat.

The sticks were held vertically in the middle with the hand at shoulder level and a little in front of the body. The tapping in choruses is normally "doubles".

o = odds strike evens, e = evens strike odds, x = clash tips.

*Hands Round* : clasp hands at waist level.

*Whole Hey* : the top two pairs pass right shoulders, turning the easy way into it.

*Shooting* : The dancers stood upright, as if firing a shotgun, which they would know all about, and never crouching, which would be dangerous to the person.

## Dances

The following is based on transcriptions of the Sharp and Blunt mss and not on previous publications such as Lionel Bacon's book..

**BLUE BELL OF SCOTLAND** - doubles stick hold

o o e e / o o e e / o e o e / x - x - // repeated.

Pattern : (1) and (4) partners; (2) and (5) middles up; (3) and (6) middles down. If they are to be done twice, it needs at least 6 figures.

**BRIGHTON CAMP** - doubles stick hold

o e o e / o e o e / o e o e / o - x - // repeated.

**(COME LANDLORD FILL THE) FLOWING BOWL** - doubles stick hold

Normally they sang the figures without dancing.

o e o e / o e x - / o e o e / o e x - / o e o e / o e x - / o / e o e o / x - x - //

Pattern : can use different striking patterns inspired eg by *Blue Bell of Scotland*.

**HAPPY MAN** - Four Part Song - doubles stick hold

Normally sang and tapped sticks. Would clash across "to close" at end of lines.

(Blunt) o e o e o e ..... x

(Bath) o o e e / o e e / o e o / e x - / e o o / e o o / e o e / x - - // repeated.

Step : 1 1 2 hop,  
2 run with heavy step on first beats,  
3 like *Jenny Jones*.

End dance with a repeat chorus performed faster.

## **LADS A BUNCHUM**

In the "High" hold the sticks in both hands, stand pointing left shoulders to each other, evens facing up, odds facing down, and raise sticks well above heads horizontally and parallel to the files. When striking the dancer makes an overhead movement pivoting right hand over left, so as to strike down with his tip on to his partner's butt.

**POSTMAN'S KNOCK** - Two Part Song - doubles stick hold

Adderbury tapped only, Wootton danced foot-up and half-gyp, foot-up with singing, stand facing an tapped without singing, ad lib.

e o e o / e o x - // four times through. Note start with an "e".

Because of the tune stretching in the last bar of the sticking to make the B music nine bars long, it is often stretched further by adding two more strong beats for a tenth bar and doing two extra taps.

End dance with a repeat chorus performed faster.

**ROAST BEEF OF OLD ENGLAND** - doubles stick hold

They only sang and tapped before the club dinner, outside they might dance. This was a typical formal song before army mess dinners.

o e o e / x - x - / o e o e / x - x - // repeated.

Collected with tapping through the A musics as well.

**(SWEET) JENNY JONES** - alternately doubles and singles stick hold

Figure order as *Washing Day*.

Sang on the last foot-up in the last chorus.

Collected both in 3/4 and apparently in 6/8 time.

in 3/4          o e o / e o e / o e o / e x - // twice

in 6/8          o e o e / o e o e / o e o e / o e x - //

Step : in 3/4 time pause on 4th step (etc) with weight on both feet.

**WASHING DAY** - alternately doubles and singles stick hold

Danced for as many as available. Figure order : foot-up; half-gip; sticks across diagonals in fours; foot-down.

o / e o e o / e o e o / e o e o / e - x // repeated.

file adderbry.wri

# SIDMOUTH WORKSHOP : ADDERBURY SING AND STICK

## BLUE BELLS OF SCOTLAND

Oh where! and oh where has your Highland Laddie gone?  
Oh where! and oh where has your Highland Laddie gone?  
He's gone to fight the foe for our Queen upon the throne,  
And it's oh in my heart! I wish him safe at Home.

Oh where! and oh where did your Highland Laddie dwell?  
Oh where! and oh where did your Highland Laddie dwell?  
He dwelt in bonnie Scotland, where blooms the sweet bluebell,  
And it's oh in my heart! I love my Laddie well.

Oh how, tell me how, is your Highland Laddie clad?  
Oh how, tell me how, is your Highland Laddie clad?  
His bonnet has a lofty plume, and on his breast a plaid,  
And it's oh in my heart! that I love my Highland Lad.

Suppose! oh suppose that your Highland Lad be slain?  
Suppose! oh suppose that your Highland Lad be slain?  
Oh, my true love will be his guard and bring him safe again,  
But it's oh my heart would break, if my Highland Lad were slain.

## BRIGHTON CAMP

I'm lonesome since I crossed the hills, and o'er the moor and valley,  
Such heavy thoughts my heart do fill, since parting from my Sally.  
I seek no more the fine or gay, for each does but remind me,  
How swiftly pass'd the hours away, with the girl I left behind me.

Her golden hair in ringlets fair, her eyes like diamonds shining,  
Her slender waist, with carriage chaste, may leave the swain repining.  
Kind heaven above us, hear my pray'r, for the beauty that does binds me,  
And send me safely home again, to the girl I left behind me.

The bee shall honey taste no more, the dove become a ranger,  
The falling waters cease to roar, ere I shall seek to change her.  
The vows we register'd above shall ever cheer and bind me,  
In constancy to her I love, the girl I left behind me.

My mind her image must retain, asleep or sadly waking,  
I long to see my love again, for her my heart is breaking.  
When-e'er my steps return that way, still faithful shall she find me,  
And never more again I'll stray, from the girl I left behind me.

The hour I remember well, when first she own'd she loved me,  
For what I felt there's none can tell, how constant I have proved me.  
But now I'm bound for Brighton camp, kind heaven, then pray guide me,  
And send me safely home again, to the girl I left behind me.

Oh, ne'er shall I forget the night, the stars were bright above me,  
And gently lent their silvery light, when first she vowed to love me!  
Oh let the night be ever so dark, or ever so wet or windy,  
I must return to the Brighton Camp, to the girl I left behind me.

## COME LANDLORD, FILL THE FLOWING BOWL

Come, landlord fill the flowing bowl, until it does run over,  
Come, landlord fill the flowing bowl, until it does run over,  
For tonight we'll merry, merry be, for tonight we'll merry, merry be,  
For tonight we'll merry, merry be, and tomorrow we'll be sober.

The man that drinks small beer and goes to bed quite sober,  
The man that drinks small beer and goes to bed quite sober,  
Falls as the leaves do fall, falls as the leaves do fall,  
Falls as the leaves do fall, that drop off in October.

The man that drinks strong ale at night and goes to bed quite mellow,  
The man that drinks strong ale at night and goes to bed quite mellow,  
Lives as he ought to do, lives as he ought to do,  
Lives as he ought to do, and dies a jolly good fellow.

But he who drinks just what he likes and gets half seas over,  
But he who drinks just what he likes and gets half seas over,  
Will live until he dies perhaps, will live until he dies perhaps,  
Will live until he dies perhaps, and then lies down in clover.

The man who kisses a pretty girl and goes and tells his mother,  
The man who kisses a pretty girl and goes and tells his mother,  
Ought to have his lips cut off, ought to have his lips cut off,  
Ought to have his lips cut off, and never kiss another.

## CONSTANT BILLY

Oh my Billy, my Constant Billy, When shall I see my Billy again?  
Oh my Billy, my Constant Billy, When shall I see my Billy again?

Billy again! Billy again!, Billy again! Billy again!  
Oh my Billy, my Constant Billy, when shall I see my Billy again?

## HAPPY MAN

How happy is that man, that's free from all care,  
That loves to make merry, that loves to make merry, o'er a drop of good beer.

With his pipe and his friends puffing hours away,  
Singing song after song, till he hails the new day,  
He can laugh, dance and sing, and smoke without fear,  
Be as happy as a King, till he hails the New Year.

How happy is the man that's free from all strife,  
He envies no other, he envies no other, but travels through life.

Our seamen of old, they feared not their foes,  
They threw away discord, they threw away discord, and to mirth they inclined.

## LADS A BUNCHUM

Oh dear mother what a fool I be, here are six young fellows come a courting me,  
Three are blind and the others can't see, oh dear mother what a fool I be.



**POSTMAN'S KNOCK** - words L Thornton, tune W Wrighton

What a wonderful man the Postman is! as he hastens from door to door.  
What a medley of news his hands contain, for high, low, rich and poor.  
In many a face, a joy he can trace, in as many a grief he can see,  
When the door is opened to his loud rap-tap, for his quick delivery.

Every morning as true as the clock, somebody hears the Postman's knock.  
Every morning as true as the clock, somebody hears the Postman's knock.

No. One he presents with the news of a birth, with tidings of a death, No. Four.  
At Thirteen, a bill, of terrible length, he drops through the hole in the door,  
A cheque or an order at Fifteen he leaves, and at Sixteen his presence does prove,  
While Seventeen does an acknowledgement get, and Eighteen a letter of love.

May his visits be frequent to those who expect,  
a line from the friends they hold dear,  
But rarely we hope that compelled he will be, disastrous tidings to bear.  
Far, far be the day when the envelope shows the dark border shading it o'er,  
Then long life to his Majesty's servant we say and oft may he knock at our door.

**ROAST BEEF OF OLD ENGLAND** words H Fielding, tune R Leveridge

When mighty roast beef was the Englishman's food,  
It ennobled our hearts and enrich'd our blood,  
Our soldiers were brave, and our courtiers good,  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.

Our fathers of old were robust, stout, and strong,  
And kept open house, with good cheer all day long,  
Which made their plump tenants rejoice in this song,  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.

When good Queen Elizabeth sat on the throne,  
Ere coffee, or tea, or such slipslops were known,  
The world was in terror if e'er she did frown,  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.

In those days, if fleets did venture on the main,  
They seldom or never returned back again,  
As witness the vaunting Armada of Spain.  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.

**SWEET JENNY JONES**

My Sweet jenny Jones is the pride of Llangollen,  
My Sweet Jenny Jones is the girl I love best.

**WASHING DAY**

Thump! Thump! Scrub! Scrub! Scrub! Scrub away!  
The devil a bit of peace I get! Upon the Washing Day.

## ADDERBURY SING AND DANCE

BEAUX OF LONDON CITY : *sung by Bessie Aris to Janet Blunt* <sup>1</sup> 1907

My father's a hedger and ditcher, my mother does nothing but spin,  
And I am a neat little stitcher and the money comes slowly in.

Oh! Dear! What shall become of me? Oh! Dear! What shall I do?  
There's nobody comes to marry me and nobody comes to woo.

Last night the dogs did bark, I went to the gate to see,  
Every lass has her spark, but there's never one for me.

Oh! Dear! What will become of me? Oh! Dear! What will I do?  
There's nobody comes to marry me and nobody comes to woo.

BLUE BELL OF SCOTLAND - *written in 1800 and made famous by Mrs Dora Jordon*<sup>2</sup>. The main text is the original. The third and fourth lines were repeated.

Oh where and oh where is your Highland Laddie gone?  
(Oh! where, tell me where, is your Highland Laddie gone?)  
Oh where and oh where is your Highland Laddie gone?  
He's gone to fight the French(foe) for King George upon the throne,  
(He's gane to fight for George our King, and left me a' alane)  
(He's gone with streaming banners where noble deeds are done)  
And it's oh! in my heart I wish him safe at Home.

Oh where and oh where did(does) your Highland Laddie dwell?  
(Oh! where, tell me where, did your Highland Laddie dwell?)  
Oh where and oh where did your Highland Laddie dwell?  
He dwelt in merry Scotland, at the sign of the Blue Bell,  
(He dwelt in bonnie Scotland, where blooms the sweet bluebell)  
(He dwells in merry Scotland, where the bluebells sweetly smell)  
And it's oh! in my heart I love my Laddie well.

In what cloaths, in what cloaths, is your Highland laddie clad?  
(Oh how, tell me how, is your Highland Laddie clad?)  
(Oh! what, tell me(lassie) what, does your Highland Laddie wear?)  
In what cloaths, in what cloaths, is your Highland laddie clad?  
His bonnet('s) of the Saxon green, and his waistcoat('s) of the plaid,  
(A bonnet with a lofty plume, and on his breast a plaid)  
(A scarlet coat and a bonnet (blue) wi' bonnie yellow hair)  
And its oh! in my heart (that) I love my Highland Lad.  
(And there's nane in the world can wi' my love compare)

[Oh what will you claim for your constancy to him?  
Oh what will you claim for your constancy to him?  
I'll claim a priest to wed us, and a clerk to ssy "Amen!"  
And I'll ne'er part again from my bonnie Highland man.]

[Oh when, and oh when will your Hieland lad come home?  
Oh when, and oh when will your Hieland lad come home?  
Whene'er the war is o'er, he'll return to me with fame,  
With the heather in his bonnet, my gallant Hielandman.]

Suppose, and(oh) suppose that your Highland Laddie should die?  
(Oh! what, tell me what, if your Highland lad be slain?)  
Suppose, oh suppose that your Highland Laddie should die?  
The bagpipes should play over(o'er) him, and I'd set(lay) me down and cry,  
(Oh, no! true love will be his guard and bring him safe again)  
And it's oh in my heart I wish he may not die.  
(But its oh! in my heart that I feel he will not die.)  
(For its oh! my heart would break, if my Highland lad were slain)

*From Ritson's "Northern Garland",*

There was a Highland laddie courted a lawland lass,  
There was a Highland laddie courted a lawland lass.  
He promis'd for to marry her, but he did not tell her when;  
And 'twas all in her heart she lov'd her Highland man.

Oh where, and oh where does your Highland laddie dwell?  
Oh where, and oh where does your Highland laddie dwell?  
He lives in merry Scotland, at the sign of the Blue Bell;  
And I vow in my heart I love my laddie well.

What cloaths, Oh what cloaths does your Highland laddie wear?  
What cloaths, Oh what cloaths does your Highland laddie wear?  
His coat is of a Saxon green, his waistcoat of the plaid;  
And it's all in my heart I love my Highland lad.

Oh where and oh where is your Highland laddie gone?  
Oh where and oh where is your Highland laddie gone?  
He's gone to fight the faithless French whilst George is on the throne,  
And I vow in my heart I do wish him safe at home.

And if my Highland laddie should chance to come no more,  
And if my Highland laddie should chance to come no more,  
They'll call my child a love-begot, myself a common whore;  
And I vow in my heart I do wish him safe on shore.

And if my Highland laddie should chance for to dye,  
And if my Highland laddie should chance for to dye,  
The bagpipes shall play over him, I'll lay me down and cry,  
And I vow in my heart I love my Highland boy.

And if my Highland laddie should chance to come again,  
And if my Highland laddie should chance to come again,  
The parson he shall marry us, and the clerk shall say amen;  
And I vow in my heart I love my Highland man.

*or parodies such as,*

Oh where and oh where has the Highland Laddie gone,  
He's gone to fight the French with his frilly knickers on.

**COME LANDLORD, FILL THE FLOWING BOWL** : *including version given by William Walton to Janet Blunt. Words based on Beaumont and Fletcher's drinking song in "Bloody Brother"* <sup>3</sup>

Come, landlord fill the flowing bowl, until it does(doth) run over,  
Come, landlord fill the flowing bowl, until it does(doth) run over,  
For tonight we'll merry (merry) be, for tonight we'll merry (merry) be,  
For tonight we'll merry (merry) be, (and) tomorrow we'll (give over)be sober.

The man that drinketh(drinks) small beer and goes to bed (quite) sober,  
The man that drinketh(drinks) small beer and goes to bed (quite) sober,  
Fades as the leaves do fade, fades as the leaves do fade,  
Fades as the leaves do fade, that drop off in October.  
(Falls when the leaves do fall, and dies in October)

The man that drinketh strong beer and goes to bed quite(right) mellow,  
(The man that drinks strong ale at night, and goes to bed mellow)  
The man that drinketh strong beer and goes to bed quite mellow,  
Lives as he ought to live, lives as he ought to live,  
Lives as he ought to live, and dies a jolly (good) fellow.  
(Lives as he ought to do, and dies a jolly (good) fellow)

But he who drinks just what he likes and getteth half sea(s) over,  
But he who drinks just what he likes and getteth half sea(s) over,  
Will live until he die perhaps, will live until he die perhaps,  
Will live until he die perhaps, and then lie down in clover.

The man who kisses a pretty girl and goes and tells his mother,  
The man who kisses a pretty girl and goes and tells his mother,  
Ought to have his lips cut off, ought to have his lips cut off,  
Ought to have his lips cut off, and never kiss another.

*Versions from Chappell,*

Come, landlord, fill a flowing bowl, until it does run over,  
Come, landlord, fill a flowing bowl, until it does run over,  
Tonight we all will merry be, tonight we all will merry be,  
Tonight we all will merry be, tomorrow we'll get sober.

[Come, let us drink a bout, drive away all sorrow,  
Come, let us drink a bout, drive away all sorrow.  
For p'r'aps we may not, for p'r'aps we may not,  
For p'r'aps we may not meet again tomorrow.]

He that drinks strong beer, and goes to bed mellow,  
(But he that drinks all day, and goes to bed mellow)  
He that drinks strong beer, and goes to bed mellow,  
Lives as he ought to live, lives as he ought to live,  
Lives as he ought to live, and dies a hearty fellow.

Punch cures the gout, the colic, and the tistic,  
(Wine cures the gout, the cholic, and the tistic)  
Punch cures the gout, the colic, and the tistic,  
And is to all men, and is to all men,

And is to all men the very best of physic.

He that drinks small beer, and goes to bed sober,  
He that drinks small beer, and goes to bed sober,  
Falls, as the leaves do, falls as the leaves do,  
Falls, as the leaves do, that die in October.

He that courts a pretty girl, and courts her for his pleasure,  
He that courts a pretty girl, and courts her for his pleasure,  
Is a fool to marry her, is a fool to marry her,  
Is a fool to marry her without store of treasure.

Now let us dance and sing, and drive away all sorrow,  
Now let us dance and sing, and drive away all sorrow,  
For perhaps we may not meet, for perhaps we may not meet,  
For perhaps we may not meet again tomorrow.

*Version from Shaw's Grieg Duncan Folk Song Collection*

Come, landlord, fill a flowing bowl, and fill it till't run over,  
Come, landlord, fill a flowing bowl, and fill it till't run over,  
For this night we'll merry, merry be, for this night we'll merry, merry be,  
For this night we'll merry, merry be, and tomorrow we'll get sober.

Here's to the lad that courts a lass, and courts her for his pleasure,  
Here's to the lad that courts a lass, and courts her for his pleasure,  
He's a fool, he's a fool if he marries her, he's a fool, he's a fool if he marries her,  
He's a fool, he's a fool if he marries her without she have some treasure.

Here's to the lad that courts lass, and goes to tell his mother,  
Here's to the lad that courts lass, and goes to tell his mother,  
He ought to have his head cut off, he ought to have his head cut off,  
He ought to have his head cut off, and never get another.

*Parody, "Come Ladies Fill the Steaming Urn", from Adderbury Women's Institute <sup>4</sup>,  
might have been by Janet Blunt herself*

Come, ladies! Fill the flowing urn, until it does boil over.  
Come fill our social cups in turn, and hand the cakes moreover.  
For today we'll merry be, cheerfully we'll drink our tea,  
Hand the buns and cakes, that we may find ourselves in clover.

For today we'll merry be, munch our buns and drink our tea.  
Singing all so merrily that here we are in clover.

If ladies will rich cocoa drink, now please don't think us petty,  
They wish to lose, I fear to think, the fashionable silhouette.  
So the wiser women we grateful though the cocoa be,  
Turn for comfort to our tea and never will be cross or fretty.

chorus

Come, ladies! Fill the tea urns up, the kettle's boiling over.  
Then hand the buns, and fill each cup, so totally-tee and sober.  
For today we'll merry be with our social dish of tea,  
Chatting, all from care so free, till the Institute is over.

chorus

**CONSTANT BILLY** : *sung by William Walton to Janet Blunt 1916*

Oh! my Billy, my Constant Billy, when shall I see my Billy again?  
Oh! my Billy, my Constant Billy, when shall I see my Billy again?

Billy again! Billy again!, Billy again! Billy again!  
Oh! my Billy, my Constant Billy, when shall I see my Billy again?

**GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME** : *tune Brighton Camp* <sup>5</sup>, *perhaps dated to 1758*

I'm lonesome since I cross'd the hills, and o'er the moors that's sedgy,  
Such heavy thoughts my mind doth fill, since parting from my Betsy.  
Searching for one that's fine and gay, and several to remind me,  
Blest be the hours I passed away with the girl I left behind me.

The hour I remember well and constancy shall prove me,  
For what I felt there's none can tell, when first she own'd she loved me.  
But now I'm bound to Brighton Camp, kind heaven then pray mind me,  
And send me home, safe back again to the girl I left behind me.

Her golden hair in ringlets were, her eyes like diamonds shining,  
Her slender waist, with carriage chaste, she left the swain(s) repining.  
Kind heaven above us, hear my pray'r, for the beauteous fair who binds me,  
And send me home, safe back again to the girl I left behind me.

or

*fragment sung by William Walton to Janet Blunt 1916*

Oh! Let the night be ever so dark, or ever so wet or windy,  
I must return to the Brighton Camp, to the girl I left behind me.

or

I'm lonesome since I cross'd the hills, and o'er the moorland sedgy,  
Such heaviness my bosom fills, since parting with my Betsy.  
I seek for one as fair and gay, but find none to remind me,  
How blest the hours pass'd away, with the girl I left behind me.

The hour I remember well, when first she own'd she loved me,  
A pain within my breast doth tell, how constant I have proved me.  
But now I'm bound for Brighton camp, kind heaven, then pray, guide me,  
And send me home safe back again, to the girl I left behind me.

My mind her image must retain, asleep or sadly waking,  
I long to see my love again, for her my heart is breaking.

When-e'er my steps return that way, still faithful shall she find me,  
And never more again I'll stray, from the girl I left behind me.

or

I'm lonesome since I crossed the hill, and o'er the moor and valley,  
Such greivous thoughts my heart do fill, since parting with my Sally  
(Such heavy thoughts my heart do fill, since parting with my Sally).  
I seek no more the fine or gay, for each does but remind me,  
How swift the hours did pass away, with the girl I ('ve) left behind me.  
(How swiftly pass'd the hours away, with the girl I left behind me)

Oh, ne'er shall I forget the night, the stars were bright above me,  
And gently lent their silvery light, when first she vowed to love me!  
But now I'm bound to Brighton Camp, kind heaven, then, pray guide me,  
And send me safely back again, to the girl I left behind me.

[Had I the art to sing her praise with all the skill of Homer,  
One only theme should fill my lays - the charms of my true lover.  
So, let the night be e'er so dark, or e'er so wet and windy,  
Kind heaven send me back again to the girl I've left behind me.]

Her golden hair in ringlets fair, her eyes like diamonds shining,  
Her slender waist, with carriage chaste, may leave the swain repining.  
Ye gods above! Oh, hear my pray'r, to my beauteous fair to bind me,  
And send me safely back again, to the girl I left behind me.

The bee shall honey taste no more, the dove become a ranger,  
The falling waters cease to roar, ere I shall seek to change her.  
The vows we register'd above shall ever cheer and bind me,  
In constancy to her I love, the girl I left behind me.

[My mind her form shall still retain, in sleeping and in waking,  
Until I see my love again, for whom my heart is breaking.  
If ever I return that way, and she should not decline me,  
I evermore will live and stay with the girl I've left behind me.]

*or parodies, eg about black and white cats.*

## HAPPY MAN <sup>6</sup>

*Second line adjusted to fit the given tune. Song always associated with Solomon Lynes of Adderbury, although he died a century before it was collected from William Walton by Janet Blunt in 1917. It was also collected by Alfred Williams so could not have been written by Solomon Lynes.*

How happy's that man, that's free from all care,  
That loves to make merry, that loves to make merry, o'er a drop of good beer.

With his pipe and his friends puffing hours away,  
Singing song after song, till he hails the new day.  
He can laugh, dance and sing, and smoke without fear,  
Be as happy as a king, till he hails the New Year.

How happy is the man that's free from all strife,  
He envies no other, he envies no other, but travels through life.

chorus

Our seamen of old, they fear not their foes,  
They throw away discord, they throw away discord, & to mirth they're inclined.

chorus

*Version collected by A Williams from James Midwinter of Aldsworth, Gloucestershire  
published in Folk Songs of the Upper Thames.*

How happy is the man that is free from all care,  
That loves to make merry o'er a pot of strong beer;  
With his pipe and his friend passing hours away,  
Singing song after song, till he hail the new day!

How happy this isle, that is doubly blest  
With meat that's delightful, and drink of the best!  
We live free from control, and are blest with great store,  
For we have what we want. What can mortals have more?

Our soldiers are bold, they fear not the foe;  
Our sailors are valiant, which our enemies know;  
They are feared in each clime, they're the dread of each shore,  
When the trumpet shall sound and the loud cannons roar.

But, since we enjoy such blessings divine,  
We'll throw off all discord, and to mirth we'll incline;  
We'll drink and we'll sing, passing hours away,  
And sing song after song, till we hail the new day.

## LADS A BUNCHUM

*As collected by Fred Hamer from William Walton's grandchildren.*

Oh dear mother what a fool I be, here are 6 young fellows come a courting me,  
Three are blind and the others can't see, Oh dear mother what a fool I be.

*As collected by Cecil Sharp from William Walton.*

Oh dear mother what a fool I be, six young girls (ladies etc) came a courting me,  
Three were blind and three couldn't see, Oh dear mother what a fool I be.

## POSTMAN'S KNOCK : words by L Thornton <sup>7</sup>, tune by W Wrighton <sup>8</sup>

What a wonderful man the Postman is! as he hastens from door to door.  
What a medley of news his hands contain, for high, low, rich and poor.  
In many a face, he joy doth(can) trace, in as many a grief he can see,



As(when) the door is opened to his loud rantan(raptap), and his quick delivery.

Ev'ry morn as true as the clock, somebody hears the Postman's knock.  
Ev'ry morn as true as the clock, somebody hears the Post - man's knock.

Number one he presents with the news of a birth,  
with tidings of a death, number four.  
At thirteen, a bill, of terrible length, he drops through the hole in the door,  
(Now) A cheque or an order at fifteen he leaves,  
and(when) sixteen his presence doth prove,  
While seventeen does an acknowledgement get, and eighteen a letter of love.  
chorus

May his visits be frequent to those who expect,  
a line from the friends they hold dear,  
But rarely we hope that compell'd he will be disastrous tidings to bear.  
Far, far be the day when the envelope shows the dark border shading it o'er,  
Then long life to his Majesty's servant we say and oft may he knock at our door.  
chorus

**ROAST BEEF OF OLD ENGLAND** : words by H Fielding <sup>9</sup>, tune by R Leveridge <sup>10</sup>

When mighty roast beef was the Englishman's food,  
It ennobled our hearts and enrich'd our blood,  
Our soldiers were brave, and our courtiers good,

Oh! the roast beef of old England, and oh! for old England's roast beef.  
Oh! the roast beef of old England, and oh! for old England's roast beef.

Our fathers of old were robust, stout, and strong,  
And kept open house, with good cheer all day long,  
Which made their plump tenants rejoice in this song,  
chorus

When good Queen Elizabeth sat on the throne,  
Ere coffee, or tea, or such slipslops were known,  
The world was in terror if e'er she did frown,  
chorus

In those days, if fleets did presume on the main,  
They seldom or never returne'd back again:  
As witness the vaunting Armada of Spain.  
chorus

**SHEPHERD'S HEY** : sung by William Walton to Cecil Sharp 1919

Shepherd's Hay, clover too, rye grass seeds and turnips too.

**SHOOTING THE WREN** : might have been a morris song with sticking.

(SWEET) JENNY JONES : sung by William Walton to Cecil Sharp 1919

My Sweet Jenny Jones is the pride of Llangollen  
My Sweet Jenny Jones is the girl I love best.

*From Moffat's "Minstelsy of Wales", and variants from Cliff and Sylvia Hayes' "Looking back at ...Llangollen" and "The Music and Musical Instruments of Wales and its Bards and Minstrels with song of "Jenny Jones"..." Words attributed to comedian-actor Charles James Mathews <sup>11</sup> (1776-1835), to a harp tune known as "Cader Idris" composed by John Parry <sup>12</sup> (1776-1856) in 1804.*

My name's(is) Edward(Ned) Morgan, I live at Llangollen,  
The vale of St. Tafyd(David), the flow'r of North Wales;  
My father and mother, too, live at Llangollen!  
Good truth! I was born in that(the) sweetest of vales!  
Yes indeed! and all countries so(and) foreign and beautiful,  
That little valley I prize far above;  
For indeed in my heart I do love that Llangollen,  
And sweet Jenny Jones, too, in truth I do love.

For twenty long years have I(I've) (have) plough'd(ed) the salt ocean,  
And serv'd(ed) my full(whole) time in a man-o'(f)-war ship;  
And 'deed, goodness knows, we had bloodful(bloodshed) engagements,  
And many a dark storm on the pitiless deep.  
And I've seen all the lands that are famous in story,  
And many fair damsels to gain me have strove;  
But I said "In my heart I do love that Llangollen,  
And sweet Jenny Jones, too, in truth I do love".

I've seen good King George, and the Lord May'r(s)(or) of London,  
With Kings of far countries and many a Queen;  
The great Pope of Rome, and the Duchess of d'Angouleme(Dongouleme),  
Up from King George to Sir Watkin, I've seen.  
But no, (not) Princesses, Kings, Dukes, not Commissioners,  
No, goodness knows it, my envy could move;  
For indeed in my heart I do love that Llangollen,  
And sweet Jenny Jones, too, in truth I do love.

I parted a lad from the vale of my fathers,  
And left Jenny Jones, then a cockit(coquette) young lass;  
But now I'm return'd(ed) a storm-beaten old mariner,  
Jenny from Jones into Morgan shall pass!  
And we'll live on our cheese and our ale in contentment,  
And long thro'(through)our dear native valley will(we'll) rove;  
For indeed in our hearts, we both love that Llangollen,  
And sweet Jenny Jones, with a truth will I love.

(And sweet Jenny Morgan in truth I do love.)

(And sweet Jenny Morgan till death will I love.)

*From Graves' Celtic Songbook, English words by A Graves, also in Caneuon Cenedlaethol Cymru (1959).*

One morning from Llangollen's dim violet valley,  
Light-hearted I clambered to Caer Dinas Bran.

O'er Cynwyd and Corwen I saw the sun sally,  
Ruabon's far ridges faint flushed with the dawn.  
As I look'd, Berwyn's waters to silver were smitten,  
And Dee danced in diamonds to left and to right;  
But when one lonely cottage my lover's eyes lit on,  
Sure ev'rything else faded out of my sight.

From the castle down hill, like a deer I went racing;  
With heart pit-a-patting I leapt the ford stones;  
My feet through the air, like a pair of swifts chasing,  
Flew straight to the doorstep of sweet Jenny Jones.  
She sat by her father, and I by her brother,  
Her sisters, like roses, ranged round me for choice.  
But of all and of any I only saw Jenny,  
And listened alone to each tone of her voice.

In the church of Llangollen, when joybells were chiming,  
If once my wits wandered right well I knew why.  
'Twas Jenny's "I take thee" to heav'n sent them climbing  
Until her soft pinch pulled me back from the sky.  
I love a good neighbour, I love rest and labour,  
Good music and preaching, my pipe and my purse:  
But beyond all and any I love my own Jenny,  
For richer for poorer, for better for worse.

**WASHING DAY : tune *There's nae Luck aboot the House* 13**

*Fragment sung by William Walton to Janet Blunt 1916*

Thump! Thump! Scrub! Scrub! Scrub! Scrub away!  
The devil a bit of peace I git! Upon a washing day

*From Palmer's Touch on the Times : words in a broadside printed by Pitts.*

The sky with clouds was overcast, the rain began to fall,  
My wife she beat the children and raised a pretty squall.  
She bade me with a frowning look to get out of the way;  
The devil a bit of comfort's there upon a washing day.

For it's thump, thump, scold, scold, thump, thump away;  
The devil a bit of comfort's there upon a washing day.

My Kate she is a bonny wife, there's none more free from evil,  
Except upon a washing day, and then she is devil.  
The very kittens on the hearth, they dare not even play;  
Away they jump with many a thump upon a washing day.

chorus

A friend of mine once asked me how long poor Kate was dead,  
Lamenting the poor creature and sorry I was wed  
To such a scolding vixen whilst he had been at sea,  
The truth it was he chanced to come upon a washing day.

chorus

I asked him once to stay and dine : "Come, come," said I "oddbuds,  
I'll no denial take, you shall, though Kate is in the suds;"  
But what he had to dine upon in faith I shall not say,  
But I'll wager he'll not come again upon a washing day.

chorus

On that sad morning when I rise, I make a fervent prayer  
Unto the gods that it might be throughout the day quite fair,  
That not a gown or handkerchief may in the ditch be laid,  
For should it happen so, egad, I'd catch a broken head.

chorus

*An improved set of words by a T Wilson dated 1831 published in Allan's Tyneside  
Songs in dialect and normalised in Henderson's My Songs My Own.*

Of all the plagues a poor man meets along life's weary way,  
There's none among them all that beats a rainy washing day;  
And let that day come when it may, It always is my care,  
Before I break my fast to pray it might be fine and fair.

For it's thump! thump! souse! souse! scrub! scrub away!  
There's nowt but glumpin' in the house, upon a washing day.

For should the morn when Sall turns out be rainy, dark, or dull,  
She clouts the little bairns about, and packs them off to school.  
On every day throughout the week the goodman has his say,  
But this, when if he chance to speak, It's "Get out of my way!"

chorus

Her step has stern defiance in't, she looks all fire and tow,  
A single word, like sparks from flint, would set her all aglow;  
The very clothes upon her back, so pinned and tucked up are,  
As if to say to bairns and me, "Come near us if you dare!"

chorus

The cat's the picture of distress, the kittens dare not play,  
The dog's afraid to show his face upon this dreary day;  
The bird sits moping on its perch like something in a play,  
The pig's as hungry as a hawk, the hens lay all away.

chorus

The hearth is all with cinders strewn, the floor with dirty duds,  
The hoose is all turned upside down when Sall is in the suds;  
But when the fray is past and done, and all's hung up to dry,  
A cup and blast of baccy soon blows all bad temper by.

Then the thump! thump! souse! souse! scrub! scrub away!  
Make no more glumpin' in the house, until next washing day.

(WITH) JOCKEY TO THE FAIR : *sung by Bessie Aris to Janet Blunt 1907. Probably only to B music of morris tune.*

Twass on the morn of sweet May Day, when nature painted all things gay,  
Taught birds to sing, and lambs to play, and Jenny had promised away she'd run,  
With Jockey to the Fair, with Jockey to the Fair.

He rose up early in the morn and merrily tripped it o'er the lawn,  
His Sunday coat the youth put on, for Jenny had said, away she'd run,  
With Jockey to the Fair, with Jockey to the Fair.

He tapped the window "Haste my dear!" and Jenny impatient cried "Who's there?"  
"Tis I, my love, there's no one near, so haste, my dear, and away you'll run,  
With Jockey to the Fair, with Jockey to the Fair.

*Other variants exist in the literature. "Jockey" is equivalent to a ploughboy.*

*There are many variants in the published words, indicated by the brackets above. Free standing words are possible extra words. Ones without a space separation are alternative words. A bracketed and inset line is an alternative to the line immediately above, but repeats are assumed to be obvious. Verses in square brackets occur in one version only. Any other versions, verses etc would be very welcome in a search for a "best" choice for use in performance.*

*Besides the Janet Blunt and Cecil Sharp mss sources, song books have been consulted in local libraries, private collections, particularly Tony Munday's, and considerable help given by the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. The library at Llangollen helped over the song Jenny Jones.*

There are other unrelated sets of words to these tunes. For example there are four families of words to *The Girl I Left Behind Me*.

Parodies or cruder versions are unlikely to have been used in polite performances by the Adderbury Morris Men.

file : addsongs.wri

## DELIVERED LONGBOROUGH TALK

### INTRODUCTION

There are two basic approaches to writing HISTORY. The first is as telling a story linking perceived facts into an apparently meaningful chronology. To the people involved there was no such logical flow and the potential for alternative consequences was always enormous. However a history full of guessed what-might-have-beens and unfillable gaps is unreadable. The second is the discipline or art of fitting models to observations or deductions. If the result can be independently checked it is a science, if not, it is a religion. The "facts" used are never completely accurate, so the models remain as hypotheses. The modern experience of local newspaper reporting ensures caution in the use of past accounts. Always to be remembered is what is being said to who, by whom for what purpose, and that it is probably a one sided position statement.

Orthodoxy is usually the most satisfying explanation that fits the widest set of experiences. Heresies are alternative models. The interpretation of the perceived "facts" produces that view of history called "the past" which influences people in the present, even though it is not necessarily true. More facts or a new point of view can change this position.

The paper submitted for publication is an illustrative account of what happened to the Cotswold morris following the loss of general public visibility of it after 1840. It is in four parts,

- 1 The nineteenth century decline, which is largely unknown.
- 2 The collection and popularisation of the morris in a new context.
- 3 The Travelling Morris and the Revival's contacts with the tradition.
- 4 Modern interpretations of the dances.

These phases also reflect the concurrent transformations which were occurring in our British society. This becomes an important cross check for consistency. Current research suggests that there was nothing special about the people who were dancers, therefore much can be deduced from a general knowledge of people of the period. The meaning of "tradition" is assumed and not further discussed. A problem is the growing specialist meaning in the use of the words "tradition" and "custom".

### VICTORIAN VALUES

It has been a dedicated struggle for some just to find the key dates of births, marriages, deaths and the family relationships of most known or presumed traditional dancers. Some facts were meant to be suppressed, like the illegal practice of widowers marrying their late wife's widowed sister. There is extremely little surviving evidence about their lives, activities, attitudes or performance. It is mostly a few limited and mostly trivial anecdotes, but what would we have done with fuller biographies?

Just seek greater self justification? The data suggests the importance of family ties, but this may just have been a prominent factor during the tail end of the persistence. There is very little insight into the even earlier morris in its presumed heyday of Ales and Competitions. Only a limited amount of work has been done to put the morris into its social context.

The Longborough and Lower Swell Morrisises remain very shadowy. What was the mutual interaction with Chipping Campden? Perhaps a couple of Campden dancers were with Longbrough at the last Cotswold Games, and later Denis Hathaway claimed a linkage for a Campden revival. What did follow Harry (really known as Henry) Taylor? There are hints of another generation of dancers or perhaps even of a boys side. The village was almost stimulated into dancing again in the 1920's, but young men's dancing then was still largely ignored by the current English Folk Dance establishment. It is difficult to see how the EFDS village classes and the traditional practices could be reconciled. They could neither lead, nor cope with the then current ills of rural society.

### EDWARDIAN ENTHUSIASMS

Cecil Sharp had been discovered by Headington Quarry Morris Men on Boxing Day 1899, but he did not exploit the contact until he became involved with Mary Neal's Esperance Club. His serious collecting of the Cotswold Morris began with Jinky Wells of Bampton a few years later and was mostly concentrated into the 1909-12 period. Many of his informants were discovered for him by name through friends and colleagues. Preferred were those recognised as best of the older exponents. He cycled over to Longborough and found Harry Taylor working near a haystack. Sharp's technique at that time was to learn the tune and then to dance opposite mimicing his elderly source while he whistled, making limited notes in a pocket book. Very little of style and emphasis was ever noted. How could he as an inexperienced dancer know what was important? He was also still influenced by his perception of "Merie England" and the "One Morris". Neal and Carey also visited the Cotswolds. Sharp would complain that Neal used some of "his" stories in her lectures.

Sharp was collecting for exploitation not for the glory or benefit of the individual traditional dancers. He did not encourage contacts with them, whereas Neal had invited upwards of 30 to visit London to pass on their dances. Although their supporters complimented them on their sympathy with the dancers, it is clear from those on the receiving end that they were held in awe and that there was mutual incomprehension. Given the right encouragement much more might have survived, but what did seem to have depended on having had a strong local focus. The active morris involved young men, but their performances were criticised for being "different" from Sharp's and were not recommended.

The London based organisations attempted to spread the dances through classes. The Oxford Branch worked in many villages, but the approach was rigid and the leaders had a London not a tradition based vision. Tiddy worked at Ascott, but, as at Leafield, the recipients were too often school

children and their activities dismissed by the local surviving traditional dancers. It was unfortunately a period when school children had become an exploitable resource. Even traditional dancers such as Hemmings, Wells, Simpson, Bennett and later Russell taught them.

## RECOVERING ROOTS

The Travelling Morrice was a new departure, setting out to meet the dance tradition where ever it could be found. The tourists saw the tradition as being people. It started the regular visits, although infrequent, being only every other year to the Cotswolds. They pleased by remembering what they were taught and did not exploit it. However they did not consult the earlier collectors or their material, so knew little outside of the *Morris Books*, and probably missed good collecting opportunities. However they did not "need" new material. There is no evidence of any interest in the social background to the old morris. Unfortunately the contacts were used by some as ammunition in the ongoing London based arguments. The full contribution of the TM to our knowledge was not made accessible outside the CMM until the 1960's.

The legacy of the TM is the Morris Ring. The EFDS and Esperance proved to be dead ends. The concept of the club, its officers, ales and feast derive from those imbued with the CMM club manner. The tradition did not contribute anything esoteric, or activities such as initiation rites, the culture of the mason or public school had had no impact. But the key persons who dominated and determined the Revival and the Ring were not from the traditional communities. By the time that it was realised that the tradition was more than just some dances, the contacts were gone and the opportunities lost for ever.

## MODERN INTERPRETATION

The last thirty years has been dominated by leaders who came through the grammar schools and their replacements following the 1944 Education Act. Their impact began in the mid 1960's as the influence of the pre-war generation waned. Many found that their traditional culture mattered, whereas to middle class academics it had not. However the morris is not part of the current working class culture, but it can still belong to those conscious of their roots.

The time gap is too long to claim continuity, and the surviving tradition is now too contaminated by the wider morris world to be a reliable guide.

We see a variety of approaches,

- 1 "Heirs" : to whom locality is important.
- 2 "Exponents" : who have the pursuit of excellence in mind.
- 3 "Contrasters": the dance troupes looking for dance fodder.



These are emotive positions, but meaningless to the preservation of a tradition. But what do we know? The collectors missed or did not succeed in communicating the expressive, artistic part of the dance, the stresses, the emphases, effort levels, speed, spacing, show content, the person to person and dance to dance tolerance on performance, musical style and favourite dances. Thus what we do may be a logical development that owes something to the way it was, but there is considerable room for opinion and interpretation. For example, how were the Longborough hand movements during stepping, a flip of the wrist or a big sweep? The relative vagueness of past written notations is a strength, if the dance is to be a living tradition, As we have no other choice, that it what it has to be!

Also to be remembered is that the tradition responds to its current culture which changes responsively with the generations. The "tradition" is a concept that is fresh for every generation, as it is a relationship between the generations.

The performing arts as distinct from the fine arts are ephemeral, and only exist whilst being done. There is no permanent record and it has to be continually recreated. The "dance" in the first three phases discussed is now unknowable, although this is almost irrelevant, as meaningful morris performance in front of modern audiences has to be for today, not as a museum piece.

file : longcomt.wri

## THE LONGBOROUGH MORRIS - THE CONTEXT OF A RECOVERY

In 1964 I was the fool for the Farnborough Morris from Hampshire in a show near Stow-on-the-Wold outside Longborough's Post Office, dangerously equipped with a horse-whip lent to me by one of the villagers, when I heard it said that "Mr. Taylor wouldn't have had that!" Several of the crowd were remembering how the grand old generalissimo of the Longborough Morris used to stop visiting sides from Oxford and Cambridge in the 1920's because they were not jumping high enough. Afterwards I spoke to two men who had started to learn the local morris in the 1920's. This was followed up the next day by visiting Harry's youngest son Fred, then living at the top of the hill above the village's only pub, in the third council house from the bottom on the right. Later that year I came back with Ewart Russell, a friend and then Morris Ring Bagman, to meet the local fiddler George Joynes.

This account, first started in 1964, collates that information with material drawn with permission from Sharp's *Morris Books*, formal manuscripts and rough Field Notes, from discussions and access to that time to the papers of Clive Carey, R Kenworthy Schofield, Douglas Kennedy, to various Travelling Morrice Logs and interviews with several other participants. There was an early expansion of the first part following exchanges with Keith Chandler at the start of his research. It has now been cross-checked for accuracy against Keith Chandler's publications, particularly for the names, but essentially with his help it has been made more readable.

This article is an account of aspects of the interaction of the revival and the tradition. It has been necessary to cast the net widely to suggest the flavour of the times, otherwise there would be too many gaps to make an interesting story.

The Travelling Morrice is often mentioned. This is a part of the Cambridge Morris family providing two or more week-long tours each year away from the Cambridge local territory for current and ex-members. The usual contact has been John Jenner. The equivalent arrangement for the Oxford University Morris Men has been called the Ancient Men. Roy Judge has prepared a manuscript history of May Morning at Oxford and the early days of the OUMM.

### PART ONE - THE ANECDOTES

Henry, colloquially Harry and called thus through-out this paper, was born in 1843 at Longborough to Stephen and Elizabeth Taylor. His father was a morris dancer. As a young boy Harry used to risk a thrashing by playing truant to watch the morris. At that time the local sides were accustomed to meet at Stow-on-the-Wold to compete. Until 1852, the last in which morris dancing took place at Dover's Games, this included the right to dance "on the hill". Only one side was allowed there and they gained the privilege of selling the yellow Dover's favours, what we would call today rosettes. The last year a meeting was held the dancers came from Longborough, accompanied by one or two older Chipping Campden men, according to the manuscript history written by John Horne of Campden in 1898.

#### The Dancers

The team consisted of six dancers, a fool, a fiddler and a hand with the money box.

The Travelling Morrice were told that Harry Taylor and Mark Taylor, perhaps distant cousins, were widely known as dancers. Harry claimed he was foreman for many years, he called it "nearside top". There were obviously close ties between the dancers in Longborough and Lower Swell. Fred Taylor said that his father usually had a couple of the best dancers living in Lower Swell in his side, mostly Hathaways. At one time it could have been all Taylors and Hathaways, suggesting it was essentially yet another "family" side. Henry Hathaway, a roadman then living at Upper Slaughter and aged seventy four, told the Travelling Morrice in 1933 that when Harry came to dance with the Lower Swell men he used to lead the set. Russell Wortley was also told later that some of the Lower Swell men were taught by Harry's father. Local fiddlers spoke of playing for the Lower Swell side, so possibly there was only one side between the two places in the 1870's and 1880's. A newspaper advertisement for 19th June 1886 in *The Moreton Free Press* said,

Morris Dancers. The Longborough and Lower Swell Morris dancers will give an entertainment in the Swan Assembly Room, this evening, at seven o'clock.

One forms the impression that there were few rigid demarcations between sides in the area of Stow, teams being organised around personalities rather than from villages. Most dancers seemed to know the others, perhaps having danced with or against them, eg at the competitions. Several revival dancers have commented to me that those they met spoke about the competitions, presumably repeating what must have been heard when younger. Little appears to have been recorded of what was said about the participants, for example at the pre-WW II Stow Ring Meetings, and the Morris Ring Logs contain nothing significant. The comments passed about the judging inspired an early article on competitions in *Morris Matters*. The local papers to consult are *The Moreton Free Press*, *Campden Herald* and *Stow-on-the-Wold Advertiser* published weekly at Moreton from 1858, *The Campden Herald* from 1862, *The Shipston News* from 1878 and *The Stow-on-the-Wold News* from 1879.

Fred Taylor, born May 1885, was too young to remember his father dancing in a team, as he gave it up in his mid-forties. It was his father's only hobby, but everyone, including his sons, used to take it as a bit of a joke. His dad was very musical, but never played anything. In those days only fiddles were cheap and they were considered the most difficult instrument to pick up. Fred remembered his father step dancing to hornpipes. He had lots of fancy steps. He also used to dance morris jigs with friends at the pubs. Fred remembered in particular another Taylor who used to dance at Oddington, see next paragraph. They liked to do a dance for two together called *Princess Royal*, which was his father's favourite.

Charles "Minnie" Taylor, living in his old age in Church Icomb, the dancer from Oddington from whom that village's dances derive, knew the Longborough, Sherborne and Bledington styles as well. He was well known as a dancer at least as far away as Ilmington, to which he had been known to walk to dance for Sam Bennett. On the 23rd August 1912, Sam had stated in *The Stratford-on-Avon Herald*,

... I hope to be at Earls Court next week with the Morris Dancers and am taking an old man of seventy four to give the *Sherborne Jig*, which is a very hard dance.

And again on 6th September 1912,

The old dancer (seventy four) walked fourteen miles and then danced jigs and morris for three hours and declared he could go on all night ... The many friends who wrote to me have said that they wanted to see morris dancing done by villagers and they wished to see it done in the old style.

### Other Individual Dancers

Why did Sharp and the collectors who followed concentrate on Harry Taylor when there were other dancers around?

George Ackerman, born 1849 and living in the village when Sharp visited, but as he was thought not to be a first rate dancer, Sharp never followed him up.

John Collins, was also living in the village and met by Clive Carey in 1913. A man of this name was baptised in Stow-on-the-Wold in 1849, whose parents lived in nearby Maugersbury. He died in 1925 aged seventy five and was buried at Stow, and was local enough to have been this dancer.

Edward, also known as Edwin, "Ned" Hathaway, born in 1852. He danced No.2 or "offside foremost". He was living in the Alms Houses at Stow-on-the-Wold when the Travelling Morrice visited him in 1925 and he died about 1932. In 1875 he married Elizabeth Jeffries, the widowed step-daughter of the fool George Hathaway whose first wife was a Jeffries. Sharp visited her when she was living at Chipping Sodbury, but recorded nothing from her husband.

Alf Tuffley, living in the village when Sharp visited, was fifteen years younger than Harry. Sharp worked with dancers of this age elsewhere, so perhaps in this case it was because he had not danced for very long before he stopped.

Tom Tuffley, was the same age as Harry, but in 1910 he was living at Shottery near Stratford where, "he has a bit of land and gets his living off it".

Oliver Budd Webb was another local fiddler who knew his tunes by ear. His two sons (Robert) Frank (or Fred) and Joe(seph), born 1876 and 1878 respectively, danced with Longborough, but would have only been boys when Harry was active. About 1892 they moved to Bloxham, near Adderbury, where Frank was interviewed by the Misses D Daking, P Marshall and Janet Blunt in February 1914 and by Cecil Sharp on 15th September 1922. John Mason, the fiddler living in Stow in his old age, but earlier at Icomb and Bledington, married a Sarah Webb in 1851 at Stow.

Another dancer who knew the Longborough and Bledington dances was (John) William Spragg from Stow. He claimed that his father and grandfather had been noted morris dancers, and that he and his brother had been discovered by Cecil Sharp on 5th July 1906, because they were whistling morris tunes whilst mending the sewers outside Sharp's house at 183, Adelaide Road, Islington. Spragg was then living at 18, Cardian Street, Hammersmith. Accounts always appear to differ in detail, which makes the derivation of history from such material a little uncertain. In commenting on an early Esperance Club show, *The Manchester Daily Guardian* of 20th September 1906 said that two men found in Hammersmith were to bring their grandfather up from the West Country. *The Morning Post* for 14th January 1909 reported that two men working in a sewer in Hammersmith gave the Esperance girls

the benefit of dances and songs that had made their father famous in Gloucestershire.

Douglas Kennedy met Spragg at Stow during a tour by Sharp's mens team in 1912 when Spragg played his mouthorgan and danced Longborough and Bledington dances with the side. (Are there any newspaper references to this tour around?) After World War I, William lived at 38, Cecil Road, Hammersmith and used to come to the EFDS displays in Hyde Park with his grandchildren, where he always had a few words with Douglas Kennedy and his family. Born in 1878, he died in 1940. He would have been only nine if he had learnt his Longborough morris from any of the sides in which Harry Taylor danced. Is this suggestive of there having been a boy's side?

### The Costume

There is sketch of the Longborough costume inside the front cover of Sharp's Field Notebook 1910 II. The dancers wore caps or half-high hats, although high hats were the right thing. They tried to have pleated shirts and to wear two, the second to suck up the sweat. Mrs Edward Hathaway had helped to make the shirts, clothes making was a common chore for daughters at home, and they were broad pleated.

A straight pleat down the centre, little frills on each side, and all the shirt with small tucks, very narrow, as narrow as could be done, four or five on each side. Frill about an inch broad. Didn't all have them, but the best ones did. No sticks ...

or so she told Sharp. His written-up manuscript says a diagonal scarf, but the sketch shows a conventional crossed baldrick in blue braid and a band around the dancer's waist in red braid. The words "bow" and "rosette" are used almost interchangeably, but it seems that what was intended was,

- a      rosettes on the shoulders, possibly red, as the other rosettes are red, and likely to be very high up because of,
- b      ribbons on breasts (at heart level),
- c      ribbons around upper arm, tied with a bow and having three short streamers, one red and two blue. All bows were blue and red.
- d      red rosettes at the lowest ends of the baldrick. Both here and at the shoulder there were probably bows as well,
- e      a bow at the tie point for the waist band.

Most of them wore trousers, but breeches and blue stockings were considered to be the right thing. The bell pads had three vertical rows of bells on each leg, tied with green and other coloured ribbons. Harry Taylor told Sharp,

Can't dance in heavy shoes. Can't get off the ground. I always used light shoes, well nailed. Must have nails when you dance at Stow, as stones so cruel.

They carried their handkerchiefs tied on the middle finger. They did not use sticks, at least not during Harry's time. Denis Hathaway's Campden side, though, had a dance called *The Longborough Stick Dance* and he had come from very near Longborough. The tune used was a version of *Young Collins*, a common tune

locally for both a stick and handclapping dance, thus it is not impossible that Longborough had at least one stick dance at some time, as a few were almost universal around Stow. Mason told Sharp that his *Highland Mary* was for handkerchiefs but sometimes it was used for a stick dance.

### The Philosophy

The side,

... used to go up to a lane with a fiddler and practice night after night about this time of year ...

that is, before Whitsun. They danced publicly only during Whit-week. Dover's Games was always on the Thursday and Friday. Fred Taylor said that they would go out for the week, starting each morning with clean shirts and rosettes, to walk to places like Shipston-on-Stour, Stow-on-the-Wold and Moreton-in-the-Marsh for the clubs, dancing at farms on the way for cider. The club days then were grand affairs with bands and entertainments, the clubs being the Friendly Societies. They would normally have their annual meeting associated with a club walk and feasting, as well as having an entertainment.

The side sometimes had a new fiddler who played fresh tunes and then he used to tell them the steps to be danced to them.

Harry seldom had a good set of dancers,

Put your best men on the near side, the duffers on the other.  
We never cared so long as we had three good 'uns.

He also suggested, "Put the tall 'uns in front, short 'uns behind."

During the seventh Travelling Morris tour Harry Taylor complained that their shirts did not get nearly as wet as those of a traditional team. In his day one dance left the team so exhausted they couldn't immediately perform another.

### The Merriman

The fool for Harry Taylor's set was usually George Hathaway from Lower Swell, who died in 1894 aged sixty eight. He was called "Squire" or "Master". It was he who used to announce, "One dancer and six fools!" George's widow and second wife Jane was Harry Taylor's sister, already a widow and also named Jeffries when they married in 1860. Aged seventy five in 1909, she said, "they always called me the Squire's wife", and thought, "it was a grand enjoyment it was", and, "he used to go and do Merriman for them, then we had a merry come up!" This was another local title, used for example at Guiting Power. George's brother Samuel was the fool at Lower Swell. George's step-daughter Elizabeth, who had married Edward Hathaway the dancer, had her father's bells when Sharp met her at Chipping Sodbury.

The morris fool always had a blackened face. Another of George's brothers, William "Snobby" Hathaway, the lame fiddler, said that the whistle player from Bourton-on-the-Water, Jack the Lad, used to black the fool's face. This must have been the widely known "Jim the Laddie" who died of excessive drink probably in 1856, and

whose real name was MacDonald, born in Edinburgh in 1811. He was an uncle to George and James Simpson at Sherborne where he lived from 1841 at least.

The fool always carried a stick with a bladder at one end and a cow's tail at the other. He wore a hairy thing on his head and had a red grid-iron marked on his seat. A blue linen smock that had been used by a Longborough fool was given to the Travelling Morrice by George Joynes about 1950 and they use a copy of this smock. Of about three-quarters length it was admitted by the CMM that this is not a very good example of a traditional smock.

The fool often danced the jigs, the most frequently mentioned were *Princess Royal* and *Jockey to the Fair*. Only the fool was remembered as doing the Baccapipes dance, to the tune of *Greensleeves*.

An oft repeated story about Hathaway as fool was how at one farm a dog went for him, so he dived into the dog's kennel, which was half a barrel, and barked and made faces at it.

"That mixed the Dog! ... Dog never good at housekeeping arter that!"

Soon after Sharp first visited Harry Taylor, Sharp was lecturing in the Lesser Queen's Hall, Langham Place, London on 31st May 1910. *The Morning Post* and *The Farnham Herald* for 1st June 1910 gave the story thus,

On one occasion the "Squire", on entering a farmstead was warned by the farmer that a ferocious chained dog would probably make demand for "fatted calf" if approached too closely. Having enticed the dog to the full length of his chain, the morris man, making a sudden dart, got into the kennel himself, and, kneeling with his head and hands just outside, growled in such an ominous fashion, that the dog, so far from being anxious for the man's calf, was thoroughly cowed and his master declared that he was "good for nowt ever afterwards".

In the same lecture Sharp told of the fool, who when asked "What's the time?", produced from his fob a large padlock and chain. Whacking his questioner on the head with it, he replied "just struck one!"

William Hathaway told Sharp, "the Squire of the morris, that's the tomfool, used to run round and sing"

"Greensleeves and yellow lace  
Boys and girls they work apace  
They earn some money to buy some lace  
To lace (sic) the lady's Greensleeves,"

You must not have a natural fool, but a man with his head  
screwed on, as I may say, for Squire.

It was this Hathaway who described Sherborne as a "desperate morris place!"

Another story told by Sharp after his visit to Longborough was in *The Times* of 1st June 1910. It was of the two enthusiasts who slept in a barn and could never get to sleep comfortably until each had danced *Jockey to the Fair* in his bare feet.

### The Fighting

Fighting was a more tolerated part of working men's culture in the past than it is today and pub sessions at weekends could often end with brawls. The morris often had an adverse image because of working class drinking and disturbances, whether justified or not.

Not all the contacts between morris sides was cordial. There was, for example, a lack of sympathy with the supposed "Gipsy Folk" settled in Wychwood Forest. Somewhen in the 1850's Longborough went over to Ascot-Under-Wychwood on the day of the club feast and ran into Leafield, "Fieldtown for short", in fighting mood, who considered this to be poaching on their territory. There were other similar stories. Henry Franklin the Fieldtown dancer told Sharp that the Finstock and Ramsden morris, "was like a nature with Leafield", but, "the young men from Leafield fell out with Finstock, had a row or two, but decided to have it out." It was a "jolly good battle" - there were two fights at the Whit Hunt, presumably during the celebrations that followed the capturing of the deer in the Chase Woods. George Steptoe, one time Fieldtown foreman, with a reputation for barefist prize-fighting, fought a man from Finstock and lost. It was a proper fight with a timekeeper.

Whilst going round with the box at Lower Slaughter on the Travelling Morrice tour of 1933, Walton Abson, next year to become the first bagman of the Morris Ring, spoke with an old man who remembered the morris at Lower Swell and Longborough. In addition he told of his wife's father who danced at Little Barrington. There was a great rivalry between the Little Barrington and Sherborne men and on one occasion when dancing was going on at Sherborne, the Little Barrington dancers got George Steptoe to come over from Leafield and act as fool for them. With him they went over and held a rival show, with the result that the two fools fell foul of each other and the dancing ceased in favour of a stand-up fight between Steptoe and Thomas Kench. The old man's father-in-law was in the Little Barrington team on this occasion and it was evidently one of his choicest memories.

In the book *R J E Tiddy, A Memoir* by D R Pye, published in Cambridge June 1923, it is mentioned that Tiddy bought the Priory Cottage at Ascot-under-Wychwood, built at his own expense a dancing and reading room in the village and started a local WEA branch. An old dancer, aged over ninety, invited to tea and asked what it was in the old morris days he liked best, said "The Fightin". Attitudes have changed. Boxing booths were once common and well supported at fairs.

### The End

Why the morris stopped is unclear. The last regular annual Whitsun performance at Stow was on Whit Monday 1885. The end must have been for a mixture of reasons.

One was distaste amongst the local gentry. In the Peacock collection there is an item from the wife of Captain Maynard, the Travelling Morrice fiddler known as "B.M.", who was the granddaughter of the Rev. Etches, sometime vicar of



Longborough. Etches was said to have suppressed the morris in Longborough somewhere about 1880 because the dancers used to hide under the women's skirts, when chased by the fool, and this was not thought quite "proper" by Mrs Etches. The reason was not, as William Palmer had once been led to believe, that the men were thought to be frequently very drunk and disorderly.

Harry Taylor told Sharp that the Longborough Morris was much like the Bledington Morris and that they often danced together, perhaps sharing dancers as seemed to be common in that area. The last time that Taylor danced with a side was at the Jubilee of 1887 when Charles Benfield of Bould, pronounced "Benfull from Bowull", the Bledington fiddler who was ever ready to make a bit of money, came over with three dancers for a day's tour. When asked by the Travelling Morrice how they managed, the answer was, "we danced on one side, they on the other."

But this was not the end. There was still dancing but probably not involving Harry Taylor. Miss Brown wrote to Maud Karpeles in 1971 that her grandfather had lived next door to Harry Taylor and remembered the side dancing when they visited Sezincote where he was a lad gardener, and it must have been in the 1890's, as he was born about 1881. In a second letter she said that the Longborough Morris used to dance mainly at Christmas, when they went from house to house with the mummers. They included a Walter Taylor, no relation to Harry, a Webb and a Tuffley. As Tiddy had the Longborough play text from Alfred Tuffley, a dancer, the available information is consistent.

Did the collectors ignore this late period because the dancers that they wanted to consult were not involved, through the desire to consult only the oldest sources, or had the dancing degenerated, and the Christmas season spoilt its authenticity?

Charles Benfield and John Hitchman, the Bledington fool, had raised the "Young Bledington" side after the local dancers at Bledington, Idbury and Fifield had retired, to provide morris at the local club days. Their last outing was about the turn of the century at Fifield Club. None of the young men were contacted by the pre-WW I collectors, although they became the source of dance information during the period of the contacts with the Travelling Morrice.

## PART TWO - THE RECOVERY

The recovery of the Longborough dances was in two phases,

- a the collectors before WW I, and,
- b the Travelling Morrice after it.

### The Non-Event

In the Autumn of 1885 D'Arcy Ferris, then living at Cheltenham, began the well known revival of the Bidford morris. In the 1880's Ferris was involved in organising "revs" up and down the country : in 1886 he was Master of the Pageant for the Ripon Millenary Pageant which brought the Kirkby Malzeard long sword team to fame, and also, Julian Pilling once claimed, included a Lancashire Morris although no documented reference has been found by Roy Judge. His first attempt in raising a morris was a troupe of boys for revs at Lord Wantage's in August 1884. From subsequent events it can be deduced that it was hardly a proper morris, probably

with no attention given at all to tradition. It is likely that this episode was well received, yet criticised for not being "morris", as he almost immediately set to the task of obtaining genuine dances. With the aid of Dr. Fosbrooke-Powers he found in the autumn of 1885 William Trotman, then aged forty five, who came from Idbury near Bledington and who had danced the morris in his youth.

Ferris was the first person to write down morris dance detail and tunes, with all the attendant difficulties of being a pioneer. Much of his manuscript is now in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. To help improve the dancing standard of the troupe of youths, Ferris contacted many morris men in Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. The evidence from letters covers Bledington, Brackley, Bucknell, Idbury, Ilmington, Longborough, and Wheatley, and his address list included Blackwell, Brailes, Honington, Newbold Pacey, and Preston-on-Stour. It is impressive that in 1885 he could find a dozen places which had or recently had a morris. Harry Taylor had been,

... asked to dance for 'em at Jubilee time for a week, but squire wouldn't let him, he said it was all nonsense.

By 22nd January 1886 the youths from Bidford were ready to perform at the Bidford School Room with Ferris lecturing and dressed in his costume as "Lord of Misrule" from the Billesley Old English Fete of 1885, see *The Pictorial World* for the 4th of February 1886. They danced to an old tabor bought from Tim Howard a Brackley dancer and to Robbins on a fiddle. The episode was repeated at Alcester, Stratford-upon-Avon, Evesham and other near villages and later at Cheltenham, Bath, Clifton and London. The "circus" paid for itself and allowed a small wage for the dancers. Harry Taylor did not think much of the Bidford dancers : they were too clumsy and too heavy on the ground.

The Bidford men danced occasionally after 1886 - for certain in 1887 and 1896 - but in 1904 they were approached by the secretary of the Shakespearean Celebrations for that year, then a Mr Evans, a vet working in Stratford-upon-Avon. Evans also collected local songs and oral history using an early Edison phonograph. Evan's children insisted to me that it was the Bidford side who danced at Stratford in 1904, but records show that it was a local revival side which danced in the following years. This Bidford side was still comprised of some the men who had starting dancing in 1886-7 and was seen by Sharp and MacIlwaine when dancing at Redditch in 1906. That was the first time they tried to collect dances from active traditional dancers. Before then, the Headington dances had been taught directly to the young women of the Esperance Club and then notated from the dancing of the chief instructress Miss Florrie Warren.

Ferris has received a bad press from the early days of the Revival, yet without him realising the possibilities inherent in the growing antiquarian interest in folk lore there might not have been a Revival. He seems to have coincided with the start of the modern habit of reviving old customs and traditions for national celebrations, thereby making them respectable, as at Queen Victoria's Jubilees. The interest aroused was decisive in maintaining the Ilmington tradition. It is uncertain if it played any part in Percy Manning involvement and the Headington Quarry morris renewal in 1897 and hence its discovery of Cecil Sharp on Boxing Day 1899.

## Cecil Sharp

Sharp began his independent collecting of morris music and dance with John Mason at Stow on 29th March 1907, (see *English Dance and Song* for Spring 1967 p.23). From Mason Sharp obtained a *Constant Billy* and *Marriage Vow*, an alternative name for *Saturday Night*, and *The Maid of the Mill* which he later published in his collection of *Folk Dance Airs* in 1909 as from Lower Swell. From the same source Sharp learnt of William Hathaway, a lame shoemaker, then living at 8, Burton St., Cheltenham and a former Lower Swell fiddler. Sharp saw him on the 30th and 31st of March and the 4th April and again on 9th August 1909. From the ages given to Sharp, William must have been born between 5th April and 9th August 1840. Charles Hughes of Naunton had sold Hathaway his first fiddle in exchange for a pair of boots worth 3s 6d (17½p). William Spragg was a great friend of William Hathaway and had copied out for him at some time his tunes from Sharp's notebooks. Sharp often allowed this practice. Many years later Spragg gave his tunebook to Helen Kennedy. It included tunes, eg, *Jockey to the Fair*, presumably written out by Spragg, but with very poor barring.

Hathaway and Mason had both played for Taylor amongst others. Mason knew "Bill" Hathaway well enough to be able to give Sharp a version of the tune *Black Joke* as played by Hathaway. When asked about his *Princess Royal* Mason said, "I began persuading it about", but Hathaway claimed for his "this is absolutely correct". From Hathaway Sharp learnt of Alf Tuffley and Harry Taylor at Longborough and Albert Taylor of Lower Swell, but he did not follow them up until 1910. Clive Carey noted Albert Taylor as a Bledington dancer. A brother to Charles Taylor, he was born in Oddington and married a Bledington woman, living there briefly in the 1860's. Sharp met another fiddler, on the 1st August, James Hathaway, who also played for the morris near Stow.

Cecil Sharp was not immune to criticism. Frank Kidson attacked him in *The Musical Times* of 1st January 1908 over his remarks on *Country Gardens* and *Constant Billy*. Lucy Broadwood took him to task in the *The West Sussex Gazette* of 2nd January 1908, over misquotes on singer's repertoires. Sharp subscribed to a newspaper cuttings service that extracted relevant articles from national and local papers, and this collection survives at the VWML.

Sharp entered his prolific phase of collecting morris dances in 1910. He spent Christmas 1909 with Miss Ella Leather in Herefordshire where he saw traditional country dancing and the Brimfield Morris team at Orleton, (see *English Dance and Song* for Autumn 1969, p.98). He returned to London visiting Billy Wells of Bampton, the Howards and Stutsbury at Brackley, Cadd at Yardley Gobion, and seeing the older scratch side at Eynsham on the way. In March *The Morris Book vol.2* (first edition) and *The Country Dance Book vol.1* were published. For most of March 1910 he stayed near Oxford with Mrs May Hobbs, better known as Miss May Elliot, a noted concert pianist, at Kelmscott, the former William Morris place. He was visiting George Simpson at Upton near Didcot, cycling over from Didcot railway station, to learn the Sherborne Morris, eg on 5th, 24th and 31st at least. George had a young team of boys and one of girls aged 10-11 years old and a local young woman as fiddler, but Sharp ignored these, although they were filmed for a two reel rustic epic in 1908 (Wortley), or perhaps 1913 (Rollo Woods), unfortunately now lost! A photograph of Simpson in his Sherborne costume with the children appears in Keith Chandler's book. On 23rd April 1910 Sharp wrote to Mrs M L Stanton of Ladle Farm, Armscote, near Stratford, about two miles from Ilmington,

I had a great find in an old morris man whom I traced from Sherborne in Gloucestershire. This man is the sole survivor of the last side ... He is full of knowledge and full of dancing and I have been steadily emptying him ... I have learned more from him than anyone else so far. His dances are quite lovely and the tunes are very jolly. I have seen him four times already."

There is another photograph of George Simpson in *The Dancing Times* of April 1925. Born in 1850 he died of cancer in 1915. Fred Hamer was told that the Simpson brothers had been in the police for a while. James was enumerated as a Police Constable at Stonehouse, near Stroud, in 1881, when aged twenty four.

Sharp saw an Abingdon side dance in Ock St, Abingdon on 1st April with Mary Neal. He lectured in London on the 20th and at Retford, Nottingham on the 25th, and was staying with Mrs Stanton on the 27th. From here he wrote his first letter to the press to start the public dispute with Mary Neal, attacking in particular Sam Bennett's Ilmington side and the Abingdon dances in *The Daily News* of 29th April.

... in the process of revival, many of the most beautiful and essential parts of the dances were lost, as anyone, conversant with the attributes of the traditional morris, would see at a glance.

The cause, course and justice of Cecil Sharp's dispute has been treated elsewhere. Mrs Stanton was a frequent companion of Sharp's at this time. She took the local traditional country dancers, the "Armscote" dancers, who in fact came from Honington, to the Stratford-upon-Avon Festivals, (see *English Dance and Song* for Autumn 1966, p.100).

### Meeting Harry Taylor

Cecil Sharp and a friend set out on a tour on the 27th April 1910 through Blackwell (one mile), Ilmington (two more miles), Brailes (six more miles), and then on to see the boys team at Chipping Campden (seven more miles). (William) Denis Hathaway had trained a set of boys, because the men's side, who had performed in Chipping Campden in 1896, perhaps for the first time since the 1850's, would not dance for Sharp. The boys included Don Ellis who in later years became the side's leader and, like many a leader elsewhere, a local councillor for a while. Denis told Sharp that his dances were practically Longborough dances, but a certain amount came from his grandfather-in-law, Thomas Veale, probably an old Campden dancer. The connection looks tenuous when watching the traditions being danced, but there are certain stylistic features in common. The dance to the tune *Young Collins*, used for a stick dance at Campden, was then called *Longborough Morris*.

The cyclists went on to look for Harry Taylor at Longborough. They found him over the hill from Longborough at Condicote, Denis Hathaway's home village. Harry had gone over for a haystack thatching job according to Fred Taylor his son in 1964. In *Merrie England and the Morris Dancers* published in *The World's Work* in August 1912, Mrs Hobbs wrote,

Another dancer, whom Cecil Sharp discovered pulling mangels, was asked for particulars of a certain dance. The veteran took Cecil Sharp behind a haystack and the pair capered together, the old man singing

the tune at the pitch of his voice, until the data necessary for the perpetuation of the dancing were in the collector's notebook. In the middle of the dancing the farmer came on the scene at hedge-gap and sat down thunderstruck. At length he approached the dancers, spoke appreciatively of the entertainment he had been given unseen and reproached his servant, not for leaving his work, for he was on piece work, but for having been with him for so many years and never let on he could dance.

In Sharp's lecture on 31st May as reported in *The Morning Post* on 16th June, mentioned previously, he described his visit to Taylor on 2nd May. He told how one pouring wet day he bicycled six miles from a station to interview a former morris man, seventy years of age, who worked as a farmhand in one of the highest parts of the Cotswolds. There under the shelter of a haystack, using wisps of hay in lieu of the orthodox handkerchiefs, Mr Sharp and "Old Harry", as the man was called, danced a "Pas de Deux", the ancient one whistling the tunes, of which, along with the steps, notes were taken and afterwards pieced together. The first dance gone through was *Constant Billy*, because of its possible relationship to the Campden dance, then *Country Gardens*, Taylor's favourite tune for the sidestep dance, and onto *Hey Diddle Dis*, the processional.

"Hey Diddle Dis, my backside you may kiss,  
And away goes the Longborough Morris."

Fred Taylor had the same story of his dad having a dance with Sharp by a stack. The demonstration side at that lecture danced some then very recently collected dances, *Shooting* from Brackley, (note not claimed to be from Hinton-in-the-Hedges), *Constant Billy* with two sticks from Sherborne, and *Brighton Camp* from Eynsham.

Sharp was fifty years old and on the brink of public recognition for his work.

Sharp returned to London at the beginning of May and fired some more public letters to the press about Mary Neal on the 9th and 10th. On the latter day in *The Morning Post*, Sharp refers to the recent Queen's Hall show with a Northants *Beansetting* and an Ilmington *Maid of the Mill*

... Survivors of the old Ilmington side would have told Neal that the dances "had not been handed on in a correct form" and that the steps were as untraditional as they were uncouth; that the figures were incorrect and the tunes untrustworthy.

On the 25th May, the paper had another letter,

Cecil Sharp has all Sam Bennet's dances in his collection, but he would not dream of publishing them.

In fact he recorded them under "Stretton-on-Fosse" from the place of the flower show at which he saw them, rather than give them the dignity of being called Ilmington.

On 13th August 1912 Sharp's letter said,

The traditional morris of the Warwickshire village of Ilmington was difficult to get, since it had not been danced for a long time, and there were only to be found two old villagers and a railway worker at Birmingham who had taken part in it. The information extracted from them on repeated visits was ingeniously pieced together and the result is a beautiful dance of some historic importance.

His reconstruction was a perception of the Ilmington of about 1867, the last "proper" outing being a visit to the Tysoe Club, but which was itself a revival, and he largely ignored the subsequent dancing. Following Sharp's criticisms, Sam Bennett went back and established from the older men to his satisfaction an authentic form, which he was teaching at least in the 1940's, and which was inherited by Oxford City through R Kenworthy Schofield, after he had moved to Oxford from St Albans..

Cecil Sharp was back with Taylor on the 13th May 1910. Fred Taylor was eighteen at the time of Sharp's visits and recalled his dad teaching Sharp the steps. Sharp first wrote down the tune of a dance and then while whistling or singing it learnt the steps and figures by dancing opposite as No.2 and mimicing Taylor. This was Sharp's technique both at Sherborne and Fieldtown as well and as all three traditions were published very soon after being collected, it is not surprising that some of the "points" of the dances as published in his *Morris Books* do not appear in Sharp's papers. As he taught the dances immediately to the "demonstration" side, "points" of style have come down through the EFDSS teaching that also do not appear in the *Morris Books*.

The only other collector that Sharp appears to have trusted was George Butterworth. He and Tiddy visited Gibbs and Wright at Bledington and gathered the steps and dances that Sharp used in his revision in his *Morris Book*. The music is in the Butterworth collection in the VWML. Miss Sinclair, Ralph Honeybone and others confirmed that these two were the source of the material for the EFDSS. At Bucknell the collecting difficulties defeated Butterworth and he had to call on Sharp.

### Joynes the Fiddler

For some of the time at Longborough Sharp had the assistance of the local young fiddler George Joynes, then aged twenty three, who had had no connection with the morris but who could read music. Until then Joynes had had no idea that there had been a local morris, so well had it died since the early 1890's. Sharp visited Taylor on 13th April 1911, and noted to his great delight his version of *London Pride*. Douglas Kennedy met Taylor for the first time on Sharp's mens team's Cotswold tour in 1912. Clive Carey visited Taylor on 22nd March 1913 during a follow up visit to the Cotswold survivors on behalf of Mary Neal.

Mr. Joynes was fired with enthusiasm after Sharp's visits and wrote out some tunes played by Harry's eldest son Henry, also a fiddler. He intended to give them to Sharp when he next saw him but they never met again. Joynes lived at Longborough with his sister. A gardener most of his life and a clock and watch repairer in his spare time, he had also worked on farms, as a shepherd and in the Donnington Brewery just two miles away. He had assembled a collection of morris tunes from libraries and other places but they were stolen just before World War II by a woman visitor who had been stopping locally in a caravan.

## Rolf Gardiner

In 1923 Rolf Gardiner went on a walking tour across the Berkshire Downs and up through the Cotswolds with Christopher Scaife, then at Oxford and later to be a professor at the University of the Lebanon. They met several singers but only two morris dancers, Harry Taylor of Longborough and Charles Taylor at Church Icomb. Rolf remembered Charles doing a few steps for him. He could not be stopped, despite his daughter's efforts and he being partially blind and it being a rough stone floor and he knocking into furniture. The meeting with Harry was overlaid with memories of subsequent visits with the Travelling Morrice. What he learnt then was also regathered by the Travelling Morrice later.

There was a lot of dissatisfaction amongst the Cambridge undergraduate morris men just before this visit, which found expression in Rolf. He wrote in *Youth* Vol.2, 1923, p.52,

... if you plant them in artificial conditions where vulgarity is rife,  
all the more so if you spray them with the germ-killer of a spurious  
traditionalism ... the dance subjected to the anatomical treatment of  
text-book legislation too is a corpse ...

He continued by proposing a ten point programme for changing the character of the EFDS, from Classes to Festivals.

- 1 No public demonstrations,
- 2 Discourage women's morris,
- 3 Divide the work clearly between,  
a. proselytising, b. artistic,
- 4 Proselytising - five area groups with freedom of action, to  
tour villages, like the Travelling Morrice in character,  
perhaps with the morris restricted to public shows and  
boys and mens organisations,
- 5 Artistic - dramatic work instead of displays (Old King Cole)
- 6 Encourage experiment but be relentless in criticism,
- 7 Meet continental dancers in England,
- 8 Send English teams abroad,
- 9 Masques, processions, pageants in public, everywhere,
- 10 Rename as the English Festival Society.

For this view, which was fifty years too early, he was asked to drop out of the Festival team for the King's Theatre, Hammersmith, 2nd-7th July 1923. He then expressed his views on the EFDS and morris in *The Challenge* issues for 6th July 1923 and 17th July 1923,

Cecil Sharp got dances chiefly from old men, greybeards of sixty and eighty, men with stiffness in their bones and rheumatism in their joints. He saw the dance as it was performed by the men who had danced in the hotness of their youth and now remembered it like a half forgotten dream. Out of his notes and conjectures Cecil Sharp gave us back the English Dance ... One

wonders at the [judgement] "decadent" ... [applied] to *Rose Tree* from Bampton?

... the technique of the morris as performed by the members of the EFDS was derived from an application of theories conjectured by Cecil Sharp ... I did not think it necessary to explain further that when Cecil Sharp set out to collect the dances he knew next to nothing about dancing technique and that he has never been a proficient morris dancer himself; that certain movements, such as the galley, I have seen him demonstrate in a way diametrically opposite to that described in his books ...

Only a few weeks ago as a guest at the house of Mr. Taylor, once captain of the Longborough side, I learnt something of the method by which Cecil Sharp collected the dances of that particular village and was able not only to correct some minor mistakes but to collect some new dances from Mr. Taylor and another octogenarian of the same name who danced for the Oddington side. This experience proved to me the supreme difficulty of gauging movements accurately when demonstrated by limbs withered and lacking flexibility and when one man had to represent a dance intended for six.

Few of the Travelling Morrice went all the way with Rolf's views. Many were very orthodox and these continued with the Travelling Morrice for many years and exercised a decisive influence on the morris in the early days of the Morris Ring.

Rolf became friendly with Mary Neal. As reported in *The Globe* for 22nd April 1919, she had disbanded the Esperance Club during the war years, the male members joining the army, the girls going to war work and the children having to be kept at home because of the perceived risk from the air raids. She became a Secretary, a senior civil service grade, in the Ministry of Pensions. She said that some of the teachers were still active though and she was hopeful of starting again. However she resolved never again to fight publicly with the EFDS and encouraged her workers to associate with the EFDS branches springing up everywhere in default of the Esperance organisation. She gave Rolf some background newspaper cuttings, that she had thought valuable and kept, in order to help him in his debates with Sharp and his followers. In an interview at the Farmers Club on 27th October 1961 Gardiner expressed the belief that the Karpeles sisters were jealous of Mary Neal, and took Cecil Sharp away and fostered the bad feelings.

She and Rolf joined "Kibbokift", an apolitical movement concerned with open air camping, woodcraft and the love of all lores of nature. Miss Neal was "Keeper of the Open Hearth" at "The Cottage", Amberley, Sussex and Rolf was "The Ranger". Kibbokift was founded by John Hargreave on 18th August 1920 at a time when he was HQ commissioner for Woodcraft and Camping to the Boy Scouts. He later became political and turned a portion of the movement into "The Greenshirts" or New Social Credit Party.

Gardiner wrote in 1928 a brief account of the Travelling Morrice which was published in his own magazine *North Sea and Baltic* for High Summer 1938.



In the spring of 1924, two of the morris men [Gardiner and Heffer] conspired to give the side [Cambridge] a taste of the real thing. They poisoned the imagination of their fellows with the charmed names of Longborough, Bledington and Sherborne. It was like talking to the home stranded Crusader about Jerusalem and the Holy Land. In this mood the Travelling Morrice was born.

Arthur Heffer was probably the key motivator. They had first met at the Chelsea Polytechnic when Rolf was sixteen. Heffer had just finished at Oxford and was going to Cambridge to run the family book business. He had been educated at Perse School, a cadet at Sandhurst and commissioned in 1918 into the Royal West Surrey Regiment. He was severely wounded and invalided home. He then gained a second class degree in modern languages as an army student at Queen College, Oxford. Arthur died of pneumonia on the 1st November 1931, aged 32

### PART THREE - THE TRAVELLING MORRICE

Rolf Gardiner wrote further in 1928 that,

... each Travelling Morrice tour achieved its own peculiar flavour and romance: its own humour and dialect. Each was cast under the spell of some particular dance or tradition. Thus the first Cotswold tour was undoubtedly dominated by our discovery of the Longborough dances and the inspiration of that grand old generalissimo, Mr Harry Taylor, octogenarian captain of the Longborough side ... The tours were of two sorts : our pilgrimages to the holy land of the traditional villages and our adventures abroad ... The images recalled by memory of these Travelling Morrice tours are profuse ... dancing on the vicarage lawn at Longborough with the sun dappled meadows below the elms opposite wavering in the heat ... returning to Longborough one evening in early September, and dancing in the still, violet-tinted light just before dusk, with Harry Taylor leaning on his stick in a black suit with a white stock, shining upon us with undefinable joy. Old Charlie Benfield playing *Hop-Frog* to us, his fingers knotty with rheumatism, outside his cottage at Bould, Richard Beach singing the "Forester's Song" in the inn parlour at Bream, Old William Bond making us a speech on the lawn at Idbury.

#### The First Tour

A slightly edited version of the log of the first Travelling Morrice tour was published in the *EFDS News* for May 1925, written by A B Heffer. The original seen was Rolf's copy. Missing then but included here were the more personal remarks about Sam Bennett. The men on this tour were George Cooke, Peter Fox, Thomas Adkins, Anthony Pim, R Kenworthy Schofield, Jim La Touche as treasurer, Rolf Gardiner as cook, Arthur Heffer as logmaster and Alan Richard as fiddler. But he played from printed music. The following are extracts concerned with the contacts with the tradition. The full source text is well worth reading.

Wednesday 18th June 1924

**Burford** - During the show Captain Kettlewell, who acted as shepherd to the party, announced Mr. East, a Burford nonogenarian, who remembered perfectly seeing the traditional men dance in Burford. Apparently he did not dance himself and the information he vouchsafed was scanty. The one thing he criticized was the absence of Bill Lap'en (or Laugh'em), who was the Fool with his bladder and cow's tail. The dancing was "pretty" he said, "but why don't you have a pipe, it's so much more tune than a fiddle."

**Fieldtown** - Two interesting people were met here [at The Potters Arms] Mr. Franklin, the brother of the dancer of that name and Mr. Pratley. Mr. Franklin liked the dancing, but affirmed that the steps were "too fussy", and that the hey was done quite wrong. To drive this home he did it himself, and to everybody's surprise, put in an extra turn which was most effective.

Thursday 19th June 1924

**Bledington** - One of them spied a promising looking old man with side whiskers and a keen appreciative eye looking on; he turned out to be Mr. John Hitchman, the dancer who used to play "squire" to the Bledington team. Mr. John Hitchman was extremely complimentary about the dancing ... Mr. Hitchman remembered all the dances perfectly - "We all likes *Hop Frog* and *William and Nancy* but for a good old fashioned dance give me, old *Trunkle*," he said. *Leap Frog* he called *Hop Frog* or *Glorishear*.

On the way to Idbury ... a call was paid on old Mr. Charles Benfield who lives by himself at Bould. He was delighted to see everybody, albeit a trifle nervous at the number of his visitors. *Leap Frog* was done to honour him, whilst he stood at his gate with beaming eye. Then a kindly neighbour fetched his fiddle, and, after much persuasion and many a shake of his knowing old head, he commenced tuning up. The business of tuning up was long for the instrument had not been used for many months, but Alan had a bright idea and loaned his own fiddle. Mr. Benfield played *Hop Frog*, *Saturday Night* and *Bonnets So Blue*, but unfortunately the unaccustomed instrument rendered his versions of the tunes somewhat difficult to follow.

**Idbury** - ... the fetching in honour of poor old Mr. Richard Bond, a one time morris man and musician - his eagerness to see the dancing was very touching ... The setting in Mr. Robertson Scott's garden was quite ideal and the audience most enthusiastic. Richard Bond was so overcome with emotion that he insisted on making a very complimentary speech afterwards. The dancing was "proper pretty" he said, and he had never seen *Trunkles* so well done, and "it takes a bit o' doing". He had hardly dared hope to see any more dancing before he died.

Friday 20th June 1924

Very early Kenworthy and Alan hurried off to catch Benfield, before he went to collect his pension in Bledington, and succeeded in noting down several new tunes, among others a version of *Saturday Night*.

**Sherborne** - ... at the invitation of Lady Sherborne, the Travelling Morrice walked up to Sherborne House and danced a few more dances on the lawn there ... Lady Sherborne generously provided tea, and during this sociable function a Mr. Albert Townsend made friends with the Morrice men. He was an old dancer, now unfortunately incapacitated from dancing with rheumatism, but he said that, "when he gets a drop of beer insides of him up gets he and does a jig."

Unfortunately no supplies of the sovereign panacea were handy, and the pleasure of seeing him dance was denied. However, he did sing a song, *Highland Mary*, the tune of which was rather reminiscent of "*Yankee Doodle*" with a dash of "*The Farmyard Song*"; the words were impossible to note. Townsend also mentioned a dance to this tune in which four took part, but he had obviously forgotten how it went.

Saturday 21st June 1924

**Longborough** - ... spirits rapidly rose to fever height to see Mr. Harry Taylor - the old Longborough foreman - doing galleys in the street to greet it ... Dancing took place in the street before lunch, with Mr. Taylor and Mr. Joynes, the fiddler, among the audience. [They danced *Hey Diddle Dis*, *Young Collins* and *London Pride*] "Just quite right," said Mr. Taylor as the party moved off, and hearts swelled with pride. Mr. Taylor is the dearest old man, very shrewd but kind to a fault ... Mr. Taylor asked to be pardoned for "larding in" and pardoned he indeed was. There was something of the generalissimo about him. An interesting discovery was made here, that during Whit week the tour done by the Morris men of the district very nearly coincided with the one of the Travelling Morrice ... Mr. Taylor, warmed with reminiscences of former "jangles", formed up the party on the lawn and proceeded to teach four new dances in the Longborough tradition - *Saturday Night*, *Cuckoo's Nest*, *Old Trunkles* and the *Old Woman tossed up in a Blanket* ... Mr. Joynes, careful man, had all the tunes neatly written out, and so it needed no great imagination to copy them out for the use of the Travelling Morrice. It appears that Mr. Joynes got his tunes from Mr. Henry Taylor.

In 1961, Rolf Gardiner said at the 38th annual feast of the Cambridge Morris Men,

... Old Harry, an octogenarian, with gleaming eye, met us, immaculately dressed but galleying in the village street. "Skuse me lardin in surr, but thic-yr be a skew-karnered dance" was his comment on one item of our repertoire.

[presumably *Swaggering Boney*].

Mr. Joynes died in February 1964 aged seventy seven and Harry's eldest son, a fiddler but not a dancer, died about 1953, aged in his eighties.

**Ilmington** - ... went off to see Mr. Sam Bennett, the local dance authority, and he was found to be an extremely clever man of middle age, but with a rather exaggerated view of his own importance. This quality did not prevent him from being a very good fiddler and apparently a dancer of no mean ability. ... the party filed on to Mr. Michael Johnson's house, and here it was rewarded, for he is the sweetest old man, who roared with delight on being told that the Morrice men wanted to dance in front of his house. Out he came, and jigged about during the dancing.

Rolf Gardiner remembered Sam Bennett as very aggressive and unpleasant. As this did not match with Mary Neal's experience, he put it down to Sharp's treatment of him. She had first met Bennett when judging the morris dance competition at Stratford-on-Avon in 1909 and invited him up to London, for example for the Queens Hall show on 5th May 1910. In a letter dated 26th June 1924 from Neal to Gardiner she said that her brother lived at Great Alne, seven miles from Stratford and Clive [Carey] and she travelled the Cotswolds from there.

I knew Bennett well - he played his fiddle on the box seat of our growler for many a mile as we searched for old dancers. I think a good deal of his manner is caused by the unkind way he was treated by Sharp. It is too long a story to write but he was badly hurt and it has made him aggressive I think. I used to like him very much and had him up in London to sing and dance.

Sam did become difficult. His persistence after the tunes at Abingdon made them want to shoot him. The speed of his playing at Bampton for the "Old 'Uns" certainly made them sweat. He gained recognition. He was invited to tour the USA by Henry Ford when Ford was doing much to restore the old US traditional social dancing. When interviewed by the BBC he had to be carried out of the studio because he was not going to stop playing!

Although a teetotaler it was said that Sam would show off by giving his rough fiddle a drink. Inside Sam Bennett's best fiddle is "Giovan Paola, Brescia 1640". It once was Henry Allan's of Stratford who played it for 73 years, from a teenager for morris in the Forest of Dean, and then sold it to Sam when he was ninety years old.

Cecil Sharp died on 23rd June 1924 while the tour was dancing its last stand at Adderbury, although only the onset of his illness was known to the party at the time. They learnt from Captain Kettlewell later and the timing coincidence had a profound emotional effect on all the men involved.

On the following Tuesday Kenworthy Schofield and Peter Fox again visited Charles Benfield, John Hitchman, Charlie Taylor of Oddington and Richard Bond. The tunes from Benfield were verified. Hitchman's criticism of the dancing was that too many steps were taken, and that it was too fussy. He said,

If you're a dancer, when you hears the tune playing, you knows

how to foot it.

When not playing "squire", Mr. Hitchman used to dance nearside hindmost, "so that he could see what the other fellows did".

From Mr. Hitchman the whereabouts of old Charlie Taylor, the Oddington dancer, was discovered. This is at Icomb not far away. Granddad Taylor and his daughter-in-law were discovered at dinner. He is in his eighty eighth year, is very deaf and has an injured eye, but is otherwise very sprightly and has a magnificent forehead. He mentioned how he had been to London with Sam Bennett under the auspices of Mary Neal - he was inclined to brag a bit about the number of tunes that he knew. His memory was clearest about jigs, and in spite of all attempts to stop him he did parts of two or three jigs, *Jockie to the Fair*, *Princess Royal* and *Highland Mary* to Mr. Townsend's tune. It was noticed that in the full capers he did the kick forward.

Kenworthy again visited Charles Benfield and Harry Taylor in September 1924.

### The Third Tour

The third Travelling Morrice tour returned to the Cotswolds. It was reported in *The Oxford Weekly News* for 2nd and the 9th September 1925. Captain W R W Kettlewell of Westhall Hill, Burford, said that the Travelling Morrice went,

... to test correctness of dances taught by the EFDS ... eight men from the Summer School of the EFDS at Cambridge ... with Elsie Avril playing ... visited Stow-on-the-Wold, Chipping Norton, Burford, Abingdon, Longborough, Oddington, Idbury, Leafield and Ascot-under-Wychwood ... everywhere old dancers turned out to see ... there can be no manner of doubt as to the accuracy of Cecil Sharp's research and teaching."

Rolf Gardiner invited Ralph Honeybone to join the tour. He grew up in Ascot-under-Wychwood, had been in one of Tiddy's boys teams, served as his batman, went to Oxford University after WW I, was one of the EFDS men's display team in the early 1920's, and finally settled in Evesham to teach, marrying one of Sharp's pianists.

On Tuesday, 25th August at Stow-on-the-Wold, they talked to Ned Hathaway.

The next day at Longborough they did two shows.

The aristocracy of the district awaited us on the vicarage lawn. Harry Taylor, of course, was there and overjoyed to see us and it was under his friendly but critical eye that the first show was given, which was almost entirely Longborough. His reception of these was not uniformly approving although he was so pleased to see the dancing that he hardly likes to criticise us ... There was a good deal of new information from Taylor ... We also pleased him by doing *Cuckoo's Nest* which he had taught us the last time. Schofield wrote in his papers that "he appeared quite satisfied and

expressed surprise that they had remembered it." ... "however when we tried *Maid of the Mill* with sidestep and caper through we were pulled up, "not absolutely wrong, but different from what he had done it", while *Swaggering Boney* was altogether wrong". He taught a revised version of the dance and *Jockey to the Fair*, a jig. "Beyond this we heard of *Saturday Night, Banks of the Dee* and a heel and toe to *We Wont Go Home Till Morning*, which he whistled like *Greensleeves*."

Kenworthy Schofield and Douglas Kennedy visited Taylor, Benfield and Alec Franklin in October 1925 to confirm what had been learnt and to obtain further information. Some of the information gleaned by Schofield was published in the *Journal of the EFDS* in 1928, on Fieldtown, and in 1930 on Longborough. Schofield's Bledington and Longborough notebook was been deposited in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library but the similar Fieldtown and Bucknell notebook was loaned to Arthur Peck when Recorder to the Morris Ring and has now disappeared.

### The Seventh Tour

On the seventh Travelling Morrice tour Harry attempted to remember a Longborough *Hop Frog* but failed. For the tours for which Arthur Peck was the logmaster before he was the Morris Ring Recorder, little of the collected dance details have been found.

On the 1929 tour Charles Taylor was met and George Hathaway who had been the number one of the young Bledington side.

Alec Franklin had been a successful potter but when he retired he used to sit outside the public houses in Leafield dressed in a long shepherd's smock, with a crook and a near empty beer mug, waiting for unwary passing motorists, a not uncommon trick between the wars. Reg Pratley of the Jubilee Inn at Bampton grew up in Leafield and remembers Franklin beating time with his crook as he followed or taught dances to visiting morris men.

Harry Taylor died in 1931 aged eighty seven years, see *Two Cotswold Morris Men* by Dr A L Peck, *Journal EFDSS*, 1932.

The local interest generated by the Travelling Morrice visits encouraged some local men to get together. They met in a local barn under Joynes and young Henry Taylor with the help of old Harry. They never rose to a public performance, but there were still men in 1964 who could dance the basic steps in the orthodox fashion with their hands raised up at the side of the head, but without any waving of the hands or handkerchiefs. When asked what they did with their hands, wondering about evidence for the shaking or twists, they answered "stick them up in the air, you fool" as should have obvious to me!

### Not All Went Well for Sharp

It must be evident from the quotes that not all went well for Cecil Sharp. He was very fondly remembered in many places, for example by the Ackermans who had kept the teetotal Highwayman Hotel in Burford where he had stayed a number of times while collecting songs and dances. But sometimes his insights and well

intended comments were not accepted and his policy of keeping the Revival and the sources well apart was not understood.

The Fieldtown dancer Henry Franklin wrote to *The Oxford Times* of 20th July 1912,

Morris dancing is all the go now, but not the proper dance. I taught Mr. Cecil Sharpe about 15 or 20 dances, the proper dance, but I am sorry to say Mr. Sharpe went for other dances before he came to me, therefore he cannot get out of the groove which he had from other Morris dancers. I gave Mr. Sharpe five lessons on Morris dances. I taught him the tunes and how to dance them, and then Mr. Sharpe had a Morris dance in the Corn Exchange, Oxford. I took my Morris bells with me, thinking to have a dance, but Mr. Sharpe said no, he thought I should hurt myself, but he did not say I should hurt myself when I danced in my home. Mr. Sharpe had a dance at Kelmscott last month [Thursday 20th June 1912]. I took my bells with me and went to Kelmscott, but again I was not allowed to dance. Mr. Sharpe came across the ring to ask if a dance was done properly. I said no. I got over the rope into the ring to show the proper way to dance it, but that would not do. So you can plainly see Mr. Sharpe does not want me to dance in public because he knows he does not dance the proper dance. I am, yours truly, H. Franklin, 6, Crown Street, Oxford.

Eye witnesses said that both brothers had walked over from near Oxford and were stopped from dancing only with the greatest of difficulty. Sharp wrote a personal reply to Franklin dated 22nd July.

Miss Taylor of 45 Woodstock Road, Oxford was interviewed on 22nd June 1962 at the suggestion of Professor Chaundy. She had been the secretary of the Oxford branch of the EFDS which had been formed in 1911 by Charlotte Sidgwick. Their teacher was Miss D C Daking who became better known as "Barney" after WW I. Her manuscript *The Log of the Fine Companions* records many anecdotes involving travelling in a gypsy style caravan, as well as a meeting with a drunken William Kimber. They had participated in a rehabilitation scheme which taught morris to shell-shocked troops in France during WW I. Miss Daking had also worked with Janet Blunt collecting from William Walton at Adderbury and no doubt was responsible for the University side dancing at a WI meeting at the Adderbury vicarage as early as 1922. Chaundy had started dancing in 1912 and the University Morris was active in 1913. He was the founder of the Oxford May Morning in 1923, and aged seventy four and living in a house named "Shepherd's Hey" in Headington when interviewed.

Henry Franklin was a tall and formidable man who had been a policeman for many years. There exists a newspaper photograph of him, dated 21st June 1914, from when he gave an exhibition of morris dancing at the Corpus Christi College on the preceding Saturday. Miss Taylor and Professor Chaundy both considered Franklin an awful nuisance. He used to turn up at Branch events and embarrass everyone by telling them how they should do it. The 1914 afternoon was arranged to keep him quiet. They never saw him again. Miss Taylor was one of the invitees at a party arranged the evening before the first day of the first Travelling Morrice tour when the participants were assembling at Scaife's Oxford flat.

Sharp recorded historical information in good faith, but again it was not always correct. When Sharp published the Ilmington dances he included statements on the background which caused Sam Bennett to write to *The Stratford-on-Avon Herald* published on 23rd August 1912,

... Mr. Sharp, in his Morris Book, makes a few statements which need correcting. He says the Ilmington dancers were disbanded in 1867 owing to the death of Tom Arthurs, but as a matter of fact Tom Arthurs did a Morris dance here in 1887, with his son playing the tabor, and that although eighty five years of age, Tom danced a Morris jig. He died in April 1891. Then, again, Mr. Sharp states that soon after the revival in 1887 Joseph Johnson died, whereas, as a matter of fact, he danced with others (and by himself) at the Diamond Jubilee in 1897, for which I played, and he died on June 29th, 1901. Mr. Sharp is also wrong as to the decease of James Arthurs which did not occur till January, 1907 ...

Sharp paid William Wells to teach him the Bampton dances during a family holiday at Stow-on-the-Wold. This money was not shared with the team, so Jinky was accused of "selling the morris" and this was one of the steps towards the split in the tradition that occurred later.

#### PART FOUR - THE INTERPRETATIONS

The total of the information on the dances and the dancing style was collated and extracted for Lionel Bacon's *Handbook of Morris Dancing*. The style of this publication was defined in the early Advisory Council of the Morris Ring discussions as a Handbook of Living Traditions, to be an aid to learning from the living tradition, not a substitute for it. The following are snippets.

##### Cecil Sharp

For Longborough Sharp had that the order of figures was flexible, but normally Foot-Up, Half-Gip, Back-to-Back, Whole-Gip, Whole-Hey. Sometimes the final chorus was omitted and the dance ended with caper-out at the end of a whole-hey to the A music which then immediately followed whole-gip. Half-Rounds **only** occurred in skew-corner dances, where they were only danced after a corner movement had brought men to the wrong side and was immediately followed by the same corner movement repeated to places. Both Sharp and Carey had the dances end with a "galley and caper up".

Taylor told Sharp,

... hands out and waving and held well up all time but opening them out at Jump. In sidestep one hand up waving. In capering, true circles in vertical plane in front of the body, out then in (handks together) then out.

Douglas Kennedy met Harry Taylor on the 1912 tour and was left with the impression of wonderful galleys, but he had a difficulty in telling which direction Taylor twisted his handkerchiefs, he appeared more to shake his handkerchiefs from the wrist, not making any circling movements with the forearm, rather as the Chipping Campden side of that time danced. Taylor's performance of the galley



was the model that most influenced Sharp's teaching of the movement. The other evidence is that only at Fieldtown was the galley similar; elsewhere there were stylistic differences or just not enough evidence collected to be sure.

### Travelling Morrice and the 1920's and 1930's

Harry Taylor told Sharp that the Longborough morris was much like the Bledington morris except that the former did the jump every two bars and the latter every four bars. They often danced together. George Hathaway of the "Young Bledington" side, from whom the Travelling Morrice derived many of the more modern ideas of the Bledington tradition, said at the Ring Meeting Feast at Stow-on-the-Wold on the 14th September 1935, that there was a big difference between the two styles of dancing. At Bledington they were told to keep their feet near the ground, while Harry Taylor, at Longborough, stressed getting well off the ground. The dancers at Bledington and Oddington called the galley a "hook-leg", with one twist of the free foot, and made it near the ground in contrast to Harry Taylor who made it very high, with his thigh parallel to the ground, and with two twists of the free foot.

In 1925 Ned Hathaway told of *British Grenadiers*, a Longborough dance. It was to him a "sidestep and caper through" dance. Sharp had it as an ordinary sidestep and half hey dance. The ordinary formula movements he knew were "go and come back", "then go round keeping your face", and "go round keeping your backs". Schofield wrote in his notebook, "that in sidestep dances the formulae movements - Foot-Up (probably with jumps both halves), Half-Gyp, Whole-Gyp and Back-to-Back were often used." The jumps usually but not necessarily occurred in Foot-Up, Half-Heys and Half-Rounds.

There was new information from Taylor on that tour, "We did whole-gip footing in the half-gip and no shuffles in the once-to-yourself and he seemed to approve of this." Sharp had noted shuffles in the middle three figures, including the whole-gip, but for the Travelling Morrice Taylor repudiated using shuffles in set dances, preferring a slower and weaker form of backstep, and only a jump for once-to-yourself.

Taylor said to Schofield that when a dance included half-heys, the final whole-hey was usually omitted and the dance ended with caper-out on the second half-hey of a chorus. It was the practice to shorten dances rather than let them flag and sidestep dances in particular were performed "single", ie. with one B music only, such that alternate figures were danced with the set reversed. Carey thought it probable that the dances *London Pride* and *Girl I Left Behind Me* were normally danced this way, and that others, *Banks of the Dee* and *Country Gardens*, rarely so. *Greensleeves*, *Highland Mary* and *Old Woman Tossed Up* were also sidestep dances. Usually the chorus sequence was a sidestep to the left, a double step facing front, a sidestep to the right, a feet together jump; but sometimes, and in *Old Woman Tossed Up* usually, the feet together jump was replaced by another double step facing front. When describing *Country Gardens* to Rolf Gardiner, Taylor had insisted that the second bar was a double step and intimated that he had had difficulty with his own side on this point.

The choruses of *Maid of the Mill* and *Banks of the Dee* were taught as clap, plain capers across and half-hey on the other side. Of *Swaggering Boney*, or alternatively titled *Travel by Steam* as Harry told Sharp, Sharp only has the first two choruses in his notebooks. Harry told the Travelling Morrice that the first crossing was like

*Maid of the Mill*, with kicking and clapping, and that later choruses included the slow capers. Another major discrepancy between Sharp's manuscript and Schofield's notebooks was in some of the chorus movement steppings for *Trunkles*, particularly where there were shuffles or galleys.

## Jigs

*Princess Royal* : the jig can be extended by dancing half-capers, or furries, like Bampton, to a slow A music. Carey recorded that each part of the jig can end with either a galley, backsteps or plain capers.

*Jockey to the Fair* : like *Princess Royal* usually done by two dancers. The B music has an opening four bar sidestep sequence followed by a number of half-capers and single or plain capers with waves to end. Harry described it as a "hard dance", meaning tiring! The B music being so long, gives plenty of scope for variations, different dancers as well as different villages doing it as they pleased, no doubt.

## Fred Taylor and Trunkles, "the longest dance in the world"

Some account must be given of the slow capers.

They have been described in various ways and Harry Taylor recognised at least four forms.

Forecapers with capers :	rtb	ft.J	R	L
Forecapers with galleys :	rtb	ft.J	hl hkr	hl hkr
Uprights :	xh	J or xh	R	L

the cross hops being done either forward, ie crossing in front of the supporting foot, or backward, bringing the foot behind the one bearing the weight.

Fred Taylor indicated that his father had special fancy versions of the slow capers which he would use in his jigs. Besides incorporating the leg movement of the galley into the forecapers, he described a 360 deg turn or "twizzle" instead of the plain capers in the uprights.

Some sides have chosen to use these versions in their corner dances, especially *Trunkles*. If all possible versions of the slow capers are used, particularly if the appropriate choruses are repeated to place before proceeding, it can be long dance, of thirteen to fifteen minutes or more. It is best kept for practices or Ales!

## Westminster Morris

Recognisable as the team with the mime-trained Unicorn, they have been one of the classic sides since WWII. Before 1964 L Saunders collated the material from the then-accessible sources. Their style, posture, stepping, galley, half-capers and flowing handkerchief movements have been passed on at Morris Ring Instructionals.

The Westminster Morris worked up the manuscript labelled "new" dances from the Butterworth mss : *Gallant Hussar*, *Staines Morris* and a handclapping *Country Gardens*. There are difficulties in accepting all of this set of Butterworth's dances which are not referenced elsewhere or fit comfortably into the known dance formats. It is not knowable now whether these were collected or composed by Butterworth. They are of course included in Bacon. Douglas Kennedy always stated that Butterworth was very careful and not given to invention.

They were the first modern team to invent rather than just to adapt dances across traditions and these included *The Golden Vanity*, a leapfrog dance, *Old Harry*, a half-through corner dance, and *Big John*, a two-by-two dance.

### Old Spot Morris

This side based in Cheltenham has sought authenticity by interpreting the collectors' stylistic remarks. They have danced high, with large jumps, and strong rapid shakings of the wrist. They created distinctive but fairly obvious dances such as *Leapfrog*, a *Belle Isle's March* heel and toe, and a two-by-two *Boys of the Bunch*. But they had also developed a Longborough *Sherborne Jig* and a *Black Joke* jig for four. More recently they have redeveloped the repertoire using the other tunes collected from the Stow-on-the-Wold morris musicians.

### Hammersmith Morris

Another team that has developed the vigorous style. Their development started with Hugh Rippon from the Schofield article in the EFDSS Journal, then John Kirkpatrick who consulted the Sharp MS, Martin Johnson and David Robinson. They imaginatively created *Lillibolero*, *Hammersmith Flyover*, *Black Jack*, *British Grenadiers*, *Lass of Richmond Hill*, and *Kew Bridge Gardens* to John Mason's *Cupid's Garden*, many of which have been copied by other teams.

### Frome Valley Morris

This club for a few years fitted my concept of what Longborough should look like, with power but no exaggerations.

### Missing from the Repertoire

Because the teams around Stow-on-the Wold had much in common it can be assumed that dance formats were shared more than is apparent from what has survived. Two-by-two dances like Longborough's *Cuckoo's Nest*, half-through dances like those at Bledington and more corner dances would have been expected. William Hathaway had *Belle Isle's March* and *Cuckoo's Nest* as corner dances. Perhaps these were really half-through as at Bledington. *Belle Isle's March* had been mentioned with *Oh Sussanah* and *We Wont Go Home Till Morning* as alternative tunes, which change the character of the dance when used.

I acknowledge the considerable interest and help of Keith Chandler during this paper's long gestation, for which I am entirely to blame.

file : longboro.wri (3)

## CHARACTERS AND THE COTSWOLD MORRIS

A typical English morris show, and one that is probably very traditional, occurs at a pub with the visiting group of strangers about equal in numbers to the local crowd. The club practices dances, not shows, so it has given little thought or time to how they intend to perform. The performance proceeds by muddling through, "just like last time", with little planning till Bonny Green Garters is reached, but with much rapport with the watchers, although even this is not essential to quite a few teams who go out only for their own pleasure. This relaxed attitude is not so effective in front of a larger audience, who would probably react better to a less primitive approach. A team will respond to the perhaps unfamiliar situation by beginning to organise their troupe into a semblance of an entertainment. One remembers the debates on whether it is "worth" getting the animal out. Everyone knows of the auxiliary roles associated with public performance, which the morris calls "characters". The older tradition combined or eliminated tasks to minimise the number participating in the final share outs. This factor is no longer a consideration for clubs today.

The role and value of the different characters that can be associated with the Cotswold morris is appreciated in a general way but often not properly understood. Part of the confusion lies in the lack of a clear separation of the various tasks they fulfil. In the best tradition of entertainment these tasks can be combined, but any one "character" can only carry one role at a time, although they can switch from one to another during a performance. The changes need to be made with care because the audience can easily be confused and start to ask what it is all meant to mean.

The first point to make is that such characters are part of the show and not part of the dancing. There are four roles that need to be filled in a show, besides those of leading the dance, or "foreman", and of playing the music. Each role has its own territory and relationship to the overall performance.

### A. SOMEONE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE AUDIENCE

This is elsewhere the Master of Ceremonies, Ring Master, or Announcer and is the apparent Producer or Director of the show and should be seen to be in charge, even if actually only acting as a front man for the Squire (the club leader), or the Foreman (the dance leader). To be obviously just relaying messages is unsatisfactory unless it becomes part of the entertainment by cross talk and back chat. They tell everyone, both audience and performers, about what is happening and why.

The activity is sited in the dancers territory and is projected outward towards the audience.

It can be and often is the task of one of the troupe, a dancer or even the musician, and is done between dances. It is eased if the show is not being ad libbed but working to something prearranged, even if the plan is very flexible. The task can be done by someone who is specially dressed for the part and not otherwise part of the dancing. For example by the wearing of evening dress or appearing as a Town Crier and thereby meeting another role, (C), mentioned below. It is important that the voice can carry adequately. It can be a problem for a woman's voice because of its shrillness.

Proper adaptive control of a show really requires deliberate observation of the crowd and its reactions during the dancing, and not just between dances, so that judgements can be made on when to stop the show, whether to speed it up or to change the programme. The character must be responsive, not scripted. In many ways it is an equivalent to the technique of the stand up comic or pantomime principal in speaking to the audience at large, and dealing with overall impressions rather than individuals in the crowd.

Any announcement has to catch the attention of the listeners. Therefore the speaker has to have an "entrance", to step out of context. The speaker has to deal with crowd control, assisted but not supplanted by the fool.

One other task is the "collection" speech. This can be full of blarney, like a fairground barker, being economical with the truth. Issues can be the "Buying of the Luck of the Morris", "Improving the Weather" or even gaining "Fertility". By contrast one should never tell the tale to reporters because it reflects back on all the morris.

There are two subsidiary tasks.

#### **B. SOMEONE ACCESSIBLE BY THE AUDIENCE**

There is a task to answer questions, to chat on a one-on-one basis and to keep the inquisitive and troublesome out of the way of the show and team organisers. It is best performed by someone identifiably not a dancer. It continues all the time from first arrival at a dance spot till departure.

The Activity is sited in the audience and is projected outward towards the audience.

It can be combined with distributing lucky morris cake or handouts and with the collecting of money unobtrusively. Who the money is for should be made quite clear. Cake bearers were common in the Wychwood Forest area, but are infrequent with the morris in recent years. Traditionally this is a steady task that does not draw attention to itself. In passing out the cake, the bearer has a cake tin and a small knife and doles out very small pieces, and these are given not sold. The cake is usually a rich fruit one, but once they sold little cakes which were mincemeat enclosed in pastry or bread. One should not be free with prited handouts, they cost money, they litter the country side, and should be aimed at genuine enquiries and photographers who might send copies for the scrapbook. It is difficult to combine this task with that of ragman, mentioned below.

I was taken with a team who had a small child tow through the audience a pull along animal toy on wheels with a slot in the top for coins.

Collecting boxes have a long history and the money was a major factor for most of the known traditional sides. Making sure that monies could not be removed secretly was important and soldered lids or padlocks were not uncommon.

#### **C. SOMEONE TO LOOK AT - a "beautiful" as the Basques put it.**

The role is to be noticed and be admired. Traditional parts are King, Queen,

Lord, Lady, Witch, and Soldier and these often appear in pairs. The team can accentuate their position by making them the centre of apparent attention. But this class of character also includes many Tourney Hobby Horses and other fairly immobile animals, as it is an inactive role with no part in the dancing unless it is specially choreographed. They are usually too cumbersome, heavy, ornate, inexperienced or old, to be allowed in the dance area during the dances. A strong carrier, as at Combe Martin, Minehead or Padstow, can make a large object the centre of the activity.

**The activity is walking or sitting between the dance area and the audience and is projected outward towards the audience.**

The character is basically to be taken seriously, and does not indulge in horse play. They may be approachable and therefore able to meet role (B) above, but this would be uneasy for the character if their dress is grand. It is a role for the inexperienced and is often what the novice morris fool is reduced to! Sam Bennett of Ilmington used to insist that his hobby horse had a particular part in the dance and had the animal dance down the set under the linked hankchiefs in his "Maid of the Mill". However the hobby horse was not traditional in the Cotswolds before Darcy Ferrars introduced one at Bidford in 1886, and copied later by Chipping Campden.

The modern morris accretes local customs like the mumming play, the Ooser Bull and the Salisbury Hob Nob Hobby. Although it is putting them in a new context, it is better than them being lost for ever.

#### **D. SOMEONE TO CREATE FUN**

The fool can be the key role, and traditionally and currently often the only one manned. I believe that the character represents the audience in dealing with the dancers. The audience is not the primary objective of his attention. It is a continuous activity which includes recognising when not to be visible. If the fool is asked to be announcer, jig dancer or money collector, the role changes and so must the behaviour. Mixing in these other tasks dilutes the impact of the clown at their true activity. A fool can in addition have particular personal entertainment skills to exploit that have nothing to do with the morris.

**The territory is everywhere, but projected from the audience inward towards the dancing.**

The costume can be almost anything from the old fashioned country smock (Longborough, Headington) which could make him a "beautiful", or imply a country "bumpkin", mock dress such as academic with student cap and gown (Adderbury), pseudo medieval, fantastic or idiotic or circus like (Bampton). The circus has established many types of clown and clown behaviour which are now part of our cultural heritage and experience and which are now quite acceptable to any audience.

The fool is not part of the dance troupe, often competing for attention, and unease should exist in the dancers when he is around. The attempt is to be complementary in the show, but the lead is almost entirely with the fool. Remember that the clown does not represent the dancers in dealing with the crowd. Any assault on the audience is being part of his independent role.

Although as supporting the show they can have many subsidiary roles such as covering, ie stepping in for accidents, collecting money in difficult conditions, eg off of buses, providing a distraction if something goes awry, and even directing traffic around the dance spot.

The clown can not in actuality be foolish or thoughtless or reckless. However the interaction with members of the crowd or of the team comes from directing the clowning at someone, so it becomes "at the expense of", meaning it interferes with in some way. The oldest tradition of folk fools includes a licence to speak freely without fear of reprisal.

The technique of a good fool is not to seek to amuse generally, ie as a stand up comic, but to be as the traditional circus clown and work on the audience one by one during a show so that all feel a personal contact.

A pet grouse is that if the clown is active, it is unfair for the dancers to call on the clown for activity between their set dances to give them a rest without prior arrangement.

The stick hobby animal, derived from the Kentish Hooden Horse, that gyrates or eats money etc is a variety of clown bound by the same rules. The version that is walked around to meet the crowd is essentially a static character as (C), even if it eats money.

#### E. SOMEONE TO LOOK AFTER THINGS

There is an invisible role, that of the "ragman" who looks after the baggage, implements and the inactives during a dance. Someone has to decide where to put things down, either near the music for safety or elsewhere where they can be watched. They should also control where the spare dancers stand, which should not be in the sight lines of the audience. It can be akin to the stage manager and properties man role in a theatre.

#### TERRITORIES

Dance Zone	Space	Audience
A>	C>	<D      B      E

The importance of the characters and their roles depends on the crowd size, and the dancing position relative to the audience, which influences the audience's expectations of the performance. It is an experience that a large crowd can largely ignore the morris, probably because the morris has taken the wrong line in establishing contact with them. The above analysis assumes a large open space surrounded by watchers.

The choice of the persons to perform the characters is often difficult. Each role benefits from experience which implies some continuity in it. Giving them to inexperienced dancers seems counter productive. One way of overcoming the club problem of giving experienced dancers challenges without over extending the club repertoire of difficult dances is to expect them to take these roles. It is also a solution to the

occasions, rare, when there are too many dancers available to allow everyone to get enough dancing.

**FINALLY**

The foreman, who is prompt calling the moves, for convenience is often number one in the set, where attention can centre, close to the music and visible to the whole set at the start of the dance. The role is the control of the dancers during the dance. However when the set contains 8 dancers it may be more practical to lead from one of the middle places. If the set is arranged by height it might even be sensible to lead from the taller dancers at the back who can see what is happening throughout the dance.





## THE ROOTS OF CLOWNING

Whatever the traditional fool was, the current character is now dominated by the concept of the clown, at least in the expectation of the modern audience. There is probably no tradition of fooling that can be recognised independent of that exploited by the professionals for the last four hundred years, unless it lies in elements of crude horseplay which have a cruel undertone. The circus clown would not give such offence, but the street clowns have always been prepared to do so, even if only to an individual rather than to the crowd at large.

The lineage of the clown appears to be as old as civilisation. Attitudes to clowns have been emotive and difficult to explain. The abnormal and subnormal have always been objects of attention. Five thousand year old illustrations include dwarfism and deformity, such as would be tolerated through being considered natural fools. The presence of artificial fools, depending on a quick wit and improvisation, is unrecognisable. The Egyptian clown was a "danga", a member of a pygmy tribe. The simple civilisations were much taken by oddity, seeing in it a magical charm against ill fortune, as well as a source of amusement, and regarded it with a kind of primitive wonder. Idiots were considered divine and mental defectives were termed "innocent" and treated with kindness, if one ignores the cruelty implicit in laughing at a handicap.

The Greeks had domestic clowns, the "parasites", who were often rough and ready buffoonists. The Romans recognised a number of types, including the "stupidus" or mimic fool and the "scurra" or common jester. Both the Greeks and the Romans accepted a freedom of plain speaking from their fools in an age when freedom of speech hardly existed for anyone else. It has been postulated that people court mockery to avoid the attention of some vague, undefined malignant power, like an evil eye, which might otherwise notice their success and bring them ill-fortune. That is, the raillery is a protection against misfortune. Such ancient revellers have given this form of theatre elements that have never been lost. They wore masks, and as fights and beatings were frequent, they were often grossly padded on their stomachs and buttocks. The fool of folk performance is still much addicted to belabouring and abusing the bystanders. It can also be argued that he gains his licence because he is also a scapegoat, receiving the recipients bad luck in return for passing on some of the fool's natural good luck.

The classical popular theatre lasted five hundred years and was a drama of stock characters and largely extempore, and only late in its history did it evolve individual characterisation. The stock masks were Bucco, the comic slave, Maccus, the country bumpkin, Pappus, the old dotard, Dossenus, the sharp tongued hunchback, and Manducus, grinding his teeth and frightening the children. Despite the similarity to later activities in Europe, classical popular theatrical entertainment arts were lost and it is impossible to trace any continuity of professional performance. The figure of the clown is lost in the Dark Ages but must have formed part of the skills of the other entertainers, minstrels, jugglers, acrobats and wandering showmen, who went from one court, castle or inn to another. In the later Middle Ages he re-emerges, assuming the dress and ways of the court jesters. A feature such as the clown's facial makeup descends from the grotesque masks of the period.

There is a universal appeal in clowning which results from the comparative freedom to mock all aspects of folly. Clowns often criticise, mock, and satirise established institutions and authority figures in ways which are socially acceptable. Many cultures have romanticised the role of the clown and some have granted him high status, even a priestly function or position.

For example, the Hopi Indian clowns of North America include an elite group of highly skilled horsemen who mock the tribal rituals. The clowns ride their horses sitting backwards, shoot their bows and arrows the wrong way, and often, of course, fall off their horses. They do this to satirise the serious and proud attitudes of the tribe towards hunting skills. These same clowns also make fun of individuals who have broken tribal law. By doing this during tribal rituals the transgressors are so thoroughly embarrassed by their mockery that the ridicule itself is a form of punishment. In the Far East there is a strong tradition of clowns performing at theatrical and ritual events. Chinese, Balinese and Indian clowns are given special licence to improvise in very traditional, religious, theatrical presentations. They are allowed to speak in the language of the common people, to break many of the formalities of performing, and usually they are the audience's favourite part.

In medieval times the court jester was often a powerful person. The fool or jester would entertain at court and frequently make fun of the king and other members of the nobility. The jester has the special opportunity to make private matters public in song and joke. On the other hand, some court jesters were executed or banished for going a bit too far. The jester was always to hand, ready to provide humour on demand, supplying a witty phrase or a bit of horseplay. If it were bawdy it did not matter as the royal court had not acquired refined manners yet. Some court jesters used their tremendous freedom of expression as a political tool. The freedom was often used for their own ends, not in support of the poor or oppressed, and the jester would use his wit to take advantage of the gullible and so enrich themselves.

We have the names of many of the English court jesters, from Golet who saved the future William I from an assassin, Henry I's Rahere who founded St Bartholomew Hospital, Edward IV's Scogan who was banished but got back by a trick, Richard Tarlton who created the Elizabethan jig as an entertainment form to James I's Archy Armstrong, from Cumberland, who was an unpleasant mischief maker and whose fooleries were mostly rough horseplay and whom Archbishop Laud at last had banished in 1637. Charles I's Jeffrey Hudson, from Rutland, was only eighteen inches tall. All these jesters seem to have used jest books. From them comes the "bauble", a staff with a clown's head modelled on the end, traditionally now called a "jack" in the south of England. It became a traditional trick to hand the bauble to anybody thought to be more foolish than the jester. Court fools died because there was no need to remind monarchs of their humanity when the divine right of kings was questioned freely by parliament.

Buffoonery had crept into the medieval religious cycles. Shepherds were country bumpkins, Noah's wife a shrew, Herod raged like a villain of the later melodrama and the devils made a farce of dragging sinners into the smoking Jaws of Hell. The fifteenth century brought a change to more serious moralities, needing light relief even more than the scriptural

episodes. The task devolved onto the chief of the nasties, known as the "Vice". He would be a rogue and a sinner, tempting virtuous characters and at the same time a comical buffoon. Quarrelsome, a braggart, he was always fighting, but still a coward, and sometimes an idiot. His tricks were to speak in nonsensical phrases, to weep loudly and to delight in pretended misunderstandings. When the moralities dies out, the Vice lingered on to be an element that fashioned the Elizabethan stage clown.

A major influence on popular clowning has come from the the Commedia dell'Arte which flourished from 1500 to 1700 AD with an origin in Italy. This marked the first appearance in Europe of companies of professional actors, but it was also with its comic turns, rapid fire repartee and practical jokes, the beginning of much of modern clowning. The chief characters were Harlequin, Columbine, Pantaloon, Scaramouche and Peirrot. Their freedom of speech was still bought at the price of accepting condescension and disguising the comment in nonsense. In the early days boys played the women's parts, as in the Elizabethan theatre, but starting with the Italians, women gradually found a place on the stage. The plays were preserved in rough form only so that each performance was with improvised speeches.

The English Pantomime evolved from the dregs of the Commedia. From 1700 the shows presented by John Weaver were called at first Harlequinades. Pulcinella appeared as a Commedia character after 1600 AD and he developed separately into the Punch of the Punch and Judy puppet theatre.

In parallel with the Commedia grew up the Montebank or Quack Doctor, supported by clownish characters such as Jack Pudding or Merry Andrew, who were "zanies" who would perform farcical skits, such as tooth pulling and comic doctoring, as is still the stock in trade of the circus clown and the traditional mummers play. Some such performers went into the Commedia, others stayed to work the fairs and inns, and such groups were still active into the nineteenth century.

Clowns had an important part in the Elizabethan theatrical performances, mainly unscripted and destructive to the plot. William Kemp and Robert Armin were the first stage clowns of any note. Kemp complained of the restrictions that Shakespeare tried to impose on his behaviour. Shakespeare's genius finally incorporated the fool into the action of his plays. It was about this time that the generic word clown came into use, before this time they were called after the style of clowning. Stage clowns lasted from 1580 till 1630, when the Puritans banned the theatre as public performances were thought to provide audiences with the opportunity for subversive political activity. Plays continued in schools and private houses, but they were no outlet for the professional clowns, so they turned to "drolls". These were short comic scenes based on serious drama or biblical themes, performed at fairs and the like, which were noted for being often rather indecent. The formal theatre of the Restoration had no place for the clowns.

The creation of the circus in the later eighteenth century added a new dimension to clowning by requiring the acquisition of talents for a big arena and allowing the burlesque of other acts and the incorporation of musical instruments into routines. Astley had left the army and invented the saw

dust ring in 1768. Riding a horse called Gibraltar, he gave exhibitions of sabre fighting and vaulting on horseback, he having found that riding in a small circle allowed him to stand on the horse's back. He built a permanent ring at Halfpenny Hatch, near Westminster Bridge, in 1770, and made another first by introducing clowns into the arena. He is commemorated by the tune Astley's Ride.

In the circus the clown has many roles. As important as any is the breaking of the tension felt by the audience after a particularly heart stopping act. Visual humour is the key to the modern circus clown, so that spoken language is more or less redundant. They do not use a proper script, although there are standard routines, some very ancient and passed from clown to clown, and improvisation and interaction with the audience dominates.

Clowns are classified by their role in the show. The "reprise" clown interrupts and parodies acts. The "entree" clowns are a troupe usually with props and the "carpet" or "run-in" clowns are there to disguise prop changes and cover up for mistakes or accidents. They are also traditionally classified by their appearance. The "whiteface" is sophisticated, graceful, shrewd and aristocratic. He wears an elegant costume. He is the straight man, appearing serious and proper, representing authority and generally very cultured. His partner is the "auguste", a German word for stupid. He is the dumb-dumb. Over the years his image has evolved from a simple exaggerated character makep and costume into a grotesque, colourful, baggy panted and big nosed clown. He does everything wrong, disrupting the activity of the whiteface or the ringmaster. His simplicity, charm and naivete make him a sympathetic character whereas the whiteface's pomposity make him appear to deserve all he receives. The auguste's mannerisms are exaggerated, absurd and unpredictable. He makes the most simple task difficult, often finding skilled acrobatic ways to solve simple problems. The whiteface-auguste relationship is the basis of many modern comic double acts. The "character" clown is an exaggerated or stock character, a caricature of people in everyday life - a nurse with big bosom and bottom, a nutty professor, a tramp or a cleaning lady. The tramp clown, like Charlie Chaplin, became very popular during the 1930's depression.

Not every famous clown came from the circus. Grock was a music hall star. Grimaldi (1778-1837) performed in English Pantomime and had such an impact that circus people call clowns "Joeys". Dan Rice was a popular clown in the USA in the nineteenth century, who was also a friend and adviser to Abraham Lincoln. he was variously an animal trainer, strong man, pantomimist, singer, equestrian, acrobat, comic poet, circus owner and manager. He had a tremendous impact on American entertainment and culture at that time and through that eventually on the UK. His clown image was used as the basis for the cartoon image of Uncle Sam. In the twentieth century many great entertainers were schooled as clowns on the music hall and vaudeville circuits. Artists such as Charles Chaplin, Buster Keaton, Laurel and Hardy, the Marx Brothers and W C Fields are now known through the cinema.

It is impossible to list the influences on clowning this century because the spread of mass entertainment has brought so many and so much to everyone's attention. Catch phrases, gestures, even funny walks can be copied and get a laugh because so many in any audience will catch the reference. Humour is

almost universal - it is difficult to think of any good comedian in the Government!

## References :

Beryl Hugill	Bring on the Clowns	David and Charles	1980
Enid Welsford	The Fool	Faber	1935
George Speight	Punch and Judy	Studio Vista	
Mark Stolzenberg	Clown for Circus and Stage	Sterling, New York	1981



## ON CLOWNING AND THE MORRIS

Clowns and Morris Fools belong to the same tribe. By considering the first it can help the modern performance of the second.

Clowns have been long associated with circuses in the public's mind, however, for various reasons, circuses have been in decline for many years, but clowns have had a growing independent life over the last 50 years. They are frequently involved with children's activities, as on TV and at schools and various festivals.

For example every year since 1985, about April 1st, there is an International Clowns Convention at Bognor Regis, which has lectures and seminars and two open days of public performances, as well as many local visits to schools etc. All the world loves a clown. Every clown is an anarchist. They deal in chaos and mayhem but in the nicest way. They love fun, they disobey the rules and create havoc. This is the public's concept of a clown, a big red nose, funny painted face, outrageous clothes and boots, from an ancient tradition with which everyone is familiar even in the morris. The Chipping Campden Morris had a retired US circus clown as their fool in the 1930's. He often brought the dancing to a stop by making the dancers laugh too much!

Folk fools of many sorts through history have contributed to the modern wide ranging concept of a clown, but the performers that have grown out of the circus are modern entertainers with little of the serious elements which once formed a significant part of the folk role. In less sophisticated cultures the making fun of important things itself carried an educational message. The licence of the fool to do and say what would normally be unacceptable within a community was once a common element of seasonal celebrations within our own society.

### WHAT'S IT ABOUT?"

You can not simply put on make-up and a costume and dash around a dance area and expect the audience to see you as a clown. Nor is the clown's role a way of using up surplus or poor dancers. Clowning is really a serious art form and to be effective needs to be approached in a disciplined and systematic manner, even though the essence of the humour is to appear spontaneous and intuitive. Untrained and possibly undisciplined clowns can at best be embarrassing and at worst a menace. When out with the morris, a clown is a link between the audience and the dancers and sometimes vice versa, as for example in making the environment right to bring in members of the audience, especially children, as volunteers into the show. The interaction with the audience is the key. Unlike in almost any other performing art, the clown can acknowledge and work with the audience directly. If the person designated clown is not prepared to interact, then they have been nominated to the wrong character in support of the morris.

### THE MORRIS FOOL'S ROLES

What you do has to fit in with the opportunities that a performance of the morris allows. The Morris Fool is usually expected to fill a number of roles in support of the show. Some that require clowning are to,



1. Produce entertainment to give the dancers a rest,
2. Fill the gaps between the dances,
3. Cover up mistakes and accidents by distracting the crowd,
4. Demonstrating personal non-dancing skills,
5. Occupy the children who can become a menace either through boredom or excitement.

What would be intolerable from a member of the public can be acceptable from a street theatre character. There are also the further roles which may not involve any clowning, but for which the person involved may be better able or better placed to do compared with anyone else, eg when the dance troupe is small or to save time, but only at the request of the team leader,

6. Announcing,
7. Giving out and collecting the implements,
8. Dancing in the set as a straight man,
9. Controlling passing traffic and crowds,
10. Asking for and collecting money, although I think that this is a function that is "out of character."

The interaction with members of the audience conventionally comes from directing the morris fooling at someone, so that it becomes "at the expense of", meaning that it interferes with it some manner.

Causing merriment can be at the expense of the,

- |                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Dancers                  | eg. by following close behind and mimicing,   |
| 2. Leader                   | eg. by making faces or contradicting commands,  |
| 3. Dance                    | eg. by trying to get involved with the dance and probably failing, say, trying to copy steps,   |
| 4. Musicians                | eg. by winding them up with an imaginary key,   |
| 5. Individuals in the Crowd | eg. by hitting someone who is looking the other way with a bladder to make them jump,   |
| 6. Dancing                  | eg. by using a rehersed routine which may or may not need props, say, borrow a bicycle or pram and travelling through or around the set, with or without a passenger, |
| 7. Planned Show             | eg. by distracting everyone by using a target of opportunity that catches one's eye, say, pretending that a temporary road sign is something else.                    |

To do this the clown must be following and understanding what is going on, all the time that the role is needed. The degree of interaction implied requires an experienced dancer for the job. The clown has also to learn when to do nothing and when not to be within the audience's attention. While not in the centre of attention the clown may have to invent business just to provide an excuse to be in view, because the inverse of doing

nothing for extended periods and then injecting an activity can be a disruptive contribution. Clowns should learn a little about body language of watchers in order to judge the crowd's attitudes to the show, as this determines what they ought to do. With practice it becomes second nature. Understanding body language is important to any morris dancer as it is easy to give an opposite message to that intended through ignorance. The traditional morris fool is not a useful guide as to behaviour, first because there have been so few of them since recording started, and second because we only have a few anecdotes and these date from a time when humour was more inclined to horseplay. Today people get revenge via the courts! The fool near Stow who wore a padlock and chain instead of a watch would, when asked the time by someone who thought that they were going to take a rise out of the clown, hit the questioner over the head with the padlock saying "just struck one!" Jinky Wells got fun from being noticed to be wearing odd socks.

The fool, and the other characters, are part of the morris show, and have to make a balanced contribution even if it is not truly integratable! But they should not continuously interrupt as they are only a part of the morris. The "morris" is the totality of the performance, not just the dances, and includes the good luck and other seasonal relics. The clowning can limit the tension in a show. The clown jokes to relieve tension and is therefore not to be the sort of character who can be dangerous or frightening that actually creates tension. In a major sense the clown and the dancers compete for the audience's interest. There can be two separate but intermeshing shows, with attention switching to and fro.

#### WHAT IS THERE TO LEARN?

So what is the relationship of the conventional clown with the morris fool and what techniques do they share? There are differences, for example the morris fool should not have to sustain a show on their own. To be a better fool requires thought, practice and a sensitivity to people and things.

Clowns should not be foolish and stupid, ie not a "natural" idiot. Clowns are silly, but acting silly for their own enjoyment and providing entertainment for others are significantly different things.

Working with a second party comes naturally to most people. It allows spontaneity and can be over quickly. It is noticeable when watching the movements of a typical modern morris fool that their business is normally very fleeting, and this is why they can get away with very little training (or skills!) There are circumstances which need set pieces and extended business and to prepare for these occasions personal skills have to be worked up. The following sections are aimed at a next step in developing personal clowning skills and perhaps for those who might be thinking of working on their own, for example at Folk Festivals. It is not all at one pace, clowns need to be appear serious and light hearted in turn, like the old music hall artists. Whatever the style or approach clowning is to be played to its fullest and enjoyed!

One can also join a number of local clown clubs for classes, workshops, advice and experience and the learning of circus skills. One can learn mime, juggling, balancing, puppetry, balloon sculpturing, conjouring, still walking,

and unicycling. There are tips to be gained that ease the learning problems with any manipulative skills. For example when wanting to juggle it is important to work with the weak, usually left, hand till it is as easy to use as the other, and it is essential not to rush moves which is what a dominant hand encourages.

### THE CHARACTER'S CHARACTER

What do the great clowns have in common? Very little, each is distinctive.

**The First Major Step** in learning to clown is to discover the clown character that works best for you, the one that you are comfortable with and which is both funny and believable.

**The Second Major Step** is to use and integrate any personal skills you have to both present and serve your clown character.

Just being very large or very small can be exploited. You do not play for laughs as does a comic, you let them arise naturally from the character. You should want laughs at the character not at you. You are no more the persona of your clown than is the actor the character in a play. Of course some people grow and reflect their clown persona throughout their life, but only a few! As not everything can be completely spontaneous, much of what is done needs to be worked up. In doing this one evolves a style of one's own. To be successful the clown's character needs consistency, and should not be a ragbag of perceptions of other people. Stunts, tricks or routines which work with one team may not for another, so it is not sufficient just to slavishly copy someone else's performance, there must be an understanding and an appreciation of the why and wherefore. Without presenting a clear character, it is all too easy to confuse or even in the extreme to intimidate an audience. The clown must motivate their actions to make the character believable. Otherwise it is both aimless and pointless to the crowd and a destructive interference with the show. After gaining a lot of experience it may become instinctive, but initially it is important to think about and plan what is done.

One must separate the idea of "image", which consists of of costume, make-up and overall appearance, and "character", which is the personality being expressed. Your image helps project your character and helps express the kinds of things your persona does.

**The First Exercise** is to try some simple everyday activities in the style of a possible character in order to find which has possibilities for you. As it is always difficult to think of any on the spur of the moment, try being,

- (a) young, shy and inexperienced,
- (b) overlarge, goofy and dominating,
- (c) grumpy, fed-up and foolish.

It is important to get used to practicing in front of a mirror (reflecting window) for self criticism and to get the support of a friend (not a relative) for polishing. But practice misses the essential audience ingredient.

Despite the above comments maybe it is more desirable in some situations for a club to have a standard club fool persona that several can adopt and learn, although most such teams seem to achieve this by mimicry not practice. This policy seems inherent in having a club owned costume for the character.

Clowns have been called a variety of names, each of which gives a possible indication of a character - buffoons, comics, fools, harlequins, jesters, joeys, jokers, merry-andrews, mimes, mirthmakers, and pranksters - and they have been described as - bizarre, clever, clumsy, eccentric, extravagant, foolish, funny, odd, preposterous, ridiculous and zany. Clowns are all these and more.

#### APPEARANCE - CLOTHES

The costume should fit the character. There are four common or archetypal modes of dress or "motley" even for morris fools.

1. Smock and Hat, which are probably worn over a normal morris kit. It has the advantage that it allows the "character" to be able to disappear by just slipping the clothes off discretely. That is such a help when walking around on your own. But it can be very hot, as it is an extra layer of clothing.
2. Medieval Jester or Circus Clown, with a more elaborate costume and probably a decorated face, but so that the "character" can not easily disappear.
3. Man-Woman, dressed in clothes of the opposite sex, sometimes the kit of a linked or rival neighbouring team.
4. Top Hat and Tailed Coat or other formal attire, appearing well dressed but having had better times.

None of which match the traditional circus clown types which have developed since Astley's first Circus in 1768. These are the whiteface pierrot, the foolish auguste and the tramp. The morris fool is, as might be expected, more like the older style of character clowns.

The possibilities are actually endless, but it is very wise to avoid some of the grotesque get-ups seen at carnivals if any rapport with the crowd is to be achieved. "Grotesques" ought to be classed with Animals not Clowns. Masks and Halloween characters have also to be avoided! It might be just possible to have a character like the villain of Victorian melodrama whose overacting makes him comic and not frightening, but that would seem out of style with the Cotswold Morris. The usual requirement on a costume is looseness. It is frequently made more effective by being very colourful. Coats are often covered with buttons and badges which themselves help provide talking points.

#### APPEARANCE - MAKE-UP

Until the mid-1800's most circus clowns wore very little makeup. With the increasing size of audiences the faces painted on became bigger for easier visibility, and evolved into the present recognised forms. As spoken

dialogue became less practical, at the same time routines developed around physical comedy and pantomime, using exaggerated movements and oversized props.

The aids to a character's appearance are gloves, strange hair, funny shoes and pockets for things. What is a clown without makeup? If you want to be accepted as a real clown, you have to look like one. A poor makeup job identifies one as a person dressed as a clown, not a **REAL** one. The possible loss of body language from the face has to be compensated for in other actions.

Use professional makeup. Keep outlining as sharp and as even as possible. Set it and dry it by powdering. On a hot day powdered makeup will last several hours and a light powdering in the middle of the day is enough to freshen it. Remove from normal or dry skin using baby oil, or baby shampoo if oily.

There is an important point about face make up. The circus clown emphasises the mouth and eyes so as to look friendly, but it is quite possible by using heavy make-up about the eyes to look frightening, especially to young children.

"Blacking" is a cover or disguise. Besides the risk today of giving cultural offence, it traditionally implies being up to no good, despite the popularity of the Nigger Minstrel Troupe.

#### SILENT ART OF MIME - ILLUSION

We all use mime or body language for the non verbal component of communication. Physical movement can be used to express most thoughts or actions, as everyone knows who has played charades or other similar party games. Mime is the art of silent expression, portraying an action, thought or concept through movement and making apparent an emotion without using words, and creating an illusion which makes the invisible visible to the watcher's imagination. To do this one must convey both a sense of space and of size, that is, where things are and their shape and weight. Clowns rely on mime to create the physical comedy that is characteristic of their art. Many perform entirely in mime, never speaking a word.

The value of exercises is that they force thought about what one is doing.

#### Typical Group Exercises :

1. while handling an actual object, show to the audience that it is to be thought of as something else.
2. improvise a skit given from the group the names of a person, a place and a thing.
3. pass an imaginary object around a circle then ask the participants afterwards what it was.

#### Some Classic Solo Exercises :

1. Meeting the invisible wall,

2. Being inside a box,
3. Walking a tightrope,
4. Taking part in a Tug of War.

One should start to create one's own morris useful impressions.

#### ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER

A good clown is not a two dimensional cardboard replica acting a script. They need a "presence" and a personality. At the same time they have to appear "open", not defensive to the audience, which means appearing to suppress the normal personal space barrier, so being "vulnerable". This implies letting the audience know what you are thinking and feeling from your actions and from the reaction and interaction with the crowd and your response to individuals within it. The clown's responses should appear genuine, yet still consistent with being a larger than life performer. Consequently the clown's behaviour can not be limited to rehearsed acts. The aim is to be expressive and communicative, so that you can reach and touch something deep in the individuals that make up the crowd, and this can become the ultimate personal objective in developing the clown skills. The involvement with the audience puts the clown on the crowd's side with regard to the show and this special relationship has to be understood and tolerated by the rest of the performers.

Any clown uses movement, cartoonlike imagery, costume, control of pace, sometimes words, sounds and personal skills, and, most important of all, a specific character to make people laugh. They can make stupid mistakes, trip and fall down, not see obvious solutions to simple problems and generally make "fools" of themselves. People laugh with the performance not only because of the content and style of the clowning but because they recognise that everyone makes mistakes from time to time and they appreciate the fellow feeling of experiencing embarrassing and awkward situations in which we feel foolish. The clown exaggerates human behaviour so that it is not unreasonable that they go to crazy, absurd or even outrageous lengths to achieve what they want. However in our culture a clown is still supposed to be a person, not an animal or creature, and should avoid any distorted or weird characteristics which would not fit with the clown spirit.

It needs practice to become a good clown. Some techniques, such as falls, can need the assistance of another at the beginning. A major problem is finding advice on the tricks of the trade. Demonstrations and personal explanations are worth far more than written words or diagrams. The working up can not be approached with any feeling of embarrassment, especially during any practice session. When you practice with others around, avoid being a "prat", that is letting your embarrassment or nervousness get in the way of what you should be doing, so that you are stupid, not constructive. Remember that a clown projects attitudes by means of expression generated with the entire body. You are funnier if you can work with physical movements and much more interesting to watch. If you exaggerate emotions, intentions, reactions and activities, the audience will understand more readily what is going on. The audience should not have to ask, "what's that, and what are they doing?" One has to work on both exaggerating the dominant gestures and on supporting them using the whole body.

The **Second Exercise** is to stand in front of a mirror and try and work up some exaggerated facial and body expressions that indicate particular emotions or intentions. It is suprising at first how difficult this is!

### SILENT ART OF MIME - EXAGGERATION

Clowns, unlike actors, do not display with normal actions but use obvious exaggeration. The emotions, thoughts, actions, reactions and personality are expressed with the entire body, a caricature of normal movements, eg exerting tremendous effort to accomplish little.

To mimic a person you must interpret their perceived personality using body language, so it is an understanding of body language is something that one must develop. Practice techniques for conveying attitudes and emotions. Base the activity on actual observation and do not rely on memory which may be fragmentary.

Try showing -

1. **Anger** - flex the muscles in the face into a tightly contorted frown, then raise a fist, stomp both feet, show the teeth, and finally jump up and down.
2. **Excitement** - jump around while clapping hands, then hugging oneself and showing others what has made you happy.
3. **Being Tired** - walk around very slowly, dragging the feet, with arms limp and mouth open, shoulders slumping, inserting stumbles as walking, and stopping to rest and wipe the brow.
4. **A Punch** - pull an arm all the way back, wind it up, and swing it forward in a wide arc.

The first step is to define what expressions, feelings and actions are wanted. Practice ways of communicating with your body. A face with little expression has the same effect as speaking in a monotone. Explore with the mirror the making of silly faces. Practice to a mirror but try and look at yourself from someone else's perspective. Now add some body movement. Try for the personality traits and act them out. But make every movement express a specific feeling or thought. Then practice in front of someone and ask them to identify what you are expressing.

To develop another useful skill repeat the earlier exercises, but now do them with slow, exaggerated movements - in "slow motion".

Other performers have to be carefully observed and analysed rather than just noticed. A good source to watch are the old silent comic movies, sometimes still to be seen on TV.

Typical points are,

1. Lessons can be picked up from acting techniques, especially with regard to the size and speed of gestures. Gestures have to be seen and interpreted by the watchers over a much greater distance than is usual in normal inter-personal behaviour. Movements look better if you can stand open to the majority of the audience, if you turn towards them rather than away, if you start off travelling with the foot furthest

from them, the so-called "upstage" foot, and make gestures with the upstage arm.

2. Beginning clowns tend to move around too much with short, fast and fussy movements. When you express an idea, emotion or intention, do it as efficiently as possible, cutting out the unnecessary movements and making sure that the ones included are clear and carefully timed.
3. The clown also needs a grin, especially for naughty behaviour, or to go with the occasional more obscene gesture.
4. A clown walk helps express the absurdity of the clown. The walk can be identifiable and stylised and can be used frequently.

The morris clown often dances around in time with the dance, but seldom matches the teams steps and can be quite idiosyncratic.

5. A clown's props will be mostly things borrowed or picked up, like morris sticks or umbrellas. An old felt hat can be a good prop as it can be used in expressing emotions or to symbolise a wide range of objects. It can be an enemy, friend, gift, handkerchief, obstacle, pillow, steering wheel, symbol of wealth or poverty, toy, weapon etc. But buy one, do not borrow it!

A key concept is that the clown plays to the audience one person at a time. A second or so to each will produce more rapport than a long session of stand-up comic routine, usually spoken looking over the heads of the punters. The individual in the crowd is important - playing to the crowd is distancing oneself, like being on TV. It should be noticed that the cinema and TV encourage comic actors not comedians because they are preprogrammed not responsive. Remember that they also have an expectation of what a clown should do, which will be a mixture of all the comic and clowning things that they have ever experienced in their lives.

#### THE "BUSINESS" & SOME DEFINITIONS

As "attitude" is a frozen pose, or snapshot, held in the middle of an action. As it is expressing something that you are wanting or waiting for the audience to catch, it is not a relaxation but a holding. Particular examples are the "take" when reacting with a frozen attitude or facial expression, usually to something suprising or unusual. Then there is the "slow burn" when slowly expressing something like being about to burst into action or burn up with rage.

A sort of organised series of actions with a beginning and an end is a "routine". Each routine has an objective which is its motivation. "Actions" and "activities" translate the routine into movement. Activities are sub-actions or specific things done to support an action. A routine can be divided into "beats", like paragraphs in writing, each containing an idea. The end result of a routine has to be funny, and if it is a fall or other action that could appear to cause a hurt, then the clown must appear unhurt at the end.

The beginning and end of a routine are key moments. One needs a good first impression if the audience is to be attentive and responsive. It is a common experience that first impressions gained in the "first four minutes"



are critical to anyone's attitudes to any meeting or performance. Entrances and exits should be strong, emphatic and simple. One should ensure that there is a reason for the entrance and exit. Possible excuses for coming on are, to escape from someone else, to look for something, to swat a fly, or to wander in innocently not realising what is going on. A clown could have a personal, symbolic "hello". To exit you have to leave the audience's attention area or otherwise indicate that you have dropped out of the action. An exit after a surprise ending is called a "blow off". The ring around a morris team is difficult to work in as the audience is "in the round" on all sides.

No matter how many of the audience are to be recipients of a stunt or routine, the action has to be "staged" so that the audience can "focus" on it. The speed and rhythm of the action and hence its effectiveness depend on "timing", all of which helps you to "sell the routine". The clown should be sensitive to whoever is being the "straight man", whether it is the team leader or a member of the crowd.

The terminology is important because good ideas are easily forgotten and need to be jotted down. Each routine is flexible and the performer needs to experiment with all its potentialities. Do not repeat anything that you are unhappy about, there will always be plenty of other possibilities. Also try not to repeat good ideas exactly or too often and make them stale, as does an oft repeated verbal joke. Remember that one has to capture the dancers interest as well as the changing crowds.

#### PHYSICAL COMEDY ELEMENTS

Humour can be separated into two broad categories, verbal, ie jokes and stories, and non-verbal, ie body movements and facial expressions. Clowns rely on the latter, they are now inseparable. An inexperienced clown usually lacks the skill to express himself effectively. He has to learn to act like a fool without being one. In verbal comedy a joke becomes stale after a while, it no longer comes as a surprise. In physical comedy, eg the pie in the face, the foot stuck in a bucket, we can watch the routines repeatedly because everytime the actor reacts differently and the "same" situation takes on a newness that makes it funny time and time again. It is advisable to use real cakes in slapstick, at least they can be licked off!

One of the major elements of humour is the occurrence of the unexpected. Any deviation from a predictable sequence has the potential to be funny. If the audience expects something to happen, and it does, there is no surprise and it is not funny. The funniest jokes require spontaneity with little or no warning that something unusual is about to happen. But surprise alone does not guarantee a laugh, the unexpected event or punch line must be related to what is going on at the time. It is the story or buildup that makes the punch line funny.

Slapstick is the comedy form using apparent physical discomfort and pain, such as falls, blows and slaps, but in which the actor never really gets hurt. Just being hit or falling is not funny, its the recipients reaction that makes the slapstick effective. Bending and hearing a clothing rip is funny only when the person reacts with embarrassment and/or fear.

Reactions are a vital element in physical comedy. Often used is the "double take", one of those second glances that confirms the unexpected. Running gags with variations on a theme are worth developing, especially with unexpected twists in the repetitions.

Timing in comedy is important, and the performer must pace themselves. It needs practice for it to become instinctive. The audience has to have time to react, to laugh.

For example, organise goofy applause, get them to move hands in circle for a 'round' of applause, clap lips, buzz the lips with a finger, slap knees, clap while bending over, clap both hands, then right knee and left knee to sound like a galloping horse, pop the mouth with a finger, jump and clap, beat chest for Tarzan, flap arms like a chicken, shout quack, quack like a duck, hold nose and say phew!

The 3 Stooges are an excellent inspiration with quick fire situations. As an example they form a pseudo pyramid standing three in a row, by the outsides hooking their inside foot behind the centre's knees and, holding hands, leaning outwards. Another old clowning trick is to pass handkerchiefs but as one has a ball in its middle it can be bounced at one point.

#### WORKING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

Any performer working with an audience, whether clown, magician, or standup comic, should be able to grab the attention of the audience and lead them to feel any emotion desired appropriate to the act. For the clown this is slanted to humour and fantasy.

When working in pairs the one with the most bizarre makeup and clothes will always be expected to play the fool.

When working with a partner, real or dummy, you are performing more of a play. It is then easy to project feelings. When working solo the method has to be slightly different because you must talk to the audience, through careful choice of actions and words, either asking for a particular response or obtaining it by performing universally recognised physical movements.

Some non-verbal signs are, a wave of the hand on entry as a "Hello", a wave while stepping back to convey that the act is over and you are leaving, a hand to the ear or a palm lifted upward asking the audience to respond louder or more vigorously. You treat the audience like they are a group of friends.

It doesn't all have to be dumb show, one can talk to them. Tell them to do something, have them all participate, choose helpers so that they feel part of the show.

Clowning is a form of communication, the clown expresses things to the audience, they respond with applause, laughter, groans (if they are enjoying themselves) or even boos or silence (if they are not). When not enjoying it, they are also telling you something! It is not a two way conversation if one side does all the talking and doesn't seem to listen. The louder, longer and more frequent the response, the greater their enjoyment. You increase

their enjoyment by getting them involved. "Participation" is a key word for keeping the attention and interest of an audience. Think of the success of games, group songs etc. It makes the audience feel special and creates a more personal relationship. Use them as often as you can.

Engage the audience from the initial warm-up. They get to know you and it shows who is in charge of this part of the show. It captures their attention and sets the mood for what follows. Particular possibilities are,

1. enter through the crowd shaking hands and waving to everyone.
2. shout hello and get them to respond till they give all they've got.
3. have an applause, shouting or singing contest between two groups.

Some audience participation ideas.

1. chose a "cheering" section, maybe with as few as one, to cheer or shout on a cue, which could be a word, or a gesture such as a wave, sticking thumbs in ears etc
2. have a magic word, either related to the theme of the show, the current "business" or just a piece of nonsense.
3. have a "magic" action, eg roll down the socks and croak like a frog,
4. do some of the "business" within the crowd.

Choosing some of the volunteers.

The rest of the audience will feel involved. Do not ask for volunteers, chose them, avoid anyone likely to be shy. Ask questions to get to know them,

1. they know you are a friend,
2. erases fears of being on stage,
3. introduces them to the audience,
4. gives you an idea of what you cooperation you'll get.

Add innocent questions looking for unexpected responses.

Using a volunteer.

They do not actually have to help in anything! Perhaps just hold a prop or display a sign. Another way is to get them to mimic your actions. This could lead to having a contest between two volunteers. One could have a "band" with simple percussion instruments, eg blocks of wood, pairs of stones, tin lids. It also helps the quality of the audience relationship to try and give a small gift to helpers no matter how trivial.

Be sensitive - avoid offence by ridiculing or embarrassing anyone in the audience. A clown has no bias regardless of age, sex ethnic or religious background.

Hecklers act as they do primarily to get attention, therefore be understanding and get them to help, you don't have to get even with them, try and be a friend. As some hecklers do not quiet down you had best deal with them early on. Be prepared, they may be from the party you came with!

When working in front of an audience, try and work out, if you can, what they reacted to and why they laughed, or why they did not. Perhaps you will need another person to help you make these post-mortems. Take this work seriously, but do not intellectualise too much, the objective is to have fun and be spontaneous and to remember that next time it will always be a little different. The more you rehearse and the more you know what you are doing, the easier it is to play with the act and experiment. What makes each performance different is the changing crowd, as anyone who has played in a stage show or pantomime for a number of nights will know, each night having its own rapport.

Each routine has structure and it may be worth developing a check list for one's first attempts. It needs headings such as,

1. Structure eg Entry, beginning, meeting, conflict, resolution, exit.
2. Content eg Mimicry, discovery, trickery, stupidity, blow or fall, surprise.
3. Work Up eg Outline, rehearsal, explorations, polishing, testing, notes, rework.

The character must be maintained through a routine. One tries to stay in character throughout a show, but this should not be held so when chatting seriously. Be prepared to explain your costume and role to enquirers. Try and drop into the background for such moments, after all the clown is not restricted to clowning.

A common experience in the performing arts is that one needs about 3 times the material that can be used in a single show. This is equivalent for a clown of about 50 odd bits of business that can be slipped into as required. With the comedy pair Abbot & Costello, the fat man never knew what the order of the act would be, thus spontaneity!

## EXERCISES

Only elementary stunts can be sorted out live with a crowd, so there is a need to develop oneself using exercises. Simple things to try are, freezing, switching from one attitude to another, the walk, stylised movements, mimes, entrances, the character you are, and the initial creation of routines. Other aspects need some experience of working in the open, such as how to appear and disappear from attention, how to be "open" and interactive. You will also find that you need a special approach geared to certain types in the audiences, like babies, children or pretty girls!

"AS IF" is a significant phrase to a clown, you do things "AS IF" certain conditions, usually imaginary ones, are affecting you.

The Third Exercise is to try behaving as if you need to be loved, to be accepted, to be allowed to join in, to inflict embarrassment. It is very difficult to do at first, but persist.

Some routines include "falls" which need to be practiced. It is wise to start using a cushioned surface. Before you try a fall do a warm up to minimise the risk of hurting yourself. You use your hands to slap the floor, both to create the sound of falling and to break the fall. The arms must be bent a little at the elbow on touching so that there is give - it is rigidity

that leads to broken bones. The rest of the fall is achieved by landing on something somewhat soft (buttocks) and rolling. But remember to end looking unhurt, even if you are not, by grinning, moving immediately or jumping up.

Slapstick or fights require simulated blows which do not actually connect but for which the receiver claps their hands to provide the noise of the slap or punch while jerking the supposedly hit part away. A "slapstick" was once an instrument for belabouring with a built in clapper, similar in noise and effect to the morris fool's bladder. Spectators should not be the butt of any joke. The clown is the silly character and he, not the audience, should end looking the fool or being on the receiving end. With care one can have a stooge in the audience who becomes the innocent victim of a routine, but it must always become clear that the recipient is part of the act before it is over or the crowd will be alienated.

In general the morris clown has as a potential partner anyone around, and the other dancers, the leader or the other characters can be involved in preplanned activity. These you can slap, trick, fight, outdo, outsmart, and develop comic relationships with - but if you are on your own, you have to make props, real or imaginary, do this for you. Props may be wayward, defective or break, you may use them improperly, or they have a mind of their own. You create a personality for the props by treating them like people, love them, get angry with them or throw them around! Beware of what you do with the animal, otherwise children will copy it and make life a misery.

The traditional accompaniment to the clown is his stick with a jester's head, or bauble, known in Hampshire as a "Jack". This tool can be used as an elementary ventriloquist dummy. The morris fool has a bladder and cow tail on opposite ends. Bladder work on people can be useful, but it is not important. Dancers do not appreciate it and in excess it can encourage children to become a nuisance. Remember the pun that someone with a weak bladder is an embarrassment!

Experience suggests that fooling must not be too choreographed with the dancing - this is the role of the animal - and it does cut across the link role with the audience. The Tommy and Betty of the Rapper can have parts in their dance, but even here they are usually played for the laughs.

You can use the audience, ask them to help you solve something, or get someone to volunteer to help you, and get them to applaud or boo when you want it.

There are numerous classic clown gags, mostly quick and easy to fit into gaps in a show.

#### THE LAST DEEP BREATH

The worst moment for the clown is just before coming on, being prepared and dealing with stage fright. Many things can carry you through once you have started. The Stand-Up-Comic is advised to talk over the heads to the persons at the back, officially because it appears to involve everyone, but really because it is actually helping to combat nervousness.

Rehearsal and performance build up confidence. Concentration helps one to relax and be less self conscious. The techniques of acting require concentration and focussing and this, plus your imagination working on the possibilities around you, will reduce awkward feelings.

However there is still that moment just before. The tension can not be avoided but it can be accepted as natural. Actors often take a few deep breaths immediately before an entrance. Before you start, follow a discipline to energise, use warm up exercises, you are as likely to strain muscles as any dancer, and relax and clear the mind. Think inwards, called "centering", to recognise your own inner resources for what you going to do. A strong "centre" frees you to extend yourself physically and to be a little outrageous.

### EXAMPLES

It is interesting, but cruel, experience at a workshop to ask someone to suggest something that should be "funny" and then get them to do it with a dancing set. Most times it is not funny because the action is expected. The same thing happens in a club when the characters are asked to work up some business - the team is often well off without it. The fun must grow out of the activity, its absurdity, outrageousness or unexpectedness.

What works for me? My character is aggressive, determined to be one up, or even two, and large! Being large, the others are cautious in how they retaliate. I have had an "Andy Pandy" blue striped suit since 1956. In France the people were very puzzled at my behaviour until they thought of Oublix of the Asterix strip cartoon!

Here are some of the things that I would do,

1. Comment loudly on the leader's announcements or just be personal, and polish their shoes with a handkerchief (theirs if you can) when you have been naughty.
2. Run in with a stick, especially if it is a handkerchief dance, while it is forming up, but eventually find that there is no place available.
3. Stand where the set has to pass, eg in Black Joke Adderbury, and just move away in time, or then again, do not.
4. Watch the steps with amazement and slide off to the edge for a quiet but visible practice and come back and do it wrong.
5. Tag onto the end off the set during the dance and follow it for a while and then cheerfully sail off the wrong way at some time.
6. Get involved in one of the fights in Swaggering Boney, either by helping one corner, getting caught up between the two corners, pushing a reluctant corner forward, or jumping in too far so that there is collision from which one of you bounce off.
7. Take a rest in the middle of the set, say during rounds.
8. Chase after the leapers in Leapfrog, either never getting to a leap, or threatening to go over in the wrong direction, or just bladdering bottoms.

9. Dance up the middle of the set at the end of a dance to take all the glory.
10. Pass through the set in a stick dance but escape just before the sticking begins.
11. Use a stick to make the rest jump over it during rounds.
12. Use two sticks and try to do both sides of the stick tapping and get into a mess.
13. Terrify the music, threaten to tighten the accordin straps, pass a handkerchief under the fingers, blindfold them or wind them up with a pretend key, tie their bell pads together, all because they can not do anything back to you while they are playing.

I have said nothing about "patter" as I have never cultivated any standard spiel. There are many almost standard/traditional speeches around which can be used as the basis for developing one's own.

I have a number of stunts, mostly usable indoors. Perhaps the one that I enjoyed most was the "One Legged Bampton Dancer." There are occasions when the messy cake in the face routine works, but it is only fair to use a real cake not a replica made with shaving cream. At least the victim should be able to lick it off! (But please, not treacle!)

#### WINDING OUT

Being a clown is not an absolute license for behaviour, it has to be acceptable to the audience/community. It goes hand in hand with the mastery of elementary skills which will also needs patience, concentration, self-discipline and restraint to develop.

The biggest problem for the morris fool is the morris team. Few dancers see the show as an integrated performance and stand in front of the audience, walk around, talk and otherwise distract, especially when something like a familiar set piece by the clown or jig dancer takes place. Familiarity breeds indifference. They have no concept of being inobtrusive and really need to be choreographed by the club leader.

This article is not a complete guide, it raises some issues at both a philosophical and a romantic level and gives limited practical advice, but primarily the initiative has to come from you who must want to be a clown. There has been a problem in writing the advice because my experience is that of the morris fool and little of being a separate clown. There are numerous classic clown gags, particularly when working in pairs or trios. Watch good sources such as the Three Stooges on TV. Need many more exercises

There is very little helpful literature for clowns on the practice of the art compared with the documentation of its history. I found "Clown for Circus and Stage" by Mark Stolzenberg, from Sterling Publishing, New York, published in 1981 and 1983 and distributed in the UK by Blandford Press, and "Creative Clowning" by eight various people, from Java Publishing Co, Colorado Springs, USA, in 1988, the most inspiring and I am indebted to them. The first I believe has been revised as "Be a Clown", pub in 1989.

## BLACK FACE MINSTRELS

1. **MINSTREL MEMORIES** by Harry Reynolds, Alston Rivers Ltd, London 1928  
The Story of Burnt Cork Minstrelsy in Great Britain from 1836 to 1927.

Jim Crow b 1754 on the estate of Squire Crow of South American parents who were executed when he was 9 for the murder of an overseer. He absconded to New York & played fiddle & did negro dancing with a peculiar jump. He was given the original Jump Jim Crow song. He made enough money that in 1787 he purchased a farm in Virginia, married an American woman and eventually owned slaves himself. Died 1809.

"Oh, Jim Crow's come to town, as you all must know,  
An' he wheel about, he turn about, he do jis so,  
An' ebery time he wheel about, he jump Jim Crow."

Thomas Dartmouth Rice, a tall man of 25, actor & light comedian, heard the refrain by a negro ostler when walking in Cincinnati in 1830. He could tell a story, sing a song or dance a hornpipe after a style, but he had personality and was slightly eccentric with mannerisms, but he had tact and shrewdness & was alert for ideas. He tried it in the Old Dury, Pittsburgh in the autumn of 1830, in borrowed old clothes. The novelty was a great success. He added other songs to the repertoire including "Such a Gettin' Upstairs". He remained in Pittsburgh for two years, went to Philadelphia, Boston, New York & then to England, the Surrey Theatre, London, July 9th 1836. He seldom worked with minstrel troupes. He did burlesques such as "The Virginian Mummy" which was a favourite with minstrel comedians for 75 years. They all depended on the inimitable acting of Rice. He came to England again in 1838 and 1843. In the later he was Julius Caesar Washington Hickory Dick in "Yankee Notes for English Circulation" and did "Jump Jim Crow" & "Such a gittin' Upstairs". He was paralysed in 1858 and died in New York in 1860 aged 53. In 1843 Joe Sweeny appeared who introduced the first version of the modern banjo which he developed about 1830.

The first minstrel troupe, The Virginia Minstrels, formed in New York in Feb 1843 consisting of Dan Emmett, Frank Brower, Dick Pelham and Whitlock who conceived it, playing banjo, violin, bone castanets & tambourine and avoiding vulgarity. They came to and performed in England in May 1843 in Liverpool, Manchester and London in their "original, novel, grotesque and melodious Ethiopian Entertainment". They disbanded in July 1843. Dan Emmett wrote "I wish I was in Dixie" in Sept 1859 as a new walk around finale for the show he was in in New York. The greatest financial and social success in the early days was the Ethiopian Serenaders in England from January 1846, the music being taken from the most popular operas of the day interspersed with Ethiopian melodies. These included Buffalo Gals, Oh Susannah, Boatman Dance and Old Joe. The Christy Minstrels started in New York in 1846 and ran till just after E P Christy retired in 1854. A company opened in London in August 1857 called the Christy Minstrels with enough performers from the original to justify the name, and included Joe Brown a champion jig dancer and the song Nelly Gray. There soon became an epidemic of "Christy Troupes" so that the name became identified with Minstrelsy. In 1882-3 there were 32 touring troupes in the USA. From April 1859 till April 1909 there were minstrels at the lesser St James' Hall, Piccadilly



In April 1909 a newspaper said "burnt cork minstrelsy seems to have taken its departure from the list of London amusements, but up to the present nothing of any consequence seems to have arisen to take its place." It was commented as still true 20 years later.

E W Mackney accompanied himself on a piano but in his famous topical song "The Whole Hog or None" he capered around the stage in a quaint costume. The original words were written by Chas Sloman, but it was kept up to date with endless improvisations. He also played the violin, banjo, bones, guitar and was famous for farm yard imitations on the fiddle. His dancing was so good that it led to him being asked to judge champion dancing competitions. He started in pantomime in 1833 at the age of 9. He became the leading exponent of Burnt cork minstrelsy in England. He retired in early middle age. He died in March 1909 aged 83.

"The world's a funny kind of place with funny people there,  
It's just the kind of steeplechase in which we all must share,  
To high and low, to rich and poor, it all turns out the same,  
For if the king is not secure, the knave must win the game.

Oh! law gals, sure Charleston is a pretty city, were you ever there?  
If not you ought to go,  
For the gals of Carolina, oh, they are so full of fun,  
There's no mistake about them, 'tis the whole hog or none!

I wish I were a volunteer that I might have a gun,  
I'd exercise at Aldershot and learn to fight like fun,  
I'd follow there a soldier's life, and taste its every charm,  
And perhaps when I came home, I'd have rheumatics in my arm."

G H Chirgwin, the white eyed kaffir, with the aid of a pair of churchwarden pipes and a tea tray amusingly imitated a clog dancer.

In 1880 a minstrel quintette, the Ethiopian Troubadours opened at the Canterbury Music Hall. They did a 30 minute act with overture, ballads by tenor and baritone, quartettes, patter, comic items, banjo selections, burlesque prima donna and ended with a mini burlesque of Il Travatore. Harry Reynold's Minstrels appeared in semi-court costume and had a back cloth representing a full troupe of 30 performers and an orchestra. The act included vocal marches, ballads with harmonised choruses, gags, laughing and whistling songs, dances and ended with unaccompanied quartette singing of old time minstrel medleys. After a time it was done in two scenes, minstrel sit round and plantation scene without leaving the stage, all in 20 minutes. the performers were interlocutor, tambourine and man, male soprano, tenor, basso profundo, bones and man and baritone. Ran for several years and it brought a minstrel revival to the halls till WW1. The Palladium Minstrels were 100 strong with 30 banjoists and went for big effects. While in the Variety theatres the unusual costumes could be of the goliwog variety with eccentric makeup by the comedians making it look like a burlesque of a minstrel show.

The brothers Charles and Harry Raynor were a blackface musical act who introduced the Cat Duet to English audiences. At one time knockabout black face comedians were the rage, then Stump Orators, it lent itself to topical

illusions and could be kept up to date. Performing develops initiative, self-reliance and readiness of wit, cultivates a thickskin, a spirit of serene optimism and a dogmatic belief in himself. Pierrots were introduced by Clifford Essex about 1892, Harry Pelisser developed the idea with his troupe "The Follies".

The best old minstrel shows were built on a solid foundation of good vocal and instrumental music, it was not confined to old time melodies or plantation songs. There was usually 8 comedians on the corner to ensure variety. There were contrasting voices, male sopranos, male altos, light tenors, dramatic tenors, baritones and basso profundos. the songs and ballads included plantation, simple homely, romantic seranades, martial songs, rollicking sea songs, anything that allowed a final harmonised refrain. They avoided voices with vibrato, needing a firm steady tone. The comedians had a variety of songs, funny songs on many subjects, topical matter, whistling, laughing, yodelling, mimetic numbers, coon songs and dances, concerted numbers, and single and double gags.

Curtain went up to a double arc of ebony hued gentlemen, white gloves and expansive shirt fronts. Interlocutor, selected for deep voice and impressive manner said "gentlemen be seated". He introduced the Grand Introductory Overture and Opening Chorus by the whole troupe, during which the corner men gave a smart and spectacular performance with bones and tambourine. Then a programme of mixed sentiment and humour, using song, dance, story and clever specialities. Then a Stump orator with humorous comment on current local topics. The first part of a show ended with an operatic selection, a medley of plantation songs or a spectacular finale. During the first part the orchestra would be on the stage. The second part, "The Grand Olio of Varieties", includes variety acts, solo dancing, acrobatics, big comncerted song or dance acts, musical novelties, mimicry, skits on the latest crazes, illusions, pantomimes, ending with a burlesque of a well known opera or popular stage success, to send everyone away in a bright and merry mood. The key to a minstrel show compared with a variety show was a person who was the guiding spirit who ensured the variety and interest throughout.

The Fisk University Jubille Singers were the only group to get the fullest effect out of the old negro tunes.

A "Statue Dance" is as follows : a little dance then a sudden stop and a pose illustrative of say "The Dying Gladiator", another little dance and a pose of "Ajax Defying the Lightning" and so on.

The best minstrel black was obtained by burning good champagne corks to a fine powder and mixing with water to the consistency of blacking.



## THE MORRIS DANCE IN WALES

by Alex Helm

*A copy of the following article was sent to me by Alex Helm in the early 1960's. Unlike others prepared by the indexing team I am not aware that this was ever published. It has significance because very little more information has appeared and perhaps its circulation might unearth more.*

So little is known of the morris in Wales that any classification of the manifestations as a whole is difficult, if not impossible. The known appearances are confined to the northern and southern coastlines, those of the former being reasonably well described in outline, but those of the latter being very vague and, in some cases, only doubtfully authentic. Separating the two areas is the whole length of Wales: in Merioneth, Montgomery, Cardigan and Breckonshire, no traditional observance of any kind has so far been traced, and in Radnorshire, only the dressing of graves with flowers at Clyro, recorded by Kilvert, 1870, has come to light. In Pembrokeshire the Morris is mentioned twice: at Fishguard, Mary Neal saw some stick dances in a Mummers' Play "very like Shepherd's Aye in form, which had been taught by two Irishmen" (1), and Burton, 1891, quotes the Articles of Visitation and Enquiry for the Diocese of St. Davids, which, in 1662, prohibited, inter alia, morris dancers coming into church to "the disturbance of the congregation".

At best these unsatisfactory references only give doubtful evidence of a ceremonial; at worst, they add some confusion. Miss Neal's observations suggest Morris as found in the Cotswolds, but as no stick dance of this name exists, it is highly likely that she was in error. Her informants told her that this was a "war dance": Kennedy, 1867, gives details of a six-man dance called Dhroghedy's March danced in Wexford, which is probably, in essence, what Miss Neal saw. There was some interplay of custom between Southern Ireland and South Wales, but a dance, Irish in origin, does not further a study of the indigenous Welsh Morris.

If it was necessary to prohibit morris dancers in church in the diocese of St. Davids, it is an argument for the existence of the Morris, but the wide use of the name in describing traditional ceremonies makes it hopeless to even guess what was involved. The Articles, incidentally, only prohibit the morris dancers in church and not generally, but there is no record of their existence at any time after this date.

Further along the coastline in Glamorganshire, E.H., 1819, recorded the appearance of "Merry Dancers" on Old Christmas Day. No exact location is given, but the writer implies that the manifestation was common in West Glamorgan. This involved three dancers, with hats and short jackets decorated profusely with "paper ornaments", who went "from house to house, dancing in each a sort of reel chiefly....peculiar to Wales". Frequently these dancers accompanied Punch and Judy, the former with animal cap and mask, jacket made partly or wholly of the same materials, fox's brush pendant behind, and a concealed bell "about his hinder parts", and the latter a "Female" with black face, enormous broad brimmed, slouched beaver hat, and female attire. This "Female", the tallest man procurable, was belaboured by the rod held by Punch. (2) These are of course the Glamorganshire

## Welsh Morris

equivalents of the Fool and his wife, and although they occasionally appeared without the Merry Dancers, they were able, in a joint appearance, to dance a pas de deux to allow the Merry Dancers to rest. This is the only account traced of this type of manifestation in Wales, its nearest parallel being the Border Morris of Shropshire. (3)

More recently, the existence of a Morris in this county depends entirely on the eyewitness accounts of Mrs Thomas of Nantgarw, who described what she saw to members of the Welsh Folk Dance Society. If the dances seen by her were Morris Dances, they were in a very degraded form. Such details as are of interest are as follows: (4)

Rali Twm Sion (5) (Tom John's Rally). Danced by 12 men and women in fancy dress. Bells on fingers. A thirteenth man, dressed in semi-military dress called on the dancers. (6)

Caerphilly Fair Much as Rali Twm Sion, but performers wore Welsh costume. (Caerphilly's important fair was the cheese fair in July).

Dawns y Pelau (The Ball Dance). Danced by six men and women, each dancer having a ball attached to the outside wrist by elastic. Dancers enter in couples and promenade in a circle with girls on the outside; change to (?) 4 rows with men on the inside, ass face partners stepping on spot. During this figure, the men shout "Hi! Hi!" about six times; later they bounce balls out and up in different directions.

Y Caseg Eira (The Snow Horse) (7). Danced by eight men and is suggestive of the Lichfield Morris. (8)

There is no similarity between the account written in 1819 and Mrs Thomas' description, of which only the latter dance appears to be genuinely ceremonial, the other three showing fugitive traces only. Bearing in mind the present state of the Northwestern Morris (9), it is not impossible that something similar to the Lancashire and Cheshire "Fluffy Morris" has appeared in Glamorganshire. The dancers were seen at the local fair, and may have "improved" their dances for the occasion. Whatever their origin, they do not further materially the study of the Welsh Morris.

Turning to the northern counties, in Caernarvonshire, Mellor, 1935, was told of springtime troupes of dancers with ribbons and bells who performed opposite Pen-y-gwrd Hotel at the top of Llanberis Pass. His informant, Mrs Williams, thought they came from Capel Curig, but investigation there was unproductive. Ruth Lewis, (10), writing to Cecil Sharp, said she heard rumours of a May Day Cadi Ha at Caernarvon. (11) With these two references the information from this country comes to an end, but travelling east along the coastline to Denbighshire and Flintshire, the information suddenly becomes richer, though still lacking the completeness which the work of collectors in England has brought to the Morris there. It is on these manifestations that the definition of the Welsh Morris is based.

In Flintshire, this Morris, usually known as the Cadi Ha, has been traced in Bagillt, Holywell, Mold, Mostyn and Rhuddlan, in Denbighshire at Ruthin. No notation of this Morris has survived (12), but reports suggest that the manifestations were identical in broad detail, as given in the definition.

The rector of Llanarmon, the Rev. Peter Roberts, gave a confused description of a North Wales Morris in 1815. In this, the Fool and his wife were known as the Fool and Megan (Jack and Jill), and the dancers, all men, wore ribbons and bells. Roberts, confusing the Morris with the game of Nine Men's Morris, gave the number of performers as nine men, who danced to the music of Country Bumpkins, a social dance for the same number. During the performance, one dancer, helped by two others, turned a 'somer-set'.

An account published by Hone, 1827, tells how the dancers collected silver articles wherewith to decorate their garland, which they carried with them in their procession, and set in position wherever the dance took place. Although Hone, probably correctly, calls this a garland, later accounts refer to it as Y Fedwen Haf (The summer birch), or Canghen Haf (summer tree). Miss Karpeles, 1932, investigating the Bagillt Morris, was told that this branch (or May Tree) had to be in blossom, and was decorated with ornaments, jewels and watches. (13) The Morris was last reported in 1941, though only as a ragged remnant, and is the only place recorded where personal investigation has been fruitful. The Flintshire Morris appeared in May, and the garland carried by the dancers is almost certainly a May Bush. (14)

It is very difficult to obtain first hand accounts of this Morris: like most Morris Dancers, those in Wales seem to have been peripatetic, and eyewitnesses generally seemed to believe that they 'came from elsewhere'. When 'elsewhere' was named, and enquiries made, information was usually not very useful, and the pursuit of it rather like chasing a will-o'-the-wisp.

Mellor, op.cit., was told that this reluctance to discuss dancing was the result of the great religious revival of the eighteenth century, which swept away all memories of dancing: an informant told him that his grandmother would occasionally invite her friends into the house, pull down the blinds, move back the furniture and begin to dance. Although this does not refer to the ceremonial dance, it is indicative of two things: first, dancing in Wales did persist in spite of an religious veto, and secondly, those who did dance were anxious to avoid observation.

This partly explains the difficulty in obtaining details of Welsh Morris Dancers, but is probably not the whole story. It has already been said that such ceremonials are confined to the southern and northern counties, and a glance at any distribution of population map will show that these areas, the coal mining districts of Wales, are the most thickly, relatively speaking, populated. The mountainous centre of Wales is, even today, only sparsely peopled: in 1700, the counties of Merioneth, Montgomery, Radnor, Cardigan and Brecknock could only show a population of less than fifty to the square mile. Cardigan alone of these could boast an increased population of fifty to one hundred by 1801. (15) These figures suggest that any large scale distribution of ceremonial is unlikely, if not impossible. For comparison, Flintshire shows figures of 50 to 100 in 1700, and 150-200 in 1801. It would be interesting to know whence came this additional population, particularly when it is borne in mind that the earliest account of the North Wales Morris is dated 1815. This suggests that the new population (in which an increasing birth rate and a declining death rate admittedly played an important part), may have brought the Morris into the county.

The affinity of this Morris with the Northwestern Morris could easily lead

to the assumption (for it is nothing more) that there was a movement of population from Cheshire; the distribution map shows that the Northwestern Morris in an indeterminate form, reached as far as Chester. The Morris of Flint seems older however than what remains in the Northwest. There is an insistence on what are believed to be the older ingredients of the Morris; the continued existence of the Fool and his wife in an important position - all accounts stress their appearance and participation - make the dancers insignificant by comparison. Looking at South Wales for a moment, it has already been noted that these two could have an independent existence, unheard of elsewhere. The procession from place to place was a ceremonial with a fixed order, first the Cadi ('female') and fool, then the Garland bearer, and behind him the fiddler and last of all the dancers. This is a 'luck visitation' in what must be the oldest recorded ceremonial form.

The closest relation to this Morris is however the Derbyshire Morris, which has been shown to be of some antiquity. (16) The two manifestations have much in common; the use of handkerchiefs, the insistence on and importance of ceremonial personages, and even a suggestion, at Bagillt, of a differentiation between the two files of dancers, one file, according to the observation of two students from Bangor University before 1914, being described as 'maids'. ( ) Unfortunately it is not clear whether these were 'maids' as described, or men dressed as maids, but otherwise, there is no doubt that this was a ceremonial in all other aspects. There may be some yet unexplained significance in the fact that the dancers seem to have been miners.

It is remarkable that no manifestation has been traced on the eastern side of Wales, bordering on England. Whether this is a tribute to the efficiency of Offa's Dyke, or a sad reflection on the failure of collectors to investigate the area thoroughly, is unknown, but it is true to say that political boundaries are non-existent in terms of traditional observance, and there are records of ceremonials in both Herefordshire and Shropshire. (17) It is not considered that much more will come to light from Wales at this stage: the most productive areas in the field of ceremonial dance are now the most populated and urbanised. With this combination the search is usually unproductive, though one hopes that the patient and enthusiastic work of the members of the Welsh Folk Dance Society will yet bear fruit.

#### SUGGESTED DEFINITION

Welsh Morris. Indeterminate number of dancers traditionally with ribbons & bells. Handkerchiefs are used in the dance, which is a Processional. Dancers accompany Fool and 'Female' (Cadi or Megan) and Garland Bearer. Garland decorated with silver articles. Appeared May Day. Occupation of performers believed to be miners.

- 
- (1) Neal, 1910, p.4.
  - (2) cp. Father Christmas belabouring his wife in some West Country mummers' plays.
  - (3) See paper on the Border Morris. Additionally, Mellor, 1935, quotes an account contributed by Cadrawd to the Cardiff Times, 1911, which, in describing a 'Morris Dance' at Llangynwyd which was called the Long

- Dance. From the description given, it is obvious that this is a social dance not a ceremonial, & as such is not taken into account in this paper.
- (4) For this information I am indebted to Mrs Lois Blake, president of the Welsh Folk Dance Society.
  - (5) For the notation see '3 Nantgarw Dances', Llangollen 1954.
  - (6) Mrs Blake views this as a degenerate Processional Morris, though now the Procession is in different directions in the confined space of the dance floor. As the notation now stands, it is difficult to see how the dancers could make any processional progress from one place to another.
  - (7) For details see JEFDS, 1957, p.103.
  - (8) See paper on Lichfield Morris.
  - (9) See under that paper p.
  - (10) Later Lady Lewis.
  - (11) Cecil Sharp Notebooks - EFDSS Library.
  - (12) Mellor, 1935, gives a suggested notation for this Morris, but it should be noted that this is suggested only.
  - (13) cp. Rushcart.
  - (14) See under May, p.
  - (15) For these figures, the maps given by W.G.East, M.A. in An Historical Geography of England Before 1800, H.C.Derby (ed.) pp 525-5, 1951 (3rd Edn) have been used. These maps are based on estimates contained in the 1811 Census Report.
  - (16) cp. Winster, Derbys.
  - (17) See under Border Morris, p.

### COMMENT ON THE ARTICLE

*It has to be remembered that Helm was writing before the "revival" of border, NW, Molly and free form street dances and we have a much broader appreciation of what is acceptable today, whereas Helm was conditioned by the knowledge and information available then. The oddest assumption is that teams only had one dance or that what was noticed was all there was.*

*We do have an Irish mummers dance notation from Wexford as danced at Fishguard, and it differs in key ways from what Helm imagines. Helm is wrong in that there are several Cotswold Shepherds Hey dances with sticks, he should have known of the Badby one at least, but the Bidford dance published by Mary Neal is probably that intended.*

*There is more information in "Welsh Folk Customs" published by the National Museum of Wales, Welsh Folk Museum.*

*The Nantgarw dances are properly described in "Dawns" 1973-4, the Welsh Folk Dance Society Journal, all the rest is imaginative reconstruction.*

*Y Caseg Eira has been reconstructed in increasing amount of detail several times. There does not appear to be anything of Lichfield in it to other people, and in any case the Lichfield dances are highly suspect.*

*Helm was not aware of the enormous immigration to the Welsh mines - quite a few Cotswold dancers made their first fortunes working double shifts, but they never had time to introduce the morris as well.*

*The early garland description fits that of the Bezant at Shaftesbury and the Milkmaids on May Day in the towns.*





## THE SINGING GAME

by Iona and Peter Opie  
Pub OUP, Oxford, 1985

see also,

The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren material collected in 1950's

Children's Games in Street and Playground (1969) part one of game material, covering competitive games, this volume is part two and the third part, games needing equipment, is yet to be written.

Oxford Book of Children's Verse

Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes (1951)

Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book

### THREAD THE NEEDLE

Boisterous procession, with as long a file as possible, the front pair raise their arms to form an arch or "Alley" or "Eye" and the back person leads the rest through and going ahead to form their own arch etc. Repeat ad lib. Often done with whooping and hollering.

Bradford on Avon - Shrove Tuesday - included "clipping church", forming a circle and going round the church three times. Trowbridge, Longbrigde Deverell, Marlborough's Jacky John's Fair also on Shrove Tuesday. Ellesmere (Shropshire) had a similar custom to Bradford on Avon. Evesham, Minchinhampton - on Easter Monday. Tenby - on May Day, also danced round Maypoles, and when they met other lines they weaved through giving alternate right and left hands (called a Ladies Chain but really a hey). Saffron Walden, Linton (Cambridgeshire) on May Day. Mount Bay, Cornwall - on Midsummer Eve - cry "An Eye! An Eye!..." along with bonfires, fireworks and tar barrels.

Philip Stubbes...."may daunce the wilde moris thorow a needles eye." Dance also referred to by Hardy and Barnes. Variants - back pair arch so that tops have to double back - dance in a circle so that the next arch is beside the first arch etc.

### GRANDY NEEDLES or DUCK UNDER WATER

Line up in pairs, with inside hands joined, and run through from back to top in turn but pairs following close together to make arches at top. At points in the song they would thump the backs of those going underneath. Could also use a handkerchief between the pairs. John Clare associated it with May Day celebrations after the garlands had been taken round. I learnt a Basque version at Sidmouth with yells.

Variant - capture the last person and question them in order to form tug o' war sides or capture the last person or pair, who either kiss the arch or each other.

### WINDING UP THE CLOCK or TWINE THE GARLAND or BALL OF YARN

One end, perhaps arranged to be the tallest person, stands still and the rest wind up until unable to move further. The aim is either, (a) the middle to lead out somehow, (b) to jog up and down till someone falls over, (c) to tread on each other's toes, (d) to form a squeeze, or (e) unwind as fast as possible. Not quite as the SNAIL CREEP movement where the leader winds in and then leads out. In Warwickshire this movement was started from a Thread Needle figure.

## BIG SHIP

Hold hands in a line, one end anchors, the rest lead through the end alley till the end one has to turn with their arms crossed in front of them and then repeat under each arch moving outwards in turn, till all have turned.

Ending either,

(a) let go and wag fingers at each other singing last verse,

"The Captain said, This will never never do etc"

(b) all sink to ground.

"The big ship sank to the bottom of the sea etc"

## THE WIND BLOWS HIGH

Chosing by the one in the middle shutting their eyes, spinning round with arm outstretched, and stoping pointing at someone. Outer ring could circle round at the same time.

## SALLY WATER - BUMP ON THE BACK

A player sits or crouches in the centre of the ring for the verses, springs up, touches someone who is in the circle and races round the outside of the ring before the touched player can get around the outside in the other direction to regain their place.

## CUSHION DANCES

For 300 yrs temporary possession of a cushion gave a man the right on convivial occasions to kiss the women he most fancied. The Cushion dance was mentioned by John Clare. Man starts, kneels in front, she then kneels also, they kiss, and he joins line behind her either holding hands in a line or both hands on waist or holding a trailing part of her clothing.

## A HUNTING WE WILL GO - GRAND OLD DUKE OF YORK

Two lines facing. Top pair slip down middle and back, separate and cast to the bottom, everyone follow, make arch and rest come through.

Alternate - top boy, bottom girl dance the turns of Sir Roger, top pair cast off and up middle then down middle to bottom under everyone's arches.

## POP GOES THE WEASEL

"Every night when I get home, The monkey's on the table,  
Take a stick and knock it off, Pop goes the weasel."

Top pair works down set, down middle and back, down outside and back, circle and pop one then circle and pop other one. When done 3 or 4 next top starts....

## WALLFLOWERS

Linking hands and dancing round in a circle with back to the centre gives the sensation of riding a merry go round. The back-to-back ring was used by witches and fairies. Walk round singing verse then one dancer turns to face out, repeat till all are facing out.

## ROMANS AND ENGLISH

Two lines advance and retire alternately. Fight hopping on one foot till pushed off balance or touch ground with other foot. End with dance in ring.

## BROOM DANCE

One dancer has a broom for a partner which they swap for a girl leaving the next to dance with the broom or sweep the floor.

King Pippen Polka = verse tune of So Early in the Morning.

## IN AND OUT THE WINDOWS

All but one form a circle, and make arches, then stand still. Other runs in and out alone then selects one and chases them zig-zagging through the arches till caught. Shake hands and then change places.

## DUSTY BLUEBELLS

As above but end stand behind one arch and tap a shoulder, that one links up behind the leader/line and all go off again. It gets more difficult to do as the line gets longer and the arches fewer. Putting both hands on the shoulders in front is one way.

## ONE LITTLE ELEPHANT

As above but first one holds nose and puts other arm through the loop formed. Next one to join does the same but holds onto first.

## DRAW A BUCKET OF WATER

Four with hands clasped in pairs, one pair across the other in a cross, see-saw back and forwards while singing, then one is brought in by putting one linkage over their head and behind them, then the other, then the first pair etc. Then all jump up and down, not circle!

## OKEY KOKEY

Created by Jimmy Kennedy in 1941.

## SEVEN SPRINGS

One step forward, two steps forward, kneel with one knee, kneel with other knee, touch with one elbow, then other elbow on ground, then forehead.

Camel walk - bent double with legs kicking out to the side.

CLAPPING craze peaked end 19th cent to WWI

a) b, r+l/l+r, b, r+l, b, l+r, b.

b) touch r side with r, b, touch left side with left, b.

c) alternately b, r+l/l+r at ends of lines of verses.

d) USA - clap palms, then similar against knees and face - USA versions died out after 1920

e) hands crossed on chest, clap thighs, b, r+r. b, l+l, b, etc ending b, b, b.

Used to clap hands with palms vertical, modern is with hands horizontal, right palm up, left palm down, for first clap, then r+l/l+r vertical, b. etc. This is the commonest clapping form today.

f) hold both together as praying and strike partner's slowly, keep hands in same general position, clap r+r above left neighboured hands, then l+l below neighboured right hands. Or open and clench fingers of hands alternately, synchronised so that one player's open hand is above the other's clenched.

g) clap in a circle left with left hand neighbour, right with right.

h) b, r+r, b, l+l, b, cross arms and touch own shoulders, slap thighs. etc.

i) THREE, SIX, NINE - b in praying position, r+r 2x, l+l 2x, clutch throat for choking... ending - r+l/l+r 2x, cross arms on chest, slap own thighs.

j) clap with each other using alternate clenched and open palms. Then cross arms one at a time to shoulders and end r+l/l+r ex.

k) clap then i) chop hands into angles of elbows, next time slap parts of body eg touch eyes (China), or pat cheeks, arms crossed on chest, knees slapped, tap toes (?)

l) SEE SEE MY PLAYMATE - hook little fingers in each others and shake up and down twice. b, r+r, b, l+l. b, b, - -. Then backs of hands together r+l/l+r, fronts of hands r+l/l+r, b. r+r, b, l+l, b, b. Repeat from backs and fronts.

#### ENDINGS

"Sex-y" - flick skirts up (and kick legs up)

"Um tiddley um dum, sex-y",

"Hi tiddley i ti, brown bread",

"Look at your father, bald head",

"Rum tiddley batchcakes, brown bread. I struck a sausage, down dead!",

"How your father, Blind Drunk",

"Tripe and bananas, Fried fish".

## CHAPTER 5

### STICK GAMES

Stick games are usually called in Maori 'Ti Rakau' or known by the name of the specific game, however there is argument as to the ancient terminology of such games. 'Ti' was the name of a tree which according to mythology changed its position by magic. If one of these trees was encountered it was said to be an evil omen. Thus the word 'ti', for a tree which changed position, came to be applied to games which involved the throwing of sticks. Another term sometimes used is 'titi torea' which is a corruption of 'titi to ure'—a vulgarism which is best left untranslated!

The version seen nowadays is purely a musical game which delights audiences at concerts with its rhythm and the dexterity of the players but in ancient times it was a serious war game where the prime purpose was to practise the hand and eye of the players. Old versions of the game used long sticks or actual spears. One game consisted of the players, always men, standing facing one another in two lines. One spear only was thrown backwards and forwards and anyone who failed to catch it was out. Finally only one person remained. (A similar game is played today by New Zealanders of all races—only a rugby ball is substituted for a spear!)

Nowadays long sticks are seldom used and a short stick some 400mm (16 inches) to 500mm (20 inches) with a diameter of 20mm to 30mm (1 to 1¼ inches) are the norm. Sticks shorter or thicker than this are difficult to catch, particularly for the novice. Cut up broomsticks of a suitable diameter make good sticks. Brightly painted sticks are easier to see, especially in artificial light, and make for much more pleasing public performances.

#### Learning the Game

Stick games require plenty of application and practice. When learning the game, rolled up newspapers of the correct length, soundly

taped into a cylinder, are very handy substitutes for sticks and make much less impact if one fails to catch the 'stick'. The secret is to concentrate on the stick or sticks which are thrown to you rather than, as many novices do, watching the sticks which you have just thrown. Thus skilled players always look down at their own hands and not of those of their partner.

The sticks must not be grasped in the fist but rather held lightly between the thumb and the tips of the fingers. They should be thrown with a slight lobbing motion which makes them easier to catch and offsets the tendency for them to drop towards the floor. Players must wait for the sticks thrown to them to arrive, rather than reaching out and grabbing for the incoming sticks, or the result will be hands colliding with sticks. To avoid mid-air collisions, partners should agree beforehand so that for the throwing movements, one throws more to the left and the other more to the right.

#### A MODERN STICK GAME—TITI TOREA

"Titi Toreia", sometimes known by the first line of the tune which accompanies it, as "E Papa Waiari", is one of the most commonly played modern stick games. Although it is simple to play, it demands a great deal of skill and practice. Here are the words and music which most usually accompany it. (Music is on page 26.)

E Papa Waiari  
 E papa waiari  
 Taku nei mahi (twice)  
 He tuku roimata  
     E Aue! —(Chorus)  
 E aue! Ka mate au!  
 E hine! Hoki iho ra.  
     Maku e  
 Maku e kaute o hikoitanga  
 Maku e kaute o hikoitanga  
     HuriHui  
 Hurihuri, hurihuri o mahara e  
 Ki te tau, ki te tau, ki te tau e.  
 Kore rawa, kore rawa o mahara e  
 Ki a koe ra, e hine!



#### Translation

Sighing and grieving  
Is what I've been doing (twice)  
Here are my tears of woe  
Alas! The pain will kill me  
Oh maiden, return to me  
I will count your footsteps  
Yes, count your footsteps  
My thoughts are ever turning  
Towards you, my love  
Yet not a thought is spared  
For me, my beloved!

#### How to Play

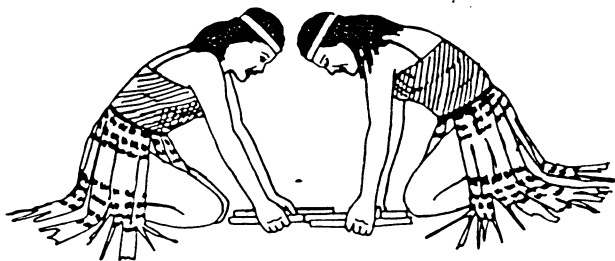
This version of Titi Toreā comprises a number of sets done either to the tune 'E Papa Waiari' or to the tune 'Maku e'. Each set is interspersed with the chorus 'E Aue'. This chorus is accompanied by a kind of marking time action and it allows performers to pick up dropped sticks and to think about the set which they are to perform next.

The game finishes with a very rapid series of movements done to the tune 'Hurihuri', followed by a tumultuous crash as the performers down their sticks to the position shown below.

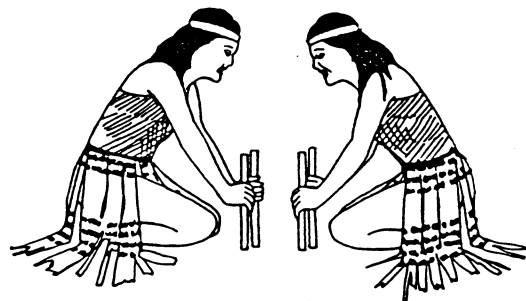
The game may be played by any number of performers kneeling in pairs with the back straight and the buttocks rested on the heels. An alternative position is to sit cross legged, but catching and throwing the sticks are rather more tricky from this latter position.

#### Starting and Finishing Positions

Before the game begins, the sticks are laid on the ground in front of each performer as shown below.



Someone acting as leader gives the command 'kia rite' (be ready) and the sticks are brought up to Position 1 (below) and rapped sharply on the floor. The leader then sings the first two bars of the chorus 'E Aue', to give the note and the tempo, calls 'toru, wha' (three, four) and the chorus begins with the appropriate actions, shown below.



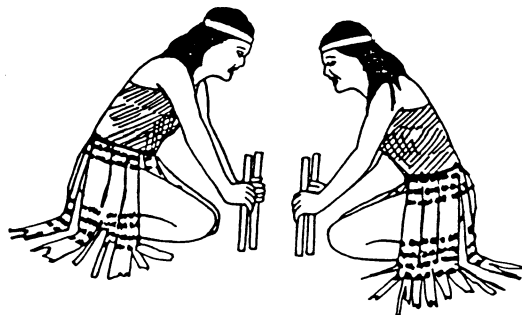
Each chorus is followed by a set of movements, the movements progressing from the simple to the more complex. Each of the movements or positions occupies one beat of the music except where sticks are flipped or tapped together twice. In this case, each flip or tap takes a single beat.

#### CHORUS

(Tune: 'E Aue')

There are three movements in the chorus, each one carried out on the first, second and third beats of each bar.

#### POSITION 1



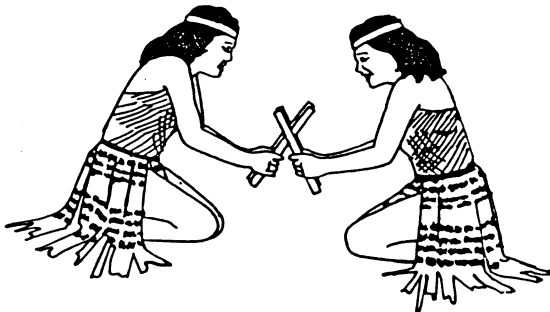
Sticks are tapped on the ground from the vertical position.

POSITION 2



The players tap their sticks together.

POSITION 3



Each player knocks sticks against those of partner.

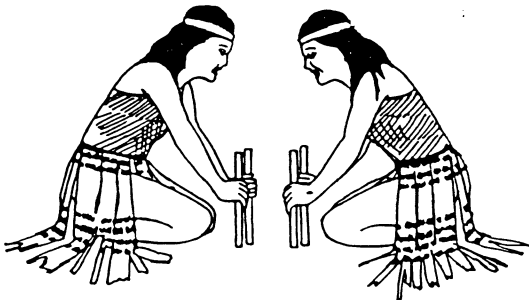
**SET No 1—THE SINGLE THROW**

(Tune: 'E Papa Waiari')

There are three movements in this set, each movement occupying one beat of each bar. As this tune has sixteen bars, the set is performed sixteen times (eight times throwing the right stick on the third movement, and eight times throwing the left stick), before returning again to the chorus.

POSITION 1

Sticks are tapped on the ground.

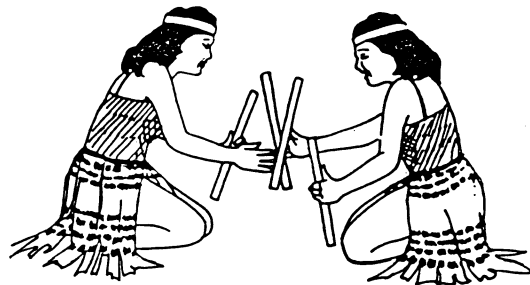


POSITION 2



Each player knocks sticks together.

POSITION 4



Each player throws RIGHT stick to partner, catches partner's stick with RIGHT hand.

Positions 1 and 2 are then repeated but this time for position 3, it is the LEFT stick which is thrown and caught in the LEFT hand.

**SET No. 2—THE DOUBLE THROW**

(Tune: 'E Papa Waiari')

Set No 2 is an extension of the first set. There are four movements, each done to one beat of music. The set is thus repeated twelve times before returning to the chorus 'E Aue'.

Movement 1: Sticks tapped on ground (Position 1)

Movement 2: Sticks tapped together (Position 2)

Movement 3: Player throws RIGHT stick to partner and catches partner's RIGHT STICK (Position 4)

Movement 4: Player throws LEFT stick to partner and at same time catches partner's LEFT stick.



### SET No 3—DOUBLE DOUBLE THROW

(Tune: 'E Papa Waiari')

There are six movements to this set, each movement taking a single beat. Thus the set is performed eight times before returning to the chorus 'E Aue'.

Movements 1 to 4: As for Set No. 2.

Movements 5 & 6: Movements 3 and 4 of Set 2 repeated.

### SET No 4—IN AND OUT

(Tune: 'Maku e')

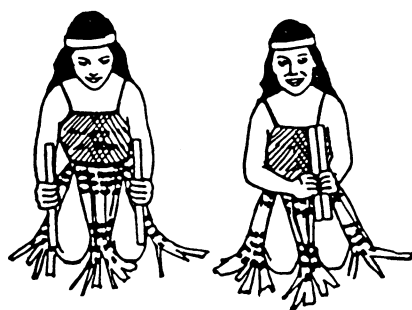
This set has three movements, each to a single beat. Thus the set is performed sixteen times before returning to the chorus 'E Aue'.

Movement 1: Sticks tapped on floor (Position 1)

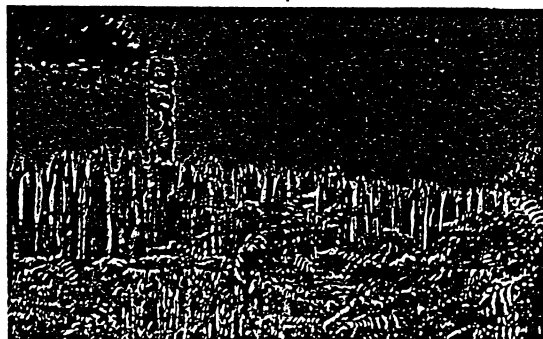
Movement 2: Sticks tapped together (Position 2)

Movement 3: Each player throws both sticks TOGETHER and almost simultaneously catches those of partner. (See Position 5 below.) When they throw, one set of sticks passes between the other set (it must be arranged beforehand who throws sticks outwards and who throws inwards.)

POSITION 5



One player holds sticks apart; one player holds sticks together.



### SET No 5—THE FLIP

(Tune: 'E Papa Waiari')

Movement 1: Sticks tapped on the ground on the player's right side (Position 6 below).

Movement 2: Sticks flipped in mid air (Position 7 below).

Movement 3: Sticks tapped on ground (Position 1).

Movement 4: Sticks tapped together (Position 2).

Movement 5 & 6: As for movements 3 and 4 of Set No 2.

POSITION 6



Sticks tapped on ground on player's right.

POSITION 7



Sticks are flipped over and each player catches the opposite end of own sticks.



### CLOSING SET

(Tune: "Hurihuri")

Hurihuri finishes the game after the final chorus. It is taken at a very much faster pace than the other sets and, performed well, makes a spectacular finish.

Movement 1: (one bar) Sticks tapped on each player's right side (Position 6).

Movement 2: (one bar) Both sticks flipped TWICE (Position 7).

Movement 3: (one beat) Sticks tapped on ground (Position 1).

Movement 4: (one beat) Sticks tapped together (Position 2).

Movement 5: Each player taps RIGHT stick TWICE against partner's RIGHT stick.

Movements 1 to 5 are repeated again twice. The only difference is that for the first repeat the sticks are tapped on the players' LEFT sides for Movement 1 and it is the LEFT sticks which are tapped together in Movement 5. For the second repeat, the sticks are again tapped on the right side for Movement 1 and the right sticks are tapped for Movement 5.

Following the two repeats the set continues as follows:

Movement 6: (two bars) sticks flipped twice as for Movement 2.

Movement 7: (1 beat) sticks tapped on ground (position 1).

Movement 8: (1 beat) sticks tapped together (position 2).

Movement 9: (1 beat) sticks placed together on ground with a bang.

### PLAYERS IN GROUPS OF FOUR

A more complex version of "Titi Torea" is played by groups of four. The players actually work as two pairs but one pair inserts extra beats into the opening movement of each set to ensure that when they throw, their sticks do not collide with the sticks of the other pair. It is good fun and looks very spectacular when performed on stage.

#### The Chorus—Working in Fours

The chorus movement to the tune "E Aue" is performed in the same way as described previously except that for the THIRD position, the players, instead of tapping their sticks together, tap their left stick against their neighbour's right stick, and their right stick against their other neighbour's left stick.

#### The Single Throw

The single throw in fours to the tune "E Papa Waiari" is done in the same way as for Set No 1 of the pairs. However, to avoid mid-air collisions of sticks, one pair, for the very first position only, gives their sticks TWO taps on the ground, instead of one. The other pair continues as normal.

The effect is best illustrated by the table below:

#### First Pair

Tap sticks ONCE on ground (pos. 1)  
Tap sticks AGAIN on ground (pos. 1)  
Tap sticks together (pos. 2)  
Throw RIGHT stick (pos. 4)  
Tap sticks on ground (pos. 1)

Tap sticks together (pos. 2)  
 Throw LEFT stick to partner (pos. 4)  
 Tap sticks on ground (pos. 1)  
 Tap sticks together and so on

#### **Second Pair**

Tap sticks ONCE on ground  
 Tap sticks together (pos. 2)  
 Throw RIGHT stick (pos. 4)  
 Tap sticks on ground (pos. 1)  
 Tap sticks together (pos. 2)  
 Throw LEFT stick (pos. 4)  
 Tap sticks on ground (pos. 1)  
 Tap sticks together (pos. 2)  
 Throw RIGHT stick to partner

It will be seen that the initial double tap on the ground by the sticks of one pair, enables the four to synchronise their movements to avoid the sticks colliding when they are thrown. The same principle applies for the other sets, as shown below.

#### **The Double Throw**

The double throw in fours to the tune "E Papa Waiari" is the same as the double throw in pairs (Set No 2 above) except for the insertion of two extra beats initially by one pair to avoid the sticks of both pairs colliding. One pair, for the first time only, gives their sticks THREE taps on the ground as illustrated in the following table:

#### **First Pair**

Tap sticks on ground ONCE  
 Tap sticks on ground AGAIN  
 Tap sticks on ground AGAIN  
 Tap sticks TOGETHER  
 Throw RIGHT stick to partner  
 Throw LEFT stick  
 Tap sticks on ground  
 Tap sticks TOGETHER  
 Throw RIGHT stick  
 Throw LEFT stick  
 and so on...

#### **Second Pair**

Tap sticks on ground  
 Tap sticks TOGETHER  
 Throw RIGHT stick to partner  
 Throw LEFT stick  
 Tap sticks on ground

Tap sticks TOGETHER  
 Throw RIGHT stick  
 Throw LEFT stick  
 Tap sticks on ground  
 Tap sticks together  
 and so on...

#### **In and Out Movement in Fours**

This movement is done to the tune "Maku e". There is little difference from the same movement in pairs (see Set No 4) except that synchronisation between the pairs is achieved by one pair giving their sticks TWO taps on the floor INITIALLY, instead of ONE tap. The sequence is:

#### **First Pair**

Tap sticks ONCE on ground  
 Tap sticks AGAIN on ground  
 Tap sticks together  
 Throw sticks in/out

#### **Second Pair**

Tap sticks ONCE on ground  
 Tap sticks together  
 Throw sticks in/out  
 and so on...



MINISTRY OF SILLY WALKS  
37627 Birdcage Walk, London, EC1 H0H0  
Tel : Ansaphone available to record insults  
Fax : Messages can be sent to the The Tower

Department of Country Pursuits  
Section of Jumps and Capers  
Our Reference : ☘☺☞☎☚☞  
Your reference :

---

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (73/1995/b) dated 13th October 1995

In pursuance of the latest obligatory EC directive, Her Majesty's Government is seeking a representative entry for the equal opportunity traditional dance section during the next World Games. The Cabinet Office, in conjunction with the Treasury, had agreed that this should be coordinated by the Ministry of Silly Walks, herein to be known as the MinSW, with one group to be selected from several finalists, following heats to be held at suitable regional centres, which are to be established without delay throughout the United Kingdom.

**ANNEX - Rules set by the MinSW**

- 1 There should be a minimum of ten distinct and preferably identifiable figures <sup>(1)</sup>.
- 2 Each dancer is allowed to exhibit their own individual sequences of steps <sup>(2)</sup>.
- 3 The competition is to be judged on the basis of originality rather than quality.
- 4 The entries must conform to local and national practices and prejudices. ☞
- 5 Attempts at bribery will be penalised if not successful.
- 6 The group will smile at the official adjudicators at appropriate moments. ☺

**SCHEDULE 1 - Applicable EC Regulations**

- 1 The performance <sup>(3)</sup> to be at least 2.33 minutes and no more than 3.68 minutes long. Any exceedence of these limits will be associated with the dancers being shortened or lengthened in compensation.
- 2 The performance will be constrained to a rectangular floor <sup>(4)</sup> area of no more than  $3.5 \times 10^{-3}$  hectares.
- 3 The performance will be limited to a group of between 5 to 10 persons plus at least one accompanist <sup>(5)</sup> with a portative musical instrument.
- 4 The persistent incorrect playing of wrong notes will be penalised. ☘\*
- 5 The combined waistage <sup>(6)</sup> will be less than 8 meters.
- 6 There is to be no discrimination <sup>(7)</sup> on the grounds of disability, race, colour, religion,

nationality, ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual preference or marital status, in that order.

- 7 The following hand signals will be observed : 🙋🙋🙋🙋🙋🙋🙋

## SCHEDULE 2 - Bye laws from the Wantage Rural District Council

- 1 The internationally recognised rules and regulations for all sports that are customary on the local playing fields will be observed, with the following exceptions,.
  - a keep off the grass, ➔
  - b no bodily contact below the waist,
  - c all droppings to be retrieved immediately and placed in an approved receptacle,
  - d avoidance of nakedness <sup>(8)</sup>, except in the heat of the moment, ☹
  - e straight lines <sup>(9)</sup> are only to be formed parallel to the pre-marked boundaries.
- 2 All required services are to be paid for in advance.
- 3 Participants may use their customary tools or be hand operated.

## DEFINITIONS

- (1) A *figure* is defined as a sequence of movements that fit to one or more musical <sup>(10)</sup> phrases.
- (2) A *step* is the transfer of weight from one foot to another, or the same, with or without the other foot remaining in contact with the floor. For greater understanding consult the Morris Federation *Glossary of Terms* <sup>(11)</sup>.
- (3) A *performance* is defined as an attempt to be entertaining, mischievous or unlikely.
- (4) A *floor* is defined as a flat surface constructed at right angles to the local direction of gravity which may be used at the dancer's discretion for support between leaps and capers.
- (5) An *accompanist* is defined as one who goes along with what is going to happen.
- (6) A *waistage* is measured exceptionally in non metric hands up until 1998.
- (7) An absence of *discrimination* is to be demonstrated through the content of what is offered.
- (8) *Nakedness* is the state at which sexual differences <sup>(12)</sup> may be observed. 😊
- (9) *Straight Lines* are those things which foreman are for ever seeking at practices.
- (10) Euphemism.
- (11) Copies may be obtained at a some small expense.
- (12) Classes can be arranged for those who are unsure through your Technical Officers. 😊

File : sillydnc.wri

# THE PRINCESSES ROYAL

## "THE PRINCESSES ROYAL"

"The Princesses Royal" by Geoffrey Wakeford, pub Robert Hale, London, 1973.  
ISBN 0 7091 3492 4. Hants Library class 929.72 (Yateley)

There have been 6 Princess Royals before Princess Anne.

The title style has no constitutional significance, for it is neither exactly a rank or really a title. It was created by Charles I for his eldest daughter Mary, who married William II of Orange and became the mother of William III. It was devised to distinguish Mary Stuart from the "ordinary" foreign princesses who were not necessarily of Royal blood etc. There is no date specified for the transition of a British Princess to being the Princess Royal. It does not carry any extra monetary grant. It is a purely royal prerogative. In practice they are the eldest daughters of the monarch, whether born before or after her parents accession to the throne. There is no prescriptive right to the honour. But the monarchs eldest, elder or only daughter is not created Princess Royal if she is likely to succeed to the crown. For example James II daughters Mary and Anne became Queens of England. George I's daughter was Sophia, but she had married the Crown Prince of Prussia, who became Frederick William II, before George came to the British throne. Frederick, Prince of Wales, died before his father George II, so his daughter Augusta was excluded. The Prince Regent's daughter Charlotte who died in childbirth was his only legitimate offspring and would have been Queen. William IV's daughter Elizabeth died in infancy. Queen Victoria's father, the Duke of Kent, died before he could become King, and Princess Victoria was heir presumptive while Queen Adelaide was trying for children.

The first two of the six married Dutchmen, the second two chose Germans, the fifth a Scot and the last an English Earl with Irish connections. The first four lived abroad all their married lives. Only the last closely identified herself with the activities of the Royal Family, especially after the Abdication of Edward VIII in 1936.

### MARY OF ORANGE

In the spring of 1641, William, the heir of Orange-Nassau, aged 14, arrived to marry Charles I's daughter, on the 2nd May. Charles I was 40, his wife Henrietta, daughter of the Bourbon Henry of Navarre and Henry IV of France, married at 15, now in her mid 20's, had had 7 of their 8 children, and was notably very short. Her mother had been Marie de' Medici. The Prince of Wales, later to be Charles II, was then aged 11. Mary was 10 (born on the 4th November 1631), and was 17 months younger. After the marriage Mary was sent to Holland with her mother to escape the English problems in February 1642. They were also with the exiled Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, Charles' sister, whose son Prince Rupert supported Charles. Her father-in-law died in March 1647 and William became the Stadtholder and Captain-General of the Dutch States (United Provinces) at age of 20, Mary was not yet 16. By July 1648 the Prince of Wales (the future Charles II) left Paris and was with his sister at Helvoetsluys. At the Hague he met Lucy Walter, and the future Duke of Monmouth was born in Zeeland. Next June they went to France and then wintered in Jersey. William died aged 24 of smallpox. His son William Henry was born 10 days later. Mary visited London after the Restoration. Mary died of smallpox at the end of 1660 in London.

ref: Carey, M C - "Princess Royal", Nisbet & Co, 1922.

**ANNE OF ORANGE**

Born on the 9th Oct 1709 in Hanover, Anne, first daughter and third child of Electoral Prince of Hanover, George (the future George II) and Caroline of Ansbach, who were married in 1705, was named after her godmother Queen Anne of England. Her elder brothers were Frederick Lewis, who became Prince of Wales, and the Duke of Cumberland (later called the butcher of Culloden). Anne was 18 at her father's accession. George I locked his wife Sophia Dorothea up in a fortress at Ahlden. His son never spoke of her, or of his father if he could avoid it. Queen Caroline was amiable and very indulgent, and subordinated her inclinations to her husband. Anne was one of first persons ever to be inoculated against smallpox. She married William IV of Orange, a grand-nephew of William III, when she was 24, on the 24th March 1734, but was already running to fat. She left for Holland on the 22nd April. When she was found pregnant she returned to England by the 2nd June. There were several attempts made for her to return to Holland, but she did not get there till the 6th December. William became Stadtholder of the United Provinces at the age of 36 in 1747. The Prince of Wales died in 1751, aged 44, through drink and perhaps a blow on the head from a cricket ball. William died in the autumn of 1751. She died on the 2nd January 1759, 21 months before her father.

ref : Robb Dr Desca, "William of Orange" Vol 1, Heinemann, 1962

**CHARLOTTE OF WÜRTTEMBERG**

She was Anne's great niece, the eldest of 6 daughters with 9 brothers, of George III and Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. She was born on the 29th September 1766. Her first 31 years were spent in Britain and the last 30 years in the German state of Württemberg, which has the source of the Danube, for which her husband Frederick William became Elector in 1803 and King in 1806, both in Napoleon's time. Frederick had married Augusta of Brunswick in 1780, a cousin of the Princess Royal and sister of Caroline who was to be the unwanted Queen of George IV, and had three children. Charlotte married on the 18th May 1797. They left for Harwich on 2nd June. She was isolated from Britain during the Napoleonic wars till 1813. She had no children. Her step-daughter Princess Catherine was married to Napoleon's youngest brother Jerome. Frederick died on the 30th October 1816. She died on the 6th October 1828.

ref: Stuart, Dorothy "The Daughters of George III", Macmillan, 1939

**VICTORIA, THE EMPRESS FREDERICK III**

She was known as "Pussy" by her parents and "Vicky" by the family, and was born about 1841. Her husband was Prince Frederick William of Prussia, they had met in 1851 when he was 19 and visiting England, Osborne and the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park. Frederick was the eldest son of William, who was the Prince Consort's cousin, and Augusta of Saxe-Weimar. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert visited Paris and Napoleon III in August 1855. Napoleon and Eugénie came to London in 1857, when the Crimean War was over, by which time Vicky was her father's little secretary and companion. Victoria and Frederick married on the 25th January 1858. Between January 1859 and April 1872 they had 4 sons and 3 daughters. King Frederick William II died on the 2nd January 1861 and they became the Crown Prince and Princess. He became Emperor on the 9th March 1888, and died on the 15th June 1888. She died on the 5th August 1901.



**LOUISE, DUCHESS OF FIFE**

She was born on the 20th February 1867 and married on the 27th July 1889. She became Princess Royal on the 9th November 1905 (then aged 38). She was in the wreck of the SS Dehli in December 1911 and her husband died consequently later on the 29th January 1912. She died on the 4th January 1931.

**MARY, COUNTESS OF HAREWOOD**

She was born at Sandringham on 25th April 1897, to the then Duke and Duchess of York. The Duke of York became the Prince of Wales in 1901, following Queen Victoria's death. Harry Lascelles, 35 years old in 1916, wanted to marry when he was 40, and chose the Princess then 24, and married on 28th February 1922. He became 6th Earl of Harewood in 1929 and died in 1947. She became Princess Royal, following the death of her aunt, on 1st January 1932. She died 28th March 1965.

## THE SPONSORED WHITSUN ALE OF THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The modern Morris Ale has very little in common with those documented in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

The evidence from churchwardens' accounts of the 15th century and onwards is that Church Ales, usually held near Whitsun, originated or were adopted, from pre-Reformation till at least Stuart times, to raise money for parochial and charitable purposes, just like the jumble sales today and the whist drives of the recent past. Such gatherings were very successful and thus Whitsun Ales were continued long after the initial reasons and support for their existence had ceased, but being carried on merely for profit or sport, they degenerated into more rollicking and boisterous amusements. Not infrequent in the early 19th century, they had stopped by the second half of the century. The loss of such meetings must have been one of the factors in the final decline of the Cotswold Morris. The following description is based on several accounts, mostly written after the events has stopped, retaining some of the flavour and charm of the original wording. First is a composite and therefore ideal image of the core of the event and then perhaps a more realistic impression of the more rumbustious part by a visitor. A more scholarly assembly of the evidence is given in chapter 4 of Keith Chandler's "Ribbons, Bells and Squeaking Fiddles."

### FACILITIES

The ideal site was considered to be near the middle of a village where the use of a barn could be obtained, with a nearby green on which a Bower and a Maypole might be erected. The Maypole could be set up before the Ale began and remained there for the duration of the feast. It was normally a bare pole ornamented with ribbons and flowers and having a garland of flowers to cap the top. The colours used were sometimes what ever was available, but often they were those of the local nobleman or leading family of the parish.

The covered area provided for social dancing was often a "Bower" constructed of boughs or perhaps a suitable tent or marquee erected for the purpose. Sometimes it would be only an empty barn or even a shed. At Woodstock the Duke of Marlborough provided one some fifty feet long, with benches set around the sides, which was called the "Bowery", and it was decorated with evergreens. Here the maids, young women, and their swains, boy friends, assembled to dance in the best manner and style that their circumstances and place could afford. They would hoof and clump "up and down the middle and up again", this being a reference to widely known country dances with stepping. Each young fellow would treat his girl with a ribbon, as a bow for her hair or dress, or a favour, recognisable as the modern flat rosette. Now reserved for supporters of sports teams and political parties, they were once a common adornment. Those distributed at Dover's Games were yellow. Such gifts associated with fairs and markets are mentioned in folk songs, including those to the "Jockey to the Fair" tune of the Morris.

Another large empty barn or some such building would be specially named for the occasion "The Lord's Mansion" or "Hall". It would be fitted out with seats to accomodate the company for refreshments. Under the cover, an area called "My Lord's Buttery" would have several barrels of ale brewed for the

Morris Ale

occasion. A further area, arranged with some branches and flowers, was called "My Lady's Bower" and used for the sale of confectionary and cakes, for which a neighbouring oven was engaged for a newly baked daily supply.

#### ECONOMICS

The May Games or Ales at this period were planned typically by the sons of more wealthy farmers, or near the end of the period by publicans, who underwrote the risk of the expense in case it ran at a loss. Examples of the costings have survived.

The intention of an Ale would be announced by the Morris Dancers on their circuit and also made known during the market days at all the adjacent towns. The dancers paid visits to the halls of neighbouring gentry where they usually obtained a contribution, although little factual evidence in surviving household account books has been found. Unfortunately most of such have been lost.

The Maypole and the boughs for the Bower were sometimes purchased, but more commonly they were obtained as a donation. The previously brewed ale could be sold without a license, and its sale together with the confectionary, cakes and large quantities of ribbons usually saved the promoters from a loss. Cheap factory made ribbons became available in the 18th century from an industry centred on Coventry.

#### THE LORD AND LADY

At first such meetings could be attended by the highest in the parish with propriety and under those circumstances to be chosen as the nominal leaders of the festivities, often called the "Lord" and "Lady" or "May Queen", was an honour much appreciated.

The two persons were chosen before the meeting. Care was taken to select a popular, smart, active and handsome villager as "Lord of the May" or "Feast". It is doubtful whether he derived any financial advantage from the revenue that went to support his role. The organisers, or the friends of the Lord, then picked out a "Lady", who ideally was a lively, pretty woman, perhaps the daughter of some respectable farmer, and to whom it could prove the prelude to obtaining a husband, then thought to be an important step. She was paid for her services, being allowed daily perhaps 20 yards of ribbon and new shoes, and given at the end of the sports a guinea or so.

The Lord and Lady were dressed as suitably for the characters they assumed as they could be, gaily and bedecked with ribbons. With their attendants, they were free in their offers of flowers or cake, for the acceptance of which a fee was expected in return. Both could carry as a badge of office a bouquet or "Mace", which consisted of a short stick as a handle stuck into the base of a small square of board, from the four corners of which semi-circular hoops crossed the top diagonally. The whole would be covered with silk ribbons finely plaited and the interior filled either with spices and perfumes for such of the company as desired to sniff, or a small cake, often like the modern Banbury cake, and called the "Whit-Cake", and these were offered also to people to taste in return for a small payment. For example at Kirtlington the mace was decorated in the Dashwood family colours of pale

pink and blue, with rosettes fixed at intervals, and silk streamers hanging down from the four corners. The colours of the two maces were reversed. The Lord might also carry slung over his shoulder the tin money box called the "Treasury".

#### THE PROCESSION

The celebrations would begin with a procession around the village to the Lord's Hall, perhaps starting at the Lady's home, led by the Lord and Lady, either walking or being carried on a wooden horse, to be described later. Their attendants could be quite numerous. These might include a steward, a sword-carrier, a purse-holder and a mace-bearer to look after the badges or emblems of office. There would be "My Lord's Footman" or "Waiting Man" who might also be the person who carried a basket of cakes for sale. "My Lady's Maid" helped to sell the ribbons, but she also carried a mace that might be named the "Mace of Mischief" because the flowers were often mischievously entwined with pins as well as briars to "tickle" the noses of her admirers.

The procession could call at various houses.

Besides a Train-bearer or Page, there would be a Fool or Jester, often cheekily called the "Squire", whose presence gave life to the show. He was dressed in motley and his ribaldry and gesticulations contributed not a little to the entertainment of some of the company. He was furnished with a weapon to prevent the crowd from impeding the progress of the Lord and Lady consisting of a stick about three feet in length with a calf or ox tail at one end and an inflated bladder suspended at the other. As an alternative to the bladder there could be a narrow round sand bag sewn in tan leather. The fool made very free use of his weapon in clearing a path or a dancing spot, and the incorrigible, on whom the bladder or bag had repeatedly fallen without effect, seldom ventured a second strike from the tail. He was expected to have a wise or foolish speech ready upon every occasion, for by the laughter that his nonsense occasioned his ability as a clown was commonly decided. In his endeavours to raise a laugh he would try to take a man's hat off by a mere flick of the tail, or bonnet him by bringing his hat down over his eyes by a blow from the bladder. For such tricks, rough as they were, he had full immunity in the recognised customary privilege of the traditional clown.

The "Lord's Music" would be a pipe and taborer or perhaps a fiddler and he would also play for the morris. The procession was completed by the band of Morris Dancers. At Kirtlington they supposedly went around the spectators before the dancing each carrying a "Crown-Cake" on the top of their hat. These cakes were about nine inches across and made with an outer crust of rich currant and plum dough and a centre of minced meat and batter. Contributions in money were expected just for looking at them. For half a crown a whole cake could be bought, and, as this was supposed to bring good luck to the buyer, a piece was often kept throughout the following year.

#### THE CURIOSITIES

Early in the morning the Lord and Lady with their attendants waited by the Maypole for visitors. The Morris Dancers came in sets to these festivities from far and near, those from a distance perhaps on horseback with the manes

and heads of the horses decorated with flowers, ribbons and traditional raised rosettes used on harnesses. The procession led them first to the Bower and then to the mansion to be shown the "Curiosities". The regulations and forfeits of the establishment were explained and finally the party invited to partake of the refreshments. The Lord and Lady then returned to the Maypole to await other visitors. If while they were engaged another set arrived, often with a goodly number of their villagers, the new party would wait at a distance until the cavalcade could be preceded in due state.

The Curiosities were hung about outside or inside one of the buildings. Typically a live or stuffed owl or a portrait of one was placed in a cage and called "My Lady's Parrot". Other songless birds such as a rook, jackdaw or raven were called "My Lady's Nightingales". A portrait of a lion was called "My Lady's Lapdog", and one or two threshing flails hung over a beam were called "My Lady's Nut Cracker" or more vulgarly "My Lord's Organ". Anyone using a name for these and other such objects other than that temporarily given them became liable to a fine. For calling them by their real names it could be as high as a shilling forfeit, a very significant sum for labourers in those days when wages were 12/6d to 15 shillings per week. No inconsiderable portion of the spectators' humour and mirth arose from the non-payment of forfeits. He that refused to pay was forced by the attendants or perhaps by the Morris Dancers to ride on the wooden horse, or "My Lord's Charger" or "Palfrey", and a similar penalty was inflicted on anyone who miscalled the horse as for anything else.

The true Cotswold Hobby Horse was not a tourney horse, that had not been seen in the Cotswolds since the Restoration at least until reintroduced by Darcy Ferris at Bidford, or a version of the stick based animal as was common in the rest of Britain, but was similar in appearance to the modern Gymnastic Vaulting Horse. It was a wooden machine which could stand on four legs a convenient four feet high, which could be carried shoulder high around the green by one or two stout horizontal poles that stuck out in front and behind. It could be painted and have a representation of a horse's head with a bridle. Upon the horse was a chair for the Lady, usually mounted sideways, such that she could hold the reins. The man sat astride the pole behind her balancing as best he could.

#### THE PENALTIES

No doubt there were many different forfeits imposed, the Victorians were particularly fond of the concept, but the horse was that most frequently remembered. At the event even jostling the Lady might incur one.

Every man who paid the fine was privileged to mount the horse and be carried with the Lady around the boundaries with unlimited kisses allowed, and, whether he was a bashful or a forward gallant, the process always proved a subject of merriment for the spectators. Experiences and attitudes could be different then. A fine was often willingly incurred as men and mere boys, today's teenagers, wished to boast of their ride and of kissing the lady, and many females for mere frolic would follow suit. When a woman paid a forfeit she took the Lady's place and the Lord had to mount and perform the kissing part.

If a man would not pay in money he had to mount the horse alone, and would

be given a practical lesson in rough-riding which he would not easily forget. This made it akin to the horse used as a punishment in armies, at least till the end of the 17th century. Although then the pole would have a metal top ridge and the prisoner may have also had weights attached to their feet. Such an apparatus was also used elsewhere to indicate community disapproval of behaviour by either carrying in local parade those who had offended or their effigies. If he still refused to pay, his hat was taken away in lieu. Many University men would come over from Oxford for the Ales near Woodstock to ride the wooden horse for the fun of the thing and frequently fights took place between them and the Morris Dancers when they would not pay. Riding the horse was not the only indignity imposed on the forfeiters, for example there was the forced option of jumping over an overwide muddy pond or river.

#### THE OXONIAN - A Visitor

This is a less sympathetic view.

The Oxonian was walking one evening. He was suddenly aroused from his reflections. On enquiry of an honest, chubby looking clod-pole, he learnt that it was a Whitsun-Ale.

"On elbowing through the throng, the first fellow I met who was engaged as a party in the revels was an old man dressed up in motley garb of a Tom Fool or Clown and I must say he looked his character to perfection.

'How do master?' cried he, 'May I ask your honour what you call that yonder?', pointing to a painted wooden horse placed in the middle of a ring.

'A wooden horse, to be sure', said I, 'What should you think it was?'

'A shilling, sir, if you please,' answered the clown, 'A forfeit, if you please sir.'

'A forfeit, a forfeit! What for?', I enquired, 'I'll give you no shilling I assure you.'

'Bring out his Lordship's Gelding. Here's a gentleman who wishes for a ride! Bring out the Gelding! His Lordship's groom. Hey! Tell her Ladyship to be mounted!'

Here I was seized by four or five clumsy clod-poles, dressed up in coloured rags and ribbons. They were forthwith proceeding to place me on the wooden hobby just mentioned, behind an ugly, red-haired, freckled trull, who personated the Lady of the revels, I bellowed out that I would pay the forfeit without more to do, and thus was I squired of a shilling, for not calling the cussed wooden hobby his Lordship's Gelding. Shortly after, one of her Ladyship's Maids of Honour came up to me, and begged me to look at the pretty bird in the cage, hanging over her ladyship's saloon, or dirty oblong tent made of tarpaulin. This was a great ugly white owl, stuffed, and I thought I should be safe by answering that it was the very handsomest owl I had ever seen! No sooner had I uttered this, then the fair Maid of Honour screamed out in treble, shriller than the squeak of a Christmas porker or a pig-drivers horn!

'A forfeit, sir, if you please, a shilling forfeit.'

'Pooh', said I, 'I've paid forfeits enough.'



# ROBERT DOVER, Dr WILLIAM BROOKES AND ALL THE OLYMPIC GAMES

## INTRODUCTION

Sport contains common elements of now ritualised behaviour which can be explained best in terms of the hunter-gatherer cultures existing up to 10,000 years ago. In this respect all sport can claim pagan roots, but it has really been a continual process of adapting old actions to new situations, and it is dangerous to imply any continuity in the ideas. Despite the modern developments, sport is not necessarily competitive. Lewis Carroll's "Dodo's Caucus Race" where everybody won and all had prizes was intended to shock Victorians into a wider realisation. The older meaning included fun, entertainment and games, and embraced the Morris when it appeared. The Olympic ideal of the classical era had brought the local Greek cultures together, as expressed in a number of annual festivals, and they grew to encompass many athletic, equestrian and artistic events. The rediscovery of the classical world from the late Renaissance onwards led to the recurring interest in them in modern times. There have been three great contributors to the movement, Robert Dover in the Cotswolds, Dr William Brookes at Much Wenlock and Baron Pierre de Coubertin, the inspiration of the Modern Olympiads, whose achievements over a three hundred year span are linked, and who are in danger of being forgotten.

## DOVER'S LIFE

Robert Dover was born in 1582, seventeen years after Shakespeare, the son of John Dover of Great Ellingham, in a family of Norfolk minor gentry, a number of whom moved to the area between Chipping Campden and Evesham. He studied at Gray's Inn during 1604-5. In Elizabethan times the Inns of Court had emerged as combined finishing schools and law academies for the sons of gentry and wealthy yeomen. By 1610 he had become the second husband of Sibella Sanford of Stow-on-the-Wold, the daughter of Rev. William Cole (d.1600), a Dean of Lincoln, and the widow of a Bristol merchant. At first they lived at Saintsbury, over the Cotswold edge from Chipping Campden, where Dover, a barrister, practiced as an attorney. It was reputed that Saintsbury then had a cherry fair and that also the local plums were made into a drink called "Plum Jerkin". In 1613 they were in Chipping Campden, and then at Childwickham, just west of Saintsbury, where, amongst other things, from 1623 he was Steward of the Manor of Wickhamford, a little to the north near Evesham. They had two daughters and two sons, one of whom died after four months. He was probably created a Royalist Army Captain during the Civil War, despite his age. Robert was buried on 24th July 1652 at Barton-on-the-Heath where his son John lived, just east of Moreton-in-the-Marsh, and his wife was buried in June 1653.

A grandson, Dr Thomas Dover (1660-1742) was born in Warwickshire, who invented "Dover's Powders", a mixture of opium, ipecacuanha and sulphate of potash, a sedative still in use in the nineteenth century. However his published works contained little else of value. He had an exaggerated estimation of the value of mercury as a remedy. Unexpectedly he went as second in command on a privateering voyage around the world, starting in August 1708, which rescued shipwrecked Alexander Selkirk from Juan Fernandez on 2nd February 1709,



where he had been for four years and four months and who then lived on at home for another thirteen years, becoming the model for Daniel Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe". Defoe met him at the home of the daughter of Nathaniel Wade, who had gained a pardon after being an officer in the Monmouth Rebellion by writing the narrative of that event from the inside for James II.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE COTSWOLD GAMES

Dover and his friends of the Inns of Court and of the stage in Jacobean London, in so far as they had any aim beyond that of just enjoying themselves, sought to keep the imagined lingering spirit of rural medieval England alive by both reviving and modernising its country sports and pastimes. This meant for them at that period relating these to classical mythology and the Renaissance culture, whilst also linking them with the English throne and the King's Protestant Church. Dover's interpretation of the "Olympick Games" probably opened about 1612. The games were in effect a counter against the growing influence of Puritanism. Dover probably took over games which had been celebrated for some years as a joint Whitsun Ale and jollification for the parishes of Weston-sub-Edge and Chipping Campden. Their boundaries met along the ancient path, now the Cotswold Way, passing near the Kiftsgate stone, once the meeting point for the neighbourhood's Saxon Hundred Moot and at which the Kings of England were proclaimed locally. By attempting to combine the then ideas of the Olympic events of ancient Greece with the activities of the Cotswold Whitsun Ales and by enlarging and organising the games, Dover created a unique festival which made Chipping Campden famous throughout the Shires and even at Court.

The general policy of King James I was confirmed in his *Book of Sports* of 1618 and reaffirmed in 1633 by Charles I,

And as for our good people's recreation; our pleasure likewise is that after the end of Divine Service, Our Good People be not disturbed or letted or discouraged from any lawful recreation, such as Dancing, Archery, Leaping, Vaulting, or any other harmless recreations; nor from having May games, Whitsun Ales, and Morris dances; and the setting up of Maypoles and other sports therewith used, so as the same shall be had in due and convenient time, without impediment or neglect of Divine Service.

Dover's friends included Ben Johnson and his sometimes employer Endymion Porter, born at Mickleton in 1587. After living in Spain between 1606 and 1612 he was able to purchase the old family estate at Aston-sub-Edge but he seldom stayed there. Porter was a poet and a groom of the bed chamber to the future king and as a great patron of the Arts played an important part later in forming Charles I's great collection of pictures. Through his position at Court in the service of the half brother of George Villiers, the King's favourite, later created Duke of Buckingham, Porter was able to obtain not only James' leave for the Games with the help of Sir Baptist Hicks, but was given a hat and feather and ruff and other clothes cast off by the King, and in these Dover used to dress when he rode on the hill officiating at the games.

They were supposedly attended by nobility and gentry from as far away as sixty miles. It is believed that Prince Rupert of the Rhine, Charles I's to be famous

nephew, attended the Cotswold Games in 1636, when aged eighteen, attended by Endymion Porter. Sir Baptist Hicks was a financier to whom James I and his court were nearly all deeply in debt. His mother is said to have invested in Drake's Round-the-World voyage. Hicks came to Campden in 1610 soon after it had received its new royal charter, buying the manor, and as owner of Weston Park on the edge above Saintsbury he provided Campden with major new buildings, such as the manor house, the market hall and the almshouses. Finally he was created Viscount Campden of Campden and Baron Hicks of Ilmington in 1628 the year before he died aged 78 at the Old Jewry in London, which is by the Guildhall, and, surprisingly, not at his London home of Campden House in Kensington.

### THE "ANNALIA"

There was a steady literary interest in the games partly because of the possible connection with Shakespeare but also because of the book *Annalia Dubrensia* containing thirty three poems which was written over a number of years, with contributions from poets, friends, relatives and admirers of Dover of which the first edition was published in 1636. It was reprinted by his grandson Thomas Dover in 1736, but then not again until 1877 by Dr A B Grosart and then in 1878 by E R Vyvyan. However except for the following there is very little mention of dance or of any form of the Morris.

William Durham (1611-1684), third son of John Durham of Willersey, two miles from Dover's Hill, and who married the daughter of the Royalist vicar of Campden in 1633.

"In honour of the place they leape on high,  
and friske and dance for joy they are so nigh!"

"And maydens measured galliards on the greene"

"Which from the woods did walke into the plaine,  
There dance a jig, and so return againe."

Thomas Randolph (1605-1635), poet and playwright.

"From this same beech to yonder mulberry,  
A second leapt, his supple nerves to try,  
A third was practising his melody,  
This a new jig was footing."

"These teach that dancing is a Jezebel  
and Barley Brake the ready way to hell,  
The Morrice, idols; Whitsun-ales can be  
but profane relics of a Jubilee!"

"The country lass, although her dance be good,  
Stirs not another's galliard in the blood."

## THE COTSWOLD GAMES UNDER DOVER

The Games were began on the Thursday of Whit week and lasted two days. Dover usually opened them by riding up on his white horse to a portable pivoted castle built of boards that he had had erected on the hill and then firing off a salvo from the castle's mimic battery of small cannons. Prizes of value were given, such as a silver "salt" for the racing in the form of a model of the castle. Yellow silken ribbons known as "Dover's Favours" were sold and worn as a compliment. Anthony a Wood in *Athenae Oxonienses* in 1691 said that five hundred of the gentry wore such favours the year after one celebration. At this time the whole of the top of Dover's Hill, known as Kingcombe Plain until the nineteenth century, was unenclosed land, a great flat open plateau of five hundred acres within the parish of Weston-sub-Edge but extending south towards Broadway. It was ideal for the steeple chasing that was becoming fashionable and which throughout the Games' history remained the major attraction. Shakespeare's much quoted words from the *Merry Wives of Windsor*,

... How does your fallow greyhound, sir? I heard say he was outrun  
on Cotsall ...

might well refer to Dover's Games as they appeared in the first folio edition of 1623, but had not been in the quarto of 1602. The games could have continued no later than 1643, as they were halted, possibly at the instigation of Campden's puritan minister, William Bartholomew. The early Civil War battle at Edgehill in October 1642 was less than twenty miles away. The antiquary and diarist Richard Symonds (1617-1692) writing during the King's Army's retreat from Evesham to Oxford on 17th June 1644 said, in an account published by the Campden Society in 1859,

... Over the Cotswold Downes, where Dover's Games were ...

The last open battle of the Civil War was fought up the slopes of Dover's Hill at Saintsbury as the start of what became known later as the battle of Stow, on the 21st March 1646.

Robert Dover's surviving son John, was born in 1614, married in 1639, moved to Barton-on-the-Heath 1604-1, and died in 1696, having been a captain of horse under Prince Rupert during the civil war and a captain of the local militia for a period after the Restoration.

## THE REVIVAL OF THE COTSWOLD GAMES

The Rev. William Thomas recorded about 1730 that in Ilmington there was also still kept an annual feast on 21st September, incidentally known as St Matthew's day, set up by the "mobbish" people for wrestling and other masculine exercises from about the year 1650.

The Campden Games were revived again after the Restoration of 29th May 1660, although the actual year is unknown, and they continued with varying degrees of popularity and success for nearly two hundred years until 1852, when, largely by the influence of Canon Bourne the rector of Weston-sub-Edge, they were finally stopped.

In the Gloucester Journal of May 1725 there is an advertisement for the Games mentioning wrestling, back-sword, and men and women dancing jigs for prizes of shoes.

In 1736 the parson of Stow-on-the-Wold complained in *A Serious Dissuasive Against Whitsun Ales*,

These sports are attended usually with ridiculous gestures and acts of folly and buffoonery, but children's play, and what therefore grown-up persons should be ashamed of ... What I have now been desiring you to consider as touching the evil and pernicious consequences of Whitsun Ales among us doth also obtain against Dover's Meetings and other noted places of publick resort of this nature in the country.

William Somerville (1675-1742), a highly cultured gentleman published in 1740 his poem, *Hobbinol, or the Rural Games*. Its main interest is the vivid description it gives of the atmosphere of Dover's Games.

In 1773, the Rev. Richard Graves "the younger" (1715-1804) poet and novelist of Mickleton, aged 57, published *The Spiritual Quixote* (reprinted by OUP in 1967) a satire on the Methodists of his day drafted about 1758 . Graves imagines his hero Wildgoose and his rural friend and assistant Tugwell, setting out to convert the world and very early in his mission going to Dover's Games. The account of the scene gives an idea of the taste and flavour of an eighteenth century country gathering, being no better or no worse than any other.

They now approached the place of the rendezvous, where the revel was held; which was a large plain on the Cotswold-hills. Their ears were saluted with a confused noise of drums, trumpets, and whistle-pipes; not those martial sounds, however, which are heard in the field of battle; but such as those harmless instruments emit, with which children amuse themselves in a country fair. There was a great number of swains in their holiday-cloaths, with their belts and silk handkerchiefs; and nymphs in straw hats and tawdry ribbands, flaunting, ogling, and coquetting (in their rustic way) with as much alacrity, as any of the gay flutterers in the Mall.

A ring was formed about the wrestlers and cudgel-players, by the substantial farmers on their long-tailed steeds, and two or three forlorn coaches [were] sauntering about with their vapourish possessors: who crept out from their neighbouring seats - to contemplate the humours of these aukward rustics, and waste an hour of their tedious month in the *country*; where (as a great modern observes) *small matters serve for amusement*.

... they were refreshing themselves ... when the company began to divide; and proclamation was made, that a holland shift, which was adorned with ribbands, and displayed on a pole, was going to be run for; and six young women began to exhibit themselves before the whole assembly, in a dress hardly reconcilable to the rules of decency.

... a shrewd young carter (with a silk handkerchief about his neck) ... thinking that this harangue would spoil the diversion, which they were now intent upon, he threw the rind of an orange at the orator's head. Another levelled a piece of horse-dung (with an unlucky dexterity) exactly into Tugwell's mouth ... Their example was followed by a great part of the company; who began to bombard then furiously with clods of dirt and horse-dung ... One of them titling up the form on which Tugwell was exalted, laid him sprawling in the moisture, occasioned by the staling of horses, or spilling of the liquor; where he lay wallowing for some time, being saluted with several bumps and jostles in contrary directions; which prevented his emerging from the slippery soil.

They met Morris dancers when near Gloucester as they retreated from the games.

Those who are acquainted with this sort of morrice-dance must know that they are usually attended with one character called the Tom Fool: who like the clown in the pantomime, seems to burlesque upon all the rest. His fool's cap has a fox's tail depending like a ramillie whig; and instead of the small bells which others wear on their legs, he had a great sheep-bell hung to his back-side. Whilst the company therefore were all attentive to the preacher, this buffoon contrived to slip the fool's cap upon Tugwell's head, and to fix the sheep-bell to his rump. Which [he] no sooner perceived, than his choler arose, and spitting in his hands, and clenching his fists, he gave the Tom-fool a swinging blow in the face. The Fool, having more wit than courage, endeavoured to escape amongst the crowd. Tugwell pursued him in great rage, with the sheep-bell at his tail; the ridiculous sound of which, forming a sort of contrast to the wrath in [his] countenance, caused a great deal of loud mirth amongst the company.

### THE SLOW DECLINE OF THE COTSWOLD GAMES

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the games seem to have declined. Samuel Rudder, topographer, (d.1801) in *A New History of Gloucestershire*, of 1779, merely stated,

... there is still a meeting of young people upon Dover's Hill, about a mile from Chipping Campden, every Thursday in Whit week.

A similar sentiment is in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1797.

Dover's Games were no doubt still pretty rough and disorderly, but they were part of the eighteenth century way of life, and an important and essential part, as also were events such as the urban public executions at which large crowds of people of all classes gathered, without the control of constables, and before the police existed. The sports were drawn from, according to later advertisements, in alphabetical order, bull-baiting, card games and chess in the tents, cock-fighting, coursing the hare with greyhounds, basket handled cudgel, back-sword and single-stick bouts, dancing by women, football and handball, handling the pike, hunting the hare with hounds, leapfrog, leaping, music, pitching or throwing the bar or hammer, quintain, quoits, racing on foot and running in sacks, shin kicking, shovel-board, skittles, walking on hands and wrestling.

According to Miss Edith Brill, for shin-kicking the two contestants had iron plates on the toes of their boots and, holding each other by the shoulders with outstretched arms, kicked at each other's shins until one was obliged to give in. Contestants hardened their shins with malt vinegar and a blacksmith's hammer. The back-sword fighting was equally brutal, in a celebrated fight between Spyres of Mickleton and Nezzy Plested of Campden, one man lost an eye and the other died from his injuries.

Although all this emphasises the sporting aspect, Sir William Denny (d.1676, a contemporary at Gray's Inn, suggested in his *Annalia* contribution that Dover had provided a "Homeric" harpist to give the Games an Olympic character and to attract the gentry.

In Campden the early nineteenth century continued as in the past with the slow revolving year and the annual event of Dover's Games, with its crowds, junketings and confusions. A poster exists from 1806 showing that they were chiefly conducted on the initiative of the Campden Innkeepers, notably William Drury of the Swan Inn, who appeared to be responsible for bookings, entries, stalls etc.

In 1818 the poster proclaimed,

The high estimation in which this truly laudable Festival is held (being so famed for the celebrated Olympic Games) is fully evinced by its having been the Admiration of every true and undesigning Briton for more than two Centuries, and is now patronised by the Noble Heroes of the present age, and by every well wisher for the prosperity of the British Empire.

That year's event included a back-sword match for twelve guineas, wrestling for a silver cup, a pony race for a handsome prize and horse racing for a sweepstake of five guineas each with thirty pounds added. The new world of piety, self-improvement and progress was yet to come!

Hunting, coursing and shooting and the annual Dover's Games were the recreation of the gentry and some of the larger farmers, although the district around Campden seems to have lost the fashionable reputé that it had in the eighteenth century for sport and social interactions. Of the meeting held in 1826, *The Mirror* (No.197 of 27th May 1826) referred to the Games and a reply (No.199 of 10th June) wrote that,

... although it is not countenanced by persons of rank and consequence as it was some half century ago.

It is still a great holiday for all the lads and lasses within ten to fifteen miles of the place, and is attended by numbers of gentry and people of respectability in the neighbourhood.

The same writer described the Cotswold Morris dancers as,

... spruce lads sprigged up in their Sunday clothes, with ribbons round their hats and arms, and bells on their legs, and they were attended by a jester called Tom Fool, who carried a long stick with a bladder tied to

1  
it, with which he buffeted about to make room for the dancers, while one of the best looking of the men was selected to carry a large plum cake, a long sword run through the middle of it, the cake resting on the hilt. On the point of the sword is a large bunch of ribbons with streamers, and a large knife stuck in the cake, and when the young man sees a favourite lass he gives her a slice.

## THE COMING OF THE RAILWAYS TO THE SOUTH MIDLANDS

The coming of the railways was an event which it was claimed caused much local disturbance. Such intrusion of large numbers of "navigators" brought a fresh element of disorder and lawlessness into the district. Shops, public houses and bookmakers benefited, but Dover's Games supposedly became more and more rowdy as they were attended by larger and larger crowds. A railway station was opened on the Midland Railway's Bristol to Birmingham line at Ashchurch in 1845 about twelve to thirteen miles away. The Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway obtained its Act on 4th August 1845. Although it became part of the West Midland Railway on 1st July 1860 and of the Great Western Railway on 1st August 1863, it remained known locally as the "Old Worse and Worse" because of the quality of its service. Dr A B Grosart in the introduction to his edition of the *Annalia* of 1877 said that during the five years 1846-52 that the Mickleton Tunnel was in progress, a body of navvies converted the gathering into a riotous and dangerous assembly. Such stories are not supported by local police records. In 1851 a dispute between the tunnel contractor Marchant and the line's engineer Brunel led to a "battle" at the tunnel involving a few thousand men, magistrates, several readings of the Riot Act, and finally the intervention of troops from Coventry. With the opening of the railway from Oxford to Wolverhampton and Birmingham on the 4th June 1853, it was claimed that the Games became more the resort of the toughs and undesirables from as far away as the Black Country. From the beginning of the railways, excursions were run, even if there was still a long walk by today's standards at the end of it.

Another relevant line in the area was the Evesham and Redditch, whose bill was gained in 1863 and which opened in September 1866, but the later Evesham, Redditch and Stratford-on-Avon Junction from Broom Junction and running through Bidford did not open until June 1879, well after the games had stopped.

## THE NEVER ENDING STORY and THE COTSWOLD MORRIS

E R Vyvyan in his 1878 edition of the *Annalia* said that the Games became the trysting place of all the lowest scum of the population which lived in the districts lying between Birmingham and Oxford. Sometime before 1851, the Rev. G D Bourne, later a Canon, who was a magistrate and the wealthy and powerful Rector of Weston-sub-Edge from 1846 until 1901, claimed to have seen over 30,000 at one of the gatherings and was much concerned at the drunkenness and the general licence that prevailed. To stop it, an enclosure act for the Weston-sub-Edge parish was obtained in 1853-4, progressed from 1849 with the help of the Earl of Harrowby who owned the common land and open fields. Chipping Campden had already been enclosed in 1799. The hill was divided into fields and ploughed, leaving no space big enough for the crowds or the steeplechases and athletic events. So the last official meeting was probably in the summer of 1852.

The advertisement for 1852 mentioned dancing for ribbons, but this is unlikely to have been a Morris competition. However the Cotswold Morris was present in the 1850's. There appeared to have been meetings at Stow-on-the-Wold beforehand for sides to compete for the right to dance on Dover's Hill at which the winning side would be allowed to sell the yellow Dover's favours. At one of the last celebrations the team from Guiting Power competed with four other sides, Sherborne among them, as to who should have the right to stay on the hill for the day and won the contest, so claimed Charles Danley. The MS history of Chipping Campden written by Mr John Horne in 1898, said that the last year the meeting was held the Morris dancers came from Longborough together with one or two old Campden dancers. Competitions at Stow were so popular that they continued for some years after their primary purpose had ceased. They were described apparently by the Young Bledington dancers present at the feast during the Stow-on-the-Wold Ring Meeting in 1938, according to interviews with attendees, although surprisingly and uncharacteristically no written record of what was said appears to have survived.

The stopping after 200 years at about the same time of the septennial Woodstock Ale in 1851, the Dover's Games in 1852, the Kirtlington Lamb Ale in 1860, and the Whit Hunt near Witney following the Wychwood Forest enclosure, removed some of the motivation for the continuance of the Cotswold Morris, which was now going into serious decline.

The Games had not only occupied Dover's Hill, in Campden there were cock fights, plays and balls and a wake on the Saturday with booths, stalls and roundabouts. These continued and by 1887 this side had expanded to be known as Scuttlebrook Wake, after the Cattle or Scuttle Brook which then ran down the middle of Leysbourne into a large pool at the junction of Church St and High St. But the older custom on the hill had died hard, for late in the nineteenth century there were still gatherings of young people for sports and games, either on what there was of open space or on the Mile Drive, which was probably part of the old race course.

Dover's Hill was threatened with development as a hotel site in the 1920's and its was saved by the artist F L Griggs, who had settled in Campden in 1904 and did much to preserve the local scene. He bid against speculators at the auction and gained it for £4000. Over the next two years richer friends, among them the historian Dr G M Trevelyan, bought it from him and handed it over to the National Trust in 1929. There is now a commemorative plaque on the hill. For the Festival of Britain in 1951 there was a special celebration on the hill and by 1966 they were regular occasions on the Friday evening before the Wake with races, bands, fireworks, culminating in a torch lit procession to the town led by a horse riding "Robert Dover" in seventeenth century dress and ending with general dancing in the square. The Scuttlebrook Fair continues today on the Saturday after the Spring Bank Holiday with a carnival procession, a May Queen and the local Morris dancers.

## OVER TO MUCH WENLOCK

The tiny medieval market town of Wenlock, beneath the wooded Wenlock Edge, was the first non-county borough to be granted borough status in 1468, sending



members to parliament until 1885. Its prosperity over the centuries depended on various trades from copper and coal, to malting, tanning and clay pipe making and then to lime and limestone quarrying. There was a time when there were more than thirty inns, public and ale houses for under two thousand people. Dancing had been a popular relaxation, for many hours at a time with considerable gusto according to local newspapers, and there are references to gypsy fiddlers providing lively music.

Dr William Penny Brookes, a local surgeon and from 1841 a magistrate and commissioner for roads and taxes at Much Wenlock, had considerable impact on Wenlock throughout the last century. Born in Wilmore Street, Much Wenlock, where now is Lloyds Bank, during 1809 to a local GP, he trained at both Guys and St Thomas's hospitals in London, Paris and Padua, and after working in Stourport, joined his father's practice in 1831 and eventually took it over. He could ride up to 70 miles a day seeing patients.

He was involved with the restoration of the Council Chamber in 1849, and the building of the Corn Exchange by public subscription in 1852, as well as in the provision of other amenities, such as the local introduction of town and domestic lighting by the Wenlock Gas Company in 1856 being a founding director, the arrival of the railway as the secretary from 1861 of the Much Wenlock and Severn Junction Railway, and the installation of public sewerage and water systems.

By the mid nineteenth century it was considered that the amount of drinking and roistering in the town was excessive and projects for the poor were started, including a library and reading room opened in 1841, of which Brookes was the first president, and the encouragement of athletics.

... the inhabitants of this neighbourhood ... will be provided with a good library of well selected useful and improving works, which will furnish abundant rational recreation to the general reader, contain an ample store of scientific information ... and prove of practical value to the Agriculturist, the Mechanic and Artificer ...

Dr Brookes appears to have been an archetypal country squire, dedicated to suppressing the perceived vice in his neighbourhood by creating a festival to substitute for the older and supposedly less uplifting expressions of village gaiety. He was an admirer of the better aspects of the Cotswold Games concept, which combined classic Greek prowess and the sporting heritage of rural England, and he started a local event on these lines in October 1850. It grew from an Olympic Class as a subsidiary organisation or "class" of the Wenlock Agricultural Reading Society. Only later did it become a separate organisation, the Wenlock Olympian Society. In 1850 the committee book expressed its aims as,

... the promotion of the moral, physical and intellectual improvement of the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Wenlock, and especially the working classes, by the encouragement of outdoor recreation and by the award of prizes annually, at public meetings, for skill in athletic exercises and proficiency in intellectual and industrial attainments.

At the very beginning the sports were strong on the rustic side, including fourteen a side football and cricket, quoits, blindfold wheelbarrow pushing,

chasing a pig around the town, a jingling match, a game of prison base, and old women running for a pound of tea. Most of these were dropped by 1860, but the popular tilting on horseback was introduced in 1858. This involved spearing a small ring, suspended from a bar over the course, of only about one and half inches diameter. There were running races even for under sevens.

In the period 1860-1870 the crowds were perhaps up to 10,000 strong. Some events were open to all comers. By 1870 the programme had developed to be more like a modern athletics meeting with recognised track and field events and top flight national athletes were being attracted. Fairness was often achieved by handicapping. In 1868 the pentathlon was added. Mentioned as pentathlon tasks were the long and high jump, putting a 32 lb stone shot with each hand and climbing a seventy foot rope. In 1878 there was a one mile hurdle race. Through the 1870's and 1880's the prestige events were competed for and often won by outsiders, not surprisingly predominately members of the Birmingham Athletic Club.

Naturally dancing did not feature highly in the sports being encouraged, but arrangements were made for it as a relaxation during the Games. In 1876 the admission charge for the dancing area enclosure was 6d.

### THE DAY AT THE EARLY WENLOCK OLYMPIC GAMES

The early Games started with a speech by Dr Brookes and then a procession from the town centre by the Gaskell Arms to the racecourse to the south east, named the Olympian Fields for the day, remembered now only by Racecourse Lane. Streets were decked in greenery and tributes to officers of the Society. Until its centenary in 1950 it was always a one day event. In 1890,

The morning rendezvous was at one of the two inns, the Raven or the Gaskell Arms. There the procession was formed. The Herald came first on horseback, wearing a richly embroidered shoulder belt and a red velvet cap with white feathers, and carrying the banner of the association. Behind him were the committee and the officers and the Wenlock band playing a march. Then the school children singing hymns and casting flowers from their baskets and last the yeoman and the tilters riding their horses and bearing on their uniforms the association badge. Through the streets gaily decorated with flags and flower wreaths the procession would make its way toward the "Olympian field" where another kind of ceremony was entered upon.

The playing ground was beautiful for its setting, its grass tracks for foot races and equestrian sports, its cricket and lawn tennis grounds, its large and comfortable stands, its open-air swimming tank and its dancing lawn.

But what makes it charming and unlike any other athletic field is the row of rare and beautiful trees that surrounds it. These have been solemnly dedicated to distinguished guests or to persons of high rank on some noteworthy occasion. The dedication of a tree was the ordinary prologue of the celebration: short speeches were delivered, a hymn was sung, and the champagne was poured on the tree out of a

large silver drinking cup that used to go round afterwards from lip to lip of the officers of the day. Then the cortege was resumed and marched toward the grand stand in front of which the sports were to take place.

These were a motley lot, including tilting at the ring, for which all the plucky young farmers of the neighbourhood are always ready to enter their names, and tent pegging, an exercise popular in India, besides racing, cricket and lawn tennis. Brookes he noted was not without admiration for the Athenians, save for one thing, they lacked *galanterie*, allowing no woman into the stadium. This injury to the beauty and charm of the fair sex the old gentleman resented deeply. Not feeling satisfied with giving the ladies the best seats at the Wenlock festival, he had forced upon his countrymen the queer custom of having the champion tilter crowned with laurels by a lady. After the title of champion for the coming year had been solemnly proclaimed by the herald, the winner was ordered to kneel down before the lady who had accepted the duty of crowning him and to kiss her hand.

The scene was indeed strange because of its derivation from three very different forms of civilisation. The dress and the speeches were modern; the use of laurels and the quotations from Greek authors inscribed on the flags and banderoles were antique; the latter part of the ceremony was a homage paid to medieval ideas and theories.

Victory odes were read and the winners were presented with olive crowns and elaborate medals. After the competitions there was a procession back to the town, again led by a band, followed by a formal dinner. The Herald's costume, supposedly modelled on one of Henry VIII's time, appeared in 1867, obtained from a London theatre, and now the original is on display in the local museum. He rode a white horse. The shops shut for the day and the streets were decorated with flags and greenery.

## THE OUTSIDE CONTACTS OF BROOKES AND THE SOCIETY

Brookes tried and failed to export this idea. He wrote to the Mayors of all the boroughs in England in 1860 enclosing a copy of the Wenlock Games programme "with a view of promoting the formation of similar societies throughout the kingdom". Olympian festivals under the same regulations took place in Birmingham, Shrewsbury (1861) and Wellington but no regular movement had started and they did not catch on. However it was brought to the attention of the Greek Government and Royalty through the Greek Charge de Affaires in London, J Gennadius, by 1880.

... as a Greek I can but feel indebted to you that you combine  
with this idea the project of a revival of the Olympic Games ...  
I believe that you will find a very sympathetic response in Greece.

The Greek newspaper *Clio* in June 1881 reported,

Dr Brookes, this enthusiastic Philhellene is endeavouring to  
organise an International Olympian Festival, to be held in Athens ...

Brookes sent a silver decoration, as awarded to victors at Wenlock, and a silver belt clasp to Queen Amilia, or Amalie on the eve of her husband King Otho's dethronement in 1862 whilst on holiday. Medals featured the figure of Nike, the goddess of victory. King Otho, an unpopular German prince, was the son of Louis I of Bavaria and was selected in 1832 by an International Congress to rule the Greeks.

Active in athletic and physical education organisations throughout his life, he remained in contact with the Olympic pioneers in Greece and was a leading member of the National Olympian Association founded in 1865, together with John Hulley of Liverpool and E Ravenstein of the German Gymnastic Society of London. It was intended that it should be "a centre of union for the many gymnastic, athletic, olympian and similar clubs rapidly springing up all over the country". The first meeting was at the Crystal Palace in 1866 and it was a success, attracting 10,000 spectators. In 1877, the successor King of the Hellenes, George I, sent a large silver cup or urn to Brookes as a trophy for the pentathlon at the Shrewsbury meeting of the NOA Games. King George was the son of Christian IX of Denmark, a brother of Queen Alexandra of England, and had married a Russian princess Olga. The British Government presented Greece with seven Ionian islands which had been long taken from the Turks.

Five more meetings were held but they faded from the national stage after the last at Hadley in 1883. The Association was obscured by the success of the more influential Amateur Athletics Club, later in 1880 to become the AAA, the creation of powerful London establishment figures and Oxford and Cambridge athletes, set up in reaction to the NOA and stealing its thunder by organising its own championships ahead of the NOA's.

Dr Brookes died in 1895 when aged 86. There is a memorial stone up on the front of the restored Corn Exchange, now the public library. Throughout his life he campaigned for the inclusion of physical education in school curricula and demonstrated its value with the children at the Much Wenlock National School. The Wenlock Society petitioned Parliament on three occasions, while Brookes wrote to Gladstone and other notables numerous times. Just before his death came the news that the Board of Education was to give grants to incorporate physical exercises, drill and gymnastics into school curricula, something he had advocated for nearly half a century. This step was exploited later by Cecil Sharp to introduce Morris and folk dance into schools before WW I.

## THE WENLOCK GAMES AND THE REMINDERS TODAY

Brooke's pioneer agricultural lending library was in the Corn Exchange in the centre of the town where the county library branch is now situated. The local museum, originally the Market Hall and then the War Memorial Hall, has a current exhibition recording some of the early history of the games and showing examples of medals and cups awarded in the past. Dr Brookes kept documents and made scrapbooks and formed a photographic collection. The current Wenlock Olympic Society now holds very extensive records.

The Much Wenlock Games continued annually until the First World War, the 63rd WOG were on May 13th 1913, and then at intervals until the 1960's, being

restarted after WWII in 1950 to celebrate their centenary. Their last revival was in 1977, largely due to the efforts of the current secretary Mr Norman Wood of Homer, born in 1922, assisted more recently by his daughter Jan of The Bakery Shop in the High Street. It has developed to include a carnival procession with floats and a carnival queen. The 1994 event attracted around 2000 athletes to the William Brookes Secondary School and Sports Hall and the adjacent Linden Playing Fields to the north of the town. Survival of the event depends on volunteers and local business sponsorships and its income is largely from entry fees and the sale of refreshments from the cricket club pavilion. Today everyone is given a commemorative medal for taking part and winners receive a modest voucher which can be exchanged for sports equipment. Races for the disabled have been included since 1981.

The three day event in 1990, the centenary of Coubertin's visit, was filmed by a local man Malcolm Brown. There were about 2000 competitors, with races for under nines, minors, under elevens, intermediates and seniors.

The sports are now usually a full weekend in early July, in 1995 they were on the 8/9th, with the cricket match two weeks later. There are associated events, such as a best Dressed Shop Window competition, a Live Arts festival in March and an Annual show of Art, Handicrafts, Produce, Cookery and Photography in the Priory Hall during the Saturday before the Games weekend.

### THE GREEK LINK

The first recorded Olympic Game victory was in Mycenaean times in 776 BC and the last in 385 AD, with possibly the final and 293rd Olympiad in 393 AD, stopped by the Roman Emperor Theodosius I, the first Christian Emperor of Rome, thinking to crush paganism by abolishing pagan rites. But they might have continued until 426 AD when the Temple of Zeus was burnt down at the edict of Theodosius II. There was a widely supported circuit of national Panhellenic Games in or opposite the Peloponnese. The first named winner was Coroibos of Elis, a cook, and the first king of Elis, Aethlius, gave us the modern word athlete.

<i>Games</i>	<i>Place</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Dedication</i>	<i>Wreath/Garland</i>
Olympic	Olympia	Midsummer	Zeus	Wild Olive
Pythian	Delphi	Midsummer	Apollo	Laurel
Nemean	North-East	Summer	Zeus	Fig-Wort
Isthmian	Isthmus of Corinth	Spring	Poseidon	Fir

The prizes were insignificant compared to the fame and glory. Interestingly winners had wool ribbons tied around their head, arms and legs as a mark of victory, and there was a public banquet.

Olympia was a sacred place near the western coast, not near Mt. Olympus which was far away in Thessaly. The games were timed so that the central day coincided with the second or third full moon after the summer solstice, in mid-August or mid-September.

The original Olympia Stadium was plundered in the fourth century and suffered two major earthquakes in the sixth which toppled temple columns and diverted the river Kladeos to destroy half the gymnasium, and in the late Middle Ages the river Alpheios washed away all of the hippodrome and covering the rest with 4 meters of silt, so that its exact location became a mystery to all but the local inhabitants. Its "rediscovery" at the start of the nineteenth century could not be exploited because of the general turmoil caused by the Greek wars of independence. Yet again the site was plundered, as was customary for that time, by the French in 1829. But the Germans began serious archaeology on the site and publishing on the historic games in the period from 1875 to 1881, and again from 1936.

The events were, in order of introduction, the short foot-race (776 BC), double length foot-race (724 BC), long distance foot-race (720 BC), pentathlon and wrestling (708 BC), boxing (688 BC), four-horse chariot-race (680 BC), all-in wrestling and horse-race (648 BC), foot-race and wrestling for boys (632 BC), boxing for boys (616 BC), race in armour (520 BC), mule-cart race (500-444 BC), two-horse chariot-race (408 BC), a **competition for the heralds and trumpeters** (396 BC), chariot-races for teams of four colts (384 BC), chariot-racing for teams of two colts (268 BC), races for colts (256 BC), all-in wrestling for boys (200 BC).

The sprint over 600 Olympic feet (192.28 m) was both the oldest and most prestigious event and the following four years in the Olympic cycle were usually named after the winner. At first it was run on a level stretch of ground with a line drawn in the sand to start, giving our term "starting from scratch". Then the stadium was built about 350 BC. The pentathlon events were a 4 kg discus, jumping, javelin hurling, running and wrestling, all in one afternoon. The discus throwers went for style and grace but without foot travel, only body rotation, the javelin throwers were assisted by a leather thong wound round the middle of the shaft that spun and stabilised it, and the long jump was a standing leap made with the assistance of hand held weights. At first these were shaped like our recent telephone receivers.

Married women and slaves were not allowed to compete or witness the Games. There were separate games in honour of Hera with only a foot-race, 500 Olympic feet (160.23) m long, for girls in three separate age bands. The men competed nude from 720 BC.

The full Greek games were actually wanton and bloody affairs, but this was conveniently ignored in the nineteenth century arguments for a revival. The new inspiration became more than just a literary mention in the eighteenth century and several serious suggestions were made for some such modern celebration. One was by Major Evangelhos Zappas, a grain dealer who had made his fortune in what is now Romania, who in 1858 offered King Otho of Greece a large endowment for the restoration of the Games. These Games were held in Place Louis, a square on Athen's outskirts, one Sunday in November 1859, and included such oddities as wrestling on the ground, discus throw for height, rope climbing, throwing a javelin at a steer's head, and a tug-of-war. He bequeathed his fortune to give the so called Zappeion to Athens. The Wenlock Society sent £10 prize money for the 1859 games, the winner of which was made an honorary member of the Wenlock Olympian Society. This WENLOCK PRIZE went to the winner of the "Long or Sevenfold Race". There were further such games in 1870, 1875, 1888 and 1889, but at various other sites.

## BARON de COUBERTIN AND THE MODERN OLYMPIADS

Baron Pierre de Coubertin was born in Paris at the family hotel on New Year's Day 1863. His grandfather had been made a Baron by the Bourbon Louis XVIII in 1821. His father died in 1908. Pierre was unusually small and took an un-French attitude to games and fitness, even practising boxing. Coubertin first visited England in 1883 to study English Public Schools and their sports, as an admirer of Dr Arnold, and then made a similar but more official visit to the USA in 1889. Many sports were standardised only from the 1850's, and purely athletic meetings only started late in the nineteenth century. The Olympic Club of Montreal was founded in 1842. America presented Coubertin with the first evidence of the mass popularity of spectator sports, whilst the 1889 Paris Universal Exposition alerted him to the attraction and symbolic power of international public spectacles. The first truly international exhibition was at the 1851 London Crystal Palace. Our Prince Albert's role in that was similar to Coubertin's for the later Olympics. But the Paris Exposition of 1878 was the first that Coubertin attended. The next was that in 1889 for which the Eiffel Tower was built. It had ethnic displays and the first European appearance of Buffalo Bill's "Wild West Show".

While setting up the Congress of Physical Training at the 1889 Paris Exposition, Dr Brookes responded to a newspaper notice, and Coubertin was invited by him to visit Much Wenlock, which he did in October 1890 and his published description is quoted above. During his visit he planted a tree at the Linden Fields, whose original commemorative plaque is now in the local museum. It was in 1892 that he made the first public suggestions in his campaign for the acceptance of the concept of the Modern Olympics. His lecture at the Sorbonne on 25 November 1892 was received with an ovation. There were many inspirations, Coubertin did not so much dream up the idea as make it a reality. Though throughout he rarely had contact with athletes.

He was utterly bemused and delighted by what he saw at Much Wenlock. Coubertin was not usually taken by such an amalgam, but the ceremonial and *bonheur*, indeed what we might call the theatricality of the Wenlock Games quite distracted him. For all its strangeness, Coubertin found such syncretism tasteful and charming. The processional opening likely added to the impressions he had already received from the opening solemnities of the Paris Exposition and contributed with them to the later opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games.

In his 1897 article on the history of modern sports and gymnastics he remarked,

... such meetings are of essentially modern character; the games are modern; modern are the rules, the dress and the prizes. In Wenlock only something of the past has survived; it is safe to say that the Wenlock people alone have preserved and followed the true Olympian traditions.

This seems to have been occasioned by the inclusion of prizes for literary compositions and artistic works, the Greek banners, slogans, and songs and above all, "such displaying of etiquette and stateliness" as "no modern athletes" had ever known.

In his periodical "*La Revue Athletique*" of December 1890,

... and of the Olympic Games which modern Greece has not yet revived, it is not a Greek to whom one is indebted, but rather to Dr William Penny Brookes ... now aged 82 ... still active, vigorous, organising and animating them ... Athletics does not count many partisans as convinced as W P Brookes.

Only rarely have women crowned champions in the modern Olympic Games, but since the 1920's it has become a regular custom to have the prizes borne forward by young maidens from the host nation. This practice, and the idea of victory ceremonies themselves, were planted in Coubertin's imagination at Much Wenlock.

His second visit to the USA was in 1893 representing France at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. He formed the first International Olympic Committee in 1894 in Paris at an eight day long meeting now remembered as "The Congress of the Sorbonne" held from 17th to 24th June. On Thursday, 24th May a meeting of the Wenlock Olympic Society read the programme for this International Athletic Congress to be called about "Amateurism and Professionalism in Athletics". They wanted them to be only amateur. Dr Brookes sent his best wishes but was unable to attend because of failing health, but he was listed as an honorary member of the Congress. However the Olympic committee did not become a working one until after 1908.

## THE INTERNATIONAL OLYMPICS BEGIN

The Games in Athens were from Easter Monday April 6th 1896 until April 13th. The Stadium had been restored according to the ancient plans in marble by a gift of one million drachma from Georgios Averoff and the sale of souvenir stamps and medals. They were the first meeting to have a unity and integrity of rule, purpose and form. Much of the organisation was owed to the efforts of Crown Prince Constantine and his brother Prince George. On the first and fifth days the crowds, perhaps 60 to 80 thousand or more, were for then the largest ever gathered for a peaceful celebration in the modern world. One unrepeatable event occurred, Robert Garrett of the USA Princeton team, took up a discus, never having seen let alone picked one up before, and threw it further than the Greeks for whom it was the classic exercise! All the associated ritual symbols of the games, solemn music, processions, flights of birds, sacred plants, flags, mythic and divine images, invocations, crownings, wreath laying, statue dedications which populated the opening, victory and awards ceremonies, followed by banquets, group photograph sessions and ceremonial leave taking, were more novel than the actual Olympic Games but have lasted. Another innovation was the raising of the national flag of the event winners. The Olympic Hymn was written in 1896 by two Greeks and, despite various attempts to modernise it, it still remains in use. There were artistic events in Athens associated with the Games, concerts, performance of ancient drama, a torch race, many receptions and extensive flood lighting. It amounted to a charming carnival of Boy Scoutish idealism and with a minimum of the pompous military and religious ritual of later games.



Subsequent games in Paris (July through October 1900 in the Bois de Boulogne) and St Louis (1904 at the Washington University) were relative disasters, with epidemics of bad temper and high level confusion, and that at London (1908 at the Shepherd's Bush Stadium), replacing Rome because of financial difficulties, was transitional, because they were all amalgamated with world fairs, and only those in Stockholm (1912) and Paris (1924) were independent triumphs for the Olympic Movement. At Paris in 1900 many athletes learned that they had participated in the second Olympics of the modern era only when they noticed the inscriptions to that effect on the medals and certificates. The 1904 games had been intended for Chicago but were transferred to join the 100th anniversary celebration of the Louisiana Purchase.

1908 was the first time that entries were by countries rather than on a personal basis. The London Games were a contribution to international acrimony rather than harmony, but about a quarter of a million people watched the marathon. The marathon distance was supposed to have been about 25 miles, but when the start in 1908 was moved to Windsor it became 26 miles. Then Princess Mary asked for the start to be moved to below the royal nursery, making it 26 miles and 385 yards! The IOC flag of five interlaced rings on a white ground, based on an emblem found at Delphi in 1913 by Coubertin himself, was first unfurled at Antwerp in 1920. They are to represent the five continents of Europe, Asia, Oceania, Africa and the Americas. The Olympic Flame was introduced at Amsterdam in 1928, the torch relay in 1936 and mascots for each games in 1968.

The Greek athletes always lead the opening procession, then nations follow in alphabetical order but with the hosts last.

These early Games also included such athletic events as standing long and high jumps but also free style javelin throwing, as well as discus, shot and javelin where the winner was the one who threw the best aggregate distance with their left and right hands separately. There was a 200 m swimming obstacle race in 1900, as well as underwater swimming and live pigeon shooting! Croquet and Cricket also occurred in 1900. England hold the only cricket gold medal when the Devon Wanderers CC beat a French team of largely British expatriots living in France. The London City Police beat the Liverpool Police in the tug o'war in 1908, an event from 1900 until 1920.

Coubertin intended from the beginning that the Modern Olympics would include cultural events as in the ancient festivals. He tried in vain to interest the organisers, London was sympathetic but too pressed for time. Stockholm made a valiant first effort with all the fine arts entries to have an appropriate affinity to the Olympic sports. The modern art competitions introduced were architecture, painting, graphic arts, sculpture or plastic arts, applied arts, literature and music. The competition lasted from 1912 until 1948. Amsterdam had a final exhibition of 1150 works of art, 450 architectural, 40 literature entries and 22 musical. There were 1100 exhibits in Los Angeles (1932), at which a German won a prize for poetry. However there never were classes for the other performing arts, other than the Ice Dancing since WW II, and certainly no chance for folk dance, except perhaps in the opening non-competitive displays. There has been a parallel art exposition at Atlanta.

Coubertin was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1936 but was not selected. He died from a stroke on 2nd February 1937, aged 74.

The British Empire, now Commonwealth, Games started in Canada in 1930 and the World Championships began in Helsinki from 7-14 August 1983.

### REMEMBRANCES INVOLVING WENLOCK

In 1980 a special Festival was held to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the Amateur Athletic Association in 1880. In 1986 the Society celebrated its own 100th Games with distinguished visitors from the British Olympic Association, and the International Olympic Committee, with the grand-nephew of Baron de Coubertin, Geoffrey de Navacelle as the Guest of Honour.

As part of the Manchester bid for the 1996 Olympics, the preparing team visited Much Wenlock in July 1990 to gain some historical support.

As 1990 was the centenary of Coubertin's visit, the Guest of Honour was HRH The Princess Royal, as a Member of the International Olympic Committee and the President of the British Olympic Association. She led representatives from the BOA including the chairman Sir Arthur Gold and Dr Don Anthony, who had done so much to forge the link between the Wenlock Society and the BOA. She also planted a tree.

The president of the International Olympic Committee, Juan Antonio Samaranch, the Marques de Samaranch, visited Wenlock for two hours on Wednesday 13th July 1994, to plant an oak tree near that planted by Coubertin in 1890, which now towers over the playing fields, to acknowledge its part in the rebirth of the Olympic movement. This event followed the 108th Wenlock Olympic Games.

Although the Morris has not been associated with any Olympics since the end of Dover's Games in the middle of the nineteenth century, there is expectation that it could be shown as part of a future opening ceremony. Dances were performed by the Auckland Morris at the start of the Commonwealth Games in Auckland, New Zealand in 1990.

V 1.0 © R L Dommett, 1980

V 2.6 © R L Dommett, 1995

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

This work depended heavily on the research by Whitfield and Powell for Dover with small details from the other sources. The Wenlock background is mainly from the books on the origins of the Modern Olympiads plus local material from individuals, particularly Mr Wood and the local librarian in Much Wenlock as well as the staff of its museum and the reference library in Shrewsbury.

### The Ancient Games

- V Olivova            *Sports and Games in the Ancient World*  
Orbis Pub. Ltd, London, 1984.
- D Sansone           *Greek Athletics and the Genesis of Sport*  
University of California Press, Berkeley, USA, 1988.
- J Swaddling         *The Ancient Olympic Games*  
British Museum Publications Ltd.  
London, 1980 (reprinted many times)  
Best and clearest description of site and sports with models  
and maps.

### The Cotswold Games

- C Whitfield         *Robert Dover and the Cotswold Games :*  
A new edition of Annalia Dubrensis  
Henry Sothorn Ltd, London, 1962.
- F Burns             *Heigh for Cotswold :*  
a history of Robert Dover's Climpick Games.  
Chipping Campden, 1981.
- C Bearman          *The Ending of the Cotswold Games*  
Thesis
- K Chandler          *"Ribbons, Bells and Squeaking Fiddles"*  
The Social History of Morris Dancing in the English  
South Midlands 1660-1900.  
Publication of the Folk Lore Society : Tradition 1  
Hasarlik Press, London, 1993
- G R Crosher         *Along the Cotswold Ways*  
Pan Books, London, 1977.
- G Powell             *The Book of Campden*  
Barracuda Books, Buckingham, 1982.
- R Christiansen       *Thames and Severn*  
Regional History of the Railways of Great Britain, Volume 13  
David and Charles, Newton Abbot, 1981.
- T Coleman           *The Railway Navvies*  
Hutchinson, London, 1965.

## The Much Wenlock Games

- J Gale                      *Much Wenlock in Victorian Times*  
Shropshire Books, Shrewsbury, 1990.
- S Mullins                   *Dr Brookes and the Olympics*  
Shropshire County Museum Service  
Information Sheet No.9, 1982.  
(leaflet available from the Much Wenlock Museum)
- Anon                        *Much Wenlock and the Olympian Connection,*  
*William Penny Brookes*  
*Founder of the Wenlock Olympian Society*  
(leaflet available from the Much Wenlock Tourist office)

## The Modern Olympiads

- B Holmes                 *The Olympic Games in Athens 1896 :*  
The First Modern Olympics  
Grove Press, New York, 1984  
(eyewitness account by one of the world's great travel writers  
of the time)
- R D Mandell             *The First Modern Olympics*  
University of California Press, Berkeley, 1976.
- G Powell                 *This Great Symbol*  
University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981.
- E A Bland                *Olympic Story*  
The definitive story of the Olympic Games from their revival  
in 1896. Illustrated, with an appendix of results and records.  
Rockliff, London, 1947.
- S Greenbury             *Guinness Olympic Fact Book*  
Guinness Publications, Enfield, Middlesex, 1991  
(Guinness Book of Olympic Facts and Feats - new edition?)
- Lord Killard(?)         *The Olympic Games*  
J Rodeau                 80 Years of People, Events and Records  
Barrie and Jenkins, London, 1976  
includes                 *Art and the Olympics* by Henri Pouret, pp 160-164

Helen Cromarty, a member of the Wenlock Olympic Society, is preparing a booklet to be a biography of Dr Brookes and the Wenlock Olympic Games.

## ANNEX

### THE MODERN OLYMPIC GAMES

No.	Year	Venue	Date	Nations	Men	Women	Total
I	1896	Athens	06 - 15 April	13	311	-	311
II	1900	Paris	14 May - 28 Oct	22	1308	11	1319
III	1904	St Louis	29 Aug - 07 Sept (01 July - 23 Nov)	12	617	-	617 <sup>t</sup>
IV	1908	London	13 - 25 July (27 April - 31 Oct)	22	2023	36	2059
V	1912	Stockholm	06 - 15 July (05 May - 22 July)	28	2484	57	2541 <sup>+</sup>
VI	1916	Berlin	cancelled				
VII	1920	Antwerp	14 - 29 August (20 April - 12 Sept)	29	2543	64	2607
VIII	1924	Paris	05 - 27 July (04 May - 27 July)	44	2956	136	3092
IX	1928	Amsterdam	28 July - 12 Aug (17 May - 12 Aug)	46	2725	290	3015
X	1932	Los Angeles	30 July - 14 Aug	34	1281	127	1408 <sup>t</sup>
XI	1936	Berlin	01 - 16 August	50	3741	328	4069
XII	1940	Toyko, then Helsinki, finally cancelled					
XIII	1944	London	cancelled				
XIV	1948	London	29 July - 14 Aug	59	4304	385	4689
XV	1952	Helsinki	19 July - 03 Aug	69	4407	518	4925
XVI	1956	Melbourne	22 Nov - 08 Dec	67 <sup>a</sup>	2959	384	3342 <sup>t</sup>
XVII	1960	Rome	25 Aug - 11 Sept	84	4738	610	5348
XVIII	1964	Tokyo	10 - 24 October	94	4826	732	5558
XIX	1968	Mexico	12 - 27 October	112	5215	844	6059
XX	1972	Munich	29 Aug - 11 Sept	122	6086	1070	7156
XXI	1976	Montreal	17 July - 1 Aug	92 <sup>b</sup>	4834	1251	6085
XXII	1980	Moscow	19 July - 1 Aug	81 <sup>c</sup>	4238	1088	5326
XXIII	1984	Los Angeles	28 July - 12 Aug	140 <sup>d</sup>	5458	1620	7078
XXIV	1988	Seoul	17 Sept - 2 Oct	159 <sup>e</sup>	6219	2186	8405
XXV	1992	Barcelona	25 July - 9 Aug	?	?	?	?
XXVI	1996	Atlanta	20 July - 4 Aug	197			

Bracketed dates are the full extent, first are the period of core athletic events.

t = numbers limited because of travel difficulties

+ = plus 1854 gymnasts in demonstrations

Numbers of participants for any of the games vary between the sources depending upon which events are included in the total. The above are usually the maximum estimates in the literature.

a,b,c,d,e = politically motivated boycott by the following number of countries  
(6),(21),(45-50),(19),(7)

file : dover.wri (4)

## **WORK IN PROGRESS**

More checks needed in DNB and Grove etc.

### **The Cotswold Games**

Read plaque on Dover's Hill.

Battle of Stow from Stow museum?

Add more on Porter.

Check Railway collection at Winchester.

Check railway records for excursions etc.

A fuller statement of the recent and current celebrations at Chipping Campden.

Are there programmes and recent newspaper accounts?

Contact the Chipping Campden library. Ask which 19th & 20th century newspapers were relevant.

Ask Keith Chandler on the detail of his search.

### **Much Wenlock Games**

More material from the Shrewsbury libraries about the Dr Brookes and the Much Wenlock Olympic Games to be incorporated

Obtain new booklet when issued.

Follow up more of what happened in 1995 and will in 1996.

Include letter from organiser.

What newspapers?

Examine programmes etc for the special years 1950, 1980, 1986, 1990, 1994.

What displays might have been put on?

How long did the special visitors stay?

Has Manchester Library got a copy of their city's Olympics bid?

### **Modern Olympiads**

Ask NZ Sphere what Auckland danced in 1990.

What about Barcelona details.

### **General**

Are there specialist sports libraries?

Check with local Reference Library for books giving lists.



## PLAYFORD AND THE COUNTRY DANCE

This paper brings together much of what has been found to have been written about the Playford family as publishers and something of the consequent history of the country dance. It is "illustrated" by a set of extracts from Pepys' Diary first published in EFDS News.

### The Puritan Attitude

There is a considerable literature existing which implies that the Puritans were against the use of music and dance both in England and in the American colonies. However as was first shown by Percy Scholes in *The Puritans and Music in England and New England, a Contribution to the Cultural History of Two Nations*, OUP, London, in 1934, this was not so, although the misunderstanding appears to persist. The major problem in understanding the period is that the culture was Protestant but not as that today. It is not to be confused with the distorted Puritanism of the 18th and especially the 19th century. It was Calvinist in flavour, looking for a Presbyterian form of government to replace the Episcopal, but not yet accepting the Armenian position. This was a certainty that Christ has died for all, but that the benefits of salvation were only received through personal faith not by works, whereas the Calvinists tended to accept predestination. The Puritans in time fragmented into Congregationalists, Baptists, Quakers, and other sects.

The Reformation was for the removal of scandals and abuses, but retaining both the doctrines and usages. However Calvinists did not want the trappings and ceremonies of Romanism and moved towards the use of the vernacular and the avoidance of musical elaboration in worship, although music itself was considered an innocent species of sensual enjoyment. The Puritan conscience attached much importance to the quiet and the religious observance of Sunday. This was contrary to those who wanted to retain the Festival Culture, that saw Sunday as a day of enjoyment, to contrast with the realities of the rest of the week. Although the reign of Charles II was a period of insincerity in the leading public lives and in many quarters a licentiousness of private conduct, the Puritan influence survived as the quiet Sunday, the stay at home and church going associated with it, and hence eventually allowing of the evangelical revival starting with the Wesleys.

The Puritans were keen music lovers. The leader of the Mayflower Pilgrims was a luteist whose children became musical performers. Oliver Cromwell possessed an organ and employed an organist. The first recorded public music concerts in England or New England occurred during the Protectorate. John Bunyan made a flute from a chair leg whilst in prison, played a violin, and favourably mentioned music and dancing throughout his inspirational books. There were no enactments on either side of the Atlantic against music or dancing on **weekdays**. They were neither anti-pleasure, as long as it was kept in proportion, anti-art, as long as it avoided superstition, or anti-music, as long as it did not distract in worship. The Puritans looked upon music as one of the good gifts of God.

Card playing and games of chance were associated with gambling, and this was objected to because it was believed that everything which happened in this world was arranged by a personal God, so these were believed blasphemous activities. Dancing was considered better than gaming for money or going forth to places of



debauchery! When abused it was seen as an introduction to whoredom, wantonness, provocative uncleanness and an introduction to all kinds of lewdness, rather than a pleasant exercise of the mind, or a wholesome practice of the body. A familiar response to young people's dancing to this day!

Often quoted is Philip Stubbs *Anatomie of Abuses* of 1583, a wonderful source of descriptive social material. He was educated at both Oxford and Cambridge, without taking a degree, and then he travelled widely. However he was not a Puritan but a self proclaimed Episcopalian who was actually abusive of the Puritans and the Sects. He was much disturbed by the social conditions of the day, at a time when gross exaggeration was a legitimate ploy.

### Beginnings of Music Printing

The first recognised music printer was Petrucci in Venice from 1501. Successful concerns were established in Paris (1527), Nuremberg (1532) and Antwerp (1540) and then such spread across Europe. Psalm books with music were printed in London from 1559 and secular music less successfully by Vautrollier from 1570. Thomas East acquired Vautrollier's set of type by 1585, but was then forbidden to print music from 1598-1602 under the royal patent given to Thomas Morley. By 1610 the momentum to sustain an English music publishing industry had faded and from 1620 new music was rarely published here. East, the leading printer of his day, had printed most of the works of Byrd and Morley. The evidence from format, style and printing, together with the stationers' registers, suggests that the elder Playford's music was printed with East's types. In many instances Playford adopted East's device and its surrounding motto, "Laetificat cor musica".

### The Playford Family

John Playford was born in Norwich in 1623, the son of a mercer who died in 1639. Shortly afterwards he was apprenticed to John Benson, publisher at St Dunstan's Churchyard, Fleet St, on the north side of Old St Paul's, the scene of executions during the Tudor religious persecutions and of some of the members of the Gunpowder Plot. In 1640, on achieving his freedom, he became a member of the Yeomanry of the Stationer's Company in 1647, entitling him to trade as a publisher. He was twenty eight when he published *The English Dancing Master, or Plaine and easie Rules for the Dancing of Country Dances with the Tune to each Dance*, addressed to the "Gentlemen of the Innes of Court", in March 1651, four years after setting up shop in the angle of the porch of the Temple Church, becoming the only music shop of account in London at that time, and trading from there until his retirement. He implied that "there was a false and surreptitious copy at the Public Presse, which if it had been published would have been a disparagement to the Professors thereof and a hinderance to the hearer."

Playford had begun by publishing political tracts culminating in the official account of the trial and execution of King Charles, *The Perfect Narrative of the Tryal of the King*. As a Royalist, a warrant had been issued for his arrest in 1649. But from 1651 he produced little else than music, the first possibly being *A Musicall Banquet* in conjunction with his former master, and he set about amassing a stock-in-trade of the musical works published in the previous one hundred years. *A Musicall Banquet* contained the genesis of many later books. It included a list of teachers of musical instruments, showing how he was in contact

with the music, and presumably dance teachers of his day, and from whom he must have drawn. During 1653 he published his *Catalogue of All the Musick Bookes printed in England*, and in 1654, a *Brief Introduction to the Skill of Music*. Covering every publishing opportunity, in 1655 he published *Court-Ayres* or the Court Dances of *Pavanes, Almains, Corants* and *Sarabands*.

A partial list of Playford publications is given in Grove.

From 1653 until his death John was clerk of the Temple Church, beginning soon after publishing the 2nd Edition of *The Dancing Master*, was devoted to the repair and maintenance of the fabric and the ordering of the services, and for a while before the Great Fire he was also vicar-choral at St Paul's Cathedral. He married Hannah Allen about 1653. They moved to Islington in 1655, where she had inherited from her father Benjamin Allen, a publisher in nearby Cornhill. There she established a boarding school for girls and ran a dancing school until her death in 1679. Playford then moved back to Arundel Street by the Strand, which he later passed to his son. He was called to the livery in 1661 and admitted to the court of assistants in 1681, at the request of the King. As a publisher he used a series of printers, Thomas Harper the successor to Thomas Snodham, the adopted son of Thomas East (d.1608), and who had inherited East's business in 1634, William Godbid (d.1679), the successor to Harper, and finally Playford's nephew, also called John Playford (1655-1685), son of brother Rev. Matthew Playford, one time vicar of Stanmore Magna. This John started as Godbid's apprentice and went into business until 1679 with Godbid's widow Anne. He appeared in the livery list of the Stationers Company in 1682. His business passed on his death to his sister Eleanor.

English music printing resumed with Playford, who sensed and met the distinctive spirit of the middle class audience. Playford's publications covered three categories, theory of music and lesson books for various instruments, collections of songs and instrumental pieces, and psalms and psalm paraphrases and hymns. *The Whole Book of Psalmes* was published in 1651 for the Stationers' Company. There were many "new" editions which differed little from their predecessors. Later songbooks could be rearrangements of earlier titles under new names. He enhanced the musical literacy of the generation before the advent of popular sheet music just after 1700. Later British music publishing never forgot this origin in the popular song sheet, and the annual output of several hundred such editions every year persisted from soon after 1700 to well into the 19th century. Also he published the "books" of the Lord Mayor's Shows for 1672, 1674, 1675, 1680 and 1688, which were in those days more of a pageant than a simple procession.

John dominated the English music trade, then largely confined to London, until he retired in 1684, just before James II came to the throne. He was not a dancing master nor, as far as is known, a musician. He left his business to Henry Playford and Robert Carr, a member of the King's Musick, who was the son of John Carr (ff. 1672-1695) a collaborator in publishing at the nearby Middle Temple Gate, but he took no active part and he and Henry soon parted. John died in 1686 aged sixty three. In his will Henry Purcell and John Blow, both composers, were beneficiaries. On his death Purcell wrote the *Elegy on my friend, Mr John Playford*. John Blow (1649-1708) was in 1669 Musician of the Virginals to Charles II and in 1674 Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and Master of the Children, which

made him the teacher of Henry Purcell. He wrote an anthem for the Coronation of James II in 1685.

Henry Playford was born in 1657, the younger son and only known survivor of John's children, and apprenticed to his father from 1674 to 1681. He updated many of his father's titles to suit more modern tastes, showing a lively perception of the requirements of public entertainments and the pleasure garden concerts which created a market for more ephemeral "favourite songs" and instrumental pieces. From 1687 he published large numbers of non-musical works, roughly one third of his total output. Married to Anne Baker in 1686, they probably had a daughter. Between 1690-3 he promoted sales and auctions of art works and antiquarian music books. Starting in 1692 he published most of Purcell's music. He took a number of not too successful initiatives to increase trade.

On John's retirement, his son Henry had moved the business to the Temple Change, over against St Dunstan's in the West Church in Fleet Street, from where he sold the eighth to twelfth editions of *The Dancing Master*, which after the first edition had dropped the word *English*. These thoroughly revised editions provided the Longways type of country dance more suited to the assembly room than the figure dances of his father's editions. The stock of the Temple Church shop was auctioned in 1690. John Cullen of The Buck, Fleet Street and John Young took over Henry's publications from 1707. In 1706, Henry's final stock had been sold, probably by Young. John Young (c 1660-c 1732), established in London by 1695, of the Dolphin and Crown at the west end of St Paul's Churchyard, published a further six editions after Henry's death in 1709. He also published more editions of Henry's *Wits and Mirth or, Pills to Purge Melancholy* of Tom D'Urfey's songs to popular airs, and also made violins. They were followed by John Johnson who between 1740 and 1762 published annual volumes of music and large collections of country dances. Then he was followed as a music publisher by his widow until 1777.

### The Dancing Master Book

The front plate of the book was an illustration, apparently by Hollar, taken from the pornographic book *The Academy of Love : describing ye Folly of Younge Men and ye Fallacy of Women*, by another John Johnson, son of John Johnson of Oddington in Gloucestershire, a thin quarto published in 1641, showing the Young Gentleman, guided by Cupid, arriving at the last stage of his progress. Country Dancing did not form part of that Academy's activities! The book was dreary attempt at humour and of no literary merit. When the design was redrawn for the seventh edition, Cupid, now playing a violin, was retained, but it was not uncommon to find on surviving copies that he was snipped out by owners of delicate susceptibilities, or his person was clothed with pen and ink unmentionables. The new title page for the final edition suggested the Pump Room at Bath.

The production of a book which could be circulated throughout the Kingdom was the answer to the prevailing condition in which many people stayed at their country home and were cut off from the urban dancing schools. The book circulated widely, not only in England and France, but among the Puritans and others in North America. Later editions cost three shillings and six pence for about three hundred and sixty dances. The most important rival collection, Walsh's *Compleat Country Dancing Master* only appeared in 1719. John Walsh

(1665-1736) and his son, also John (1709-1766), started publishing in 1695 when Henry Playford appeared to lack the initiative to maintain the family firm's dominance. Henry stayed with the old fashioned production methods, not seriously adopting engraving. From then onwards until the early nineteenth century Prof J Flett estimated that nearly ten thousand notations appeared in print, with many repetitions of course, but reflecting that the country dance had become fashionable and had to have the appearance of innovation. The most comprehensive collection eventually was Thomas Wilson's *Complete System of English Country Dancing* of 1820.

### As a Source of Melody

The first to recognise in *The Dancing Master* a source of English melody was John Malchair (1730-1812), a German who lived in England from 1754, who interested his friend William Crotch (1775-1847) sufficiently to include examples in his book of *Specimens of Various Styles of National Music* in 1807. William, a prodigy, had played for the King and Queen at Buckingham Palace when three and half years old, and became the organist at Christ Church College Oxford from the age of fifteen until 1807, and he had gained a Doctorate of Music in November 1799. He had befriended Malchair in 1788 when he became blind and acknowledged his help in the book. John had been collecting airs, one of what were at least three volumes is now with the EFDSS. They are mostly from Playford but include some from singers and military bands heard in the streets of Oxford. Malchair also wrote a chime still used at Gloucester Cathedral.

Thirty years later William Chappell (1809-1888), noted for an interest in early music, but also for his prejudice against Scotland and everything Scottish, brought out his *Collection of (Two Hundred and Forty Five) National English Airs : consisting of Ancient Song, Ballad and Dance Tunes* in two volumes (1838-1840), and from 1855-9 *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, also in two volumes. He and later workers have identified many of the tunes, so far sixty six out of one hundred and five, in broadside ballads, English MS collections, eg. *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, or in foreign printed collections. Therefore it is unlikely that the editor(s) of the first edition drew directly on any traditional sources for the music.

### Source of the Material

The styles of the original notations suggest that several hands helped, but so far no one has made a serious study of the likely number of collaborators. The rich variety of form provided by the early editions might have reflected a sweeping together of archaic forms. The slow rate of change considered to be typical of a tradition would imply a long history for such diversity to have developed, all unnoticed, and would imply also a more sophisticated folk form than that in polite society because one would not expect Society to pick up all the peasant material. Alternatively and much more likely is that it reflects a brief period of intense innovation with a very tenuous connection with its roots of inspiration.

The tunes were often altered between editions, particularly to eliminate archaic features, especially the modal characteristics much prized by the revivalists. Oddly it was often the tune that attracted the modern performer to the dance, yet in no way does the interest in a dance in the twentieth century reflect its popularity in its day, at least as measured by persistence through several editions.

*Rufty Tufty* appeared in the first edition only and the better known version of *Sellengers Round* not until the fourth edition.

It is surprising that there has been no further attempt to use the vast corpus of tunes in the Playford and later English collections until quite recently, and it seems incongruous to work with Irish and Scottish collections which themselves have drawn on such sources without acknowledgement.

### The Country Dance

The English Country Dance seemed to have sprung fully developed from Playford's shop, but it must have grown from something, even though the evidence is scanty. The sixteenth century was the end of the old artistic world in which all the forms from the twelfth century onwards were gathered up and worked out to their logical conclusion. In 1501 Katherine of Aragon came to marry Henry VIII's elder brother and brought Spanish music and dancing to England. When Princess Katherine met Prince Arthur at Dogmersfield House, Hampshire, before the wedding, they found that their dances were incompatible and they had to dance with their own attendees. When Henry VIII's sister Mary, the widow of Louis XII, returned, with her lady-in-waiting Anne Boleyn, French fashions became the order of the day. But none were country dances.

Rounds as dances were mentioned by Sir Thomas Elyot in 1531. The term Country Dance was used in 1560 in a play *Misogonus*. Several dances were named, some of which occurred in Playford, eg. *Heart's Ease*, but there is no means of knowing if they were the same. Country people danced before the Queen at Cowdray in 1591. In 1600 the Queen liked to watch her ladies dance the "old and the new" Country Dances. Although she preferred the solo performances in the *Galliards* and *La Volta*, and the more demanding couple dances in which the steps were more important than the tracks of the dance. Whilst medieval gentlemen could fight in tournaments to show off before their ladies, sixteenth century gentlemen were deprived of such outlets. Sport as we now understand it did not exist, so the Elizabethans became "The Dancing English". In 1623 the Court Masquers danced *The Soldier's March* and *Half Hannikan*. However this may just have been the reuse of known tunes.

In dancing, as with costume and other things affecting social life, there was a clean break during the first quarter of the seventeenth century with a fresh start on new lines. It was in many ways the beginning of a recognisably modern world. In 1625 Charles I had succeeded his father and married the sister of Louis XIII.

The *Gavotte* had become prominent because after their solo the gentlemen kissed all the ladies and his partner all the gentlemen. *Gavottes* were progressive, but not in the Country Dance sense. The top couple did not work their way down the set, but after the kissing immediately took the lowest place. Ten of Playford's first edition dances included kissing, only two of which were revived by Sharp, and it is still thought that this type of dance really belonged to an earlier period. Foreign visitors to England in the sixteenth century observed that kissing was a salutation ubiquitously used but that the habit as a common greeting went out by the mid seventeenth century. The *Galliard* became a shadow of its former self, with the springs reduced to instep movements, and so was forgotten by society, but it

presumably contributed something to the Cotswold Morris at the revival of Merry England following the Restoration of 1660 because of the similarities.

At Court the simple outdoor dances came indoors and, as it happened earlier in Italy under similar circumstances, they quickly became figure dances. Only in Court Masques are we sure of large numbers of dancers. The disturbed conditions in England in the seventeenth century favoured the development of domestic dancing with only a few dancers. The existence of rigid distinctions made it easier for the classes to mix. The Country Dance was impersonal and it was possible to call in servants to make up a set. Also then there was less of a difference between town and country. Urban centres were smaller and products and produce were directly exchanged, and fashions and behaviour readily observed. Many of Playford's dances fit comfortably into the average living room or kitchen of the better people of the period, with the Longways for use in the Long Gallery that was a feature of so many grander country houses. The countryman's ballroom would be the threshing floor of beaten earth or fitted boards, typically about twenty by fourteen feet. Later, when public assemblies had largely replaced dancing at home, the Longways formation became the sole one, and variants, such as the triple minor were popular, both to accommodate socialising and yet another basic change to a more cumbersome style of fashionable clothes, driving to graceful rather than robust movements.

From the middle of the sixteenth century there are literary references to a few Country Dances whose names eventually found a place in Playford's volumes, but there is little certain knowledge of the steps or figures used. Only in two cases are there documentary evidence, *Turkeyloney* and *Basilema*, in MS about 1590, when such dances are assumed to be coming to Court. There is little resemblance to the form now associated with the Playford publications and it is reasonable to assume that any original dances, if such really existed, were much altered and improved. The characteristic form of three "Introductions" followed by a figure repeated, or three unique figures had no known antecedent, yet sixty nine dances in the first edition are of this form, including over half of the Longways-for-as-many-as-will. Some dances, for example *Chestnut*, are in common with Daniel Wright's *Country Dances Volume I*, c.1720, without these movements, so perhaps they were taken for granted and actually were used even more frequently than the Playford volumes state explicitly. The Wrights, father and son, traded from 1709 until 1735 and 1730 until 1740 respectively, and were notorious musical pirates, especially from John Walsh. They also published works under the same or very similar titles. There was a marked discrepancy between the later Dancing Master published notations and actual common practice in ball rooms from the mid nineteenth century, so why not earlier?

### At Court

During the Interregnum various country recreations were frowned upon, particularly maypoles and maygames, primarily on the grounds that they were practiced on Sundays. That they led to mixed, promiscuous or lascivious dancing to wanton ditties and with amorous gestures and wanton dalliances, especially after great feasts, was regarded as indecent and therefore sinful. There was a similarity with minstrels or street singers because of their bawdy, licentious and loose minded songs to which they objected to the words. The crudity and vulgarity of the times cannot be ignored. These behaviours were not sanctified by reference in the bible and therefore labelled heathenish and superstitious.

Presumably the country dances with their minimum of body contact were more acceptable. Music itself was not the target, Oliver Cromwell and many leading followers were devoted to it, where it could be reconciled with religious susceptibilities. Dancing was also acceptable. The mixed dancing at the wedding of Cromwell's daughter Frances went on until 5am. Bulstrode Whitelocke on a mission to Sweden in 1653 assured Queen Christina just before her abdication that dancing was not forbidden. After the *Brawls*, French dances and some country dances, his gentleman-in-waiting taught her ladies some new steps. Two (presumably unenforceable) ordinances passed in June 1657 are of interest, the first declaring that any fiddler or minstrel playing in an alehouse or entreating any person to hear him play was to be punished as a rogue, and the second that anyone profanely singing or playing on the Lord's Day would be fined ten shillings.

Not everyone liked all the dances being performed, Arbeau and Louis XIII did not approve of *La Volta*, and Philip II of Spain did not like the *Sarabande*. The *Spectator* of 17th May 1711 remarked adversely on "kissing dances" and the "most impudent and lascivious step called setting."

When 27, James, Duke of York, contracted on 24th November 1659 to marry Anne Hyde, then 22, a Lady-in-Waiting to his sister Mary, and it was conducted in secret on 3rd September 1660, when she was pregnant. She was the daughter of the fat but able lawyer Edward Hyde, later at the Restoration the Lord Chancellor and created the Earl of Clarendon. She loved dancing but later "lost her spirits". She died in 1671.

William of Orange's minority was ended in September 1668. He visited England from 18th November to 28th February 1671. At that time James' daughter Mary was in the charge of Colonel Edward Villiers, uncle of Lady Castlemaine, and Lady Frances Villiers, the youngest daughter of Theophilus Howard, 2nd Earl of Suffolk. Mary's household was small but paid her dancing master £200 a year. He was the Frenchman who had taught her grandparents and her father, but he remained still a brilliant teacher. Mary was an excellent dancer for the rest of her life.

Charles sent James, the Duke of Monmouth, to Paris in 1668 for two months to further improve his graces and to sweeten Louis XIV. Almost 19, he met his aunt Henrietta-Anne, Duchess of Orleans, only five years his senior. "Madame" danced with incomparable grace and sang like an angel. They adored each other and he delighted her by teaching the country dances which were fashionable at Whitehall.

The Duke of Monmouth had stayed in Lady Wentworth's house at Toddington, Bedfordshire, when first ordered abroad by the King in 1681. He was then in Holland for a year and a half. Monmouth was a favourite of Princess Mary and a friend of her husband William of Orange. He danced at State Balls, taught her the latest country dances of England, and skated with Princess Mary on the frozen canals.

#### Playford's Dances

The formations in Playford are Rounds, Squares and Longways for four, six, eight or as-many-as-will, although it is unlikely that the Longways-for-as-many-as-will

were originally done with many more than four couples. The days of the New England "*String*" Dances was still to be a long way off. In Victorian times six to eight couples were the usual maximum and such a limitation is observed by the Scottish Dancers today. It was usual to start a longways dance with the top pairs only and to continue by bringing in pairs at each progression until all had returned to their starting places, so that even a simple longways would last for at least as many minutes as there were couples in the set.

From the original one hundred and five dances the numbers published grew with each edition. Major revisions in content were associated with the changes in publisher. Before the eighth edition, of 1690, with two hundred and twenty dances, only five of the original first edition had been dropped. By the tenth edition, of 1698, with two hundred and twelve dances, only fifty three survived. The final edition was in three parts, Part 1, eighteenth edition, of 1728, had three hundred and fifty seven dances, Part 2, fourth edition, had three hundred and sixty, and Part 3, second edition, had two hundred, but thirty one dances still survived from the first edition. With the changes and omissions over one thousand dances were published, an impossible number to have been in general use. Current fashion was reflected, in the third edition, of 1665/7, there were tunes for the "most usual" French Dances, and another set in the 1668 edition. Playford described other dances, eg. *Passepied* in the 12th edition was a Court dance.

One important change was that in the 17th century, music no longer remained the servant of the dance, until then the dance forms had dictated the characteristics of the music so that they developed side by side. The spread of printing gave music an advantage which it never relinquished. Dance developed a notation of sorts, but it did not compare in quality. It became common to have musical suites which reflected dance speeds and rhythms, with such sequences as *Prelude*, *Allemande*, *Courante*, *Gigue* and *Sarabande*, that were brilliantly exploited by Bach and Handel, but for listening not dancing.

Not only did the Longways develop, but so did the other social dances, the *Volts* and *Galliards* were replaced by *Minuets* and *Allemandes*, then by *Waltzes* and *Polkas*. With the appearance of the *Cottillions* and *Quadrilles* in the 19th century, which started as two pairs of dancers facing across a square, a simple development of the French *Contra Dance*, the Longways that remained became both simple and fun, more party dances than serious. It is said that the *Quadrille* was popular because you could choose the group you danced with and did not have to mix with so many strangers.

### Social Background

Up to the end of the seventeenth century dancing remained domestic and informal and a way part of everyday life with a spontaneity in its occurrence. At the turn of that century the Country Dance crossed the English Channel and was taken up with enthusiasm in many European countries. Except for brief period under Queen Anne, the Court gave little lead to Society and the English nobility and gentry remained on their estates. The tenantry were often regarded as an extension of the family and festivities at the big house were shared by all in addition to the round of local seasonal festivals. As the century progressed Society started to congregate at places of amusement, like Vauxhall Gardens and Ranelagh, or at the fashionable spas and watering places such as Bath, where the



highest standards of dancing and deportment were demanded. Up and down the country every town and many a village inn had its Assembly Room which was used for public and private balls. The first were probably those at Hampstead, Tunbridge and Epsom, where it was no coincidence that the supposedly health giving waters were being exploited. As society people were now living in smaller houses they found it convenient to join forces to hire the local hall. The atmosphere can be appreciated by reading Jane Austen's novels.

Beau Nash reigned at Bath from 1705 until 1752. Four years after his death in 1762, the orchestra at the Bath Assembly was led by a young Hanoverian whose knowledge of music was gained from a short experience in the Duke of Cumberland's army band, from which he had deserted. He remained at Bath from 1766 until 1782, using his spare time, with the help of his sister, to make telescopes. William, later Sir, Herschel in March 1781, discovered the planet Uranus. He went on to become Astronomer Royal.

### The Revival of the Dances

Starting in 1911, Cecil Sharp published a selection of dances, rising to one hundred and fifty one in all, in four of the six volumes of his *Country Dance Books*. He had no training in dance research. *The Dancing Master* was terse and frequently obscure, being only an aide memoire, and there was no mention of steps or style. Sharp intended to make them enjoyable for a new generation and did not reconstruct them for historical purposes, thus although keeping close to the originals, unlike some previous interpreters, he leaned heavily on the movements and style of the traditions he had met, and the figures he considered to be similar to the those in the morris and sword dances. The dances were an immediate success, but it was found nearly impossible to persuade dancers to change when interpretations were found to be faulty. For example in 1922 Sharp accepted that Siding was a side-by-side movement, like the half-gyp of the morris with no turning, but it was not until fifty years later that this became at all acceptable in performance. (see xii)

At the time to be able to describe something as of folk origin conferred upon it a particular merit, both moral and artistic. Sharp, at the height of his fame, was determined that Playford should contribute, even though the dances were not of pure folk form, which may seem surprising considering his firm ruling about traditional song. Maud Karpeles wrote that Cecil Sharp believed that the older dances in the collection were deeply rooted in tradition, although certain features may have been added at a later and more sophisticated period, while others owed a great deal to the creative efforts of Playford's contributors. This view of a conscious manipulation of traditional material by those who were immersed in the spirit of the dance justified republication, along with the artistic beauty of the results.

The question still remains, where is the Folk in all this? Where did the dances come from and where did the tunes? The literary references can only be extrapolated to the immediate circle of contact of the gentry. More recent tradition only provides negative evidence. Such dances are simple and party like, most of the English ones can be traced to published sources or can be shown to have evolved from such, as for example the separate dances derived from the figures of *The First Set of Quadrilles*. Thomas Hardy remembered as a youth the Country Dance form spreading into the social life at the common level in Dorset about

1840. The Fletts established that it spread into the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in living memory at the time of their enquiries. In this century, when dancing in many idioms could become a pastime or hobby for anyone, it is notable that the standard of complexity of the dance of the enthusiast is akin to that of Playford. By contrast the Playford material contributes little to the modern recreational leader or caller at one night stands.

Often those who have written about folk dance were steeped in the Song. This is personal and shows an ability to persist of a different order to the dance, which requires group participation. For example Mervyn Plunkett has shown that the nonsense burdens of ballads in the carol form can often be explained as rationalisations of medieval Latin phrases. Even simpler is the survival of superstitions, eg. throwing coins into wells or fountains. The story of folk song gives a false background to any understanding the social dance, as also does the so called ritual dance. No matter how much that drew on social dance forms.

### Discussion

Of all the folk arts, I believe that the content of the social dance until the appearance of dance halls or palais in the later nineteenth century, is unique in that it is all by devolution from fashionable society. Such a mechanism for diffusion downwards can be demonstrated to exist in other areas, so should not be surprising.

Too often writers have perceptions of the past which no longer reflect the realities which are apparent in the modern researches by historians of the period, as is happening in most fields of the "folk arts".

This as in all articles on Playford and *The Dancing Master* volumes is greatly indebted to the work of Margaret Dean Smith. Much activity continues on the dances, tunes and background, although little is available in easily accessible sources, as will be seen from *The Playford Ball : 103 Early English Country Dances* by Kate Van Winkle Keller and Genevieve Shimer (1990).

Although thanks to so many for their publications from which this is drawn, errors, omissions and opinions are entirely the author's responsibility.

V 1.0 R L Dommett, 1978

V 2.1 R L Dommett, 1996

file : playford.wri

## DATES IN CONTEXT

November	1623	John Playford born in Norwich.
23 February	1633	Samual Pepys born in London.
22 August	1642	Charles I raised his standard at Nottingham.
30 January	1649	Execution of Charles I.
19 May	1649	England was declared a Commonwealth.
	1651	Playford published <i>A Musicall Banquet</i> .
	1651	First Edition of <i>The English Dancing Master</i> .
September	1651	Charles II defeated at Worcester.
12 May	1652	Start of First Dutch War - ended 5 April 1654.
	1652	Second Edition of <i>The Dancing Master</i> .
16 December	1653	Oliver Cromwell became Lord Protector.
	1654	<i>A Brief Introduction to the Skill of Music</i> .
13 October	1655	Elizabeth Pepys started her diary.
	1657	Third Edition of <i>The Dancing Master</i> .
	1657	Henry Playford born.
03 September	1658	Oliver Cromwell died.
24 May	1659	Richard Cromwell retired.
01 January	1660	Pepys started his Diary.
01 January	1660	General Monck began his March.
29 May	1660	Charles II enters London.
22 February	1665	Start of Second Dutch War - ended 31 July 1667.
	1665	Reprint of Third Edition of <i>The Dancing Master</i> .
July/January	1665/6	Great Plague.
1/5 September	1666	Great Fire of London.
31 May	1669	End of Samuel Pepys diary.
10 November	1669	Elizabeth Pepys died.
01 January	1670	General Monck, Duke of Albemarle died.
	1670	Fourth Edition of <i>The Dancing Master</i> .
March	1672	Start of Third Dutch War - ended February 1674.
	1685	James II became King and Monmouth's Rebellion.
	1686	John Playford died.
	1688	The Glorious Revolution.
26 May	1703	Samuel Pepys died.

[check later edition dates]

## PEPYS ON DANCING

This text is copied from EFDS NEWS volume 1, pp. 305-312, and 364-371.

The following, being the principal accounts of and references to dancing in the Dairy, are reprinted from the full text, as edited by Wheatley and published by Messrs. G Bell and Sons, by permission of the Master and Fellows of Magdalene College, Cambridge, and of the publishers.

*March 6th, 1659-60.* "I went to see Mrs. Jem ... They all went down into the dining room, where it was full of tag, rag, and bobtail, dancing, singing, and drinking, of which I was ashamed, and after I had staid a dance or two I went away."

*September 24th, 1660.* "Went ... to a dancing meeting in Broad Street, at the house that was formerly the glass-house, Luke Channell Master of the School, where I saw good dancing, but it growing late, and the room very full of people and so very hot, I went home."

*March 27th, 1661.* "To the Dolphin to a dinner of Mr. Harris's where Sir Williams both and my Lady Batten, and her two daughters, and other company, where a great deal of mirth, and there staid till 11 o'clock at night; and in our mirth I sang and sometimes fiddled (there being a noise of fiddlers there), and at last we fell to dancing, the first time that ever I did in my life, which I did wonder to see myself to do. At last we made Mingo, Sir W. Batten's black and Jack, Sir W. Ren's, dance, and it was strange how the first did dance with great deal of seeming skill."

*April 10th, 1661.* "Here [at Mr Hempson's house] we had, for my sake, two fiddles, the one a base viall, on which he that played, played well some lyra [viol] lessons, but both together made the worst musique that I ever heard ... After we had done eating, the ladies went to dance, and among the men we had, I was forced to dance too; and did make an ugly shift. Mrs. R. Allen danced very well, and seems the best humoured woman that ever I saw. About 9 o'clock Sir William and my Lady went home, and we continued dancing an hour or two, and so broke up very pleasant and merry."

*May 8th, 1661.* "To-day I received a letter from my uncle, to beg an old fiddle of me for my Cozen Perkin, the miller, whose mill the wind hath lately broke down, and now he hath nothing to live by but fiddling, and he must needs have it gainst Whitsuntide to play to the country girls."

*November 11th, 1661.* "He [Captain Ferrers] took me to a dancing school in Fleet Street, where we saw a company of pretty girls dance, but I do not myself like to have young girls exposed to such vanity."

*October 5th, 1662.* "Dined with my wife, and to talk again above, chiefly about her learning to dance against her going next year into the country, which I am willing she shall do."

*November 22nd, 1662.* "This day I bought the book of country dances against my wife's woman Gosnell comes, who dances finely; and there meeting Mr. Playford he did give me his Latin songs of Mr. Deering's, which he lately printed."

This entry seems to have been made after the day's doings had been set down. There is no antecedent to the word "there," but Pepys mentions that he visited his cousin Roger, who was a barrister of the Middle Temple, after dinner that day. Playford's address was Temple Change, so Pepys must have dropped in on his way. The "book of country dances" was presumably (it is not in the Pepysian Library at Magdalene College), *The Dancing Master*, second edition, 1652.

*December 8th, 1662.* "We sit up looking over the book of Dances till 12 at night, not observing how the time went."

December 31st, 1662. "Mr. Povy and I, to White Hall; he carrying me thither on purpose to carry me into the ball this night before the King ... Into the room where the ball was to be, crammed with fine ladies, the greatest of the Court. By and by comes the King and Queen, the Duke and Duchess, and all the great ones : and after seating themselves, the King takes out the Duchess of York; and the Duke, the Duchess of Buckingham; the Duke of Monmouth, my Lady Castlemaine; and so other lords other ladies : and they danced the Bransle. After that, the King led a lady a single Coranto; and then the rest of the lords, one after another, other ladies : very noble it was, and a great pleasure to see. Then to country dances; the King leading the first, which he called for; which was, says he, "Cuckolds all awry," the old dance of England. Of the ladies that danced, the Duke of Monmouth's mistress, and my Lady Castlemaine, and a daughter of Sir Henry de Vicke's, were the best. The manner was, when the King dances, all the ladies in the room, and the Queen herself, stand up : and indeed he dances rarely, and much better than the Duke of York. Having staid here as long as I thought fit, to my infinite content, it being the greatest pleasure I could wish now to see at Court, I went out, leaving them dancing ... We have lately had it in our thoughts, and I can hardly bring myself off of it, since Mrs. Gosnell cannot be with us, to find out another to be in the quality of a woman to my wife that can sing or dance, and yet finding it hard to save anything at the year's end as I now live, I think I shall not be such a fool till I am more warm in my purse, besides my oath of entering into no such expenses till I am worth £1000."

Extract from Cecil Sharp, *The Country Dance book*, Part II, p.10 : "The 'old dance of England' is, no doubt, identical with Playford's 'Cuckolds all a row' : it is included in every edition of 'The Dancing Master,' and, under its alternative title, 'Hey, boys, up go we,' is given in the text."

Whether the King's remark was erudition or wit is unimportant; the interest of this entry lies in the mention by name of a Country dance, the only instance in the whole Diary. 'Hey, boys,' as we know it, both tune and figures, is 'Cuckolds all a row' in Playford, all editions. There is a longways for as many as will in the seventh and subsequent editions entitled 'Hey-boys up go we,' with entirely different tune and figures. There are several names for this latter, e.g. 'Forty-one,' 'The Clean contrary way,' and 'The Good Old Cause,' i.e. the Roundhead cause. But the song 'Hey, boys, up go we,' appears in *The Shepherd's Oracles*, by Frances Quarles, 1646, the last line of each stanza being 'And hey, then up go we,' and this is a satire on the Puritans. The Cavaliers used to sing it, but to their own party tune, 'Cuckolds all a row.' [Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time*.]

April 19th, 1663. "After supper fell in discourse of dancing, and I find that Ashwell [Mrs. Pepys' new maid] hath a very fine carriage, which makes my wife almost ashamed of herself to see herself so outdone, but to-morrow she begins to learn to dance for a month or two."

April 20th, 1663. "Somewhat troubled at Ashwell's desiring and insisting over eagerly upon her going to a ball to meet some of her old companions at a dancing school here in town next Friday, but I am resolved she shall not go."

April 24th, 1663. "Sending my boy by the way to enquire after two dancing masters at our end of the town for my wife to learn, of whose names the boy brought word. After dinner all the afternoon fiddling upon my viallin (which I have not done many a day) while Ashwell danced above in my upper best chamber, which is a rare room for musique."

April 25th, 1663. "So in the evening home, and after supper (my father at my brother's) and merrily practicing to dance, which my wife hath begun to learn this day of Mr. Pembleton, but I fear will hardly do any great good at it, because she is conceited that she do well already, though I think no such thing."

April 27th, 1663. "At home with my wife and Ashwell talking of her going into

the country this year, wherein we had like to have fallen out, she thinking that I have design to have her go, which I have not, and to let her stay here I perceive will not be convenient, for she expects more pleasure than I can give her here, and I fear I have done very ill in letting her begin to learn to dance."

*April 28th, 1663.* "Up betimes and to my office, and there all the morning, only stepped up to see my wife and her dancing master at it, and I think after all she will do pretty well at it."

*May 1st, 1663.* "In Leadenhall Street, there was morris-dancing which I have not seen a great while."

*May 4th, 1663.* "By and by the dancing-master [Pembleton] came, whom standing by, seeing him instructing my wife, when he had done with her, he would needs have me try the steps of a coranto, and what with his desire and my wife's importunity, I did begin, and then was obliged to give him entry-money 10s., and am become his scholler. The truth is, I think it a thing very useful for a gentleman, and sometimes I may have occasion of using it, and though it cost me what I am heartily sorry it should, besides that I must by my oath give half as much more to the poor, yet I am resolved to get it up some other way, and then it will not be above a month or two a year. So though it be against my stomach yet I will try it a little while; if I see it comes to any great inconvenience or charge I will fling it off. After I had begun with the steps of half a coranto, which I think I shall learn well enough, he went away."

*May 5th, 1663.* "After dinner up to try my dance."

*May 6th, 1663.* "While at supper comes Mr. Pembleton, and after supper we up to our dancing room and there danced three or four country dances, and after that a practice of my coranto I began with him the other day, and I begin to think that I shall be able to do something at it in time. Late and merry at it, and so weary to bed."

There is no mention of any visitors this evening, but Pepys, Pembleton, Mrs. Pepys, and Ashwell would make a four. The dances for four in Playford, second edition, are *Argeers*, *Cuckolds all a row*, *Glory of the West*, *Hit and misse*, *Hearts Ease*, *Parsons farewell*, and *Saint Martins*.

*May 8th, 1663.* "Took up my wife and Ashwell to the Theatre Royall [Drury Lane] ... The play was 'The Humorous Lieutenant.' ... In the dance, the tall devil's actions was very pretty. ... At supper comes Pembleton, and afterwards we all up to dancing till late, and so broke up and to bed, and they say I am like to make a dancer."

*May 11th, 1663.* "At home there being Pembleton I danced, and I think shall come on to do something in a little time [this apparently in the morning] ... So home, and finding Pembleton there we did dance till it was late, and so to supper and to bed."

*May 12th, 1663.* "A little angry with my wife for minding nothing now but the dancing-master, having him come twice a day, which is folly."

*May 13th, 1663.* "After dinner Pembleton came and I practised. But, Lord! to see how my wife will not be thought to need telling by me or Ashwell, and yet will plead that she has learnt but a month, which causes many short fallings out between us."

*May 16th, 1663.* "Did go up to them to practise, and did make an end of 'La Duchesse,' which I think I should, with little pains, do very well."

*May 18th, 1663.* "Home and spent the morning at dancing."

*May 19th, 1663.* "Up pretty betimes, but yet I observe how my dancing and lying

a morning or two longer than ordinary for my cold do make me hard to rise as I used to do, or look after my business as I am wont."

*May 20th, 1663.* "Home and to see my wife dancing with Pembleton about noon. ... Pembleton coming, we danced a country dance or two, and so broke up and to bed."

*May 21st, 1663.* "Up, but cannot get up so early as I was wont, not my mind to business as it should be and used to be before this dancing ... Home and danced with Pembleton, and then the barber trimmed me, and so to dinner, my wife and I having high words about her dancing to that degree that I did enter and make a vow to myself not to oppose her or say anything to dispraise or correct her therein as long as her month lasts, in pain of 2s. 6d. for every time, which if God pleases, I will observe, for this roguish business has brought us more disquiety than anything [that] has happened a great while. After dinner to my office, where late, and then home; and Pembleton being there again, we fell to dance a country dance or two, and so to supper and bed. But being at supper my wife did say something that caused me to oppose her in, she used the word devil, which vexed me, and among other things I said I would not have her use that word, upon which she took me up most scornfully, which, before Ashwell and the rest of the world, I know not now-a-days how to check, as I would heretofore, for less than that would have made me strike her. So that I fear without great discretion I shall go near to lose command over her, and nothing do it more than giving her this occasion of dancing and other pleasures, whereby her mind is taken up from her business and finds other sweets besides pleasing of me, and so makes her that she begins not at all to take pleasure in me or study to please me as heretofore. But if this month of her dancing were but out (as my first was this night, and I paid off Pembleton for myself) I shall hope with a little pains to bring her to her old wont."

*May 27th, 1663.* "We danced country dances, and single, my wife and I: and my wife paid him off for this month also, and so he is cleared. After dancing we took him down to supper, and were very merry."

*May 31st, 1663.* "Being come from church, I to make up my month's accounts, and find myself worth £726, for which God be praised, but yet I might have been better by £20 almost had I forborne some layings out in dancing and other things upon my wife, and going to plays and other things merely to ease my mind as to the business of the dancing-master, which I bless God is now over and I falling to my quiet of mind and business again, which I have for a fortnight neglected too much."

The 'disquiet' of mind was due not so much to the actual dancing and Mrs. Pepys' addiction to it as to Pepys' violent jealousy of Pembleton, owing to the latter coming to the house when he was out. But Pepys admits in the Diary that he found no justification for his suspicions.

*August 6th, 1663.* "To my cozen Mary Joyce's ... After dinner to talk and laugh. I drank no wine, but sent for some water, the beer not being good. A fiddler was sent for, and there one Mrs. Larkin, a neighbour, a good, and merry poor woman, but a very tall woman, did dance and show such tricks that made us all merry, but above all a daughter of Mr. Brumfield's, black, but well-shaped and modest, did dance very well, which pleased me mightily. I began the Duchess with her, but could not do it; but, however, I came off well enough, and made mighty much of her."

*August 19th, 1663.* "By and by comes in Pembleton, which begun to make me

sweat, but I did give him so little countenance, and declared at one word against dancing any more, and bid him a short (God be with you) myself, and so he took as short a leave of my wife and so went away."

*February 3rd, 1664-5.* "Mrs. Pickering ... did ... tell me the manner of a masquerade before the King and Court the other day, Where six women (my Lady Castlemayne and Duchesse of Monmouth being two of them) and six men (the Duke of Monmouth and Lord Arran and Monsieur Blanfort, being three of them) in vizards, but most rich and antique dresses, did dance admirably and most gloriously."

*April 13th, 1665.* "At noon to Sheriff Waterman's to dinner, all of us men of the office in towne, and our wives, my Lady Carteret and daughters, and Ladies Batten, Pen, and my wife, &c., and very good cheer we had and merry; musique at and after dinner, and a fellow danced a jig; but when the company began to dance, I came away lest I should be taken out; and the God knows how my wife carried herself, but I left her to try her fortune."

*April 23rd, 1665.* "All to my house, where comes Mr. Hill, Andrews, and Captain Taylor, and good musique, but at supper to hear the arguements we had against Taylor concerning a Corant, he saying that the law of a dancing Corant is to have every barr to end in a pricked crochet and quaver, which I did deny, was very strange. It proceeded till I vexed him, but parted friends, for Creed and I to laugh at when he was gone."

*October 4th, 1665* "Being come to my wife, at our lodging [at Woolwich, where they had moved on account of the plague], I did go to bed, and left my wife with her people to laugh and dance and I to sleep."

*October 11th, 1665.* "Against tide and in the darke and very cold weather to Woolwich, where we had appointed to keep the night merrily; and so, by Captain Cocke's coach, had brought a very pretty child, a daughter of one Mrs. Tooker's, next door to my lodging, and so she, and a daughter and kinsman of Mrs Pett's made up a fine company at my lodgings at Woolwich, where my wife and Mercer [Mrs. Pepys' maid], and Mrs. Barbara danced, and mighty merry we were, but especially at Mercer's dancing a jig, which she does the best I ever did see. This night is kept in lieu of yesterday, for my wedding day of ten years ... Having danced with my people as long as I saw fit to sit up, I to bed and left them to do what they would. I forgot that we had W. Hewer there, and Tom, and Golding, my barber at Greenwich, for our fiddler, to whom I did give 10s."

*October 26th, 1665.* "I to the office till night, and then they come and tell me my wife is come to towne, so I to her vexed at her coming, but it was upon innocent business, so I was pleased and made her stay, Captain Ferrers and his lady being yet there, and so I left them to dance, and I to the office till past nine at night, and so to them and there saw them dance very prettily, the Captain and his wife, my wife and Mrs. Barbary, and Mercer and my landlady's daughter, and then little Mistress Frances Tooker, and her mother, a pretty woman come to see my wife. Anon to supper, and then to dance again (Golding being our fiddler, who plays very well and all tunes) till past twelve at night."

*December 1st, 1665.* "Home by promise to my wife, to have mirth there. So we had our neighbours, little Miss Tooker and Mrs. Daniels, to dance, and after supper I to bed, and left them merry below, which they did not part from till two or three in the morning."

*December 31st, 1665.* "I have never lived so merrily (besides that I never got so



much) as I have done this plague time, by my Lord Bruncker's and Captain Cocke's good company, and the acquaintance of Mrs. Knipp, Coleman and her husband, and Mr. Laneare, and great store of dancings we have had at my cost (which I was willing to indulge myself and wife) at my lodgings."

*January 18th, 1665-6.* "My wife and I anon and Mercer, by coach, to Pierce's; where mighty merry, and sing and dance with great pleasure; and I danced, who never did in company in my life, and Captain Cocke come for a little while and danced, but went away, but we staid and had a pretty supper, and spent till two in the morning, but got home well by coach, though as dark as pitch, and so to bed."

*September 28th, 1666.* "Am come to an agreement with my wife to have Mercer again, on condition she may learn this winter two months to dance, and she promises me she will endeavour to learn to sing, and all this I am willing enough to."

*November 9th, 1666.* "To dress myself very fine, about 4 or 5 o'clock, and by that time comes Mr. Batelier and Mercer, and away by coach to Mrs. Pierce's, by appointment, where we find good company : a fair lady, my Lady Prettyman, Mrs. Corbet, Knipp; and for men, Captain Downing, Mr. Lloyd, Sir W. Coventry's clerk, and one Mr. Tripp, who dances well. After some trifling discourse, we to dancing, and very good sport, and mightily pleased I was with the company. After our first bout of dancing, Knipp and I to sing ... This being done and going to dance again, comes news that White Hall was on fire; and presently more particulars, that the Horse-guard was on fire; and so we run up to the garret, and find it so; a horrid great fire; and by and by we saw and heard part of it blown up with powder. The ladies begun presently to be afeard : one fell into fits. The whole town in an alarme. Drums beat and trumpets, and the guards everywhere spread, running up and down in the street ... By and by comes news that the fire has slackened; so then we were a little cheered up again, and to supper, and pretty merry ... After supper, another dance or two, and then the news that the fire is as great as ever, which put us all to our wit's-end; and I mightily [anxious] to go home, but the coach being gone, and it being about ten atnight, and rainy dirty weather, I knew not what to do; but to walk out with Mr. Batelier, myself resolving to go home on foot, and leave the women there. And so did; but at the Savoy got a coach, and came back and took up the women; and so, having, by people come from the fire, understood that the fire was overcome, and all well, we merrily parted, and home."

The *Great Fire* was earlier in the year, at the beginning of September.

*November 15th, 1666.* "I took coach and to Mrs. Pierce's, where I find her as fine as possible, and herself going to the ball at night at Court, it being the Queen's birth-day ... I also to the ball, and with much ado got up to the loft, where with much trouble I could see very well. Anon the house grew full, and the candles light, and the King and Queen and all the ladies set : and it was indeed a glorious sight to see Mrs. Stewart in black and white lace, and her head and shoulders dressed with dyamonds, and the like a great many great ladies more, only the Queen none; and the King in his rich vest of some rich silke and silver trimming, as the Duke of York and all the dancers were, some of cloth of silver, and others of other sorts, exceeding rich. Presently after the King was come in, he took the Queene, and about fourteen more couple there was, and began the Bransles ... All [the ladies] most excellently dressed in rich petticoats and gowns, and dyamonds, and pearls. After the Bransles, then to a Corant, and now and then a French dance; but that so rare that the Corants grew tiresome, that I wished it

done. Only Mrs. Stewart danced mighty finely, and many French dances, specially one the King called the New Dance, which was very pretty; but upon the whole matter, the business of the dancing of itself was not extraordinary pleasing. But the clothes and sight of the persons was indeed very pleasing, and worth my coming, being never likely to see more gallantry while I live, if I should come twenty times ... So away home with my wife, between displeased with the dull dancing, and satisfied at the clothes and persons."

*March 7th, 1666-7.* "To the Duke's playhouse ... and saw "The English Princesse, or Richard the Third"; a most sad, melancholy play, and pretty good; but nothing eminent in it, as some tragedys are; only little Mis. Davis did dance a jig after the end of the play, and there telling the next day's play; so that it come in by force only to please the company to see her dance in boy's clothes; and, the truth is, there is no comparison between Nell's dancing the other day at the King's house in boy's clothes and this, this being infinitely beyond the other."

*May 1st, 1667.* "To Westminster; in the way meeting many milk-maids with their garlands upon their pails, dancing with a fiddler before them."

*May 22nd, 1667.* "To the King's house, where I did give 18d., and saw the last two acts of "The Gobbins", a play I could not make any thing of by these two acts, but here Knipp spied me out of the tiring-room, and come to the pit door ... being in a country-dress, she and others having, it seemed, had a country-dance in the play."

*August 17th, 1667.* "To the King's playhouse, where the house extraordinary full; and there was the King and Duke of York to see the new play, "Queen Elizabeth's Troubles, and the History of Eighty Eight." ... The play is the most ridiculous that sure ever come upon the stage ... Only I was pleased to see Knipp dance among the milkmaids."

*September 25th, 1667.* "After dinner I to the King's playhouse ... The play was a new play; and infinitely full: the King and all the Court almost there. It is "The Storme," a play of Fletcher's; which is but so-so, methinks; only there is a most admirable dance at the end, of the ladies, in a military manner which indeed did please me mightily."

*September 26th, 1667.* "With my wife abroad to the King's playhouse, to shew her yesterday's new play, which I like as I did yesterday, the principal thing extraordinary being the dance, which is very good."

*October 19th, 1667.* "At noon home to a short dinner, being full of my desire of seeing my Lord Orrery's new play this afternoon at the King's house, "The Black Prince," the first time it is acted; where, though we come by two o'clock, yet there was no room in the pit, but we were forced to go into one of the upper boxes, at 4s. a piece, which is the first time I ever sat in a box in my life ... By and by the play begun, and in it nothing particular but a very fine dance for a variety of figures, but a little too long."

Pepys saw this play again on April 1st, 1667, remarking "The dance very stately."

*October 21st, 1667.* "Home myself, where I find my wife and the two Mercers and Willett and W. Batelier have been dancing, but without a fidler."

*October 30th, 1667.* "When I come home I did find my wife, and Betty Turner, the two Mercers, and Mrs. Parker, and ugly lass, but yet dances well, and speaks the best of them, and W. Batelier, and Pembleton dancing; and here I danced with them, and had a good supper, and as merry as I could be, and so they being gone we to bed."

*January 4th 1667-8.* "My thoughts full, how to order our design of having some dancing at our house on Monday next, being Twelfth-day."

*January 6th, 1667-8.* "Home, where we find my house with good fires and candles ready, and our Office the like, and the two Mercers, and Betty Turner, Pendleton, and W. Batelier. And so with much pleasure we into the house, and there fell to dancing, having extraordinary musick, two viollins, and a base viollin, and theorbo, four hands, the Duke of Buckingham's musique, the best in towne, sent me by Greeting, and there we set in to dancing. By and by to my house, to a very good supper, and mighty merry, and good musick playing; and after supper to dancing and singing till about twelve at night; and then we had a good sack posset for them, and an excellent cake, cost me near 20s., of our Jane's making, which was cut into twenty pieces, there being by this time so many of our company, by the coming in of young Goodyer and some others of our neighbours, young men that could dance, hearing of our dancing ... And so to dancing again, and singing, with extraordinary great pleasure, till about two in the morning, and then broke up ... I paid the fiddlers £3 among the four, and so away to bed, weary and mightily pleased."

*February 3rd, 1667-8.* "After dinner to the Duke of York's house, to the play, "The Tempest," which we have often seen, but yet I was pleased again, and shall be again to see it, it is so full of variety, and particularly this day I took pleasure to learn the tune of the seaman's dance, which I have much desired to be perfect in, and have made myself so."

*March 7th, 1667-8.* "At noon home to dinner, where Mercer with us, and after dinner she, my wife, Deb., and I, to the King's playhouse, and there saw "The Spanish Gipsys," the second time of acting, and the first that I saw it. A very silly play, only great variety of dances, and those most excellently done, especially one part by one Hanes."

There is a Country dance *The Spanish Jeepsie* in every edition of Playford, a longways for eight. Chappell thinks the name is derived from a song in the play, beginning "Come, follow your leader, follow."

*March 17th, 1667-8.* "Abroad to the Excize-Office, where I met Mr. Ball ... and there fell in talk with him, who, being an old cavalier, do swear and curse at the present state of things ... do cry out against our great men at Court; how it is a fine thing for a Secretary of State to dance a jig, and that it was not so heretofore."

*March 26th, 1668.* "We all of us ('my wife and Deb. ... with Mrs. Pierce and Corbet and Betty Turner') to the Blue Balls hard by, whither Mr. Pierce also goes with us, who met us at the play, and anon comes Manuel, and his wife, and Knepp, and Harris, who brings with him Mr. Banister, the great master of musique; and after much difficulty in getting of musique, we to dancing, and than to a supper of some French dishes, which yet did not please me, and then to dance and sing; and mighty merry we were till about eleven or twelve at night, with mighty great content in all my company, and I did, as I love to do, enjoy myself in my pleasure at being the height of what we take pains for and can hope for in this world, and therefore to be enjoyed while we are young and capable of these joys ... I having paid the reckoning, which came to almost £4, we parted."

*May 2nd, 1668.* "To the Duke of York's playhouse ... [The play] called "The Sullen Lovers; or, The Impertinents," having many good humours in it, but the play tedious, and no design at all in it. But a little boy, for a farce, do play Polichinelli, the best that ever anything was done in the world, by all men's report most pleased with that, beyond anything in the world, and much beyond all the play."

*May 9th, 1668.* "We are told ... that last night the Duchesse of Monmouth, dancing at her lodgings, hath sprained her thigh."

*July 15th, 1668.* "My Lady Duchesse of Monmouth is still lame, and likely always to be so, which is a sad chance for a young [lady] to get, only by trying tricks in dancing."

*August 26th, 1668.* "To Mr. Batelier's by appointment, where I find my wife, and Deb., and Mercer; Mrs. Pierce and her husband, son, and daughter; and Knepp and Harris, and W. Batelier, and his sister Mary, and cozen Gumbleton, a good-humoured, fat young gentleman, son to the Jeweller, that dances well; and here danced all night long, with a noble supper; and about two in the morning the table spread again for a noble breakfast beyond all moderation, that put me out of countenance, so much and so good."

*August 29th, 1668.* "To Bartholomew Fair ... and so to Jacob Hall's dancing of the ropes; a thing worth seeing, and mightily followed."

*September 21st, 1668.* "To Southwark-Fair ... To Jacob Hall's dancing on the ropes, where I saw such action as I never saw before, and mightily worth seeing; and here took acquaintance with a fellow that carried me to a tavern, whither come the musick of this booth, and by and by Jacob Hall himself, with whom I had a mind to speak, to hear whether he had ever mischief by falls in his time. He told me, "Yes, many; but never to the breaking of a limb" : he seems a mighty strong man."

Pepys had previously seen "monkeys dancing on the ropes (at Bartholomew Fayre), which was strange, but such dirty sport that I was not pleased with it." (*Sept. 4, 1663*).

*January 19th, 1668/9.* "To the King's house, to see "Horace"; ... a silly tragedy; but Lacy hath made a farce of several dances - between each act, one : but his words are but silly, and invention not extraordinary, as to the dances; only some Dutchmen come out of the mouth and tail of a Hamburgh sow."

Wheatley's note gives a reference to Evelyn's Dairy, February 4th, 1667-8 : "I saw the tragedy of Horace .... Betwixt each act a masque and antique dance."

*February 8th, 1668-9.* "I to visit my Lord Sandwich; and there, while my Lord was dressing himself, did see a young Spaniard, that he hath brought over with him, dance, which he is admired for, as the best dancer in Spain, and indeed he do with mighty mastery; but I do not like his dancing as the English, though my Lord commends it mightily : but I will have him to my house, and show it my wife."

*February 23rd, 1668-9.* "To Mr. Batelier's, where we supped, and had a good supper, and here was Mr. Gumbleton; and after supper some fiddles, and so to dance; but my eyes were so out of order, that I had little pleasure this night at all, though I was glad to see the rest merry, and so about midnight home and to bed."

*February 25th, 1668-9.* "To the Duke of York's house ... a new play, or an old one vamped, by Shadwell, called, 'The Royall Shepherdess'; but the silliest for words and design, and everything, that ever I saw in my whole life, there being nothing in the world pleasing to it, but a good martial dance of pikemen, where Harris and another do handle their pikes in a dance to admiration."

They certainly deserved admiration if they use eighteen-foot pikes! Even with eleven-foot pikes, introduced by Gustavus Adolphus whose reforms were copied by other armies, considerable skill would be necessary.

*March 2nd, 1668-9.* "Up, and at the office till noon, when home, and there I find

my company come, namely Madam Turner, Dyke, The., and Betty Turner, and Mr. Bellwood, formerly their father's clerk, but now set up for himself - a conceited, silly fellow, but one they make mightily of - my cozen Roger Pepys, and his wife, and two daughters. I had a noble dinner for them, as I almost ever had, and mighty merry ... And thus till night, that out musick come, and the Office ready and candles, and also W. Batelier and his sister Susan come, and also Will. Howe and two gentlemen more, strangers, which, at my request yesterday, he did bring to dance, called Mr. Ireton and Mr. Starkey. We fell to dancing, and continued, only with intermission for a good supper, till two in the morning, the musick being Greeting, and another most excellent violin, and theorbo, the best in town. And so with mighty mirth, and pleased with their dancing of jigs afterwards several of them, and, among others, Betty Turner, who did it mighty prettily; and lastly, W. Batelier's "Blackmore and Blackmore Mad"; and then to a country-dance again, and so broke up with extraordinary pleasure, as being one of the days and nights of my life spent with the greatest content; and that which I can but hope to repeat again a few times in my whole life."

Cf. October 11, 1665, when Mercer danced a jig. What exactly these jigs were its difficult to say, except that we can be positive that *Old Mother Oxford*, for instance, was not one of them! The O.E.D. can give no clearer definition than "a lively, rapid, springy kind of dance," and there is no reason to suppose that the word ever had a more precise technical significance. It did, however, come to be used particularly of the entertainment at the end of more than dance alone. The appended extract from Burnaby's "Travels" describes an unusual form.

*March 6th, 1668-9.* "This day my wife made it appear to me that my late entertainment this week cost me above £12, an expence which I am almost ashamed of, though it is but once in a great while, and is the end for which, in the most part, we live, to have such a merry day once or twice in a man's life."

*April 2nd, 1669.* "To the Duke of York's lodgings ... Stepping to the Duchess of York's side to speak with Lady Peterborough, I did see the young Duchess, a little child in hanging sleeves, dance most finely, so as almost to ravish me, her ears were so good : taught by a Frenchman that did heretofore teach the King, and all the King's children, and the Queen-Mother herself, who do still dance well."

A number of slighter references have been omitted, of these dates : May 1, 1660; June 9, August 31, November 22, 27, 1661; February 18, 1661-2; November 14, 1662; May 14, 15, 17, 23, 24, 25, 26, June 6, 9, 10, 1664; October 31, December 8, 1665; January 3, 6, 15, February 14, March 14, 1665-6; July 31, August 7, 14, 28, October 6, November 8, December 26, 1666; January 23, 24, March 8, 1666-7; April 19, August 21, 22, September 6, 16, 27, October 26, 1667; January 1, 14, 29, March 23, April 22, May 7, 11, 30, 31, June 9, August 27, September 7, 1668; January 11, March 1, 168-9; April 6, 1669.

Rev. Andrew Burnaby, "Travels through the Middle Settlements in North-America, in the years 1759 and 1760," etc. 1775 (p.21).

"The women [of Virginia] ... are immoderately fond of dancing, and indeed it is almost the only amusement they partake of : but even in this they discover great want of taste and elegance, and seldom appear with that gracefulness and ease, which these movements are so calculated to display. Towards the close of an evening, when the company are pretty well tired with country dances, it is usual to dance jiggs; a practice originally borrowed, I am informed, from the Negroes.\* [\* Author's note : "The author has since had an opportunity of observing something similar in Italy. The trescone of the Tuscans is very like the jiggs of the Virginians."] These dances are without any method or regularity : a gentleman and lady stand up, and dance about the room, one of them retiring, the other pursuing, then perhaps meeting, in an irregular fantastical manner. After some time, another lady gets up, and then the first lady must sit down, she being, as they term it cut out : the second lady acts the same part which the first did, till somebody cuts her out. The gentlemen perform in the same manner."

## BACKGROUND

The various published editions of Samuel Pepys' Diary differ slightly because of the variations in the transliterations of his shorthand into plain English. The entry selections and the spellings have been kept here as in the EFDS News reprinting. There have been many books about Pepys, but none had the advantage of knowing his wife's views.

Samuel Pepys wife Elizabeth kept a diary, as was common at that time, from 13th October 1655 until November 1669, just before she died on 10th November of a fever caught on a European tour with her husband, of which that to the 24th April 1661 has been edited and published, representing about one third of the manuscript which has been recovered, see Dale Spender, *The Diary of Elizabeth Pepys*, Grafton, Harper Collins, London, 1991. It was her's that eventually from 1st January 1660 persuaded Samuel to keep his so lively and informative one until 31st May 1669 when increasingly troubled with his eyes and in fear of blindness.

She was born on 23rd October 1640 in Bideford, a daughter of Dorothea and Alexander St Michael, a minor noble from Anjou but disinherited for becoming a Protestant. He was tall and striking, with impressive courtly French manners. He quickly dissipated his wife's fortune, she being a rich widow, then fought in Flanders in 1648-9 and under Cromwell in Ireland, before becoming a relatively unsuccessful inventor. Contact and visits with French relatives led to Elizabeth being fluent in French, which she used for the more sensitive parts of her diary as Samuel did not read that language.

Handsome Samuel, son of a washerwoman and a tailor, was born in 1632 in Salisbury Court, now called Salisbury Square, off Fleet Street. He went to St Paul's School, as had Judge Jeffreys and John Churchill, and took a BA at Magdalene College, Cambridge. He was ambitious and with promising career prospects. He met Elizabeth, who was considered a very great beauty with breeding, although poor and with no influence, when the family was living in reduced circumstances at Charing Cross by St Martin-in-the-Fields. They married on 1st December 1655, when she was only fifteen. He was found to be mean with money, moody, bad tempered, a bit paranoid, and unfaithful, having many relationships with women before and after their marriage. At first they lived in a room in Whitehall, possibly in one of the turrets of King Street Gate, built in 1532 as a two storey stone building having two circular turrets with domed roofs. As was common, meals were either brought in or eaten out. She became under-nourished because she could not feed herself when he was out, as he did not give his wife any house-keeping allowance until after the reconciliation, following a two year separation.

Captain Robert Holmes, a prominent sailor after the Restoration, had found her very attractive before she was married, and, while Pepys behaviour had forced their early separation lasting from February 1656 until December 1657, he offered to make her his mistress. But she supported herself by translating and interpreting. At this time Pepys was working as a steward for Lord Montagu on a task by task basis and his career had hardly started. Both had a hard time during the separation, she even nursed him through a major illness. In 1658 Samuel obtained a post as a regular clerk to George Downing at the Exchequer, and on the income moved to a small house in Axe Yard on the west side of King Street, Westminster, about August. Their first maid was Jane Birch. Pepys bought copies

of the latest songs from Playford's shop. In 1661 Pepys found it impossible to relate the glory of Charles II's Coronation day.

Pepys had sexual relationships with servants and contacts, including Gosnell, Mary Ashwell, Mary Mercer and Deb Willett, introduced by W Batelier on 24th September 1667, found embracing by Elizabeth on 25th October 1668 and not mentioned again in the diary after May 1669. (pp 98, 190-3, 205) He had a long term relationship with the pretty wife of a subordinate, Mrs Bagwell of Deptford, which lasted 2 or 3 years. After Elizabeth died he formed a proper one with Mary Skinner, the young daughter of a city neighbour, which was close, tender and enduring till his death. They lived together, and this was probably why he was not knighted, but it is not obvious why they did not marry.

Pepys' post in the Admiralty of Clerk of the Navy Acts at the Restoration brought them, on 17th July, an official house in Seething Lane. In 1656 the Navy Office had been built on the site of Sir Francis Walsingham's house, and itself destroyed by fire in 1672, so he moved to Winchester Street and then next year to Derby House. He lived at 12 Buckingham Street from 1679-1688 and then at number 14 until 1701, when he moved to Clapham Old Town on the north side of Clapham Common into a house designed by Sir Dennis Gauden. He was Master of the Clothworkers Company in 1677-8, imprisoned in the Tower briefly in 1679 accused by Titus Oates of giving Naval secrets to the French, but released on bail and eventually cleared, and elected President of the Royal Society for 1684-5 immediately before Sir Isaac Newton's long term.

He died on 26th May 1703. Pepys and his wife are both buried in the nave of St Olave, Hart Street, off Seething Lane, near the Cornmarket in Fenchurch Street. There are separate monuments to both of them. There is an annual service at St. Olave's in memory. The Ancient Society of Pepys meets at the Prospect of Whitby, 57 Wapping Wall, which had been known as the Devil's Tavern when Pepys had been a frequent visitor, one of many inns with which he was familiar. This one is by the site of Execution Dock where pirates were hanged.

Elizabeth found her husband's diary, and the key to his shorthand writing through Thomas Shelton's book *Tachygraphy*, published in the 1620's, in order to discover more about his financial and amorous affairs. However Samuel made few references in it to his wife. Shelton's approach was not as sophisticated as modern shorthands, eg, Pitman's, being quasi-phonetic. Many of the signs were simply reduced forms of letters and abbreviations for words, plus 300 invented symbols which were mainly arbitrary logograms, and a few empty symbols to foster secrecy. It was commonly used at the time for reporting speeches and sermons, as it could be written as fast as 100 words per minute.

## Notes

1. Note that several of those mentioned by name had roles with the Royal Navy.
2. For respectability, it was usual to call all actresses "Mrs", regardless of their marital state.
3. Mrs Knipp or Knepp was the actress. He wrote in August 1667, "my wife out of humour as she always is when this woman is by." Pepys had been seen by his wife buying Mrs Knipp a pair of gloves at the New Exchange.
4. King Charles II's wit about *Cuckolds all awry*, with the presumed allusion to the dance Cuckolds all a row, was made because they were dancing with each other's mistresses. Cecil Sharp preference for *Hey boys, up go we*, was because Chappell in *The Ballad Literature and Popular Music of the Olden Time*, 1859, noted that a Cavalier song of *Hey, boys, up go we*, was sung to the *Cuckolds* tune. However it is a very different dance and its tune is distinct and had been much used for political satire. From its use in coarse verses, the phrase *Hey boys, up go we* was actually intended to be even more suggestive than *Cuckolds*. Douglas Kennedy reconstructed the original *Hey boys* dance with its proper tune, but published it as *Trip to Norwich*.
5. The first Theatre Royal in Drury Lane was built in 1663 for Thomas Killigan and the King's Company. It was burnt down in 1672 and rebuilt by Wren. Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre was opened in 1661 by Sir William Davenant for the Duke's Company.
6. Rope dancing was on a suspended rope or wire, slack or tight, horizontal or sloping like a guy rope. Jacob Hill the tight rope dancer was for a while a lover of Barabara Villier, Lady Castlemaine, who became the Duchess of Cleveland in 1670, having been a long time mistress of Charles II. She also had a daughter by John Churchill, who later became the Duke of Marlborough.
7. A theorbo was a therbo-lute.
8. Pepys played about ten different musical instruments.



## PEOPLE MENTIONED IN DIARY EXTRACTS

Mrs R Allen  
Mr Andrews  
Mary Ashwell - Mrs Pepys Maid (1663)  
Mr Ball  
Mr Banister - master of music  
Mrs Barbar(y) or (a)  
Mr W Batelier and sister Mary, a linen draper, and sister Susan  
Sir William and Lady Batten plus two daughters, he became Surveyor to the Navy  
Mr Bellwood  
Bond  
Mr Brumfield  
Lord William Bruncker or Brouncker, 2nd Viscount, Navy commissioner  
Lady Carteret and daughters, Sir George was Treasurer of Naval Board  
Luke Channell - master of the school in Broad St.  
Captain George Cocke - hemp contractor, MP and a Director of Royal Africa Co,  
    who bribed Pepys  
Mrs Coleman and husband (Captain William Coleman?)  
Mrs Corbet  
Sir W Coventry's clerk William  
Mrs Daniels  
Mrs Davis (Moll, the actress?)  
Mr Deering - song writer  
Captain Downing (might just be Sir George, Pepys worked for this diplomat)  
Mrs Dyke  
Captain Ferrers and Lady  
Mr Fletcher - playwright  
Golding - fiddler and barber  
Goodyer  
Mrs Gosnell - Pepys' wife's woman 1668  
Greeting - sent Duke of Buckingham's music  
Cozen Gumbleton  
Mr Harris  
Mr Hempson  
Will Hewer - Pepys' right hand man and closest friend  
Jacob Hill  
Mr Thomas Hill - music loving Lisbon merchant, arranged musical evenings  
Will Howe - steward to Lord Sandwich  
Mr Ireton  
Couzen Mary Joyce  
Mrs Knipp - actress and dancer  
Lacy - play producer?  
Mr Laneare  
Manuel and wife (Mr Lloyd?)  
Mrs Lurkin  
Mary Mercer - Mrs Pepys maid 1665  
Montagu, "Mrs Jem." - Countess of Sandwich or Lady Jem., for Jemimah  
Edward Montagu, Lord Sandwich  
Lord Orrery - playwright  
Mrs Parker  
Mr Pembleton - dance teacher  
Sir William and Lady Penn [Sir W Ren??] Admiral

Couzen Roger Pepys, wife and two daughters, lawyer and MP for Cambridge  
Couzen Perkin - miller and fiddler  
Mrs Pett - Peter Pett shipbuilder and commissioner for Chatham Dockyard  
Mrs Pickering - Ned a young kinsman  
Mr and Mrs Pierce, and son and daughter  
Mr Playford - music seller  
Mr Thomas Povy- incompetent colleague  
Lady Prettyman  
Shadwell - playwright  
Mr Starkey  
Captain Taylor  
Theophilia Turner "The." (1668-9) elder sister of Betty  
Mrs Tooker and Miss Frances Tooker  
Mr Tripp  
Betty Turner - a young cousin  
Sheriff Waterman (1665)  
Deb. Willett (maid)



**Follow Up Note 1**

Roy Dommett CBE  
10 Attlee Gardens, Church Crookham,  
Fleet, Hampshire, GU13 0PH  
Tel UK ([0]1252) 617229  
29th September 1997

**SOCIAL BACKGROUND TO THE COTSWOLD MORRIS**

There is always an interest in the social conditions under which the traditional Cotswold morris existed, albeit in the 19th century through decline from 1840 onwards. This booklet has been out of print for some time but amongst other things puts the morris into its context. It has a few inaccuracies on the morris which can be covered by studying Keith Chandler's books for dates for the actual persistence of the traditions, but otherwise it is a valuable adjunct and helps to show how different conditions really were and what a social gulf there is to today. It was inspirational to my first conference paper on how the morris ran into the 20th century.

Yours

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Roy', with a large, looping initial 'R'.

85. Mary Fielding, conversation, 30 March 1986; Mrs Kate Thorpe, recorded interview, 13 February 1986.

86. EvJ, 26 May 1951, p.10.

87. EvJ, 11 June 1955, p.5.

88. Ibid.

89. Mary Fielding, conversation, 30 March 1986.

90. Mrs Kate Thorpe, recorded interview, 13 February 1986.

91. See Local Studies, by children of Mrs Thorpe's class, St James School (Chipping Campden, 1985) edited by Craig Fees (available Gloucestershire Record Office and Campden library). 1881 statistics compiled from 1881 census and admissions registers; 1985 statistics compiled by the children.

92. At the time of the 1901 census there were 1,542 people in Campden.

93. See Ashbee Journals, September 1919, Alec Miller to G. R. Ashbee; 19 October 1919, W. Huysh to Janet Ashbee. The battle was waged in public: see EvJ, 22 March 1919, p.8; 29 March 1919, p.7; 5 April 1919, p.8.

94. H. J. Massingham, who lived in the Campden area in 1930-1931 wrote extensively of this invasion in the inter-war period, but nowhere with more specific relevance than in A Countryman's Journal (London: Chapman and Hall, 1939).

95. EvJ, 29 September 1983, p.1.

96. This may be overlooking the factor of the novelty of the event. One does see a logic of spectacle emerging over the three years, a sense of story-line as the organisers become more familiar and perhaps more confident with the custom. Had the fete continued, they may well have constructed a more theatrically coherent event than is apparent in 1895.

97. I offer this tentatively, knowing that more detailed studies of the 1895-1897 fates, fin de siècle Campden, and local culture generally may overturn all or part of this thesis.

98. Refer to my dissertation (see note 4, above); Peter L. Berger, Brigitte Berger, Hansfried Kellner, The Homeless Mind (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1974); Andrew Pearse, Metropolis and Peasant: The Expansion of the Urban-Industrial Complex and the Changing Rural Structure, in Peasants and Peasant Societies, edited by Teodor Shanin (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1971), pp.69-80.

# CUSTOM IN CONFLICT: THE MORRIS DANCE IN THE SHREWSBURY AND IRONBRIDGE AREA OF SHROPSHIRE

GORDON ASHMAN

I must begin with an explanation of the title of my paper, a point which many of you will no doubt feel bodes ill for what is to come. After all, if something as simple and straightforward as the name of the paper requires explanation, you may even now be asking yourselves, what will be required for the meat of the paper. The answer, I hope, is nothing other than a powerful digestive system and the ability to make a feast of the scraps from other men's tables and if, at the end of the paper, you have metaphorical morris indigestion, the fault will be entirely mine.

I would have liked to entitle what I am about to say: 'Custom in Conflict in Coalbrookdale'. Had I done so, I am sure that many of you would reasonably have concluded that I was going to discuss happenings in a tiny Shropshire village; a little place that time has left stranded in that collection of roundabouts and traffic islands called Telford New Town. Any recent map shows Coalbrookdale to be just that; a part of modern Ironbridge.

If, however, you had asked any reasonably lettered man or woman the question:- 'Where or what is Coalbrookdale?', some little time ago, the short answer, quoted perhaps from Charles Hulbert in 1837 would have been:- 'Why, the most extraordinary district in the World'.<sup>1</sup>

Looking at de Louthembourg's 1801 painting of 'Coalbrookdale by Night'<sup>2</sup> where Moloch, in the form of the Industrial Revolution, was being built, it is not hard to see why everyone held this view. Incidentally, the painting depicts the Bedlam Furnaces, some one

and a half miles from present day Coalbrookdale and if we return to Hulbert's remarkable book,<sup>3</sup> we find that his description of Coalbrookdale covers a very large area.

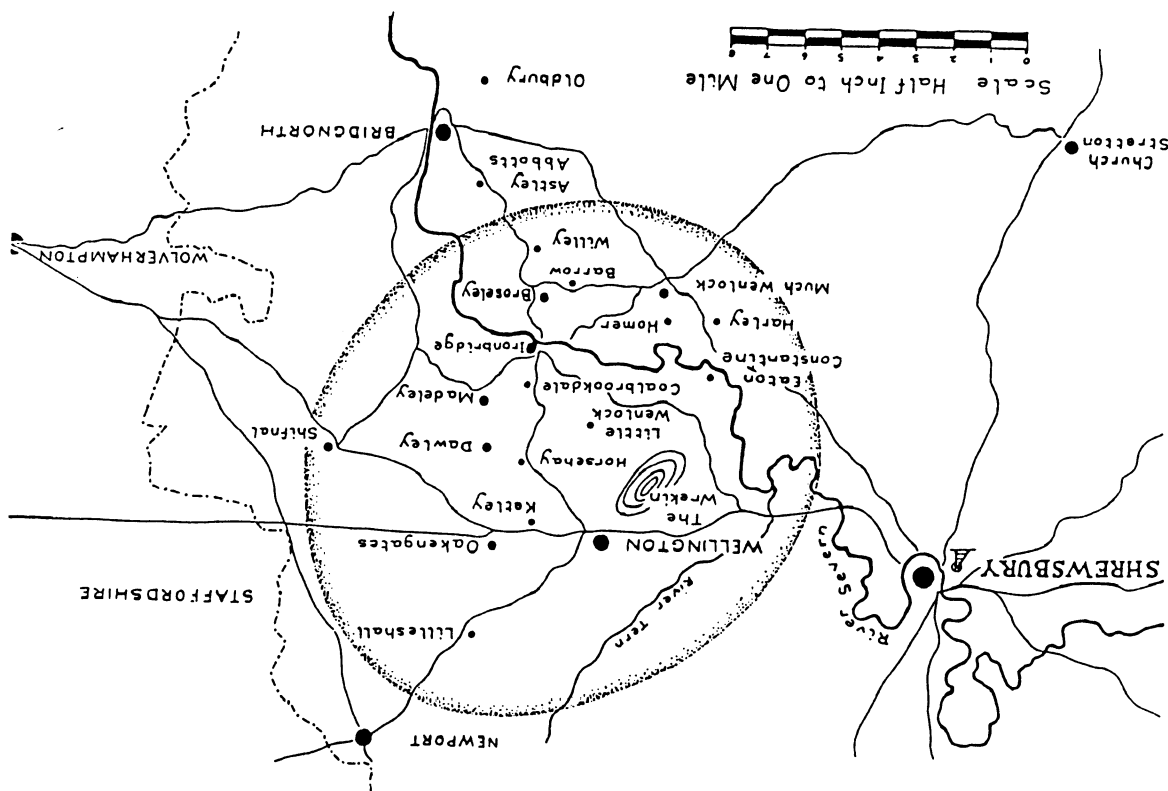
Hulbert called it 'the coal district'<sup>4</sup> and that remarkable folklorist Charlotte Burne called its people 'the Colliery folk'.<sup>5</sup> I include Shrewsbury in the area of my study not just because it is the county town, and thus provided law as well as administration and some finance for the colliery district, but also because that elegant town was almost a coalfield town, coal being mined at Meole Brace only two miles from the centre of Shrewsbury.

In short then, we have an area wherein great change took place in a relatively short time. Nothing in the world was ever quite the same after Abraham Darby successfully smelted iron with coal instead of charcoal and set in train the Industrial Revolution. The time it took to forge a billet of iron replaced the time it took corn to grow as the Coalbrookdale man's clock. Old ways came into conflict with the new, the morris dance no less than many other 'Customs in Conflict'.

Before getting down to the substance of the paper, it remains only to define 'Custom' and 'Conflict'. Conflict, I trust will not bring us to blows since it is simply from the Latin fligere , to strike. Custom may be a different matter, since the word has many meanings for many men. For my purposes, I will use the definition given by that fine parson of the little Shropshire village of Myddle, Richard Gough, who in 1700 wrote thus:

Customs are a law or right, not written, which being established by long use and the consent of our ancestors, hath been and is daily practised.

I hope to show later why these elements of long use, consent and frequent observance are so important.



THE EAST SHROPSHIRE COALFIELD

Having, at long last, explained the title of my paper, I can now get down to the heart of the matter. Any study of the morris danced in this area must begin with Dr Cawte's masterly article which appeared in the Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society nearly a quarter of a century ago. I feel certain that anyone who has researched this part of the world will agree with me when I say that he did an exceedingly thorough job and, in terms of documentary information, he left very little for those of us following in his footsteps. We should not, however, despair. As I shall later show, there is still vital documentary evidence to be found. Oral sources offer a wealth of material and, most importantly of all, old sources can be re-examined in the light of present day understanding of history and historical processes.

In a paper of this length, it will not be possible to review every early quotation and so one of the things I propose to do today is to examine a few key references in the hope that you will be stimulated, as I have been, to question commonly accepted views or to try to look at them with a fresh and open mind.

Let us take one of the earliest known references to the morris dance in England as well as our area of study. At the Visitation of the Parish of St Mary's, Shrewsbury in 1584, it was asked by the Official:

Whether there have bene any lords of mysrule, or somer lords or ladies, or any disguised persons, as morice dauncers, maskers, or mum'ers, or such lyke, within the parishe, ether in the nativittide or in som'er, or at any other tyme, and what be their names?

Dr Cawte cites this question and goes on to state: 'This does not prove that the morris dancers appeared, but it is interesting that summer and Christmas were expected to be their special seasons'. True, but what I find even more interesting is the fact that the population of Shrewsbury at this time was about 6,000.<sup>9</sup> I live in a small Shropshire settlement, still referred to by all who live there as 'The Village', despite the fact that there are now some

6,000 inhabitants. It is the size of Shrewsbury in 1584 and yet, when I walk down the village street, I know, in the sense of exchanging greetings, at least six people out of ten and recognise ninety-five out of a hundred. Were anything as outlandish as 'morice dauncers, maskers, or mum'ers' to appear I would most certainly know it! To understand why the Official asked what was surely a purely rhetorical question, we need to know something of the man and the times in which he lived.

'John Tomkiss... was renowned as a 'painful preacher'', writes Barrie Trinder in his History of Shropshire.<sup>10</sup> English understatement at its best, for the self-described 'Her Majesty's Stipendiary Minister of St. Mary's... with decided anti-Roman views on all points of Church order and doctrine...',<sup>11</sup> had been appointed to reform, be it ever so painful, the ways of the people of Shrewsbury.

His position as public preacher was one of great power but, despite this, he was not always successful in his endeavours to put down Papist practices. In 1589

... great disturbances were in the town, occasioned by the setting up May-poles, and making bonfires, before the Shearmens-Hall, and in other places. Mr. Tomkies, Minister of St. Mary's, and public preacher, appeared among the people, and endeavoured to dissuade them against such proceedings; but he was ill-used by the populace, and the disturbances increased, until the bailiffs interfered and put a stop to them.

The matter did not end there for, two years later, the young men of the Shearmens' Company set up '...this green tree before their hall door as of many years before had been accustomed', and were promptly arrested, committed to prison and indicted. They came to trial nearly three months later before the Recorder when '...upon their submission, they were quit for their disobedience' and Mr Sergeant Owen determined that '...the usual tree shall be used as heretofore, so it be done civilly and in loving order, without

contention'. 13

I could, but will not, spend the rest of this session cataloguing the conflict between John Tomkies and his parishioners' customs. I have tried to give something of the feeling of these times but, unless you can bring to mind the smell of burning human flesh and remember how close in time were these events to Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley, you will not understand the intensity of feeling the Reformation aroused.

If we now return to the question Tomkies asked in 1584 in the light of what I have just said and, if we remember that the year before Tomkies asked his question about morris-dancers, Stubbes' diatribe against many customs Englishmen regarded as their birthright - The Anatomie of Abuses - had been printed,<sup>14</sup> I think you might, like me, see the question in a new light. Indeed, you may well conclude that far from being even a rhetorical question, it was actually a statement that such things as 'lords of mysrule...or morice dauncers...or such lyke' would not be tolerated, at least by the preacher of St Mary's. I feel sure that had morris dancers appeared in the streets of Shrewsbury, they would have heard the sharp tongue of the Reverend Mr Tomkys M.A., and would have had all his reforming zeal brought to bear upon them. Had this been done, I am convinced that it would have been recorded by Shrewsbury's early historians.

I therefore conclude that rather than being evidence that morris dancers may have performed in Shrewsbury in the late sixteenth century, the Visitation question makes that possibility seem somewhat unlikely.

The disapproval, or even attempted putting-down of a custom, has sometimes backfired in the face of the would-be suppressor. I think it very unlikely that we would have any inkling of how the inhabitants of a tiny Shropshire hamlet spent their Sundays in the

seventeenth century, had not their recorder been preoccupied with sin, and thus in conflict with local custom.

Let us come forward in time, roughly fifty years, to see the villagers of Eaton Constantine. We see them through the eyes of another zealous preacher, the celebrated divine, Richard Baxter. Whilst many of us would have had troubled souls had we lived through the horrors of the Civil War, Baxter's loathing of the pleasures and pastimes of his fellows often exceeded all reason. In his autobiography, Baxter begins by writing of the incompetence of the local clergy (in the High Ercall and Eaton Constantine area), and goes on to describe how Sunday was spent in his youth in about 1627:

In the village where I lived the reader read the Common Prayer briefly, and the rest of the day even till dark night almost, except eating-time, was spent in dancing under a maypole and a great tree not far from my father's door, where all the town did meet together. And though one of my father's own tenants was the piper, he could not restrain him nor break the sport. So that we could not read the Scripture in our family without the great disturbance of the tabor and pipe and noise in the street.

Elsewhere he records with an even greater sense of outrage:

...and we could not on the Lord's day, either read a Chapter, or Pray, or sing a Psalm, or Chatechise or instruct a Servant, but with the noise of the Pipe and Taber, and the Whootings in the Street continually in our Ears; And even among a tractable people, we were the common Scorn of all the Rabble in the Streets. ..And sometimes the Morrice-Dancers would come into the Church, in all their Linnen and Scarfs and Antick Dresses, with the Morrice-bells jingling at their leggs. And as soon as the Common Prayer was read, did haste out presently to their play again.

We can find a hint as to the reason for his detestation of the dancers in the following extract from the Reliquiae Baxterianae, since in his youth:



Many times my mind was inclined to be among them, and sometimes I broke loose from conscience and joined with them; and the more I did it the more I was inclined to it. But when I heard them call my father Puritan it did much to cure me and alienate me from them.

We might also be indebted to indigestion for Baxter's acidulous view of life since he tells us that:

I was much addicted to the excessive gluttonous eating of apples and pears; which I think laid the foundation of that imbecility and flatulency of my stomach which caused the bodily calamities of my life.

A well man might have been more charitably disposed to his fellows and we might not have such a fine description of village life.

We need to remember the terrible times Baxter had lived through. They had killed a king, brother had killed brother, the Witchfinder-General had stalked the land, and morris dancing was not merely an idle pursuit, but the damning evidence of a soul lost. Had Baxter not felt as he did, we would surely not have such a marvellous description of the classic, archetypal, dare I but say it, 'Cotswold' morris dance in the heart of the 'Border' area.

I would like now to consider slightly different forms of conflict. The first is a conflict of evidence and it leads to what is, I suppose, the classic form of conflict in our field of study: that between the squirearchy and the morris dancer, even in detail.

It begins innocently enough with a nice little snippet about a spirited old lady:

In the churchyard of Willey is a gravestone, dated 1756, to a Margery Brider, aged 113, 'who danced with the Morris-dancers the year before'.

As Dr Cawte points out, there are parallels with the account of the old men of Herefordshire.

In following up this reference, I came across an item in a parish register concerning the lady. The cynical among you will conclude that it positively confirms that she was a morris dancer since the entry for 20 July 1701 notes that on 8 July, Margery Symons (alias Brider), had given birth to a bastard son Joseph, and blamed it on one Thomas Pritchard, a Vagabond.<sup>21</sup> The next task was to visit the churchyard to see the gravestone but, long before I got there I felt uneasy. In this tiny hamlet is Willey Old Hall. Not far away is the magnificent seat of Lord Forester, Willey Park. Close by is the tiny, old church held by the Weld-Forester family for some 400 years.

I was not in the least surprised when I was unable to find Margery Brider's tombstone, neither did it shake me to discover from the Parish Register that there had been no burials at all at Willey between 1754 and 1758.<sup>22</sup> What would really have surprised me would have been to see the lords of the Manor of Willey permitting such an immoral individual to be buried in their personal churchyard.

Margery Simmons was buried some way from Willey on 17 January 1756.<sup>23</sup> Her remains are to be found somewhere in Barrow Churchyard. No stone marks the spot and it reminds me very forcibly of the need for researchers, wherever possible, not to accept even apparently sound evidence without walking the ground and attempting to understand the place and its people.

I suggested a little earlier that vital documentary information was still to be found, even today. We come to such a find and I hope I can do two things at this point. The first is to communicate the excitement I felt on first reading this document and the second and much more important point is to make clear my debt to Keith Chandler who passed the cutting to me and Mike Heaney who found it in Henry Ellis's personal copy of Brand's Antiquities. It must be very tempting to hug such a find to your chest, at least for a while, but their generosity must already be known to many of you.

It is such a splendid piece of information, packed with fact after fact about living and working conditions and attitudes to working men as well as the most marvellous description of morris dancers from a period about which we know very little that I give it here in full.

QUEEN SQUARE.- MORRIS DANCERS.- John Cadman, Rowland Fowler, William Fowler, Edward Herbert, and five others, were brought before the Magistrate by Benjamin P. Capper, Esq. of the Alien-office, under the following circumstances:-

It appeared from the statement of Mr. Capper, that these nine men, were decked out in all the colours of the rainbow, by means of ribands of various colours, white, red, and yellow paper round the edges of their hats, to imitate silver and gold lace, and other absurd imitations of finery, made their appearance before the doors and windows of the Alien-office, in Crown-street, Westminster, between 1 and 2 o'clock in the afternoon; one of them bearing in his hand a tambourine, and the others with sticks in theirs, and began dancing in their usual grotesque way. In a few minutes a great crowd was collected, and Mr. C. having heard or read of some morris-dancers who had annoyed different neighbourhoods about town, thought, as they were so near the office, it would be right they should see the inside of it, and hear what the Magistrate would say to them.

Mr. FIELDING told them they had committed a great breach of the law in thus arraying themselves, that they were amenable as vagrants, and as such liable to be sent to prison.

He observed that on a paper in front of one of their hats was written "Colliers from Shropshire;" it would grieve [sic] him, he said, particularly at the present moment, to deprive the harvest, which is fast approaching, of the exertions of nine such stout, young active lads as they appeared to be; but he must do his duty, and, however painful to his feelings, put the law in force unless they would solemnly promise him, upon their word of honour, that they would leave the town immediately by two different routes, five in one party and four in the other. This they very readily promised to do. Mr. F. then asked them what money they had about them? They instantly emptied their pockets, and their whole store was found to amount to about 2s. in halfpence. He then asked them how much they had earned a day since they arrived in town; they answered, never more than 2s. a day each.

Mr. F. also informed them they must immediately disrobe themselves of all their fantastic finery, give up their "spirit-stirring-drum," with all their other implements

of morris-dancing mystery; of all which they immediately divested themselves, and they were given in charge to the officer present.

Thus restored to a state of natural appearance, they looked like what they really were, stout, well-made, and some of them rather handsome young men.

Mr. Fielding then informed them they must leave the town this day, and must endeavour to obtain employment at the first place where they could any of them meet with it; and those who could not get it must make the best of their way in search of it in some other place: and in order to make them somewhat more easy, in once more turning their faces towards their native county, he would (not doubting but they would keep their words which they had pledged) order them to be paid half-a-crown each to cheer them on their way.

Mr. COLQUHOUN also advised them to be very cautious in their conduct, and by no means to attempt taking up again, as they passed along, the mystery they had just laid down; for if it came under the cognizance of any of the country Magistrates, they would most assuredly be sent to prison. The Clerk was then desired to give them half-a-crown each, and they departed, after very respectfully returning the Magistrate's thanks for the kind treatment they had met with.

I literally could not sleep on the night after I received that cutting. My mind was simply whirling round at all the information, implications and new questions it raised. Suddenly the origins of the strips of cloth or paper on a Shropshire Morris dancer became clearer. The tambourine, used in living memory in my area, had long antecedents. The dancers were such a long way from Shropshire. How and why had they gone there? Why were the Magistrates so lenient in their treatment of the miscreants? There is no mention of the blackened faces which later accounts mention. There are many more questions and comments to make but, given the constraints of time, I would like to put before you just a few of the ideas that come welling up.

We have been conditioned in the belief that, until recently, the rural population of England was born, grew up, worked a lifetime and died, never having travelled more than a day's walk from the parish of their birth. Just how false is this belief is shown above, but I am sure it will surprise many of you to know that the Shropshire colliers were doing no more than following their sisters

and sweethearts to London. By 1817 the annual expedition to London by Shropshire pit girls was well established and its purpose was nothing so soft or effete as morris dancing. The girls from the Ketley pit banks went to carry the strawberry harvest from the fields of Isleworth or Richmond into central London in 40-50lb loads on their heads, making several journeys each day.

A year before these events, the post-Napoleonic war depression reached its height in Shropshire. Only ten of Coalbrookdale's thirty-four furnaces were in blast. The few colliers who were in work and accustomed to earning 4s. a day were reduced to working for 1s-6d. Two shillings a day for morris dancing suddenly takes on a different perspective. In June 1817, the monthly agricultural report for Salop mentioned: '...the uncommon drought of last month....all lenten crops and seeds were at a stand....Some wheats... have entirely perished.' <sup>27</sup> It was fine to be told by the Magistrate to find work harvesting but there must needs be something to harvest.

Perhaps the colliers gained from hard-working reputations enjoyed by their Shropshire sisters, who had reputations of working until they literally dropped dead from exertion in the fields around Barnes. <sup>28</sup> Maybe the magistrates, mindful of the general unemployment which had led to the Spa Fields Riots only a few months earlier, <sup>29</sup> were simply trying to reduce quietly the population of a ragged and potentially rebellious element which might be added to the thousands of destitutes on the streets of London.

As I suggested earlier, these are but a few of the points which this marvellous reference opens up. The names of the dances must be followed up. Not an easy task, but an intriguing one since the name Cadman, unusual perhaps to those of you not from Shropshire,

was common in the Ketley-Wellington-Oakengates area and, indeed, was used by Mrs Cameron, a prominent writer of religious tracts at the time, as the name of the hard-drinking, bull-baiting, wife-abusing, pitman anti-hero in her novel, Oakengates Wake.

In short, the reference poses at least as many new questions as it provides answers, but should give heart to any researcher who has been told that there is nothing new to be found in their field.

Now to turn to an internal form of conflict: that is, one within me, and one from which some of you may gain. I am sure all of you must have known the dreadful experience of visiting your county Record Office or local studies library, devoting a day, a week, a month, to ploughing painstakingly through record books in spidery writing (whence, I wonder, came this myth that our forebears wrote in immaculate copperplate) or hacking your way through a year of your local newspaper (on badly scratched microfilm, of course) only to find.....absolutely nothing.

I had certainly reached the point early last year when I was prepared to admit defeat in both my primary, historical field of work as well as my secondary area, morris dancing. I had spent ages working through some of the most turgid literature known to man. Not only that, much of it had been written by some of the most smug and pompous creatures ever to put pen to paper. I had spent months looking for certain types of calendar or popular custom and was bitterly disappointed not to have found them. I had to rediscover the lesson that what is not there is often almost as important as what is there. To a soldier entering an area it may be a matter of life or death to know that it has not been mined or that there are not enemy tanks waiting for him. I had in the past spent much of my working life gathering such information. It was probably on the road to Dawley rather than Damascus that I had been conversion took place. I suddenly realised that I had been investing the subject of my research with a quite unmerited mystique.

Applying what I had learnt in military intelligence gathering to morris dancing gave a new perspective to the hours spent with say, 'An Honest Penny is Worth a Silver Shilling',<sup>31</sup> or the days spent wrestling with 'The Posthumous Pieces of the late Rev. John William de la Flechere',<sup>32</sup> or the aeons of narcolepsy spent with the diaries of the ladies who were described by an enthusiastic writer on the family as ".....those frightful Darby women".

If those who had spent a lifetime cataloguing the major and minor sins of the miners of Madeley and I shall go on to give you a few examples, had failed to mention morris dancing, then we may reasonably infer that there was not much of it about. Consider for a moment Fletcher's list of sins to be avoided:

....taking the Lord's name in vain...Sabbath breaking, uncleanness, drunkenness or tippling, or going into a public house or staying without necessity; quarrelling; brawling...attendance at balls, plays, races, cockfights and bull baitings; gaming; song singing; needless indulgence; putting on gaudy and costly apparel...

Surely if he had seen any morris dancing, combining as it does so many of the foregoing sins, Fletcher would have condemned it with all the others. Incidentally, the quotation shows how well Fletcher knew the area and the men, since he condemns '...going into a public house and staying without necessity'. I think he recognises the need to slake a thirst, but knows that under the charter-master system (sub-contracting of labour), the men were invariably paid in the pub.

A decade later he was still condemning theatrical performances, annual wakes, horse racing, cock fighting, man fighting and dog fighting, and his opposition to bull baiting was such that the Madeley Wood colliers were intent on setting their dogs on him instead of the bull.<sup>34</sup>

Fletcher had no doubt as to why the miners of his parish were so sinful as he noted that: 'They plead for the old customs: they will do as their fathers did, though ever so contrary to the word of God.'<sup>35</sup>

My notes and records are full of such invective from the pens of many men and women recording life in the colliery district over some two hundred years, and yet the mentions of morris dancing are few and far between. The lesson which I had to relearn, and which I hope will save some of you from the anguish I felt when hours of drudgery failed to reveal what I hoped to find, is that negative information may be nearly as important as the positive when you are trying to establish quantitatively, the part morris dancing played in the lives of earlier communities.

Let me now talk very briefly about what many people would consider to be the essential characteristic of the morris dance in the area under examination. 'You're not a morris dancer without a black face', an old man told Dr Cawte.<sup>36</sup> Come with me in your imagination to a day out with the morris side in which I perform. Our black faces fascinate the watchers and I can guarantee they will ask: 'Why do you have black faces?' The answer, of course, is: 'It's traditional', and is immediately followed by the corollary: 'We've done it for hundreds of years', a bit of information I find quite breathtaking since I personally persuaded the side to adopt the custom less than six years ago. Please for the moment keep that in mind whilst we go back to some early references.

Consider the ones I have already mentioned. Consider Baxter's or Fletcher's howls of outrage or the cynical reportage of The Times reporter. I am certain that had they seen blackened faces, this would have been noted in no uncertain terms. Indeed, try as I might, I have found no references to blacking up much before the middle of the nineteenth century.

Trying to set blacking up in the context of the period, I cannot say I am surprised,<sup>37</sup> since for much of this time, the Waltham Black Act was in force. Originally passed to protect the deer on landed estates, the Act became a catch-all, and E.P. Thompson, in his book Whigs and Hunters, suggests that eventually, arming (which could be as simple as taking up a stick), and/or blacking the face might constitute capital offences.<sup>38</sup> No wonder there are no mentions of black-faced morris dancers, though almost any year in the late eighteenth to mid nineteenth century will provide newspaper reports of robbers or thieves or Luddites 'with blackened faces' at work.

I can find no genuine references to blacking up before the popularity of the minstrel show swept the country in a wave after one of the earliest 'Ethiopian Delineators', Thomas Rice, took London by storm with his 'Jim Crow' act in 1836.<sup>39</sup> A correspondent in Shropshire Notes and Queries in 1885 who seems to know morris dancing quite well notes that: 'The blacking of the faces is perhaps modern, and detracts to some extent from the dance (performance I was going to write).'<sup>40</sup> A later writer to Bye-Gones gives us another clue to the origins of the black faces when he mentions morris dancers in Shrewsbury in 1855 as

...frozen-out bricklayers, under the directorship of an old army pensioner named Fitzpatrick, who ...used to represent the Black Prince at Shrewsbury Shows.

The Black Prince of the Shrewsbury Shows seems not to have been a depiction of the eldest son of King Edward III who died in 1376, called the Black Prince either because of the colour of his armour, or more likely, his foul Angevin temper, but rather, as seen by 'A Lover of Shropshire' who wrote to Shropshire Notes and Queries in 1885, '...The Black Prince' personated by a morris-dancer got up as a nigger'.<sup>42</sup>

I have found several more examples which tend to confirm the late arrival on the scene of blacking up, and the most important oral sources from the Broseley/Much Wenlock area, that is, dancers and families of dancers from the last 'genuine' side of morris dancers, believe that the late nineteenth and early twentieth century dancers borrowed heavily from the nigger minstrels.<sup>43</sup> This seems to be confirmed by the C part of the tune collected in Broseley by Dr Cawte. A bit of doggerel was a feature of the dance in this area and this one goes:

There was a little nigger, and he grew no bigger  
So they put him in the Wild West Show.  
He tumbled through the window and he broke his little finger,  
And he couldn't play the old banjo.<sup>44</sup>

I begin to move towards a close. A number of writers have identified certain common elements in the morris dance of the area I have examined, as well as the Welsh Border counties at large, but I feel a major factor has been neglected. Indeed I would go so far as to say that the primary, driving force of the dance in recent times has been largely ignored. I move briefly out of the area to make a point. We would not, I am sure, be here but for the pioneering work of Cecil Sharp. Equally, I am almost certain that most of us are aware that his interest in the dance form that seems to occupy much of our lives sprang from seeing the morris dancers at Headington in 1899. But how many of us are aware that he saw them on Boxing Day '...at the wrong time of year, because they were out of work, and wanted to turn an honest penny'.

In Coalbrookdale, once we move into the period of the Industrial Revolution, many of the references are effectively a recital of the hardness of the living conditions of the times. I have prepared a list of some of them and quote them briefly now, reminding you that they begin with the Shropshire collier driven to seek some means of earning money in London':

The Morris-dancers came round about Whitsuntide, and of course expected a dole from the spectators.

John Randall, Monthly Illustrated Journal, Madeley, December 1879, p.27 [Writing of his youth, born 1810]

I can recollect seeing Morris dancers in the streets of Shrewsbury between thirty and forty years ago, but I think they were only men out of work who adopted that method of soliciting alms.

W. O. Bye-Gones, 15 September 1886, p.119.

In the winter of 1855 I witnessed a similar performance in the Market Square at Shrewsbury ...the dramatis personae were frozen-out bricklayers....

T. Caswell, Bye-Gones, 24 May 1911, p.61.

About twelve years ago it was customary for mummers or Morris dancers, from Newport to go into the surrounding countryside at Christmas, and act a version of the history of St. George and the Dragon...the Clown presents "the small dripping pan," which is a long tin ladle, to receive money in'.

Wildmoor, Salopian Shreds and Patches, 31 December 1884, p.12.  
[ Wildmoor was a pseudonym used by Charlotte Burne ].

I saw the dancing carried out at Shrewsbury, about ten or twelve years ago, in the month of January, or thereabouts. The men forming the company were supposed to be bricklayers, thrown out of work by the continued severity of the frost. The avowed object of the performers was to collect contributions towards their support, until the frosty weather gave way and they were able to resume work...after every good collection, these necessitous workmen beat a hasty retreat to the nearest public-house, before resuming operations in some other street. The practice was, I believe, kept up for many days.

S.M.M. Shropshire Notes and Queries, No. 189, 12 June 1885, p.60.

The last specimen of morrice dancing seen by me in Shrewsbury was during the hard winter of 1878-9, when about a dozen unemployed men performed a morrice dance through the streets of Shrewsbury to excite the sympathy of the benevolent.

Greg, Shropshire Notes and Queries, No. 191, 19 June 1885, p.61.

It is a common thing in hard winters for frozen-out bricklayers and quarrymen to get up a morris-dancing party, and dance in the streets of the neighbouring towns and villages to collect money. The hard winters between 1878 and 1881 brought many such parties into the various towns.

Charlotte Sophia Burne, Shropshire Folk-Lore, London, 1886, p.477.

A party who danced in the street at Newport in the hard winter of 1878-79, also sang...they were said to come from Madeley.

Burne, p.479, footnote 1.

With the cold of last month fresh in your minds, I need hardly remind you of how cruel an English winter can be. As well as telling us of the hardness of both the winters in the late 1870s and early 1880s, and the lives of many working men, the above extracts tell us something about the dancers. There are few surprises as to which trades fell on bad times. Bricklayers, of course, were always the first to be laid-off when the weather turned bad and, as soon as the frosts came, you could no longer quarry stone. Miners have always bottomed out with the economy. These trades have a strong group or team working basis and this surely accounts for the repeated references to bricklayers, quarrymen and miners in the reports I have found.

There is one curious point. The conflict which has formed the theme of my paper is strangely absent in this area, or rather, if there is a conflict, it is with what seems to have been the case in the rest of the country. I am sure that all of you who have

researched traditional dancing in Victorian times would confirm that the most fruitful sources of information are the condemnatory reports to be found in local newspapers or the proceedings of magistrates courts. Go as far as you can from Shropshire and you will find items such as:

The town was completely overrun on Plough Monday, by numbers of men and boys facetiously miscalling themselves plough 'witches'. Dirty faces seemed to be the premier qualification, combined with the necessary share of impudence. On the following day the same parties enveloped in straw whips and denominating themselves Straw Bears (!) levied black mail with intolerable impartiality on the inhabitants. Customs like these it appears to us would be more hoggared in the breach than in the observance.

Collectively, I have no doubt you could produce a book of similar reports from the places between Shropshire and Whittlesey but I can find virtually nothing of that nature; something I find very strange. The Shrewsbury papers are ready to condemn almost every other custom. Can it be that polite society felt sympathy for those thrown out of work by the bad weather or the hardness of the times? Can it be that the dancers pleaded custom, as did the Shearmen in 1591, and does this give us a hint as to why my fellow-dancers describe a six-year-old practice as being hundreds of years old? Intriguing questions to which we will probably never find answers, and there is one last aspect of the 'morris dancing mystery' which is a very closely guarded secret.

Dance in the streets of Shropshire's former pit villages now and you will often meet those who remember their fathers and uncles dancing in the 1920s and 1930s. They remember, that is, until reminded by a mother or sister that it was regarded as little better than cadging, and suddenly memory fades. Few will tell, as did one of the pre-War Much Wenlock side, of leaving school to do 'a bit of poaching and a bit of morris dancing'<sup>47</sup> and so both the identity and the number of dancers remains largely hidden.

Sadly I am out of time. Out of time without even being able to wonder at the part played in the transmission of music for morris, and music for dancing, by the gipsies we know to have travelled in the area. Out of time without even being able to question how much Welsh music and custom were carried into the area by seasonal workers who came into Shropshire from the principality every harvest. Out of time without discussing the survival, in some of the world's earliest industrialised communities, of the customs of agricultural societies. I hope we will have the chance to raise these matters in the future.

Finally then, let me summarise a few of my thoughts. I hope I have shown the need to examine references in the light of the fact that the recorders were often seeking to suppress the customs. I trust that you will note from the example at Willey that frequent quotation of a reference still does not make it reliable. I believe that hearing of the marvellous find by Mike Heaney should convince you that, even today, vital new information is to be found. My own example of apparently wasted searches being turned into useful, albeit negative evidence, may make a headache induced by reading microfilms a little easier to bear. Lastly, I hope the examples of men driven to dance by being thrown out of work remind us that what was a pleasant custom providing beer money in a good year, was turned to providing daily bread in a bad one, even when custom was in conflict.

#### NOTES

1. Charles Hulbert, *The History and Description of the County of Salop* (Shrewsbury: The Author, 1837), pp. 347-348.
2. Philip James de Loutherberg. Painting exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1801 as 'A View of Colebrook Dale by Night'. Held in the Science Museum.
3. Hulbert, p.28.
4. Hulbert, p.28.
5. Charlotte Sophia Burne, *Shropshire Folk-Lore*, 3 parts (London: Trubner, 1887; Shrewsbury: Admitt and Naunton, 1885; Chester: Minshull and Meeson, 1886), p.350.

6. Richard Gough, Antiquities and Memories of the Parish of Myddle written in 1700, published (Shrewsbury: Admitt and Naunton, 1875).
7. E. C. Cawte, 'The Morris Dance in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire', JFDS, 9, no. 4 (1963), 197-212.
8. Cawte, p.197.
9. T. Phillips, The History and Antiquities of Shrewsbury (Shrewsbury: T. Wood, 1799). No precise figure of the population at that time is available, but the estimated guess of 6,000 is made on general information in this work.
10. Barrie Trinder, History of Shropshire (Chichester: Phillimore, 1983), p.48. The name 'Tomkiss' appears in a variety of spellings in the original sources.
11. Ven. Archdeacon Lloyd, Notes on St. Mary's Church (Shrewsbury: Admitt and Naunton, 1900), p.29.
12. Phillips, p.209.
13. Hugh Owen and John Blakeway, A History of Shrewsbury, 2 vols (London: Harding, Lepard, 1825), i, p.392.
14. Philip Stubbes, The Anatomie of Abuses (London, 1583), reprinted from third edition of 1585, supervised by W. Turnbull (London, 1836).
15. Richard Baxter, The Autobiography of Richard Baxter being the Reliquiae Baxterianae abridged from the Folio by Lloyd Thomas (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1925), p.6.
16. Richard Baxter, The Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day Proved (London: Nevil Simmons, 1671), p.117.
17. Baxter, Autobiography, p.6.
18. Baxter, Autobiography, p.5.
19. J.E.A. Bye-Gones Relating to Wales and the Border Counties, 8 March 1911 (Oswestry and Wrexham: Woodall, Minshall, 1911), p.38.
20. Cawte, p.199.
21. Willey Parish Register, entry for 20 July 1701, copy held in Shrewsbury Local Studies Library.
22. Willey Parish Registers, 1754-1758.
23. Barrow Parish Register, entry for 17 January 1756, copy held in Shrewsbury Local Studies Library.
24. 'Queen Square - Morris Dancers', The Times, 8 August 1817.
25. Barrie Trinder, The Industrial Revolution in Shropshire (London: Phillimore, 1981), pp. 214-215.
26. 'Distress in Shropshire', Wolverhampton Chronicle, 21 August 1816.
27. 'Monthly Agricultural Report', Salopian Journal, 4 June 1817.
28. Maisie Brown, Market Gardens of Barnes and Mortlake (Barnes: Barnes and Mortlake History Society, 1985), p.33.
29. 'The Riots', Wolverhampton Chronicle, 11 December 1816.
30. Lucy Lyttleton Cameron, The Oakengates Wake or the History of Thomas and Mary Cadman (London: Houlston, n.d.). Dr Trinder estimates from topographical descriptions in the book that it is set circa 1820.
31. Lucy Lyttleton Cameron, 'An Honest Penny is Worth a Silver Shilling', No. 10 in Volume I of Houlston's Series of Tracts (Wellington: Houlston, n.d.). Tracts were bound up and sold in book form from 1825.
32. Melville Horne, Posthumous Pieces of the late Rev John William de la Flechere (Madeley: J. Edmunds, 1791).
33. Luke Tyerman, Weasley's Designated Successor (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1882), p.86.
34. Tyerman, p.261.
35. Horne, p.404.
36. Cawte, p.206.
37. 9 George I, c. 22, The Waltham Forest Black Act.
38. E. P. Thompson, Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act (London: Allen Lane, 1975).
39. Robert Toll, Blacking Up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth Century America (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.28.
40. F. S. Shropshire Notes and Queries, 1, No. 192, 19 June 1885 (Shrewsbury J. Watton and Son, 1885), p.61.
41. T. Caswell, Bye-Gones, 24 May 1911, pp. 61-62.



42. A Lover of Shropshire, Shropshire Notes and Queries, No. 181, 5 June 1885, p.57.
43. Oral evidence from the Minton and Cartwright families, collected 1981, 1985 and 1986.
44. Cavte, p.201.
45. The Morris and Sword Dances of England (London: The Morris Ring, 1963), p.4.
46. 'Disguised Begging', Peterborough Advertiser, 15 January 1859.
47. Interview by Curator of Much Wenlock Museum, Brosseley, 1985.

## IRISH TRADITIONAL STEP-DANCE IN CORK

CATHERINE FOLEY

To discuss Irish traditional step-dance in Cork a brief résumé of the major dance forms of this dance type is necessary. Of these, there are four categories, namely: the reel, jig, hornpipe and slip-jig. Other minor divisions in these categories include the light-jig, single-jig and solo set-dances. However, all the above mentioned step-dances may be divided further into two broader categories: the light-shoe and the hard-shoe dances.

### The Light-Shoe Dances

Soft, black, laced pumps, similar to ballet shoes, are worn for the reel, slip-jig, light-jig and single-jig and are therefore known as the light-shoe-dances. These dances, with the exception of the reel, are performed by females only. However, young boys are sometimes allowed to learn the slip-jig with the intention of them acquiring a grace of movement. This step-dance is revered as the most graceful of all Irish dances. It is in 8 time and, similar to the light-jig and single-jig, is related musically to the jig.

The reel, believed to be of Scottish origin, is in <sup>4</sup> time and is performed by both sexes. However, though it may be performed with either soft or heavy shoes, it is more generally regarded as a light-shoe-dance.

### The Hard-Shoe Dances

The hornpipe, jig and solo set-dances are the hard-shoe-dances.

**HISTORY WORKSHOP PAMPHLETS**

*Number Eight*

---

**WHITSUN**

**IN**

**19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY**

**OXFORDSHIRE**

---

**by**

**Alan Howkins**

---

**Price 60p**

# HISTORY WORKSHOP PAMPHLETS

Editor: Raphael Samuel, tutor in social history, Ruskin College, Oxford. Designer: Adrian Hodakins (Lambeth). Publications secretary: Bob Gilding (Poplar).

1. Frank McKenna, *A Glossary of Railwaymen's Talk*
2. Sally Alexander, *St Giles' Fair, 1830-1914*
3. Bernard Remy, *The Class Struggle in 19th century Oxfordshire*
4. Bob Gilding, *The Journeyman Coopers of East London*
5. Stan Shipley, *Club Life and Socialism in mid-Victorian London*
6. Dave Douglass, *Fit Life in County Durham*
7. John Taylor, *From Self Help to Glamour, the Working Men's Club, 1860-1970* 60p + 10p postage
8. Alun Howkins, *Whitsun in 19th century Oxfordshire* 60p + 10p postage
9. Dave Marson, *Children's Strikes in 1911* 30p + 10p postage
10. Dave Douglass, *Fit Talk in County Durham* 60p + 10p postage
11. Jennie Kitteringham, *Country Girls in 19th century England* 50p + 10p postage
12. Edgar Moyo, *Big Mother and Little Mother in Malawi* 50p + 10p postage

out of print

These pamphlets can be obtained by sending cheques or postal orders to History Workshop, Ruskin College, Oxford.

## CONTENTS

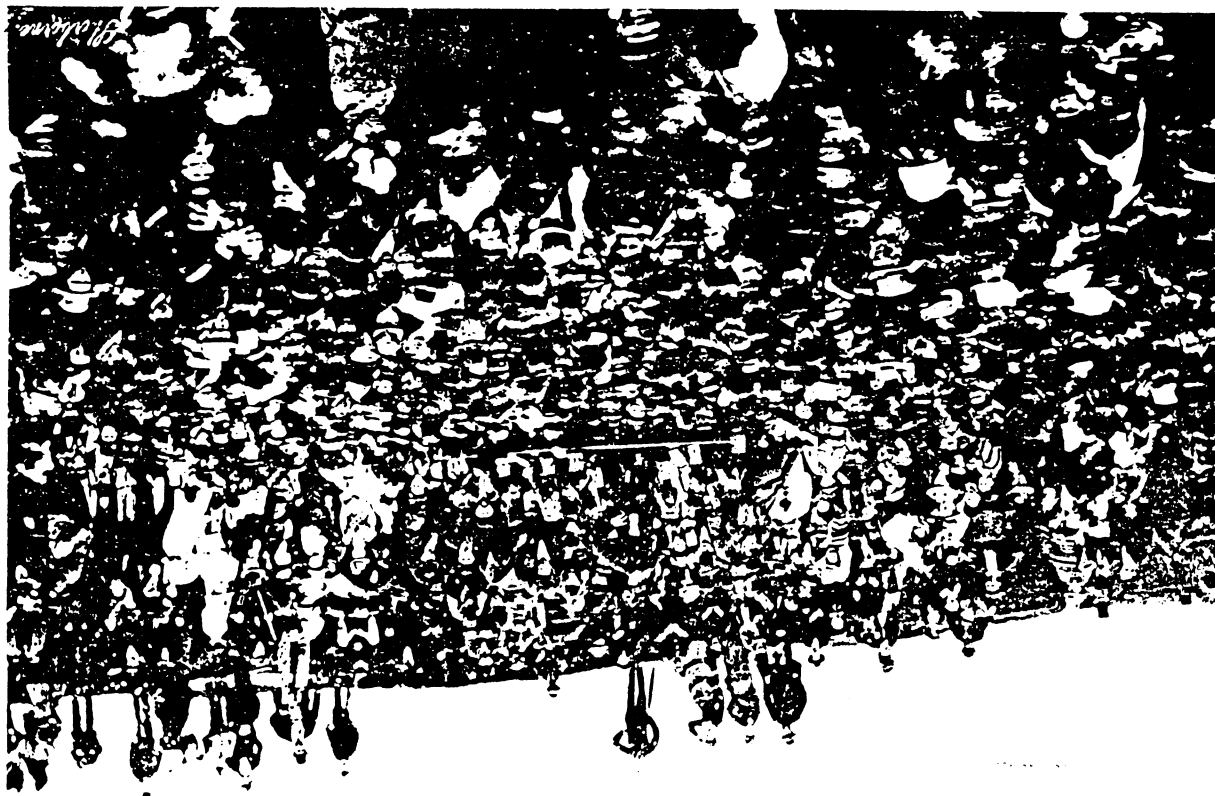
I	The Old Ways.	1
II	The New Spirit.	19
III	Club Day.	28
IV	Rational Recreation.	44
V	Kitchener's Army.	63

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1 Rational recreation: National demonstration of Farm-workers, Ham Hill, nr. Yeovil, Whit Monday 1877.  
Copyright N.U.A.A.W.
- 2 Foresters' Club Day at Iffley, Oxon. c. 1900, Museum of English Rural Life, Reading.
- 3 The old ways: A Whit Ale in Woodstock, 1829, from Thomas Little, *Confessions of an Oxonian*, London, 1826.

## Editorial note

Alun Howkins is a native of Bicester and a collector and singer of Oxfordshire songs. He was a student at Ruskin from 1968-70; is now at the Queen's College, and next year plans to be starting work on Norfolk farm labourers in the 1890s.



## FOREWORD

My own first real contact with the kind of things this pamphlet is about is fortunately preserved for posterity. It comes from a rare, and hitherto unpublished manuscript entitled 'English Book, Alun Howkins, Form 1', and apparently drawn up at the Bicester Highfield Secondary Modern School in 1959.

On Whit-Monday my Dad borrowed Mr. Powell's car and took me and my sister out for the day for a drive. Because my mum is a cook in the hospital she had to work so she could not come. We drove to the Cotswold Hills which were very nice and we picked some flowers for my Mum. We went to a place called Winchcom where there is a castle and we had dinner there in a cafe. After dinner we went to Bibury and to a place called Bampton. Bampton was good fun, there were lots of men dancing. They are called Morris dancers, but they are nothing to do with the factory but are very old. They danced facing each other and waved handkerchiefs. They were dressed in white with blue and red ribbons and bells on their feet. There was a man called a fool who had a clown's costume on and went round hitting people with a ball on a stick. He chased my sister Tina and was very funny. There was a man with a cake with a sword in it. Afterwards we sat outside a pub and had some lemonade. My Dad had some beer. When we went home we were tired and happy and had enjoyed our half term.

Since that date my growing interest and love of English country music has taken me to Bampton many times, and it was the love of the old music and the atmosphere of Bampton which led me to the work for this pamphlet.

However there is little in it about Bampton and the 'old ways'; the pamphlet deals more with the taming of the holiday. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the old ways were dying in the 19th century and although they survived in some villages, these were exceptional. Secondly, lack of sources, there is much more information about 'club day' than its more spontaneous predecessors. Thirdly the 'taming' of Whitsun occupied the greater part of my period, since the new ways were already gaining a foothold in the 1810s.

I have to admit that my feelings about Whitsun have changed during the writing of the pamphlet. To put it simply I feel personally ambiguous about the process of 'taming'. When I began I had no doubt that I was 'on the side' of the old ways - now I am no longer sure. The old Whitsun represented a world which was in many ways more sympathetic than the one which succeeded it. The libertarianism of many village communities for instance can only be more attractive than the later imposed, and highly regulated work discipline. Similarly the Morris represents a culture (now all but dead) which contained some of the finest songs and liveliest dances that Western culture has produced. I am also deeply in sympathy with the old village and most of the communitarian features it threw up. But there is another side to Whit and one which equally inclines me to take the opposite view. Simply the old Whitsun, or aspects of it, was nothing short of barbaric. Bull baiting, dog fighting, badger baiting and bare fist fighting were not romantic subjects for a sporting print but revolting and bloody spectacles of man's inhumanity to his fellow creatures. In the last analysis my mind is not firmly made up and the reader must attempt to judge for himself from the evidence presented.

I should like to say a word of thanks to all those who, either directly or indirectly, helped bring this pamphlet to the light of day. Firstly to Raph and Anna, for painstaking editing and checking, and all the comrades of the History Workshop, without whom it certainly would never have been possible, and without whom I would never have even heard of social history let alone written about it. Secondly, and in a different way equally, to Sue Himmelweit, a great comrade, a fine person and my companion through the writing of this. Thirdly, to my parents for being good parents. Fourthly, to the bearers of the tradition, most of whom don't know me from Adam but whose songs and music are the ultimate inspiration of this pamphlet. Thanks then to Reg. Hall and Francis Shergold at Bampton as well as Mr. Tanner in that village, to Jim Phillips of Quarry, the entire Abingdon Morris side, and to any one who plays, sings or dances in the old way. Finally, just people who have been nice in the last two years when a town boy found himself unhappily amongst the gown, especially Tim Mason, John Prestwich, Dr. Alistair Parker, John Walsh, Dan Davin, and Phillip Waller.

Lastly, a word about sources. In my account of 'the old ways' I have relied heavily on a source referred to in the footnotes as 'Manning MSS'. These are the notes of Percy

Manning, a fellow of New College and an amateur folklorist, who amassed a great deal of material in the twenty or so years before the great war. Much of this is conventional antiquarian stuff, but it also includes some remarkable village autobiography and memoirs of an altogether different quality. This material was collected for Manning by Tom Carter, a self educated stone mason from St. Clements in Oxford City who deserves better treatment from posterity than he had hitherto received.

I should like to humbly dedicate this pamphlet to the farm workers of the world, in the belief and hope that soon they will have what is rightly theirs.

Alun Howkins

Oxford City, December 1972

(c) Copyright by History Workshop, 1973.

345

They ploughed him in the earth so deep,  
With clots upon his head,  
Then these three men they did conclude  
John Barleycorn was dead.

There he lay sleeping in the ground  
Till rain from the sky did fall,  
Then Barleycorn sprung up a green blade,  
And proved liars of them all.<sup>1</sup>

Whitsun, like May day and Easter, is in origin a celebration of the end of the darkness, infertility, and cold of winter. When primitive man planted his grain at the beginning of winter it seemed to him that it lay dead in the cold ground through the long dark months. Then, as the frosts ended, the apparently dead seeds came to life and pushed up their small green shoots. However the cycle of death and rebirth was not left to chance factors: man intervened in the process with his own sympathetic magic. Until recent years in the Balkans young couples made love in the furrows to encourage the corn to grow. At Padstow, Cornwall, on May day, a man dressed as a horse is danced through the streets, and then made, to fall, exhausted, to the ground. The crowd gathers around him singing gently and urges him back to his feet. When he finally rises the triumphant shout goes up, 'Oss Oss, We Oss' and the song and dance begin again through the streets. In the past, the man who danced the horse was naked under his wide skirts, and young girls caught under them were taken to the ground when he 'died', which assured them of fertility in the coming year.

Unite then Unite and we shall all unite  
For summer is come unto day  
And whither we are going then we shall all unite  
In the merry morning of May

1. John Barleycorn, possibly one of the oldest songs in the English tongue it tells, in allegory, how the earth and the seeds die in the winter only to come back to life magically in the spring. Collected from Edward Warren, South Marston, Wilts, in A. Williams, *Folk Songs of the Upper Thames*, Reprinted 1970, p.246.

goes the Padstow song, although its vitality is impossible to appreciate without its tune, played on melodeons and kettle drums.

These elements of sympathetic magic were retained when magic was rationalised into ordered religion. In the Spring Judaism celebrates Pesach, the festival of escape from Egypt, of deliverance out of bondage, while in the Christian calendar Easter, the festival of death and resurrection, falls at the same time. Whit Sunday, in the Christian calendar, is a further symbol of rebirth, marking the time when Christ finally ascended to heaven, six weeks after the crucifixion, passing on his spirit in the tongues of fire that appeared over the heads of the apostles on Whit Sunday.

The incorporation of these 'pagan' elements into the Christian calendar gave Whitsun many of the characteristics to which clergymen from John Bromyard in the fourteenth century to Edward Elton, Vicar of Wheatley in the nineteenth, most strongly objected. John Bromyard wrote a number of sermons specifically attacking the old spring festivals, which he treats as the Devil's own revenge for the severities of Lent, 'to annul . . . contrition'.<sup>1</sup> The rigours of Lent now give place to the rejoicings of Easter tide; and the thoughts of men and women turn to the open, the merry greensward, May-games and revelry, whither they will go with heads rose-garlanded for the feasts and shows.<sup>2</sup>

The celebration of Whitsun in the past was not always clearly separated from May Day. As we shall see maypoles form an important part of Whitsun celebrations in Oxfordshire; while the children of Bampton carried May garlands around on Whit Monday until the beginning of this century.<sup>3</sup>

Chappel quotes a much earlier example of 'going Maying', from Bourne's *Antiquitates Vulgares*: 'On . . . the first day of May, commonly called May-day, the juvenile part of both sexes are wont to rise a little before midnight and walk to some neighbouring wood, accompanied with music, and the blowing of horns, where they break down branches from the trees, and adorn them with nosegays and crowns of flowers. When this is done, they return with their booty homewards, about the rising of the sun, and make their doors and windows to triumph in the

1. Bromyard, Sermon, 'Contritio' in G.R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England*, Oxford, 1966, p.393.
2. Bromyard, Sermon, 'Munditia', paraphrased in Owst, *loc.cit.*
3. Jackson's *Oxford Journal*, (hereafter J.O.J.), 25 May, 1907, p.7.

flowery spoil.<sup>1</sup> In Bicester a degenerate form of this custom was still carried out by children in the early years of this century. Mrs. Cherry of Bicester gave me this version of the song which they sang as they carried the garlands from house to house:

Good morning ladies and gentlemen we wish you a  
merry May

We hope you like our May garland because it is May day

A bunch of may, I have brought you, and at your door I stand

It is but a bit but it will spread about the work<sub>2</sub>  
of our Lord's hands. . . .

To Puritanism May games and Whitsun were anathema, whether because of the work ethic (as some historians have suggested), or simply because they were most hostile to the 'profane' side of religious festivals and feasts. We don't have to look far in the literature of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for attacks on the traditional sports and games. Philip Stubbes in his *Anatomie of Abuse* (1585) denounced the frolics and games taking place at 'May, Whitsuntide, or some other time of the year'; and singled out maypoles for a vehement attack.

But their chiefest jewel . . . is their May-pole, which they bring home with great veneration, as thus: they have twenty or forty yoke of oxen, every ox having a sweet nosegay of flowers tied to the tip of his horns; and these oxen draw home this May-pole, (this stinking idol rather), which is covered all over with flowers and herbs, bound round about with strings, from the top to the bottom, and sometime painted with variable colours, with two or three hundred men, women and children, following it with great devotion. And thus, being reared up with handkerchiefs and flags streaming on the top, they strew the ground about, bind green boughs about it, set up summer halls, bowers, and arbours, hard by it; and then fall they to banquet and feast, to leap and dance about it, as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idols, whereof this is a perfect

1. W. Chappell, *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, New York, 1965 ed., Vol. 1, p.132.
2. Song from Mrs. Cherry of Bicester in Oxfordshire, collected by author in May 1971.



pattern, or rather the thing itself.<sup>1</sup>

Some Puritan magistrates tried to suppress the spring festivals. James I, although a Calvinist (of sorts) did not back them up, and in 1618 issued his *Book of Sports* directed against those Puritan magistrates and preachers who taught that 'no honest mirth or recreation is lawful or tolerable in Our Religion'.<sup>2</sup>

Our Pleasure . . . is, that after the end of Divine Service, Our good people be not disturbed, letted, or discouraged from any lawful recreation, such as Dancing (either men or women), Archery for men, Leaping, Vaulting, or any other such harmless recreations; nor from having of May Games, Whitsun Ales, and Morris Dances; and the setting up of May Poles, and other sports therewith used . . .<sup>3</sup>

Although there were attempts during the Commonwealth to suppress Whit Ales they showed considerable powers of survival. The earliest description of Whit Ales in Oxfordshire comes from Blount's *Ancient Tenures*, published in London in 1679. Blount writes:

At Kidlington in Oxfordshire the Custom is, That on Monday after Whitson week, there is a fat live Lamb provided, and the Maids of the Town having their thumbs ty'd behind them, run after it, and she that with her mouth takes and holds the Lamb, is declared *Lady of the Lamb*, which, being dress'd with the skin hanging on, is carried on a long Pole before the Lady and her Companions to the Green, attended with Music and a *Morisco Dance* of men and another of Women, where the rest of the day is spent in dancing, mirth and merry glee. The next day the Lamb is part Bak'd, boyl'd, and roast, for the Ladies feast, where she sits majestically at the upper end of the Table, and her Companions with her, with music and other attendants, which ends the solemnity.<sup>4</sup>

1. Quoted in Chappell, *op. cit.*, p.133.

2. *The King's Majesty's Declaration to his Subjects Concerning lawful sports to be used*, London 1618. Reprinted in *An English Garner, Social England Illustrated*, New York, 1964, p.312.

3. *Ibid.*, p.313.

4. Quoted in P. Manning, 'Some Oxfordshire Seasonal Festivals' *Folklore*, 1897-8, p.312.

In Oxfordshire Whit Ales survived into the nineteenth century. As late as 1837 *Jackson's Oxford Journal* was able to write, 'In no other part of the united kingdom, we believe, are these old English revels [i.e. Whit Ales] celebrated with such spirit, and so much original character, as in the midland county of Oxford, particularly at Woodstock, Marston, Beckley, Headington, etc., septennially, and at the village of Kirtlington annually in the week following Whitsun-week . . .<sup>1</sup> This list would seem to be far from complete for the years before 1830. To it we can add with certainty, Milton-under-Wychwood, Brill, Chalgrove, Finstock, Charlbury, Bucknell, Eynsham, Kidlington and probably several others. While all over the county there were the village 'feasts' at Whitsun, which were often descendants of Whit Ales.

Blount's description fits, in most respects, the most perfectly recorded of the Whit Ales, the Lamb Ale at Kirtlington which was held until 1858. Tom Carter, who was collecting Oxfordshire folklore for Percy Manning in the 1890's, interviewed Mr. and Mrs. Pearman of Kirtlington, and from their account drew up the following description of the Kirtlington Lamb Ale:

The centre of the festivities was the "Bowery", a shed made of green boughs set up on the village-green, where the ale previously brewed was sold during the nine days of the feast without a license, the proceeds going towards the expenses incurred. One of the villagers was chosen "Lord" of the feast, and he with his mates picked out a "Lady", who was paid for her services. At 11 o'clock on the Monday morning the "Lord" started from the "Bowery" to the "Lady's" house, whence a procession marched round the village. . . First came a man carrying a live lamb on his shoulders, which was, if possible, the first-born of the season, and the finest of the flock. Its legs were tied together with blue and pink ribbons, and blue ribbons hung round its neck. Next came the "Lord" and "Lady" gaily dressed and decked with pink and blue ribbons. . . The "Lord" carried slung over his shoulder a tin money-box called the "treasury". Both he and his consort held in their hands badges of office, known as "maces". . . Following the "Lord" and "Lady" came the Fool, known as the "Squire", who wore a dress of motley, and

1. *J.O.J.*, 6 May, 1837, p.4.

carried a long staff with a bladder and cow's tail at either end. His duties were to belabour the by-standers and to clear a ring for the dancers. Next came six morris-dancers, who were dressed in beaver hats, finely pleated white shirts, crossed with blue and pink ribbons and rosettes, and white moleskin trousers with bells at the knees. Their music was supplied by a fiddler, and a "whittle and dub" man, as the musician was called who played the pipe and tabor. At the end of the procession were two men carrying "forest feathers", which were wooden clubs about three feet long, covered with leaves, flowers, rushes, and blue and pink ribbons.<sup>1</sup>

At Woodstock the Ale began with the raising of a May-pole, which, by custom, was provided by the Duke of Marlborough. The *Journal* reports in 1837, 'On Monday last one of the finest May Poles ever seen was set up at Woodstock, as the signal for the rural sports of a Whitsunale; and on Thursday, being Holy Thursday, *My Lord* and *My Lady*, with their usual attendants - the tabor, pipe, and the fiddle, with an excellent set of morris dancers, paid their respects to their neighbours, to invite them to *My Lord's Hall and Bower* during the Whitsun-week.'<sup>2</sup> The pole was simply 'a bare pole, ornamented with ribbons and flowers.'<sup>4</sup> As at Kirtlington the 'Hall and Bower' was a long shed decorated with evergreens; like the May-pole, it was also provided by the Duke of Marlborough. At Woodstock we also come up against the deliberate mis-naming of commonplace objects. 'In front of the "Bowery" were hung up an owl and a hawk in cages, and two threshing flails, which went by the names of "The Lady's Parrot", and "The Lady's Nut-crackers".'<sup>5</sup> At Finstock, where the Whit Ale was part of the Whit Hunt and called the Youth Ale, the owl in the cage was called "My Lord's Parrot" while the flail was called "My

1. Manning, *op. cit.*, pp.313-314.
2. Holy Thursday is the Thursday before Whitsunday, so presumably the *Journal* report means that the pole went up on the Monday before Whit Monday.
3. *J.O.J.*, 6 May 1837, p.4.
4. P. Manning, 'Stray Notes on Oxfordshire Folklore', *Folklore* 1903, p.171. John Kibble, the Methodist mason of Charlbury, knew about maypoles. 'A maypole from Wychwood stood in Church Street and for a week things not pleasant to think of were to the fore'. John Kibble, *Historical and Other Notes on Charlbury*, Oxford, 1927, p.90.
5. Manning, 'Stray Notes', p.171.

Lord's bagpipes."<sup>1</sup> To call these objects by their correct names was to incur a forfeit. An amusing, if unsympathetic, account of the Woodstock Whit Ale, can be found in a three-decker novel published in 1826, *Confession of an Oromian*. The hero, an undergraduate, goes for a stroll in Blenheim Park.

I was suddenly roused from my reflections by the sound of tabors, flutes, pipes, tambourines, and fiddles, mingled with shouts of merriment and rustic songs, all indicative of glee and rural festivity; and having now passed the gates of the park, I was able to discern the quarter whence the sounds of this merrymaking proceeded. On inquiry, I learned from an honest, chubby-looking clod-pole, that the present occasion was one of no small importance in the vicinity of Woodstock, since it recurred once only in the space of seven long years; that the period of its celebration was always at Whitsuntide, and that it was denominated by the ancient appellation of an ale.

Off I walked to be a spectator of the festivities of the Whitsun ale. On elbowing through the throng, the first fellow I met who was engaged as a party in the revels was an old man dressed up in the motley garb of a Tom Fool or Clown, and I must say he looked his character to perfection. "How do, master?" cried he. "May I ask your honour what you call that yonder?" pointing to a painted wooden horse, placed in the middle of a ring. "A wooden horse, to be sure," said I. "What should you think it was?" "A shilling, Sir, if you please," answered the clown; "A forfeit, if you please, Sir."

"A forfeit! A forfeit! What for?" I inquired. "I'll give you no shilling, I assure you."

"Bring out his lordship's gelding. Here's a gentleman who wishes for a ride! Bring out the gelding! His lordship's groom, hey! Tell her ladyship to be mounted!"

Here I was seized by four or five clumsy clod-poles, dressed up in coloured rags and ribbons. They were forthwith proceeding to place me on the wooden hobby just mentioned, behind an ugly, red-haired, freckled trull, who personated the lady of the revels. I

1. Kibble, *op. cit.*, p.89.

250  
bellowed out that I would pay the forfeit without more to do; and thus was I sconded of a shilling for not calling the cursed wooden hobby his lordship's gelding. Shortly after one of her ladyship's maids of honour came up to me, and begged me to look at the pretty bird in the cage, hanging over her ladyship's saloon, or dirty oblong tent made of tarpaulin. There was a great ugly white owl, stuffed; and I thought I should be safe by answering that it was the very handsomest owl I had ever seen. No sooner had I uttered this, than the fair maid of honour screamed out in treble, shriller than the squeak of a Christmas porker, or a pig driver's horn, "A forfeit, Sir, if you please. A shilling forfeit!" "Pooh" said I, "I've paid forfeits enough." On which, continuing in the same strain, "Bring out her ladyship's cook! Here's a gentleman who wishes to marry her!" On this, all the dirty baggages, which formed the group of her ladyship's maids of honour, brought out a fat ugly wench, with a nose and cheeks reddened with brickdust, and bearing a toasting-fork in one hand and a dish-clout in the other; and were on the point of commencing a mock ceremony of marriage between myself and this fair syren of the kitchen, in the course of which I was to have received three pricks with the toasting-fork on each buttock, and to have had my nose wiped with the dish-clout, had I not saved myself by producing a shilling as the penalty of my mistake, which consisted, as I was afterwards given to understand, in not denominating the stuffed owl her ladyship's canary-bird. . . . At short intervals tents were erected for the purpose of dancing; and all the maidens and swains of the whole country round were hoofing and clumping up and down the middle and up again, beneath their welcome canopy.

The procession and the bower recur in descriptions of Whit Ales; so does food. At Kirtlington cakes, called Crown Cakes, were sold. These were ' . . . about nine inches across, and were made of an outer crust of rich currant and plum dough, with a centre of minced meat and batter', (possession of a piece of cake was considered lucky<sup>2</sup>). Similarly at Woodstock

1. Thomas Little, *Confessions of an Oxonian*, London, 1826, Vol. 1, pp. 169-73. See illustration from the same volume.
2. Manning, 'Seasonal Festivals', p. 314.

cakes were sold which Manning describes as ' . . . like the modern Banbury Cake, called the "Whit Cake", and these were offered to people to taste in return for a small payment.'<sup>1</sup> An advertisement in the *Jamaica* for a Whit Ale at Brill in 1808 lured visitors with the promise of 'the best CAKE and ALE the village affords',<sup>2</sup> while at Milton-under-Wychwood in the same year prospective visitors were told that there were 'Barrels of home-brewed Ale (9 months old), and Cakes, as numerous as gnat flies in the summer.'<sup>3</sup> Dancing as well as feasting played an important part; the Brill advertisement also mentioned 'an excellent band' that was 'engaged to play in the Hall', and Milton made similar claims in other years. The style of the Milton advertisement (which was signed by 'Good Humour', Secretary General) deserves quotation.

MILTON WHITSUN ALE, NEAR BURFORD, OXFORDSHIRE  
CELEBRATED BUT ONCE IN 20 YEARS

Come then, ye votaries of pleasure, and pay your adorations to the shrine of Venus, Bacchus, and Comus: lose not this charming opportunity of hiding from care, in the bowers of love, festivity and harmony. You may not live 20 years more: hilarity, jocularly, and rural simplicity will move hand in hand conducted with the greatest discretion, modest demeanour, and appropriate etiquette, by his Lordship, attired suitably to the occasion, assisted by his Lady, specially elected for the pleasing task from the youth and beauty of the neighbourhood. - Be not afraid, nor encourage unfounded prejudices (if any exist), for the utmost attention will be paid to due decorum. So strong has been the resolutions of the Honourable Committee in that respect, that a retired Castle has been provided in the neighbourhood, where nothing can be heard more divine than the croaking of a Crow, or the braying of an Ass, to which all the enemies of innocent mirth will have the liberty of retiring during the merry week. Barrels of home-brewed Ale (9 months old) and Cakes, as numerous as gnat flies in the summer, with various other elegant repasts, tastefully set out in his Lordships Hall and Her Ladyship's Bowers and Tea Gardens, will be at the service of the

1. Manning, 'Stray Notes', p. 171.
2. J.O.J., 21 May, 1808, p. 3.
3. *Ibid.*, 14 May, 1808, p. 4.

Company. A May Pole, as lofty and well decorated as ever was seen, will nod its assent on Holy Thursday; and the superb *fete* will commence on Whitsun Monday and continue during the week, in a Hall and Boweries, rurally decorated for the Occasion, and attended by a Band of eminent Musicians.<sup>1</sup>

Morris dancing was always associated with the spring holiday, and by the nineteenth century seems to have been mainly restricted to Whitsun and dancing competitions - often with rival village 'sides'. A Brill advertisement in 1808 announced that '... the Right Hon. Earl Chandos Temple has kindly condescended to give a PRIZE of ONE GUINEA and a set of RIBBANDS to the second best ... a PRIZE of RIBBANDS, and a HAT of one Guinea value, to the best set of Oxfordshire Morris; and a HAT of Half-a-Guinea value, and RIBBANDS to the second best.'<sup>2</sup> Manning gives us two examples of the competitive spirit in the middle of the century. At Minster Lovell 'there was a competition between the Morris Dancers of Leafield, Stanlake, Ducklington, Brize Norton, and Bampton, at the "Pike" Inn when Leafield won easily',<sup>3</sup> and in another competition the Kencott and Langford morris sides danced for a Cake, 'The Test Was the Side that Made the Least False Steps in Three Different Tunes'.<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly, such competitions often did not end (if they ever began) in a spirit of 'sportsmanship'. 'These contests, tho' friendly enough at first, often ended, after a drinking bout, in a fierce fight, in which the sticks carried by the dancers were answerable for not a few broken heads...'<sup>5</sup> In the early 1860s Ascott danced at Pudlicot House on Whit Monday morning 'and the Gentleman then living there after Seeing their Dancing Set them Boxing for Money the First to Draw Blood to Receive 2/6 the Second 2/0 - they Received 14/- that Morning for the Entertainment - and as Much Beer as they Liked to Drink...'<sup>6</sup>

1. *Ibid.*., p.3. Milton celebrated at least 3 ales within the next 20 years, in 1808, 1809, and 1828.
2. *J.O.J.*, 21 May 1808, p.3.
3. Bodleian Lib., MS Top. Oxon. d 200, fols. 225-6 from Jonathan Williams, aged 70, Leafield. The competition would have taken place about 1845.
4. MS Top. Oxon. d 200, fol. 193.
5. Manning, 'Seasonal Festivals'.
6. MS Top. Oxon. d 200 fol. 133.

Not all the travelling done by the morris was competitive however. Then, as now, Morris sides would travel around nearby villages during Whit week, and sometimes the week after, dancing in the streets. The Bucknell side spent Whit week dancing in Bucknell and the villages around,<sup>1</sup> while during the nine days of the Kirtlington Lamb Ale the dancers would go out every day and return to the Bowery at nights '<sup>2</sup>. from visits to neighbouring villages to collect money.'<sup>3</sup> Swinford's memoir of Filkins also speaks of the travelling done by the old Morris side from that village, 'I have heard say that Whit-sun week they spent the whole week visiting the different club feasts every day. They started on Monday and did not come home until the following Sunday, sleeping in stables or lofts, at night, and not taking off their clothes or boots.'<sup>4</sup> Later in the century the Headington Quarry Morris side danced in Oxford City on Monday morning, Headington on Monday afternoon for the Havelock Lodge of Oddfellows, Quarry all day Tuesday, rested on Wednesday, and then danced at Milton, Great Hasely, Long Crendon and other villages in east Oxfordshire for the rest of the week.<sup>5</sup> Other sides that Manning lists as dancing all week at Whitsun are Kencott, Langford, Wheatley, Field Town and Oakley (Bucks). Early in this century Bampton also went out on tour in Whit week, to dance for the 'little bit' of money they could get; they went to Aston, Clanfield, and other local club days 'just the little local ones round 'ere'.<sup>6</sup> Jinky Wells the Bampton fiddler who taught Sharp many of the Bampton tunes, used to travel on his own round the villages during Whit week playing the fiddle and singing and dancing. In Jubilee week, 1897, he went to Kingham, Stow, Burford, Lew, Crubage (sic: Curbridge), and Witney. 'I have done what no other known man ever attempted to do, I have been to village clubs, singlehanded in full war paint, with Gosoon Dress, two sets of Bells on, Stick and Bladder, a stocking of a sort, Ribbons and Sashes, with my Fiddle in my hand. The jingle of Bells would fetch people out. They would shout "Here's the Bam Morris". When they saw only one member, "Where's the Morris?" "Here's the Morris", says I. Ah, and I have done well too, for I have brought as much as a sovereign back... I

1. MS. Top. Oxon. c515, fols. 29-30.
2. Manning 'Seasonal Festivals', p.315.
3. Bodleian Lib., MS. Top. Oxon. d 475, G. Swinford, 'History of Filkins', fol.76.
4. T.W. Chaundy, 'William Kimber, A Portrait', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 1959, p.204.
5. Interview of the writer with Mr. Tanner, Bampton, Whit Monday, 1972.

have been out as far as Stow-on-the-Wold, Kingham, South Lea, Leafeld, Kingston and dozens of other places single-handed and have met with plenty of old Morris dancers that used to take part in sets that are broken up and gone, but always met with a civil reception and got on well.<sup>1</sup>

The different sides had different styles of dancing and different colours (Bampton blue and red, Abington green and yellow, Kirtlington pink and blue), and although their tunes were often similar, dances done to them varied considerably from village to village. The old sides would only dance their own dances and would scorn to dance anybody else's. Cotswold Morris now tends to be seen through Headington eyes, since this was the first place that Sharp collected and he continued to think of it as the 'spiritual' home of dancing. But there were, and indeed are, many other traditions. The next most famous is probably Bampton which is still danced on Whit Monday by a village side (or rather three sides) and has an unbroken tradition. Also surviving is Abington, apparently considered by Sharp to be degenerate but with an unbroken tradition stretching back to at least 1700. Their dancing is not now associated with Whit but with a 'Lord of Misrule' survival, 'The Mock Mayor of Oak Street', celebrated in June. Another side with an unbroken tradition survives at Chipping Campden in Gloucestershire. Probably the most famous of the vanished sides is Field Town, from Leafeld in the Forest of Wychnwood; Jinky Wells said in an interview in 1952, '... they were wonderful dancers...'; Ambrose Preston, interviewed by Manning in 1894, said, 'The Field Town Morris Dancers were noted for their dancing... They had a blind fiddler to play for them. A wonderful man he was; they were dancing once, and he said to one of the men, "You began on the wrong foot then, I hope nobody noticed it." And nobody had noticed it, but the fiddler heard it right enough... Some of them used to dance jigs to please the farmers, over two bacca pipes crossed on the ground. One Cyphus was a great man for jigs; he "could all but speak with his feet"... They used to go out travelling round for a week or so, and make lots of money.'<sup>3</sup> An old man called Franklin spoke to Cecil Sharp in 1912 and told him 'Headington men don't get off the ground enough.' At Field Town they 'capered as high off the

1. From notes written by Jinky Wells, quoted in 'William Wells 1868-1953', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 1953, p.12.
2. *Ibid.*, p.5.
3. MS. Top. Oxon. d191a, fols. 196-8.

ground as that table'; 'Then the sweat ran down their faces; then they'd drink again, and the sweat ran down again.'<sup>1</sup> Field Town seem to have stopped dancing by the 1880s; but a few village sides were still dancing after that date apart from Headington and Bampton: Eynsham last danced at the Jubilee in 1935, Bucknell were certainly still dancing in the 1890s, as was Shipton-under-Wychwood (although this may have been a side of boys); a Brackley side, just over the border in Northants, last danced in 1914.

Morris is danced now by men, and despite seventeenth century references to women dancing it, most authorities tend to accept that it is a male dance. An old dancer told Sharp in Ducklington in the 1900s 'Girls have got things for their use and men have got things for *their* use and the morris is for men.'<sup>2</sup> This seems however to be incorrect even within this old man's lifetime. There are several reports of a side of women dancing at Spelsbury in the 1820s. 'About 70 years ago a set of women Morris-Dancers used to dance on Whit-Monday. They were mostly farmers' daughters, girls of eighteen or twenty, and were under the escort of a man who looked after them. They wore head-dresses of ribbons and flowers, short skirts, and bells on their legs of the same kind as those worn by the male dancers, and carried white handkerchiefs. With them went a clown or "squire" with a bladder and cow's tail, and a man playing the pipe and tabour.'<sup>3</sup> Much more recently Mr. Tanner of Bampton told me that in his lifetime a woman, Tizzy Buckingham, danced with Bampton on occasions and that 'she was as good as a man' and 'just danced in her ordinary clothes.'<sup>4</sup>

In social terms Morris sides were working class, and the dancers tended to come from the same families. The Wheatley side of 1860 - six dancers, fool and foreman - whose names are recorded by Manning were all labourers, while the list of Field Town dancers given by Sharp for the same year, and checked against the census shows a similar result. Jinky Wells said, 'Oh! I've been working on all sorts of work, every sort. I've been faggging, mowing, worked on the farms, thrashing -

1. Clare College, Cambridge, Sharp MSS., 'Folk Words', II, fol.84.
2. *Loc.cit.*, 'Folk Dance Notes', III, fol.121.
3. MS. Top. Oxon. d200, fol.235.
4. Writers' interview with Mr. Tanner.
5. Manning, MS. Top. Oxon. d200, fol.224; Sharp MSS., 'Folk Dance Notes', II, fol.89.

all sorts of work. I've walked six miles to work and six mile back at night for two bob - two bob a day. . .<sup>1</sup> Merry Kimber, the great Headington dancer and concertina player was a building worker, as were many of the Quarry side. When Sharp first saw them it was Boxing Day. 'They apologized for being out at Christmas; they knew that Whitsun was the proper time, but work was slack and they thought there would be no harm in earning an honest penny.'<sup>2</sup> The family links in the sides are also easily seen. Manning's list from Wheatley gives three dancers with the name Putt, and Sharp's Field Town list gives Jason Eels, Stephen Eels and Richard Eels. The tradition of dancing was handed down from father to son. Mr. Tanner of Bampton speaks of four generations of Tanners dancing there; his own father taught him to dance as a boy, whistling the tunes to him. In the 'twenties Mr. Tanner's father, he himself and his two brothers danced with Bampton. Jinky Wells says his grandfather was 'head of the Morris' and that he had three uncles who danced with the side as well as his father. Merry Kimber's father also danced with Quarry and many more of the old side had fathers who had danced before them.

The original instrument for Morris was the pipe and tabor. Jinky Wells, born in 1868 could remember when he was 'quite a little kid' the pipe and tabor (called locally 'whittle and dub') being played.<sup>3</sup> Stanton Harcourt had a famous pipe and tabor player called John Porter who could almost make it speak, while Wheatley's was played by Old Tom Hall of Islip. It would seem however, that by the middle of the century 'a squeaking fiddle' was beginning to take over from the whittle and dub, although it was not until the end, and then only at Headington, that the instruments of the 'squeeze box' family began to move in. In the end the shortage of musicians became acute. Jinky Wells had to go and play at Field Town because they couldn't get a musician while Ascott-under-Wychwood had to pay a man from Finstock 7/- a day to play pipe and tabor. Bucknell though never seems to have lacked musicians: one John (?) Powell played a pipe and tabor there until the 1920s and the Morris side was able to provide musicians for church services.

1837 is the last date of a Whit Ale being mentioned in the

1. 'William Wells' in *J.E.F.D.S.S.*, 1953, p.2.
2. A.H. Fox Strangeways and Maud Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp*, Oxford, 1955, p.27.
3. Sharp, *Loc.cit.*, 'Folk Dance' Notes, II, fols. 85-6.
4. *J.O.J.*, 29 May, 1858, p.8.
5. MS. Top. Oxon. c515, ff.29-30.

*Journal* but vestiges of the old 'Ales' remained at village feasts and other events. Spelsbury is a good example of what was probably a degenerate Whit Ale, . . . Spelsbury Fair or Club was held on Ascension Day [Holy Thursday] in May. My mother told me that it was the largest affair of its kind in the neighbourhood when she was a girl. It was kept up for two or three days, with all kinds of festivities, especially dancing and Morris dancing. . . Mrs. Hitchcock said she remembered hearing how the Romanies used to camp along the Green Lane and play their fiddle for the dancers. Her parents were both great dancers. She used to have her father's bells. . . Mr. Caleb Lainchbury can remember shooting for a goose by the Chequers Inn . . . with old muzzle-loading guns and a bit of paper on a tree for a target. He can just remember the last of the booths down the street for the Fair, but there used to be many more before his day.<sup>1</sup> Capps Lodge Plain, near Fulbrook in the Forest of Wychwood was the site of what was possibly another degenerated Whit Ale. Ambrose Preston told Percy Manning 'Capps Lodge Fair was held on Whitsunday. There was a cockpit there, a round wooden building. There used to be lots of fighting with fists there.'<sup>2</sup> Bucknell's Whit Ale survived until later and in a less corrupt form. In the early 1900s the Oxfordshire Archeological Society sent a letter to all incumbents asking if any old customs survived in their parishes and got the following reply from Bucknell, 'The observance of Whitsun Ales was kept up until recent years. The scene of the festivities was the Rectory Barn, and in later years the Parish Pound, where a tent was made with rick-cloths. There was dancing on the ground in front of the barn, as many as fifty couples dancing at a time. There were also morris-dancers . . . accompanied by a musician who carried a pipe and small drum. . .'<sup>3</sup> A feature of the old Whitsun in and around Wychwood Forest in West Oxfordshire was the Whit Hunt. The Whit Hunt seem to have originated in a common right enjoyed by the villagers within the bounds of the old Royal Forest. At Whitsun they claimed the right to take three deer from within the Forest, one going to Witney, one to Hailey and one to Crawley. All the villages in and around the Forest joined in the Hunt, though Bampton, Brize Norton, Leafield, Ascott, Shipton, Charlbury, Finstock etc. Manning, in 1895,

1. Elsie Corbett, ed., *A History of Spelsbury*. . . *Compiled by its Women's Institute*, Shipton-on-Stour, 1934, pp.235-6.
2. MS. Top. Oxon. 191a, fol.171.
3. *Oxfordshire Archeological Society Reports 1903*, Banbury, 1905, p.34.

collected a considerable amount of information on the Whit Hunt from John Fisher aged 80, John Bennet aged 87, both from Ducklington, and Ambrose Preston, aged 85 in 1903 and born in Leafield. 'At the hour of midnight on Whit-Sunday, the villagers were roused from their sleep, by the blowing of "peeling horns", and the loud shouts of their bearers, to prepare for the coming festivities.'<sup>1</sup> Peeling horns were a primitive musical instrument made from a long spiral strip of willow bark peeled then rolled into a long funnel shape, about 11 inches long, and 2½ wide at the longer end with a willow reed in the narrow end.<sup>2</sup> 'At daybreak on the Monday, all the men of the village who could beg or borrow a horse, rode off to the village of Hailey on the edge of the Forest.'<sup>3</sup> The *Journal* reports the Hunt in 1837 when Lord Churchill took part (as in 1811 when the hunt is also reported). 'Our annual chartered hunt had a numerous attendance on Monday last. At an early hour in the morning the whole of the athletic population of Witney appeared to be in motion, and were seen pouring in crowds to the Forest Copses, the scene of the action. The noble stag hounds of Lord Churchill threw off at five and by eight o'clock a brace of deer were killed. The sport was suspended for a time to refresh the hounds and another deer was shortly afterwards killed.'<sup>4</sup> The carcass seems to have been cooked and either sold or given away, but there was a good deal of rivalry over the skin and head. 'The man who was first in at the death of the deer claimed the head and antlers as his trophy, and the antlers seem to have been kept for years after as a mark of distinction.'<sup>5</sup> The deer was then taken to an inn where it was skinned. A piece of the skin was a much prized trophy, it was '... cut into pieces, and distributed, and happy was the maiden whose lover could sport a piece of skin in his cap, for it brought good luck and ensured her marriage within the coming year.'<sup>6</sup> Although the deer by right could only go to three of the villages, there was in fact a lot of squabbling over the spoils. Ambrose Preston told Manning that there was great fighting over the deer between the 'companies'. He remembered seeing Jim Rowell standing over a deer with his long stick in his hand, and his company round him and saying to the other companies, 'Take it if

1. Manning, 'Seasonal Festivals', p.310.
2. There is an example of a peeling horn in the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, presented by Manning.
3. Manning, *op.cit.*, p.311.
4. *J.O.J.*, 20 May 1837, p.4.
5. Manning, *loc.cit.*
6. *Ibid.*

you be man enough.'<sup>1</sup> Fighting broke out over other matters too! John Butler, the blacksmith, of Minster was a great fighter, though a 'quiet civil man'. Once after the hunt Preston sat next to him when they were drinking at the tail of the cart. There used to be a cart with barrels of beer in it, following the hunt, Preston was getting up to go, when Butler said, 'Thee stop where thee be'est, thee may have to hold my clothes'. Then some of the others said 'Who's he?' 'Why Jack Butler'. 'Who cares for Jack Butler?' So Jack stood up and held his cap over his head and said 'The man as doesn't care for Jack Butler, stand up.' But they 'were all as quiet as mice - there wasn't no man as could stand up to him'. 'No horse couldn't kick no stronger than Jack Butler could hit,' said a friend of Preston, who had fought him. 'Terrible work there used to be, terrible.'<sup>2</sup> Manning adds in his article 'The forest meeting was recognised as the fittest place for settling up old grudges and quarrels, and many a fight took place between private enemies or the champions of different villages.'

Meanwhile, back in the villages preparations were going on for a local version of the Whit Ale, called a Youth Ale, which followed the end of the Hunt. A bowery was built and a maypole set up. The morris sides of the different villages danced in their own village and then set out for others. On the return of the hunters from the Forest, the Ale began in earnest, and continued with drinking and dancing through to the Saturday when the deer was cooked (the hunters were given free portions while outsiders had to pay a shilling for a taste). The Youth Ale was the scene of yet more fighting, and again we have a description from old Ambrose Preston who seems to have had a less rosy view of his youth than most of Manning's informants. 'Sorrell the carrier of Charlbury and Joe Jackson, the butcher of Witney fell out once. Jackson had married a girl who had been Sorrell's old sweetheart, and Sorrell treated her to a drink, and so they fought. Jackson "wouldn't give out". His eyes were blinded, and they were lanced twice, to let the blood out, and at last he had to be carried away.'<sup>3</sup> 'The Hunt continued until at least the 1840s and as late as 1851 the *Journal* wrote 'It is not definitely known whether

1. MS. Top. Oxon. dl91a, fols. 183-4.
2. *Ibid.*, fols. 184-5.
3. Manning, *op.cit.*, p.312.
4. *Ibid.*,
5. MS. Top. Oxon. dl91a, fol.184.

this annual event is to be abolished';<sup>1</sup> but there is no reference to it after this date.

Cock fighting was a part of early nineteenth century Whitsun in some places. Certainly from 1806, and probably earlier, till 1812 there was an annual cock fight at the King's Head in Wantage, 'COCKING, THE ANNUAL FIGHTING at the King Alfred's Head in Wantage, will be on Whit-Monday next, the 3rd of June. There will be a great Number of Cocks up; and it expected to be a great Meeting, as the Subscribers meet on that Day to enlarge their Subscriptions for the Cups for next Year. The Cocks to be *fent* in to Pens on Friday and Saturday the 24th and 25th of May In/stant. INOTT, Feeder.'<sup>2</sup> Every year until 1815 a similar match took place at the Green Dragon in Chipping Campden, and there are more occasional references to cock-fights in other places. Even when suppressed cock-fighting lingered on in places like Wheatley, on the turnpike out of Oxford, and was indeed encouraged to remain here by the fact that undergraduates would come out from Oxford to witness the spectacle.<sup>3</sup> John Juggins of Wheatley was a famous cock fighter and breeder of fighting birds known as 'Juggins's Reds'. He died on October 19th 1870.<sup>4</sup>

At Wheatley bulls were also baited. The Vicar of Wheatley wrote of the 1840s 'Rude sports lingered here as in their last resort. . . Before this the custom was at the feast or at Whitsuntide to parade a bull through the streets covered with ribbons and during the next day to bait him tied to a stake., i.e. everyone who had a savage dog was allowed to let him loose at the bull. This was done in the old quarry and a brutal scene it was.'<sup>5</sup> Bulls were also baited at Garsington ' . . . a butcher-farmer of Garsington used, for some years, to purchase a plucky bull: allow it to undergo the torture of being baited up at Garsington and a week or so afterwards bring it down to Cowley Marsh to be similarly treated. . .'<sup>6</sup> Bulls were baited on the other side of the county at Field Assarts, part of Leafield, and Phillip Franklin, from the Pottery at Field Town, was a well-known breeder of bull baiting dogs.'<sup>7</sup> Badger baiting and dog fighting were also popular

1. *J.O.J.*, 31 May 1851, p.4.
2. *J.O.J.*, 25 May 1805, p.3.
3. Cuthbert Bede, *Mr. Verdant Green*, London, 1840, Pt.II, p.41 for example.
4. MS. Top. Oxon. d201, fols. 473-474.
5. 'Diary of Rev. Edward Elton' in W.O. Hassall, *Wheatley Records, 956-1956*, Oxford, 1956, p.106.
6. MS. Top. Oxon. c192, fol.28.
7. MS. Top. Oxon. d191a, fol.176.

sports, both practised at Whitsun and both continuing long after the animal protection societies declared them vanished. As man committed violence on his fellow men at Whitsun he committed even more on other creatures.

## II THE NEW SPIRIT

As the century progressed Whitsun became more respectable. It grew shorter in length - a one day holiday rather than a three or four day affair; and it came under the increasing control of the local gentry and clergy. The old Whit Ales disappeared. The Littlemore Whit Ale - the Hills Ale Feast - had by the end of the century been turned into a temperance sport's day. At Milton-under-Wychwood in 1903, where a hundred years earlier (it will be recalled) a maypole was to ' . . . nod its affent on Holy Thursday. . .', things had come round full circle when, 'A May-pole dance, conducted by Miss M.D. Vennell, was much enjoyed, the children taking part being picturesquely attired in quaint Old English costumes. Probably what happened to many of the old Whit Ales was what had happened at Bampton. By the middle of the century all that was left of the old ways was the Morris and the children going around from door to door with maces or garlands collecting pennies; the club procession was now dominant. In Bampton at least the Morris was to survive, but elsewhere it vanished. In 1860 there were about 20 Morris sides dancing in Oxfordshire and around 1914 there were six.

The changes were noted with approval by the respectable. For example, at the Bletchington 'Black's Head Benefit Club' in 1862, when memories of the Whit Ales in nearby Kirtlington must have still been fresh in many minds, the club surgeon, Mr. T.C. Blick, 'made some feeling allusions' to the changes he had witnessed, and forcibly contrasted the present 'orderly and unanimous meeting' with those of years gone by, 'when riot, dispute, and dissipation prevailed; 'they had taken a step in the right direction'. Bletchington's other club, 'The Valentinia' was no less orderly, as *Jackson's Oxford Journal* reported: 'It was a pleasing sight to see nearly a hundred young, fine, clean, and well-dressed labourers follow their banner . . . to the quiet old church - it was a convincing proof of what unanimity and good feeling can affect . . . This

1. *J.O.J.*, 7th June 1903, p.4.
2. *Ibid.*, 21st June 1862, p.8.



was a meeting bearing strong contrast to those of years gone by, when riot and drunkenness was the result. . . .<sup>1</sup> Although we saw more symptoms of intemperance this year than for two years past,' the Watlington correspondent of the *Journal* reported in 1858, 'Still we can but admit, on the whole, that there were fewer instances of intoxication than on similar occasions a few years back, and there were no broils and fighting annoyances in the streets on this occasion.'<sup>2</sup> Even such slight doubts as these are usually absent from the Whitsun reports of the later nineteenth century. At Henley in 1864 ' . . . order and decorum prevailed throughout the day, which passed off, we believe, without the slightest accident or occurrence to mar the pleasure of the meeting; a pleasing contrast to the coarser amusements at the Whitsuntide revels of half a century since.'

The power of moral reform reached the countryside in a variety of ways. Enclosure led to more wage labour and the growth of a regular working week on many farms leaving the worker with less flexibility in the ordering of his time. Sunday schools and day schools, usually under the direction of some form of religious authority, replaced the field and hedgerow as the place where morality and experience were learned. Authority in general began to appear more frequently in the village in the shape of the village constable. The most important agencies of introducing moral reformation in the countryside, at least at holiday times, were the church, the chapel and the village Benefit Clubs, and the numerous organisations and events that they created and provided.

The Anglican Church played an increasingly active role in parish life in the course of the century. New churches were planted, older ones were occupied by resident Clergymen rather than part-swilling absentees. Oxfordshire caught the mood of change when Samuel Wilberforce became Bishop of Oxford in 1845. Wilberforce had very clear ideas as to the duties of his priests. His attack on pluralism began almost within days of being appointed to the Bishopric. In February 1846 he wrote to the absentee Rector of Henley. ' . . . your . . . parish . . . is overrun with Dissent and Godlessness. Its population, now above 3,000 souls, most urgently needs the instant Care of another Curate. . . . Souls committed to your charge and government, for whom you must render account at the

1. *J.O.J.*, 21 June 1862, p.8.
2. *Ibid.*, 29 May 1858, p.8.
3. *Ibid.*, 21 May 1864, p.8.

Judgement Seat of Christ are passing daily unprepared into their Eternal State.'<sup>1</sup> Wilberforce also attacked some of the parson's traditional pleasures. In August 1848 he wrote to a young man who had applied to be licensed as curate of Stowe in Buckinghamshire: ' . . . You will be placed . . . in the midst of a country which is much given to field sports: & I feel it to be so important to the true efficiency of your Ministry that you should not be ensnared by the facilities which may lead you to become a sportsman that I must beg you to give me your assurance that you will not join in any field sports whilst you hold my license. . . .'<sup>2</sup>

We can see the effect of the new type of vicar in the case of the Rev. Edward Elton at Wheatley. When Elton came to the village in 1849 he was told by Wilberforce 'that it was one of the worse places in the diocese.' In the Visitation Returns of 1872 he reflected on the parish as it had been when he first arrived. 'The large majority of the people seemed to be almost wholly ignorant of Church teaching and in consequence paid no attention to her ordinances. Many of the older parishioners who resisted all efforts for their improvement have passed away: some remain to this day living wholly without God.'<sup>4</sup> Bull and badger baiting had been made illegal in 1835 but Elton still found badgers being openly baited in 1851.

As we follow Elton's diary we see the village and its people slowly coming under control. The children and young people were the first to feel the effect of the transition. In 1860 when Elton gave a large school feast for the children of the local schools, 'nearly 230 paraded the street with a band. . . . Two years earlier he had also succeeded in starting a night school of some twenty pupils. The village feast was changed too. In 1851 Elton confided to his diary. 'The Wheatley feast began today, a sad time of drunkenness. A badger baiting intended. . . . but by 1877 he was able to record that he had managed to get many people to the schoolroom for a temperance entertainment. Elton launched a temperance campaign in the early 1870s with meetings in the National School Room; by the end of the decade the cause was well advanced and by 1881 Wheatley possessed both an adult temperance society and a Band of Hope. Elton's efforts extended to other kinds

1. *The Letter Books of Samuel Wilberforce 1843-68*, Oxfordshire Record Society, Oxford, 1970, Letter 91, p.56.
2. *Ibid.*, Letter 244, p.130.
3. 'Diary of the Rev. Edward Elton', in Hassall, *op.cit.*, p.106 n.3.
4. Bodleian Lib., MS Oxf.Dioc. c338 fol.446, Visitation Returns, 1872.

of mid-Victorian 'improvement'. He supported, indeed actively campaigned for the railway to be brought to Wheatley, and obtained grounds and funds for a new school. From 1867 his wife ran a soup kitchen in the village, in that year feeding some 100 families; and from 1870 'Excellent, cheap dinners for the poor.'

Nonconformity provided a second arm of respectability. It grew rapidly in rural Oxfordshire during the first half of the 19th Century.

In 1851, at the religious census, there were 34,942 Dissenting sittings in Oxfordshire, some 32% of the church-going population. The 1854 Visitation returns, which are, beyond question, incomplete, show 178 chapels and meeting houses in Oxfordshire. The 178 consisted of 43 Wesleyan Methodist chapels, 31 Primitive Methodist, 30 Baptist, 18 Independent, 10 Quaker, 3 Reformed Methodist, 2 Antinomian, 1 each of Unitarian, Plymouth Brethren, Calvinist, Particular Baptist and Congregationalist, and 35 belonging to unspecified denominations. Nonconformity did not develop evenly in Oxfordshire and in certain areas the chapels were markedly better represented, for instance in the villages around the Forest of Wyche<sup>4</sup>. In the eighteenth century this had the reputation of being a particularly lawless area. Chapels began to be established from early in the century. There was a Baptist Chapel at Milton-under-Wychwood in 1808 and at nearby Ascot in 1816. At Chadlington in 1821 the Rev. W. Grey of Chipping Norton preached from a wagon in the open air and gained many converts for the same denomination. By the 1850s there were two Baptist Chapels at Milton, one of them being 'strict', one at Ascot and one at Chadlington. Wesley had preached at Finsstock in 1775 and had left small communities both there and in Charlbury, at the home of one Mr. Grace, a rope spinner. By the 1820s there were Methodist meetings in Bladon and

1. Quoted in Alan Everitt, 'Nonconformity in Country Parishes', in Joan Thirsk ed. *Land, Church and People, Essays presented to Prof. H.P.R. Finberg*, Reading, 1970, p.181.

2. This figure is almost certainly wrong. Those classified as Independent may be Congregationalist as well as many of the unspecified.

3. *Bishop Wilberforce's Visitation Returns for the Archdeaconry of Oxford in the Year 1854*, Oxfordshire Record Society, 1954, *passim*.

4. See Everitt *op.cit.*, for a general discussion of nonconformity in forest villages.

Stonesfield. Permanent chapels soon followed, and by the 1850s there were also chapels in Charlbury, Chadlington, Finstock, Bladon, Coombe and Milton. The Primitive Methodists, who had sent 'missionaries' into the area in the early 1830s, if not before, had chapels in Charlbury, Chilson, Bladon and Milton by mid-century.

Nonconformity created a new sort of countryman. To see the village Methodists or Baptists as a majority would of course be wrong but they were a powerful and influential minority who could, and did, impress their fellows. It was the Primitive Methodists in Joseph Ashby's Tysoe who formed the branch of Joe Arch's union in the village; it was the dissenters, earlier on, who had fought for the villagers in the dispute over the village charities. Such men and women were a moral example to men like Ashby,

Here... were proofs of the power of religion, something very interesting for a boy to contemplate - men who had been drunkards and wife-beaters, brutal fellows whose lives had been changed. There was a frank, brotherly attack in the sermons on all sorts of simple evils - drink and gaming and strong language. One old brother would scold about a game of football, thinking that the old brutal sports might be coming back.

The growth of friendly societies in the countryside was another major influence, and so far as Whitsun was concerned the most directly important, since they 'expropriated' Whitsun and turned it into their 'Club' day. There can be little doubt that the gentry and clergy, who played a large part in promoting them, saw the Friendly Societies as active agencies of social control, as well as a means of relieving the rates by encouraging self-help on the part of working men. Many village clubs were actually founded by gentlemen and clergy. In many cases they had the effective running of the clubs, as honorary members or officers. Kidlington Friendly Society is a good example. It was founded in 1839 by the Vicar, Rev. A. Arrowsmith<sup>3</sup>. Its constitution seems to have placed power firmly in the hands of a committee composed of the Vicar, his curate, and a number of the local gentry. At Club dinners

1. This paragraph is based on the three books of John Kibble, the Charlbury stonemason.
2. Mabel K. Ashby, *Joseph Ashby of Tysoe 1859-1919*, Cambridge, 1961, p.80.
3. *J.O.J.*, 14 June 1852, p.3; 13 June 1857, p.8.

this group dominated the speechifying - proposing endless toasts and votes of thanks to each other, while the humble 'brothers' of the society hardly got a word in. The President of the society in the 1850s (Dr. Richards, absentee Vicar of Kidlington, Rector of Exeter College, Oxford and one of Prince Albert's chaplains) was often unable to attend, but there was no shortage of clerical gentlemen to take his place. So in 1851 the chair was taken in his absence by the Society's Vice-Chairman, the Rev. T. Whitehead (his curate), and the first toast was given by a Rev. J.C. Clutterbuck, Vicar of Long Wittenham,<sup>1</sup> while in 1849, when Dr. Richards was also absent, attending 'some important meeting of the University, which would not allow him to be with his parishioners on that occasion', the Rev. M. Anstis took his place and conveyed a message from him wishing 'his people' a happy holiday.<sup>2</sup> The speeches and toasts took place after the meal, when the cloth had been removed and the labourers' pots of beer (the gentlemen had glasses) were well filled; presumably the 'gentlemen' sat in a group: the 1849 account refers to 'the leading farmers of the parish and neighbourhood' (some thirteen of them are listed) as being seated near the chairman. Later in the evening, when the singing and dancing began, control of the proceedings was delegated to the humbler members; at the 1849 dinner 'At half-past six o'clock the Chairman, with Mr. Whitehead, left the room, having appointed as his successor for the evening in the chair, Mr. Rouse, the churchwarden.'<sup>4</sup> At the 1857 dinner the room was cleared with 'God Save the Queen' 'at nine o'clock precisely,' and an exhortation to go home quietly 'so that the pleasures of the day might not be marred by any ill conduct of the evening'.<sup>5</sup>

The honorary members at Kidlington not only monopolised the speeches on club day; they also organised the day itself. In 1861, for instance, an 'adjourned meeting of the honorary members' resolved that the anniversary meeting should be celebrated in the National Schoolroom on Thursday June 13. 'The members are to meet at the club room at a quarter before eleven, to answer their names when called. They are then to walk to church in procession to attend divine service. . .<sup>6</sup> In 1856 there is a similar report. 'The honorary members of this

1. *Ibid.*, 14 June 1851, p.3.
2. *Ibid.*, 16 June 1849, p.3.
3. *Ibid.*, *loc.cit.*
4. *Ibid.*, *loc.cit.*
5. *Ibid.*, 13 June 1851, p.3.
6. *Ibid.*, 25 May 1861, p.8.

Society held their annual meeting in the schoolroom on Thursday night, to audit the accounts, elect officers, and make arrangements for the celebration of anniversary day.<sup>1</sup> The honorary members did not only choose the President, Secretary, etc. (posts which were invariably filled from among their own number), but also the Father, and the Stewards, whom they 'elected' from the ordinary benefit members.

The affiliated societies (such as the Foresters) were less easily dominated by honorary members than the local ones. In Mabel Ashby's book the contrast is well made. Young Joseph is given a book of rules prior to joining the old village society run by the Vicar. The response from his older friends, all members of the Foresters, was immediate. Old Master Blunn, the saddler explained to Joseph why he, already a supporter of Arch and on the way to being a Methodist, should join the Foresters rather than the old Club.

"Look here", said Blunn, turning over the leaves [of the rule book], "The Club's got to be run by Trustees and they're always to be drawn from the honorary members, paying a guinea subscription. As good say a labourer's got no sense. Why can't the members manage their own money?"<sup>3</sup>

How many village clubs were like the one at Kidlington is difficult to say, certainly a considerable number. But in all the clubs the influence of the local ruling class was felt, even at the club day meetings of the affiliated orders. The influence and interest was expressed in two main ways, through the traditional club day sermons, sometimes by the vicar of the parish and sometimes by a visiting preacher, and through the speeches of the honorary members at club dinners. Both give a clear picture of the way in which the local gent tried viewed the clubs and what role they expected them to play in village society.

The texts from which these sermons were preached reveal a surprising diversity. One popular text was Galatians vi.2., 'Bear ye on another's burdens and so fulfil the laws of Christ' which was invoked at Bampton in 1846 and 1875 and Heyford in 1861. Some texts support the conventional ideas of the Friendly Society movement. Ecclesiastes iv.12 for example, 'A three-fold cord is not quickly broke' (Kidlington 1867); 1st Epistle of St. Peter 2 v.17 'Love the Brotherhood'

1. *Ibid.*, 17 May 1856, p.8.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Ashby, *op.cit.*, p.71.

(Bampton 1846) or 1st Thessalonians 5 v.14 'Support the Weak' (Kidlington 1857). Wider social messages do, however, creep in. At Bampton in 1856 the text was taken from xii Romans 2 'Not slothful in Business, fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord.' At Kidlington in 1884 the brethren were warned to 'Be sober and watch unto prayer', while all forms of pleasure were warned against at Bampton in 1864 with the grim text 'Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.' Some texts were downright inappropriate, considering the preacher was usually paid two or three guineas for his efforts. At Watlington in 1845 the text was taken from vii Ecclesiastes 2, 'It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting.' Hardly an appropriate sentiment for those who were going to devour what one honorary member at Kidlington described as the '... one good dinner of such luxurious things ...'<sup>1</sup> that they had in a year.

Figuring largely in the sermons are exhortations to temperance on Whitsun and throughout the year. The Watlington sermon referred to above is an extreme example: the sermon amounted to an attack on the whole idea of club day. 'The Rev. Preacher deprecated the practice of annual feasts, and bands, flags, colours, as tending to immorality and vice, the music, &c. as a useless expense.'<sup>2</sup> A more typical example comes from Bampton two years earlier when the preacher warned his hearers to take care 'lest by their conduct that day they should disgrace their profession as Christians, and make the club tend to the dishonour of God.'<sup>3</sup> In 1855 the Bampton preacher enlarged upon the effects of intemperance, neglect of attendance at God's House, and other sins, observing, that for present enjoyment many were content to give up their hopes of future happiness, and concluded by a special and earnest appeal to the members of the societies to conduct themselves towards each other in such a way that their union on earth might be continued in heaven.

The church also lost no chance to emphasise the self-help aspects of Friendly Societies. Not only did these societies promote social order but they also reduced the poor rates. At Burford in 1893 the vicar urged his listeners to look to the Bible for example.

1. *J.O.J.*, 13 June 1857, p.8.
2. *Ibid.*, 17 May 1845, p.3.
3. *Ibid.*, 10 June 1843, p.3.
4. *Ibid.*, 2 June 1855, p.8.

After alluding to the practical nature of St. Paul's epistles, the preacher dwelt at some length upon the Apostles' independence of the pecuniary assistance of others. This was the lesson he would impress upon his hearers, Christian independence, or self dependence. . . What was possible and moreover a duty, was for every man by means of thrift to be as independent of the help of others as circumstances would allow.<sup>1</sup>

At Dorchester in 1901 the vicar used the club dinner to urge a similar message.

They never knew when the rainy day might come to any of them, and if, when it did come, they had something to fall back upon, some fund to draw upon . . . they all rested much more happily . . . and so it was important, both for themselves, and families, that they should belong to a benefit society.<sup>2</sup>

A more ancient message was preached at Bampton in 1875, recalling the mediaeval idea of the Great Chain of Being.

. . . He (God) would have all people of one nature, from the Queen on her throne down to the labourer in the field, bound by one law of helping one another. Yes, we are all links of the same chain, whatever our lot or condition may be in this life; whether we are high or low, rich or poor, master or servant, each should be guided by the same rule, not with the selfish thought of our own private profit, but seasoned with the idea as members of one and the same great family, working for the benefit of the whole community . . . bearing the burdens of others, and so fulfilling the law of Christ, viz., the strong helping to support the weak, the healthy waiting upon the sick, the rich administering to the wants of the poor. . .

By the early Victorian years the Club 'feast' was beginning to replace the old traditional Whitsun. It was an altogether more orderly affair. Enshrined in the rule books of most Clubs were detailed instructions as to how members should behave themselves on the club's social occasions.

1. *Ibid.*, 3 June 1893, p.7.
2. *Ibid.*, 1 June 1901, p.8.
3. *Ibid.*, 22 May 1875, p.7.

### III CLUB DAY

Club Day, not surprisingly since its *raison d'être* was eating and drinking, was the most strictly governed of all. For instance the rules of the Prince of Wales' club at Clanfield said 'If any Member use any scurrilous language, or reflect of a Brother Member's character, or shall strike, collar, or use threatening language during club hours. . . for every such offence he shall forfeit one shilling to the stock. . .<sup>1</sup> At Ambrosden and at Clanfield members were fined if they attempted to turn up at the feast without attending Church,<sup>2</sup> and at Ambrosden they were also instructed 'to wear a clean decent white apron, or forfeit 1s 6d. . .<sup>3</sup> The times at which the feast should end were also forcibly set out in many rule books, and the timetable of the celebration constitutionally fixed, as in the following example:

XVII - That a feast shall be held on Whit Monday in every year, when the Society shall meet together by ten o'clock in the forenoon on the Feast Day, to go to Church in a decent manner, walking two and two, and return in the same order. Every member intending to partake of the feast shall on the Club night before the feast, or on the Feast Day, before he goes to Church, pay down two Shillings towards providing the same. The Committee, together with the Stewards and Wardens, shall provide provisions for the feast, and see that no more be brought in than what, in their computation, will be thought sufficient: the Dinner to be on the table at One o'clock. . .<sup>4</sup> The Feast to close the same night at Ten o'clock. . .<sup>4</sup>

The Prince of Wales club's rules contained similar instructions.

28 - That a feast shall be held on Whit-Tuesday in every year, when the Society shall meet together by nine o'clock in the forenoon, on the feast day, to

∴ *Rules of the Prince of Wales Friendly Society or Club Established at the Mason's Arms Inn, Clanfield on the 14th day of June 1875*, Bampton, 1875, p.7.  
 ∴ *Ibid*, and *Rules and Orders of the Amicable Society of Tradesmen, held at the House of Thomas Whale, Turner's Arms, Ambrosden, Oxford*, 1818, p.10  
 ∴ *Ambrosden, op.cit.*, p.10.  
 ∴ *Rules of the Victoria Club held at the Harcourt Arms, in Stanton Harcourt, Bampton, 1874*, pp.8-9.

go to Church in a decent manner, walking two and two and returning in the same order; and if any Member neglects going to Church he shall pay sixpence to the funds of the Society. Every member shall, on the feast day, pay down three shillings and sixpence towards providing the feast . . . The feast to close the same night at 9.30 o'clock, and no part of the expenses to come out of the funds.<sup>1</sup>

Club Day was a village celebration as much as the club's, the procession, the church service, and the club feast serving as a nucleus around which the traditional celebration of Whitsun rearranged itself. The band marching around the village was for everybody, the dancing in the evening was also usually open-air and often there was a small fair, a coconut shy and a couple of small booths, sometimes swingboats and even a small roundabout. Club day was one of the great days of the village year, looked forward to and saved for, for months beforehand. For the daughter who had gone away to service, or the son who had taken up employment in the town, it was the great day of re-union, 'the only day in the year when they saw their friends,' as George Swinford, the Filkins stonemason, wrote.

For the village, Club Day was ushered in by the ringing of the church bells. So at Highworth in 1843 'At an early hour in the morning a merry peal was given';<sup>2</sup> similarly in 1888 'The Burford Church ringers . . . were early in the morning at the belfry';<sup>3</sup> at Bampton the 'merry peal' ('never . . . omitted within our recollection') was missed in 1857.<sup>4</sup> The arrival of the band was another early morning feature. At Faringdon in 1853 'the day was ushered in with merry peals from the parish church bells, and the entrance into the town of the two brass bands engaged by the clubs to perform during the day.'<sup>5</sup> At Filkins, too, the band was brought in from outside.' The steward and flagman met them at the entrance of the village, and the band played to the clubhouse at about 9 a.m.<sup>6</sup> At Kidlington the village in 1849 'presented a very animated appearance.' The bells were rung at 5 a.m., 'and throughout the morning the inhabitants were engaged in the

1. Clanfield, *op.cit.*, p.11.
2. *J.O.J.* 10 June 1843, p.3.
3. *Ibid*, 2 June 1888, p.7.
4. *Ibid*, 6 June 1857, p.8.
5. *Ibid*, 21 May 1853, p.4.
6. Swinford, *op.cit.*, fol.78.

decoration of their houses and gardens.<sup>1</sup> It was midmorning when most clubs began the first procession of the day, which was also in some ways the most important. From their club room or from the market place, carrying the club banner, the members marched 'two by two in a decent manner' to church, with boots shining, unfamiliar collars tight round the neck, watched by the multitude. At their head went the band, either from their own village, or one nearby. The old photos show the bands gazing fixedly ahead as they march in precision with military style uniforms and those curious rimless Victorian military hats. The music itself, however, may not always have matched these imposing appearances: the observer who reported Bampton's festivities in 1853 claimed that the practice of many country bands was to make as much noise as possible, and stifle the more unpleasant portion of it with the drum.<sup>2</sup>

Bands were as essential to mid-Victorian Whitsun as clubs. It is generally stated in musical history that brass bands were restricted by and large to the industrial areas of the North where bands such as the Black Dyke Mills band play an important part in working class culture to this day. However, even a cursory glance at mid 19th century local newspapers will show that village brass, silver, fife and drum and saxon horn bands were very nearly as common in the rural areas of the South, and they were no doubt followed and supported with equally partisan fervour. 148 village bands are mentioned by name in the Whitsun reports of *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, between 1840 and 1914. Whitsun was a field day for the village band and they were involved at every stage of the day. At Burford in 1862 the band played through the town at a very early hour, 'just to rouse the inhabitants from their slumbers'.<sup>3</sup> The band headed the morning procession to the church, though members did not necessarily attend the service, as a Bampton correspondent noted in 1852:

To us it seems quite at variance with the decent usages of society (to use no severer term) for men to go to the church, and then leave and return again in time to accompany the Club to their inns without attending the services at the church, or where the members go to worship; it is a practice that requires alteration, and the members of the band would do well to profit by this hint.<sup>4</sup>

1. *J.O.J.* 16 June 1849, p.3.
2. *Ibid.* 21 May 1853, p.4.
3. *Ibid.* 14 June 1862, p.8.
4. *Ibid.* 5 June 1852, p.2.

The band sometimes enlivened the club dinner by playing 'lively airs'; they filled in any gaps in the day's proceedings with impromptu performances; their playing was of course the justification of the afternoon parade and collections; and in the evening they provided music for the dance. So for example at Filkins 'About 7 p.m. seats were brought out on the grass for the band and they played dance music until 9 p.m.'<sup>1</sup> At Bloxham in 1894 'the band was engaged in the large barn until the early morning hours, discoursing sweet music to a large attendance of lovers of the light fantastic toe.'<sup>2</sup>

It seems fairly clear from the loving way in which many local correspondents followed the fortunes of their village bands that they evoked considerable local pride. Their members were drawn from the villagers themselves. At Roke, according to Moreau, 'a surprisingly large proportion' of the men and the grown lads of the village were involved: 'Everybody was proud of the Roke Band'.<sup>3</sup> Participation in the Roke band involved a weekly subscription: one of Moreau's informants recalled that as a boy, when he played the side-drums, he was supposed to pay twopence a week subscription. 'His mother gave it him all right but he spent it on marbles. When the bandmaster complained to the mother that several twopences were outstanding, that was the end of his playing.' Moreau also quotes a comment on the Roke 'Temperance' Band: '"Temperance, my foot; some of 'em couldn't half knock it back."<sup>4</sup> In Filkins the band was more true to its name:

About 1900, it was called the Filkins Primitive Methodist band, and it played at all the camp meetings. The first Sunday out was at Filkins on Whit Sunday, the Chapel anniversary . . . After the service the band played in the street, generally near the museum at the bottom of Rouses lane, where they had a collection for the band funds. . .

Subsequently the band

was asked to attend flower shows and garden parties. This did not please all the members and a few harsh words were said when they started to play dance music.<sup>5</sup>

1. Swinford MS. Top. Oxon. fol.79.
2. *J.O.J.*, 2 June 1894, p.8.
3. Moreau, *op.cit.*, p.85.
4. Moreau, *loc.cit.*
5. Swinford, MS. Top. Oxon. fols.25-6.

The sort of music played by village bands seems, on the whole, to have consisted of popular march tunes, plus waltzes, polkas and traditional or semi traditional dance tunes. The standard of playing was not always admired. The Bampton correspondent of *Jackson's Oxford Journal* was persistently critical. In 1852, referring to the visiting bands from Shipton-under-Wychwood and Stow-on-the-Wold, he complained of their narrow range:

The music given was, with the exception of the National Anthem, Rule Britannia, and a Glee (by Wainwright), of the usual commonplace description, and with their apparent resources, it seems to us that they might, instead of giving the usual *quantum* of marches &c., easily interpret a selection of choruses by Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and the other great composers, which would amply repay them for the trouble it would cost them. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The following year his attack was more general:

To the last year's band we gave a hint or two, and as this is from the same place, we may observe that what was said last year has passed unheeded. The practice of many country bands is to make as much noise as possible . . .<sup>2</sup>

He found occasion to complain again of Bampton's bands in 1857, 1859, 1865 and 1872, so his advice was obviously not heeded: the villagers continued to prefer noise and joviality to 'good taste' as defined by the anonymous writer and judging from his condemnation of the village's morris dancing one is inclined to agree with them. Bad taste or not though the bands with their 'capital songs' marches and 'lively jigs' played a vital part in Club Day. By the playing in the streets and dance music in the evening they made Club Day into a village affair; and they also brought in outsiders: at Watlington in 1861: ' . . . the notice of "no music" resulted in "no visitors" and the day was more quiet than for many years past . . .'<sup>3</sup>

Village bands playing for the club feast were not the only ones to provide music at Whitsun. Apart from what one might loosely term 'entertainments',<sup>4</sup> the religious bodies also used

1. *J.O.J.* 5 June 1852, p.2.
2. *Ibid.*, 21 April 1853, p.4.
3. *Ibid.*, 25 June 1861, p.8.
4. H.B. Kendall, *History of the Primitive Methodist Connection*, London 1911, *passim*.

the saxe horn, fife and drum, and the brass band, to sing the praises of the Lord. The Primitive Methodists held Camp Meetings with bands and hymn-singing as a counter attraction to the great traditional feasts and wakes; and many other religious or quasi-religious organisations adopted the practice, if in less spectacular forms. The Temperance movement used music extensively as an alternative leisure occupation to drinking, as well as for publicity purposes. Thame, Tysoe, Watlington (the Watlington Nephallites), Bloxham and Stokenchurch all had temperance bands playing at various club days in Oxfordshire, and there were certainly others.

Another important group of bands were those attached to the volunteer movement and to regular army regiments. As in the case of religious and temperance bands these bands obviously had other purposes besides simply providing music. The red and blue uniforms, flashing buttons and braid plus the chance to play an instrument must have tempted many a young farm labourer to forsake the life of the fields for the seemingly more glamorous army. The presence of a military band at a village club feast was probably worth four or five of the more traditional recruiting sergeants and one imagines aroused less hostility. Among the military bands who played at club feasts in Oxfordshire there were the 8th Berkshire Rifles Band, 3rd Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment Band, 4th Bat. Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry Band, 3/4 Bat. North Warwickshire Regiment Band and the East County of Oxfordshire Light Infantry Band. From the Volunteer Rifle Corps we see bands from the University, Thame, Wantage, Wiltshire, 11th Berkshire, Abingdon, Oxford City, Swindon, 13th Gloucestershire, Evesham, Banbury and Bicester; from the Yeomanry Oxford, Oxford Yeomanry Cavalry, and the Royal Berkshire Yeomanry, while other bands appear from the Militia and Cowley Barracks. All in all these bands must have represented a substantial aid to recruitment as well as providing music and entertainment on Club Day.

Although this first procession was to the church, it was not so much the service which gave the occasion solemnity (the frequency with which rule books reiterate a scale of fines for non-attendance shows this), but the dignity of the procession itself. At Kidlington in 1849 we read 'At eleven o'clock the Kidlington Friendly Society assembled at the National Schools, and, after each member had answered to his name, marched in procession to the church, preceded by the village band . . .'<sup>1</sup> At Burford in 1893, nearly fifty years

1. *Ibid.*, 16 June 1853, p.3.

later things were still done in much the same way. 'A few minutes before eleven the members, preceded by the band, marched to the parish church to attend the special club service.'<sup>1</sup> At Bampton in 1859 the local correspondent criticised the procession for its want of precision:

Club-day had arrived, and the various necessary preparations had to be made. Soon after ten o'clock the members of the two benefit societies donned their holiday suits - the best *toga* was not left at home on that day, and were soon at their respective hostleries, where the bands played a tune or two on their arrival. Visitors, more than usually numerous, presented themselves, and the dresses of many of them vied with the colours of the brightest rainbow, and which were only outshone by the dazzling brightness of their eyes. The clubs met - one at the Fleur-de-lis, the other at the Horse Shoe, from which houses they walked to church, preceded by the bands, the clergymen and some of the honorary members. The services of a drill sergeant were required here, for to our mind the procession appeared to want the order and precision of former years; however, they all reached the church, <sup>2</sup> where the Rev. F.E. Lott, Vicar of Lew, preached. . .

At Filkins the procession was preceded by a collection:

At 10.30 a.m. the band formed up on the road ready to march to the church. The members stood in a group and the secretary called out their names. They fell in behind the band, two deep. As they passed the secretary there were two boxes where each member put sixpence in one for the secretary, and twopence in the other for the women who were cooking the meals. . . .<sup>3</sup>

As well as being dressed in their best clothes the members of the clubs often wore club favots, or sometimes (especially in the case of the affiliated orders) regalia, and they carried banners and flags. Unfortunately, very few of those belonging to the old village clubs have survived, and there is little detailed information about their appearance. The Bampton Friendly Society in 1843 had a new flag on display for the

1. *Ibid*, 3 June 1893, p.7.
2. *J.O.J.* 18 June 1859, p.8.
3. Swinford, *op.cit.*, fols.78-9.

first time, 'It was the work of Mr. Stevens, of the late firm of King and Stevens, and was very creditable to him as an artist.' It was gilded and bore the motto 'Love the Brotherhood, fear God, honour the King'.<sup>1</sup> 'Bear ye one another's burdens' was the exhortation on one of the banners in Deddington's procession in 1857.<sup>2</sup> Some banners were presented by wealthy patrons, as was the one belonging to the Valentia Club at Bletchington.<sup>3</sup> Along with banners and clubflags, the Union Jack was often seen in the processions. Many clubs expected their members to wear the club's favours, usually in the form of a rosette or ribbons. Staves were also sometimes carried. Margaret Fuller in her excellent book on West Country Friendly Societies<sup>4</sup> remarks that brass headed staves were popular in the West Country. There are several references in the Oxfordshire papers to the carrying of staves on club day, though they may not have had brass heads. They were carried by the club officials - perhaps even by all members - and were probably painted in the club's colours. At Filkins they were carried by the stewards and had bunches of flowers tied on the top, 'generally the old double red peony'.<sup>5</sup> A women's Friendly Society at Banbury in the early years of the century also carried staves. 'They used to march to church, each carrying a light staff with a hook at the end and a bunch of flowers tied with a bit of ribbon under the hook'.<sup>6</sup> After the church sermon the club returned to the lodge house for the dinner, again marching in order with the bands, banner and due dignity. (In some clubs the procession to church took place in the afternoon, and was preceded by the dinner, but this seems to have been comparatively rare.)

The club dinner was also conducted with some ceremony, though at one club at least 'The members brought their own knife, fork and spoon. The joints of mutton and beef were brought up from the bakehouse where they had been cooked, the hams already there, and the vegetables . . .'.<sup>7</sup> The costs of the dinner were usually borne by the members themselves. In order to qualify for registration under the various Friendly Societies Acts, as has already been noted, none of the club social

1. *Ibid*, 10 June 1843, p.3.
2. *Ibid*, 13 June 1857, p.8.
3. *Ibid*, 21 June 1862, p.8.
4. Margaret Fuller, *West Country Friendly Societies*, Reading, 1964.
5. Swinford, *loc.cit*, fol.79.
6. George Herbert, *Shoemaker's Window*, Oxford 1948, p.54.
7. Swinford, *loc.cit*.



events could be paid for from the stock, although there can be little doubt that on occasions this regulation was evaded. Most clubs made provision for payment for the feast in their rules. The rules of the Ambrosden Society say '... each Member shall pay 2s 6d towards (the feast)'.<sup>1</sup> This was a lot of money in 1819 when those rules were printed. In 1875 the cost at Clanfield was 3s 6d<sup>2</sup>; the members of the Victoria Club at Stanton Harcourt could get their feast at this time for two shillings.<sup>3</sup> Temperance was obviously cheaper: the United Christian Benefit Society at Banbury provided a Whit-Monday '... 4 public Tea Entertainment... at the cost of one shilling. The only drinking club which seems to have been able to rival this for cheapness was Kidlington, 'each of the benefit members had an opportunity of enjoying this holiday with his fellow members, and have his dinner, beer, tobacco, and the pleasure of a band of music for only one shilling'.<sup>5</sup>

After the meal there were the speeches and toasts. As with sermons, they were used by the Honorary Members, to pass on their own particular version of the prevailing ideology. The toasts also reflect the social order of the day. As well as toasting themselves, members also drank the health of the Queen, 'the Bishops and Clergy' and later in the century, the Army and Navy. At the end of the dinner there were occasionally performances from the band or from one of the club members. At Sibford Gower in 1881 someone in the band was obviously a part of the real culture of the English people for he sang a version of the *Husbandman and Serving Maid*,<sup>6</sup>... capitally sung, and received with rapturous applause by an appreciative audience.<sup>7</sup>

Regalia was very important to the affiliated orders, partly as a conscious imitation of the masons, but perhaps more

1. Rules of Ambrosden Society, *op.cit.*, p.3.
2. Rules of Clanfield Society, *op.cit.*, p.11.
3. Rules of Stanton Harcourt, *op.cit.*, p.9.
4. Rules of the United Christian Benefit Society Established at Banbury, November 16th 1840, Banbury 1841, p.13.
5. *J.O.J.*, 10 June 1871, p.7.
6. Widely spread traditional song expressing clearly and concisely the theory known to historians as 'the court and county'. Thames valley version in Alfred Williams, *Folk Songs of the Upper Thames*, London 1923, p.1.
7. *J.O.J.*, 18.6.81 p.7.

crucially because it created a common bond between the members, making a Forester working as a cowman in Oxfordshire feel he had more in common with another Forester in Oldham than with his fellow workers on his farm who were not in the order. Most regalia worn by members of the affiliated orders was secret, and had little meaning to those outside. As the *Journal* said in 1891 reporting on the Oddfellows' anniversary at Stow-on-the-Wold. 'In addition to the differently-coloured regalia which the members wore, a number of silver emblems were carried which to the uninitiated were meaningless puzzles but to those who knew illustrated the teachings of the different degrees and offices of the Society'.<sup>1</sup> The Foresters were perhaps the most extravagant in their regalia, at least in the Oxford area. Several reports refer to members dressed as "Bold Robin" mounted on his charger.<sup>2</sup> and even occasionally as accompanied by a retinue of Little John etc. Few Foresters processions however went this far in pageantry at least before the end of the century when big parades of all the clubs in Oxfordshire were held in Oxford City. But their costume was always picturesque. At Brailles in 1848 the Foresters appeared in 'beautiful green dresses, with caps and feathers'.<sup>3</sup> Similarly at Wantage in 1868 the Oddfellows '... appeared in new caps of scarlet and blue velvet, according to the various offices held by them'.<sup>4</sup>

Most clubs spent at least part of the afternoon and early evening going the rounds of the club's patrons and the wealthier local inhabitants to collect for club funds. For instance at Faringdon in 1854 'In the afternoon both Clubs, with their bands of music, paraded the town, and played at the houses of the gentry and supporters of the Club...'.<sup>5</sup> In some places the club dinner extended through the afternoon, and the parade took place later. At Cowley in 1889 it took place 'according to the usual custom,' in the evening when the band paraded the streets, 'calling at residences of patrons of the Society'.<sup>6</sup> At Bampton the bands and clubs simply paraded the streets of the town as they had done in the morning, 'accompanied by crowds of persons - the juvenile, the adolescent, the adult, and hoary age, all of whom enjoyed to the full the gay scene

1. *J.O.J.* 6 June 1891, p.8.
2. *Ibid*, 25.5.6. 8.4, also Deddington 14.6.84. 7.6.
3. *Ibid*, 17.6.48 3.6.
4. *Ibid*, 6.6.68 7.6.
5. *Ibid*, 10 June 1854, p.8.
6. *Ibid*, 15 June 1889, p.8.

before them, while the musical *cognoscenti* were appreciating, with eager ears, the performances. . . .<sup>1</sup>

It was custom in some villages for the band and the members to receive a drink at the houses of the friends and patrons of the club, so at Blockley . . . in the evening the members embraced the opportunity of tasting the quality of their neighbours' beer and cider, &c.<sup>2</sup> It was this custom that led to a famous, if apocryphal story told by an old man from Beckley. In the last years of the century Beckley lodge of the Oddfellows had their own band which played from house to house on club day for a tanner in the box and a taste of home-made beer. The drummer in the band was an old man called Harry who was not only just five feet tall but also stone deaf. One Whit-Monday the beer had flowed more generously than usual and old Harry had gotten a bit the worse for wear. Being so small he couldn't see over the top of the big drum and being in the state he was he was beating it louder than usual and so didn't see or hear the rest of the band when it turned off the main road leaving him - followed by the kids in the village, marching proudly on alone up the village street. After having a laugh one of the kids thought he ought to tell Harry about his mistake and went up to him 'Ere 'arry,' says the kid, 'the rest of the bands gone off down the other street' 'Don't worry I,' says Harry still beating the drum, 'I knows the tune.'

At Bampton, as well as parading the streets behind the band it was the custom to chair new members through the village, 'much to the amusement of the youngsters, whose duty and pleasure appeared to be to make the welkin ring with their voices.'<sup>3</sup> In the slightly grander clubs of country towns such as Thame or Faringdon the band often spent the afternoon playing on a raised platform outside the clubhouse. At Thame in 1864 the Thame Brass Band . . . played some music in capital style, in an orchestra erected with much task in front of the Fighting Cocks Inn. . . .<sup>4</sup>

As Club Day drew to a close some clubs returned to their rooms at the village pub simply to drink, smoke, chat and sometimes sing. At Wantage in 1865 after parading the streets the Oddfellows . . . returned to the Lodge-room, and with song and

1. *J.O.J.* 25 May 1861, p.8.
2. *Ibid.*, 5 June 1858, p.8.
3. *Ibid.*, 18 June 1859, p.8.
4. *Ibid.*, 21 May 1864, p.8.

glass the festivities of the day were prolonged till about 11 o'clock.<sup>1</sup> Another way of rounding off the day was to have a dance, often in the open air. At Northleach in 1856 . . . the day's amusements were concluded by a dance in the Market place.<sup>2</sup> At Adderbury, nearer the end of the century, there was an afternoon dance 'in a field kindly lent by Mr. Henry Butler,' and in the evening, 'a ball . . . in the school-room'.<sup>3</sup> At Hethe the clubroom was open in the evening, when 'the members had supper together, whilst dancing was indulged to the strain of the band';<sup>4</sup> at Bloxham the Foresters 'held a dance in the large barn, for which an extension had been granted to one o'clock'.<sup>5</sup> The clubs however did not always meet with such sympathetic magistrates; at Marston in 1889 the dancing was brought to an early termination 'owing to the County Magistrates not permitting anything of an intoxicating nature to be sold on the ground after 7.30, which was a great disappointment to many, as it caused the party to break up prematurely'.<sup>6</sup>

Few descriptions of nineteenth century rural social dance survive, but it was clearly removed from the elegant renditions of today's folk dance enthusiasts (and I include myself here!) Listen to an old lady from Northleigh talking in the twenties to a collector from the Folklore Society.

. . . the principal times for dancing were at the feasts and clubs, in the dancing booths and club-rooms . . . Oh that was real dancing! There was no walking or gracefully gliding through the figures, as was the custom in other circles, but real hard, energetic dancing, a step or a stamp to every note of the music, and when the dance was over the men sat down hot and panting and wiped the perspiration from their faces with their red handkerchiefs. . . .<sup>7</sup>

Again, in an article based on conversation with 'Merry' Kimber, the great Anglo-Concertina player and Morris dancer from

1. *Ibid.*, 17 June 1865, p.3.
2. *Ibid.*, 17 May 1856, p.8.
3. *Ibid.*, 6 June 1891, p.8.
4. *Ibid.*, 1 June 1901, p.8.
5. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1899, p.10.
6. *Ibid.*, 15 June 1889, p.7.
7. A. Parker, Oxfordshire Village Folklore, *Folklore*, 1923, no.34, p.332.

Headington Quarry, T.W. Chaundy wrote, 'At night (Whit-Tuesday) there was country dancing: if anyone dared introduce quadrilles, such as the Polka Quadrille or the Caledonian Quadrille the old women hooted and called for traditional dances. . .'<sup>1</sup>

At some Club Days there was a fair, which, like the drinking, eating and fighting, like the regalia and the evergreen decorations, and like the Morris which still continued in some villages, provided an echo of the old, dead, Whitsun. Such fairs were inevitably small affairs, with a few booths and a shooting gallery, coconut shies, and perhaps (very rarely) a roundabout and swingboats. At the simplest level it was merely a normal village pastime, such as Aunt Sally, organised on a slightly grander scale, perhaps with some small prizes.<sup>2</sup> A step up from this was the slightly more elaborate, but still distinctly village organised, traditional games and sports. These were usually held outside an inn and run by the landlord, who no doubt hoped to profit by raising a holiday spirit in his customers. At Bampton in 1853, 'In the close at the Horse Shoe Inn, the younger part of the community had an opportunity of exercising their skill in eating treacle buns, diving in tubs for oranges, money &c.,<sup>3</sup> and thus pleasantly amused a numerous array of spectators.'<sup>4</sup> And at Eynsham in 1856, 'In the evening, near the Swan Inn, there was a series of diversions - jumping in sacks for a new hat decorated with ribbons - young ladies racing for a beautiful and fashionable ready-trimmed bonnet boys racing for caps &c., &c.,'<sup>4</sup> Such 'amusements' as these, in the view of the correspondent from Faringdon in 1845, (who also mentioned climbing poles for legs of mutton) '... tended much to keep up the good old custom of "keeping Whitsun"'.<sup>5</sup>

A few booths, ginger bread stalls etc. came to Club Day but it seems that it was not until the eighties and nineties that roundabouts and swingboats visited club day in any number. At Kidlington in 1889 there were 'a goodly number of roundabouts, stalls, &c.'<sup>6</sup> At Burford in 1893 there seems to have been a bigger fair: 'Sheep Street had all the fun of the fair

1. T.W. Chaundy, William Kimber, A Portrait, *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, Vol.VIII, No.4, 1959, p.204.

2. C.f. an example at March Baldon, *J.O.J.* 30 May 1885, p.8.

3. *Ibid.* 21 May 1853, p.4.

4. *Ibid.* 17 May 1856, p.8.

5. *Ibid.* 17 May 1845, p.3.

6. *Ibid.* 15 June 1889, p.7.

to itself, stalls, roundabouts, swings, &c., being congregated there.'<sup>1</sup> But steam roundabouts never really came in: they made it necessary for a showman to invest a great deal of capital in his rides: a casual visit to a small village feast was hardly profitable.<sup>2</sup>

By the end of the century the Foresters and the Oddfellows, along with the newer Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes (the 'Buffs') were taking over from village clubs. A man who joined one of these orders could take his subscription with him and go anywhere with it when he changed jobs. By 1893 Club day had completely vanished in Witney. Instead the affiliated orders met on Whit Sunday, and marched behind their District banners. They did not go from house to house collecting a tanner and a glass of beer, but paraded through the streets collecting for Oxfordshire Hospitals.

If club day was, by and large, quieter, less brutal and less colourful than the old traditional Whitsun it retained, on its fringes, elements of the earlier celebrations. We have already mentioned morris as a constant factor, and although this declined there were others which did not. The regalia was one. Bold Robin Hood at Wantage in 1867 '... in full costume, mounted, with his attendant, "Little John", bringing up the rear'<sup>4</sup>, has a distinct feeling of 'My Lord' and 'My Lady' about it as does the custom of decorating the club room with evergreens as at Milton-under-Wychwood in 1855.<sup>5</sup> The old Whitsun circuits were retained, with morris sides, village bands, and the villagers themselves moving from club to club in the area during Whit week. Even after the Bank Holiday Act Whitsun remained in parts of the countryside an indeterminate holiday of several days rather than the one recommended by the Act.

Another echo of the old Whitsun was the possibility of fights. Tom Carter, the mason, who collected folklore for Percy Manning, remembered 'a fight or two' in his native village of Marsh Baldon along with dancing on the green, 'for the Garsington roughs made it a point to be there, and of course the

1. *Ibid.* 3 June 1893, p.7.

2. For a discussion of the changing character of the 19th century fair see Sally Alexander, *St. Giles' Fair 1830-1914*, History Workshop, 1970.

3. *J.O.J.* 27 May 1893, p.7.

4. *Ibid.* 15 June 1867, p.8.

5. *Ibid.* 2 June 1894, p.8.

Baldon folks returned the compliment at Garsington feast.<sup>1</sup> The reports in the *Journal* have little to say about this. An exception is Leafield (Field Town), on which the following report appeared for Whitsun, 1875:

The morning passed off very well, but long before evening set in the extra policeman's services were much needed. It was an imitation of Donnybrook Fair, many of the men feeling in that happy mood as to invite other men to "step on the tails of their coats". There was even one faction fight. Saturday was a repetition of Friday's sport.<sup>2</sup>

Club Day at Field Town was perhaps the strongest survival of the old ways to be found in the later parts of the century. There were three public houses at Leafield, and on the occasion of the club feast, each had a band of music. The feast lasted for two days, Friday and Saturday. 'On Friday morning all the club members went to church, but they occupied the remainder of the day as well as the following one in eating enormous dinners, drinking and dancing. . .<sup>3</sup> John Kibble, the working-man historian of Wyckwood, and a Methodist, disapproved of these proceedings and drew a moral:

Sometimes we heard a fiddle. That was very delightful to our young ears, but generally the associations with drink, dancing, shame and sorrow made it not quite the thing for some I know. I sat by the bedside of a fiddler and I remember he said to me: "I have gone with my fiddle to Field Town Club for the two days, and I have brought home more money than both the bands had, but the money was no good." As he lay ill, looking at life as it was, thus was his summing up. An old book I have gives a verdict somewhat similar in the words, "Vanity. . . all is vanity."<sup>4</sup>

By the last decade of the century then, the old village clubs had all but had their day. In some places the affiliated orders were taking over and simply marched around the village

1. Tom Carter in MS Top. Oxon. d 193 fd. 1 2 (Bodleian Library)
2. *J.O.J.* 29 May 1875, p.7.
3. Taken down from George Pratt Hambridge b.1846 by his daughter Muriel Groves in Muriel Groves Ed., *The History of Shipton-under-Wyckwood*, Compiled by the Womens Institute, Shipton 1934, p.58.
4. John Kibble, *Historical and Other Notes on Wyckwood Forest*, Oxford 1928, p.54.

(or neighbouring town) to collect money for the local hospital. In some places the village fete, which had started as an afternoon addition to club day, eventually replaced it altogether. At Berrick Salome the village club kept up its celebration only by combining with another village, and lost its local character.

For subscribers to the Compton Pilgrims' benefit Society, who could club together and somehow arrange to be transported to that remote village on the Berkshire Downs, Whit Monday was a great day. First a stop was made at the Swan at Crowmarsh, for beer and to pick up 'an old chap with a cornet. He used to play "Wait for me at Heaven's Gate" and "Soon we'll be in London Town" a treat. But when "The Honeysuckle and the Bee" came in he went fair mad about it and would hardly play anything else. . . . As men trickled in they were given a bread and cheese lunch. Then came the admission of new members and an open-air religious service. In a huge decorated marquee with 'facing the entrance a legend "God save the Queen", five hundred persons sat down to a hot dinner served by fourteen carvers.'<sup>1</sup>

But for most there wasn't even the possibility of going to the old sort of club feast, but instead there was the highly organised 'fete' with marches, fancy dress competitions, athletic sports and perhaps a demonstration by the volunteer fire brigade.<sup>2</sup> Even at Bampton, once the home of at least two flourishing clubs, 'the only procession we used to have', Porky Tanner recalled, 'was with the Foresters . . . and that was on Hospital Sunday'.<sup>3</sup>

1. R.E. Moreau, *The Departed Village*, Oxford 1970, p.88.
2. *J.O.J.*, 29 May 1912, p.7.
3. Interview Howkins/Tanner, Whit Monday, 1972.

#### IV RATIONAL RECREATION

We have already shown that benefit societies had a decisive influence in the taming of Whitsun. In some measure, and in most villages, they replaced the wildness of the early years of the century with sobriety and order. Nevertheless, they were very much an offspring of the old festivities. The change that took place was, by and large, quantitative rather than qualitative; many essentials remained the same, the eating and drinking, for example, the decorations and the regalia, and the dancing and music. But there was another group of Whitsun activities which marked a more decisive break.

They were based on an entirely new principle, one which in some senses personifies what is new in the nineteenth century and can best be summed up in the phrase (evocative of Samuel Smiles, and a favourite among many nineteenth century social reformers): 'rational recreation'. This phrase enshrined the essential idea that leisure should be useful. It counterposed, for instance, athletic sports, which improved the body and if the *Boy's Own Paper* is to be believed the mind, against drinking, smoking and the older country pastimes like climbing greasy poles. The advocates of 'rational recreation' were diverse, and it would be wrong to see an organised movement (let alone a conspiracy) at work. Those who supported, say, athletics, were not necessarily against drink, while many temperance reformers were only too ready to organise dances, provided they were free from beer.

Rational recreation was both more and less successful in the countryside than in the towns. It was more successful because in many cases it provided the village with a whole new world of entertainment. On the other hand its active promoters in the countryside were comparatively few. In rural Oxfordshire there do not appear to be any working men's literary or scientific institutes, debating societies or libraries, and temperance itself, as a movement, did not acquire such fierce partisans as it did in the towns.

In the cities it was possible to cream off an advanced, self-helping artisan class and organise them into some sort of movement with a predominantly working class membership. In the countryside where the artisan class was not only qualitatively different, but much smaller, no such possibility existed. The whole of village working class society had to be involved, if 'rational recreation' was to find a base, and

it had to take account of the villagers' local horizons.

A graphic illustration of this localism is afforded by the countryman's apparently unhappy affair with the railways. A major aspect of rational recreation in the cities was the organised railway excursion. Temperance societies, chapels and Sunday Schools turned to them regularly as a way of delivering men from the devil's Whitsun temptations. When we turn to the countryside a quite different picture emerges. Nothing was more calculated to drive a nineteenth century local correspondent to paroxysms of praise than the organised, orderly, outing. Chapel teas or sports days at Whitsun are often mentioned, yet in sixty years of Whitsun coverage there is not one mention in *Jackson Oxford Journal* of an organised village excursion. There are certainly advertisements in the papers for excursions from Oxford stopping at villages on route but no village report ever mentions their arrival or departure, let alone how many people, if any, took advantage of them. On the other hand there are many detailed reports of excursions from Oxford City from the 1870s onwards. Earlier, in 1851, an organised excursion from Chipping Norton (a town interestingly with a strong dissenting tradition and a large woollen mill) gets detailed coverage.

The members of the Provident Society, formed here in the autumn of last year for the purpose of receiving subscriptions to enable them to visit the Exhibition on the most economical terms, have determined to start on Saturday and to return on Tuesday. A lecture on the Exhibition, to enable them to make the best use of their time when there, and to direct their attention to the objects most worthy of their notice, was announced to be delivered ... and, although but four hours' public notice was given, the large room was filled with some hundreds ...<sup>1</sup>

More successful, at least on occasions, were the various attempts to put down beer, either by setting up temperance friendly societies or by convincing some of the existing friendly societies to abandon drinking at club feasts or to stop meeting in public houses. Temperance friendly societies were organised nationally into an affiliated order, the Independent Order of Rechabites, founded in 1835. The Rechabites grew slowly and not until the 1860s did they begin to have a large membership, even by 1868 they only had 13,000 members.<sup>2</sup>

1. J.O.J. 14th June 1851, p.3.

2. Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians*, London 1971, p.336.

The rules of the society clearly stated its differences with the other orders. Rule 1 was 'That this Society shall be denominated the Independent Order of Rechabites and shall consist of persons of good moral character, free from lameness or disorder, of any religious persuasion, who shall be members of the Temperance Society, having signed the following pledge:- "I do hereby voluntarily promise to abstain from all intoxicating liquor - such as Brandy, Whiskey, Rum, Gin, Wine, Ale, Porter, Cider, Perry, distilled Peppermint, etc. I will not engage in the traffic of them and in all suitable ways discountenance the use, manufacture and sale of them."<sup>1</sup> Only one branch of the Rechabites was established in Oxfordshire as far as I have been able to tell. This was at Watlington, where the club had been founded in 1861 as the Nephthalites Friendly Society. 'Another Benefit Society is, we understand, about to be formed in this town by total abstainers from all intoxicating liquors, and it is likely to be largely patronised by that class, their proposed scale of payments being smaller than any other club for the same allowance in sickness, the promoters of the club presuming that there will be less liability to sickness and a more speedy cure where the subject is a "teetotaler".<sup>2</sup> However the Watlington Nephthalites did have local precursors, the members of the New Wesleyan Provident Society which from 1852 met in the school room attached to the chapel.<sup>3</sup> This club was also a temperance club; it met on the same day as the Old Fellows and a younger offshoot called the Bold Fellows, but in different style. The more quiet Wesleyan Club held their meeting without music, but they did ample justice, we understand, to "the roast and boiled", indulging in the afternoon in the "cup that cheers and not inebriates", with many visitors and friends.<sup>4</sup> An unusual feature of this club was that it appears to have been a 'sick and divvy', a form of club, with its annual share-outs, which temperance reformers often attacked. The Wesleyan Provident Society continued to exist right up until the beginning of this century although it seems to have dropped the principle of the annual share-out sometime during the 1860s. Since neither of these clubs were registered with the Registrar general, (again, curious was

1. *Jubilee Record of the Independent Order of Rechabites, Salford Unity*, Salford 1885, p.11.
2. J.O.J., 25 May 1861, p.8.
3. *Ibid.*, 5 June 1852, p.2.
4. *Ibid.*, 2 June 1855, p.8.

such respectable institutions,) we have no idea of their membership figures or of how successful they were in attracting members away from other clubs in the village by their lower payments and temperance propaganda. In 1864, three years after the foundation of the Nephthalites and twelve years after the Wesleyans the *Journal* gives 24 members for the former and 86 for the latter. The older, non-temperance, clubs are credited respectively with 50 to 90 members.<sup>1</sup> The growth of the Nephthalites continued. In 1882 the *Journal* writes that '... they dined together in the Hall to the number of 150.<sup>2</sup> The numbers increase steadily from then on: 'nearly 200' in 1883; 'nearly 250' in 1884, 240 in 1889, and 'upwards to 250' in 1890. The number seems to have remained around the 250 mark for the rest of the years covered. On the other hand the Watlington Tradesmen's Club, which was already in existence in 1841 when reporting of the club day begins, had eighty one members in 1893 - exactly one more than it had 52 years earlier.<sup>3</sup>

The Nephthalites, in common with most clubs, hired a band for their club day and held a procession through the town with banners etc. In 1882 the Reading Temperance band was engaged; by 1889 the club had its own band: 'The Nephthalite Band, a musical outcome of this important club, played during the day some capital music, one item of which - an original march by Mr. John Youens, the hon. bandmaster, and called "The Nephthalites' March" - was much admired.<sup>4</sup> Again in common with other clubs the Nephthalites held an annual dinner, but it was held in the Lecture Hall rather than in the usual public house. The Nephthalites also attempted to provide diversions for the visitors to the village and non-club members, with sports and a tea meeting in the late afternoon. 'After dinner cricket, baseball, and ring games were freely indulged in by the large gathering of people who had collected in the meadow, kindly lent by Mr. Dixon, swing boats and coconut stands also coming in for a fair share of attention by those present ...<sup>5</sup> More direct propaganda for temperance was also made. In the evenings a public tea meeting was usually held at which temperance lectures spoke and exhortations to temperance were delivered; at this meeting in 1884 it

1. *Ibid.*, 21 May 1864, p.8.
2. J.O.J., 3 June 1882, p.7.
3. *Ibid.*, 17 May 1841, p.2.; 27 May 1893, p.7.
4. J.O.J., 15 June 1889, p.8.
5. J.O.J., 31 May 1890, p.7.

was claimed that over 500 sat down to the tea, and presumably listened to the speeches.<sup>1</sup> The chairman of these meetings was invariably Mr. H. Dixon, Coroner for South Oxfordshire and a local temperance advocate. In 1885 he said that teetotalers should bring pressure on parliamentary candidates in the forthcoming elections, requesting those of his audience who had the privilege of being electors to ask candidates, whether Conservative or Liberal, the crucial question "Will you vote for Sunday Closing and Local Option?" and to vote for that man who gives an affirmative reply.<sup>2</sup> In other years open air meetings were held after tea and before the Nephthalites returned to their hall for supper. In 1893, as we have already said, the Nephthalites became a tent of the Rechabites but their celebration of club day did not alter up to 1914.

As well as the Nephthalites at Watlington there were other Clubs in the county either founded on the temperance principle or adopting it on club day and other festivities. There was a group of United Christian Benefit Societies in various parts of North Oxfordshire including Banbury and Chipping Norton. At Bampton in the mid-70s there was a Total Abstinence Club with its own five-and-drum band.<sup>3</sup>

Like the Nephthalites this club also tried to promote their cause by organising a total abstinence entertainment on the evening of Whit Monday. At Enstone the Vicar founded a Sick and Benefit Society on total abstinence principles, and affiliated it to the Church of England Temperance Society. The first fete day was held on Whit Monday, 1885: 'About 200 sat down to tea in front of the Vicarage, and after a few addresses on the advantages of temperance, especially to the rising generation, the festivities of the day were brought to a close by the young people enjoying a dance on the green. The musicians came from Banbury.'<sup>4</sup>

Besides the clubs dedicated to temperance or teetotal principles there were others (usually under the influence of the local gentry) which kept away from pubs and avoided drinking. The Registrar of Friendly Societies forbade any club which wished to be registered to spend any of the contributions on beer either on club night or at the feast;

1. *Ibid.*, 7 June 1884, p.7.
2. *Ibid.*, 30 June 1885, p.8.
3. *Ibid.*, 7 June 1873, p.8.
4. J.O.J., 6 June 1885, p.7.

and the custom of meeting in public houses was constantly being deprecated in his reports. This tack was taken up by an honorary member of the Barton Friendly Society who wrote an open letter to the club members following the club feast in 1878.

#### TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BARTON FRIENDLY SOCIETY FRIENDS AND FELLOW MEMBERS,

Let me say that I felt much obliged when you asked me once more to take the Chair at your Annual Dinner, on Tuesday the 2nd, inst., in the unavoidable absence of the President of the Club; and that I feel equally so still for the kind reception with which you favoured me at the meeting. The way too in which the names you are accustomed to welcome were applauded, and the harmony which prevailed, were just such as befits a gathering of club-able men. But I hope that I may now be allowed to make a few remarks, as your late Chairman, upon the termination of the day, and may not suffer in your kind estimation for so doing. I trust that you will take it well.

I have often heard it mentioned, as a subject of lamentation, that your entertainment does not always close as it begins. It did not altogether on this occasion. It is of course only from a small minority, and that not entirely composed of members of the club, that the difference arises; but then it reflects its character upon the whole club; and people are frequently unable, from want of knowledge, to make a right distinction, and in this, as in other cases, the many have to suffer for the few. I know of the withdrawal of more than one Honorary Member for such a reason.

Without saying anything against the custom of drinking, in its proper place and degree, I am convinced that the introduction of it at such a meeting as ours, had, if possible, much better be avoided. It is from this cause, so far as I know, the unpleasant remarks arise: and I wish you to consider whether such a course as this cannot be adopted; - it is simply to omit to ask the Magistrates for an extra licence, and to prohibit the introduction of any intoxicant on the Ground, by a rule of the Club.

No doubt the proposal will seem strange and impracticable at first; and I should have thought it so at

one time myself. But public opinion has made much progress in this direction; and I am convinced that it is possible to have as true an enjoyment of a day without drinking as with it. It is only to have the firmness to make the trial, and you will find it too. You propose to consider at your next quarterly meeting the means of securing a good party next year. Please do me the favour to take this into consideration with the rest of the proposals.

I hope that I may feel that we know one another to well to require any further explanation or apology. And believe me, friends and fellow members,

Very faithfully yours,  
EDWARD MARSHALL

July 5th. 1878,

Manor House

Sandford St. Martin.<sup>1</sup>

At Beachampton the Club Anniversary was celebrated by a dinner in the schoolroom and 'in the afternoon tea was provided for the women and children'.<sup>2</sup> Clubs which met in schoolrooms and chapels rather than in the traditional public house, remained very much in the minority, but a glance at the lists of the Registrar General of Friendly Societies shows how frequently it was attempted to found them. The Garsington New Benefit Society was such a club. On its foundation in 1881 the *Journal* noted approvingly '... we may observe that one very desirable object has been obtained by the promoters of this Society, namely, that none of its meetings ... are held at the public-house, all the business of the club being conducted, with the consent and hearty co-operation of the Rector, in the School-room.'<sup>3</sup>

As well as temperance or teetotal clubs there were numerous attempts by temperance organisations to organise 'rational' alternatives to the Whitsun festivities. These included public teas, sports days, meetings and processions by temperance bands, etc. By 1881 the temperance cause had

1. Bodleian Library, GA Oxon. C22, single Folio.
2. *J.O.J.*, 6 June 1885, p.7.
3. *Ibid.*, 18 June 1881, p.7.

even penetrated to the notorious Field Town.

The first annual festival of our villagers' branch of the Church of England Temperance Society was held here on Whit Monday, the Shipton and Milton Branch combining. The members assembled at the Schoolroom at 1.30, and headed by a local band, and with an imposing display of banners kindly lent by the Witney Temperance Society, they proceeded to meet the Shipton party. Upon the arrival of the latter the band led the way to the Parish Church, the bells ringing merrily, and a good number of the parishioners turned out to witness the procession and to attend the choral evensong at 2 o'clock ... Service over the procession re-formed, and having paid a visit to the lower end of the village proceeded to a field placed at their disposal for the afternoon. Here cricket, dancing, quoits, knock-em-downs, and other games were entered into, a small charge for admission being made on non-members up to 5 o'clock, when admission was free. A public tea was provided in a barn by the proprietor of the Shipton Coffee House, to which some 160 sat down ...<sup>1</sup>

It is an interesting comment on the state of Field Town that the contingents for this particular celebration were largely contributed from outside the village, the banners from Witney, delegations from two other villages in the procession, sermons preached by outsiders as well as the local vicar, and refreshments provided by a Shipton Caterer. It was, in fact, a rally, and the tactics were those which minority organisations have often adopted to make themselves seem big. Temperance advocates from a large area would go to one place in order to propagandise, thus presenting an impressive front, and making their numbers seem much larger than they in fact were. This can also be seen at Bloxham in 1893 where attendance at the afternoon entertainments (which included 'tea and light refreshments ... of a strictly temperance regimen') was less than expected, because of the Foresters' Fete 'and other attractions in the village', but later, at the ball in the National Schoolroom, 'a break load of gentlemen coming from Banbury, considerably added to the success of the evening.'<sup>2</sup>

1. *J.O.J.*, 18 June 1881, p.7.
2. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1893, p.7.



Bands providing music for dancing or just for listening to were frequently used by temperance groups. At Bloxham the Church of England Temperance Society engaged different bands for a number of Whit Mondays in the 1890s. In 1895 Mr. Kay's Band was engaged and played in front of the Post Office from about mid-day before marching to a field lent by a local sympathiser for a temperance fete and sports.<sup>1</sup> In 1890 it was the Bloxham Brass Band which performed a similar service, while in 1892 and 93 the C.E.T.S. provided its own band.<sup>2</sup> In a similar category can be placed temperance 'entertainments', another form of counter attraction popular with temperance organisations on club day. Most of these, like fetes, took place in the afternoon and evening, conflicting intentionally with the hours when most of the club drinking took place. At Bicester in 1892 26 Post Office officials gave 'an excellent temperance entertainment in St. Edburg's Hall...' The entertainment consisted of songs, readings and speeches including one from Mr. F. Kirtland, who recalled that during his 26 years as a postman - 18 of them as a teetotalter - he had walked over 130,000 miles, and during that time he had only had a fortnight's illness.<sup>3</sup>

One success for the temperance reformers was the transformation of the Littlemore Whit Ale, the Hills Ale Feast, into a temperance sports day. It was a highly respectable affair. In 1904 for instance the Rev. T. W. Mallam was in the chair at the Hills Ale Dinner, while in 1906 the guests included the Mayor of Oxford, many of the local clergy, and the daughters of Sir William Herschel. In the afternoon there were sports with prizes donated by the local gentry and presented by the vicar's wife.<sup>4</sup> The process had begun several years earlier when Sir William Herschel's daughter noted in her diary 'On Whit Monday the usual Hills Ale took place - the feast was supplied with good gratuity of temperance drinks which greatly reduced the amount of beer drunk on this occasion...'<sup>5</sup>

An aspect of Whitsun which grew in importance through the century was the village sports day. Sporting events at

1. *Ibid.*, 8 June 1895, p.7.
2. *Ibid.*, 31 May 1890, p.7; 27 May 1893, p.7; 11 June 1892, p.7.
3. *Ibid.*, 11 June 1892, p.7.
4. *Ibid.*, 28 May 1904, p.4; 9 June 1906, p.7.
5. MS. Top Oxon d 444, Diary of the daughter of Sir Wm. Herschel, Bodleian.

village celebrations became more formalised, and large organised sports days, after the 1870s appear in large numbers. Brian Harrison has an interesting discussion of the relation between temperance and the growth of athletic sports. 'The temperance reformer' he writes, 'vigorously attacked the rural sports - greasy poles, sack races and crude enjoyments...' They also attacked blood sports, which had strong links with the drinking place. Such sports were also alien to the spirit and disciplines of industrial society '...requiring unrestricted space, unspecified periods of time and a taste for animal cruelty.' The new athletic sports according to Harrison, saved both time and space, and were much more in tune with the needs of urban industrial society.<sup>1</sup> In the country the temperance attack was the same; and the general movement away from the old amusements was comparable to that in the towns, but the reasons for the trend are less clear (lack of space was not a rural problem), and there are differences which await further examination and discussion.

The bigger sports days very quickly became established annual events. Farrington, Charlbury, Abingdon, and Banbury, all of which had Whit Monday sports meetings established in the 1870s, were still holding them in 1914. Charlbury provides an example we can follow in some detail. Its first 'Amateur Athletic Sports' was held on Whit Monday 1874, under the patronship of most of the local gentry including the Duke of Marlborough, Viscount Dillon, Lord Churchill and the local Tory M.P. In 1874 the sports began at 1 o'clock 'with the Quarter-Mile Flat Race for boys under 16 years of age...'<sup>2</sup>, and continued through the afternoon and into the early evening. Most of the events run would be familiar to anyone who has attended a village sports day but there was one notable exception, and a definite concession to earlier days in that a horse race was included. Again in 1875 there were pony and Galloway races, and horse racing and driving contests continued until nearly the end of the century. In 1893 bicycle racing was introduced.<sup>3</sup> In 1889 there were four running events including one for Lord Churchill's Silver Cup, throwing the hammer, hurdles, a sack race, a tug of war and the pony and Galloway races.<sup>4</sup>

1. Brian Harrison, *op.cit.*, pp.330-31.
2. J.O.J., 30 May 1874, p.8.
3. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1893, p.7.
4. *Ibid.*, 15 June 1889, p.7.

In 1875 the *Journal* obviously expected its readers to have heard of some of its runners. '...W. H. Seary, of Oxford renown, ... won the hurdle and steeple chases, being second for the mile and half-mile races'.<sup>1</sup> Seary and others presumably travelled from Oxford in order to take part.

Sports were organised by a variety of bodies including village clubs, the Oddfellows, the Foresters and, as we have already seen, temperance groups. In accord with the general tone of sports days they were often temperance in character even when run by other groups. At the Eynsham sports in 1883 (organised by a village committee) 'Nothing but temperance drinks were sold upon the field, the Magistrates having refused to grant permission for the sale of alcoholic drinks...'.<sup>2</sup> At the 'Beaconsfield' Club Sports, Abingdon, in the previous year, there were only 'refreshments of a non-intoxicating description'.<sup>3</sup> Another sign of change was the organisation of sports days to collect money for charity (often hospitals); or with special charitable arrangements as at Milton-under-Wychwood in 1903 when the inmates at the Children's Homes at Shipton were given tea at the sports and had special races arranged for them;<sup>4</sup> or again at Faringdon in 1882 when '...the children from Faringdon Workhouse were admitted to the fields. The old people were provided with Tobacco and Snuff...'.<sup>5</sup>

Athletic sports were not the only form of 'rational recreation' which infiltrated club day. The other major newcomer was cricket. It is difficult to say when cricket, as a popular village sport, began to become important. As early as 1804 the following advertisement appeared in the *Journal* 'To Cricketers, Gentlemen fond of the game are hereby informed, that the sum of Five Guineas will be played for on Thursday in the Whitsun-week, at the Fox, in North Afton, Oxfordshire - Eleven of a Side - The Wickets to be pitched at Ten o'clock, and Articles will be produced'.<sup>6</sup> At Thame's

1. *Ibid.*, 22 May 1875, p.7.
2. *Ibid.*, 19 May 1883, p.7. I cannot refrain from mentioning that at the Ensham Whitsuntide Sports in 1883 one W. Howkins was third in the 200 yards Foot Hurdle Race - my great grandfather, in his forties but still in his prime.
3. *Ibid.*, 3 June 1882, p.7.
4. *Ibid.*, 31 May 1890, p.7.
5. *Ibid.*, 3 June 1882, p.7.
6. *Ibid.*, 19 May 1804, p.4.

Whitsun in 1828, 'A challenge was given on Tuesday by eleven tailors, to play eleven shoemakers at the game of cricket, which was accepted, and played on Wednesday, when the snobs proved too much for the *Knights of the Thimble*...'.<sup>1</sup> In the mid-fifties village cricket matches are quite often reported as part of Whitsun festivities; like the Married v. Single match on Whit Monday 1856 at Ludgershall, on the Buckinghamshire border, which was followed by a 'sumptuous repast... at the White Hart Inn'.<sup>2</sup> In the 1860s we find it in the club day celebrations. At Longworth in 1865 for instance '...a match was played between the married and single members of the club...',<sup>3</sup> while at Clanfield in 1868 a match was played between Clanfield and Aston (after which the players resorted to the Plough Inn, to refresh the inner man, and the conviviality was kept up till 10 p.m.) A return match was to be played on Aston Feast Monday.<sup>4</sup> At Thame in 1871 two courts of Foresters, ('Court British Queen' from Thame and 'Court Hampden' from Watlington) played a cricket match which was the only afternoon entertainment of the day;<sup>5</sup> and at Eynsham in 1899 cricket had so taken over that the *Journal* headed its club day report 'Foresters' Cricket Match and Dinner'.<sup>6</sup> The elevens were not invariably drawn from other villages: in Whit Week 1874 Bicester played teams from Queen's College and Magdalen.<sup>7</sup> But most village matches remained essentially local affairs, and there does not seem to be any evidence of the games being organised on a league basis before 1914.

Bicycling, as a sport, was little practised by the rural working class before 1914; and for some years was regarded as a curiosity, beyond their reach. (There is a story in W. H. Hudson's *A Shepherd's Life* of how one day he was riding across the downs when he saw a boy scaring crows in a field some distance away. As he approached the boy he saw that he was running across the fields to intercept him. Hudson, thinking that something was the matter, stopped, and asked the boy why he had run to meet him; the boy replied 'Just to see

1. *Ibid.*, 31 May 1828, p.4.
2. *Ibid.*, 17 May 1856, p.8.
3. *Ibid.*, 17 June 1865, p.8.
4. *Ibid.*, 13 June 1868, p.7.
5. *Ibid.*, 10 June 1871, p.7.
6. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1899, p.3.
7. *Ibid.*, 30 May 1874, p.8.

you pass'.<sup>1</sup>) An advertisement in the *Oxford Journal Illustrated* for 3rd June 1914 gives prices for £5 12s. 6d. to £13 13s. Od. for Royal Enfield cycles - 'The Bicycle that is made like a Gun... the Best Bicycle that money can buy'.<sup>2</sup> Such prices were beyond the reach of the farm labourer, whose wages in Oxfordshire averaged around 12s. a week. There was some cycling going on. But it was not until my father's day, in the late twenties, that cycling clubs became a working class institution in Oxfordshire.

Others besides temperance reformers sought, by providing other amusements, to keep country men and women away from the feasts. To many ordinary non-conformists and even churchmen they were Vanity Fair. John Kibble, the Methodist stonemason spoke for these people when he wrote, 'as a boy, without a word from anyone, I could see that to follow the path I had resolved upon I had best give feasts a wide berth, and after these many years I see no cause for regret at the course resolved upon'.<sup>3</sup> Armed with the evangelical spirit they took Christianity into Satan's lair and Whit Monday became a focus for various kinds of religious activity. The earliest report in the newspapers of a religious body using Whitsun for its own celebrations (other than the ordinary Whit services) comes from Standlake in 1839 when 'The ministers and messengers of the associated Baptist Churches in this and the adjoining counties held their anniversary meeting at Standlake on Tuesday and at Cote and Bampton on Wednesday last. Numerous and respectable auditories attended the several services - refreshments for ministers and friends were supplied at Cote, by Mr. Townsend, of the Bull Inn, Aston, while Mr. P. Williams, of Old Shifford, very humanely and liberally provided the poorer attendants with a good dinner and accompaniments gratis'.<sup>4</sup> This meeting, later known as the Oxford Association of Baptist Churches, continued annually for most of the century. Numbers of local Baptist chapels held their anniversaries on Whit Monday. At Thame in 1857 '...two sermons were preached by Mr. J. Hazelton of London. At half past five o'clock upwards of sixty of the friends assembled

1. W.H. Hudson, *A Shepherd's Life*, Everyman Ed., London 1936, p.5.
2. *Oxford Journal Illustrated*, 3 June 1914, p.5.
3. John Kibble, *Charming Charlbury: A Wychwood Gem*, Charlbury 1930, p.28.
4. J.O.J., 25th May 1839, p.4.

and partook of tea together... After tea the company enjoyed a walk in the beautiful grounds of Mr. T. H. Seymour, which were kindly thrown open for the occasion, and added much to the pleasure of the afternoon. In the evening a goodly number attended the chapel; the collections were good'.<sup>1</sup>

The Primitive Methodists had from their earliest days held 'camp meetings', open air evangelical gatherings, in opposition to wakes, fairs, and feasts. In 1869 at Witney, one of their strongholds, 'As usual on Whit Monday the Primitive Methodist connection held camp meetings on Woodgreen both morning and afternoon, the latter especially being largely attended. The discourses were delivered with great fervour, and listened to with attention'.<sup>2</sup> At Curbridge in 1904 a special service was held on Whit Monday afternoon, followed by a public tea and in the evening '...a service of song entitled "Little Maggie's Mission"'.<sup>3</sup> The Wesleyans also used public tea meetings and concerts on Whit Monday to keep their members and possible converts away from the evils of the feast. At Bloxham in 1887, 'On Whit Monday the Wesleyans and friends of this parish had a tea meeting and concert, which may be classed second to none amongst the numerous attractions of the club-day. The state of the weather being taken into consideration (it was very sunny), the attendance at the tea was very good indeed, the upper and lower school rooms being both well filled. After the tea a free sacred concert was given in the chapel, which was also well attended, and which everyone enjoyed very much... The hymns were selected from Sankey's "Songs and Solos", and the musical portion consisted of the organ, three violins and a violoncello'.<sup>4</sup> The Horspath Methodists combined at Whitsun with nearby Headington, and in 1901 the *Journal* describes them as having had '...a lively time...' 'The proceedings commenced at 2.30 with a cricket match between Headington and Horspath, won by the Headington team. During the afternoon the Headington brass band played selections of music. At 5.30 a public tea was held in the Wesleyan chapel... After tea the band paraded the street, and at 7 o'clock an entertainment took place in the chapel... A capital programme was gone through, consisting of songs and recitations, and

1. *Ibid.*, 6 June 1857, p.4.
2. *Ibid.*, 22 May 1869, p.8.
3. *Ibid.*, 28 May 1904, p.9.
4. *Ibid.*, 15 June 1887, p.7.

selections by members of the band',<sup>1</sup> Like the Baptists the Wesleyans held their circuit anniversary at Whitsun but this was usually restricted to discussion and teas; as the *Journal* wrote in 1899: 'It is an occasion when the whole of the circuit is brought together for social, financial, and spiritual purposes, and has, therefore, been of great service and is highly esteemed.'<sup>2</sup> The other non-conformist denominations followed a similar pattern at Whitsun; the Congregationalists of Chinnor had a tea '... and after ample justice had been done to the cake, bread and butter &c., the company resorted to the hills, where sports, games, and other pastimes were indulged in by the younger friends'.<sup>3</sup> The Congregationalists in Henley ran a Benefit Society which behaved, as far as can be seen, in exactly the same way as an ordinary club on Whit Monday right down to a dinner in a public house.<sup>4</sup> John Kibble would not have approved!

The Church of England rarely organised special Whitsun activities: it hardly needed to, since the central role of the parson in Club sermons and speeches, the importance (often) of the Church of England Temperance Society, and usually the dominance of the Church Sunday School, made church influence pervasive. Occasionally they did more. At Stonesfield in 1868 the church emulated the non-conformist and held a 'public tea meeting' on the Rectory lawn. 'After tea the people amused themselves with different kinds of games, and the evening's amusement was brought to a close with an entertainment in the School room...'<sup>5</sup> There were also occasional meetings of the Church Missionary Society or the British and Foreign Bible Society, but this would seem to be simple coincidence rather than a part of Whitsun. In the nineteen hundreds the Church Lads Brigade often paraded their town at Whitsun, but in rural Oxfordshire at least, this particular branch of the church militant seems to have had little appeal.

For many a child, even in my own day, Whitsun was indistinguishable from two things: the Buffs outing, and the Sunday School treat. The club outing replaced club day in the course of the 1920s, by which time too the Sunday School treat often

1. *Ibid.*, 1 June 1901, p.8.
2. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1899, p.3.
3. *Ibid.*, 26 May 1888, p.8.
4. *Ibid.*, 2 June 1855, p.8.
5. *Ibid.*, 13 June 1868, p.7.

took the form of an outing (I have not found evidence of Sunday School outings in Oxfordshire before 1914, although there are plenty of examples from other counties of excursions in wagons and even by trains before that date).

Sunday schools would hold their annual treat at Whitsun, often using it in advance to coerce the children into 'good behaviour': it was a reward for regular attendance, and exclusion from it was a potent threat. Its original purpose, at least in part, was to remove children from the dissipation of the village holiday, to prevent them taking part in it, by providing an alternative (and desirable) way of spending the day. The Charlbury Methodists in 1838 decided bluntly: 'The children shall not walk to make exhibition in the town, it being a day of worldly amusement, namely Charlbury Club feast'.<sup>1</sup> But often the diversion took the form of an organised parade. At Watlington on Whitsun, 1841, 'the teachers and friends of the Wesleyan Sunday School in this town presented the children with their annual treat: at three o'clock in the afternoon they formed into a procession and paraded the town preceded by a band for music: immediately after they adjourned to the spacious yard in front of the chapel, where 168 children of the poor partook of the bounty of their friends. The evening was spent by the teachers in an animating manner: several interesting speeches were delivered illustrative of the blessings of a religious education'.<sup>2</sup> Events of this kind were organised throughout the century by most chapels and churches. The Primitive Methodists of Long Hanborough celebrated their school anniversary at Whitsun: 'On Monday the teachers and children met at the Chapel and formed in procession, parading the village, headed by the brass band and singing at intervals'; then they had tea and games and a public meeting, in a barn lent by J. Joslin Esq.<sup>3</sup> The children of Anglican Sunday schools might have the advantage of a rectory garden in which to hold their treat, and no doubt the support of the richer local inhabitants. (As a child I remember heated sectarian discussion at school, not on the finer points of theology, but on who provided the

1. Minute Book of the Charlbury Methodist Sunday School, May 1838, quoted in John Kibble, *Historical and Other Notes on Charlbury*, Charlbury 1927, p.32.
2. *J.O.J.*, 17 May 1841, p.2.
3. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1893, p.8.

375

better treat, church or chapel). At Salford (Oxfordshire) in 1904, 60 or 70 scholars of the Anglican Sunday School assembled at the Rectory for a 'sumptuous tea', preceded and followed by games on the Rectory lawn.<sup>1</sup> Treats were often the occasion for the presentation of prizes for the year's work. So for instance at Wootton, 'Prizes for regular attendance and good conduct were distributed...'<sup>2</sup> while at the Baptist Sunday School in Eynsham prizes were presented to Rose Eltham, Alice Dance and Clara Lambourn 'for collecting for the Temperance Hospital', and certificates 'in connection with the Oxford and district Sunday School Union examination...'.<sup>3</sup> were awarded to nine other children.<sup>3</sup> On some occasions the treat included a concert or entertainment by the children for their proud parents. At Middle Barton in 1893 for example, a public tea was held to mark the 31st anniversary of the Primitive Chapel and 'At intervals between the speeches the musicians and the children enlivened the proceedings by playing and singing some of Sankey's songs and solos, Miss A. Chadborn presiding at the harmonium'.<sup>4</sup>

From the middle of the century onwards the fete begins to appear at Whitsun, with its fund raising stalls, tea tables, speeches by minor celebrities, and amateur entertainments. The first Whitsun fete in Oxfordshire reported in the *Journal* (there are a couple earlier from Reading) was held in 1855 in Witney in aid of the building fund for the Witney National Schools.<sup>5</sup> The Vicar of Bladon in 1859 was able to secure illustrious patronage for his attempt to withdraw the villagers from the 'boisterous and intoxicating revellings formerly as prevalent at Bladon as at other rustic annual feasts':

On Whit-Monday ... the villagers assembled at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, in an orchard kindly lent for the occasion by Mr. Adams ... The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough, by their kind and courteous presence at the principal tea-table, enhanced the enjoyment of the assembled throng; and His Grace, in a few suitable words after tea was concluded, expressed gratification at seeing so many ... When evening's shadows fell, the Harmonium was taken into the school ... and the music, both vocal and instrumental, was resumed until

1. *J.O.J.*, 28 May 1904, p.4.
2. *Ibid.*, 28 May 1904, p.9.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1893, p.8.
5. *Ibid.*, 2 June 1855, p.8.

a late hour ... an unprecedented treat was afforded the village maidens by the opportunity of listening (probably for the first time in their lives) to Italian operatic vocal music ... Loyalty and devotion - 'God save the Queen', and the 'Te Deum' - concluded the happy evening, which will not soon be forgotten either at Bladon or by any who had the pleasure of being present.<sup>1</sup>

Petes developed as a regular way of raising funds for church and chapel, as well as offering a more controlled and elevating alternative to the general village feast. The preparation of goods - as today for the Christmas bazaar - engaged the activity of members for months beforehand, with the double aim of providing exhibits for a lavish display and raising funds. The Winslow Baptists in 1881, faced with a debt of £150 on their hall, were able to raise £135 6s. Od. of it by means of a fete. The fete was held in the hall itself, and opened by the Hon. Rupert Carington, M.P. The stalls were '... laden with a very large assortment of goods useful and otherwise, clothing being probably predominant, but articles of vertu were not by any means absent'. There was also a 'Fine Art Gallery conducted by the Rev. Williams ...'; and scientific curiosity was catered for (as often at such functions) in this case by 'an incubator in full work' and 'a microscopical department ... furnished with an interesting variety of natural objects'. Refreshments were available and there were a number of 'superior' articles given by patrons of the Chapel.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from churches and chapels many other bodies came to adopt the fete as a means of celebrating Whitsun and/or raising money. Many clubs abandoned the Whit Monday processions in favour of the fete, especially those which were branches of the affiliated orders. In Oxford City in 1899 a fete even replaced the mildest of all imaginable club activities, 'Hospital Sunday', because of 'several objectionable features'.<sup>3</sup> At Stanton Harcourt in 1907, the local Foresters had not only replaced club day by a fete but had incorporated Empire Day - British Imperialism's contribution to the English holiday - and the ceremony of running up the flag and singing patriotic songs was added to the day's

1. *Ibid.*, 18 June 1859, p.8.
2. *Ibid.*, 11 June 1881, p.7.
3. *Ibid.*, 27 May 1899, p.3.

'amusements'.<sup>1</sup> In a like vein the Foresters' Fete at Headington Hill Hall in 1912 included a Scout Rally.<sup>2</sup>

Brian Harrison writes in *Drink and the Victorians*

Surveying briefly then, from the temperance viewpoint, the changes between the 1820s and the 1870s in the influence of drink, of drinksellers and of the drink interest - there had been a marked change. Alternative thirst-quenchers had become cheaper and more accessible. Seasonal and religious festivals had become more sober, and the link between drinksellers and long-distance public transport had been severely weakened.<sup>3</sup>

By 1914 further victories had been won and the earlier gains consolidated. In the sphere of leisure the changes had been enormous, and the ideas of 'rational recreation' had an important part in the transformation. Often unconsciously men and women responded to the change in manners which swept through the upper classes in the last half of the eighteenth century and spread those changes slowly over the whole society. The change in Whitsun took place unevenly and in stages, first by the rise of Club Day and the Clubs, then by the change in their character, as temperance and 'rational recreation' gradually encroached. The rise of the affiliated orders shifted the focus of Whitsun from the village to the district fete or rally. Whitsun as a village festival was on its way out when the clubs began to disappear, when the survivors stopped marching through their own villages behind their own village bands, to sing and dance till the early hours of the morning, and when the Foresters and Oddfellows, banners triumphant marched into Headington Hill Hall for their annual fete and sports day, to run, jump and parade with nary a drop to drink or a bit of fatty bacon to eat.

1. *Ibid.*, 25 May 1907, p.3.
2. *Ibid.*, 29 May 1912, p.7.
3. Harrison, *op.cit.*, p.346.

## V KITCHENER'S ARMY

It's fifty-one spring times since she was  
a bride, Whitsun-  
But still you can see her at each  
tide,  
In a dress of White Linen and ribbons of  
Green,  
As Green as her memories of loving.

.....

Down from the green farlands and from their  
loved ones  
Went Husbands and brothers, went Fathers  
and Sons,

... There's a fine roll of honour where  
the Maypole once was  
And the ladies went dancing at Whitsun.<sup>1</sup>

On August the 4th 1914 Oxfordshire received the outbreak of the great war in much the same way as the rest of the country. There were enthusiastic crowds, reservists in the streets, flags, children. Mabel Ashby remembered those last weeks of the old world.

The last week of July and the first days of August, my mother and I harnessed a pony every evening, and drove the five miles from the Lower Town to Kineton Post Office to read in its windows the latest telegrams on the news from Serbia, Austria, Germany, Russia and France. Each evening all the wide valley was bathed in golden serene sunset light, but on the third of August the weather changed. The sunset was more gorgeous than ever; but the valley was filled with mist of raucous purple. When my mother recited the message we had brought home there was a long stillness that Joseph broke with the only possible words: "Few things will ever be the same again"<sup>2</sup>

At first only the Regulars went, then the territorials, then at the beginning of 1915 recruiting began for Kitchener's

1. Words by Austria James Marshall to a song *Whitsun Dancing*, tune from Copper family.
3. Ashby, *op.cit.*, p.290.

Army. Among those who went to the recruiting office in Oxford was Jonathan 'Jack' Hawkins; he was swallowed up into the Queens Own Oxfordshire Yeomanry Cavalry. Another recruit was a young man who worked on the roads over in Berkshire. He recalled joining Kitchener's Army: 'I worked for the County Council and, one morning, I left to go to work; we were repairing the roads in Windsor Park at the time, but on the way I met a friend who was going to enlist. Instead of going on to work, I went home, changed into my best clothes and went with him to the Recruiting Office in Reading'.<sup>1</sup> My grandmother remembered her first husband marching off with those early recruits; he ended up in an 'unknown grave' in the mud of Paschendael as a member of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. When the war was over not only had the young men gone but things had changed completely. This is a platitude of history, but one which is repeated by practically every old man and woman that one talks to. An old man in Headington once said 'It was all different after' and when I asked why he said 'The donkeys and rabbits had gone'.

So had the clubs, even the affiliated orders were beginning to fail as the state took more and more responsibility for its citizens. As for Whitsun, it ceased to be a village affair. In place of the village processions and 'feast' there came the charabanc outing, working class cycling clubs, rambling, the day out and the holiday away from home. The carefully nurtured world of rational recreation also disappeared, simply because it too was based on the village. In fact what the war shattered beyond repair was not simply this or that aspect of village life but the whole concept of unified village activity.

The ideals, culture and indeed the physical form of the Oxfordshire village was completely altered by the Great War. The village community with its own lore and oral history; its own celebrations, bands and banners; and above all its own sense of separate identity, could not stand the shock of the wholesale depopulation which set in during and after the war. It seems to me, comparing Oxfordshire village life before 1914 and in my own childhood, that there are few continuities. Certainly I went on Sunday School treats, Friendly Society outings, even watched Morris and heard the occasional band, but they were not, with the exception of

1. Pte J.H. Harwood, 6th Royal Berkshire Regiment, in Martin Middlebrook, *The First Day on the Somme*, London, 1971, p.7.

some Morris sides, the product of distinct village cultures. They were planned and executed for a wider district.

'Whats the life of a man, any more than a leaf.' laments a song once popular throughout the Thames Valley, 'A man has his seasons, then why should he grieve?' And like man the village had its seasons, Spring and Summer were of great length and beauty; Autumn and Winter were short, bitterly hard; the 'frost came and bit'it, and the 'storm came upon' it in the shape of the Great War and like both the man and leaf in the song, although to the 'wide world' it appeared 'fine and gay', it tragically and all too quickly did 'wither and soon fade away'.

## APPENDIX: FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

This is no place to go into the history of Friendly Societies, however a few general remarks seem necessary.<sup>1</sup> The aim of Friendly Societies was simple. Members paid a contribution weekly when in work as a provision against sickness or unemployment. Sometimes clubs also paid for burials, gave cash payments for injuries, paid lump sums to widows and orphans and provided a small pension, and very occasionally a pension for the contributor when he became too old to work. Such clubs had been in existence in England since the end of the seventeenth century. In 1697 Defoe wrote, 'Friendly societies are very extensive...'<sup>2</sup>

The earlier Friendly Societies seem to have been got up among small tradesmen and artisans, but from the early 19th century they began to appear, in both town and country, lower down the social scale. Their early growth was encouraged both by the government in the form of sympathetic legislation (after carefully distinguishing between Friendly Societies and trade unions) and by the local bourgeoisie - gentry, farmers and clergymen - starting up clubs and usually keeping them firmly under their control.

For most of the period dealt with in this part of the pamphlet there were in Oxfordshire, as elsewhere, two distinct sorts of societies, the local clubs and the affiliated orders. The local clubs were by and large based on one village or parish, having no members outside and no funds apart from those collected from the members. The main reason why local clubs predominated in the rural areas was simple: their scale of contribution was much lower and more in keeping with the wages of a farm labourer. The Manchester Unity Oddfellows fixed their scale of contribution and benefit locally but it varied at about 4d., 5d., or 6d., a week or 17s. 4d., £1 1s. 8d. and £1 6s. 0d. a year.<sup>3</sup>

1. The standard history of Friendly Societies is F.H.J.H. Gosden, *The Friendly Societies in England 1815-1875*, Manchester 1960. This is now supplemented by an excellent local study, Margaret D. Fuller, *West Country Friendly Societies*, Reading 1964. Both give details of the development of the Friendly Society movement.
2. Quoted in Fuller, *op.cit.*, p.1.
3. Gosden, *op.cit.*, p.105.

Benefits were in turn varied from area to area although the Order by and large seldom paid less than 10s. a week in benefit. There were occasional exceptions as in Banbury where the benefit was only 7s. 6d. a week in time of sickness in a Lodge which had been started mainly for farm labourers.<sup>1</sup> The local societies collected smaller sums than this and paid lower benefits. In the West of England and parts of the South Midlands the maximum a labourer could expect from the club was about 6s. a week although it could sometimes be as low as 3s. 6d. or 4s. and very occasionally above 7s.<sup>2</sup> It was not solely economic considerations which bound men to the local clubs. For a start they were less closely regulated. This often meant that the club feast and beer on club night was paid for out of stock: a practice which the registered club had to abandon. Many local clubs were 'sick and divvy' in that they shared out their funds annually or divided them every few years. Local ties remained strong as well.

The two affiliated orders which gained a real footing in rural Oxfordshire were the Independent Order of Oddfellows, Manchester Unity, and the Ancient Order of Foresters.<sup>3</sup> The Manchester Unity had been founded in Manchester in 1810, but its real period of growth in Oxfordshire does not begin until the mid sixties.<sup>4</sup> In 1877 there were sixteen adult lodges of the Oddfellows in Oxfordshire and one Juvenile lodge. It is interesting to note though that nine (among them the juvenile branch) were in market towns, including four in Oxford City.<sup>5</sup> The Foresters, like the Oddfellows, began in the North and developed into a national organisation; but they were less centralised and because their

1. *Ibid.*, p.80.
2. Fuller, *op.cit.*, p.72. Gosden, *op.cit.*, p.76, these figures refer to the initial period of illness, they were lowered if the member was ill for long periods.
3. When the Oddfellows split in 1845 the number of lodges in Oxon. declined from 5 to 1 indicating that some lodges may have gone with the splintered group(s) or simply reverted to being village clubs. They certainly did not last long if they joined one of the rival Oddfellows organisations as no other affiliated orders are listed by the Registrar General in Oxon.
4. Gosden, *op.cit.*, Table 5, p.35.
5. Report of the Registrar General of Friendly Societies, for 1876, pp 1877, LXXVII.



Contributions were slightly lower, were more successful in rural areas, at least early on. In 1877 there were seventeen adult (and one juvenile) Courts of Foresters in Oxfordshire, and only four were in market towns, including two in Oxford City.<sup>1</sup> The growth of the Foresters was also greater. In 1863 both Orders had a foothold in the towns of Oxfordshire, but the Oddfellows had eight lodges and the Foresters only four.<sup>2</sup>

During most of the century local village societies predominated in rural Oxfordshire. Out of 78 societies in the county in 1863, 66 were local village societies.<sup>3</sup> Similarly in 1877 there were one hundred and twenty-five local clubs, against thirty-five branches of affiliated orders.<sup>4</sup> The origins and organisation of these local societies was almost as diverse as the societies themselves. At these 125 have in common that they were all registered. They do not by any means represent all the clubs in Oxfordshire, for to be registered meant that the funds had to be properly audited and that the funds should only be used to meet sickness or other purposes approved by the Registrar and enforced by the magistrates. The largest group unregistered would be those who divided their funds at the end of each year or a period of five or seven years, who would not, in general register. But many local societies referred to remain unregistered so as to be able to use part of the funds for the club feast or for buying beer on club nights, while others were deferred from registering on their ignorance of actuary science.

*Ibid.*

Report of the Registrar General of Friendly Societies for 1862, PP 1863, XXIX.

*Ibid.*

PP 1877, *loc.cit.*

## HISTORY WORKSHOP

### RUSKIN ESSAYS IN SOCIAL HISTORY

#### First Volume: WORK

##### Contents

Editorial Introduction: *Freedom and servitude in 18th century*

Sid Willis: *The pooper's berth*

David Morgan: *The pooper's berth*

Raphael Samuel: *The pooper's berth*

Merfyn Jones: *The pooper's berth*

Dave Douglass: *The pooper's berth*

Frank McKenna: *The pooper's berth*

Second Volume: *CHILDHOOD*

Contents

Peter Burke: *The pooper's berth*

Edgar Snow: *The pooper's berth*

Bernard Caplan: *The pooper's berth*

Della Davin: *The pooper's berth*

Christopher Hill: *The pooper's berth*

Jennifer K. Leach: *The pooper's berth*

Raphael Samuel: *The pooper's berth*

James Fort: *The pooper's berth*

Stan Shibley: *The pooper's berth*

Dave Harson: *The pooper's berth*

Dave Douglass: *The pooper's berth*

These two volumes will be published in 1974 and will be followed by volumes on POPULAR CULTURE, CLASS STRUGGLE, THE WOMAN QUESTION

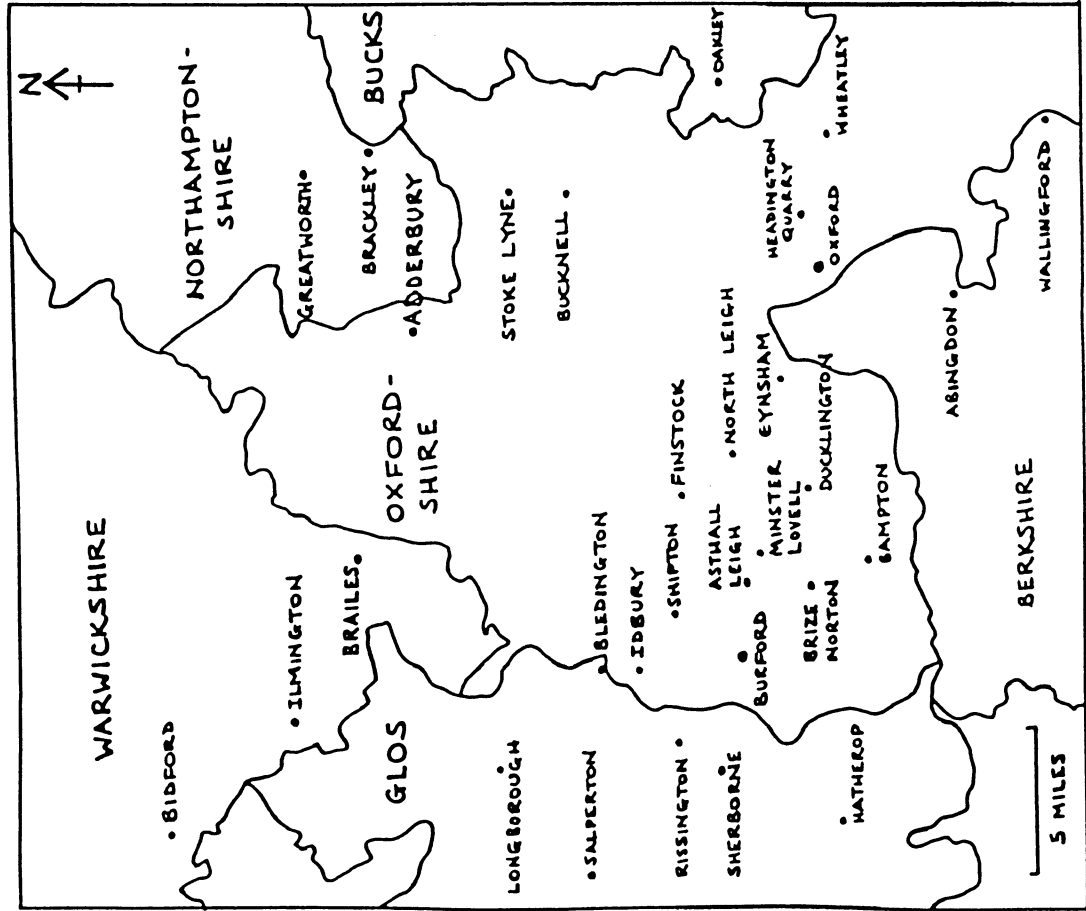
Routledge & Kegan Paul

# MORRIS DANCING IN THE SOUTH MIDLANDS: THE SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND TO 1914

KEITH CHANDLER

The main aim of this paper will be to examine a number of the historical aspects of the morris form formerly dominant within an approximately thirty-five mile radius of Witney in Oxfordshire and to indicate some of the ways in which official sources may be applied to specifically collected folkloristic material in order to illuminate the social and cultural context in which it flourished and then declined in importance before the advent of war in 1914.

Until recently, historical material has been largely recorded and interpreted from above and this is reflected in the comparative dearth of sources concerned with grass-roots history, of which the rural morris during the nineteenth century is one cultural manifestation. Thankfully there are a number of oases in this desert; although most of the early collectors who were interested in the morris appear to have been very selective in the type of material they chose to record. Tom Carter for example, hired by Percy Manning to acquire old relics as well as historical information,<sup>1</sup> typically noted a list of names of the men involved in a given dance side, sometimes their occupations, a date at which the morris was said to have been extant and often an anecdote or two,<sup>2</sup> while the steps, tunes, form and style of the dances were outside his brief. Cecil Sharp's chief interests were diametrically opposite and frequently he omitted to even note the names of dancers in a tradition, especially on those occasions when he discovered a living exponent of the local dance style. Other



collectors had their own individual bias, although most - Mary Neal, Clive Carey, George Butterworth and the like - tended towards that approach favoured by Sharp. In practice this meant that the material was collected largely without reference to its contextual milieu.

The semi-systematic if somewhat haphazard collection of morris-related material was begun only during the last decade of the nineteenth century and this has undoubtedly distorted our knowledge of the distribution of dance sides in these south Midland counties by emphasising the period from around eighteen twenty onwards. The available evidence creates an impression of the middle years of the century being the heyday of performance but tells us little about the earlier period, during which the morris as a rural phenomenon may well have been more widespread.

There are currently around two dozen known recorded instances during the eighteenth century of what appear to have been sightings of authentic rural-based morris sides of the type designated by folklorists as "traditional". Geographically the area of performance<sup>3</sup> is bounded on the four points by Wallingford, Hatherop, Greatworth and Richmond and encompasses much of the enclosed area; while the temporal span extends throughout the whole of the century, from the sighting of a visiting side in Hatherop, Gloucestershire, by Nicholas Blundell in 1703<sup>4</sup> to the performance of a team from Burford at Sherborne Manor in 1799.<sup>5</sup> This widespread evidence suggests that the morris was an important facet of entertainment in the annual cycle of at least certain communities. To what extent the performance of the dancing was continuous at any given location we cannot, for the want of sufficient source material, offer any concrete conclusions. It would seem logical, however, that the

morris did not merely appear full-blown at the beginning of the eighteenth century and we may therefore postulate the existence of a rural-based tradition extending backwards into the previous century at the very least.<sup>6</sup> This pedigree encompasses radical and sometimes rapid technological development, both in industry and agriculture, in addition to an expanding population increasingly prone to migration and emigration and alternating periods of, on the one hand dearth and starvation and, on the other prosperity and plenty.<sup>7</sup> Given these elements it becomes obvious that the social and economic factors which would have determined the continuation or abandonment (no doubt in some cases merely temporary) of performance were in a state of flux and it is therefore misleading to formulate inflexible generalisations.

Each performance of a morris team would have been (and still is) subject to a number of mitigating factors: the ability to raise a side of a suitable standard and more importantly a musician,<sup>8</sup> the state of the weather; the degree of potential reward, determined by the number of status of the onlookers; the physical state of the dancers themselves<sup>9</sup> and many others. This is not to suggest that the only factors in play were negative ones, but rather to observe the obvious yet seldom stated fact that every performance (indeed every dance) given by a morris side is a culmination of many variable circumstances, perceptions and motivations generated both from within the group of participants and from external social and cultural pressures.

Given these manifold temporal and geographical fluctuations it is obvious that in a paper of this length it will not be possible to present a comprehensive examination of those factors which appear, to me at least, to have most influenced the morris in performance.

Many of these social variables, both positive and negative, in general and more specific contexts I have analysed elsewhere<sup>10</sup> and hope to elaborate at greater length at some future date. At present it is possible only to briefly outline some of the more overt factors. One point in favour of the heavier weighting of source material, concerning the second half of the nineteenth century, is that it enables us to trace in some detail the decline of the morris as it gradually became less of an integral facet of community life and, it is largely for this reason, that I have chosen to elaborate on certain aspects of performance during a time span of approximately one hundred years prior to the outbreak of the First World War.

By correlating the fortunes of the dance sides with what appear at least to have been disruptive and negative trends within the society of the region, it becomes possible to suggest factors which seem likely to have contributed to the virtual disappearance of the morris in a community context before respectability was regained for it by the educated urban folklorists during the first decade of this century.<sup>11</sup> These would have to include economic fluctuations in the agricultural base and hence the degree of largesses available to those members of a community from whom it was expected by the performers. Emigration to the colonies and other areas, which was increasingly available to craftsmen and agricultural workers at subsidised rates of passage from at least the eighteen-thirties and continuing, despite fluctuations in intensity, until the outbreak of war in 1914.<sup>12</sup> The establishment of the railway network by about eighteen-seventy provided increased opportunities both for trips away from the home area at holiday times and hence a reduction in potential patronage for morris sides performing in communities

where there was no great attraction to entice visitors,<sup>13</sup> and also for migration to the larger centres of industry in search of employment, especially for the younger men to whom the onus of continuation of the dancing should have passed.<sup>14</sup> The increasing tendency was towards a "taming" of the Whitsuntide holiday from one of extended license and unrestrained celebration to one of "rational recreation" and even teetotalism as the century progressed.<sup>15</sup> The social fabric of community was disrupted by the agitation of the National Agricultural Labourers Union during the 1870s<sup>16</sup> and there was an increase in the amount of alternative leisure pursuits available to the labouring classes.<sup>17</sup>

In order to establish the position of the men who were dancers in the social hierarchy of the communities in which they lived, worked and played it is necessary to know how they earned their daily bread. Having identified approximately 80% of the men known to have danced in the rural-based morris sides in the south Midlands prior to 1914, at least one census year or in the parish registers at either the date of their marriage or the registration of the baptism of at least one child,<sup>18</sup> it is obvious that the majority of dancers were employed on the land as labourers, carters, shepherds, woodmen and the like. There are of course regional variations: in the quarrying areas to the east of Oxford, the so-called Redlands of north Oxfordshire and in isolated pockets of stone throughout the rest of the region we find a number of dancers employed in stone-related jobs such as mason, mason's labourer or quarryman. Similarly, in the small manufacturing towns such as Brackley, Abingdon and Bidford there were dancers who were employed in shoe-making, fellmongering and the odd example of men working for the railway companies. Even where a man's chief occupation might be,

for example, carpenter or blacksmith he would probably have spent at least part of his working life on the farms, perhaps as a youngster<sup>19</sup> but more especially at labour-intensive periods such as harvest time. Throughout our area community life was intimately bound to the cultivation of the soil for, with minor variations, the agricultural propensity of these south Midland counties was overwhelmingly arable.

Farms throughout the region tended on the whole to be fairly small in size and to keep very few men in full-time employment and hence a degree of geographical mobility was necessary. In the village of Kencot for example - which fielded a morris side probably during the 1830s or 1840s - there were only four farms in 1851. Out of a total population of two hundred and six souls three of these farmers between them gave work to twenty-five men, while the fourth employed none at all.<sup>20</sup> Albert Townsend, who kept the Elephant and Castle at Bampton for many years earlier this century, said of the local agricultural labourers, "some of 'em used to walk from 'ere to Kelmscot",<sup>21</sup> a journey of six miles each morning and evening which reflects the lack of sufficient suitable work in their home parish. This situation often meant that alternative occupations had to be pursued and a man might change jobs frequently within a single community. Raphael Samuel's work on Headington Quarry has perhaps shown this most explicitly,<sup>22</sup> with oral testimony indicating a variety which cannot be gleaned from primary official sources such as the decadal census enumeration books,<sup>23</sup> the Anglican parish registers and the reports of local and quarter sessions which may be found in most local newspapers during the nineteenth century. These sources, however flawed, nevertheless tend to note the contemporary occupation of at least the adult males where they

impinge upon the recorded flow of officialdom and thereby provide virtually the sum total of the extant evidence which may be used to illuminate the social structure of the communities with which we are concerned. Lamentably the sources are subject to the often idiosyncratic and indiscriminate use of occupational descriptions by the individual enumerator, registrar or reporter and may thus be deceptive and conceal innumerable periodic fluctuations. The terms agricultural labourer, field labourer, farm boy, wood labourer, woodman and sometimes simply labourer cannot begin to describe the type of work pursued, the seasonal variation of the work, the degree of geographical mobility or the frequency of unemployment. Other designations such as agricultural carter, cowman or shepherd offer an impression which is a little more concrete but again fail to consider periodic fluctuations.

Sometimes however it is broadly possible to pursue a man as his occupational bias undergoes (by and large minor) temporal transformations. The Finstock dancer Edward Oliver for example is recorded over the twenty-one years covered by the census between 1851 and 1871 as "dealer in fruit" then "woodman" and finally "hawker".<sup>24</sup> Richard Bond at Idbury went from woodman in 1851 to agricultural labourer ten years later and then back to woodman in 1871;<sup>25</sup> while his brother Benjamin (as far as we know not a dancer) would appear to have elevated his status from field labourer to carter between 1851 and 1861.<sup>26</sup> Another of the Finstock dancers, Charles Dore, pursuing the family trade of carpenter in 1851 and 1861 was enumerated as a sawyer ten years later which implies a reduction in occupational status.<sup>27</sup> William Bellinger, one of three brothers who danced in the morris side at Brize Norton - probably during the 1840s - told Carter that his brothers Henry and

Charles worked as quarrymen yet the 1871 census returns show that they both were agricultural labourers at this date. This handful of examples and the numerous others which could be cited merely confirms the necessity for occupational flexibility in order to exploit the fluctuating patterns of employment in operation in a given locality over a period of time.

I have stated that during the period under examination the known tradition bearers of the morris were overwhelmingly drawn from the pool of manual labourers and small craftsmen, yet there is a certain amount of evidence to suggest a degree of commingling within specific morris sides between men from several levels of the social hierarchy. It is impossible to accurately define the often minute gradations within a defunct societal structure from the limited amount of evidence currently available and to do so would require a knowledge of individual perceptions and expectations which is largely denied us. These factors are, however, sometimes implied in the sources and an example will later be found in the brief examination of marriage patterns, yet a qualitative statement is elusive. Nevertheless, in 1886 the antiquarian George Rowell recalled that at Kirtlington during the early part of the century it was sometimes the case that the sons of farmers - undoubtedly perceived by the community as socially superior to the labourers who formed the basis of the dance side - "did not decline joining the dancers, but rather prided themselves on being selected as one of them".<sup>28</sup> It may have been that the transformation of labour relations between farmer and employees engendered by enclosure and the accompanying intensification of agricultural production techniques<sup>29</sup> had not by that date yet created the social rift which is apparent during the latter half of the century. That there were

gradations within the generic group labelled "farmer" is evident from two examples of men involved with the morris around the middle years of the nineteenth century.<sup>30</sup> Masfen Hart, a dancer in the same Brize Norton team as the Bellinger brothers, was born the son of a farmer at Stonelands near Asthall Leigh in 1813.<sup>31</sup> By 1833 he had married and moved to Brize Norton, where he is recorded in the parish registers at the baptism of a daughter as a labourer, implying a reduction in status.<sup>32</sup> This trend was rectified by 1841 when he is enumerated as a carrier,<sup>33</sup> a trade with a far greater degree of security and remuneration than that of a labourer. By 1851, Hart was living in Little Minster Lovell where he farmed three acres and employed one man and the route by which this social elevation was achieved appears, at least partially, to have been the acquisition of land on the Chartist estate at Minster Lovell.<sup>34</sup> Assuming that the dancer and the Mr. Hart of Brize Norton who gave a meadow party during May 1848, at which nearly forty couples danced,<sup>35</sup> are one and the same, he would appear to have already gained a certain degree of social status locally by this date. By 1852, Hart was living in the schoolhouse at Charterville where he was responsible for the cultivation of empty allotments on the estate.<sup>36</sup> Thomas Langford, piper for teams at Finstock and Ascot-under-Wychwood, was described as a farmer of four acres in 1851 and as "landed proprietor" ten years later.<sup>37</sup> Certainly both of these men appear to have been smallholders, farming on a very small scale indeed; and the problems inherent in any attempt to define perceived status within a given community is illuminated by these examples.

Obviously a farmer of two hundred acres who employed twenty-five men would have been accorded greater respect than those in a similar position to the two dancers cited above; yet the distinction between such smallholders and the day-rate labouring group, to which

the majority of dancers active during the nineteenth century belonged, is considerably blurred. The problem is further compounded by the example of Masfen Hart: born the son of a farmer yet by the age of twenty working as a labourer.

This predominant occupational mode was however conducive to the pursuance of the morris dancing, for Whitsun and the preparation of the morris for public performance was slotted into the lull in the annual agricultural cycle which fell between the spring sowing and the hay harvest in the early summer.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, in those communities where men were predominantly employed in wood-related trades the seasonal nature of the work meant that these men were likewise available to dance at Whitsun, for the important task of stripping the bark from the trees in order to obtain flax to be used in tanning started in March and lasted for about six weeks. Samuel has noted that:

"[Flawing] was a major harvest, drawing extra hands from afar, as well as providing employment for woodlanders themselves ..."<sup>39</sup>

Once again this distorts the evidence of the census which, other than in 1841,<sup>40</sup> was normally taken about the beginning of April.<sup>41</sup> Small craftsmen and artisans, generally self-employed, were better able to regulate their free time and would also have been in a position to dance with the morris sides. Amongst those men in this latter category were William Jaycock, a journeyman blacksmith at Stoke Lyne; the Walton family at Adderbury, a long line of stonemasons; several of the Dore family at Finstock who were carpenters; and the weaver Edwin Clay at Brailles. Such men would normally have greater job security for, with a trade, it was possible to travel elsewhere during a localised depression in the knowledge that work might be easier to obtain than for an unskilled labourer.<sup>42</sup>

In both the arable and the woodland areas the slack period which followed the spring sowing and flaxing forced many men and women who had been thrown out of work to migrate in search of employment. Some of these journeyed eastwards to assist with the earlier-ripening hay or to work in the market gardens around London and the Home Counties and would then work their way homewards in time for the local hay harvest which, given normal weather conditions, occurred most often during June. In order to raise extra cash on these jaunts some of the dancers and musicians would busk in the streets and, from the frequency with which antiquarian writers record the sighting of whole teams of dancers from the rural areas in the vicinity of London during the early summer, it might be argued that from as early as the latter half of the eighteenth century the morris was viewed by the performers as a possession to be exploited.<sup>43</sup> By implication this commercialisation of the morris might be cited to argue against the theories of dancing for the sake of tradition and continuity with the past, fertility magic and luck-bringing so beloved of the early collectors and still rife today. So, within the varied and variable occupational structure of any given community, the evidence points to periods of unemployment and inactivity for many of the labouring groups to which the dancers belonged. I have shown how the official sources may be deceptive when considering work patterns and, despite the limited recording of grass-roots history, the odd piece of oral evidence may shed some light. I interviewed Martha Druce, the grand-daughter of Ducklington dancer Joseph Druce, on 29 August 1981 and, when showing her the entries concerning her grandfather from the census, she smiled and commented:

"My grandfather didn't work much .... He might have put down that he was a farm labourer but he didn't do much .... I suppose he got by without ...."

The provision of sufficient food with which to feed himself and his family must have been a difficult task for the majority of the labouring classes during the nineteenth century. In 1884 the social commentator Richard Heath had this to say about the diet of the average agricultural labourer:

"... it is manifest that the wages which have been given to the Agricultural Labourer during the greater part of this century - 7s., 8s. or the utmost 9s. or 10s. have meant starvation during the lifetime of at least one generation and a portion of two others. For be it remembered that on these miserable sums not one person, but very frequently four or five have had to live. It was only done by reducing the quantity of bread, bacon and beer, and taking in their place gruel, potatoes, suet and rice puddings, with decoctions of washed-out tea leaves ..." 44

If a man was un- or underemployed for any length of time then other means of providing sustenance would have to be found. Of course, in a rural area there are many natural foods to be had free for the taking but, in addition, there is much which is illegal and this includes the majority of meat which would have been found in a labourer's diet. There is much evidence to suggest that poaching was not only common but, in many cases, absolutely necessary for survival. In a rare, though no doubt biased, description of one of our morris villages, the Reverend J. C. Young wrote of the parish of Ilmington in 1857 that it was one of the most disreputable in the county of Warwickshire:

"... Conviction in the graver offences against the law, such as burglary, sheep stealing and agrarian outrages have not been infrequent: while cases of poaching, brawling, drunkenness, adultery and fornication have been rather the rule than the exception ..." 45

George "Brewer" Pratley of Finstock, in an interview with Michael Heaney on 26 August 1981, told how:

"... Men would get gamekeepers drunk at the Waterloo Arms so they could go off and poach. This was necessary as they had no money to buy food ..." 46

This latter statement is confirmed by oral testimony recorded by Samuel at Headington Quarry; and many instances are in evidence amongst the reports of local petty sessions. Those unlucky enough to have been caught in the act of attempted poaching include the dancers Henry Smith of Shipton-under-Wychwood, charged in 1865 with "trespassing on certain lands in the occupation of Thomas Brookes, in search of game - Fined 9s 6d and costs"; Edward Heydon of Stoke Lyne in 1880 for "using a gun for killing hares" and fined f5 and costs 10s 9d or six weeks; and William Search of Rissington in 1882, again with "trespassing in search of game - fined 5s and costs 5s." 47 Obviously this is something which by its very illicit nature is impossible to quantify, yet despite often considerable penalties if convicted the evidence suggests that poaching in its many forms was rife.

The physical performance of the dancing is dependent upon certain basic human factors. To expend vast quantities of energy over sustained periods the body needs to be in reasonable health and well-nourished. Even allowing that much of the morris was performed under the influence of alcohol and, as William Kimber of Headington Quarry once remarked, "You were never a morris dancer unless you had plenty of beer, there was no time for food," 48 the body must be adequately fed beforehand. Most teams consisted of a bare minimum of six dancers, although there was sometimes a spare man who was able to step into the set to spell a dancer when he needed a rest, and again this implies a degree of economic determinism on the part of the organisers. What this meant



in practice was that a man would have been obliged to perform almost every dance, perhaps for twelve hours a day overall, sometimes for five or more days in succession, in addition to walking to the dancing venue when performing outside of their home parish. It is apparent that the physical condition of the dancers, especially when in their prime, must have been good. The Reverend James Fraser, one of the Assistant Commissioners involved with the Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture, conducted in 1867, wrote of the typical cottage of the rural labourer:

"... It is impossible to exaggerate the ill effects of such a state of things in every aspect, physical, social, economical, moral, intellectual. Physically, a ruinous, ill-drained cottage, cribbed, cabin'd, confined, and overcrowded, generates any amount of disease, fevers of every type, catarrh, rheumatism, as well as intensifies to the utmost that tendency to scrofula and phthisis which, from their frequent intermarriages and their low diet, abound so largely among the poor ..." 49

Yet despite this and similar evidence I have suggested that the men who were dancers must have been relatively healthy. The nature of the work would of course have developed the physique during the formative years, although both occupational and social conditions appear to have often taken their toll on the body in later life. 50 It might be acceptable to suggest that a man would have been at peak physical condition between the ages of perhaps fifteen and thirty-five. Joseph Druce said that at Ducklington the men did not join the morris team until they were aged about twenty<sup>51</sup> and given that the right to dance often passed from father to son, this would seem to be an age conducive to the supplanting of one generation by the next. It is however impossible to offer any generalisations, for there were obviously many variations on the mode of organisation within different dance teams. In addition to that of ongoing

generational continuity there are examples of a side composed of "Little Boys", seen at Sherborne Manor in 1785<sup>52</sup> and others consisting of father and six sons, as at Salperton.<sup>53</sup> Given these latter variations it is difficult to reconcile the obvious economic advantages for the mentor of tractable young dancers with the often ascribed motivation of continuity for the sake of tradition. Here again, generalisations must be eschewed for there were undoubtedly a number of perhaps complex motivations involved and these are likely to have undergone transformation over time.

The fact that as a rule each community in which there was a history of dancing<sup>54</sup> possessed only one morris side at any given time suggests that there were factors in operation of a delimiting nature. From the parish registers it is possible to indicate a trend within many teams towards a close-knit kin structure and it is my contention that this was the single most important qualification for admission into the culturally-diverting and potentially-lucrative morris fraternity. In any examination of patterns of intermarriage there has to be an initial awareness of the basic chicken and egg question: did a man marry into one of the main dancing families and then get invited to participate in the tangible benefits associated with the morris, or was he already a dancer and by socialising with others in the side forge a liaison with the daughter or sister of one of his fellow dancers? No doubt there were examples of both forms, although the limited evidence on extant dates of both dance sides and the specific involvement of individual dancers prevents any definitive statement. Within a socially delimited community such as a village or town segment like Ock Street in Abingdon there would have been a great familiarity with other local families and any number of potential marriage

partners within any given generation. These would include incoming migrants as well as long-settled groups; and many of the nineteenth century dancers were among this former section of society.<sup>55</sup> There is a suggestion of a trend towards the forging of marriages within the same social group and this would have presumably reinforced the hierarchical structure of community. In a sample of six marriages between 1864 and 1873 amongst families possessing surnames associated with the morris at Brackley for example, four were between the offspring of labourers, one involved the son of the Brackley morris leader Timothy Howard, a horsekeeper, and the daughter of a carpenter, and the sixth was between the son of a carpenter and the daughter of a tailor.<sup>56</sup> The implication is that here, and at Wheatley amongst other communities, there was even a clear distinction between the manual labourers and the artisans. This was not however an inviolable rule and evidence from elsewhere shows inter-marriage amongst these two social groups.

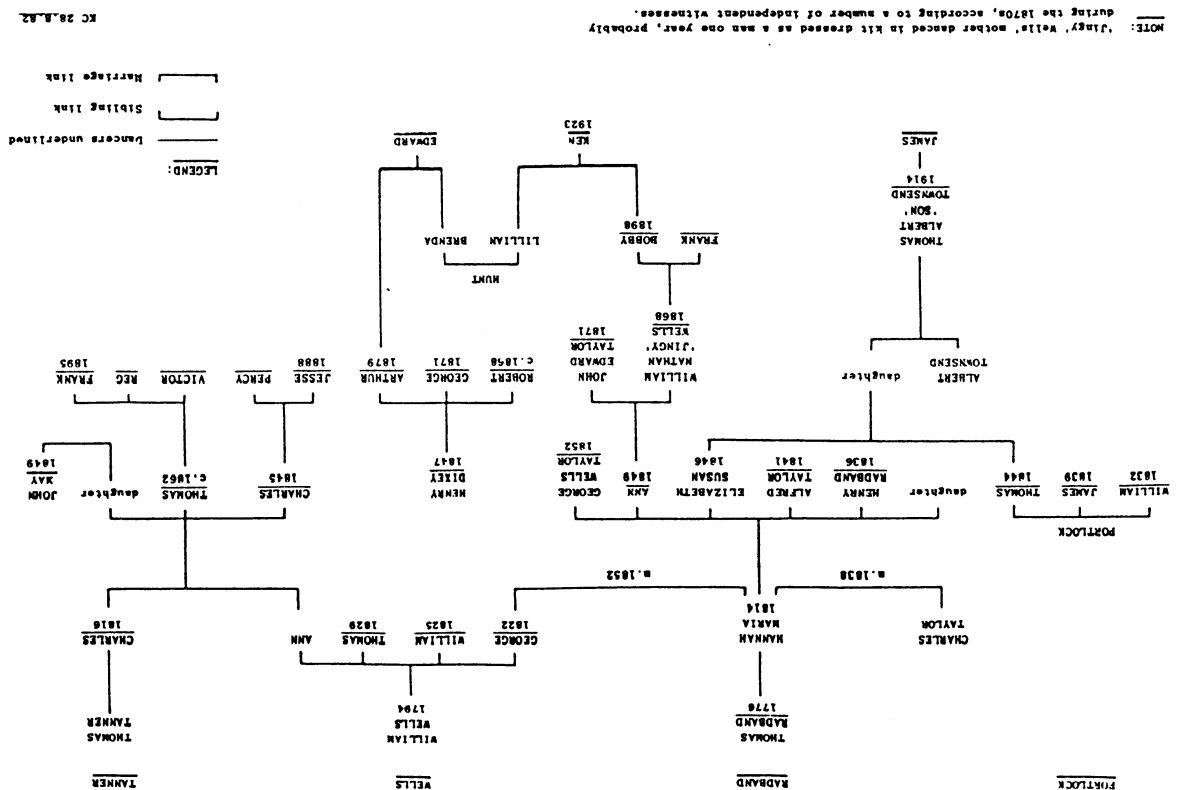
Unfortunately we possess far too few names of dancers involved with a given team over two or more generations to reach any definite conclusions about the original question. Where such material exists it is possible to suggest that certain families within a community were among the chief tradition bearers and to indicate familial ties between them and other dancers in the local morris. I have suggested in a forthcoming paper for example that the Bason family was central to the tradition at Ducklington.<sup>57</sup> In this village there were three distinct dance sides around the middle years of the nineteenth century. In one of these, members of two generations of the Bason family were involved, one as a sword-bearer at a stage when this role was often taken by an old dancer; while William Fisher and Joseph Druce senior, fathers of dancers in both other

teams, had married into the Bason family. That the three sides existed synchronously and in apparent harmony<sup>58</sup> implies at least an internal sanctioning of the situation. At Eynsham, where admittedly there is some confusion over the date at which the morris and mumming was merged and the same men performed both customs, it can be shown that Fred Harwood, dancer both pre and post World War One and father of two later Eynsham dancers, married the daughter of Fred Humphries, named as one of the old mummers to James Madison Carpenter.<sup>59</sup> Ned Harris, again spanning the war, married into the Harwood family; while Ern May, son of a dancer of the same name and himself a dancer during the 1920s, married the daughter of another dancer Thomas Watkins. Such examples are legion and include at least one marriage forged between families involved with two separate dance teams. Ann Rolfe, sister of four dancers at Bucknell, married William Ring of Wheatley and, although we cannot be sure that William was himself a dancer, their son James certainly was a member of this latter side.<sup>60</sup>

Largely due to the foresight of William "Jingy" Wells, who in 1914 committed to paper many memories of the morris from both his older relatives and himself, we know the names of virtually all the dancers, musicians and fools at Bampton from around 1840 onwards and, for this reason, it would seem logical to use this community as a test case for patterns of intermarriage. It might be argued that because of its longevity the morris here is a special case, but traditions in other areas held on just as tenaciously, until around 1900 or so, at Brackley, Eynsham, Bledington and Abingdon for example, and only a little less so at Headington Quarry, Wheatley, Bucknell, Sherborne, Longborough and in many other places.

290

SIMPLIFIED SCHEME SHOWING INTER-MARRIAGE AND CONTINUITY OVER SIX GENERATIONS WITHIN THE MORRIS AT BAMPTON, OXFORDSHIRE



If we possessed more names of dancers in these sides then it seems likely that a similar pattern to that at Bampton would emerge.

"Jingy" Wells was interviewed by Peter Kennedy in 1952 and he had this to say concerning the longevity of the morris at Bampton:

"One hundred years ago my grandfather was head of the morris ... a century ago. His grandfather Thomas Wells was head of the morris a hundred years before that ..." 61

His timing is a little confused but "Thomas Wells" would almost certainly have been active in the morris around 1800. Because of the illegitimacy which was prevalent within the family, it seems likely that the man to whom he refers as his grandfather's grandfather is actually his grandmother's father Thomas Radband, and that he is distorting the facts for the sake of decorum. Radband was born in 1776 and was the piper for the team about the turn of the eighteenth century.<sup>62</sup> Assuming Wells' assertion to be correct - and this is confirmed by examples from elsewhere: George Arthur at Ilmington, Billy Brown at North Leigh and so on - he fulfilled the dual roles of musician (and hence the most indispensable member of a dance side) and leader or organiser. From the available evidence the Radband family appear to have been the central strand around which dancers from other families were drawn. The chief protagonist in this saga during the first half of the nineteenth century is Thomas' daughter Hannah Maria Radband, baptised in 1814. By the time of her first marriage she already had two illegitimate children; and it is apparent from the frequency of registration of base-born offspring that this was a frequent and even sanctioned facet of community experience. One of Hannah's children, Henry "Sarah" Radband, born in 1836, later became one of the dancers<sup>63</sup> and then took over as cake carrier from his step father, probably during the

1880s<sup>64</sup> and continued in this role until the outbreak of war in 1914. Hannah Maria married Charles Taylor in 1838 and they had one son, Alfred "Jarby" Taylor, of whom "Jingy" later said:

"Uncle Alf was supposed to be the best dancer as ever danced in the morris. Heel and toes, he was a good dancer ..." <sup>65</sup>

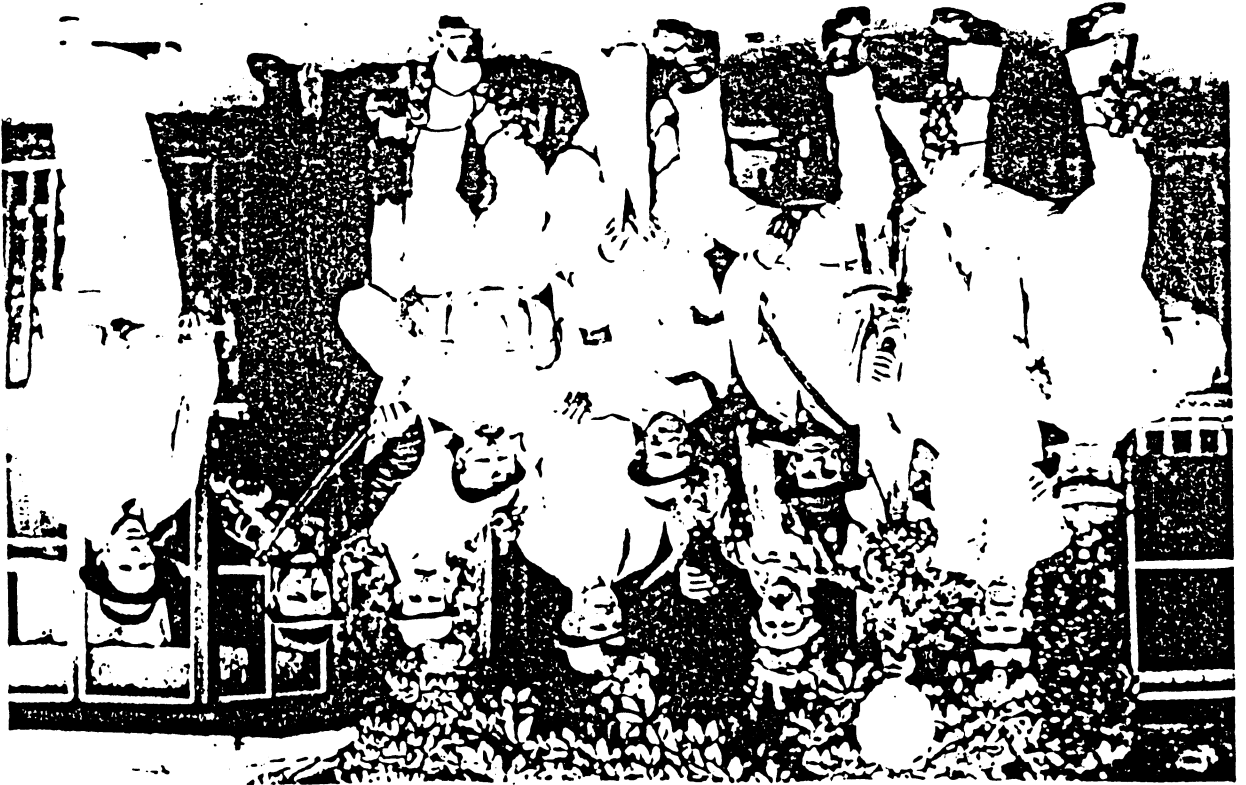
Charles Taylor died in 1844 and Hannah Maria subsequently gave birth to three more illegitimate children: two daughters, Elizabeth Susan in 1846 and Ann in 1849, and a son in 1852. Significantly, this son was baptised George Wells Taylor, for the naming of an illegitimate child by the surname of its real or supposed father was a common practice during the last century. In Ducklington for example, it is probably significant that the foremanship of one morris team passed from John Hall to the base-born Robert Hall Jordan. <sup>66</sup>

The father of Hannah's final child, also named George Wells, was a lodger with her at the date of the 1851 census and married her four months after the baptism of their son. This was the man referred to by "Jingy" as his grandfather who was head of the morris around the middle of the nineteenth century and here we have an example of the leadership passing from Thomas Radband<sup>67</sup> to the most suitable male successor, his son-in-law. Given the lack of sources, we cannot say for how long Hannah Maria and George Wells had cohabited (perhaps from the date of death of her former husband in 1844), but since he was already aged thirty when he married it seems likely that he was already a dancer prior to 1852. In this respect it is possible to indicate an earlier link between the Wells family and the carriers of the morris tradition in Bampton. Other than the Radbands, it is the Tanner family who figure largest in the history of the team. As early as 1837, Charles Tanner, born in 1816 and also claiming to have been "head morris dancer" in his

younger days, <sup>68</sup> married George Wells' sister Ann, after apparently fathering an illegitimate child on her in the previous year. <sup>69</sup> Two other of her brothers - William Wells, born 1825 and buried 1863, and Thomas Wells, born 1829 and buried 1857 - were also dancers and given their birthdates it looks as if this would have followed, and presumably have been influenced by, the marriage of their sister to Charles Tanner.

In the census year 1861, we find a household consisting of George and Hannah Wells, his son George Taylor (still officially referred to by his surname at the time of baptism), and his two stepsons Henry Radband and Alfred Taylor: four men who feature prominently in the morris during the century. Also living with them was Elizabeth Taylor who around 1868 married Thomas Portlock, born 1844 and another of the dancers. Two of Portlock's brothers also danced: William, born 1832 and James, born 1839. <sup>70</sup> Hannah's daughter Ann was the mother of William Nathan "Jingy" Wells and John Edward Taylor, <sup>71</sup> both of whom joined the morris side in 1887. "Jingy" of course later became the mentor and chief informant on the tradition and used his family connections and leverage as musician to successfully exploit the tangible benefits to be had from the early collectors. <sup>72</sup> John danced this one year only and then left to live in London. <sup>73</sup> There was direct continuity via "Jingy" through two more generations: his sons Frank and Bobby danced after the First War, <sup>74</sup> while Bobby's son Ken danced from 1937 and into the Second War.

The Tanner family likewise provided generational continuity. One of Charles' sons was a dancer - also named Charles, born 1846 and involved first as a dancer then as ragman until the First War brought the morris to a halt; <sup>75</sup> while his cousin Thomas, born



Illustr. 4. Bampton Morris Dancers, Whit Monday, 1897. Standing (left to right): George "Nipper" Dixey, William "Jingy" Wells (fool), Robert "Grank" Dixey, Joey Rouse, Dick Butler (fiddle), Charles "Cocky" Tanner (ragman, holding the bacca pipes). Seated (left to right): Philip Dewe, Henry "Sarah" Radband (cake carrier), George "Chackler" Wells Taylor, Thomas "Buscot" Tanner.

around 1850 continued to dance until 1914, well into his sixties. Sons of both men were subsequently involved in the tradition, although none had the staying power of their fathers: Charles' sons Jesse and Percy, and Thomas' sons John, Victor, Reg and Frank were dancers at various stages, and direct continuity only came to an end at the outbreak of the Second War. John May, born 1849, married another of Charles senior's daughters and was also a dancer.

Other potential family links may be only suggested: Wells married Rouse, Tanner married Dewe, Wells married Brooks and so on, with men of these latter surnames in the side at one stage or another during the nineteenth century; although again we must be aware of the chicken and egg question. More demonstrable is the continuity over several generations. The ongoing participation of the Radband, Wells and Tanner families has already been indicated, while in the Dixey family Henry, born 1847, was a dancer and was followed by his sons Robert, George and Arthur before the First War, then by Arthur's son Ted during the 1940s and presently by Arthur's grand-son Martin Ferguson, who dances for the Shergolds.

Bampton and Weald was one of the larger communities in the south Midland counties and the close-knit kin structures in combination with other motivations - perhaps economic, cultural diversion and, almost certainly, a sense of pride which might be equated with the elusive sense of tradition for tradition's sake, reinforced by the stability of a regular musician since around 1880<sup>76</sup> - assured a continuance of the dancing on a regular basis. From the census returns it is possible to show that in a number of the smaller communities there was a trend towards a reduction in the number of households having surnames associated with the local morris. At Finstock for example, where in 1851 there were sixteen households where the head was

named Dore, Langford, Oliver, Turner and Stratford, twenty years later there were a mere seven. At Oakley in Buckinghamshire there was a similar trend, from fourteen households named Hawes, Ing and Shirley in 1851 to seven (with no one named Ing then in the village) in 1871. The same process is apparent elsewhere within our area and the implications for the transmission of the morris within the immediate family group are obvious and this dilution of community ties may well have hastened the disappearance of the morris in certain localities.

It is obvious that some men stepped in to dance having married into one of the organising families and left it at that, with their surname passing out of active involvement after one generation. Others may have had no specific kin ties at all and have been drawn from the circle of friends and associates within the immediate peer group. But just as obvious, at Bampton as indicated above, three generations of Arthurs at Ilmington, three or more of Rolfes at Bucknell and at least six of Hemmings at Abingdon, the morris was considered sufficiently important within certain families to warrant transmitting the tunes and keeping the dances in practice, even where there was no external encouragement. The reasons for this are unclear and are likely to have varied from one individual to the next. There is no doubt that at times during the nineteenth century the morris was often externally viewed with favour. Many of the local newspapers give a degree of coverage to the performance of the dancing, often in inverse proportion to the frequency of observation.<sup>77</sup> From 1858 onwards the team at Bampton are consistently reported in one or another of the Oxford and Witney papers and this heaping of accolades, however restrained at times, may well have contributed to the longevity of the morris in this community.

In this paper I have briefly outlined a number of important historical facets of the society in which the morris as a cultural phenomenon occurred. I have indicated the status and social standing of the majority of dancers within their communities: manual workers towards the bottom end of the social hierarchy, a little above the paupers and unemployed and even finding themselves in these situations at times.<sup>78</sup> The borderline between existence and near-starvation on which much of the labouring population appear to have lived meant that a high proportion of children died at an early age and of those males who did survive not all would have been suitable to become dancers. This would have been exacerbated during periods of economic dearth which affected the community as a whole and thereby produced a situation whereby the very period during which the morris could be exploited to provide extra sustenance coincided with a reduction of potential largesse for the performers.<sup>79</sup>

At the beginning of his published works, Sharp noted that the right to dance the morris was passed on to a select group by invitation of the leader of the side<sup>80</sup> and the evidence of intermarriage both defines the 'select group' and suggests that this was indeed the norm. However, whereas Sharp saw this as a facet of dancing for the sake of tradition and custom, I have tried to argue that in view of the social milieu in which most of the rural morris was performed, the dancing was jealously guarded because of its potential as a means of extra income, other tangible benefits such as alcohol and food donated by entertained patrons and cultural diversion for the performers themselves in a society where, for men of such low social status, such opportunities were normally restricted.

There is a great danger inherent in specialisation: that is of isolating the favoured subject - in this instance the performers of a specific cultural phenomenon - from the numerous other factors in operation within the work/leisure pattern of the society under review. Intense physical labour, however intermittent, may be relieved by participation in one or another form of diversion. The choice is largely governed by individual inclination, talent and resources, but it is obvious that a man might wear many hats. He may be a singer, alehouse patron, cricketer, lover, fighter, mummer, darts player, dancer, horticulturalist, musician and probably a combination of some or all of these and many others. The application of official and popular written sources and the more vital oral interview makes it possible to restore a degree of humanity to the often anonymous and homogeneous sector of society commonly known as 'the folk'.

## NOTES

1. The majority of morris-related material collected by Carter is contained in Manning MSS: Bodleian MS Top. Oxon d.200. See also Percy Manning, 'Some Oxfordshire Seasonal Festivals', Folk-Lore, VIII (1897), 307-324 and Percy Manning, 'Stray Notes on Oxfordshire Folklore', Folk-Lore, XIII (1902), 288-295
2. The anecdotes are generally historically rather worthless. For a typical example see Keith Chandler, 'The Morris at Wyford, Buckinghamshire', Morris Matters, 5, No.1 (1982), 4
3. The site of performance is not necessarily the indigenous location of the observed morris team.
4. The Great Diurnal of Nicholas Blundell of Little Crosby, Lancashire, edited by J. J. Bagley, transcribed and annotated by Frank Tyrer, 2 vols (Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1968-70), I, 35
5. Gloucestershire C.R.O., ref. D/678/FAM/96D. For an analysis of the relevant account book see Keith Chandler, 'Morris dancing in the eighteenth-century: a newly discovered source', Love and Language, forthcoming.

6. For a discussion of the dangers inherent in the idea of the "rural myth", however, see Michael Pickering, Village Song and Culture, (London and Canberra: Croom Helm, 1982), especially pages 19, 164 and 165
7. To what extent the benefits of prosperity filtered down to the community members at the bottom of the social scale we cannot say with certainty.
8. For examples of men lamenting the fact of fielding a team of inferior quality see Cecil Sharp, The Morris Book, Volume 5 (London: Novello, 1924), p.77, and Cecil Sharp, Folk Dance Notes, (unpublished MS, deposited in Clare College, Cambridge), volume 1, folio 141. For the problems of getting a musician at Bampton see the letter from William "Jingy" Wells to Douglas Kennedy, 3 February 1922, 'The Writings of "Jingy" Wells', Folk Music Journal 2, No.1, (1970), 4
9. For example if the dancers were given too much alcohol and could not continue dancing. See, for example, the letter from Curtis to D'Arcy Ferrers, 6 January 1886, in Ferrers MS (unpublished), deposited in Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, GRQ/35
10. See, for example, my unpublished B.A. dissertation, University of Lancaster, 1979, 'Morris Dancing in the South Midlands: A Social History'; and 'Morris Dancing at Brackley: A Study in Longevity', English Dance and Song, 43, No.1, (1981), 16-18
11. For a brief review of the process involved see Roy Donnett, 'The Cotswold Morris in the Twentieth Century', Traditional Dance Volume One: Proceedings of the Traditional Dance Conference held at Crewe and Alsager College of Higher Education, 28 March 1981, edited by Theresa Buckland (Alsager: Crewe and Alsager College of Higher Education, 1982)
12. For some general examples see Pamela Horn, 'Agricultural Trade Unionism and Emigration', The Historical Journal, XV, No.1, (1972); and Ross Duncan, 'Case Studies in Emigration: Cornwall, Gloucestershire and New South Wales, 1877-1886', The Economic History Review, second series, XVI, No.2, (1963). For specific negative effects on south Midland morris sides see Cecil Sharp, Folk Dance Notes, op.cit., volume IV, folio 92 for Wyford, and volume IV, folio 12a for Idbury.
13. Conversely, this would have given an incentive to those teams which were able to exploit the situation. William Walton said that the sides from Adderbury, Long Handborough and Wooton always danced at Banbury Fair during Whit week (Cecil Sharp, Folk Dance Notes, op. cit., volume IV, folio 58); while local newspapers describe the visitors to Bampton on Whit Monday as, for example, "many visitors were present in the town as on similar occasions" (Witney Express, 1 June 1882, p.8) and "a multitude of people" (ibid, 17 May 1883, p.5). A correspondent to the Bicester Advertiser and Brackley Observer wrote in 1882, "... I suppose the railway is the real aggressor in curtailing village feasts and festivals." (9 June 1882, p.4). For a succinct overview of the progress of railway development during the nineteenth century see, The Oxford Region, Trevor Rowley, editor (Oxford University Department for External Studies, 1980), pp.60-61.
14. For example William "Jingy" Wells' brother John, who left Bampton to live in London in 1887 when aged sixteen.

15. This has been ably and convincingly documented for Oxfordshire by Alun Howkins in *Whitsun in Nineteenth Century Oxfordshire* (Oxford: History Workshop Pamphlet No.8, 1972) and 'The Taming of Whitsun: The Changing Face of a Nineteenth-Century Rural Holiday', in *Popular Culture and Class Conflict 1590 - 1914: Explorations in the History of Labour and Leisure*, edited by Eileen and Stephen Yeo, (Brighton: Harvester, 1981) pp.187-208
16. See Pamela Horn, 'Agricultural Trade Unionism in Oxfordshire', in *Rural Discontent in Nineteenth Century Britain*, edited by J. P. D. Dunbabin, (London: Faber, 1974); J. P. D. Dunbabin, 'The Incidence and Organisation of Agricultural Trade Unionism in the 1870s', *Agricultural History Review*, XVI, (1968); and Pamela Horn, *Agricultural Trade Unionism in Oxfordshire*, (Oxfordshire Record Society, volume XLVIII, 1974)
17. For example cricket and flower shows. See Alun Howkins, op.cit.
18. For much of the nineteenth century the Anglican parish registers record the occupation of the fathers in the baptism register and often of both parties in the marriage register.
19. William "Merry" Kimber of Headington Quarry for example, who left school at the age of nine and worked as a bird scarer, (Anon. 'Notes on William Kimber', Vaughan Williams Library, Lib. Coll: AL/KIMBER.)
20. A. S. T. Fisher, *The History of Kencot Oxfordshire* (privately printed, no date), p.110. For the original census enumeration books see P.R.O. reference HO.107.1731
21. Constant Billy. *Music and Memories of a Morris-man II. William Wells (fiddler)*. Folktracks tape FSA-90-084. (The Centre for Oral Traditions, Totnes)
22. Raphael Samuel, 'Quarry roughs: life and labour in Headington Quarry, 1860-1920. An essay in oral history', in *Village Life and Labour*, edited by Raphael Samuel (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp.139-263
23. Although available from 1801, it is only from 1841 onwards that the inhabitants of each community are named and details of age and occupation (head of the household only in 1841, each member of the household from 1851 onwards). The one hundred year delay in issue means that 1881 is the latest available.
24. P.R.O. reference HO.107.1732, schedule 90; RG.9.901, schedule 107; RG.10.1455, schedule 97
25. P.R.O. reference HO.107.1732, schedule 3; RG.9.910, schedule 10; RG.10.1455, schedule 13
26. P.R.O. reference HO.107.1732, schedule 3; RG.9.910, schedule 9
27. P.R.O. reference HO.107.1732, schedule 51; RG.9.901, schedule 65; RG.10.910, schedule 70
28. G. A. Rowell, 'Notes on Some Old-Fashioned English Customs: The Mummers; The Morris-Dancers; Whitsun-Ales; Lamb Ales', *Folklore Journal*, IV, (1886), 108

29. For a discussion of the process in one area of north Oxfordshire see Michael Pickering, op. cit., especially pages 12-13 and chapter 4
30. Although one of Carter's informants at Leafield remembered Frederick Shaylor as a farmer (Bodleian MS. Top. Oxon. d 200, fol225), this is a red herring. In 1851, when aged twenty, Shaylor worked as a wood labourer (P.R.O. reference HO.107.1732, Book II, schedule 5), while ten years later he was enumerated in Whichwood as a gamekeeper (P.R.O. reference RG.9.910, schedule 3), a position he appears to have held for more than twenty years (Winney Express, 17 May 1877). The first mention of Shaylor as a farmer comes in 1893, when he is so designated in the Leafield Marriage Register at the marriage of his daughter Emma (17 January 1893). He was buried on 2 May 1908 in Leafield.
31. Asthall Baptism Register: Masfen Charles Hart, baptised 17 January 1813.
32. Brize Norton Baptism Register: Elizabeth, daughter of Misfen and Sarah Hart, labourer. Baptised 22 December 1833.
33. Brize Norton census enumeration book: P.R.O. reference HO.107.872, Book II, schedule 15.
34. Alice Hadfield, *The Chartist Land Company* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1970) p.162
35. Ibid., p.162; quoting *The Northern Star*, 1 June 1848
36. Ibid., p.170
37. Finstock census enumeration book, P.R.O. reference HO.107.1732, schedule 57; RG.9.901, schedule 67.
38. Presumably in the obscured mists of antiquity when the morris originated this was by design rather than accident.
39. Raphael Samuel, 'Village Labour', in *Village Life and Labour*, edited by Raphael Samuel, p.7
40. In 1841 the night of 7 June was chosen for the census tally. This coincided with the Lamb Ale at Kirtlington and so distorted the population figures for that village, with 86 persons not normally resident there. The note by the enumerator is interesting:  
"There is a feast kept on Trinity Monday called a Lamb Ale which is supposed to have been held annually for upwards of 500 years which is always visited by Gipsys and People with Stalls."  
(P.R.O. reference HO.107.886)
41. 1851 (30 March), 1861 (7 April), 1871 (2 April) and 1881 (3 April)
42. An invaluable account of such a quest in search of employment by Henry Broadhurst (a mason from Littlemore, near Wheatley) to London, Buckingham, Banbury and East Anglia is printed in *Useful Toil*, edited by John Burnett (London: Allen Lane, 1974), pp.312-320
43. It is impossible to assess the effect which this absence of dancers had on the performance of the morris in their home communities. I hope to examine the phenomenon of the peripatetic rural morris in the near future.











44. Richard Heath, The English Peasant. Studies: Historical, Local and Biographic (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1893; reprinted by EP Publishing Limited, 1978), p.45
45. Letter from Revd. J. C. Young, 1857; quoted in E. M. H. Ibbotson, 'Ilmington in the Nineteenth Century', The Local Historian, 9, No.7, (1971), 339
46. The Waterloo Arms at Finstock (now a garage), known locally as The Flying Pisspot, was a public house of some disrepute. According to Michael Heaney, the impression given by the informant was that the landlord was in collusion with the poachers.
47. Oxford Chronicle, 6 May 1865, p.7; ibid, 29 May 1880, p.8; Jacksons Oxford Journal, 10 June 1882, p.8. It is interesting to note that the use of a firearm elicited a heavier fine.
48. T. W. Chaundy, 'William Kimber, a Portrait, Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, IX, No.1, (1960), p.209
49. Quoted in Richard Heath, op. cit., p.60. The social problems noted in this source would presumably have meant that within any given generation there would have been a reduced number of males sufficiently fit to perform so strenuous an activity as the morris.
50. For some examples seen in Oxfordshire see ibid, pp.224-225
51. Cecil Sharp, Folk Dance Notes, volume II, folio 123.
52. See above, note 5.
53. Cecil Sharp, Folk Dance Notes, volume II, folio 46.
54. This may be either long-established or an import from elsewhere, as for example at Ilmington around 1805 (Stratford-on-Avon Herald, 23 August 1912. Letter from Sam Bennett) or at Blackwell, where the Cooper family were said to have brought the tradition from the Forest of Dean (Letter from Mrs. Stanton to Cecil Sharp. Folk Dance Notes, volume I, folio 107)
55. There are many examples of migrant males settling in a community, marrying a local girl and then dancing in the morris.
56. Brackley Marriage Register 1837-1877: Warwick C.R.O. reference 42 P/13. The occupations of the sons reflect those of the fathers, with four labourers, one carter and one carpenter
57. Keith Chandler, 'The Morris at Ducklington: A Chronological Analysis', English Dance and Song, forthcoming.
58. Cecil Sharp, Folk Dance Notes, volume I, folio 144. There is no indication of animosity between the three teams in the evidence of Joseph Druce.
59. Carpenter MSS: Library of Congress MSS. Music 3109. Copy in Vaughan Williams Library. Microfilm Reel 2, Box 1, Packet 3, Frame 512; Eynsham Marriage Register: 13/4/1889; A. D. Townsend Collection: Interview with Ada Gardner, daughter of Fred Harwood, 12 June 1981. The two customs were probably conjoined after 1901 (See the Witney Gazette, 5 January 1901, p.8)
60. Bucknell Marriage Register: 25 November 1829; Bodleian MS. Top. Oxon. d 200, folio 224
61. Folktracks tape FSA-90-084
62. Bampton Baptism Register: 2 June 1776; Cecil Sharp, Folk Dance Notes, volume II, folio 92. Any confusion arising from this section should be alleviated by frequent reference to the accompanying family tree. I gratefully acknowledge my debt to Michael Heaney, who drew up a first draft in 1979.
63. "Jingy" Wells said that his uncle had been involved with the morris for a total of fifty-two years in 1914, which would give a date of primary involvement of 1862 (Letter from Wells to Miss Taylor and Friends, 28 February 1922, printed in Folk Music Journal, 2, No.1, p.6)
64. In 1922 Wells wrote, "40 years ago three of my uncles were dancing out of the six and my Grand Father, George Wells was then carrying the Sword Box and Cake ..." (ibid.). Arnold Woodley has a copy of the earliest known photograph of the Bampton team, probably taken by Henry Taunt in 1886, which shows that Radband was already carrying the cake by this date.
65. Folktracks tape FSA-90-084. Taylor was involved first as a dancer then, when the old fool Joe Akers was found dead in a snowdrift in 1881, as fool for four or five years. (Letter from Wells to Miss Taylor and Friends, 28 February 1922)
66. In the Manning MSS (Bodleian MS Top. Oxon. d 200, folio 174) the note besides the name of John Hall reads "Foreman U.S.A." which might imply that Hall had emigrated. For Robert Hall Jordan as foreman see Cecil Sharp, Folk Dance Notes, volume II, folio 123.
67. Radband died between 1851 and 1861, when in the census enumeration books for Weald his wife Mary is listed as a widow (P.R.O. reference RG.9.905, schedule 138)
68. Percy Manning, 'Some Seasonal Oxfordshire Festivals', Folk-Lore, VIII (1897), p.309
69. Bampton Baptism Register: Jane Tanner, daughter of Ann Wells, baptised 4 September 1836
70. Incidentally, William Portlock's daughter Louise later married one of Charles Tanner senior's non-dancing sons; and also relevant (although outside the scope of this paper), Thomas Portlock's grandson Thomas Albert "Son" Townsend danced during the 1920s and 1930s, fooled for Arnold Woodley during the 1950s, then for the Shergolds during the 1960s and again for Arnold from 1971 to date.
71. The confusion over family relationships is further compounded by the entry in the 1871 census enumeration book for Weald, (P.R.O. reference RG.10.1451, schedule 153) where Ann Wells' illegitimate children are named Willie and John Taylor.
72. These included money payments and trips to London and elsewhere at the expense of the collectors.

73. William "Jingy" Wells MSS (unpublished). I am indebted to Roy Dommett for a resume of this little-seen source. "Jingy's" brother John went with him and Arthur Dixey to dance at the Esperance Club on 28 August 1912 despite his lack of experience and this reflects Wells' nepotistic attitude. (Clive Carey MSS (unpublished): Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Brown notebooks, number IV, folio 19).
74. Frank did little actual dancing, acting mainly as coat carrier; but Bobby danced often during the 1920s and 1930s then carried the cake regularly until the 1960s.
75. Tanner was also one of Alfred Williams' major song informants. See Alfred Williams, Folk Songs of the Upper Thames (1923: reprinted by EP Publishing Limited, 1970).
76. First Dick Butler from around 1880 to 1897; then William "Jingy" Wells until 1948. For a brief account of the inter-familial problems within the Bampton morris and the regular appearance of two distinct teams from 1927 on, see Roy Dommett in Traditional Dance Volume One, pp. 70-71; Oxford Times, 1 June 1928, p. 9; and the letter from Wells to Schofield dated 2 June 1938, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Lib. Coll. GRQ/258.
77. A correspondent to the Oxford Times, 10 June 1876, p. 8, notes that the custom of morris dancing, "like most of the ancient amusements in England, appears to be dying out and it is to the credit of Headington that every year that village sends forth a band of dancers ..."; a long account of the performance of the Brackley side on 3 June 1884 reported in the Banbury Guardian, 12 June 1884, p. 3, observes that "in many places it is supposed that the old custom had entirely died out years ago ..."; while the Witney Express for 17 June 1886, p. 3, wrote that "one rarely hears anything now of the 'Morris Dances' which were performed a few centuries ago ...".
78. For example, the Kencot dancer Thomas Sates, who in 1850 was receiving poor relief following the death of his wife in child-birth (A. S. T. Fisher, The History of Kencot Oxfordshire, p. 129); or the Bampton dancer George Wells (baptised 1852), who in 1871 was an "agricultural labourer, out of employ" at the time of the census (Census enumeration books for Weald: P.R.O. reference RG.10.1451, schedule 153).
79. See the evidence of William Cartwright of Launton concerning the effects of dearth during the Crimean War, in George Butterworth MSS: Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, volume X, folio 5; printed in Folk Music Journal, 3, No. 3 (1977), p. 194.
80. Cecil Sharp, The Morris Book, I (London: Novello, 1912, second edition), p. 43.

# CORRIGENDA TO VOLUME ONE

'Solo Step Dancing Within Living Memory in North Norfolk',  
Traditional Dance, Volume One, p. 43.

The second and third lines of music should read:

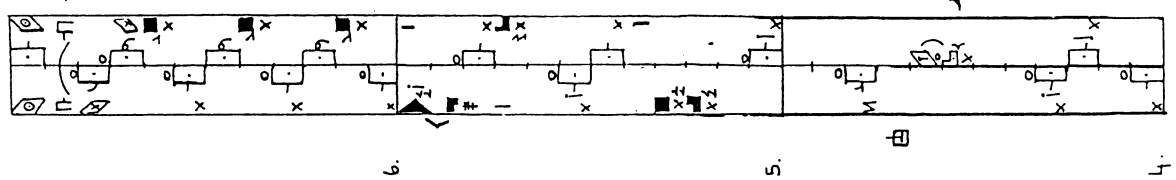
	1 and		could be		or		1 an and a
	1 an and a		2 and 3 and 4 and		1 and a		2 - a 3 - a 4

Peter Clifton and Ann-Marie Hulme

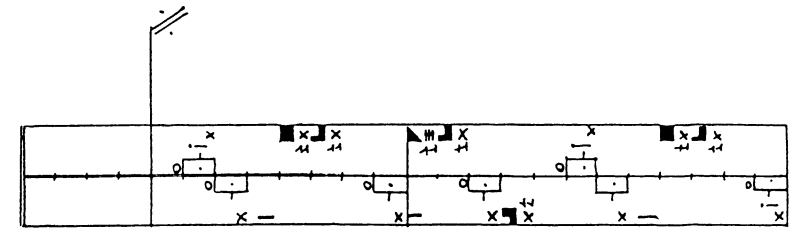


KEITH CHANDLER

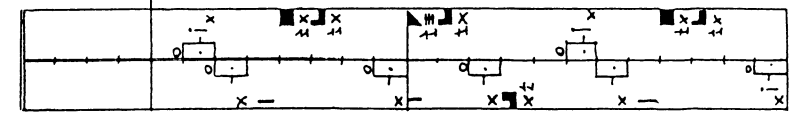
HORNPIPE STEP--:  
MOORE'S DREAM.  
DANCER--: PEGGY McTEGGART.  
NOTATION--: CATHERINE FOLEY.  
DATE--: FEBRUARY, 1980.



4.



5.



6.

A long time ago, with characteristic Taurean obsessiveness, I set myself the task of gathering every possible scrap of information on the historical aspects of the traditional morris dance form as practised in Oxfordshire and the contiguous counties up to the present day. It seemed then, as now, that this was the only possible way to evaluate accurately the evidence. During the middle years of the 1970s very little worthwhile historiographical material had appeared in print. Most of the texts which mentioned morris dancing were largely concerned with perpetuating the romantic (and, as we now know, outmoded) notion that the dance forms were directly linked to pre-Christian fertility rites.<sup>1</sup> As even a cursory glance at the first and second editions of the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library leaflet on the 'Bibliography of the morris dance will reveal,<sup>2</sup> interest in and access to material on the historical contexts of morris dancing has increased at least two-fold since 1978. It seemed to me, at that date, that the more data I could accrue and analyse, the clearer the overall historical picture would become. Now, eight years later, with fifteen thousand sheets of typed A4, representing a lot of help from a lot of people who were often more than generous with their time and materials, to work with, it has become apparent that quite the reverse is true. More on this later. Within the boundaries defined by the extant source material it has been possible to make strides in defining, for example, the limits of distribution, the chronology of performance, the biographies of known dancers and musicians and the like, so that much of my current research is in the nature of support and consolidation of a

pre-existing historical outline. Some of the analysis resulting from this research has appeared in various formats, but a considerable amount lies on a shelf at home, unseen by few if any other eyes, and it is this "hidden" material which forms the basis of this progress report.

The piece of research which has most shaped my perception of the chronological and geographical distribution of morris dance sides is one which I have titled 'Chronology and Overview'. This consists of a sequentially-arrayed series of all known historical source material relating to the years between 1660 and 1914. Each of the verbatim sources are accompanied by a commentary which analyses and augments the inherent data, and relates it to contemporary circumstances, in addition to rooting it in the broader context of morris dance activity. When arrayed in this fashion it becomes plainly evident that the extant source material is merely the tip of a huge iceberg of unrecorded or as-yet-undiscovered data. As more and more references surface and are fitted into the historical jigsaw, I am increasingly convinced that if a mere note had been made each time a morris team, based on one of the communities in the South Midland counties (and at least one hundred and fifty communities did field a dance side at various times throughout this period), gave a performance on any occasion during the two hundred and fifty years prior to the First World War, enough volumes would have been filled to cover all the walls of the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. When placed in that sort of perspective, it strongly suggests that the kind of historiography which I and others write can be little more than a superficial, and very likely distorted, outline of what actually occurred. But then this is a truism of any aspect of history and the trick in creating historiography is to remain true to the sources and make the best of the available material.

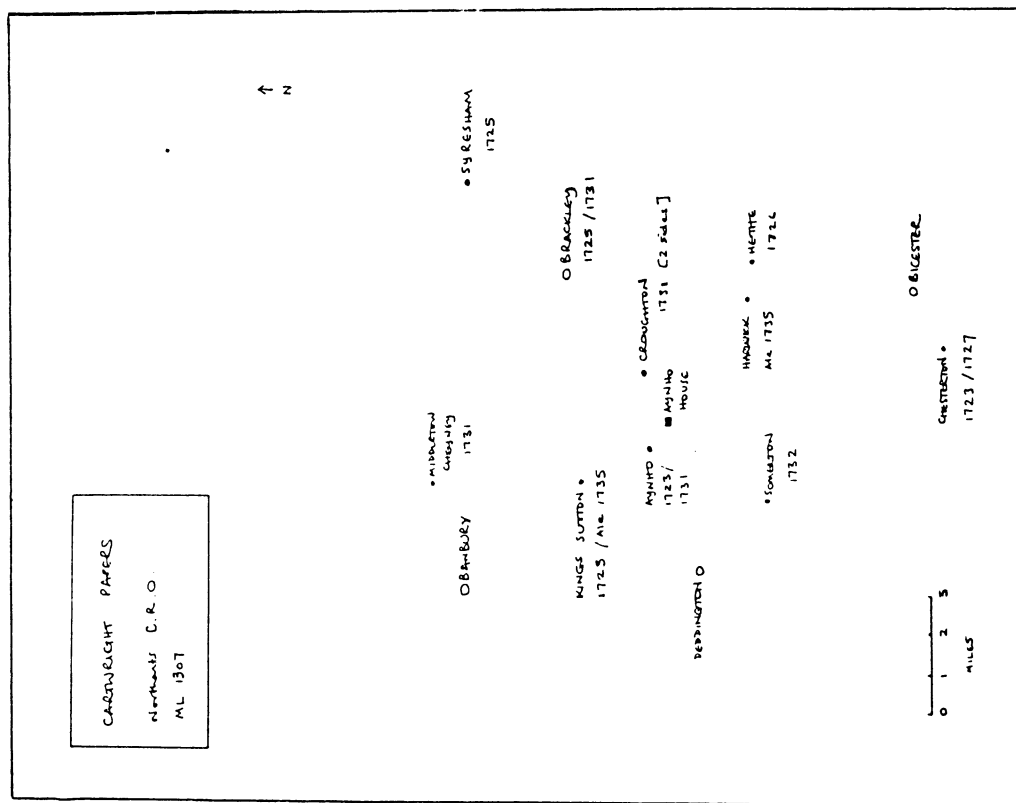
My conviction that morris dancing was far more widespread throughout the area during this period is periodically reinforced by particularly detailed data which surface. Some years ago I followed up a lead from Mike Heaney which led to the discovery of

ten payments to morris sides which visited the Manor House at Sherborne, Gloucestershire, between 1777 and 1799.<sup>3</sup> This was, in itself, a very important discovery but what made it more so was the fact that in three instances the location of origin of the dance set was given. More recently, I pursued a reference in a published local history of the village of Aynho, Northamptonshire,<sup>4</sup> which led to a set of account books for the Manor House in that village. Between the years 1696 and 1732, sixteen entries are recorded of payments to morris dance teams. Again, this is an important discovery, but what increases its importance immeasurably is the fact that in thirteen of the entries the location of origin of the visiting dance set is noted. These offer data which can be interpreted in a number of ways. Firstly, we can now say with confidence that in the decade between 1723 and 1732 morris dance sides within a six-mile radius of Aynho House were commonplace. During this decade there were dance sets at Aynho, Croughton, Kings Sutton, Brackley, Syresham, Middleton Cheney, Somerton, Hethe and Chesterton. The geographical distribution is displayed in Figure 1. Of these nine locations only two (Brackley and Kings Sutton) are previously recorded as a community which fielded a morris side; and this adds further fuel to my suggestion that the morris was far more widespread than we know. Further, this source indicates a degree of ongoing continuity of performance. The side from Aynho village danced at the house in both 1723 and 1731, the Chesterton side in 1723 and 1727 and the Brackley side in 1725 and 1731. One community, Croughton, supported two dance sets, both of which danced at the house around Whitsuntide in 1731. The squire of the village, Sir Thomas Cartwright, was obviously a good touch for the various morris dance sides and they clearly exploited his generous nature whenever possible.

To illustrate further the rather hit-and-miss quality of the recorded sources, Figure 2 graphically displays the distribution of morris dance activity during the decade 1720 to 1729. A series of decadal maps in this format form an integral part of the work under discussion. Formerly the map for this decade contained a mere

and three entries, at Dixton, Gloucestershire, and Churchill and Kirtlington, both in Oxfordshire. These three well illustrate the type of sources which can contribute to the whole. The first takes the form of a painting of activity in harvest fields, in one of which a group of morris dancers are apparently processing in a single line; the second derives from a set of accounts for the 1721 Whitsun Ale at Churchill; and the third comes from a manuscript collection of 1723. The account books from the Cartwright collection trebled the number of entries on the map for this decade.

The Far more examples could be adduced as revealing data on the Morris, from manuscripts and other printed sources such as the local newspapers, but I would like to move on and briefly mention some results of oral interviews conducted over the past eight years. I have tried, though failed, to interview everyone involved with the Morris in some form (either as participant, relative of a participant or observer) in the communities which fielded a traditional side. It has, however, been possible to explore many avenues of potential information, and this has taken a variety of forms which include personal visits, letters or telephone conversations. A great deal of important contextual material has been recovered at such places as Bampton, Chipping Campden, Abington, Bledington, Ilmington, Brackley, Bucknell and many of the Wychwood communities. Space limitations prevent too much elaboration, although I would mention as a prime example what I consider to be my most important piece of oral research. The dancers at Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, have maintained a degree of aloofness since Cecil Sharp first tried collecting there in 1909. Virtually nothing has appeared in print on the tradition and very little survives in manuscript. Of the surviving traditional sides the history of three - Bampton, Headington Quarry and Abington - are reasonably well, and, more importantly, are accurately documented. The historiography relating to the Chipping Campden Morris is largely riddled with inaccuracies, especially where dates are concerned. A major ongoing project over the past five years has been to document as fully as possible the history of



on this side. With the interviewing of two brothers involved in the 1932 revival, conducted six days ago, I have now recorded all the women involved with the morris prior to 1939, including multiple interviews with the sole survivor from the 1910 boys' side which danced for Cecil Sharp. In addition, I have interviewed the majority of men involved since 1945, including all but one of the currently active dancers. Although some of the Campden dancers do not wish to see their history published, at least the evidence now exists in a permanent form.

The possibility of amplifying material recorded by the pre-1914 collectors even today is illustrated by this anecdote about an incident which occurred on a field trip to Brackley, Northamptonshire. I was giving a talk to the local history society and happened to mention that Cecil Sharp had noted the surname of one of the morris fools as Tuckey, but had not recorded a Christian name, thus making identification impossible. One middle-aged lady in the audience immediately announced that this was her grandfather, Alfred Tuckey, and gave me the name of her ninety-year-old aunt (Tuckey's daughter), Annie Wyatt. I visited Mrs Wyatt and she gave me a great deal of information on her father, the activities of the Brackley Morris Dancers around the turn of the century and also named two other men who had been morris dancers in her father's day, neither of which had been previously recorded. More than being a mere manifestation of the "train-spotting" syndrome, this type of information has a very real value, inasmuch as it is the participants in the dance-set who determine the social and economic factors inherent in performance. Roy Dommett has recorded the story that a joint side of Brackley and Whitfield morris dancers performed in 1923 to collect money for a blind man, and that this had been the final occasion that a Brackley morris side had danced. Having been through the contemporary local newspapers and discovered nothing during that year, I asked Mrs Wyatt if she had ever heard the story. Her daughter, who was present, stated that one of her friends was, in fact, the daughter of this blind man. Coincidentally, while I was

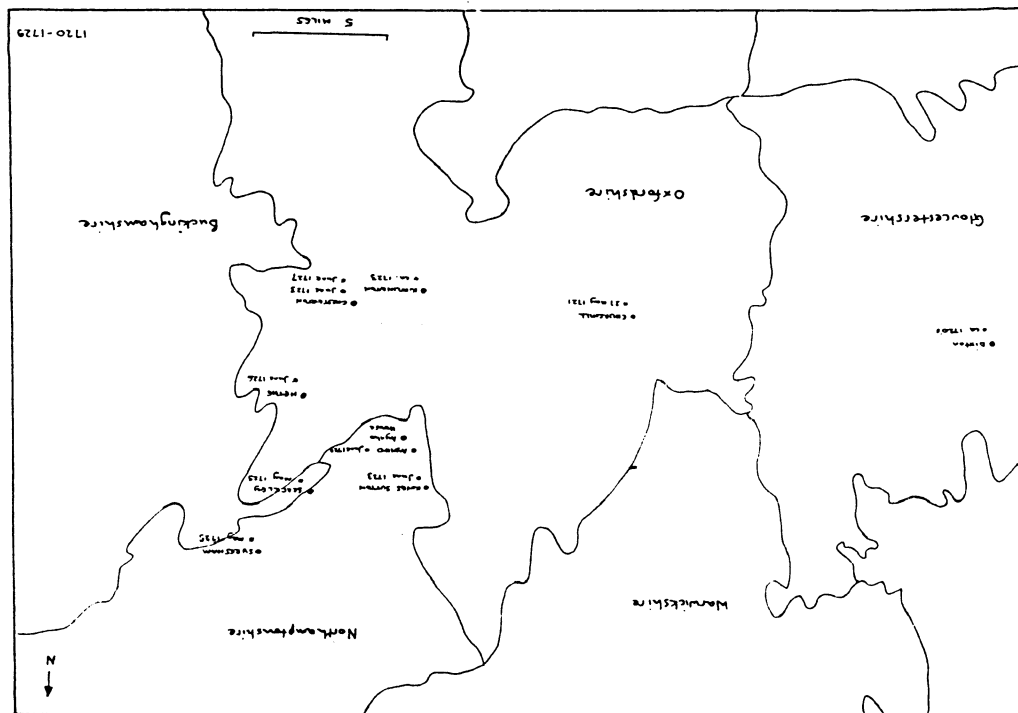


Figure 2

402

still in the house, her friend arrived and confirmed the fact that the morris dancers had performed and collected money for her father. She queried the date I had suggested and claimed to have the receipt for the money collected at home, which she promised to pass on. That evening I got a telephone call from Mrs Wyatt's daughter which cleared up the whole story. The morris dancers had performed at a fete held on 31 July 1920, with the specific aim of raising money to buy her friend's father, who had been blinded during the war, a house, and they had collected £5.3.8d. Such results make all the trudging around and the frequent disappointments all worthwhile.

Finally, I would like to say something of the minute detail with which I record the activities of the current traditional sides. The definition of the term 'traditional' continues to rage and each of us is forced to define it according to his or her perceptions. Of those sides currently active I ascribe the term to seven sides from four communities: three from Bampton, generally acknowledged to be led by Francis Shergold, Arnold Woodley and Alec Wixey; two from Abingdon, namely Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers and Mr Hemmings Abingdon Traditional Morris Dancers; and Headington Quarry, and Chipping Campden. I have been concerned to document adequately the performances of these sides, recording details of composition, choice of repertoire on a given occasion, position of each dancer in the set, and so forth. In addition, I have noted internal politics and policies, details of how each man has been absorbed into the side, how each participant perceives his role in the tradition, and, for a greater understanding of the social context, personal details of each participant, such as age, occupation, and the like. There are many problems in the handling of such details, not the least of which is a possible invasion of personal privacy, and so these field-notes remain largely unpublished and inaccessible. Again, they exist for future historians of the traditional morris and also for my immediate personal pleasure.

If the foregoing set of anecdotes has any point at all, it is to

indicate that my research at all levels, bibliographical, biographical, oral collecting, documentation of current traditional sides by tape, field notes and photographs, and the general accretion of all manner of source material continues not merely unabated but with increased intensity. I make a final plea for others to follow the same route and, just as importantly, to share their researches with others.

#### NOTES

1. A succinct assessment of prior scholarship in this field may be found in Theresa Buckland, 'English Folk Dance Scholarship: A Review', in Traditional Dance, 1 (Alsager: Crewe and Alsager College of Higher Education, 1982), 3-18.
2. Russell Wortley, Bibliography of the Morris Dance, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library leaflet, no. 16 (London: English Folk Dance and Song Society, 1978); Mike Heaney, An Introductory Bibliography on Morris Dancing, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library leaflet, no. 19 (London: English Folk Dance and Song Society, 1986).
3. A full assessment of this source appeared in Keith Chandler, 'Morris Dancing in the Eighteenth Century: A newly-discovered source', Language, 3, no. 8 (January 1983), 31-38.
4. Nicholas Cooper, Aynho - A Northamptonshire Village (Banbury: Leopard's Head Press, in conjunction with the Banbury Historical Society, 1984), p.150. This book contains no references, but the relevant accounts books may be found at the Northamptonshire Record Office, reference Cartwright Papers, ML 1306 and 1307.
5. On the same date as my talk to the Brackley Historical Society, 3 July 1985, I had recorded from the son of one of the older dancers a further eight names of men who had been morris dancers at the same time as his father, around 1900.

403