

The Morris Dancer

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THE MORRIS DANCER

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Contents.

Editorial	Mac McCoig	Page 132
Mumming in Europe, Frazer(ism) in Italy, and “Survivals” in Historical Anthropology: a response to Julian Whybra.	Alessandro Testa, Ph.D.	Page 134
Manchester Morris Men: The Early Years.	Keith Ashman	Page 143
The Cambridge Morris Men and traditional dancers.	John Jenner	Page 151
The Travelling Morrice and traditional dancers.	John Jenner	Page 154
Some thoughts on the origin of the Papa Stour sword dance.	Brian Tasker	Page 176
An Ahistory of Morris.	Julian Whybra	Page 179
Book Review:		
Discordant Comicals – The Hooden Horses of East Kent.	George Frampton	Page 188

Cover Picture: Beorma Morris. Photo: Birmingham Evening Mail

At the 2014 Jigs Instructional, the three Editors agreed to remind readers what sort of material would be accepted for each Ring publication. In the case of The Morris Dancer, it is any article, paper or study which expands our knowledge of the Morris in all its forms. It is better that the text is referenced, so that other researchers may follow up if they wish to do so, but non-referenced writing will be considered.

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In January 2017 at the Jockey Morris Plough Tour, a group of outraged British Afro-Caribbean spectators interrupted a performance by Alvechurch Morris, a black-face Border side. It occurred to me that, aside from the accusations of racism, certain questions about cultural appropriation by revival Morris sides could arise and be worth a thought or two.

Cultural appropriation or cultural misappropriation can be defined as the casual use of elements of one culture by another, and can be seen as particularly offensive when the appropriating culture is taking from a minority or marginalised culture that has a limited power to object. The offence, such as it is, largely stems from the trivialisation of the original meaning of the cultural meme by the appropriating culture, resulting in accusations of disrespect or sacrilege. At this point it is worth noting that there is a strong tradition, particularly in the arts, of artists being 'influenced' by something, for instance Picasso being influenced by Iberian sculptures. An important difference exists between on the one hand adopting a cultural artefact, for example, as a kitsch fashion statement (such as the popular practice of wearing of a crucifix or the Hand of Fatima simply as an item of jewellery) and, on the other of incorporating elements of a cultural meme to create a new cultural artefact (such as in Picasso's incorporation of Iberian forms into Cubist paintings). The former is 'misappropriation' with little regard to cultural significance; the latter form can be seen as 'influence', which can create new cultural memes through a natural process of cross-fertilisation or 'transculturation', particularly between two living cultures. As Homi K Bhabba in *The Location of Culture* (2004) says it 'Opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy'.

So what has this to do with Morris dance? The black youths that interrupted the Border Morris performance in January 2017 assumed that the blackened faces of the dancers was a form of mimicry that was offensive to black people, a form of misappropriation which disregarded the sensitivities of a marginalised black British minority community. For them the issue of traditional disguise in English Morris dance was irrelevant to the perceived offence the activity engendered. The Morris Ring statement (you will find it and other information about black-face Morris on the Morris Ring web site) concerning the use of black-face in certain Morris dances makes clear that the use of blacking up is in no way intended to cause offence and is a traditional disguise and as such, the Alvechurch Morris and others continue to use black face presumably secure in the knowledge that they are acting legitimately within the tradition and not cynically mimicking for entertainment purposes the skin colour of a section of our British community. However, the very fact that objections were raised begs the questions of 'originality', 'tradition' and 'authenticity' within such performances. Can the performance of a (largely) revived dance tradition with many elements of recent invention legitimately adopt such a disguise without exposing themselves to such accusations? It could be argued that Morris sides that use selected elements of a former and largely lost tradition are themselves appropriating a cultural artefact without the element of authenticity of an arguably strong connection to the ways in which such dances are traditionally transmitted between successive generations in a specific geographic setting. I argue that it is difficult to justify the use of such a cultural meme without the authenticity that such tradition brings. There are many Morris sides that continue to dance with similar black-face disguises, but in the case of Beorma Morris, the process of appropriation has extended to the use of kilts in their costume by some of the male dancers, which tends to reinforce the 'charge' of cultural misappropriation (although the adoption of the kilt (see the cover photo) for dancing may well fall under the umbrella of transculturation, since the Scots are hardly a marginalised community and are unlikely to feel outraged by it). It is, as Levi Strauss might say, 'cultural bricolage', that is re-combining existing cultural artefacts into new forms.

In general terms, the whole Morris revival may well be founded upon a process of deliberate cultural appropriation, given that Cecil Sharp and other collectors set out on a deliberate process of collecting from 'peasants' and teaching the (tidied up) material to schoolchildren, and in later revivals adopted by largely

middle class white men and women. Sharp's attitude, though laudable in the sense that were it not for him and other collectors, it would have largely died out by the mid-20th Century, was one of preservation and to permanently preserve in amber the dances he noted, to the exclusion of any change or interpretation (see his notorious disagreement with Mary Neal). I also understand that Sharp would also complain if William Kimber, his Headington Quarry informant and traditional dancer, varied from earlier notations).

In conclusion, my basic observations on a complex and much-researched topic are not designed to provide answers, but to raise questions about the meaning of authenticity and originality within the broad and varied cultural phenomena that is Morris Dancing. Most dancers that I know are very free with the word 'tradition' as though calling a dance recently invented a 'tradition' guarantees a form of authenticity. In addition, there are dancers in revival sides who resist any deviation from Sharp's notes, even though they are aware that what they do is Sharp's 'tidied up' interpretations of observations taken from often ancient and infirm traditional dancers who may not have danced for 40 years or more before their dance was collected. There is possibly a debate to be had about the assumed hegemony of dances noted by collectors in the early 20th Century and the assumptions of legitimacy in the practices of some revival sides with regard to 'tradition'.

Alessandro Testa

Alessandro Testa's excellent response to Julian Whybra's article 'The Golden Bough, Mumming and St George (Vol. 5 No. 5 September 2017) is a thorough riposte to some of Whybra's assertions about Sir James Frazer and his seminal work *The Golden Bough*. If you have not read Whybra's article, please do so before setting out to read the response by Testa. It is exactly this kind of debate which adds the paprika to academic discussion: few anthropological themes are set in stone.

Future Articles

The Morris Dancer is only published when sufficient material is available to make it worthwhile. I rely, of course on contributions from those interested in the Morris and the academic community. Sadly, these contributions come to me rarely and in dribs and drabs. I am sure that there are articles out there which would fit these pages very nicely, but because the Morris Dancer is published so infrequently, it is forgotten about. The recent weekend held at Cecil Sharp House on Morris Dancing would have brought forward a number of worthy papers, which although rejected by the organisers, could well have been published here. So please dear reader, write something or send a copy of your pet study, essay or theory to me for consideration.

Mac McCoig 2019

Mumming in Europe, Frazer(ism) in Italy, and “Survivals” in Historical Anthropology: a response to Julian Whybra

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In his recent article “The Golden Bough, Mumming & St George and the Dragon”¹, Julian Whybra devotes himself to an interesting analysis of the British tradition of Mumming, to its specific and particularly popular variant known as St George and the Dragon, and to a comparison with similar motifs in what he calls Germanic (or northern) traditions. I will not comment on the etymological and diffusionist hypotheses informing his piece. Nor will I argue about the British historical and folkloric material he uses, not being a specialist of British folklore. However, I do have something to say about Whybra’s comparative scope, some of his conclusions, his methodological choices, and about his usage of other authors’ scholarship – the last concerning the practice of quoting, for instance. With respect to the two latter themes, I will focus on two specific topics to which he seems to attach a special attention: the influence and persistence of Frazer’s legacy in the field of folkloristics and anthropology (especially the influence of his masterpiece, *The Golden Bough*), and my (alleged) mistreatment of this legacy.

In the following pages, I will try to demonstrate why Whybra is either unaware of several historical implications in the topics he chooses to explore, or just plainly wrong about some of his observations and conclusions. I will be citing only a few references, as the present paper should not be considered as a research article, but rather a recapitulation of some of my former research conclusions and, of course, a reply to some of Whybra’s arguments and to his quoting and mistreatment of one of my recent articles.

Broadly speaking, mumming, which Whybra deems a rather specific Germanic/northern-European ritual form, can actually be considered a cultural variation of what in the English-speaking world is known as with a more general term, “guising” (disguising), which is the seasonal (usually winter) tradition performed by groups of masked people (in the past mostly young unmarried men) going in procession (typically along streets and/or door-to-door), performing certain “actions” (usually dances and/or mimed combats), and getting something in return as a result of such performances. Although slightly different and more sophisticated forms of this phenomenon (like the Morris Dance precisely) did/do exist, the afore-described form can be considered as the elementary one².

This group of traditions have been documented certainly since the late middle ages and then more abundantly starting from the early modern period. Nevertheless, they are probably much older, as I have tried to demonstrate elsewhere³ (and Whybra himself claims); in fact their elementary and common features (the fact of being performed in winter, the masking, the procession) can actually be traced back to the late antique and early medieval times. As for their origins, it is possible to hypothesise – but difficult to prove – that they existed in similar forms throughout Europe in pre-Christian times, but it is also possible

1 *The Morris Dancer*, n. 5/5, pp. 103-122.

2 Alessandro Testa, *Il carnevale dell’uomo-animale: Le dimensioni storiche e socio-culturali di una festa appenninica*, Loffredo, Napoli 2014, and Alessandro Testa, “Mascheramenti zoomorfi: Comparazioni e interpretazioni a partire da fonti tardo-antiche e alto-medievali”, *Studi Medievali* n. 54/1, 2013, 63-130.

3 Alessandro Testa, “Mascheramenti zoomorfi”, cit.

that they emerged and developed later, either arising somewhere in particular then spreading throughout the continent, or appearing polygenetically in different locations in roughly the same epochs. Certainly, the oldest sources describing similar facts are almost exclusively Christian sources produced by the clergy, mostly in texts where they were harshly condemned.

As some readers might have guessed at this point, the story briefly told so far is not only the story of the “mumming”/“guising” traditions, but also that of the most important and renowned popular festival in the history of Europe: Carnival, and its regional/linguistic declensions and associated festivities and practices (Fasching, Fastnacht, Shrovetide, Masopust, Pust, etc.). Carnival festivities tended to cluster towards the end of winter (the pre-Lent period), whereas the Morris Dance is more typically a winter solstice tradition. (It must be said though that exceptions exist, not to mention the fact that in many parts of Europe the Carnival period begins much earlier than the pre-Lent week, i.e. in December or even in November). Sword dances, mimed combats, processions, and, of course, disguising, are all in fact very common in Carnival traditions, as is widely known, and medieval sources (especially before the XI-XII centuries) make it sometimes very difficult to understand whether the winter traditions described in the texts (or depicted in the miniatures) were winter rituals connected with the solstice, or end-of-the-year events related to the pre-Christian calendar, or forms of proto-Carnival festivities (not counting the fact that these typologies could actually overlap, but this short piece is obviously no place to try to answer such a question⁴). What is sure is that, after the XIV-XV centuries, in many parts of Europe (especially but not exclusively in the south) a process of agglutination of such disparate traditions took place, also in the form of their “carnivalisation”. From that period on, the figures involved would be exceptionally standardised, showing a likewise exceptional continuity over the centuries: the knight, the saint, the doctor, the transvestite man, the Turk, and animal and/or monstrous figures. The literature about all of this abounds in all the major European languages.

In any case, after the middle ages, with religious diversification and fragmentation propelled by the Reformation and by other alternative religious (but still Christian, mostly) movements, and with the emergence of different variations and declensions of Christianity in Europe (and beyond), each with its peculiar liturgical, ritual, and calendar traditions, the motif of mumming/guising, as well as carnivalesque motifs more in general, acquired more recognisable characteristics. In other words, a complex interrelation and interaction of transregional and *longue durée* historical factors of variation, circulation, diffusion, diversion, prohibition, syncretism, and others, culminated, between the late middle ages and the early modern period, in the crystallisation of on the one hand the mumming/Morris Dance type, on the other of the Carnival type (and other winter rituals/festivals could be mentioned). This happened in the British isles as well as in the north and elsewhere in Europe, although the former type remained characteristic of the north and Britain, the latter of continental and southern Europe.

In more recent times, the folkloric forms associated with mumming can be observed in very similar forms throughout Europe⁵. In other words, it may very well be a typical northern Germanic tradition, as Whybra

4 I try to answer this question in the aforementioned, long research article “Mascheramenti zoomorfi”, cit. Some of this article’s contents and conclusions have been translated into English and accordingly re-thought and reformulated in Alessandro Testa, “Ritual zoomorphism in medieval and modern European folklore: some skeptical remarks on a possible connection with shamanism”, in *Religio: Revue pro religionistiku*, n. 25/1, 2017, pp. 3-24. However, this article, unlike its Italian sibling, only touches superficially the topics discussed here.

5 See the sources cited in my aforementioned studies (especially for southern-European examples). Slavic examples are described in Frolec V., Tomeš, J., ed. *Masopustní tradice*, Blok, Brno 1979.

wants it to be⁶, but the family of cultural phenomena to which it belongs is pan-European, obviously including the Catholic/southern/Latin areas, as well as the Slavic/eastern ones, as a rich corpus of sources demonstrates⁷.

Methodological problems arise in Whybra's treatment of Frazer and his intellectual legacy, too. Such problems are at least of two kinds: one is connected with the survivalist paradigm, which is based on the belief that certain social facts, especially of a ritual and folkloric nature, would have "survived" over the passage of the centuries and outlived cultural obsolescence up to nowadays; the second one has to do with fertility-centred interpretations of European rituals and folklore more in general. Here is a brief overview of both of them:

One of the evident aims of Whybra's text is to rehabilitate the figure of Frazer, who is presented by the author as an unjustly ill-treated, forgotten, or disowned scholar (which, be it said as soon as possible here, is false). However, in order to save the baby from the proverbial throwing him out along with the bath-water, Whybra ends up taking a good gulp of the liquid himself, because his attempt to rehabilitate the venerable but relentlessly obsolete paradigm of the "survivals" approach is in fact a very problematic theoretical and methodological operation. I will not enter here into the now canonic debate about Frazer's method, his role in the development of evolutionary social anthropology, and of social anthropology (and history of religions) in general; it has been done a million times in the last century by scholars of all kinds and origins and affiliations, and there are now dozens of handbooks introducing the reader to this *vexata quaestio* and related ones, besides, I have already done this elsewhere⁸. Whybra himself quotes (p. 117) a

6 In his article, Whybra uses the terms "northern" and "Germanic" almost synonymously. The problem is that not all northern traditions are Germanic (take the Baltic, Finnish, or the Sami ones, for example), nor are all Germanic traditions northern (XIX century Tyrolean or German-Crimean folklore are very different from the Scandinavian ones, say). Just like his spiritual mentor Frazer, Whybra operates a broad but also quite problematic kind of comparison, which could result in the undermining of some of his own hypotheses (but an exercise in undermining them is not meant to happen in this short piece). The problematization of these broad and sometimes shallow associations should however be highlighted. On the other hand, if these associations are weak at times, when he evokes the "ethno-linguistic Indo-European group of northern European origin" Whybra is just plainly wrong: there is no such a group. Unless referring to the almost mythological prehistoric proto-Indo-European first tribe or cluster of tribes, the word "ethno" does not make any sense when used to refer to historical times – let alone medieval and more recent ones. And it makes even less sense if coupled with the word "origin": no Indo-European people "originated" in the North (or even in Europe, for that matter; as far as we know, they "originated" in western central Asia, or in the farthest East of what is nowadays called Europe: Bernard Sergent, *Les Indoeuropéens. Histoire, langues, mythes*, Payot, Paris 2005). Indo-European languages and the Indo-European family of languages exist, of course, but the peoples who speak them are the product of several millennia of interbreeding between themselves, between those who migrated and those who stayed, between those who stayed and those who arrived, and between those who arrived and those who were already there when they arrived. Although genetic similarities and common patterns do exist amongst Eurasian people speaking Indo-European languages, these are far from allowing any talking of an Indo-European "ethnicity" (Cavalli-Sforza L., Cavalli-Sforza, *Chi siamo*, Mondadori, Milano 1995 and Bernard Sergent, *Les Indoeuropéens*, cit.), as the mere fact of comparing the external appearance of an Indian and a Norwegian would suggest. The fact that northern Europeans have phenotypical traits in common – which moreover they share with other Europeans as well as with other non-European northern people – is also in no way reason or justification to call them "ethnos": after all, people have been sharing genes and languages in Eurasia for quite some time now. In short, there is no such a thing as an "ethnic" Indo-European group, and certainly not any of "northern European origin".

7 The primary as well as (abundant) secondary literature is cited in my works quoted in the first five notes of this paper.

8 Alessandro Testa, *Il carnevale dell'uomo-animale*, cit. pp. 269 and 309-311.

series of excellent, very convincing studies that show why, however respectable, this paradigm should have little place in more recent interpretations of the kind of phenomena Frazer was interested in⁹. Every scholar with a background in social anthropology, history of religions, or folkloristics would agree and actually knows about this intellectual genealogy, and about the fact that “survivalism” is a paradigm today bearing mostly only a historiographical significance. This, however, in no way implies denying or ignoring Frazer’s importance in the history of these disciplines, which can hardly be overestimated. He was a great scholar and, in a manner of speaking, we all are children of Frazer. Nevertheless, recognizing his historical relevance does not at any rate imply that we are today obliged to follow his method, nor that this cannot be the object of criticism and obsolescence, as is normal in any science. In fact, the very idea of a social fact “surviving” along the axis of time, in the form of a cultural relic or of a second-order manifestation, a sort of mistake or hiccup of history, cannot be sustained any longer: changes and transformations are constant, and although certain facts may have more viscous traits, and keep formal or even structural similitudes over long periods of time, their meanings and functions are bound to change along with the contexts in which they are embedded. To put it differently, if certain traditions were kept or transmitted or “just” refunctionalised instead of disappearing “naturally” or being banned (for example by the clergy), this would not mean that we are dealing with the *same* social facts, in spite of their keeping some features virtually unchanged (the name among others). One never steps in the same river twice – let alone several centuries after the first step.

On top of these methodological considerations, and to remain on the ground of an assessment of Frazer’s intellectual impact, Whybra seems to ignore altogether the fact that Italy, the country where I completed part of my studies, has over the last few decades produced an increasingly rich variety of studies on Frazer and his legacy in anthropology, folkloristics, and history of religions - a tradition of studies of which I consider myself a representative¹⁰.

As for the question of fertility, I recapitulate it sufficiently in a section devoted to the influence of Frazer in the historical and anthropological study of Carnival, in one of my recent articles¹¹. Frazer’s now canonical ideas on magic and fertility should be known by anyone with a minimum of preparation in the field of

9 The list of authors who criticised and moved beyond the survivalist paradigm cited by Whybra should be integrated with at least two among the most prominent folklorists of the first half of the last century, who in some of their most important pages critically discussed said paradigm: Giuseppe Cocchiara, *Storia del folklore in Europa*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 1971 (1 ed. 1952), pp. 8-9, and Arnold van Gennep, *Manuel de folklore français contemporain. Tome premier. Vol. III, Les cérémonies périodiques cycliques et saisonnières*, Picard, Paris 1949, pp. 837-838, 844, 858, 1147 and *passim*.

10 This scholarship is rather rich: the most important works (books or monographic issues of journals containing dozens of articles) belonging to it are: Clemente, Pietro (ed.), *I frutti del Ramo d’oro. James Frazer e l’eredità dell’antropologia*, monographic issue of *La ricerca folklorica*, n. 10, 1984; P. Clemente, F. Dei, A. Simonicca, “I frutti del Ramo d’oro. Venticinque anni dopo”, in *I Quaderni del Ramo d’Oro on-line* 1 (2008); Fabiana Dimpflmeier, “Nel bosco sacro. Realtà, finzione, magia e natura ne *Il ramo d’oro* di James G. Frazer”, in *Belphégor. Littératures populaires et culture médiatique*, n. 12/1, 2014; Dei, Fabio, *La discesa agli inferi: James G. Frazer e la cultura del Novecento*, Lecce: Argo, 1998; Giacomo Scarpelli, *Il razionalista pagano: Frazer e la filosofia del mito*, Meltemi Roma 2018. The paradigm of “Popular Frazerism”, which Whybra trivializes in his article, as we are about to see in a few pages, is a debtor to a preliminary study published in the eighties, whose intelligent intuitions remained unfortunately underdeveloped: Paola De Sanctis, “Frazer alla Rai-TV. Sondaggi su alcune fonti di massa del ‘frazerismo diffuso’”, in *I frutti del Ramo d’oro. James Frazer e l’eredità dell’antropologia*, edited by P. Clemente, monographic issue of *La ricerca folklorica* 10 (1984), pp. 85-90. My “Fertility” and the Carnival 2: Popular Frazerism and the Reconfiguration of Tradition in Europe Today’ (in *Folklore*, n. 128/2, 2017, pp. 111-132) partly belongs to this family of texts.

11 See the following notes.

folkloristics, anthropology, and comparative religions, and I will not hover on them here. I will just point out that my conclusions in said article are rather clear and solidly founded¹², unlike those that Whybra insinuates (see further ahead in the text). As for the persistence of Frazer's ideas on this particular subject, I conclude that "despite the reservations and critiques they were the object of, the diffusion of Frazer's main theses was pervasive to the extent of becoming an interpretative standard—or even a canonical exegesis—for specialists, and even more so for amateurs and cultured but non-academic people, as discussed in greater detail in the following sections [of that article, not of this one]. Nonetheless, its applicability and validity have been addressed numerous times ever since its formulation, and it is today widely regarded as inaccurate or at least not as universally applicable as its progenitor thought"¹³.

Now, however fascinating, Frazer's thesis about magically-induced fertility is not as universal as he himself used to think, and sometimes it is actually wholly untenable. The problem here is that this passe-partout theory is espoused fully by Whybra, who on p. 113 of his article writes: "Mummers' Plays are thus a form of the Morris with a common origin. The origin and meaning of the dance-cum-playlet was originally quasi-religious or magical in character, the purport of which was to promote the fertility of the soil and of all living things, and to guarantee the cycle of the seasons and the return of the spring. The rite helped nature; nature was in a measure dependent on the rite. Its central act was the ritual mock 'killing' and subsequent restoration to life of a man who, from the character of his dress and other considerations, represented, apparently, the natural world."

As I wrote in the first page of this paper, I am not an expert of the British material Whybra discusses and I am therefore suspending my judgment on this particular case. I do agree, however, with his assessment about the magical or pseudo-religious nature of these rites, especially in their earlier times (this is also one of the conclusions of several of my works devoted to similar phenomena), and I also agree with the idea that they would be enacted also for the sake of marking a passage (usually a seasonal or even early one). Nonetheless, the kind of general, grand explanations based on principles of fertility and the "rebirth" of spring usually leave me extremely skeptical and unsatisfied. They are easy, ready-made, and flatten the often deep geographical and historical differences that exist between the compared social facts by attaching a presumed universal function to whatever tradition showing even only casual isomorphisms. Furthermore, as I already claimed, when close historical and ethnographic scrutiny is applied, in many similar cases in European folklore the Frazerian passe-partout fertility complex proves weak – or can be even utterly disproven. There are often better explanations and interpretations for understanding and explaining these phenomena. This was, for example, the case with the 5-year historical and ethnographic

12 My treatment of Frazer's theses was praised by one of the anonymous peer-reviewers of *Folklore*, during the submission and review process of my article "'Fertility' and the Carnival 2" and obviously considered sound by the general editors of this well-established, prestigious journal of folkloristics. It is founded on years of study and I invite the readers of *The Morris Dancer* to judge its quality themselves, since it is easily accessible and readable in open source online at several sites. It is Whybra's opinion on my conclusions that is unfounded and actually, at closer scrutiny, very weak, as I am about to demonstrate in the following pages.

13 Alessandro Testa, "'Fertility' and the Carnival 2", cit., p. 113. My conclusions echo those of some of my Italian colleagues: "Non è mancato anche da noi un [...] frazerismo evidente soprattutto nella tendenza a ricondurre ogni elemento del folklore e della cultura tradizionale alle leggi della magia simpatica o ad antichi riti agrari. Il folklore, in modo particolare, ha sentito irresistibilmente l'attrattiva di questo tipo di approccio" (Fabio Dei, *La discesa agli inferi*, cit., p. 411). Similar considerations are in Paola De Sanctis, "Frazer alla Rai-TV", cit., and in P. Clemente, F. Dei, A. Simonicca, "I frutti del Ramo d'oro. Venticinque anni dopo", cit.

research I undertook about the Carnival of the Deer-man (“Gl’ Cierv”) in Castelnuovo al Volturno¹⁴. In this case, most if not all of the previously published interpretations of this peculiar pantomime insisted precisely on Frazerian tropes: the festival has been called “pagan”, but it is a couple of hundred years old at the most (and is probably much more recent); it has been called “Dionysian” but it has absolutely nothing Dionysian in it; it is/was meant to induce or sustain fertility magically, but actually it had a very different function in the past and it has a very different function in the present. These characteristics have been attached to the Carnival of Castelnuovo *because of* a certain reading of *The Golden Bough*, i.e. because of a direct influence of Frazer’s theses among certain scholars as well as non-academic interpreters. Frazer himself has of course no direct responsibility (he did not even know about this carnival), but the weak and wrong interpretations that have been proposed about Castelnuovo’s Carnival over decades have their ultimate source in Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*. This is an important and beautiful book, but not any longer the ultimate reference for understanding and interpreting popular culture.

Last but not least, this paper intends to deal with the way one my recent articles has been (mis)treated by Julian Whybra. I refer to the lengthy endnote n. 16, which can be found on pages 117-118 in his article, and in which, as the reader may rightly suspect, I am openly referenced, and not in flattering terms. As this note deserves special scrutiny here, it is not pointless to report it in its entirety, also to facilitate the understanding of my subsequent counter-arguments by those who are unfamiliar with Whybra’s article.

Having written, in the main text on p. 104, that “Despite its persistent influence in other fields the prestige of *The Golden Bough* was relatively short-lived among anthropologists and the work became a target for any up-and-coming, next-generation anthropologist in the post-war rush to distance himself from James Frazer and his ilk. Some of his ideas were superseded, undermined or refuted by his detractors [here is the reference to myself in endnote n. 16] and his work was accused of being the result of casual observation rather than scientific fieldwork”, Whybra writes in the endnote:

Prominent among them have been [... a long list of authors follows]. Broadly-speaking these authors’ writings and opinions reflected the political landscape and mainstream social anthropological thought of the post-war decades in Britain and America. Interestingly many of Frazer’s contemporaries and fellow-travellers did not receive similar treatment, Phillpotts, *Op. cit.*, for example, has remained virtually unassailable. However, unfounded criticism continues to this day. For example, Testa, Alessandro, “‘Fertility’ and the Carnival 2: Popular Frazerism and the Reconfiguration of Tradition in Europe Today”, *Folklore*, (June 2017), vol. 128, pp. 111-132, argues that Frazer posited that all “*European cultural traditions...were to be included in the macro-category of springtime festivities in which propitiatory magical rituals were performed for the fertility of the fields*”. Nowhere in his work did Frazer make such a claim. Testa then proceeds to knock down this self-constructed ivory tower by debunking two European carnival festivals: *Carneval* from Castelnuovo al Volturno, Italy and *Masopust* from Hlinsko v Čechách in the Czech Republic. The former dates from no earlier than the late nineteenth century, the latter is a long-standing, well-documented, mediæval festival. Both were ‘hijacked’ in the 1980s and 1990s respectively and provided with a collective, imaginary, new interpretation of the old rite and its function. What Testa calls “*popular Frazerism*” and others have labelled ‘cultural bricolage’ or ‘cultural-heritage-making’ has

14 These lines and those that follow immediately are based on Alessandro Testa, *Il carnevale dell’uomo-animale*, cit., “‘Fertility’ and the Carnival 1: Symbolic Effectiveness, Emic Beliefs, and the Re-enchantment of Europe”, in *Folklore*, n. 128/1, 2017, pp. 16-36, and “‘Fertility’ and the Carnival 2”, cit.

enabled these festivals through “*power confrontations*” and “*political positioning*” to “*acquire Frazerian properties*”. In other words, aspects of ritual fertility have been invented and symbolic structures have been created, then attached to them. This cynical manipulation has been laid at Frazer’s door. Yet Frazer used neither of these two examples in his research and neither is an example of Germanic folklore (being Roman and Slavic respectively). Both provide a convenient stick with which to beat Frazer despite his being innocent of the ‘crime’.

Before focusing on the mistreatment and misquote of my article, I would like to point out that what Whybra writes about the authors he cites is incorrect: those writings and opinions did not (only) reflect “the political landscape and mainstream social anthropological thought of the post-war decades in Britain and America”, they reflect *the* social anthropological thought of the time. The authors he cites – amongst them Claude Lévi-Strauss [who was Belgian, not British or American, by the way], Edmund Leach, William Bascom, Mary Douglas – are still widely considered among the most influential of their time, and not because they were “mainstream”, a term which does not mean much in the field of anthropology. They were the most cited, the most discussed, and not for “political” reasons. Whybra’s opinions of anthropologists, anthropological theories, and anthropology as a discipline as expressed in his article are quite puzzling.

But let me finally come to my article “‘Fertility’ and the Carnival 2: Popular Frazerism and the Reconfiguration of Tradition in Europe Today”¹⁵, and its misreading by Julian Whybra.

- 1) For a start, Whybra misquotes me, in spite of reporting my words as if *verbatim*, claiming in my own authorial voice, but mendaciously, that I would consider “*European cultural traditions*” as “ [...] *springtime festivities in which propitiatory magical rituals were performed for the fertility of the fields*”, then he adds “Nowhere in his work did Frazer make such a claim”. Of course, nowhere did Frazer make such a claim, and neither did I; it was fabricated by Whybra himself and attributed to myself. “*European cultural traditions*” is an expression that I would have never used, being at best redundant, at worst meaningless. What I write, instead, is that “European **carnival** [not “cultural”!] traditions, documented from the Middle Ages onwards throughout the continent, were to be included in the macro-category of springtime festivities in which propitiatory magical rituals were performed for the fertility of the fields”. This conclusion is in fact what can be easily gathered from reading the many pages of *The Golden Bough* where Frazer comments upon these kinds of facts. And even more incredibly, considering what Whybra writes, my citation strongly evokes a passage by Frazer, a passage which, moreover, Julian Whybra cites himself! Here is what he, quoting Frazer, writes: “The general explanation which we have been led to adopt of these and many similar ceremonies is that they are, or were in their origin, magical rites intended to ensure the revival of nature in spring. The means by which they were supposed to effect this end were imitation and sympathy” (Frazer quoted by Whybra on p. 112, with reference in endnote n. 53 on p. 122). Quite remarkably, Whybra manages to misquote me, disprove himself, and prove myself right in just a few lines.
- 2) Concerning my alleged self-construction of an ivory tower, as I have already argued and hopefully demonstrated in the last few pages, my interpretative edifice about these matters has, unlike Whybra’s, solid foundations. I do not need to self-construct anything.
- 3) Whybra proceeds with his curious and wanting reading of my text, claiming that what I call ‘popular Frazerism’ (and here I quote him again) “others have labelled ‘cultural bricolage’ or

15 In *Folklore*, n 128/2, 2017, pp. 111-132.

‘cultural-heritage-making’”. This is not true. First, “cultural bricolage” or “cultural-heritage-making” are in no way synonyms of “popular Frazerism”; second, they are not synonyms of each other; third, “cultural bricolage” *and* (not “*or*”!) “cultural-heritage-making” are established notions in the field of cultural history and anthropology. Hundreds of articles and books have been devoted to them, in the case of cultural heritage in the last few decades¹⁶, and in that of “cultural bricolage”, since its first formulation by Lévi-Strauss in the sixties¹⁷. They are certainly two symbolic mechanisms at the base of the complex I have named “popular Frazerism”, which is thoroughly theorised in my above-mentioned article, but they are nevertheless something distinct from it. Here not only, and again, Whybra manages to squeeze a number of falsities into just a few words – not even lines – but he also shows an utter ignorance of those anthropological notions and of the relative, abundant scholarly literature he is supposed to review and critically analyse.

- 4) Not content with *his own* operation of cultural bricolage on my own text, he continues chastising some of my expressions, such as “*power confrontations*”, “*political positioning*”, and “*Frazerian properties*”. What Whybra does here is to randomly cherry-pick these expressions, uproot them from their context, in which they have a specific meaning, and then, after having made an incomprehensible hodgepodge of them, he disapproves of them, or rather of the nonsense he has himself fabricated. Not the soundest and fairest of methods.
- 5) The peak of this weak and confused – when not overtly mendacious – critique is reached a few lines after the hodgepodge, where Whybra writes that “[...] aspects of ritual fertility have been invented and symbolic structures have been created, then attached to them. This cynical manipulation has been laid at Frazer’s door”. No cynical manipulation and nothing laid at whomever’s doors; just complex social dynamics of cultural circulation and social production of meaning. Nobody has ever willingly misused or manipulated Frazer’s theory, who is hardly ever mentioned explicitly by the social agents who were at the centre of my ethnographic investigations (with a couple of exceptions). This is why I have called this cultural operation examples of “*popular Frazerism*”, and not “*Frazerism*” *tout court*. But why am I explaining all this here? The entire article Whybra claims to have read and criticises is precisely about the theorisation of this social complex, the factors and conditions of its emergence, and its current presence and significance in some European contexts. None of this remains in Whybra’s shallow and ineffective critique.

16 A note about the making of cultural heritage and about the anthropological analyses of this process could number, as I said, hundreds of titles. I limit myself to cite my own works, again, where abundant references to these studies are made: Alessandro Testa, “From folklore to intangible cultural heritage. Observations about a problematic filiation”, in *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 119/3-4, pp. 183-204, and Alessandro Testa, “Events that want to become heritage: on the vernacularisation of ICH and the politics of culture and identity in European public rituals”, forthcoming (2019) in Cristina Clopot, Máiréad Nic Craith, Ullrich Kockel, Baiba Tjarve (eds), *Heritage and Festivals in Europe*, Routledge, London.

17 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La pensée sauvage*, Plon, Paris 1962. Today, building on Lévi-Strauss first formulation, the expression “cultural bricolage” is used to signify the construction of imaginaries, taxonomies, narratives, or more or less coherent sets of representations on the basis of elements taken from culturally and socially available symbolic sources. Fiona Bowie writes that “The term bricolage has been widely adopted within anthropology to refer to the creation of symbolic structures from a variety of culturally available symbols” (Fiona Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion: An Introduction*, Blackwell, Oxford 2006, p. 70). See also the observations about this notion’s theoretical and methodological utility, especially in the field of historical anthropology and cultural history, by Peter Burke, in *What is Cultural History?*, Polity Press, Cambridge 2008, pp. 100–101.

- 6) He continues: “Yet Frazer used neither of these two examples in his research and neither is an example of Germanic folklore (being Roman and Slavic respectively).” So what? There are thousands of carnivals or carnival-like traditions throughout Europe, and of course Frazer could not deal with all of them. And what does being influenced by Frazer (or applying a Frazerian interpretative model, for that matter) have to do with Frazer mentioning this or that example? Does current scholarship have to deal only with older historical or ethnographic examples already discussed in the previous literature? Preposterous! And who cares that neither is an example of Germanic folklore? Germanic folklore is the object of Whybra’s article, not mine.
- 7) And finally, the cherry on top, Whybra concludes: “Both [my two ethnographic examples from Czechia and Italy] provide a convenient stick with which to beat Frazer despite his being innocent of the ‘crime’”. As I tried to demonstrate in this text so far, and as I have stated numerous times in my scholarship, I have the utmost respect and admiration for Frazer, so this is no beating with a stick, just an exercise in social analysis and textual critique. As for the ‘crime’, this is neither one I accuse Frazer of, nor one I have committed myself, but a creation of Whybra, not existing but in his own imagination.

In his long and sloppy critical note, Whybra engages in an exercise of chastising my alleged anti-Frazerism, as well as the innocent social agents from my fieldworks, who have all the right to imagine and invent their own past and traditions the way they prefer. At a closer inspection, however, he is only chastising his own ghosts.

Most of the criticism we are offered is applied to sentences, opinions, and alleged conclusions laid at my door, but which in fact he has either misquoted/misunderstood or fabricated himself. We are left to contemplate the doubt about whether this is due to a genuine incapacity of understanding my text and arguments (and accordingly citing me incorrectly) or to a deliberate, tendentious will to distort my ideas. Either way, I hope that this paper has served the purpose of reestablishing some clarity about them.



Cultural bricolage? Photo: ©Stuart Purfield

Manchester Morris Men

The Early Years

Keith Ashman
Manchester Morris Men
April 2010



CONTENTS

- 1 The EFDS Men's Morris Classes in the 1920s
- 2 The Manchester Men's Morris team in the 1930s
- 3 The North-west Morris dances in the 1930s
- 4 The War Years, and beyond

Appendix Ring Meeting Reports (1936-39)

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to John Tallis and Bill Chadband for permission to quote from their documents; and to Duncan Broomhead and Roger Bryant for providing photographs of the MMM in the 1930s.

This article contains extracts from :-

- i. John Tallis' booklet 'the English Folk Dance Revival in Manchester' published in 1972
quotes from this booklet are indicated by ^(JT)
- ii. Bernard Bentley's recollections of how MMM started (audio recording : 1986)
- iii. Minutes of the Manchester Branch of the EFDS; morris related topics extracted by Bill Chadband in 1985
- iv. The First Log Book of the Morris Ring (published by the Morris Ring)
- v. Roger Bryant, who found what is probably the first known photograph of the Manchester Men's Morris team
- vi. Duncan Broomhead, (Morris Ring Photo Archivist), for providing the first known photograph of MMM dancing a North-west dance

Note

In 1932, the English Folk Dance Society (formed by Cecil Sharp in 1911) merged with the Folk-Song Society (founded in 1898) to form the English Folk Dance and Song Society. This is why both of the abbreviations EFDS and EFDSS appear in the section for the 1930s.

1 The EFDS Men's Morris Classes (1921-29)

The English Folk Dance Society was founded by Cecil Sharp in 1911, and in the following year the Manchester Branch was formed. The main role of the EFDS was in providing teaching classes in country dancing, Cotswold morris and sword dancing; and the majority of members at this time were women.

During 1921, an EFDS Easter School was held in Manchester, which brought in new members to the Manchester Branch, and enabled the formation of Men's Classes in Morris and Sword. In John Tallis' booklet, members from that period recall that "for the first time ...the Manchester Branch... were able to include Men's Morris and Sword Dances in their demonstrations" ^(JT) Bernard Bentley's recollections are that "these shows would be at private functions, or occasionally they would put things on in the parks. We used to get a brass band to play for the country dancing - most people in the branch would turn up and dance, bringing the crowd in if you could".



EFDS Display Team c.1926 (from MMM Archives)

In 1926 other EFDS Branches remarked on Manchester's lack of interest in Festivals because they took no part in the competitions. And so in 1928, the Branch sent teams to the local (competitive) Festivals at Buxton and Alderley Edge, and after this regularly entered teams for Festivals.

Some of those early EFDS members recall that "after 1929, the more experienced dancers of the Branch were organised into definite demonstration teams which gave displays to outside clubs and societies on request, and also participated in Folk Dance Festivals throughout the North of England - at Blackpool, Burnley, Buxton, Doncaster, Liverpool, Preston and York." ^(JT)

2 The Manchester Men's Morris team in the 1930s

EFDS documentation, along with recollections of members, indicates that in 1930 the Men's Morris class was in fact an experienced team of morris men, who made their own arrangements and decisions. On this basis, Manchester Morris can claim to have been dancing since early 1930, initially as the Manchester Men's Morris team and by the end of the decade as the Manchester Morris Men.

- EFDS Branch minutes for Sept 1929 record that the Men's Morris class was led by Mr Heath, and in his absence, "the Morris hour would be taken by Miss Ledger, so that it would be a lesson rather than a practice". Which implies that the men's morris hour was normally a practice session, for an established team of dancers.
- The minutes in February 1930 record that "the Men's Morris Class was allowed to make their own arrangements, Mr Duffy kindly offering the use of his Scout Room for the classes and also for the demonstration practices".
- Later in 1930, the minutes record that the Branch committee left the decision to enter a Men's Morris team in the Liverpool festival with the morris men, and that "Mr Heath should discuss the matter with the men next Friday". Although the Branch committee themselves made the decision to enter the Country Dance and Women's Morris teams in the Festival, without further reference to those two demonstration teams.
- Further minutes record "Mr Heath should approach the Men to see if a side could be raised to give a Men's Morris and Sword demonstration in Preston".



Believed to be the Manchester Men's Morris Team at Flowerly Field Cricket Club in June 1930.

(photo from 'The Reporter Pictorial Review for 1930')

supplied by Roger Bryant

Recollections from local EFDS members at the time, were that "the Men's Morris team, at its best, was reckoned to be as good as the EFDS Headquarters Demonstration Team. The Men's Team at this stage, of course, danced only the Cotswold Morris, as the North-West Morris was still largely unknown".⁽¹⁷⁾ In fact the Men's Morris team was awarded a Distinction Certificate at the Liverpool Festival on 29 Nov 1930 and awarded First-Class Certificates in May/June every year from 1931 to 1939, at the Alderley Edge Musical Festival.

In the EFDSS minutes of 3 Feb 1936, "It was decided that the Men's Morris Side should affiliate with the Morris Ring, the Branch paying the Annual Subscriptions and that Mr Hiley should be asked to be the Correspondent". Later that month, the minutes state that "Mr Hiley had consented to act as correspondent for the Morris Side, which was now affiliated to the Morris Ring."

In June 1936, at the Thaxted Ring Meeting, the Morris Ring Log Book records that the “Bagman announced the applications of four new clubs to become associated in the Ring – Bournemouth, Cheddar, Newcastle and Manchester, and their association was formally confirmed. ” And at the Grasmere Ring Meeting, later in the year, Manchester MM were presented with their staff of association.

During the 1930s, the EFDSS Men’s Morris team and the Manchester Morris Men were in all probability one and the same team. And in their role as the Manchester Morris Men, they attended all the northern Ring Meetings until the start of WW2 ; namely :-

- Grasmere (1936)
- Tideswell (1937)
- Manchester (1938)
- Longridge (1939)

Details of these meetings are recorded in the First Log Book of the Morris Ring, and brief extracts are given in the appendix.

The first known reference to the ‘Manchester Morris Men’ is in May 1938, when the EFDSS minutes record that the “Men's Morris Class is to be held on Friday evenings next term taught by a Manchester Morris Man.”

3 The North-west morris dances in the 1930s

By the 1930s, interest in the North-west dances was growing in EFDS/morris circles, and Manchester Morris Men learned and danced the Godley Hill dance in 1937.

John Tallis’ booklet has a section on the Lancashire Morris, based on information supplied by Maud Karpeles, Gladys Ledger, Edith Emmett and Bernard Bentley, and an extract is given below :-

One of the best known local teams in the Nineteenth Century was the Godley Hill Team, but by the 1930's this was no longer in existence. Miss Maud Karpeles noted down a version of the Godley Hill Dance in 1929, but this was not collated with the Crompton version (see below) until after the War. At about the same time she also noted down versions of the Royton Dance and the Bacup Garland Dance.

At the time of Miss Karpeles' visits (to Royton) there were only four dancers, but shortly afterwards a full team was revived under Jimmy Coleman, and danced twice in Manchester in 1929, though not in costume. A 'Royton Fund' was opened to raise money to kit out the Team and send it up to the Albert Hall Festival, and all Branch members were urged to contribute 6d.

The Royton Men danced at the Branch Christmas Party in 1929 in full costume, and subsequently at the Royal Albert Hall Festival in London in January 1930, and were a great success. Soon afterwards, two Royton teams emerged, doing slightly different versions of the dance, one under Jimmy Coleman and one under Bob McDermott, and the competition between these teams resulted in very high standards of performance. Later they amalgamated again. ^(JT)

EFDSS minutes record that Bob McDermott taught his version of the Royton dance to the Advanced Morris Class in Manchester in 1933/4. But the minutes do not say whether this was ever performed in public; and it may be that it was only learnt in class, as the team at Royton were still performing the dance in the local area.

John’s booklet goes on to say :-

Bob McDermott was also invited to teach the Royton Dance to the Manley village dancers. This he did, though, the dance was not shown in public by the Manley Men until after the War.

The Bacup Men were very averse to their dances being published, since they were afraid of other teams learning the dances and then competing with them. Eventually it

was agreed that the Society would never teach the dances. Like the Royton Men, the Bacup Men gave a public performance in Manchester at a Branch Party prior to their appearance at the Royal Albert Hall in January 1931.^(JT)

John Tallis' booklet goes on to say more about the Godley Hill dance :-

'Although the team no longer danced, memories and photographs, however, survived, and in 1937 a version of the dance was noted down by Mr Crompton of Hyde. This version was learned by the Manchester Men's Team, and first performed in public at the 1938 Alderley Edge Festival as an entry in the 'Traditional Dances' section ('open to teams performing dances which have been identified with their locality for at least 50 years'), in an attempt to break the supremacy of the Irish teams - it was adjudged of equal merit. Cotswold costume was retained on this occasion, but rudimentary flowered hats were worn.'
(JT)

Note : the central part of the above paragraph is from an EFDSS viewpoint. The dance was actually performed in public 11 months earlier than stated, in June 1937 by the Manchester Morris Men at the Tideswell Ring Meeting. (see text below and photos on next page)

In March 1937, Harper Crompton and 5 other morris men (Messrs. King, Duffy, Hiley, Jones & Kirkbridge) met with about 8 or 10 old Godley Hill dancers at the Boar's Head in Hyde. (Stephen Hiley and Harry Duffy are both known to have been dancing with Manchester MM at that time.)

The MMM Archives has details of this meeting, in a copy of the letter written by Harper Crompton to the Ring Squire, Kenworthy Schofield :-

"A team of local girls who had been taught the dance by some of the old dancers were also present, and they danced first. After they had danced, the assembled old men "were unanimous that the girls did it properly".

After this, the old 'hands' were itching to 'have a do', but having had no rehearsal the pattern of the figures was rather muddled.

To give them a rest, the 6 visitors danced some Headington and Adderbury dances, after which, the old men were keen for them to learn their dance. After watching the Godley Hill dance again, the old men and girls instructed the visitors"

The MMM Archives also contain what appears to be an original copy of Crompton's notation for the dance.

Three months later, in June 1937, the Morris Ring Log Book for the Tideswell meeting records that a feature of the tour of the surrounding area was :-

"... a display by some of the Manchester men, and Harper Crompton of the Godley Hill dance, interesting not only to the audience but to the rest of the dancers, to most of whom it was quite new.

And on the Sunday morning there was "more instruction in the yard of the inn, particularly about the Godley Hill dance"

The photographs below are from the Morris Ring Photo Archive, and used with permission. (They originally came from Walter Abson, and were probably taken by Arthur Peck).



The upper photo shows Harper Crompton and 4 Manchester men dancing the Godley Hill dance. It is believed that Crompton is in the 'replica' Godley Hill kit. (Note. Crompton was born in Hyde, but in 1937 was dancing with the West Yorkshire MM, as he lived in Halifax.)



The lower photo shows an instructional session in yard of The George, at Tideswell

4 The War Years, and beyond

The only recollections of MMM in the 1940s are from Bernard Bentley, and during his chat with Roy Battersby, squire of MMM at the MMM Jubilee celebration in 1986 (celebrating 50 years membership of the Morris Ring), Bernard recalled that "we kept a team going right through the war as teachers over a certain age were not called up, and technical people were drafted into factories". Bernard himself was drafted into the Ford factory at Trafford Park, where they mass produced Merlin aero engines, which had previously been made individually at Rolls-Royce. At this time he was still living at home in Manchester, and apart from Home Guard duties one evening a week, had the remaining evenings and weekends free. As well as Bernard, there was Stephen Hiley, a headmaster called Bowkridge (? *see note below*) and others in engineering who made up the Morris Men's numbers. And Bernard recalled that "one of the older Holy Name scouts (who danced with Harry Duffy's team of scouts) could always be relied on to

make up the 6th man, if necessary. And there were also any morris men from other parts of the country who were 'passing through and working in Manchester' as part of the war effort."

Bernard also recalled that, after the war, "Ian Browne came up to Manchester, as he was involved in building the telescope at Jodrell Bank. Ian was a keen morris dancer, having danced with the Cambridge men and was very insistent on the difference between traditions."

(Note. A 'glitch' on the tape recording makes it hard to make out the name of the headmaster. It could be that the name is Kirkbridge, who is listed as one of the EFDS men present in the pub in Hyde in 1937, when they met the old Godley Hill dancers.)

In 1949 the Morris Ring celebrated its fifteenth anniversary by publishing a booklet describing the background of the organisation, and short accounts from some of the forty-three clubs that had been admitted to the Morris Ring at that time. The account for Manchester Morris Men, written by Bernard Bentley stated :-

"The Club was a small one, having only seven or eight members, under the leadership of Stephen Hiley, but was able to continue its meetings until about the end of the war, and it was still possible to get together a side after Stephen Hiley left for South Africa. At present there is not a complete side (and the club is not holding regular meetings) but it is hoped that some new members may be forthcoming before long."

[extracted from the Morris Ring booklet "Fifty Years of Morris Dancing 1899-1949"]

Appendix A

Extracts from Ring Meeting reports in the 1st Morris Ring Log Book

Meeting at Grasmere Sept 18th - 20th 1936

The seventh meeting of the Ring was held at Grasmere, the first meeting to be held in the North of England. Several men were able to meet on Friday evening and danced in somewhat restricted space in the Dale Lodge Cafe; on Saturday morning more men arrived to make a total of 21, representing the following clubs:- Cambridge, East Surrey, Edinburgh, Lakeland, Liverpool and Manchester.

"The minutes of the last meeting were read by the Bagman, and confirmed Regrets for absence were read from many clubs, and staves were presented to the Lakeland, Manchester, Liverpool and Edinburgh clubs."

Meeting at Tideswell 1937

The tenth meeting of the Ring was held at Tideswell, Derbyshire on the weekend of June 12th 1937. The following clubs were represented:- Cambridge, East Surrey, London Pride, Liverpool, Manchester and St.Albans, about 20 dancers being present.

The headquarters for the weekend was the George Hotel, Tideswell, and a few men arrived there late on Friday evening. On Saturday morning the main party arrived, and a rehearsal was held in the large upper room, and also out in the courtyard of the inn when the weather permitted. we set off with high hopes to Ashford. Here our first show was a great success, and a number of people had gathered to watch, some even following us after the show to Great Longstone. A feature of these performances was a display by some of the Manchester men, and Harper Crompton of the Godley Hill dance, interesting not only to the audience but to the rest of the dancers, to most of whom it was quite new.

"The following morning we had more instruction in the yard of the inn, particularly about the Godley Hill dance, and had discussions again with old men of Tideswell who could remember the dancing and its

ceremonial from their earliest days. Lunch was our last meal together, then men dispersed to their own places, carrying very vivid memories with them of a momentous weekend."

Meeting at Manchester 1938

The fifteenth meeting of the Morris Ring was held at Manchester, on Saturday October 29th.

About 20 men were present, representing the following clubs:- Manchester, East Surrey, Greensleeves, London Pride, St. Albans and West Yorkshire.

"Dancing began at the Birch School, Rusholme, at 2.30p.m., under the direction of the Squire. This proceeded, with a break for tea at the Platt Cottage Hotel, until 7.0p.m., when the men returned to the hotel and sat down to the Feast at 8.0 p.m."

"A good deal of discussion took place about the local traditional dances, and Harper Crompton described the contacts he had made with several teams. The possibility of a meeting in a year's time was discussed, at which some collaboration with traditional dancers could be made. Some singing then followed, and about 11.0 p.m. the men dispersed, after a most enjoyable day."

Meeting at Longridge 1939

The seventeenth meeting of the Morris Ring was held on the weekend of May 13th 1939, at Longridge, near Preston, Lancashire. 22 men were present, representing the following clubs:- Bedford, Cambridge, Manchester, Liverpool, St.Albans and West Yorkshire.

"The Feast then followed, at the Dog Inn; In the absence of the Squire, Kenworthy Schofield was in the chair, A letter from Harper Crompton was read, regretting his inability to make arrangements this year for a South Lancashire meeting, it was felt that such a meeting would be impossible without his local knowledge and enthusiasm. The whole question of dancing in industrial towns was discussed and it was agreed that any shows given there would have to be of a high standard and very thoroughly rehearsed."

"On Sunday morning there was a little dancing in the Dull (*sic*) Hall and then the men dispersed after a very successful meeting in an entirely new part of the country."



Cultural bricolage?
Photo: London SE1
Community Website

The Cambridge Morris Men and traditional dancers

John Jenner

November 2002

This document contains references within **The Minute Book of The Cambridge Morris Men**, other than in the summaries of The Travelling Morrice logs, to meetings and conversations with, and references to, traditional dancers and dances.

Tuesday 1st July 1930

On their [way] back from a Travelling Morrice tour in Devon, Joe Coales, Joseph Needham & Arthur Peck paid a visit to the Cotswolds & learnt the sad news of the deaths of **John Hitchman** & **Charles Taylor**, whom the Travelling Morrice had seen last year. John Hitchman of **Bledington**, was ill for three weeks: he was taken to the infirmary at Stow & died there a week later on Nov. 27th 1929. He would have been 80 had he lived until his birthday on January 22nd. He was buried in Bledington. His daughter told us that he spoke much about the morris dancing during his last weeks. Charles (Minnie) Taylor, of Church Icomb, was taken ill on Friday after Christmas 1929 & died the following Tuesday, the last day of the old year. The doctor saw him but once. He was buried at Icomb. He was 93 or 94 years of age.

At **Longborough**, after much searching we found **Mr Harry Taylor**, and his daughter's description of him was only too true. He has much gone off since the Travelling Morrice saw him last year, & his memory much impaired. His old charm and courteous manner remained, but we could see that he would hardly enjoy another performance of his old dances. After a brief visit, to avoid unduly exciting him, we took our leave.

Sunday June 21st 1931

Arthur Peck, Joseph Needham & George Tomkins, on their way out to Fairford passed through **Bucknell**, & had the pleasure of seeing **Mr Powell** & hearing him play several tunes on his pipe.

September 1933

A few days later (i.e. after the East Devon TM Tour) the Squire (Joseph Needham) called upon **Mr Henry Hathaway** at Lower Swell. Mr Hathaway, now aged 74, used to dance with the Longborough side when Harry Taylor led it. He had enjoyed the dancing during the previous tour, though he said the fiddle was not loud enough. Also, he repeatable stated that the T.M. lacked was a fool with a bladder & cows tail. Unfortunately he was unable to remember anything further about the Longborough leapfrog.

Saturday May 9th 1936

On Saturday May 9th eight men, all of whom were members or honorary members of the C.M.M. (Alec Hunter, Sq. of the Ring, Douglas Kennedy, Kenworthy Schofield, Arthur Peck, Walter Abson, Joseph Needham, Wm. Ganiford, & Kenneth Constable) paid a visit to **Bampton**, and spent an afternoon and evening with **Mr William Wells and the Bampton Dancers**, through whose kindness they were enabled to see all the Bampton dances specially performed for their benefit. The purpose of the visit was to learn as much as possible about the way in which the Bampton men dance at the present time. Mr Wells and his men gave the visitors the fullest opportunity for doing this; & the result of the visit is that those who took part realised how remarkable a man Mr Wells is, & also that a new method of notation of the morris dances has been worked out especially for the Bampton ones. An attempt has been made both in the CMM practices and on tours & also at meetings of the Morris Ring to approximate more closely to the present day style of Bampton dancing.

Summer 1937

During the summer a number of visits were made to several of the morris men (Kenworthy, John C., Russell & Arthur) to various places in the **Cotswolds**, incl. Fieldtown, Bledington, Stow & Brackley, to see old dancers and to learn what they could of the tunes & dances.

Saturday August 4th 1945

The Bagman, Russell Wortley visited the Cotswolds with a view to organising a TM tour. A visit to **George Hathaway** found the old Bledington morris dancer in wonderfully good spirits considering that he had suffered a stroke about Easter time and had partially lost the use of his right arm and leg, and he was delighted to know that the Travelling Morrice would be returning to Stow in three weeks time. At **Bledington Charles Franklin** was seen, whose wife (the daughter of John Hitchman the Bledington fool;) had died 3 or 4 years ago; a long talk was had with **Lewis Hall** (George Hathaway's brother-in-law & an old morris dancer) also now a widower. The latter was much more communicative than usual and mentioned that both William Roberts of Small Heath, B'ham and William Kerry, formally of Headington, Oxford but now living near Reading had recently revisited their native village. They were both members with himself and George Hathaway of the last traditional morris side. He mentioned that they had they instructions from Jonathan Harris (from whom Sharp collected) and Charles Benfield the fiddler and that they used to dance during club week (which had just that day come to an end) The reason he gave for the discontinuance of the Morris was the opposition of the stallholders, who claimed that the morris men took too much of the people's money and finally made it impossible for them to dance by drowning their music with rattles. Russell was just in time for the last-but-one pint of ale at the King's Head and urged the landlord (who mentioned that a young morris team had been taught in the village) to lay in a good stock of alcohol for August 21st - an unavailing request as it afterwards transpired.

Monday-Wednesday August 26th – 28th 1946

On leaving the Cotswold tour Russell Wortley called at Battledown, Cheltenham & learnt that Mr Jim Simpson the old Sherborne dancer visited by the Travelling Morrice in 1938, a brother of George Simpson from whom Cecil Sharp collected the Sherborne dances, had died there about the end of 1941.

He then revisited certain parts of the **Forest of Dean** in order to investigate more fully some scraps of information on the traditional morris dancing of that area which had been picked up during the Euroclydon tour. Two former dancers were seen; **Martin Penn** (83) of Ruardean and **Peter Ward** of Joy's Green. They took part in what was almost certainly the last traditional morris side belonging to the Forest, their last appearance being at Whitsun 1884 when they danced at Ruardean & Mitcheldean, finishing up at Ross-on-Wye. There were six dancers in the set, also a tomfool (taken by John Penn, a brother of Martin, now living at Newport, Mon.) & a Flag-bearer(Jim Knight) who waved his flag (about 4ft. X 3ft on a broomstick-length pole) in time with the music supplied by the fiddler, "Tite" Smith, a gypsy. They had four dances done to the following tunes: Speed the Plough (single file, probably a processional), Soldier's Joy (double file, with hand-clapping), Haste to the Wedding & Greensleeves. The details of the handclapping in Soldier's Joy were obtained from Mr Ward. The dancers wore white shirts with 40 yards of coloured ribbon hanging in overlapping folds & long sleeves without ribbons, breeches or trousers, box hats with ribbons, & ruggles - a single row of 6 or 8 bells tied just below the knee. They were taught the dances by old John Ward, who had long before belonged to a long- disbanded Morris side probably at Lydbrook where he kept the Bell Inn & also had a room for Morris dancers. Martin Penn had seen the Travelling Morrice on more than one occasion & said that their dancing was really altogether different, but he was unable to explain in what way it differed. Peter Ward may also have taken part in a slightly earlier side as he mentioned a larger number of dancers & 2 men with 2 swords each which they swirled in the air above their heads (as described by Cecil Sharp, part I, 2nd ed.,p.29). He also mentioned the fiddler who preceded "Tite" Smith & understood the dancing better – this was Paddy Morgan of Kern Bridge, whose granddaughter Mrs Creed was found at

English Bicknor. She remembered seeing the Morris for which her grandfather played at Joy's Green, but she did not know the Penns.

At Netherend (Woolaston parish) on the other side of the Forest **Mrs Workman** (wife of the photographer who conversed with the men at Longhope) told of her grandfather who died in 1913 aged 86, speaking much of the Morris dancing he used to take part in with his brother. It was an Alvington-Woolaston set – they wore bells & ribbons & had a “Mad Moll”.

Monday-Saturday April 14th – 19th 1947

Russell (the Bagman) was again in the **Forest of Dean** & visited Mr **Martin Penn** at Ruardean & also his brother **John Penn** at Newport, Mom. Some further information on the Forest of Dean Morris was obtained from the latter, who mentioned among other things the use in certain dances of small flags a pair of which were carried by each dancer. The Tomfool carried a stick with a nice horse's tail attached to it. It was learnt that Peter Ward of Joy's Green had died several months ago. With the help of the names of old dancers & fiddlers culled from Cecil Sharp's MSS, it was found possible to trace some of the children & grandchildren of the last Morris dancers of the Herefordshire / Gloucestershire border around May Hill & Clifford's Mesne, & it was clear that these people are still fully conscious of what the Morris stood for though very few of them are old enough to have seen it in action. One first-rate fiddler was found, **Steve Baldwin**, a son of old Charles Baldwin (not George B. as stated in the MSS) from whom Cecil Sharp collected the Morris Call & other tunes. A remarkable situation is **Dancing Green**, Pontshill, on the extreme northern edge of the Forest of Dean, an ancient rendezvous for Morris dancers of the neighbourhood, & little more the a stone's

through from Euroclydon. The last inhabitant to remember seeing dancing there was being buried (aged 93) on the very day of Russell's visit.

Whit-Monday 1947

Russell Wortley & Kenneth Savory spent Whit-Monday at **Bampton** to view the Morris there. From time to time the dancing was seriously impeded by a persistent television man whose object was to persuade Billy Wells & the Bampton dancers to go to Alexandra Palace on the following Wednesday to appear in a television programme of the BBC. This in spite of (or because of) his irksome persistence he failed to do. Much benefit was gained from viewing the dancing, and owing to a shortage of men after tea Russell had the unusual experience of taking part in the traditional team during the last hour's dancing.

Saturday January 12th 1952

Russell & three other members of the CMM visited the Cotswolds. At **Bledington** valueless

speech taken with various women. Much more useful speech was had with **Cecil Alcock** a young Bledington man who works on the Holdom's farm and took part in a Morris at Bledington in 1939, which had been trained by Mr Randolph of Stroud. It appeared that most of the other members of this side had since left the village but Cecil said he had a friend who played the accordion & was interested. It was decided that further contact should be made next time the Travelling Morrice visited Bledington. The next day Russell visited old Lewis Hall, who again harped on about that great fiddler Charles Benfield of Bould.

Wednesday April 15th 1953

Russell visited **Mr Henry Taylor**, eldest son of Harry Taylor, Foreman of the old Longborough Morris, who has retired from the Metropolitan Police & lives with his widowed sister at 161 Crescent Road, Plumstead near Woolwich. He remembered seeing the Longborough side dance at Stow-on-the-Wold about the time he left school, & he has never seen any morris dancing since then. Though he said he was never a dancer

himself he seemed to remember some of the steps quite clearly & he used to play many of the tunes on his fiddle.

The Travelling Morrice and traditional dancers

John Jenner

December 2000

This document contains references within **The Travelling Morrice logs**, to meetings and conversations with, and also references to, traditional dancers and dances.

The extracts from the first three tours are taken from the original Logbooks, written up the same night in most cases, by Arthur Heffer, or Conway Waddington (3rd.) Other extracts have been taken from the duplicated logs or summaries in the CMM archives. Only a few small amendments have been made to put the meetings into context etc.

In an **Appendix** to these notes there are nine pages of tunes and dance notation put together from the original manuscript of the log of the First Tour, and also seven pages of photographs of old dancers or traditional sides from the many hundreds held in the club's archives (mostly just snapshots of men dancing or camping).

While reading the early logs in order to extract the information I have been reminded of how much we have lost in the passing of these old dancers. Also the great expectancy of the village audiences and the difficulties of travel, not only by bicycle but also by the frequent failures of the cars. Camping suffered continuously from attacks from horses, cattle and sheep, and candles were used in tents, which on one occasion caused considerable loss to one man. However the men drank just as much beer and cider, sang well and every tour records the state of many of the men's brains and legs both at midnight and next morning (But : As is stamped on one log "For members of C.M.M.. Not to be published")

First Tour 1924 (Cotswolds)

Wednesday June 18th

Burford. During the very first show of the TM. To the delight of all at this point Mr Kettlewell announced **Mr East** who turned out to be a dear old man of some ninety years who remembered perfectly seeing the dances done in Burford in his early years. The information he vouchsafed was scanty but it was gathered that dances "similar" to ours were done and the costume also the same. Apparently Billy Laugh'em (or Lap'em) was the fool or squire and had a stick with a bladder one end and a cow's tail the other. Hobby horses joined the ceremony. Mr East was emphatic that a pipe and tabor was "so much better than a fiddle". (*The TM had a fiddler*). The presence of Mr East required something in his honour and accordingly Banks of the Dee and Green Garters were done, the latter round him. Some photographs were taken by one of the local people and these are eagerly looked for. (*The collection was £1-14-6*)

Field Town. While resting several people made friends with **Mr Franklin**, brother of the dancer of that name (died three years ago) and very critical but kindly he was. Peter Fox sang the song to an admiring audience and later Mr Franklin became eloquent and actually danced us the "Hey" as it "should be done" with an extra turn in it before doing hop back step into places. This must be worked out. Earsden seemed to please the populace but Mr Franklin firmly protested that "he didn't like it". In fact he saw a similar dance done in Burford just before the war which was "much better". However enough praise to suit the

most vain person was extracted from a gentleman called **Pratley** who said “You dance fine “ and “very pretty”

Thursday June 19th

Still in **Fieldtown**

At the shop two young men, one a **Pratley**, remembered Tiddy and Ralph Honeybone and votes the dancing good fun and announced their intention of restarting the side.

Bledington. After the show several of the party were introduced to Mr John Hitchman (a former Morris Man of great renown who knew old Ned Gibbs and Charles Benfield). He thought the dancing extremely good – not so good as the “party from Burford” (Wherever we go we are haunted with the still admired fame of this Burford side which seems to have been the headquarters side or perhaps Mr Tiddy’s dancers from Ascot under Wychwood). Mr Hitchman remembered all the dances perfectly and also presumable Bledington dances to Saturday Night and Young Collins. No persuasion would induce Mr Hitchman to come and be photographed with the side so Alan came on to the bridge where he was standing and snapped him there – he was not unpleased.

To Leap Frog, Mr Hitchman recollected some words something like

First you does your bow

Then I does my bow

And he don’t do his bow

Because he don’t know how

Leap Frog he called “Hop Frog” or “Glorishear”. He called Trunkles “a good old fashioned dance”. “ We all likes Hop Frog and William and Nancy but give me Old Trunkles for a good old fashioned dance “.

Bould. Where a halt was made at **Mr Charles Benfield’s** cottage. The grand old man lives quite by himself and was delighted to see us albeit a trifle nervous at being confronted with so many (seven) people. Leap Frog (or Hop Frog as he called it) was done in his honour in the road. He voted it “proper”. To our joy he consented to play his fiddle which a kind neighbour fetched. Alas it would not be tuned so Alan loaned his own instrument. He played “Hop Frog” and to the great interest of Kenworthy’s collecting instinct, “Saturday Night”. Kenworthy is to get up early and try and hear more of this and of Young Collins tomorrow before old Benfield (84) goes to Bledington to collect his pension money. He also played Maid of the Mill and Bonnets so Blue. He knew of the Monk’s March – a “heel and toe” dance. Young Collins was danced with sticks he said.

Idbury. First **Mr Richard Bond**, a dear old man, who came to see us dance after being confined to his house for several months. Poor Mr Bond wept for joy at seeing his old favourites again – he waxed eloquent and made a small speech saying he had never seen Trunkles so well danced – which was very complimentary. He had hardly hoped to see it again before he died. Mr Benfield was also brought over from Bould. ...The collection was a very generous £1-1-2 ½ from mostly quite poor people and yet every single one contributed his or her mite. Far from resenting the collection everybody seemed to expect it —tradition again.

Friday June 20th

Kenworthy and Alan bustled off to **Bledington** to see **Mr Benfield** and get some tunes and dances from him and returned in time for breakfast about 9.0 a.m. having collected tunes for Saturday Night and Bonnets so

Blue. He called R.T.B's "fore capers" and insisted that they should be done not as we dance them but with the body upright and the knee bent.

After breakfast at Mr Robertson Scott's suggestion Kenworthy, Peter and Arthur went to see **Mr Richard Bond** in his cottage. They were met with smiles by Mr & Mrs Bond – dear old Bond after seeing the dancing last night had had his first good night's rest for months, and he was found beaming and looking extremely well. What was most exciting was his version of a "Young Collins" tune) and also Flowers of Edinbro.. (*see appendix for both*)

The fool he called Jimmy the Loddy and he was a Rissington dancer. He mentioned Mobey and Franklin as good Milton dancers. To the amusement of the "keen collectors" he said that the Honeyburn's at Leafield were "terrible fighters"

He sang one very amusing song entitled "Arthur o' Bradlio".

One verse went something like this:

"You never can't sing Arthur o' Bradlio"	Chorus
The upper ten and the lower voive	"O rare Arthur o'Bradlio
.....	Wonderful Arthur o'Bradlio" Etc
Oh but is my true love there	
.....	Or
I belongs to the lower voive	"For the honour of Arthur o'Bradley
I lives in a	O rare Arthur o'Bradley
And I sometimes contrive	O brave Arthur o'Bradley
To pick up a copper or two.	Arthur o'Bradley O!"

The first verse from "Choyce Drollery" 1656 (Ebsworth edition) is then quoted.

N.B. Mr Bond's version seems to have little or nothing to do with this.

(note . To be found in Alfred Watkins "Folk Songs of the Upper Thames" pp271-4)

Sherborne. After four dances they moved to Sherborne House for four more dances which were done very badly. However during tea an old man called **Mr Townsend** (Albert Townsend , Post Office, Sherborne) made friends with the party. He was an old dancer and sang a song to us called "Highland Mary" rather like "Yankee doodle dandy" and with some obscure words which were only partly noted down. He said a dance was done to "Highland Mary" for four in a square with heys or some such figure returning to places. A dear old man, delighted to see us. Charles Taylor of Oddington danced a jig with the Sherborne step to this tune – something like "I'll go and enlist for a sailor"
On the way back Arthur and Kenworthy called on **Mrs Mott**, a sister of old **George Simpson** the famous Sherborne dancer – poor bedridden old girl.

Stow. During the show which was more than two hours late, some of the dancers chummed up with a **Mr Halloway (?) (sic)** who seems to have been a Bledington dancer. Also a certain Mr **Lewis Hall** also of Bledington was commended as a man to call upon.

Everybody was extremely nice and all were delighted to hear the children sing the tunes as they were played. Apparently dances have been taught in Stow but the practice has dropped lately. Alan reported that he had his films developed at no cost as "that is my contribution towards your collection".

Saturday June 21st

Before leaving Stow they bought a cardigan & a neckerchief for Mr Benfield.

Longborough. One of the first things seen was **Mr Henry Taylor** in the street – doing a galley – perfectly. Mr Taylor (the old Longboro foreman) strolled down the street with the cavalcade to find a suitable dancing place. The ground was unconscionably unlevel, but spirits were high and Hey diddle dis was danced, followed by Young Collins and London Pride. Mr Taylor was high in his praise, in fact all swelled with pride “ Just right quite” was his actual sentence. Some little way down the village another halt was made and Bledington Trunkles was done “by way of a change”. However, a small suspicion that even the Longboro people might get tired of Longboro dances was quickly dispelled.

Then a wonderful thing happened: Old Henry Taylor, bless him, came up to Arthur, and said confidentially;- “Pardon me larding in young sir, but may an old man what knows what he’s talking about suggest that you do Constant Billio a new way to rest you – I knows how tired you gets, and it don’t do to weary your bonny lads.” Then came the suggestion. It was that instead of doing the hand clapping and cross over with opposites to four capers, that it should be done as follows ;

Clap to. r.r. / to. l.l. / to. be / to. across r.l. and l.r.

Feet r.r. / l.l. / /

This did indeed rest everybody and gave one furiously to think how the foreman of a side had to coax and look after his men. He said that during Whit week he and his men used to tour on a very similar route to the one taken by the party.

A **Mr Joynes** was then discovered and he turned out to be the fiddler of the side , a comparatively young man, full of life and a remarkably good instrumentalist. Mr Joynes apparently played for Mr Taylor to dance when the Director took down the Longboro dances. Mr Joynes produced a book of tunes, extremely neatly copied out and these were perused with eagerness. Lunch was taken on the vicarage lawn. Mr Taylor and Mr Joynes sat watching the animals feed. While washing we heard Mr Joynes playing tunes on Alan’s fiddle, extremely well too it was found that he had all the tunes copied out neatly from **Mr Tom Taylor**. The recorded tunes excluding Saturday Night are copied from Mr Joynes’ book. Neither Mr Taylor or Mr Joynes could remember that tune but were satisfied with the Benfield version. Now comes the exciting part. Mr Taylor warmed by seeing the dancing and by a small quantity of beer (he spoke with relish of a certain “jangle” or carouse enjoyed many years before at Stow) was pressed to show us how to do some dances. Nothing loathe, but unable to dance much himself, Mr Taylor formed the party up in one long line facing up (six) and announced Saturday Night.

(Saturday Night - included here but also see the appendix)

This was as follows (Longboro tradition). A and B music played alternately, same dancing to both. Dance two by two, 1 and 2 beginning (Perhaps No. 1 began by dancing alone facing up).

tw * * * out..... sw up wide

r. l. r. hr / l. r. l. hl / r. hr .hr / ft. ju.

gal.....

tw * * * wave * * *

r. cap l. r / l. cap r. L / R. L. / R. L. //

Pass each other on the capers. When neutral dance first facing away from the set then turn on the capers and as before.

To get into column when the order is 2 (facing down) 1, 4, 3, 6, 5. and

substitute a galley (right galley) for the last 4 capers. Then turn and do a whole hey.

Then Cuckoo's Nest (Mr Joynes took this tune down from Tom Taylor) - (*see appendix*)

(Bledington also had a version of this)

Old Trunkle - (*see appendix*)

Old Woman Tossed up in a Blanket danced as London Pride – (*see appendix*)

At 4.0 they unwilling had to leave and Mr Taylor and Mr Joynes seemed as sorry as the rest that the morrice was going. In fact the constant refrain all along has been "Do come again" which is most encouraging.

Ilmington. While waiting for tea in The Howard Arms, Arthur and Kenworthy went off to see **Mr Sam Bennett**. He was found to be most garrulous and rather puffed up with his own importance with a villainous face to boot. However he was doubtless a clever man and seems to be the moving spirit in the morris propaganda in Ilmington. After tea of eggs and bread and butter the show was due at 7.00 and on arriving opposite Mr Sam Bennett's house they found him playing a version of Flowers of Edinboro, (Country Dance) to the dancing of a number of small children (with bells on). Then the Travelling Morrice started and did Old Black Joe (rather badly) and Lads a Bunchum (Adderbury) and this rather well. Mr Bennett was rather surprised to hear some tunes and see some dances that were new to him.

Then a move was made a few hundred yards up the street to **Mr Michael Johnson's** house. Mr Johnson is a dear old man and quite reconciled the party to the discomforts and bad arrangements of Ilmington. One of the party went to see the old gentleman – as he heard the bells on his garden path he gave a chuckle and when he was told that morris men wanted to dance in front of his house he gave a huge chortle of delight. "Hooray" said he and cut a caper to his wife's consternation in front of his fireplace. Then he came out to watch.

For Mr Johnson's benefit two Ilmington dances were performed Old Woman Tossed up in a Blanket and Cuckoo's Nest. Here a collection was made and Mr Johnson insisted on giving us a shilling. This ought to be framed. Next by way of a change a move was made towards the green in front of Mr Bennett's house. The dances done on the road were Room for the Cuckoo (Bucknell) ; which impressed Mr Bennett as a dance he had never seen before, and Shepherd's Hey (Field Town). Mr Bennett is an interesting man and clever to a fault; he sings, plays the fiddle and teaches all the youth of Ilmington to dance. Finally Flowers of Edinboro was done for our hosts outside the Howard's Arms.

(At 8.45 the party rode off to Stratford arriving at about 9.30, pitched camp by 10.15 collected beer and biscuits and celebrated Midsummer Eve in the big tent with a sing-song during which Peter Fox taught Rose Rose – a magnificent round.)

Monday June 23rd

Adderbury. After a day of rest in Stratford and two breakfasts at the Unicorn, where the landlady remembered Cecil Sharp and some of the shows given in Stratford, the party gave a show in Adderbury to a large and enthusiastic audience. It appears that a certain **Miss Blunt** is the local folk dance enthusiast and so accounts for the fact that many of the children present knew the tunes and even danced informally in one corner.

Alas the tour of the Travelling Morrice is over. But stay the illness of Mr Sharp has been hanging over head like a terrible sword of Damocles. The extreme mobility has not permitted the access to bulletins from headquarters. Sorry and grief Tommy and Arthur on reaching London heard that Mr Sharp died this morning, even as the camp was being struck at Stratford. Thank heavens that the tour is actually over and strange unhappy chance that his death should coincide with the breaking up of the Travelling Morrice! It is comfort to think that even on his death bed Mr Sharp gave his blessing to the tour – without which no such venture would have been possible. When one thinks of it there was something mystical about the end of the tour, a completing of the magic circle in that The Travelling Morrice took back the dances to the villages from which Mr Cecil Sharp collected them years ago

Visit after first tour 1924 (Cotswolds)

Kenworthy Schofield and Peter Fox stayed in the Cotswolds in a cottage belonging to Mr Robertson Scott in search of new dances and then wrote to Arthur Heffer the logmaster.

Tuesday June 24th

Up betimes and after breakfast we called on **Mr Charles Benfield**. He was working in his garden making felloes for cart and wagon wheels (over 80). After conversation we arranged chairs outside his door and he played to us. He verified the tunes which we had played last week and very few alterations were necessary. He taught us the stick tapping of Young Collins and “Billy Boy”. Saturday Night we found to be common to Longboro’ and Bledington but Benfield made it longer: foot it twice – shuffle and jump and repeat - B Music 1. Side step – 2. Half capers –and then change into capers. Bonnets of Blue, a most attractive tune, is danced as William & Nancy (probably done at Milton as the others don’t know it) Apart from Ken breaking a chair and “Charlie” breaking a string nothing untoward happened – and we left him very grateful.

We next went to see **John Hitchman** who must have been a grand “lad” in his time. He used to play the “squire”. One criticism of our dancing was that we took too many steps to the tune. This is interesting and it probably refers to our shuffles which are, as we already know fussy and noisy, and to them the shuffle was a only a preparation for the jumps: it may also refer to the “faint” steps and e.g. in Hopfrog, the step or sometimes a stamp which some dancers put in before the galley. He talked at length and rather vaguely about Hopfrog.. (There’s a long note to come here which I’ll leave as I want to catch the post.) I’ll give extracts) *(no trace of the full note exists)* “If you’re a dancer when you hears the tune playing you knows how to foot it”. We were asking a lot of questions in order to get definite answers and he thought us stupid. He said this because he couldn’t remember even when we gave him the tune what happened next. He knew Shepherds Hey and Jockie as jigs also Heel & Toe and the Sherborne Jig (with meeting). He was very keen on the dancing of the Burford girls especially a short, sandy-haired girl, but though he eulogised their dancing his wink rather betrayed him – perhaps it wasn’t altogether artistic appreciation. He gave us several interesting details about the dancers. He himself when not being Squire used to dance offside at the top, but he liked best nearside hindmost, where he could do what the other fellows did (second corner in each case)! Benfield, he said, used to play for Longboro’ and Bledington and Milton. He had lived all his life at Bould - “bred and born there”. It is wrong to kick the back leg at Bled. Hitchman says, and you ought to have alternate legs out.

From Hitchman we discovered the whereabouts of **Charlie Taylor**, the Oddington dancer – known to Rolf. He now lives near Icomb (*sic*) in part of some farm buildings, which are reached across three fields. We found grandad and his daughter in law at dinner. He is in his 88th year, very deaf and has an injured eye, but otherwise is very sprightly, rather a short man, with a magnificent forehead. He remembered a gentleman coming to see him six months back. While we were drinking tea, he told us how he and Sam Bennett and Billy Wells had been to London, under the aegis of Miss Neale. This may have turned his head slightly; he bragged about the number of tunes he knew, like Bennett. Though there had been an Oddington side he had always danced with Bled. And Longboro'. He verified several Bled. Dances – e.g. stick tapping in Young Collins. But his memory was clearest about jigs and in spite of our attempts to restrain him he did parts of two or three jigs, Jockie and Princess Royal – twist c-clockwise etc pretty like Plum Pudding. Jockie sidestep has 16 bars – half-capers and eight capers at the end. He did Highland Mary to Townsend's tune. – Sherborne step, which we noticed at once. In full capers of other jigs he did the kick forward. At 1.30 we left him and ate oranges and chocolate in the lane.

Returning to Idbury went to **Richard Bond**, and we learnt a good deal from him; a country dance tune etc. He has a lot more to give, but he was a bit tired when we were there. (Time presses) From all these men we were anxious to find out how the hand movements went. Bledington and Idbury do definite c-cl twists – at the jump you put them up.

We must go now. We have verified one or two theories.

Second Tour 1925 (Forest of Dean)

Wednesday July 1st

Ruardean. The show was due at 6.30 but by now past that time men still demanded beer and more beer in the Angel (Mr Arkell). Walked or danced to our first site at the west end of the village and then moved to a site lower down – a site apparently where dancing used to be done in the old days. On again to the triangle by the Angel.

Friday July 3rd

Bream. Danced around the Maypole which stands at the crossroads in the main street.

After the show we went to the New Inn for a badly needed lunch after lunch a **Mr Scott** the local postman put his head in the door, so we dragged him in and gave him beer. Then he talked solidly to us for nearly half an hour a delightfully rambling talk covering every conceivable topic and during which we learnt a great deal about Bream. He told us of two old men who might know some dances or songs :-

Mr Richard Beach, 4 Council Villas, Bream and Mr Niblett, opposite the church, Bream.

Then off he went on his rounds promising to send to Arthur any interesting things he might discover.

Shortly afterwards Arthur exploring outside found the very **Mr Richard Beach** having met the postman & hearing that 'some gentlemen wanted to see him'

So we brought him in too. A fine old man, over 70 yet working several days a week in the fields. Today he had been working underground since 6.30 am (it was now 2.00)

After a little beer he became talkative & mentioning songs he said he knew the Forest of Dean Song. 'Oh' said we 'how does it go', then he sang it to us.

Chorus: Oh we're the jovial foresters

Our trade is getting coal

You never knew a forester

But he was a hearty soul.

Verse: So here we are all at our work

We're bound to share like any Turk

So firm & free our duty see

We stick like bucks to liberty

The tune is rather a haunting one. We don't know the song & hope rather that we are the first to get it down. In his honour we did Mr Beach a dance (William & Nancy) outside the inn & packed him off to his 'missus' – of whom he seemed quite rightly afraid.

Now for **Mr Niblett**. We found him pottering in his garden. A nice old man but shaky with a weak heart & signs of dropsy. He didn't know, or had forgotten any songs or dances – but it was too much to expect to find two songs in a day. We did him a dance too (Glorishears).

Then Mrs Nibbett, kindly soul, implored us to have some of her herb beer – we simply had to for it would have broken her heart if we had refused. It wasn't nice – but enough!

Saturday July 4th

In **Chepstow**, on the advice of Mr Hughes, the vicar had been making enquires and discovered that an elderly gentleman in Chepstow remembered hearing a folk tune of a dance some forty years ago at a pageant of some kind in Chepstow. Expectantly some of the men visited this gentleman at his home and got him to hum the tune. To our amazement he sang 'Shepherd's Hey - Bampton' with only one variation from our own version and that could probably be accounted for by lapse of time since he heard it.

The dance he didn't remember – that is not in detail- but he did recollect that it was a processional dance & that quite a number (about 20) people took part in it. They were dressed in tunics with ribbons, knee-breeches & had bells on and sticks in their hands & sometimes advanced in one line b& sometimes in two lines to a 4/3 morris step which our friend demonstrated quite effectively. No more details could be discovered but our friend promised to search his mind and his photograph album, for he remembered that some photographs being taken of the pageant. Perhaps something may turn up later.

Sunday July 5th

Ronald returned to **Bream** when the tour was over to see what he could find. The visit was worth while for he hunted out one singing haymaker friend and summarised a description of him in the laconic phrase "a sophisticated bromide". However **Mr Beach** was still in good form and Ronald managed to secure three songs from him with the promise of others. The tunes are not particularly good but the fact remains he discovered them.

Third Tour 1925 (Cotswolds)

Tuesday August 25th

Bledington. Show at 12.40, a good crowd including **Mr Benfield** who had been fetched over by car, and **Hr Hitchman**, another old dancer, all Bledington show including Hop Frog (with song to the great delight of Mr Hitchman).

Next show was at **Stow** during which had talked to various old men (including **George Hathaway**, an old dancer).

Wednesday August 26th

Show at **Oddington** watched by several old men who remembered the morrice in the old days and one whose grandfather played the pipe.

At **Longborough** after the show (under the critical eye of **Harry Taylor**) and tea Kenworthy and Alec went to see Harry Taylor who gave instructions for a Longborough Jockey to the Fair and a new version of Swaggering Boney. (*the rest played croquet*). During another long show with a large and appreciative audience including Harry Taylor who was very excited at the dancing and his enthusiasm did a great deal to keep our spirits up.

Thursday August 27th

After breakfast on the way from Stow to **Chipping Norton** Kenworthy and Roland went off to interview **Charles Benfield** but had to hurry to get to the show.

We changed in the house of Mr Freeborn, a butcher, who was very kind to us & provided us with a large pig's bladder, which was tied to a stick & given to Peter, who didn't dance at all but acted as the fool, A fine fool he made, with his mild face contorted into a most mirth provoking grin.

After the show George and Conway had a long conversation with a **Mr Longshaw** who had been the fiddler for the Shipton & Milton sides. Meanwhile Kenworthy found time to imbibe at least a sufficiency of Mr Freeborn's cider and had to be kept strenuously in hand all afternoon. Ronald, Alf & Conway took him to see Mr Longshaw who was eventually run to earth in the blacksmith's shop. He was very pleased to talk about the morrice & said how his fingers had itched to play when he saw "that young lady a-playing" "Ah! She could fiddle she could" he said, but his own fiddling days were over as his hands were all bent up with rheumatism. (*the fiddler for the tour was Miss Ruby Avril*). He told us some very entertaining stories of the old days, including one in which Mr Hitchman of Bledington got pitched into a water tub. The last morris he had seen had been six young ladies, who danced very well, he said, -for young ladies.

Friday August 28th

After a show outside the George at **Fieldtown** went to the Fox where we found **Mr Alec Franklin**, a very spry old gentleman who was very pleased to see dancing again. He instructed us to do capers in the second half of the stick tapping in Bobby & Joan, and a great improvement it was too. For his benefit, too, we repeated The Rose, Kenworthy performing on his pipe, as Ruby had to go home for lunch. After bread, cheese & pickles with beer and excellent cider as lubricants, Mr Franklin got quite cheerful and got up to help Kenworthy reconstruct Princess Royal (F.T.) For an oldish man he did the capers very firmly.

Saturday August 29th

At **Abingdon** show under the market hall . After the first dance William & Nancy, **Mr Hemmings**, a coalman & former dancer was very excited and tried to make us do Abingdon heys in the dance, so we did Princess Royal to gratify him & explained the position to him.

In Ock Street the Gallant Hussar was done outside a pub & an admiring audience invited us to go inside & have refreshment. They were very interested in our dancing & sung us a tune to which they did Princess Royal. It was a sort of mixture of Brighton Camp & A-Hunting we will go. To please them we did Princess Royal in the Back yard singing the tune for ourselves. As Ruby had already gone After food at the Red Lion and afterwards Tommy & others complained (complained if you please) of the potency of the beer.

As an Appendix to the log this summary was written by the logmaster

Notes on the information collected from old dancers.

Tuesday A visit was paid to **Benfield** & we verified the Cuckoo's Nest & Balance the Straw, a jig, both of which Ken had originally got last September. In Bledington we danced Cuckoo's Nest to the surprise of **Hitchman**, who hadn't seen it for years. Afterwards at lunch Ken danced Balance the Straw, and his version seemed to pass muster. Benfield was very delighted with Ruby's playing, particularly because she played without music. After the show he played us Maid of the Mill on her fiddle.

At **Stow** we met **George Hathaway** who was in the revived Bledington side, with **Hall & the Careys**. He showed us a heart shaped collecting box they had used. We also spoke to **Ned Hathaway**, an old man now living in the almshouses. He used to dance offside foremost to Harry Taylor of Longborough. He told us of a Longborough dance to the British Grenadiers. It was a "side step & caper through " dance. The ordinary formula movements he knew of were "go & come back, then go round keeping your faces, go round keeping your backs" ie half gip, whole gip, back to back.

Wednesday The only **Oddington** dancer left is **Charles Taylor** of Church Icomb, who we did not see. At **Longborough** we got a good deal of new information from **Harry Taylor**. We did whole gip footing in the half gip & no shuffles in the once-to-yourself & he seemed to approve of this. We also pleased him by doing Cuckoo's Nest which he had taught us last time. However when we tried Maid of the Mill with side step & caper through we were pulled up, while Swaggering Boney was altogether wrong. His corrected version was as follows :- ordinary foot up & rounds B1, sidestep, clap & hit feet, (clap, r-r feet, clap l-l feet) then galley back to places on last two bars. B2 sidestep, fight, galley B3 sidestep, forecapers through & galley. B4 sidestep, rtbs & galley. B5 sidestep, full capers & galley. This leaves you on the wrong sides so perhaps the forecapers should be repeated. Beyond this we heard of Saturday Night, Banks of the Dee & a heel & toe dance to We won't go Home till Morning, which he whistled like Greensleeves.

Thursday We visited Benfield. They got Princess Royal which will have to be further verified. It's more like the Bampton version than Hitchman's garbled version given in the old book III. Benfield also fiddled Idbury Hill, a version of London Pride, and Old Woman.

Friday At Fieldtown we met Alec Franklin. He made us do capers in the second half of the stick tapping in Bobby & Joan. In the Fox Inn he actually got up and showed us Princess Royal, with hand clapping in the sidestep & the Nutting Girl with a hockle back joining the A & B music in the sidestep. He referred to Constant Billy as a jig, meaning None so Pretty, and to a heel & toe - "Mrs Casey".

Saturday The Abingdon men didn't know much about the dance. They all remembered the final jump into ring, and sang us a mangled version of "A Hunting we will go".

Fifth Tour 1927 (Cotswolds)

Tuesday June 21st

Brackley. Danced by the Town Hall with **Tim Howard and Mr Giles** (Month of May)

Wednesday June 22nd

Bucknell. At show there was present **Eli Rolfe and his brother and Mr Powell** with his pipe and tabor and played for us to dance and played Black Joe, Constant Billee, Cuckoo's Nest, Blue Eyed Stranger, Jockie, Shepherd's Hey, Maid of the Mill etc. Arthur Peck noted down only the last two. Noted as "reasonably complete".

There used to be a flag on the tree in Whitsun week.

Friday June 24th

Danced in **Adderbury** before **Miss Blunt**

Seventh Tour 1929 (Cotswolds)

Tuesday June 25th

Bourton-on-the-Water Danced in centre of village outside the Wellington and butcher opposite was so pleased that he presented us with a pig's bladder and a calf's tail.

Wednesday June 26th

Three shows in **Longborough** watched by **Harry Taylor** as an interested critic. He was delighted to see us and to see his dances done again, but he complained that our shirts did not get nearly as wet as those of the traditional team; in his day one dance left the team so exhausted that they could not immediately perform another. He showed us a Galley which he made high in the air with the thigh at rightangles to the body. Arthur also spoke to **George Joynes** who was interested in morris tunes and from whom Kenworthy had collected all the new Longborough tunes. Harry Taylor attempted to remember a Longborough "Hop Frog", but failed to do so. He was borne home, tired but exhilarated in Clifford's car the richer by 10/-, a small present made to him by The Travelling Morrice.

After lunch and a change into clean whites went to **Maugersbury Manor** for Stow Church Fete. **Old Hathaway** was present and taught us a new Bledington processional "Hey Away" which we danced at the fete. Men were entertained to magnificent supper in the Manor medieval hall with unlimited food and cyder cup and returned to camp in a very fine state.

Thursday June 27th

Went to **Church Icomb**. Danced several dances and were warmly greeted by **Charles (Minny) Taylor**, an old dancer of 93, who had belonged to the Oddington team, and knew the Bledington and Longborough traditions. He danced "Princess Royal" for us to Clifford's fiddling; "Play it once to yourself": and when the time came "Now side-step", and then "fore capers", and then he stopped saying "Now I want to see you dance". Arthur Peck then performed the dance for him. Charles Taylor was a fiery fine old man, wonderfully vigorous for his age. He taught us a new "Leap-frog" which went to the tune of "Swaggering Boney" (The steps of the dance are given in the appendix) (*This does not exist now*). Taylor's conversation was very lively and a few fragments were recorded:- John Hitchman over to Bledington don't know as much about the morris as that thing passing there. We called him Squire, but he was really the Tom-fool. I know I'm fool enough myself, but he was a bigger"

He told us that during a competition between Icomb and Sherborne, the Sherborne men started on the left foot, and so lost. He also told us that the Bampton fiddler, Billy Wells, used to dance the Sherborne Jig and play the tune at the same time: the writer (*Jan Durrant*) is assured that this is indeed the case.

It was interesting to note that all Taylor's tunes corresponded note for note with the official tunes, and that he called a Galley a "Hook-leg" and made it very near the ground (Contrast Henry Taylor's galley.)

Lunch was obtained from the Post-office and home-brewed cyder from a house on the opposite side of the road. During lunch Miney Taylor collected for himself in the Morrice Men's box all round the village. He obtained 8/6, which the morrice men made up to 10/-. He seemed surprised to find the box so heavy (it was filled with coppers from the day before) and remarked that we must have put in stones to make it rattle. His team used a large wooden box with a hole in for the penny pieces, and two smaller ones for the

threepences and sixpences. John Coales and Arthur Peck carried on a great deal of conversation with Minny Taylor which the writer did not hear and he is indebted to them for the following notes. Minny Taylor spoke of a Highland Mary, having a tune almost the same as the Bampton one. "A side-step dance – face up, side-step and hookleg, the hey all round and come into your places again" This probably:-

Side-step, right in front, side-step, left in front, Hook-leg, Half-hey, Repeat

He also sang "Greensleeves" for the Baccapipes dance, his tune being like the Wyresdale tune, and "Young Collins" (his tune was practically the same as the Bledington version) during which he tapped sticks with us. This, he said, was their only stick dance. He sang a version of "Hey diddle dis" to the words:

Hey diddle dis

The girls you may kiss

Here comes the Fieldtown Morris

Give the poor fiddler some drink, some drink

Give the poor fiddler some drink.

"Jockie to the Fair" was another tune he was able to sing to us.

On to Bledington where the Vicar's bride was being welcomed to the village in the hall and our audience was the most enthusiastic we experienced on the tour.

Friday June 28th

Arthur Heffer and Arthur Peck visited **Mr Benfield**, the son of **Charlie** who died since the 1925 tour and saw the old man's fiddle that he had had all his life. They also called on **John Hitchman** who used to be squire of the Bledington men.

With visits to Fieldtown, Sherborne and Burford (but no mention of old dancers) and again another very alcoholic evening at Burford to end the tour.

After the Eighth Tour 1930 visit to the Cotswolds

After the tour in Devon three members on their way back paid visit to the Cotswolds, and there learnt the sad news of the death of two old Cotswold morris men, Mr John Hitchman of Bledington and Mr Charles Taylor of Church Icomb.

Mr John Hitchman died on Nov 27th 1929 after a three week illness, the last week in Stow Infirmary. He is said to have spoken much of the Morris during his last days. He was in his 80th year, and was buried in his own village of Bledington. He had seen the Travelling Morrice dance on several occasions, and in June 1929 they found him in his room and heard him sing two jig tunes, Jockie to the Fair, and Highland Mary (though the latter was in reality the Bledington Saturday Night). He had been the Squire (that is to say the "tomfool") of the Bledington Men, and so seems to have confined himself to jigs.

Mr Charles ("Minny") Taylor (according to Hitchman) was taken ill the Friday after Christmas Day 1929, and died the Tuesday after. He was seen by the doctor only once. His age was 93 or 94. The first meeting of the Travelling Morrice with Mr Taylor was in June 1929, and they found him a most remarkable man. He belonged to the Oddington side, and was familiar with the Bledington and Longborough traditions. He was wonderfully vigorous for his age and stood up with bells and handkerchiefs and danced Princess Royal as far as the end of the Fore-capers. His conversation was as remarkable as his vigour and scraps of it are preserved in the logs of the Travelling Morrice

There is then a repeat of the dances etc. collected from Mr Taylor in the Seventh tour log. Also an additional note in reference to Bledington Hey Away taught by Mr Hathaway at Maugersbury Manor in that it is danced by the dancers in one file, and the music is played (as indicated in the music above) [no such music] in this order : A twice, B once. And so on repeating ad libitum.

Ninth Tour 1931 (Cotswolds)

Sunday June 21st

Alfred (i.e. Arthur) Peck, Joseph Needham and George Tomkins on way over called at **Bucknell** where we found **Mr Joseph Powell**, the pipe and tabor player of the old Bucknell side. He was delighted to see us and remembered the previous visits of the Travelling Morrice. He played us some tunes (Blue eyed stranger, Bonnets so blue, Shepherd's Hey) on his pipe and showed us his drum, which had parchment on which could still be distinctly read the lease of a refreshment purveyor.

He promised to make drums for Alfred (this may be the one still held by the CMM) and Joseph.

Tuesday June 23rd

After the show at **Fairford**, the morris men congregated in the bar of the George and had conversation with various old men, one of whom, a **Mr Price**, allowed Joe to take down a number of hitherto unrecorded folk songs (The Mistaken Sailor, The Something-or-other Robber etc. etc.). A convivial evening followed supper.

Wednesday June 24th

At **Sherborne** during the course of the jig "I'll go and Enlist" (done by Alfred and John Oliver) Joseph got acquainted with old **Mrs Townsend**, whose husband was a morris man of Sherborne in the old days (the 80's), when they were engaged. He had died in 1929, and she had never expected to see the morris again. She was delighted at what she called the only proper dancing (offered 6d.) She also remembered the names of the Sherborne dances.

Thursday June 25th

At **Leafield** after the show, at lunch in the Fox the Travelling Morrice had pleasure in the company of old **Mr Pratley** (aged 84) who remembered the dancing at Fieldtown.

After dancing in **Bledington**, **Mr Charles Benfield** (son of Benfield of Bould) and **Mrs Franklin** (daughter of old Mr Hitchman) were engaged in very pleasant conversation.

Friday June 26th

Longborough show watched by **Mr Thomas Taylor** (with spade & fork) and **Mr Joynes**

In **Chipping Norton** Joseph visited Mr Freeborn the butcher who had provided the bladder in 1926 and remembered it well. He then provided two bladders one of which had to be given first aid with zinc oxide plaster before it would be persuaded to hold air. After the apathetic show, which did not contribute much to the pecuniam, men passed into the White Hart and bought ale for **Mr Gregory**, a gardener, who had in his youth lived at Kingham and danced in what he called the Kingham Morris ("but some of the men came from Bledington")

Saturday June 27th

At **Stow** from the very beginning the morris was watched by **Mr George Hathaway**, one of the original Bledington men, who had formerly taught the Bledington Hey Away to the Cambridge Morris Men (sic). He expressed full approval of our William & Nancy and Hey Away, which gave us much pleasure. Another friend to the Morris whom we met was **Mrs Sherborne** (aged 80), the widow of the late station master at Ascot u/W; her father (**Mr Busby**) had been the fiddler to the Fieldtown Morris. She said she had greatly enjoyed the dancing and hoped that we would come back soon. Mr Hathaway joined the men for supper at the Unicorn. Later in the evening three men had the great pleasure of paying a visit to **Mr & Mrs Hathaway** in their home. Their three daughters and some grandchildren were present, and the old Bledington heart-shaped money-box was viewed.

Eleventh Tour 1932 (Cotswolds)

Friday July 15th

Joseph and Joe Coales drove off to **Chipping Campden** to see **Mr Lionel Ellis** and arranged for a joint show in the evening with the Chipping Campden morris men.

Ilmington at 2.30 T.M. issued forth, and soon saw that **Sam Bennett** was present, though at first no one recognised him, as no member of the 1924 tour was present. He soon hurried off to fetch his fiddle and to put on his beribboned hat; and played for most of the dancing here, as was only proper, though unfortunately the T.M. was not familiar enough with any of the Ilmington dances to undertake the performance of them. Mr Bennett spoke of Arthur Heffer, whose name he remembered in a corrupt form. He had of course visited Ilmington in 1924.

On to **Chipping Campden** and there one of the finest evenings of any morris tour was spent. In conjunction with the Chipping Campden Morris men, under Mr Hathaway, who had their excellent fool and hobby horse-man with them, the Travelling Morrice gave no less than three shows in the middle and at either end of the town, lasting from 7.30 to 9.30. The whole party TM & CCMM, numbering 18 persons sat down to a meal in the Red Lion the cost of which was defrayed by the collection which had been taken at the shows (total £2/8/-).

Twelfth Tour 1933 (Cotswolds)

Monday June 26th

After a short and very pleasant show at **Lower Swell** the B.M. asked whether anyone remembered the Morris. **A Mr Hathaway** replied and said he used to dance at Upper Slaughter; he knew of Trunkles, Jackie to the Fair, London Pride (recognised tune but did not know the dance) Princess Royal, Constant Billy (like the Longborough dance ; clap and pass right round each other, like a whole gyp), Ladies Pleasure. He said the Longborough and Swell were the only places where dancing took place. When Harry Taylor came to dance with the Swell men he used to lead the set. Mr Hathaway is nearly 70 – he is a roadman. Another roadman working in Swell spoke of **Mark Taylor**, the brother of Harry Taylor.

At **Lower Slaughter**, whilst going round with the pecuniam tin Walter held speech with an **old man** who remembered the morris at Swell and Longborough. In addition he told of his wife's father who had danced at Little Barrington; there was great rivalry between the Barrington and Sherborne men and on one occasion when dancing was going on at Sherborne, the Barrington dancers obtained a prize fighter from Fieldtown to come over and act as fool for them. With him the Barrington men went over to Sherborne 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 them. The old man's father-in-law was in the Barrington team on this occasion, and it was evidently one of his choicest memories.

Tuesday June 26th

At **Longborough Mr Joynes** was present and showed us a photo taken on the Vicarage lawn during the first tour in 1924 showing Mr Harry Taylor, Mr Joynes and all the men. After the show Mr Joynes showed us his music book, with other tunes copied out from various of Mr Sharp's books, including a form of Princess Royal which the BM insisted was in the wrong time.

Wednesday June 27th

At Lower Oddington. Speech was taken with an old lady whose grandfather, **Mr Sandles**, used to dance in the **Upper Oddington Morris**. She sang Princess Royal, a major version, in a very clear and firm voice, but without words until the last line when she sang the words "And a red coat for a soldier" She also sang part of Step and fetch her.

Friday June 30th

Met with the **Chipping Campden** men at Mr Ellis's basket-shop in Chipping Campden, and set out in procession led by the hobby horse and fool before a programme in the market place of alternate dances and some very good fooling by **Ormund Plasted** (the Campden fool).

Fourteenth Tour 1934 (Derbyshire)

Thursday June 28th

On to **Winster** where the **Winster men** were awaiting us and we gave a succession of shows jointly with them throughout the town finishing up with the ascent of Winster Bank (1 in 9) and a show outside the Miner's Standard, followed by a most exhilarating evening.

Seventeenth Tour 1936 (Yorkshire Dales)

Friday June 26th

A visit to Mr & Mrs Sargent at **Arkengarthdale** re sword-dancing proved fruitless. At Redmire, we met **Christopher Paycock** ("Kit Puke"), over 80, a fine old miner, the only survivor of the **Redmire Sword-dance team**.

June 20th-28th

Note at end of the log. For the first time on a tour, some "new" Bampton was danced.
(This presumably refers to the Morris Ring's visit to Bampton earlier in the year)

Eighteenth Tour 1936 (Cotswolds)

Sunday August 30th

A few of the men took afternoon tea with **Mr & Mrs Rolfe** (Mr Rolfe being the son of Will Rolfe from whom Cecil Sharp collected some of the Bucknell dances), and were shown the handclapping of the Bucknell "Shepherd's Hey" jig, and sang part of the tune.

Monday August 31st

A visit was made by Arthur, Russell Wortley and Major Francis Fryer to **Joe Powell**, the old **Bucknell** pipe and taborer, now nearly 91 years of age. During the course of a very pleasant hour they heard a number of ancient morris tunes including what seemed to be a fine version of Trunkles, which we had not heard before, but owing to Mr Powell's great age, he had great difficulty in blowing the higher notes and the excessively dry state of his pipe nothing definite could be picked up. The Major tried this old pipe and he found that it not only required a lot of wind, but also that it is tuned on a different principle from the ordinary English 3-holed pipe. Its tuning is similar to that of the Provence three-holed pipe.

Wednesday September 2nd

At Gawcott the blacksmith informed Russell that there used to be Morris dancers at **Padbury**, last seen about 30 years ago. They were led by a **Mr Gibberd** and also did handbell ringing. They had stick and handkerchief dances and wore bells and ribbons but no hats.

Bucknell. **Mr Powell** showed great interest in the Major's playing of the pipe and tabor, but said he wanted to hear more of the drum.

Thursday September 3rd

Kirtlington and a Mr Pearman spoke of the Lamb-ale, there were the Lord and the Lady (a woman), the man with the lamb, the fool and six dancers. The Lord and Lady carried maces made of wood. The fool carried the spit – a long pole with hooks on it for offerings of food from the people. The Lamb Ale was 8 weeks from Easter – which was the Kirtlington Club. Jockie to the Fair & and Shepherd's Hey were two of the dances. During afternoon speech taken with **Mr Deeley** Foreman of the **Deddington Men** **Deddington** and a joint show with the "**Deddington (Traditional) Morris Dancers**".

Friday September 4th

Piddington, small village but definite news obtained of the former existence there of a Morris tradition of the Cotswold type.

Nineteenth Tour 1937 (Cotswolds)

Summary log records that the men spoke to **Mr George Hathaway and Lewis Hall** of **Bledington**. Also a delightful old dancer named **Charlie Jones** at **Sherborne**.

Saturday June 26th

At **Fieldtown**, unfortunately the dancing was below par, but the show was very enjoyable, being witnessed by **Mr Joseph Dore**, aged 96, from his bath-chair. After lunch the BM visited and purchased the ancient Fieldtown morris fiddle (£1) [sic, it doesn't say who from], and other men visited **Mr Wm. Dore** and heard him play Jockie to the Fair, which his father used to dance and took some pleasant home-made wine.

At **Eynsham**, where we found the **Eynsham men** well at it just outside the church, with Kenworthy as compere, and we then proceeded to give a joint show with them. Their dancing was vigorous and impressive, the only draw back was the tolling of the church bell, which made all the instruments but Joseph's squiffer inaudible. A meal with the men followed, at which little ice was broken, but afterwards each side began to teach the other its dances, with the result that some men became completely entranced and enraptured, while others who had only just joined the tour began to feel the need of a good show to finish the Tour. This was at Charlbury and some men had never been seen to dance in such a state of exaltation before.

Twentieth Tour 1938 (Cotswolds)

Tuesday June 21st

Tommy Adkins drove Mr Geo. Hathaway to **Bledington** from Stow, and he and Mr Hall and several of their descendants and others came to view us. The evening meal followed at the farmhouse, **Geo. Hathaway** outsang the BM's fiddle and we came within an ace of hearing some important remarks about the Bledington dances, when the meeting was broken up by men leaving to drive off.

Friday June 24th

Evening show at **Witney** was a joint show with the **Eynsham men** whom we picked up and drove over for the purpose. The Eynsham men's dancing was superb, their bladder remarkable, and the dancers passed from situation to situation in the town, alcohol in its various forms was taken, and the evening drew to a close.

Saturday June 25th

An intercalary show was put on before tea in order to have the opportunity of dancing in front of old **Mr Tom Pitts**, from whom Allbino had taken a new version of Old Woman, and this took place at **Eastleach** where Mr Pitts lives. Luckily the old man was on board, delighted to see the dancing, and spontaneously sang a number of tunes. During the Sherborne Princess Royal jig, Arthur, by keeping his ear close to the old man's throat, was able to hear him singing almost precisely the same tune off his own bat against the noise of the BM's fiddle.

Twenty-second Tour 1939 (Derbyshire)

Thursday June 29th

At **Winster** joint shows were given by the **Winster Men** and the Travelling Morrice, in the presence of a large crowd, and the King, Queen, Jester and Witch all of whom were excellent impersonators, especially the Queen, who had had a superb shave in preparation for the occasion. Three shows in all were given in the high street, including two beautiful performances of the Flamborough sword dance by the Winster Men. After a fine evening at the Miners' Standard the men drove off. The BM and Arthur visited the King's (Mr Brown's) house to see his collection of ores, etc. and were presented with two specimens each.

Saturday July 1st

At **Tideswell** at the conclusion of the show outside the George the Tideswell Band was heard approaching, playing the tune of the Tideswell processional and followed by a number of children executing the dance.

After the evening meal at the George the landlord said that we should be dancing again we went into his sequestered courtyard and practised the Tideswell processional, then issued forth into the open and performed it. A certain amount of information on the subject was offered by an aged bandsman and other speech was taken.

Twenty-third Tour 1945 (Cotswolds)

Tuesday August 21st

Bledington. Enthusiastic audience and the approval of **Mr Hall**, who of his own accord described the order of the leaps in Leap-Frog just as we in fact do it. Much time had been spent at rehearsals attempting to get the order of the leaps in accordance with the description in Cecil Sharp's MS. Notes, which differs considerably from the published instructions. He also approved of the hook-legs and upright capers (3 crosses & kick forward and not back).

Friday August 24th

At **Longborough** the show at the end of the village was viewed by **Mr Joynes** & his sister and several other elderly persons who remembered the last traditional Longborough side, put down by the grandfather of the BM's wife when vicar there, and also two daughters of Harry Taylor.

Saturday August 25th

At Leafield several men spoke of dancing at Fieldtown many years ago, but this turned out to have been early revival morris and the dances Headington. A real discovery was **Mr John Cooper**, a genuinely ancient man whose father was the Fool and Squire of the old **Chadlington** side, and himself a member, from whom the Foreman (Russell Wortley) gained considerable knowledge, Ted's make up and fooling pleased Mr Cooper greatly as being quite in the right tradition.

After a very fine evening at Burford men cycled back by moonlight to the camp at Bourton-on-the-Water, and so ended the first post-war Tour, which was felt to be an excellent augury for the future of the Travelling Morrce.

Twenty-fourth Tour 1946 (Forest of Dean)

Wednesday July 3rd

After the show at Longhope a cinephotographer, **Mr Roy Workman**, mentioned that his wife's grandfather had been a morris dancer at **Woolaston** and that they used to dance about Christmas time and had a man dressed as a woman. On one occasion the dancers were putting up at a pub for the night; the landlady said that she could just squeeze them in if they didn't mind sharing beds and if the lady would share with the maidservants; as time passed the uproar was more than the landlady had bargained for. (A footnote to the log:- Later in the summer **Mrs Workman** herself told Russell Wortley something of what her grandfather, who died in 1913 aged 86, used to relate about the Morris. He and his brother had taken part in a Woolaston-Alvington team, one of them being the "Mad Moll"; bells and ribbons were worn and Mrs Workman was fairly certain that the dancing took place in the summer and not at Christmas time.

Twenty-sixth Tour 1947 (Forest of Dean)

Saturday June 21st

Russell while cycling from Longhope took refuge from heavy damp under a hedge at **Dursley Cross** and became convinced that in the next cottage some ancient man was latent. He therefore trumped up some excuse for visiting the cottage and entered into conversation with two persons, apparently son and daughter of the ancient man in the background who after time overheard the speech and asked Russell to enter, and he disclosed himself as **Eli Sterry**. Eli is a cripple, aged over 80, and he discoursed with Russell

on the subject of dancing at Dursley Cross, and how the morris men used to belay their flag to the stake or stump of the cross which stood not far from the alehouse. He remembered seeing them himself and how they took part on May Hill all night long. Russell asked him about the Phelps and the Williamses of Gaunders Green, who are mentioned in Cecil Sharp's notes. Some Williamses are to be found in the Solomon's Tump neighbourhood. He also spoke about Gaunders Green and the morris that went on there and told Russell how to get to it. Russell took leave of the ancient Eli and passed by a circuitous and precipitous route to Gaunders Green where he spoke to another ancient man in another cottage who pointed out the exact portion of the Green and indicated that portion of it which has now been fenced in by some sickening land-grabber. From here Russell passed on down the road to the Glasshouse Inn and visited Oliver Phelps (nephew of Thos Phelps whom Cecil Sharp saw) who said that not only his uncle Thos. but also his father Samuel (younger than Thomas) took part in the morris, though not so much as his uncle. He then saw Oliver Sterry, son of Eli, who put up the men's notice. He then went to view **Mrs Watkins**, as Oliver said that she was probably the only person there who actually remembered seeing the Morris. This proved to be so and as soon as she realised that Russell meant to bring his men to take part there she exacted a promise that he would not allow them to damage her fence and was particularly anxious to ascertain the exact time at which the men would arrive. When the time came she was not at home. Russell then passed back to Dursley Cross and for the first time viewed the actual Cross itself. He enquired of the best way to May Hill, and here he met Mrs Boddendam, daughter-in-law of **Robert Boddendam**, one of the old dancers, and visited farmer **John Lewis**, who had often heard Charles Baldwin play, but did not actually learn from him. When young he worked with Steve Baldwin (son of Charles) and they both played fiddles together for parties etc., often all through the night, and one week they got only nine hours sleep all told. Lewis had had lessons on the fiddle so he was quite clear about the difference between countryside and professional fiddling; he said Steve Baldwin learnt entirely by ear (this was confirmed by Steve himself the following Saturday in speech with the BM).

Sunday June 22nd

While putting up posters at **Upton Bishop**, Russell, Ted Purver and other men saw old man **Stephen Baldwin** and picked up from him on loan a small handbell, which used to be worn by the Fool on his bohind, for the use by Ted for the week. Stephen Baldwin had taught a team at Mitcheldean for 2 or 3 seasons, which practised in the George Hotel clubroom there. He had picked up the dance at Broomsberrow Heath, at least 50 years since it was danced there.

Thursday June 26th

To **Beaven's Hill**, to visit Mr and Mrs Henry Taylor, Mrs T being the granddaughter of old **Charles Baldwin** from whom Cecil Sharp collected the Morris Call at Clifford's Mesne, and her mother aged over 80, whose brain had partially given way.

During the evening outside the Plough at Newent, Russell realised that he was seated next to a Mr **Leonard Ryles** who was the son of **Fiddler Lock** from Gorseley, who used to play with Charles Baldwin, and some pleasant and interesting discourse ensued.

Saturday June 28th

To **Upton Bishop** to see **Mr Steve Baldwin** himself. The first two men to arrive passed up the bankway into Mr Baldwin's house and gradually as they arrived man after man piled into the drawing room where they were introduced to Mr B. Mrs B. and Mrs Drinkwater, till the room was seething with men. Mr Baldwin unhooked his rosin-covered fiddle (now in the possession of the CMM) from its hook near the mantelpiece and began playing. He played Flanagan's Wake, Cock o' the North, Flowers of Edinburgh, Gipsies' Hornpipe, Swansea Hornpipe, Liverpool Hornpipe, Doublededout (cf. Humpty Dumpty), a particularly fine version of Haste to the Wedding, which the BM afterwards learnt; and Gleensleeves. He failed however to remember Mony Musk. Finally men passed forth into the garden and began rehearsing the Broomsberrow dance, a reel with sticks (and without them, ad lib.) in single file, to the tune Cock o' the North played by Mr Baldwin. Local inhabitants and children viewed the performance so the men then passed into the roadway where they danced 2 or 3 of our own dances and the Broomsberrow dance, again to Mr Baldwin's playing.

At Ross the men met a Mr Lane, formerly of Steeple Bumpstead, who was familiar with Thaxted and said that Plough Monday was kept up at Steeple Bumpstead at least until 14 years ago, under the leadership of Mr Tilbrook Jones, who at that time was 70 years of age.

Twenty-eighth Tour 1948 (Forest of Dean)

Monday June 28th

After lunch in the bar of the **Weston Cross** alehouse, introduced by the vicar and a Mr Ray Walder of Cheltenham who danced the morris at Burgess Hill in 1908 under the tutelage of the vicar's daughter, Marjorie Hunt the men spoke to **Mr Robins** (his uncle) mainly about bellringing, but he also mentioned that his own father and mother used to speak often about the Morris on Dancing Green. The men used to be led on by a man ringing a little handbell (he gave the impression that it was like a small Sanctus bell), and demonstrated how this was rung with a lateral hand movement. After discussion later with 2 or 3 Mrs Robins' (they all married their cousins), it was made clear that the bell had never been in their possession but the men were advised by them to get in touch with a Mrs Price and a Mrs Gardner (this lady was already known by Russell) at Dancing Green one of whom might well possess the bell. The next day the men spoke with Mrs Gardner.

Thursday July 1st

On entering the Point alehouse at **Plump Hill**, the men got into conversation with an ancient man who mentioned that one **Bill Bennett**, an old Morris dancer, was still alive and worked during the day in the Wilderness, the local asylum, although his cottage was visited he was out at work. Clearly he was one of Mr Baldwin's dancers Russell also confirmed that the Clown's name was **Bob Blewitt**.

On entering **Ruardean** Russell spoke with a number of persons, including the son-in-law of the late Mr **Isaiah Pewtner**, who had been the sword-bearer in the Ruardean morris. The sword, "a fine sword", had been kept clean and polished and hung for a long time over Mrs Pewnter's mantelpiece until finally it was sold. Russell also had interesting speech with Mrs Elizabeth Watkins, daughter of **Anne Roberts** who made a Morris dancer's shirt especially for Cecil Sharp to exhibit in London. Mrs W. learnt how to make the shirts from her mother, and recalls clearly Cecil Sharp's three visits; "He was a very nice gentleman". She said the fool had a horse's tail on a stick and called out ". for Ruardean Morris"

Thirtieth Tour 1949 (Cotswolds)

Monday June 27th

After the show at Lower Slaughter Mr & Mrs Albino (who had for many years been great supporters of the TM) invited the men into their house for hospitality, this had to be refused, but Mrs A. produced the ancient Herefordshire bohind-bell given to her by **Steve Baldwin** 18 months ago, and this she presented to the Men as a heirloom. This very bell had been worn by Ted during the 1947 tour in the Forest of Dean, and Mrs A felt it would be put to better use by the Men than if it remained on her piano.

At Guiting Power Russell spoke to an ancient woman, Mrs Denby, whose father-in-law used to dance the morris in Guiting and the men also spoke to another ancient inhabitant who remembered the Guiting Morris perform at the 1887 Jubilee of Q. Victoria. He also mentioned Daniel Carter as the fife and drum player. Arthur was told independently in the alehouse, before the show, that Daniel Carter's pipe and tabor were sent to the British Museum as the oldest instruments of their kind to be found in the country.

Tuesday June 28th

At Sherborne the men learnt that old **Charlie Jones** had died about Christmas time.

Thursday June 30th

At Lower Swell a **Mr Williams** remembered how the Taylors of Longborough used to join with men from Lower Swell to perform the Morris "about 70 years ago"

Friday July 1st

At Kingham a **Mr Melton** told us he had seen a mummers play at Kingham in 1890, and he sang bits of a song about only 18 pence in my pocket.

At Bledington they met **Mr Hall** who that day was celebrating his 83rd birthday.

Saturday July 2nd

On the way to Moreton in Marsh men stopped for an RHP at the Coach & Horses at Bourton station where other drinkers spoke of **Charlie Taylor** of Icomb, who, accompanied by Charles Benfield and two Bledington men, went to the White City in about 1900 to demonstrate and teach the Morris. Another drinker enquired why the men were “all dressed up” and professed complete ignorance of the morris. His companions laughed him to scorn and it turned out that he was from Northleach, so had some excuse for his ignorance.

Thirty-first Tour 1950 (Forest of Dean)

During the week morning rehearsals took place at the **Glasshouse, May Hill**, where the rough cider helped men rise and where **Mrs Smith** had been landlady for 52 years and remembers some of the old dancers.

Sunday June 25th

Posting in **Ruardean** the men had useful speech with **Mr Martin Penn** (now aged 88). He mentioned that the Ruardean men used to go down in 1883 to get instruction from **Mr Ward** at the Bell Inn at Lydbrook, and actually got more benefit from viewing that ancient man cutting his capers than they did from dancing themselves. One man of the side was a religious man, a preacher, and he crept off to Canada, where he remained and the dancing fell through. He mentioned Haste to the Wedding, Greensleeves, Soldier's Joy and Speed the Plough. The man with the flag used to cut his capers when Haste to the Wedding was played, the others cut their capers, (later in the week he said that H to the W was played for the rounds and the corners crossing). He also remarked “your dancing is more classical than ours”

Monday June 26th

Special show at **Dursley Cross** for Mr **Eli Sterry** (and one beautiful girl on horseback, who dismounted and tied the horse to a convenient gate). He was delighted to see the men and gave by way of pecuniam two half-crowns and one dozen fresh eggs for the men's breakfast.

Tuesday June 27th

At **Upton Bishop**, a curiously difficult place to find ones way in, **Stephen Baldwin** was in very good form and played for the three-handed reel and for Haste to the Wedding. Later, after tea, the men again crowded into Mr Baldwin's front room and he played a good number of tunes (see 26th Tour 1947) He played Greensleeves- dorian or aeolian A music, though he finished the B music by an obvious mistake in the major (“one of the oldest there is: my father said it was an old tune in his time ; 98 when he died; was a woodman in the woods belonging to Squire Onslow;)

Saturday July 1st

The show at **Bromsberrow Heath** was witnessed by the ancient **Mr Ralph Hill** one of the old dancers and **Mrs Fred'k Hill** (no relation) also appeared with her squiffer and a list of tunes which she could play. The show soon became a sort of audition of tunes played by this remarkable woman on her instrument.

A show followed at Ledbury, but the men returned to the Bell at **Bromsberrow Heath** for another show and several ancient dancers were in the crowd which assembled there, including the ancient Mr Ralph Hill who during the performance of the Forest of Dean three-handed reel, which he had not witnessed for the best part of 70 years, hopped about in a most active way and also his brother **Alvin**. Mrs Hill again played her squiffer and mentioned that her sister, Miss Bishop, also played and that they were the daughters of the one time leader or “King” of the team.

Thirty-third Tour 1951 (Cotswolds)

Saturday June 30th

At **Longborough** a middle-aged man brought out for the men's inspection a photograph taken of the men on the first Travelling Morrice Tour in June 1924. (And so the circle of the revival of the Cotswold Morris is complete)

Forty-first Tour (Forest of Dean) 1954

Monday June 21st

Inside the alehouse after the show at Pontshill, **Mr Jack Wall** made himself known to the men. He used to dance 40 years ago at **Peterstow** and other situations and had worked with Mr Steve Baldwin. Owing to bad legs he was unable to perform any steps.

Tuesday June 22nd

The afternoon activity was the great visit to **Upton Bishop** for **Russell's tapework** with **Mr Stephen Baldwin**. Arthur fetched him in his car from his house to the schoolroom, and as soon as the cables and plugs were satisfactorily adjusted Russell and Mr B. got down to business. Mr B. was in fine form and no fewer than 28 tunes were recorded on Scotch Boy specially prepared magnetic tape from Mr Baldwin's almost continuous fiddling. This in itself was a remarkable achievement, considering that Mr Baldwin felt the heat inside the school premises, but he was by no means exhausted, and seated on a chair in the school yard he played for Haste to the Wedding and the Bromsberrow Heath so-called three-handed reel, and for the whole of the Newbiggin Sword Dance, performed by Leogh and his men. This was a remarkable occasion, the like of which had never been known before, at which the whole performance of the Travelling Morrice was accompanied by a traditional fiddler. Mr Baldwin was driven back to his situation and all the men passed off to the tearoom at Much Marcle. (Produced 1973 Leader Label LED 2068)

(Note, not in log. Stephen Baldwin's playing of "Just as the tide was flowing" was so danceable to that the men decided to dance The Rose Tree to it. Only half way through the first corners did they realise that the number of bars was not commensurate and hasty improvisation was required of the dancers)

Saturday June 26th

The final show of the Tour was at the Bell at **Bromsberrow Heath**. **Miss Bishop** and her sister **Mrs Hill** were present and sat precariously on a backless bench on the edge of the terrace. Soon after 8.0'clock the meal came on, one of the finest ever eaten by the men. Due to the distinctly cold air the men began to congregate inside the inn to hear Mrs Hill play on her squiffer and to hear Miss Bishop sing. Russell had his tape machine in action and took down 2 or 3 songs from Miss Bishop. Speech arose on the subject of her tambourine, which was not present, so it was immediately sent for, and she executed a vigorous and masterly accompaniment on it to several tunes. Russell played them a few of Stephen Baldwin's tunes, including his magnificent Pop goes the Weasel.

Forty-fifth Tour 1956 (Cotswolds)

Friday 29th June

The men arrived somewhat late at **Bucknell** and **Mr Rolfe** was present to welcome them, and a few dances were performed at the cross roads near which used to stand the recently felled immemorial elm tree from which the Bucknell men used to fly the Union Jack, when they were out dancing. Mr Rolfe showed the men an ancient photograph, coloured of the Bucknell side taken a great many years ago (? C 1860-70) and also an un-coloured copy of it, and a great deal of speech took place compared with the amount of dancing.... Before long the men passed up to the Trigger Pond alehouse and a few dances were performed here.

Again a great deal of speech arose owing to the fact that an old peoples home has been established in the village, and there were present one of the ancient **Kirtlington** men, named **Nicholson**, and an old Bampton dancer. A great photograph group containing these ancient men, Mr Rolfe, and some of the Travelling Morrice was taken. Mr Nicholson watched the Kirtlington Trunkles closely, with the air of one who possessed knowledge, and mentioned that a step was being omitted from the caper corners, but it was difficult to make out exactly what was wrong (possibly an introductory jump before each pair begins) Mr N. also spoke of a **Mr Bob Pearman** as a fine dancer and expert on swinging the flag in front of the procession..... A woman seated next to Mr Rolfe, a relative of his, said that its proper name was Twigger Pond and also spoke of Mr Pearman as a whittle and dub player; he used to come over to Bucknell.

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After exactly thirty years most of the old dancers and others had passed on and no additional information was recorded, although some of them and members of their families still watched the shows or were visited by the men. However, the spirit of the Travelling Morrice lives on, and in Ireland the men again met with expectancy in the villages and had a fine joint show at Belmullet followed by a magnificent lunch-time session with the traditional "Straw Boys". The special relationship with the Chipping Campden Morris Men continues and it was in Campden that both the 100th Tour in 1985 and the 75th Anniversary Tour in 1999 concluded with memorable evenings.

Some thoughts on the origin of the Papa Stour sword dance

Brian Tasker



Papa Stour from Sandness Hill on the Shetland Mainland

It is not known how the small island of Papa Stour, which lies off the west coast of the Shetland Mainland, came to have a play and a complicated sword dance. They may have been devised by the islanders themselves or be the result of a foreign introduction. It must also be considered whether they were once a widespread custom on the islands or were unique to Papa Stour.

The principal documentary evidence is a description of the play and dance in Sir Walter Scott's book "The Pirate", which was published in 1822. He states that the description was copied from a document dated to about 1788 which was itself a copy of an even older document. It seems likely that the dance was being

performed in the early 18th century but it is possible that the play came later. It is curious that it is written in English in a grandiose style and features St George, the patron Saint of England, as the master. The play reads very much like a mumming play. It is possible that Sir Walter Scott had an influence on the text.

I will examine the possibilities in roughly historical sequence:

1. Early writers on the subject thought that the dance was of Norse origin and was introduced to the Shetland Isles when they were part of Norway. The Shetland Isles became part of Scotland in 1469 so if this theory is correct the dance goes back a very long way. Unfortunately there is no evidence that such dances ever existed in Norway and references to a Swedish dance are from a much later period.
2. If you have read the Ann Cleeves books about Shetland or watched the TV series "Shetland", you will be aware that the central character, Jimmy Perez, claims that his name indicates that he is descended from a soldier or sailor on board one of the ships of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Some of these ships were wrecked off the Shetland Isles on their way back to Spain. Jimmie claims that his ancestor was on one of the wrecked ships but managed to reach the shore and settled on Fair Isle. The stories are pure fiction but if you consider Jimmie's claim as credible then it is equally credible that some of the shipwrecked soldiers and sailors who survived settled in the Shetland Isles and introduced a sword dance from their homeland.
3. During the latter part of the 17th century England was often at war with the Dutch. To avoid a confrontation with the English Navy in the English Channel the Dutch routed their trading vessels around the north of Scotland. Some of these vessels were wrecked and it is possible that some of the surviving sailors settled in the Shetland Isles and introduced their sword dance to the local

population. The Papa Stour sword dance has features which are similar to those in continental sword dances. The time gap between the Anglo Dutch wars and the early 18th century when I have assumed that the dance existed in Papa Stour is very short and could even be non-existent.

4. In times past there was considerable trade between the Shetland Isles and the low countries. The Shetlanders sold their wool and woollen products and purchased goods they could not produce themselves. This trading relationship may also have resulted in people from the low countries settling in the Shetland Isles and introducing their customs to the local population. There is also the possibility that visiting fisherman may have settled in the Shetland Isles.
5. George Peterson learned the dance in Papa Stour but later moved to the Mainland and became the leader and musician of a team in Lerwick. His view is that the dance originated in Yorkshire and was subsequently introduced to Papa Stour by one of the servants of the local gentry who had a knowledge of the Yorkshire dances. There are a number of problems with this idea:
 - (a) The dance is in many respects different from the Yorkshire dances.
 - (b) The servant is unlikely to have acquired the knowledge and experience necessary to teach a complicated dance to people with no experience of sword dancing.
 - (c) Lastly and most importantly, there is a problem of timing. The Papa Stour dance was in existence in the early part of the 18th century and it may be older than that. The earliest reference to sword dancing in Yorkshire is from the late 18th century. Unless evidence is found to place sword dancing in Yorkshire at an earlier date it cannot be the source of the Papa Stour dance.
6. Lastly, we must consider the possibility that the dance is of local origin. In the Shetland Museum there is a section on folk traditions. There is a single sentence on sword dancing and this states that

it may once have been a widespread tradition in the Shetland Isles, though there is no documentary evidence for this. If it is true then it is possible that it died out everywhere except on the remote Island of Papa Stour. This is a credible possibility, but the alternative possibility exists that the dance originated on Papa Stour and did not spread to the Mainland. The total population of Papa Stour has never been much more than 300 inhabitants, including men, women and children. Is it credible that such a small population could have conceived and developed such a complicated sword dance without outside help? It is possible that a sword dance tradition began on the Mainland or on Papa Stour which was subsequently influenced by an outside source and became a more complicated dance.

A word of caution. I have expressed the view that the Papa Stour dance has similarities with continental sword dances. It is wrong to assume that similarities mean that there must be a connection. Given an idea it is possible for different people in different places to come up with similar conclusions so the similarities may be co-incidental.

Audiences have always called sword dancers “Morris dancers”, but is there a connection? Cecil Sharp thought there might be. He sets out in his book: “The Sword Dances of Northern England”, the case for a common origin. Again we must be careful that we are not drawn by similarities in the dances to conclude that they have a common origin.

There is another Shetland Isles custom with which direct parallels can be drawn. Fair Isle knitwear exhibits a wealth of pattern and colour and in the past was produced by an uneducated people in a remote location. Similar questions have been asked about its origin as have been asked about the Papa Stour

dance. Theories include the Spanish Armada, Dutch ships wrecked during the Anglo Dutch wars and visiting Dutch herring fishermen as well as spontaneous development. In her book: “The Fair Isle Knitting Handbook”, Alice Starmore concludes that the most likely explanation is that the patterns originated in the Baltic countries, probably Finland or Estonia and were imported into Fair Isle in the first half of the 19th century. The evidence for this is that the earliest pieces in the Fair Isle Museum are not made of Shetland wool, they evidence liberal use of indigo dye which is rare in Fair Isle and are made with an openwork pattern which appears with great frequency on early 19th century Finnish and Estonian examples. The openwork pattern is not found on later pieces from Fair Isle which are far more experimental and less assured. If only we had equally convincing evidence for the origin of the Papa Stour dance, such as an ancient sword the provenance of which could be ascertained by an analysis of the metal.

I suspect that the origin of the Papa Stour play and sword dance will remain a mystery, so they have that in common with our morris dances.

Brian Tasker

Some suggestions for further reading:

The Pirate by Sir Walter Scott, especially pages 350-353 of the 1996 edition published by the Shetland Times.

The Sword Dances of Northern England by Cecil J Sharp

Sword Dance and Drama by Violet Alford published by the Merlin Press in 1962

The Fair Isle Knitting Handbook by Alice Starmore published by Blandford in 1990
Sword Dancing in Europe: A History by Stephen D Corrsin published by the Hisarlik Press in 1997
Longsword Dances from Traditional and Manuscript Sources by Ivor Allsop published by the Northern Harmony Publishing Company in 1996
Rattle Up My Boys, the longsword magazine, Series 2 issue 5, Series 3 issue 1, Series 18 Issue 4, Series 19 issue 4, Series 23 issue 2, Series 25 issues 2 and 4.

An Ahistory of Morris

Julian Whybra

Twice recently I have come across statements relating to John Forrest's *The History of Morris Dancing, 1458-1750*¹ which have been presented as unassailable. These referred to his dismissal of Cecil Sharp and Joseph Needham's views (based in turn on the work of Sir James Frazer²), his conclusion that "*the dances have no single point of origin, have come together and become known collectively as 'morris dances'*"³ and his "*rock solid reiteration of the complete lack of evidence for the morris as a fertility rite.*"⁴ This essay proposes to challenge those statements.

John Forrest is not by profession a historian; he is an anthropologist. His book does not prove that Morris dancing does not have ancient or pagan origins. It provides a statistical analysis of surviving early references to the word 'Morris' (and variants) between 1458 and 1750. This is done competently using the sociologist's technique of seriation-graphing of the frequency of the word 'Morris' in the written record. However, any assumptions about what existed before 1458 (i.e. that the earliest discovered reference for the word 'Morris' will yield a date close in proximity, relatively speaking, to the introduction/creation of the dance in England) are flawed, illogical, and ahistorical. Indeed, since the book's publication its earliest recorded date of 1458⁵ has twice been ante-dated to reflect references discovered even earlier. First, *morysk Daunce*, dating from 31st October 1448, was found in an inventory from Caister Castle, Caister-on-Sea, Norfolk.⁶ This, in turn, was pre-dated by a reference to a payment by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths to *moryssh. Dauners* dated 19th May 1448.⁷ No doubt the earliest date will continue to be pushed backwards in time.⁸

Seriation-graphing was developed in archaeology for situations where the sporadic nature of the evidence does not permit normal statistical analysis.⁹ It is intended that a resulting analysis would enable a statistician to see whether patterns emerge in the period studied. Forrest showed that in the early modern period documented Morris events can be made to reveal patterns of venue, providers of financial support, and official actions for or against the Morris, on the basis of which he argued that the primary context of the Morris altered very markedly from 1458 to 1750. He further argued that the absence of recorded evidence from early modern English history (and, obviously, from before) does not support the notion of a folkloric, ritual origin of the Morris. Neither does the non-existence of recorded evidence before 1458 admit to a more modern English origin developing from the *moresca*.¹⁰ Nor does it support an earlier fourteenth-century connection to a foreign Moorish origin. Consequently Forrest does not reach a conclusion about the origins of the Morris because there is no evidence to support any theory (or so it is claimed).

*“Forrest’s history is a developmental one; that is, he does not search for the origins of morris, its pure quintessence, its natural environment, its characteristic style or the music proper to it. Instead, he analyses documented morris ‘events’, the term he uses for the combination of text (what the document says about the dance) and context (the environment in which the dance is performed).”*¹¹

But the use of seriation-graphing in establishing a ‘first-recorded Morris date’ does not mean that Morris did not exist for æons (speaking neither astronomically nor geologically but metaphorically) before that date. To maintain that it does, is to twist the results to fit the desired conclusion and to a certain extent Forrest’s researches have further been misrepresented as evidence in favour of ‘revisionist’ folklorists’ proposal of a late mediæval, non-‘survivalist’ origin for Morris dancing (for which there is no evidence). The inadequacy of seriation-graphing as an appropriate tool in these contexts can be amply demonstrated.

First, *“a history cannot be as objective as a database, and even a database is not fully objective, since the choice of what information is included and under which search-categories the information is made available depends on complex acts of interpretation.”*¹² It also depends on how comprehensive the research was in obtaining the information and on how incomplete the surviving records were from which that information was taken. In the case of the Morris, this is highly subjective.

Secondly, the weakness of the argument can best be understood by a series of examples. Forrest came up with a first-recorded date for ‘Morris’ of 1458 (actually, currently 1448). A similar exercise of seriation-graphing might be conducted with other similar ‘specialist’ nouns which should (probably) belie an extremely early origin. Seriation-graphing must inevitably only extend as far back as the first-known, currently-existing record of a word’s existence. So it seems reasonable to collate, as examples, the first-recorded dates of usage in English for the following ‘specialist’ nouns (using the *Oxford English Dictionary*) as in Table 1:¹³

Lyre	c.1275	Tabor	c.1290	Motley	1371
Taborer	c.1400	Baldrick	c.1300	Maypole	1529
Marotte	1611	Hey	a.1529	Jig	c.1560
Tabard	c.1300	Mumming	1417	Mummer	1429
Green Man	1578	Jack-in-the-Green	1801	Hobby horse	1557

Joust	1297	Bagpipes	c.1405	Pancake	c.1400
May Queen	1600	May-dew	c.1400	Ogre	1713
Fairy	c.1395	Sword-dance	1604	Fool's-cap	a.1640
Rushbearing	1571	Rushcart	1817	Mermaid	c.1350
Corn-dolly ¹⁴	1952	Molly dancer	1881	Marriage	c.1300

Table 1 First-recorded dates of usage in English of selected 'specialist' nouns: c. = circa; a. = ante.

The results are surprisingly similar to 'Morris'. Does it really seem so out of place at 1448? The same exercise can be performed with common words as in Table 2:

Fool	c.1275	Dance	c.1300	Snowball	c.1400
Boot	c.1325	Toy	c.1290	Snowman	1827
Football	1409	Squire	c.1290	Scaffold	1349
Music	c.1250	Hangman	1393	Drum	?1534

Table 2 First-recorded dates of usage in English of selected common nouns: c. = circa; ? = date unsure.

The above list puts Morris's 1448 rather into perspective. Even the first-recorded usage of the word 'dance' pre-dates 'Morris' by just 150 years and many of the above words are pre-dated by their pictorial images, showing that the object or concept was already in existence. It would indeed be ludicrous to deduce on the basis of recorded usage that neither word nor concept existed long before the first-recorded dates: children have played with toys, made snowmen and enjoyed a form of football from time immemorial. Seriation-graphing of the frequency of the word 'Morris' demonstrated nothing more than the paucity of the written record in general before the 1450s.

In this context it might also be remembered that William Caxton produced his first printed book in English only in 1474.¹⁵ Before then the overwhelming majority of hand-written books, inventories, and ledgers were concerned with the Royal Court, the Church, the law, and land & property ownership. An examination of words associated with these areas in Table 3 shows, unsurprisingly, far earlier first-recorded dates:

Law	a.1000	Priest	656	Bishop	c.893
Chalice	c.825	Gaol	c.1275	Farm	a.900
Earl	1030	Knight	a.1100	Charter	939

Table 3 First-recorded dates of usage in English of selected nouns from the Court, Church, law, land & property: c. = circa; a. = ante.

Thirdly, imagine recording / documentation of Morris-events had only begun in 1899. Consider the extent of the accuracy of any prediction of the origins of the Morris based upon a seriation-graphing from 1899 to the present. It might appear that the Morris had sprung from nowhere in the 1890s to become a series of isolated, individual events, which, following a gradual expansion, had grown exponentially to a veritable explosion of events by the 1970s which had continued apace. And, of course, that hypothesis would be hopelessly wrong. Morris cannot be compared with events, like instances of computer-hacking, the origin of which began in recorded time.

The logical impact of this is that since Forrest found no evidence to support any theory then it is impossible to disprove any theory and therefore there is no basis on which anything (e.g. a fertility rite) can be ruled out. If, as was claimed, there is a “*complete lack of evidence for the morris as a fertility rite*” then it is also true that there is a complete lack of evidence to disprove that the Morris was a fertility rite. To stress one statement without the other is partiality and as such is incomplete and unbalanced. Since one cannot prove or disprove any theory (based on seriation-graphing alone) the field is open to conjecture or possibly inference from other sources, e.g. data from other countries or customs. ‘Finding no evidence’ for a case does not mean that the case is not true, it means only that there is no evidence or, if there is evidence, then it has not been properly sought and evidence from other sources elsewhere should be examined.¹⁶

Fourthly, the book made no attempt to take into account the accrued knowledge of other disciplines and as such lacks historicity. In the absence of written evidence the historian turns to linguistics, social anthropology, comparative mythology, etc., and there is a multitude of persuasive pan-European paradigms where there are precedents in, and parallels with, secular dance-traditions dating from the early mediæval period containing themes and influences from folk traditions pre-dating the arrival/predominance of Christianity. From the dozens of examples might be mentioned (dates indicate the earliest record of a performance, not the first performance; > = from such date onwards; < = before such a date; fl. [Latin, *floruit*] = a date during which the activity was known to have flourished): the *Pueblo de Guzmán dances* from the Basque Country (>14th century); the *Schöfflertanz* of Bavaria (>1517); the *Schuhplattler* of Bavaria, the Tyrol and the South Tyrol, (>1030); the *Ball de bastons* of Catalonia (>1150); [*La Morisca de Gerri de la Sal*](#) in Lleida, Catalonia (fl. 1156); the *Baile de las Espadas* from Graus, Spain (>1588), the *Maskeradsvärdsdans* in Sweden (fl. 1555); the *Paloteado* from Ochagavia, Navarre (>16th century); the *Moreška* from Korčula, Croatia (>1666); the *Reiftanz* from Hüttenberg, Carinthia (>1608); *Schwerttänzer* from Überlingen (>1538), Nürnberg (fl.1350), Braunschweig (<1500), Köln (<1500), Zürich (fl.1578), Dürrenberg (>1586), Traunstein (>1530), Hermannstadt [now Sibiu] (fl.1590), and elsewhere in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Saxon Transylvania.¹⁷ To substantiate and develop this argument, it is intended to present and explore these dances, events, and customs in a forthcoming essay.



Schafflertänzer can be seen on Munich's Rathaus clock in the Marienplatz. Two stories are re-enacted from Munich's past on two levels. The first, on the upper level, concerns the marriage of the local duke but the second, on the lower level, commemorates a plague of 1517 when the town's coopers are said to have performed their traditional dance through the town to lure frightened residents back on to the streets. The mechanical figures dance round every day at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Real live dancers perform the dance every seven years during *Fasching* (the next time is 2019). It is one of the last original guild dances in Germany
 (© Julian Whybra Collection).



The *Maskeradvärdsdans*: dancers with bells round their legs began in a ring holding a neighbour's swordpoint and described various figures. After a few turns the chain was dissolved; they clashed their swords and formed different patterns in the air. The dance gets faster and concludes with a mock-execution. The dance-play was performed on Shrove Tuesday to drum and flute.¹⁸

Lastly, there is an implicit question about the way the statement that there is a “*complete lack of evidence for the morris as a fertility rite*” is framed. And that is: would one expect to find such evidence using Forrest's methods? If the answer is yes, then the lack of evidence is significant and the statement carries weight. If it is neither likely nor unlikely that one would find evidence, then it means that one can say nothing in conclusion. So, are there other customs, events, traditions, etc., where one can find evidence of origin using Forrest's techniques?

A thorough seriation-graphing of such words is impossible in the limited space available but the examination of such words' first-recorded dates in Table 4 shows some interesting parallels:

Wassailing	1586	Beating the bounds	1570	April Fool	1629
May Day	1267	Hallowe'en	1556	Pancake day	1700
Guy Fawkes-Day	1825	Bonfire night	1936	Plough Monday	1498
Mothering Day	1644	St. Valentine's Day	c.1381	Leap Year	c.1387
Up-Helly-Aa	1872	Harvest Home	1598	Hocktide	1484
Hogmanay	1443	Furry dance	1790	(Highland) fling	1806
Christmas	1123	New Year's Eve	c.1400	Boxing Day	1833
New Year's Day	c.1200	Midsummer's Eve	a.1400	Midsummer games	1577
Pancake race	1951	Pace egg	1579	Hooden	1807
Ceilidh	1875	Auld lang syne	1666	Nine Men's Morris	1600

Blind-man's-buff	1600	Punkie	1931	First footing	1823
Well-dressing	1819	Father Christmas ¹⁹	1646	Robin Hood	c.1378

Table 4 First-recorded dates of usage in English of selected nouns from customs & traditions: c. = circa; a. = ante.

Important calendrical days (especially to the church) are recorded very early. Annual calendrical 'folk' events and age-old, traditional customs appear later and specific terminologies connected with such events appear later still. In this context Morris at 1448 appears surprisingly early. What does emerge though is that virtually nothing is revealed regarding the origin of customs similar to the Morris and that therefore one can as a result draw no conclusions from such techniques in this respect. In fact, the only point of note with regard to first-recorded dates of folk customs is that the words listed above had not been invented for the occasion, had evidently, from the context, long been in current usage and, as with the Morris, belie a much earlier origin. For example:

Pancake

*"This being Pancake and Fritter Day & I have Companey makes me to begin my letter this morning."*²⁰

April Fool,

*"For my part, I was not willing at the sight of yours (which I espied by meere chaunce, and neuer sawe but once) to be made an Aprill foole, and therefore would not be so farre at your command."*²¹

Beating the bounds

*"Procession weeke...Bounds are beaten."*²²

Wassailing

*"Spending all the day, and good part of the night in dauncing, carolling, and wassalling."*²³

Robin Hood

*"I can [ken] rymes [romances] of Robyn hood and Randolf erle of Chestre."*²⁴

Father Christmas

*"Honest Crier, I know thou knewest old Father Christmas; I am sent to thee from an honest scholler of Oxford...to cry Christmas, for they hear that he is gone from hence, and that we have lost the poor old man."*²⁵

Forrest's developmental 'history' did not search for the origins of the Morris; instead, he analysed documented Morris-dance events. The book merely reflected trends in recording and financial support; it did not reflect how, when and where Morris was performed and certainly not why, neither did it make any attempt to explore these questions. It is dissatisfying that his conclusions claim to show what the Morris is not, but not what it is.²⁶ Thus, Forrest's book is not 'The History' of Morris Dancing, it is not even 'A History' but it is 'An Ahistory' – and a narrow one at that.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Forrest, John, *The History of Morris Dancing, 1458-1750*, (Cambridge, 1999).
- ² Frazer, James, *The Golden Bough: A Study of Magic and Religion*, (1st ed. London, 2 vols., 1890; 2nd ed. 3 vols., 1900; 3rd ed., 12 vols., 1916-15; abridgement 1 vol., 1922).
- ³ Tasker, Brian, 'Book Review: The History of Morris Dancing 1458-1750 by John Forrest', *The Morris Dancer*, (Vol. 5, No. 5), p. 126 referring to Forrest, *Op. cit.*, pp. 18 & 27.
- ⁴ Swift, John, 'The Histories of Morris in Britain', *Morris Matters*, vol. 36, no. 2 (July 2017), p. 11. This was a review of a series of lectures delivered at Cecil Sharp House, London 25th-26th March 2017, one of which, 'The History of History', was delivered by Forrest.
- ⁵ There are two references to the Morris dated 1458. The earlier one relates to the will of Alice Wetenhale, a widow from Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk who left to her daughter, Catherine, three silver cups sculpted with a *moreys daunce*: Wetenhale, Alice [Will], PRO Prerogative Court of Canterbury, Stokton 24-25 ('*ij ciphos argenti sculptos cum moreys daunce*'). The later one relates to Chaworth, Sir Thomas, [Will], in *Testamenta Eboracensia*, Part II, Publications of the Surtees Society, 30 (Durham: Surtees Society, 1885), no. CLXXIX, pp. 220-29 at p. 226 ('*ij peces of silver...with a Moresk 'eron*').
- ⁶ Heaney, Michael and Forrest, John, 'An Antedating for the 'Morris Dance', *Notes and Queries*, (2002), volume 49, pp. 190-193. The inventory described the contents of the castle, including a tapestry in the Winter Hall which depicted a *morysk Daunce*. At the same time the authors also came across another undated inventory possibly preceding the 1448 list which used the phrase *morysch daunce* (see Heaney, Michael, 'The Earliest Reference to the Morris Dance', *Folk Music Journal*, vol. 8, no. 4, (2004), pp. 513-5).
- ⁷ Lancashire, Professor Anne, *London Civic Theatre*, (Cambridge, 2002), p. 278, fn. 54 (using unpublished research by Professor David Parkinson of the University of Saskatchewan). The reference to *moryssh. Dauners* appeared in the Wardens' Accounts and Court Minutes under payments to entertainers by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths at their annual feast day, St. Dunstan's Day.
- ⁸ Having recently discovered a previously unrecorded date myself (5th January 1575), I realize how many more there are still to be discovered: Whybra, Julian, 'The Golden Bough, Mumming & St. George and the Dragon', *The Morris Dancer*, (Vol. 5, No. 5), p. 103-22 at p. 113.
- ⁹ The technique of seriation-graphing for use in archæology was invented by James Ford (Ford, James A., *A Quantitative Method for Deriving Cultural Chronology*, (Washington, D.C., 1962). It was further developed in Deetz, James, *Invitation to Archaeology*, (Garden City, New York, 1967).
- ¹⁰ Forrest was careful to distinguish between the Morris and *moresca* as two distinct entities (though he is often misread and misquoted). Those who persist in relegating English Morris to being a scion of the continental *moresca* might note that in fact the first mention of the *moresca* in England was not until 2nd January 1494 when Henry VII ordered that £2 should be paid "*For playing of the Mourice daunce*" (*Excerpta Historica*, [London, 1831], p. 95). It should be noted that Lowe, Barbara, 'Early Records of the Morris in England', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, vol. 8, no. 2, (1957), pp. 61-82 at p. 61, was incorrect in stating that there was an earlier record dating from c.1460. This is now known to date from much later viz. Copland, Robert (transl.), *The knight of the swanne...*, (London, 1560).
- ¹¹ Dove, Mary, 'Book Reviews: The History of Morris Dancing, 1458-1750', *Dance Research: The Journal of the Society for Dance Research*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2002, pp. 137-9 at pp. 137.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 139.
- ¹³ Complete etymological entries are available from www.oed.com. Space precludes listing

second-recorded dates but they provide interesting parallels to the word 'Morris'.

¹⁴ 'Corn-dolly' was preceded by the term 'corn-baby', the earliest reference to which still dates from only 1777.

¹⁵ *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troy*, (Bruges, 1474 possibly 1473) is a translation by Caxton of a French courtly romance written by Raoul Lefèvre, chaplain to Philippe III le Bon, duc de Bourgogne. Just eighteen copies survive worldwide. *Recuyell* (from the French *recueil*) means 'collection' – Caxton's translations and titles sometimes used words from other languages.

¹⁶ As an aside, it might be mentioned that the majority of the earliest Morris records are taken from account books and relate to payments. Account books tell you 'what' but they never tell you 'why', even today. Forrest's seriation-graphing technique fails to investigate 'why' there is an absence of Morris-related entries pre-1448. If the Morris were a relict from pagan times, then, in the early mediæval period when the entire population was obliged to be Christian on pain of death, would the Church not have been active in suppressing any sponsored or 'state-authorized' performances of what was deemed unChristian? Would that not explain the Morris's absence from records pre-1448? Might then the fact that the Morris began to appear in mid-fifteenth-century records in such performances indicate that it had been modified into something which the Church could accept and perhaps had even sanctified to suit the Church's purpose? The Church had already done this at Rome's behest in earlier times (Whybra, *Op. cit.*, fn. 1, p. 114-5) and had adopted and adapted pagan rites, customs and festivals like *Eostre* and *Geol*. Might such a line of inquiry provide a 'missing link' to the Morris? Forrest singularly fails to test possible theories of origin against the claims from his analysis.

¹⁷ Not included here are dances like the *Călușerii* of Transylvania and the *Pauliteiros* of Miranda, Portugal, the historical recording of which began in more recent centuries yet which have, allegedly, ancient origins. The Mirandese affirm that Strabo recorded the *Pauliteiros* in his *Rerum Geographicum* of A.D. 17 or 18, and the *Călușerii* have been described as being a "mythico-ritual scenario" ([Eliade, Mircea](#), 'Some Observations on European Witchcraft', *History of Religions*, [February, 1975], vol. 14, no. 3. p. 162) dating "*din timpuri imemoriale strămoșești*" (Armenescu, Elena, 'Călușul, dans terapeutic stravechi', *Confluente Literare*, [24th June 2013], nr. 906, Year III), a Roumanian expression equivalent to 'from time immemorial', meaning a time ancient beyond memory or record. However, 'from time immemorial' has in addition a precise legal meaning in English, which is to date from before the accession of King Richard I on 6th July 1189. But what an intriguing, beguiling, and glorious expression it is! How sad it is that Morris dancers have been induced, almost unwittingly, to fight shy of the term when foreign academics still readily apply it. And how hypocritical it is that a small minority of self-appointed opinion formers from the British liberal élite and Left seek always to denigrate or ridicule historic English culture and traditions whilst at the same time lauding non-native or foreign ones.

¹⁸ Magnus, Olaus (Latinized from Olof Månsson), *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, (Rome, 1555), vol. III, pt. 15, ch. 23.

¹⁹ Prior to this, 'Father Christmas' was referred to as 'Sir', 'King', 'Lord', 'Old', or 'Prince Christmas, the earliest reference being "*Sir Christemas*" in a carol still dateable only as far back as 1435 x 1477.

²⁰ Willis, F., Letter 13th February 1700, from Verney, Margaret Maria (ed.), *Verney letters of the eighteenth century, from the manuscripts at Claydon House*, (London, 1930), I. v. 70.

²¹ Lechmere, E., *A Disputation of Church wherein the old religion is maintained*, (Doway [Douai], 1629), sig. +6.

²² Kirchmeyer, Thomas, (transl. by Barnabe Goodge), *The popish kingdome, or reigne of*

Antichrist, (1st ed., London, 1570), iv. f. 53.

²³ Sidney, Sir Philip, *The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia*, (1st ed., London, 1593), iii. sig. Ll3.

²⁴ Langland, William, *The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman*, Text B, Bodleian MS. Laud 581, (c. 1378), B.v. 402.

²⁵ Anonymous, *The Arraignment, Conviction and Imprisoning of Christmas*, satirical pamphlet, (London, January 1646), p. 2.

²⁶ In fairness to Forrest, in his book's introduction (Forrest, *Op. cit.*, p. xv), he stated that he was not going to answer the question 'What are the origins of morris dancing?' Instead, his intention was to "*study how morris dances have evolved and developed over the centuries. In fact, trying to discover the 'origins' of any long-standing and complex tradition is undoubtedly a lost cause from the outset.*"

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Cultural bricolage?
Photo: Beth Druce

Discordant Comicals – The Hooden Horses of East Kent. By George Frampton. Ozaru Books, 2018. 235 pp. Illus £24.00 (hbk). ISBN 978-0-9931587-7-3

Discordant Comicals, first edition published by the Faversham Society, with the subtitle “The Christmas Hooden Horses of East Kent: Tradition and Revival” 2006, perhaps describes Frampton’s excellent book a little more completely. Frampton’s thorough gathering together of all available information on his subject scrutinises not just the history and performances of the past, but revivals of the tradition from 1939 to 2016 and includes in an appendix a short essay on Twenty-First Century Mumming.

Frampton’s book launches from the slipway of Percy Maylam’s 1910 book “The Hooden Horse”. He surveys thoroughly Maylam’s text (and the subsequent writings of others) and supplements this work using technology not available to Maylam in 1910. He aims to put all this information into context in Kent, bringing the reader as up to date as possible by exploring revivals currently performing.

The book’s information is delightfully easy to access, being organised into 10 chapters with short sub-sections. This, I suspect will make it simple for anyone who is intrigued by the tradition to dip into their areas of interest, or to browse through at leisure. It is thorough, but accessible. This book, like Maylam’s earlier work, may act as a blueprint for anyone wishing to start a revival custom, or to Morris teams who wish to enhance their performances with the unique comedic effect that a Hooden Horse can give. (although I would add a note of caution here: my single foray as a Hooden Horse with Winchester Morris set a child screaming in fright, which escalated into hysteria when I took off the horse in an attempt to pacify her!)

My only criticisms of this excellent book are first, the inset quotes in pink, which may prove hard on some reader’s eyes, and second, the statement in Chapter two (p21, line 4): “Let us assume for the sake of argument, the Kentish farm labourer has no ingenuity himself to spontaneously initiate such a Christmastide pageant”. This sweeping statement continues the well-worn trope begun by early folklore collectors that somehow Hodge could not have thought this up by himself, so must be the mere guardian of a more ancient custom which he does not understand. Frampton did not need to say this at all to achieve the following excellent discussion of the possible origins of Hoodening, It stands on its own merits.

That aside, this book needed to be written, and it is fortunate that the task fell into the competent hands of George Frampton. Much new material has been made available through modern research tools and there has been no complete survey of the subject since 1910. It is a good read for the interested layman as well as a valuable resource for anyone interested in the custom of Hoodening.

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