

THE MORRIS DANCER

No.TWELVE *****MARCH.1982

SALUTE

The Morris Dancer No.9, p10, announced that Ravensbourne's Jim Bartlett was to dance from Orpington to Worcester to raise money for the Bromley (Kent) Multiple Sclerosis Society; in October, 1981, the amount raised had reached £9,000. The figure for the Bromley Branch, alone, is now £12,136 91p; other M.S.Branches, also benefiting from the Great Jig, have received sums, in all, well into four figures.

Write to

Ewart Russell, 50, Mile End Road, Colchester, C04 5BX

The Norris Dancer No.11, Nov.1981, carried Bill Banbury's "Morris in Scotland." Past Squire of The Ring Douglas Kennedy wrote, 14th January, 1982,

I welcomed the article warmly. First, it shows that the label (Moreis or Moris or Morris) is used to cover a variety of display but particularly the Procession of 'mixed' couples - disguised as each other? - a habit which inspired the fiercest prohibitions throughout Europe. Pre-Reformation Scotland must have been indeed a version of "Merry England" for it had the added close contacts with France and 'joie de vivre'.

The Morris Ring attitude to 'Morris' is naturally too coloured by the idiom of the Cotswold dances to reflect the various facets of the Morris - they stretch out over Europe and over the centuries of historic time.

Bill Banbury's article is not about "Scottish" Morris but about "Norris" in the big sense in Scotland. Which reminds me!! - Very soon after The Great War probably 1919, Sharp was invited to lecture in Edinburgh on the Folk Dance. Without a decent men's side he took the Quartette (Maud, Helen, himself and me) plus W. Kimber, for jigs and tunes on the 'tina', and we illustrated his lecture (in the Music Hall, George Street.) Within the next year or two Alec Hunter turned up at the Cheltenham Summer School and 'went over the wall' on the Morris, etc. He was then a hand loom weaver with his father at Letchworth. A few years later he was invited by the Morton family (the Edinburgh weavers) to join them, and Alec infected them with 'folk' and the Morris. I danced with a good side Alec had raised which was early admitted to the Ring. (14.9.1935. Ed.) N.O.M. Cameron (See 'Morris Dancer' No.6, P.9) who was a native of Lerwick in Shetland, had spoken to me about the "Papa Stour" at this time and urged me to visit Shetland; but with the next war etc. I never got there. Pat Shaw and others did visit after the war, and it was taught at Cecil Sharp House by John Armstrong; and we saw a team of the Edinburgh Branch of the RSCDS perform it in Princes Street Gardens during a conference called by The Royal Anthropological Society (Scotland) about 1948. Princes Margaret was present, and she very much admired 'her' Scots performance. We (EFDSS) had a full complement of

dancers, and also showed sword (English) and Morris etc. The Scots and ourselves would have been better able to appreciate our comparative study had we had Bill Banbury's article to give us 'historic' background.

5, Grove Terrace,
Torphins,
Aberdeenshire.
18th, January, 1982

A Scottish Morris man's "response" to
"Morris in Scotland"

Here in Banchory we were most interested to see what "Bill Banbury" had come up with. Here, for what it's worth, are some reactions - more or less in order as they came up on reading the article :-

First, an addition to his historical anecdotes; prompted by his references to Walter Scott, I was reminded of another little incident quoted by Scott, extracted from John Knox's diaries. In the north-east, Morris and related activities were usually only punished with a fine (40/- was about usual) but, in Edinburgh, one James Gullane, "ane cordinaire apprentice", was arrested for "playing, with Roben Hocde", brought "before ane assize...wha, eftir schort deliberatioune, condemnit hime to be hangit for ye said crime". - I!! - With such penalties, it is no wonder that the Morris, and similar festivities, died out in Scotland (in more ways than one!)

Now, of course, things are much healthier, and several sides exist, though we tend to think of Lothians as "Banchory's offshoot in Edinburgh" - they even had to import their current Squire from us. In fact, of course, neither side is in any way the other's "offshoot" - we each formed completely separately - if Banchory are anyone's offshoot it's John o' Gaunt's.

The old Scottish traditions - yes, we are very much aware of them - probably more so than most Scots. Most of the references quoted by B.B. were already known to us, though there were a few new details. But there is, I think, a great danger in such matters of confusing "traditional" with "antiquarian."

4.

For example, we use some of the old holidays, like May, Beltane, and, being near Aberdeen, Ben-Accord, as the Morris seems to fit naturally into present-day festivities on these occasions. On the other hand, the modern Scottish "Yule", at least around Deeside, just doesn't exist in the old way, so, while we do dance in the Christmas/New Year period generally, there is no one time or place at which we dance, as there is at the other times.

The suggestion of using Scottish terms for dignitaries is likewise maybe a bit forced. Anyway, we can't use Abbot and Prior of Bonaccord, as they still exist in Aberdeen, for the Bonaccord festival. Also, many of the titles suggested are rather generalised "Lords of the Feast" than specific to the Morris. A generic term like "Laird" for "Squire" might serve, but it's still pretty contrived. Or, maybe, we could borrow a term from the Glasgow gangs (a highly traditional institution!) and call him the "Leader-aff"? "Bagman" is every bit as good north of the Border as south.

Similarly, with music, I must confess ignorance of most 16th/17th century Scottish court music, but, in principle, don't see why it has any better claim to be used for Morris tunes than, say, "Bonny Banchory", "The Hen's March to the Midden", or "Charlie is m'Darlin' " - all of which, as well as a couple of original tunes in similar idiom, we use for our own dances.

That's right - our own dances. For we have, in Banchory, the beginnings of a new "tradition". Some is adapted from the Cotswold style. Other parts are quite different. But all is an attempt to work towards something that feels right when done in this area. A gradual, trial-and-error build up of this kind may, in the long run, achieve a more truly traditional whole than trying to resurrect exactly whatever went on in pre-Reformation Scotland, which itself no longer exists and is, in that sense, every bit as alien as any "English" import. Give us another three or four hundred years. If we're still going by then, it should all have been licked into shape sufficiently for some latterday Cecil Sharp to come and 'collect' it.

Thus, though we had a look at what we could learn of the

5.

Perth Glovers' dance - for it does look tantalisingly worth having a go at it - in the end we have not tried to "reconstruct" it, as there is so little detailed description that the amount of imagination necessary to fill in the gaps would require rather the invention of a completely new dance. So - bearing in mind the Scottish Sword Traditions, the hints of rapper style in the Perth dance, all the background information available to us, and the old local custom of the deer drive (latterly transmogrified to stalking, but some of the old dykes still exist) we did just that. The result is the Banchory Ternan Horn Dance. This is a sword dance for five men, plus a sixth man dressed in a deerskin and carrying a pair of antlers, who ends up being "beheaded" when the final lock/nut/whatyouwill is woven around the antlers so as to hold them when exhibited at the end of the dance.



So far, so good. Now, how about the women? While agreeing with B.B. about their presence in the old Scottish Morris, this is not so easy a question as it might appear. To me, the key point about the old dances which involved women is that they were meant to. That is, the figures (and, probably more important, the steps) will have been composed specifically for performance by women (or even, horror of horrors, a mixed side!) That is very different from women trying to perform steps, or dances, meant to be done by men. The same applies to men doing dances meant for women. (E.g., on collection of a Lancashire clog Morris dance from an old lady who had danced with the women after the men had stopped.... "you take four steps forward, turn cut..." (O.K. so far) "...wave your fan and curtsey." - I!! - that step obviously needed changing if men were to do the dance again.)

For the moment, it is probably safer for the men and women to work out their own, separate steps and dances at first. Then, in another couple of centuries or so, we can (maybe) start thinking about putting 'em together.

Meanwhile, can B.B. refer me to any good tunes in that

court music?

DON FRENCH (Foreman, Banchory Ternan M.M.)

(At on French's suggestion a copy of the article was sent to Bill Banbury; for, he said, "it is not meant to be a 'reply' (in the controversial sense) but rather some extension of the thoughts in it, a discussion of some of the points raised, and comment on what has or has not been done, along the lines suggested by B.B., or otherwise, by at least one Scottish Morris side." Bill Banbury has sent the musical references to Don French. Ed.)

DOUGLAS KENNEDY wrote, on the 28th of December last,

Just to provide you with some raw material I have jotted down out of my memory-remnant-bag some approximate dates of foreign visits of Morris sides I have led. The details must seem patchy at the least - e.g., why should I remember so clearly why we were in Brussels, but so dimly why in Paris?

The pre-1914 side was roughly always the same, viz.,

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. George Wilkinson | 2. Claude Wright |
| 3. James Patterson | 4. George Butterworth |
| 5. Perceval Lucas | 6. Douglas Kennedy |

The period I find most difficult to account for is 1919 - 1923, particularly 1919 - 1920 and 1921. The Oxford (Univ.) chaps appeared episodically, e.g., K. Constable and Honeybone, ditto Cambridge, e.g., K. Schofield and G. Cooke; and, of course, Arthur Heffer, who was at both Oxford and Cambridge.

I see several faces, but not the names. If someone mentioned names I could respond one way or another. I remember men who were versed in just one or two dances who could be used if the nucleus were sound. The 'Old Vic' show in 1919 was strong in jigs and sword, but only elementary Morris proper; and through 1920 and 1921 we were conscious of passengers to be carried. After 1922 we began to be able to call on all-rounders with fair repertoire of Cotswold. In addition to names above I can think of Thomas Adkins, Jim La Touche, Arthur Peck, Russell Wortley emerging as men with repertoires.

With photographs to consult I could name some faces,

and old EFDS magazines would be revealing; but all such relics of my own I have long since passed to the RVW Library. A rich source of the odd individuals would be the programmes of the King's Theatre performances Sharp staged in 1922 - 3, possibly 1921. It has just occurred to me that even an inspection of programmes of the pre-war era (1914 - 1918) would reveal more names - e.g., our show at the Savoy Theatre 1913 - 1914 when Granville Barker had his Shakespeare Season. In the Library there is a lot of material to be sifted by some Morris enthusiast.

E.J.Nicol came on the scene very soon after I became Director, and he would be a valuable source for 1926 and onward. The early Vacation Schools at Stratford, Cheltenham, Malvern, Aldeburgh, Scarborough, Exeter etc. would have some record of men used in demonstration 'sides' - even with "Good" women we always sought to show men's Morris, however elementary.

The touring team of 1929 in U.S.A. and Canada contained these men:-

Henry Trefusis, Charles Bardswell, William Ganiford, Spencer Ranger, Reggie Wylam, and Jim La Touche.

The composition of other teams could be discovered in the photos available; e.g., British Week in Helsinki, and the C.I.A.P. gatherings at Antwerp and Stockholm. I suppose I could write up some tours in more detail; i.e., Canada and U.S.,

and Finland. DOUGLAS

Enclosed with the letter was RECOLLECTIONS OF D.N.K.

Pre-1914 War: Team of six men and partners under Cecil Sharp, with violinist Elsie Avril. The occasion was the fashion parade of dress designer POIRET, in 1913, in Brussels. In 1914, in Paris, a similar team (the men identical) danced at some Anglo-French organisation.

1925 Holland, team men/women and E. Avril (violin) and May Hobbs (piano). The invitation to Flushing was by Zeeland Shipping Line

1927 Czecho-Slovakia and Austria; to an international conference (1) under the auspices of C.I.A.P. at Prague;

show in Vienna arranged separately from C.I.A.P. undertaking.

1928 Denmark; Scandinavian Festival, Copenhagen; with teams from Norway, Sweden, Greenland (Esquimaux) Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

1928 Antwerp - C.I.A.P. Conference (2)

1929 Bayonne; Anglo-Basque Festival; teams from France and Spain; organised by Musée Basque (Mons. Boisselle).

1929 Touring E.F.D.S.S. team Trans-Canada with curtain-raiser mini-tour in U.S.A. (New York, Boston, Rochester.)

1931 Finland; British Trade Week in Helsinki, at the invitation of our Government; also a group of Theatre people - dancers; the Pipe Band of the Black Watch; and the band of H.M.S. York (Marines.)

1933 San Sebastian; Spanish Basque festival with usual Spanish Basque teams - VISCAYA, GUIPOZCOA and NAVARRE.

1939 C.I.A.P. International Festival, Stockholm. (3)

After the formation of I.F.M.C. in 1947, almost annual foreign visits to Europe in connection with conferences, and I.F.M.C. Festivals, with full E.F.D.S.S. teams, including Morris.

1949 In Venice, dancing on a raised platform in San Marco Piazza.

1951 Opatia (Yugoslavia, on the Dalmatian coast.)

1953 Biarritz, Pamplona at time of bull-running through streets; shows in the Bull Ring. The morris men danced in the streets all night.

1955 Oslo; English represented by University team from New-castle led by Fisher Cassie.

Odd Recollections:

1955 South Africa: Men, Jacky Toaduff (clog), Tony Farres, Peter Burton, Bob Parker, Ron Smedley, Peter Swann, Nelson Bowker, Paul Green, David Welti, Pat Shuldham-Shaw, with Nan Fleming-Williams and Jimmy Coleman as musicians. The tour through the Union was by Blue Train; we lived on the train.

1960 South Africa: Men, Patrick Murphy, Geoffrey Briggs, Peter North, Keith Uttley, Pat Shuldham-Shaw, Peter Dashwood, Alan Archer, Mike Nash.

The tours were organised by The Volkspielers (Afrikaans Folk Dancers). The tours were in coaches; and the dancers were accommodated in private houses.

1958 Portugal; organised by Oporto Anglo-Portuguese group. (Port Wine), and Horizon Holidays.

In reply to a letter from the Editor, Douglas wrote again, 6/1/1982

"The E.F.D.S. in Cecil Sharp's day provided 'Morris' at his visits to Brussels and Paris 1913 - 1914. When we started the All-England Festival in 1924 after his death we had a Dutch team from the island of Walcheren, sent over by the Zeeland Shipping Co., and in 1925 we (EFDS) were ourselves invited by the Z.S.Co. over to Walcheren to dance in their hotel in Flushing - so 'Morris' in Folland, 1925. The connection with Zeeland Shipping was through Mrs. Hobbs (May Eliot Hobbs, sister of Walter Eliot, M.P.,) who lived at Kelmscott near Kelmscott Manor, home of William Morris. The daughter, May Morris, was Mrs. Hobbs' friend, and she got us down (Cecil Sharp and the Morris) to dance at Kelmscott, 1912. The widow, Mrs. William Morris (Rossetti's Jane Burden) was present in a wheel chair pushed by May Morris."

The Past Squire, when asked about the organizations represented by the initials C.I.A.P., and I.F.M.C, said that they stand for COMMISSION INTERNATIONALE LES ARTS POPULAIRES - "a child of the Committee of Intellectual Co-operation of the League of Nations; and C.I.A.P. was designed to deal with 'Folk' art of all kinds." And,

INTERNATIONAL FOLK MUSIC COUNCIL - "Before the second world war we (British Isles) organised the 1935 Conference and Festival (All Europe) at London (Cecil Sharp House, then only three years old) at the end of which we founded International Folk Dance Council. This functioned in collaboration with the CIAP up to 1939. After the war we (EFDSS) called a conference

at Cecil Sharp House (1947) with a Festival in London, and this re-established the pre-war links that had been snapped. The 1947 Conference really established a new organisation, the I.F.M.C."

He wrote, also, "It was interesting that, on our U.S.A. and Canada trip in 1929, the audiences 'fell' quite consistently for the long-sword with its 'mock ritual murder' rather than the 'Morris' Cotswold idiom."

"I think Reginald Tiddy should be included in pre-1914 Morris (apart from Oxford U.M.M.) as he not only coached a team in his own village of Ascot-under-Wychwood but also substituted for Lucas on several occasions when the Morris Side were called on to illustrate one of Sharp's public lectures in London and other parts of England. I recollect one such occasion at University College, London, to the Viking Society (who insisted on pronouncing it Vicking with a short "i" (to rhyme with Kicking and not Hiking). This occasion focussed chiefly on Sword, brought into the English Dance Tradition by the Vikings according to the Viking Society. I recollect another such lecture on the Sword dance dramas, or folk plays, to members of the British Drama League. These random recollections were primed by a need to high-light Tiddy's relation to the pre-war (1914) H.Q. Morris side."

RUSSELL WORTLEY MEMORIAL BOOK

(See Morris Dancer, No.9)

JOHN JENNER, Springfield, 47, Spring Lane, Bassingbourn, Royston, Herts., SG8 5HT, wrote, 3/2/82,

"The first edition (500) of the various articles written by RUSSELL WORTLEY, published as a memorial book after his death, is nearly sold out. Orders continue to be received by the Cambridge M.M.; who would be happy to arrange a reprinting if they could see a demand for at least 200 copies, to sell at £2.50 plus postage, to cover the cost."Please, Club Bagmen and individuals, write to John Jenner, to give him any information you can about present and future demand - new men come into clubs.

THE DEAN FOREST TRADITIONS

Two articles have recently appeared on the subject of the Morris traditions of the Forest of Dean. One of them, by the late Russell Wortley, surveys the historical references of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, collates the information collected by Sharp in 1909-1910, and recounts the result of his own research in the area in 1946-1948.¹ The second, by Roy Dommett, also collates the information collected by Sharp and 'very briefly summarises Russell Wortley's research. It adds little to Wortley's article, apart from giving the Ruardean and Clifford's Mesne tunes collected by Sharp.²

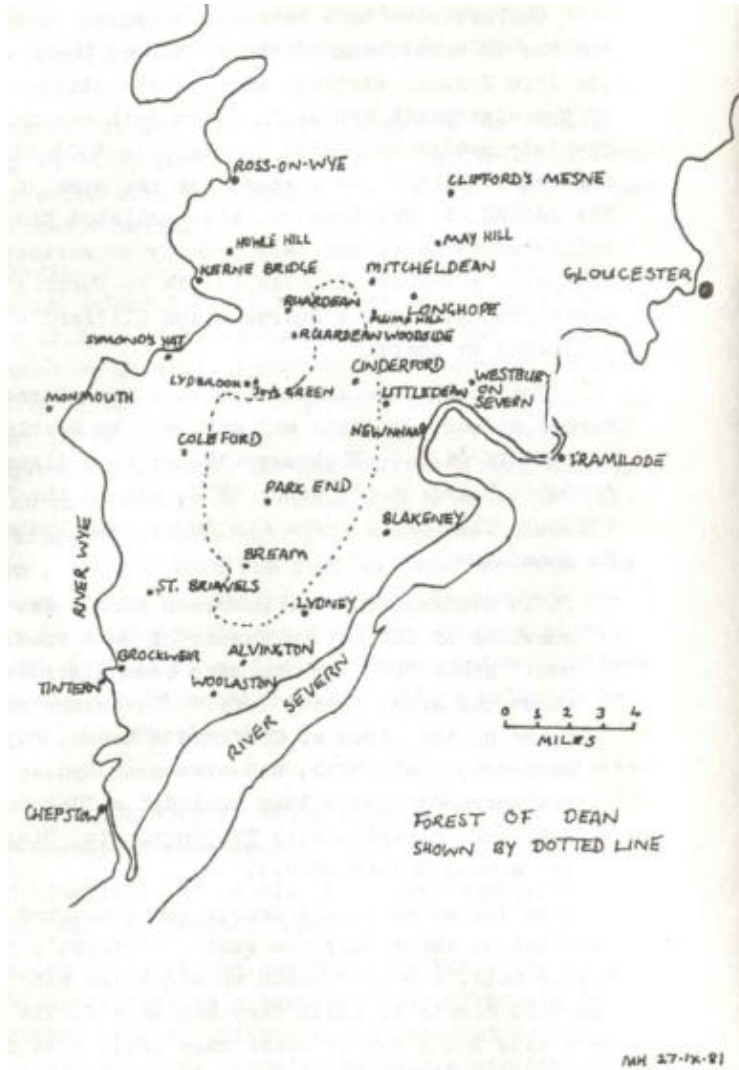
The localities in the Forest of Dean associated with the Morris at various times and surveyed by Wortley are: the Forest itself (1787); Blakeney (1822); Ross district (1840s/1850s?); Ruardean (to about 1872, and in the 1880s); May Hill (1870s); Clifford's Mesne (to 1870), and Lydbrook (1840s?). He concludes

It is evident that the Ruardean morris was the last survivor of the native Forest of Dean traditions, which until about 1870 seem to have been distributed generally about the area. In the late 1940s echoes could still be heard of the sides at Clifford's Mesne, May Hill, Longhope, Lydbrook, Howle Hill, and even near Lydney where an Alvington/Woolaston team included a "Mad Moll", an intriguing link, perhaps, with The Torrington Diaries (which mention a Maid Marian -M.H.).

As far as tunes and dances are concerned, there is information about only two sides. Clifford's Mesne had a Morris Call, a Morris March to which the side marched on, and The Wild Morris to which they danced off. The earlier Ruardean side had a Morris Dance tune similar to the Clifford's Mesne Morris Call, and a Sword Dance using a variant of The Wild Morris as its tune, in which the swords were laid crossed on the ground. The later Ruardean side danced a processional to Speed the Plough, did a handclapping dance to Soldier's Joy, and also had dances to the tunes of Haste to the Wedding and Greensleeves.

It would appear, however, that there were many more Morris sides in the area than those mentioned above; and at the teams were long lasting; in fact, the Forest was as fertile a ground for Morris dancing as was the Forest of Wychwood in Oxfordshire. Among Maud Karpeles' manuscripts now deposited in the Vaughan Williams Library are some notes about Dean Forest.³ The first item is a letter from Miss E.M. Hartland, dated 30 August 1913, describing a curious Morris seen by a Mr. Hobbs at Framilode:

"little crooks like diminutive shepherds' crooks were used instead of the usual plain sticks. Bunches of gilliflowers were tied to the crook, 'the white gilliflowers that blossom at Whitsuntide'." Now enclosed with the letter are some notes headed "Forest of Dean" with the note "sent by Mr. Hobbs?" (and



therefore presumably also dating from about 1913) written at the top. It contains information on no less than eleven sides in the area. Whoever the source, he (or she) seems to be reliable: he mentions that Mr. Tom Davies (who lived on the hill between Ruardean and Lydbrook) was in the revival thirty years before, and got his bells (still in his possession) from an old dancer to whose father they had belonged. Gipsy Smith, a fiddler of the original team, had taught them; he was drowned. This information is confirmed by Russell Wortley's researches: a gipsy named Smith was involved in the revival at Ruardean in the 1880's. The Karpeles notes are under the heading "Lydbrook which is described as "a great morris place". Obviously the 1880s revival team drew on members from both places: Wortley notes that the team was taught by John Ward of Lydbrook. More information is given about the revival: the shirts were made by Mrs. Webb of Kerne Bridge Inn, and the informant saw them - "box plaited ribbon on white shirts all over except on stiff white fronts. Sleeves tied with ribbon." They wore black breeches and box hats with cockades. The description of the shirt accords with Sharp's information about Ruardean; Wortley confirms the information about shirts and breeches.

In describing the earlier Lydbrook side, Mr. Hobbs says that it was sustained by two families, the Coles and the Wards, who lived at Joy's Green; the Fool was John Williams. Immediately after the mention of Williams is the cryptic note "Story of kennel. Jack o' the Lantern with a mouse on his back and a horse's tail." This probably relates to some of the Fool's antics. Extremely intriguing is the note "Here also Moll the Ladle went with the dancers" - recalling the Maid Marian and Mad Moll mentioned above. The "Ladle" may refer to the ladle often carried by the man-woman (as at Abbot's Bromley).

Martin Penn informed Russell Wortley that one of the tunes of the 1880s revival was Greensleeves. Davies describes the dance as "Handclapping like Shepherds' Hey to Greensleeves tune - rounds first figure and hey last."

The Morris side at Blakeney is mentioned, with Mr. Joseph

Virgo (then aged 89) as informant. They danced at a crossroads in the Forest, and had a "woman" with a horse's or cow's tail tied on his back; as well as a "Ladleman" who carried a brass ladle. In common with the early Ruardean side, they had white plaited shirts with sleeves tied with black ribbons, and wore box hats with ribbons. The Blakeney team used to meet the team from Lydney and would stage a mock fight with the swords, the winner "gaining the ground" to dance first. How "mock" was "mock" is hard to know, especially in view of other information on contests (for which see below).

The Littledean Morris was led by a man named Rees, and apparently contained dancers from Cinderford also. Charles Waite of Littledean Hill, Cinderford, was a dancer in the side, which had a Flagman and Swordsman. The Swordsman carried two swords, which he waved crosswise before the dance began. One of their dances was a handclapping dance to a Shepherds' Hey tune. They would dance in procession to an open place in the Forest - "all the (Morris dancing) places evidently had a dance place in part of the Forest near; often at cross-tracks". Waite's nephew William Pick is said to be a good concertina player. It is not clear whether he played for the Morris, but among his tunes were Greensleeves, Haste to the Wedding, Irish Washerwoman and Carry Ma Back. Waite also knew a mummers' play.

More fights were said to have taken place between the men from Tintern and the Brockweir side, which consisted of ship-building men. Brockweir was a "great morris place".

At St.Briavels a Mrs.Rollins said that the Morris was danced at a place before the Castle called the Bailey Tump, in front of the church on the edge of a steep hill sixty feet up from the Wye. Her father had been Flagman of the side.

The side at Bream danced at the maypole at the crossroads in the middle of the village, and also at Park End. There were also Morris sides at Newnham and Westbury-on-Severn.

Ruardean is said to have had a Mock Mayor election.

It is plain that Morris sides were thick on the ground in the area, and fights were common. Confirmation of this

comes from a report in the Gloucester Chronicle for 28 May, 1836, p.3, under the heading "Whitsuntide customs in Gloucestershire";

The Morris dancers of Monmouth, the Forest, and Lydbrooke, generally assemble at Cymon's Yatt, on the Wye, at Whitsuntide, to celebrate their annual "revels" upon that commanding eminence. This year the parties contended for the possession of the post of honour, and a serious engagement took place which ended in several of the parties being carried off the field very seriously injured.

According to the Gloucester Journal of 5 June, 1841, p.3:

On Saturday last, at Clifford's Mesne Wake, a drunken rustic festival, which is held annually on the 29th of May, a fight took place, in which one of the combatants, a young man named Jonathan Wood, about 22 years of age, lost his life.

Sharp was informed that the Ruardean Morris stopped after one of the men was killed in a fight at Pump Hill. (i.e. Plump Hill?)

Keith Chandler recently pointed out the importance of local newspapers in providing information about the Morris.⁴ The Gloucester Chronicle reference illustrates this, revealing the existence of a previously unknown team at Monmouth; but although events in the Forest of Dean are regularly reported in that newspaper, I have found no other reference to Morris dancing in it. The Forest itself, however, is well provided with newspapers which remain to be checked:

Coleford Forester from 1860 Coleford Times from 1862
Cinderford Journal from 1866 Coleford Chronicle from 1870
Lydney Observer from 1871 Dean Forest Mercury from 1881

NOTES

1. R.Wortley, "The Morris of Dean Forest, glimpses of an extinct tradition", English Dance and Song vol.42, no.1, 1980, 16-17; also reprinted in Russell Wortley, Cambridge Morris Men: 1980, 31-33.
2. R.Dommett, "The tradition in the Forest of Dean", Morris Matters vol.4, no.2, 1981, 4-5.

3. Karpeles MSS, Box 7 (donated to the Library by Peter Kennedy).
4. K.Chandler, "Local newspapers as a source for the history of Morris in the South Midlands", The Morris Dancer no.8, 1980, 2-12.

MIKE HEANEY, Eynsham, Oxford, 29.9.81

Mike Heaney sent, also, (29.9.81) newspaper extracts:

Northampton Herald 1832-1356; patchy coverage, but including week after Whitsun 1832-36, 38-46, 48-50, 53-55; 2nd week after Whitsun 1833-36, 33, 39, 41-48, 50, 53, 56.

1848/VI/24, p3.

KIRTLINGTON: The annual six days' festivity at Kirtlington, commenced on Monday last. It is said to have been held since the days of John o'Gaunt, who is also said to have resided at the village. In the morning the "lord and lady" with the morris dancers went in procession through the place with a man before them carrying a lamb, after which "the hall" was opened and visitors were supplied with cake and ale. Formerly the lamb carried through the village was slaughtered, but of late its life has been spared. The villagers by virtue of the "lamb ale" claim freedom from toll in all markets and fairs. There were a variety of dancing booths, stalls &c, this week; but for some years the attendance of persons has gradually fallen off. On Tuesday the morris dancers, &c, were as usual entertained at Sir George Dashwood of Kirtlington Park. The festivities always commence on Trinity Monday.

1849/VI/2 p3.

BICESTER POLICE OFFICE, Tuesday May 29th: Passing Bad Money - John Cato, Labourer, Kirtlington, for passing a bad sovereign on S. Boddington, publican, Stoke Lyne. Remanded.

(1849/VI/16, p.3: John Cato and Charles Coxhill committed for trial. The Catos included morris dancers; and the offence took place on Whit Tuesday in another morris village).

1855/VI/2 p.3.

YARDLEY HASTINGS: In a vehicle, accompanying the club (procession), were three of the members, dressed in ludicrous and

fanciful costume, the centre one as a female, with bonnet, veil and parasol, and on one side a soldier, on the other a morris-dancer.

Northampton Mercury 1835-1850; patchy coverage, but including week after Whitsun 1836-37, 40-50; 2nd week after Whitsun 1835 37, 38, 40-50: nothing found.

Gloucester Chronicle week before, three weeks after Whitsun; 1836, 37, 40, 42.

1836/V/28, p3.

WHITSUNTIDE CUSTOMS IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE. The Morris dancers of Monmouth, the Forest, and Lydbroke, generally assemble at Cymons Yatt, on the Wye, at Whitsuntide, to celebrate their annual "revels" upon that commanding eminence. This year the parties contended for the possession of the post of honour, and a serious engagement took place which ended in several of the parties being carried off the field very seriously injured... (then other customs elsewhere described, including:) At Cooper's Hill, on the road between Gloucester and Cirencester, the country people meet on Whit Monday, frequently in considerable numbers, for the purpose of amusing themselves with rough games, but we are not aware that there is any peculiarity in them.

Cheltenham Journal week before, 3 weeks after Whitsun:

1832-53, 1856, 57, Coronation 1838

1842/V/23 p2.

The Morris Dancers, which in some parts of England are now never heard of, still continue to go through their various manoeuvres every Whitsuntide in this neighbourhood; retaining, indeed, some of their ancient features, for the primitive harmony of the "pipe and tabor" forms their music generally. although some parties introduce the more modern innovations of violin and tambourine. In 1560

"Oh the golden days of good Queen Bess,

Merry be the memory of good Queen Bess!"

morris dancing was at its height, for we learn by the Archaeologia that in the churchwarden's account for St. Helen's, Abingdon, in the year 1560, the third year of Queen Elizabeth, there was a charge of "one shilling for two dossin morres

belles"; and in the year following there is an item of eighteen-pence for "setting up Robin Hood's bower", doubtless "an arbour or booth at a festival." The same authority tells us that these games were practised at festivals, "that the populace might be indulged; and that this indulgence was resorted to from a political point of view to keep them in good humour." Fuller wittily observes, "that as careful mothers and nurses, on condition that they can get their children to part with knives, are contented to let them play with rattles; so they permitted ignorant people still to retain some of their fond and foolish customs, that they might remove from them the most dangerous and destructive superstitions." All writers agree that these games have ever been popular with the English people; and for ourselves, we would much rather see the multitude engaged in harmless sports, than political debates - a body of morris dancers is much less dangerous to the State, than a gang of chartist pikemen.

1843/VI/5 p2.

This is Whit Monday: The holiday of the lads and lasses, the carnival of the mummers, the harvest of the fiddlers,...

1845/V/12 p2.

AWFUL CALAMITY - On Thursday sen'night among the visitors to this town for the day, it being Cheltenham fair, was a young robust woman from Broadway. It will be remembered that in addition to being fair day, it was May-day, and the sweeps were abroad carrying on their usual gambols. It appears that while the female before mentioned was standing in the street, the "sooty clown", unperceived by her, suddenly threw his calf's tail over her shoulder, which so much alarmed her that she was instantly thrown into fits. The poor girl was taken to the Hospital, and afterwards to the lodging house of the Cheltenham Union, where she still remains, not having yet recovered from the effects of the fright. It is supposed by some that the constant succession of fits by which this young woman has been attacked will terminate in her death or con-firmed idiocy

1846/V/8 p2.

The Whitsuntide festivities! - It is seldom that we have had

to record such fine, bright, hot weather, so early in the summer, as that with which we have been favoured during the past week. Monday last was Whit Monday, and the "Glorious First of June"; and a glorious day it was for the holiday folks. The streets of this town have seldom worn a more animated appearance. In addition to the great and increasing population of Cheltenham, there were the teeming hundreds from the neighbouring towns and villages, all anxious to see the clubs walk, and the morris dancers perform: there were the full band of the one, pealing through the street; and the primitive pipe and tabor of the other, reminding us of boyish days, and boyish toys.

M. HEANEY

 THE FURNESS MORRIS MEN visited Albert in northern France for five days, July 30th - August 4th, in 1981. Albert is the twin town of Ulverston, where our team is centred, and the visit was the result of an invitation from the committee at Albert. All arrangements had been made by this committee for dancing spots and entertainment; and it provided us free accommodation and all meals for four days. We travelled by mini-bus and Sea Link ferry and visited Abbeville and Amiens en route. The tone for the tour was set at Abbeville; a reception committee met us at the Hotel de Ville, and gave us an excellent site for the dancing display. After this we were provided with refreshments - wine and biscuits in the council chamber. Brief speeches were exchanged and good relations established. The weather was superb, and this added to the pleasure of the tour, though dancing in such heat works up an incredible thirst, and French wine, though excellent, is not really a substitute for Hartley's beer.

At Albert we were welcomed with champagne in the town hall, and taken to our hotel. We were pleased to have the chairman of the Albert Twinning Committee accompanying us on our rounds as guide, announcer and interpreter, a most generous gesture on his part to give up so much of time to us.

Villages and small towns turned out in varying numbers to see our dancing - Cotswold Morris varied with figures of North Skelton Sword and our own North West dance the Ulverston

Morris. In a full programme the village of Bouzincourt stands out, where benches had been set out in the little public garden and a large number of the villagers gathered to enjoy the show. The area we visited was devastated in the first World War, and had been restored and renewed since, a green country full of poppies by the way side, and with many war cemeteries about. We visited two of the major monuments during our visit, at Hamel and Thiepval - a pause for solemn reflection.

Our big day at Albert coincided with the August Fete, and we had to compete with the noise of a Funfair on the town square. We also provided an interlude in the Fistball tournament (a local sport taken very seriously in Picardy). Presentations were exchanged at a reception in the Town Hall, and the day ended with a ceilidh which we 'developed' at our hotel with guests from the Twinning Committee and a silver wedding party which was there at the same time.

On the return journey we danced at Doullens and were entertained in an historic room in the Town Hall where the united High Command of World War I was formed.

At Montreuil we danced for the last time, and ended the day with a lazy stroll round the town. It had been a memorable trip, with stops at Pray sur Somme, Corbie, Bapaume, Arras and Hesdin among others already mentioned. The keynote to it all was good humour and courtesy; the visit must have done much good as a contact between our two countries.

STUART LAWRENCE, 1981

 Vol.2, No.1, 1982, of "ROOMER", the Newsletter of The Traditional Drama Research Group (Traditional Drama Research Group, c/o Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, S10 2TN) carries notes on "Documenting Traditional Drama"; "Mummers in Bedfordshire"; "Animal Disguise in Monmouthshire"; "Classification of Folk Plays"; news of recent publications; "Theatre in Focus"- original monographs, with colour slides; and the 5th Annual Conference on Aspects of Current Scholarship in Traditional Drama; for details of which write to Paul Smith, address as above.
 (16.10.1982
