

THE MORRIS DANCER

No. EIGHTEEN*****MARCH 1984

If anyone, or any body, has spare copies of this magazine, Nos.2 to 7, and No.13, please tell the Editor (postages etc. will be refunded.) There are one or two people who want to make complete sets of the Morris Dancer.

An article on the Longsword in this Issue mentions, P.8, "...the various factors which produce variations within specific traditions..."..."can be seen very clearly in..." "...North West teams..." (which) "...regularly split..." and "...set up a new group..." An article on this phenomenon, from someone in the N.W., will be received gratefully by the Editor.

And something, too, please, from the N. East, on the Rapper.

Teams specializing in Border Morris must have something to write about.

Write to Ewart Russell, 50, Mile End Road,

Colchester, C04 5BX

2.

Continuing MORRIS DANCERS AT CHELTENHAM, by Mike Heaney, from Issue No.17: where the article had reached an extract from R. St .Johnston, A History of Dancing, 1906, p.49-50:-

Leaving aside the author's desire to link the Morris with Robin Hood, it is plain that his informant was seeing two sides dancing together - two fools, two musicians, and enough men for two full sets of dancers. If the informant is correct, the date was about 1865 - much later than all the other references. A question mark must hang over it. St.Johnston was living in Cheltenham when he wrote the above piece, and presumably his informant was a native of the town. The tone of the anecdote suggests the performers were strangers to the informant, and hence also probably to the town.

MIKE HEANEY December, 1981

Mike Heaney wrote, on the 28th of November, 1983,

Publication of the Cheltenham piece in two parts gives me an opportunity to comment on it before it's even finished! One or two things do need to be added now.

First, the W.E.Adams who wrote to Notes and Queries also wrote his autobiography, Memoirs of a social atom, Hutchinson 1903, two vols. (Keith Chandler and Roy Judge independently found this out). He was indeed born in Cheltenham, baptised 11th February, 1832, and left the town in 1854. He does not specifically state his own involvement in Morris dancing, but describes it thus (I, 52-53):

Another feature of Whitsuntide was the appearance of the morris dancers... The dancers were all men, though one, who played the part of fool to the rest, was dressed as a woman. Duck trousers and white shirts made up the costume, the sleeves of the performers being tied round with coloured ribbons, their legs below the knee bearing pads of tinkling bells. The dance they executed was curiously varied with the clapping of hands and the flirting of white handkerchiefs. Of course, after every dance, "the usual collection was taken".

Adam's account confirms dancing by Cheltenham people, probably in the mid to late 1840s. Adams himself would only have been a boy of about 9 or 10 if his memory is good (as it

3.

appears to be) and his observations in Notes and Queries are accurate. There is a note in Sharp's field notes (1910, ii) that "Cheltenham men used to come over to Hantley with pipe and tabor. 6 dancers. Ragman, fool and music. White flag, a yard square, blue round the edge 'RW' in red". This note probably refers to the same period, or perhaps to the period a little later, in the 1850s.

M.H. 28.11.1983

(The above quoted passage from W. E .Adams was also sent to the magazine by Keith Chandler, commenting upon Issue No.17. See P.4 of this issue.)

Commenting upon "The Traditional Pipe and Tabor, Some Missed Opportunities" article by Carl Willetts in Issue 17, Mike Heaney writes,

We can add that Manning also bought the pipe that had belonged to Jim the Laddie of the Sherborne team, and had last been played by Charles Benfield the Bledington musician. The pipe pictured by Manning in the 1897 Folklore article as being from Bampton, c. 1850, is probably not the same as that acquired by him from Maxey Miller of Cumnor, which used to belong to Bob Potter, as that pipe, although made in Bampton, is dated and confirmed by Manning as 1814 or thereabouts.

At the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford there are several items of Morris interest. The first Curator of the Museum, H. Balfour, purchased a pipe and tabor from Leafield in 1896, and another set of unknown provenance was acquired from his collection after his death. G.A.Rowell, who wrote in 1886 about the Kirtlington Lamb Ale, donated a pipe and tabor to the Museum in the same year: could this set be from Kirtlington? There are also bell pads from Finstock, Ramsden and Oxford. The last are a set bought from Thomas Carter in 1903 and intended for the cancelled Coronation festivities of 1902, and so never used. Another pair was acquired from Balfour's own collection after his death. They are presumably from Headington, but are not in the present Headington colours, having green ribbon on brown leather.

MIKE HEANEY 28.11.1983

KEITH CHANDLER wrote, 4th December, 1983, about Issue No.17:-

A lot of fine research is being undertaken at present, almost certainly more concentrated now than at any time in the past. What this has meant in practice is that new sources and additional information on established material is surfacing constantly, and this sometimes has the effect of rendering written pieces woven from the available sources a little outmoded by the time they appear in print. Thus, for example, in Mike Heaney's piece on dancing in Cheltenham, W. E. Adams has been identified since the article was written. I was reading David Vincent's superb book Bread. Knowledge and Freedom (London:1981), which is an analysis of nineteenth century working-class autobiographies, when I noticed that one of the works being used as source material by Vincent was by a man with the same name as the writer to Notes and Queries, as cited by Mike on P.20. The author of this work, Memoirs of a Social Atom, was William Edwin Adams who declares on the first page that he was baptised at "the old Parish Church" in Cheltenham on February 11th, 1832. Later he notes that,

(here follows the passage quoted by Mike Heaney, P2.)

At no point does he mention that he was himself a dancer. If his "forty years ago" is accurate then he would have been in the morris when he was aged nine, and although sets of young boys were not unknown (one was seen at Sherborne Manor in 1788: see my article Morris dancing in the eighteenth-century: a newly discovered source, in Lore and Language, vol.3, no.8 (January 1983) pp.31-38) this does seem a little young. His place of baptism does suggest that the team with which he was involved was indigenous to the town, although outside teams did visit there at times. The set from Rissington went there around 1870 or so (Cecil Sharp, Field notebook, ii).

What a fine forum the magazine has become for the exchange of information between researchers, as typified by Bob Grant's and Mike Heaney's additions to earlier work, on pages two and three. Following in this tradition, I would like to offer some further information concerning the articles in this issue. On the murder by a morris dancer who lived in Chipping Campden in 1772: there is a William Keeley married in Ebrington (two miles east of Campden) on 6th November, 1763, who sub-

sequently had two children' baptised there in 1766 and 1768. This man only fits the bill if the newspapers (which are obviously quoting from a single source) are a little inaccurate in giving Keeley's age as "about 22 years old" (my emphasis). If this is the correct identification then he would have to have been at least in his late twenties to be married in 1763. There are no James Warner's in the Campden registers, but two males of this name were baptised in Buckland (five miles west of Campden), one in "1736" and the other in "1737", both to the same parents, which implies that the first of them had died as an infant and the next male child was also called by that forename. Another James Warner was baptised in Campden in 1766, but the names of the parents were not noted on this occasion: perhaps it was the piper and his wife.

Carl Willett's piece on the pipe and tabor was very informative. Again, I can offer some additional material and correct an error or two. On page fifteen Carl quotes Sharp in saying that the Ilmington side ceased when Tom Arthur died in 1867. Sam Bennett, leader of the revived Ilmington team which had been publicly criticised by Sharp, took great delight in putting Sharp in his place when he wrote in 1912 in a letter to the Stratford-upon-Avon Herald (23 August 1912, p.2),

...Mr.Sharp, in his Morris book, makes a few statements which need correcting. He says the Ilmington dancers were disbanded in 1867 owing to the death of Tom Arthurs [sic], but as a matter of fact Tom Arthurs did a Morris dance here in 1887, which his son playing the tabor, and that although eighty-five years of age, Tom danced a Morris jig. He died in 1891...

But then even Bennett, who knew Tom Arthur, got it wrong. According to the Ilmington burial register, Arthur was buried on 29 April 1890. His son James John Arthur played at the 1886 revival, but was aged only fifty-eight at this date and this makes me wonder whether the revival was short-lived because he "became too old to play" or if it was due to a general lack of interest in the morris which was widespread at this time.

Marsden, mentioned on page sixteen, is actually

Marston, two miles north-east of Oxford. This piper, John Fathers, was born in Heyford (a much-publicised location nowadays) in 1789 and moved to Marston around eighteen-twenty. Thomas Humphries of Hailey (a village which I can see from my back window across the Windrush Valley) is almost certainly the butcher living there in 1861, when he was aged forty-six (hence born circa 1815), since he is the only man of this name in the village at this date. From evidence collected by Norman Peacock and Russell Wortley, it appears as if there may have been a morris in Hailey at one time. Arnold Woodley's uncle Jim Buckingham said that his grandfather had been a morris dancer, and Arnold thinks that the family came from Hailey.

One of my informants in Bucknell says that he has a drum much like the photograph of the old dance side shows Joe Powell playing. It was, he says, one of his father's most treasured possessions, but is now somewhere in his loft and I have not yet seen it. This may be Powell's original tabor or one of the copies he made for sale. For obvious reasons I will not make the address of my informant public, but if it should prove to be the original at least its whereabouts will be known.

KEITH CHANDLER 4.12.1983

From JULIAN PILLING

I was interested in Carl Willett's article on the three hole pipe. Certainly there have been missed opportunities and instruments have been lost to the EFDSS, the Ring etc; but the term should not imply blame for however vigilant we may feel we are, we are probably missing opportunities that those who come later will be able to point to.

However, may I make a few comments and additions?

The Dolmetsch pipe: The one I have is A= 450, i.e., virtually old high pitch. It has a sounding length of 360 mm and a bore of 10 mm, rosewood with ivory mouthpiece and finial. Maybe some hint was taken from the Provençal pipe but Dr. Carl Dolmetsch told me that it was their own design. There have of course been changes in the organisation since this instrument was made, but probably the same design is in use. Dolmetsch are virtually alone among makers of historical instruments in that they do not claim to make exact copies.

The pipe is longer by about $\frac{1}{4}$ than the two Provençal pipes I have seen and the fingering system is lifting the fingers in natural sequence and allows no cross fingering as the holes are wide. In no way is this an open-air instrument, it is very soft and very sensitive to wind pressure to obtain the harmonics.

The pipe found on the Mary Rose has a 425 mm sounding length, and a bore of 13 mm, which points to a pitch of about modern G and suggests that the Dolmetsch pipe is a reasonable conjecture historically.

Some of the wide holed pipes sound a neutral third and where cross fingering is ineffective there are two possibilities: That this 'bagpipe' type scale was used, and, 2. that 'East European' (Surla) techniques of half-holing were employed. This latter is not so easy with quick melodies, and may have helped to make the taboring the more important task; however, this is certainly conjecture for all extant traditions, Catalan, Provençal and Basque, have virtuoso pipers.

Still, we must make a distinction between traditional and historical; this has bedevilled the E.F.D.S.S. for years, and in fact in some quarters seems to be getting worse as a reaction to the academic traditionalists. What is historical is not necessarily traditional! The historical music people seem to have a wide variety of tabor pipes (and they equally mix up traditional and historical).

Messrs. Woods (Early Music Shop, Bradford and London) catalogue lists the following makers:- Bryan Tolley: Camac: Brian Carlick: Deura: T.Owen: and what must be the most attractive, I am sure, the Sweetheart Flute Company.

JULIAN PILLING December, 1983

Note: See also: Joan Rimmer, Tabor Pipes from Aardenburg and Goedereede: Some Musical implications in: Berichten van de Rijksdienst Voor het Oudheidkundig Bodemonderzoek. Jaargang 29, 1979 M. Castellengo, 'Le Galoubet', Le Droict Chemin de Musique, Paris.

TREVOR STONE, with the backing of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, is organizing this year's Long Sword Dance weekend, in the Malton and Ryedale area, 19th - 20th May; will people who want full details of the weekend please write to Trevor

at 6, Priory Road, Sale, Cheshire, M33 2BR. He writes, "The Saturday will include tours to villages which once had dance teams in the hope that local interest may be aroused. Ampleforth is one of the villages." In his article

THE AMPLEFORTH LONGSWORD DANCE - some confusion he includes as a foreword

At workshops and displays I regularly overhear comments which cast doubt on the authenticity of the dance being performed. Usually the observer continues with a detailed summary of the variations which differentiate the performance from the accepted recorded version, usually taken from Sharp's published work. I think that Sharp, and many of his contemporaries, would have been disturbed by this narrow minded view of the value of published material.

The need for a more balanced attitude towards the reliability of published material can be found in Sharp's own notes. His notes indicate an awareness of the many factors which produce variations within specific traditions such as the forgetfulness when the dance had been dormant for a number of years, and the desire to create differences.

This inventiveness can be seen very clearly in the way in which present North West teams, because of their increasing popularity, regularly split and part of the team leaves to set up a new group to "do things their way". This usually results in the creation of variations and completely new figures or dances, the best of which retain a strong feeling for the tradition. A number of teams now perform dances which have been composed or substantially modified within the last decade but are generally believed to be traditional, in the same way as some of Ewan McColl's songs have been speedily assimilated into the "tradition".

Some dogmatic traditionalists continue to place undue reliance on written records and hold out against allowing the tradition to develop and change as it did in the past. I would recommend that they examine Sharp's original notes (rather than his published work) and question the reliability of informants who were often elderly who stopped dancing many years earlier.

The Ampleforth longsword dance produces an ideal case history.

Today we are so used to falling back on the published notations of our dances that we tend to forget that in the past the majority of dance detail was passed on orally from generation to generation. This often resulted in changes to the dance due to forgetfulness or in some cases, the inventiveness of subsequent teams. The Longsword dance from Ampleforth is one such example.

Cecil Sharp collected details of a dance in the village from two ex-dancers who disagreed on a number of important points of detail. Sharp subsequently published a notation in "Sword Dances of Northern England: Part III" which has since become the accepted version. Comparison of the three variants is most interesting.

Sharp's informants were:

Mr. George Wright of Darlington (75 years old in 1913) "who as a young man danced at Ampleforth and at one time played the Clown".*

Mr. George Fox (68 years old in 1913) "an old sword dancer of Ampleforth who has for more than 40 years lived at Linton near Newton -on-Ouse, York.... when he first came to Linton he taught the Newton men the Ampleforth sword dance which he, his father and grandfather had danced. The Newton men danced for 20 years continuously and then 20 years ago they stopped".*

Even though Fox would seem to be a more reliable informant (he taught the dance, his father and grandfather danced, he was slightly younger, and he lived in the same area) Sharp chose to credit Wright as his informant in the preface to his published version.

The differences in sequence are:

| <u>Fox's version</u> | <u>Wright's version</u> | <u>Published version</u> |
|---|--|---|
| Clash | Clash | Clash |
| Over your own sword | | |
| Single shuffle (No 1 sword down, 4 & 5 over to their right, 3 & 2 to left) | Single over (No 1 down - No 6 to left) | Fourth man over (No 2 to left - other minor differences) |
| | Single under Third man over (as above No 5 to left) | Fourth man under Third man over (No 3 to left) |

| <u>Fox's version</u> | <u>Wright's version</u> | <u>Published version</u> |
|--|--|--|
| | Third man under | Third man under |
| Circle counter clock | | |
| Double shuffle (normal double over, both go over at end) | Double over (only 1 goes over at end) | Double over (both go over at end) |
| | Double under | Double under |
| High lock behead fool | | |
| | Three reel (a hey by three couples) | Plaiting (as the hey Three Reel in Wright's version) |
| Waves of the Sea | Waves of the Sea | Waves of the Sea |
| Three Reel (2 triangles No 1 & 6 lower sword etc) | Three Reel (as Fox's version) | Three Reel (double triangles but und- er sword) |
| | Ring | Ring |
| | Nip-it lock | Third man over |
| | Display | Nip-it lock |
| | **Wheel (lock passes to man behind) | The wheel |

* see GRQ 10, vol 3, pp 20 & 49 in Vaughan Williams Library

** Details of this from another informant named Benson.

Note:

Sharp's notes on Wright's version indicate that the men numbered counter-clockwise. If this is correct then moves led by one man such as Single Over etc. are very different to both other versions. However if the numbering is clockwise, which is more usual, then most of Wright's moves are similar to the published version (but different to Fox's moves).

General presentation

All three versions broadly agree about costume: red soldier tunics (Fox says pink), white trousers with red stripe and small military caps (Red caps in Fox and published versions, Blue according to Wright).

All three versions indicate two musicians, unspecified in

"Sword Dances of Northern England", but referred to as fiddler and drummer by both informants. All versions also include a flag bearer, two beggars, a clown, a Queen and a King (who is an extra character according to Fox and Wright but becomes the leading dancer in Sharp's book).

A postcard dated 1896 in the Vaughan Williams Library at Cecil Sharp House shows a group of 12 men in the costumes described, together with a bass drummer and a violinist. The picture includes Willie Worthy who was interviewed in the early 1950's by Father Damian Webb prior to the last local revival of the dance by the boys at Ampleforth College.

During the interview Worthy, who was in his late 70's and blind, gave background stories but no details of the dance. The College team under Father Damian's control first learned the dance from Sharp's book and subsequently were coached for a Royal Albert Hall performance by Miss Hall, local English Folk Dance & Song organiser. Miss Hall seems to have introduced a number of minor features (e.g., the stepping) from the Cleveland style of dancing.

The Ampleforth dance (in any of the three versions) is an interesting dance and has the added feature of a detailed Folk Play. At one time the dance was an integral part of the total performance, although here again the records differ as Fox makes no mention of the play. He claims that the team "danced a figure or so every 20 yards down the street of the village".

The reason for the differences is a mystery. Was Fox describing a Newton version of the dance - the two teams must have been operating concurrently in the 1890's? Why did Sharp choose to modify and publish Wright's version and make no reference to Fox? Did two teams operate in Ampleforth? In my view both versions qualify for the title "The Ampleforth Dance".

The confusion is not confined to discrepancies between the memories of two men but comes more up to date. Most of the teams who currently perform the dance, and the majority of teachers who teach it, use the haunting "Ampleforth" tune but I have studied Sharp's notes and all informants agree that the tune used for the dance was "The Girl I Left Behind Me". When did this variant arise and how?

The Longsword tradition involves approximately 25 identifiably

different dances which are recorded in sufficient detail to perform. Of these only 16 are regularly danced and, although nationally 7 or 8 teams currently perform the published version of the Ampleforth dance, none of these teams are from the village or even from the traditional Longsword areas in Yorkshire and County Durham.

TREVOR STONE 10th November, 1983

SOME NOTES ON BROMYARD MORRIS

Gael TURNBULL, of the Faithful City Morris Men and the Welsh Border Morris (and now with the Furness Morris Men), made notes of an interview, on the 26th of April, 1982, with CLARENCE FREDERICK GREEN, in Mr. Green's sitting room in Bromwich Lane, St. John's, Worcester: copies of the field notes made then, and the transcription of those notes (a transcription on five A5 sheets of paper) are at Cecil Sharp House, and in the Morris Ring's Archive (Ivor Allsop, 36, Green Spring Avenue, Birdwell, Barnsley, S. Yorkshire, S70 5RY).

Gael wrote, 14th January, 1984, "It does not add anything directly to our knowledge of the dances themselves, but I think it gives a valuable background to the morris as it was danced in that part of Herefordshire just before the First World War, as well as glimpses of the social background. I was very careful not to ask any leading questions and his account is generally very consistent with other accounts of the morris specifically in Bromyard. There is a revival side recently starting in Bromyard (using other sources) and they have a copy of this and will be using some of the details." Writing again on 21st January, he said, "There are a number of things he mentioned which fit in with other information. The shout of 'Ho' (which puzzled him as he remembered it) is of course familiar in the Brimfield Dance. The mention of half the side with black faces and half with white was also mentioned by another old man in Bromyard, and other details (though not the detail about the handbells). This is someone now dead whom I did not meet but who described some details of at least one of the dances to two friends of mine (also Faithful City) who have been organizing the revival side. The details of them not just hitting the sticks fits very well because in the pattern of the

stick striking, they found that it was highly dangerous: But I don't think that they ever interviewed him formally, or wrote it down as he told it.

They are all going now, the very last ones. A friend of mine, a doctor in Pershore, suddenly discovered on a routine visit that one of his old men had danced with a side at Spetchley, between Worcester and White Ladies Aston. He arranged to come back next week to do a long interview, but the old boy dropped dead two days later....

The following is drawn from the transcription made by Gael Turnbull from his notes of the interview with Mr. Green:-

Mr. Green, who was born in 1904, at Callow End, Worcestershire, gave recollections of the morris as danced at Bromyard and at places nearby. He had not been a dancer himself; he was not old enough, but he accompanied his father, Frederick Green, who did not dance, but dressed up in costume like the others, and was a musician, who played what he (Mr. Green) kept calling an "old-fashioned melodeon; small box type"; "and was one of the chief men in the side". Two other men played on fiddles. The bell pads were called "yorks"; "Maybe just a bit of rope with bells on...much about the same as yours but less colour". From Mr. Green's description, it would appear that the dancers wore old working smocks, cut off at the waist and at the elbows; any old trousers; and their working boots. They wore "old shoes...heavy shoes with hobnails...working boots". Mostly because they had nothing else; "You could hear them...you didn't have to stamp!". Hats were "what they'd got". Some had tall silk black hats, or "concertina hats"; but most men couldn't get or afford those. Sometimes woollen hats "with tassels on" were worn.

Decoration of costume was what the men could find; "little things around ankles...bits of ribbon and silk."; but Mr. Green was emphatic that in May bunches of may were worn on the shoulders. Baldricks were not used, nor were white handkerchiefs; instead, any bit of old silk or colour. Sticks used were much as those used by present-day sides that he had seen; and "They didn't only knock the sticks sometimes." Mr. Green was very particular about one thing; at certain points in a stick dance the men would shout "HO" - "Ho...Ho...Ho...hands and sticks in

the air."

At Bromyard, dancing took place outside The Oak, The Falcon, and The Bay Horse. The men would go from one to the other; "Used to dance for free drinks:"

The side was definitely eight men, "but more in reserves". He described them dancing in the middle of Bromyard; "...but in the end, when they were finished, everyone was dancing; they called out 'Come and have a go:" This was in the main square. "They didn't know what they was dancing but everyone was going round...generally to the fiddler because he could play a tune everyone could know:"

The team danced four on each side; generally, four men with black faces and four white, but faces were not always blacked. Mr. Green said that there were gatherings of men to dance together: "They had a name for it but I can't recollect it - a morris festival or something - five or six different groups all together...there were more in Herefordshire than in Worcestershire, I think". "They used to have a handbell sometimes. Perhaps two men each with one. Didn't use 'em all the time...one bell each...one would ring and then the other, not together...a little 'ting/ting"ting/ting' to give a beat to the dance... wooden handles, they'd put their fingers on the clappers...the bells different tones..."

Gael wrote that Mr. Green obviously remembered a great deal very vividly, and with great pleasure. His impression of his father's enthusiasm for the morris was given with great affection; he took pride in that enthusiasm, and that he himself had shared in the enjoyment of his father's world.

GAEL TURNBULL, Ulverston, January, 1984.

Issue No.17 carried notices of the first two volumes of Morris Dancing in the South Midlands, by Keith Chandler:

1. An Interim Check List of References to Morris Dancing in Local Newspapers: and,
2. Morris Dancing at Bampton Until 1914. Both are available now.

Of the 320 newspaper references in Vol.1 the Editor selects: No.3 NM 7.9.1747 /3 Great Brington Ace/Bh/Ca
The Legend of the Check List, as Keith calls it, is so easily used that in seconds one learns that the newspaper report, on

p.3 of the Northampton Mercury of the 7th of September, 1747, gives an announcement of future performance(s); refers to or implies past undatable performances, and to a Statute or hiring fair; and has actual mention of Morris dancers or dancing. 84 AH 25.6.1870 /5* Aaef/B1/Cacejk/Db/Gd is used as a sample reference in the book. It gives in full an 190 word entry in the Abingdon Herald (including that the Mayor of Ock Street was "duly installed amid the chinking of quart jugs":)

The second book, on Bampton, has in its last pages 90 references to material used in its compilation: and detailed information about the 31 men who danced between 1836 and 1896. The pages preceding, a remarkable account of the Bampton Morris, make this Editor look forward, very much, to "the next Volume... probably a study of the Morris at Ducklington..." (KC,5.12.83)

Vol.1, £1.50, plus 25p p and p: Vol.2, £1.25, plus 25p p and p. Ordered together, the postage and packing is the one 25p.

Cheques should be payable to Keith Chandler, at The Bungalow, Hill Grove Farm, Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire, OX8 5NA

ROY DOMMETT'S Article, "Contemporary Change", in the Morris Ring's Autumn circular, led the Editor to ask him if he would write further on some of the matters mentioned; the following came within a few days.

WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING TO THE MORRIS?

It is very difficult to extract from older dancers information on the way they were first taught. Perhaps it is the feeling that the ways of the EFDSS and the early Ring are in some manner suspect and that it is now possible to get behind the early teaching to something more authentic. We forget that the new approaches are alternatives, not substitutes, and were often promulgated to force dancers to choose consciously what to do rather than dance without care for the detail. Often the scholarship is dubious, based more on morris good sense than the received tradition. Those who have received a strong tradition should not be denigrated. The potential weakness of what has come to us through Cecil Sharp is seen when comparison is made with the tradition at Bampton and Headington, but in general Sharp has stood up well to further contact with the tradition and indeed for several Sharp is the only source for teaching even when

there is an apparent wealth of additional tunes and dances from more recent collectors.

This note is a plea for help in tracing and understanding what has come to us by example rather than by the written word. How close was teaching before 1939 to the Sharp books? I feel that Bampton at least must have been "interpreted". What was emphasised in the teaching, how technical was the teaching or did it rely on emotive or metaphorical language? How were jumps, shuffles or galleys taught? What tips were given for any movements that are remembered as helpful? Are any of the older EFDSS teachers able to describe what they did?

The uncertainties in the printed words centre on distance travelled in figures and the hand movements, particularly with backsteps and slow capers. For example how far was the travel in the Bledington figures? How many places did one go round in half rounds in each tradition? How far apart were the lines in Once to Yourself in Badby?

Some things have been changed because of the persuasiveness of the new source, whether informant, collector or interpreter. It can be difficult to find out what was done before. What was Longborough before Westminster, in hand movements in the stepping and the jumps and the slow capers? What was it for Bledington or Fieldtown in the capers and galley? What was the sidestep movement in Fieldtown and Bucknell originally? Was there a standard size of movement for the hands with the basic stepping in Adderbury, what did people do for the Headington backstep hand movements at various times in the past, how much swing was there in the Ilmington back and forward? When precisely were the turns on the jumps in Ilmington? Or was there always a spread in interpretation from one teacher to another?

Where did some things come from that do not appear to be in the tradition such as the Eynsham hand movements for Brighton Camp, the low waves in the Bampton sidestep, and the Bucknell double caper?

We would all benefit from remembering these aspects of the roots of what we do.

R.L.DOMMETT © 1984

In acknowledging the receipt of the article, the Editor included this paragraph about Eynsham hand movements; and Roy asked that

it should be added to his piece, as an illustration:

The young schoolmaster who came to Colchester in 1926, and began the morris which has had some continuity ever since, was already an accomplished dancer; how much was a direct C.S.House instruction we don't know; but at that time his instruction (he was not a traditional dancer) must have been strongly C.S. House. He always had links there, and although none of us ever thought to ask him if he were at the inaugural meeting of the Ring, one of Walter Abson's articles says a Colchester man was present; and we know he was at the Thaxted 1934 discussions. He couldn't have got that Eynsham hand movement from anywhere else; a movement, of course, quite unlike the one in Lionel Bacon's film. (Of Eynsham, 1937). (Note: Cecil Sharp House was not opened until 1930, of course; but that does not affect the meaning of the above - that the instruction was from the Folk Dance Society.)

Roy's second letter also added to his article:

He referred to the Fieldtown and Bampton aspects of the films made from the 1912 Kinora print sequences, described by Mike Heaney in the E.F.D.S.S. English Dance and Song, Autumn/Winter 1983 (Vol.45, No.3, pp20-21) and wrote:-

The written word in Cecil Sharp's books is seldom enough and the 1912 material must surely represent Cecil Sharp's views on what he collected - it is the hand movements that are so difficult to describe. I would expect early dancers and teachers to be within the descriptions in Cecil Sharp's books, but they allow some latitude in terms of effort, phasing relative to other limbs etc. Hopefully we can get at what Kenworthy Schofield ever taught - perhaps you need to appeal about such people by name.

The final point is to be able to get thoughtful debate on Cecil Sharp's Bampton and its source, and on other interpretations since which may or may not owe something to the tradition. If it is not done soon too many memories will be gone and we will be able only to guess and this could do a great injustice to those whose efforts have given us the Cotswold Morris.

(See Walter Abson's article in The Morris Dancer, Issue No.4, August, 1979, pp2-7, on The Early Morris Revival)

From ROY DOMMETT 1. Work has started on the MSS for a new edition of Lionel Bacon's A Handbook of Morris Dances. Comments on the First Edition, advice on size, lay-out, music etc., and content, and any new tunes or dances introduced by clubs, or new interpretations, can be sent either to Morris Sunderland, at Roundabout, 13, Park Lane, Henlow, Beds., SG16 6AT; or to me, Roy Dommett, at 10, Attlee Gardens, Church Crookham, Aldershot, Hants., GU3 0P4

2. I shall be running an Advanced Morris Weekend, at Halsway, from the 5th to the 7th of October, 1984, for sixty dancers; the cost will be approximately £35/£45. Bookings should be made with the Warden, Halsway Manor, Crowcombe, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 4BD, or with Bob Bradbury, Term's End, Withycomb, Minehead, Somerset. It will be a one-off repeat of those very influential meetings of the late 1960's, with continuous dance, lecture and film with the theme of research, interpretation and development in the Cotswold Morris since 1970.

William Palmer (see Morris Dancer, Issue 14, pp15-16) sent an advance notice of a book by another Cambridge man -POLKA ROUND

"Within living memory folk dances and associated customs survived in a number of Cambridgeshire villages. There were the Molly Dances, for men only, connected particularly with Plough Monday; and Feast Dances, social dances for mixed couples, at Harvest suppers and other times of jollification. At any time of the year individual men might display the Broom Dance or solo step dancing in barns, bar parlours, or pub yards. In this attractive little book Cyril Papworth gives notation and music for seven Cambridgeshire Feast Dances which were being danced at Comberton and elsewhere fifty or sixty years ago. Worthwhile in themselves, these are of interest in their affinity, both musically and structurally, with Molly Dances. From his grandfather, a member of the last side of Comberton Molly Dancers, Cyril learnt the Broom Dance, which he also describes in detail. Polka Round, Folk Dances of Cambridgeshire, illustrated with charming little line drawings and priced at £1.20 (by post £1.40), will be available early in March from: Cyril Papworth, 25, Ferry Path, Cambridge."

LADS A BUNCHUM

At Sherborne, Headington, Ducklington, and probably North Leigh, a corner dance was performed to variants of a tune known as 'The Orange In Bloom', 'Laudanum Bunches', 'Lads a Bunchum', and 'Boys of the Bunch' respectively. I hope in what follows to show that there is evidence that this tune was the "original" 'Lads a Bunchum', and that it had once been generally, if not exclusively, associated with the corner dance.

The name 'Lads a Bunchum' was used for a variety of dances and tunes noted by collectors in Oxfordshire and neighbouring counties (1):

(i) At Ducklington the name would seem to have been used for the tune and dance known at North Leigh as 'Boys of the Bunch' (2). A variant of that tune was also used for a corner dance at Sherborne, where it was known as 'The Orange In Bloom'. Another variant was known at Bledington as 'Bonnetts o' Blue', which name would seem to have strayed from another tune.

(ii) At Hinton the name was used for the tune and dance more generally known as '(Old) Trunkle(s)'.

(iii) At Adderbury the name was used for the tune 'Balance a Straw', which there accompanied a stick dance. This may also have been the case at Sulgrave near Brackley.

(iv) A similar name, 'Laudanum Bunches', was used for a corner dance and its associated tune at Headington. In his 'Morris Book' Cecil Sharp plausibly suggests that this name was a corruption of 'Lads a Bunchum'.

(v) At Sherborne the name 'Lads a Bunchum' was used for a corner dance to the tune known at Fieldtown as 'Dearest Dickie' (which presumably also stood in close relationship to the Ascot under Wychwood dance 'Dear Is My Dickie', which I have elsewhere argued was also a corner dance (3)).

(vi) The name alone was noted at Bucknell.

Of the dances which accompanied these tunes, of those at (i), Sherborne, Ducklington, and presumably North Leigh, were corner dances.

I believe the Headington tune 'Laudanum Bunches' to be yet another, if more distant, variant of the family of tunes listed at (i) above. On the strength of the close relationship between

the Headington and Bucknell 'traditions', I would also guess the latter's 'Lads a Bunchum' to have been similar both as a tune and a dance to 'Laudanum Bunches'.

The name 'Lads a Bunchun' at Sherborne would seem not to have been proper to its Tune ('Dearest Dickie'). It may therefore refer rather to the dance, which was, as stated, a corner dance.

As I have already mentioned, the name 'Lads a Bunchum' was noted at Hinton for the tune and dance usually known as 'Trunkles'. However, the Rev. Hilderic Friend's list of Brackley dances, published in the Banbury Guardian of 3rd July 1884, includes the title 'Trunkhose'. If, as is commonly considered, the Hinton dancing derived from the Brackley dancing, I would suggest that the name 'Lads a Bunchum' became associated with 'Trunkles' (tune and dance) because the "real" 'Lads a Bunchum' had also been a corner dance (though it must be remembered that the corners crossing movements, along with their music, have disappeared from the dance collected at Hinton).

Even disregarding the last instance, the name 'Lads a Bunchum' was thus predominantly associated with the corner dance.

If I am right to associate the Headington 'Laudanum Bunches' and the Ducklington 'Lads a Bunchum' with the 'Orange in Bloom' family of tunes, then the name 'Lads a Bunchum' would have some claim to be proper thereto.

If the "true" 'Lads a Bunchum' was not the tune we know variously as 'The Orange in Bloom', 'Boys of the Bunch'/'Lads a Bunchum', 'Laudanum Bunches', and 'Bonnetts o' Blue', as I have sought to establish, what was it? The other tunes with which the name is associated, to wit 'Balance a Straw' at Adderbury, 'Trunkles' at Hinton (and also 'Dearest Dickie' at Sherborne), can in no wise be considered contenders, as there is ample testimony that these names are proper to them. Furthermore, 'Bonnetts o' Blue' is, of course, a stray name in this case, being otherwise exclusively associated in Morris and social dancing with a distinct tune.

(The two final paragraphs, and the Notes, of this article, by PHILIP S.HEATH-COLEMAN, will be in the Morris Dancer, No.19, in August, 1984. The Editor presents his apologies to Philip, and to the readership; but Issues 18 and 19 are in the same subscription year; all receiving No.18 will receive No.19)