THE MORRIS DANCER

No. THREE ********** MARCH 1979

After the printing of this twenty page Issue, it is expected that a true cost for each copy will be ascertained; that has been most difficult to do. Either the expected August Issue, or the Ring's Autumn circular, should be able to tell purchasers what money to send to the Treasurer for three Issues in advance (for printing and postage for varying sizes of orders); that should cover one year. Future printings may be smaller than hitherto; they will be enough to meet orders and to supply some enquirers. Only 38% of the Associated clubs, and 20% of the non-Associated clubs in Britain, wrote about the Newsletter. A continued large supply of complimentaries is unfair to those who do order; and is a misuse of Ring's funds.

****

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

From the Squire of the Morris Ring (See Newsletter TWO)

The stated aims of 'The Morris Dancer' were that it was not to become the mouthpiece of the Officers of the Morris Ring; so it is with some trepidation that I am writing a reply to the letter from Chingford Morris Men which appeared in the last issue of the magazine giving their reasons for resigning from the Ring.

The 'autocratic 'Squire' ' is, in my humble opinion, something of a necessity since many of the problems which arise cannot be dealt with on a committee level; they need immediate action, and this is not possible when dealing with committees. How many clubs are run by a committee? Not many, I venture to suggest - nothing would get done. If Chingford had taken the trouble to read a little further in the Ring Constitution they would have seen that the Ring is bound to sponsor at least one 'orgy' each year. The word is sponsor, and if my recollections are correct it is the clubs who offer to organise Ring Meetings - so are Chingford a voice alone - crying in the wilderness in not wanting Ring Meetings. This year there are five meetings, and all are full to 'busting,' so somebody 'loves 'em baby' to use a popular phrase from American Television.

Successive Squires have tried to adapt the policy of massed dances to suit the various clubs, and clubs have used the massed dances to blood relatively junior members. The general public do like the spectacle of lots of morris men dancing; and providing the dancing is of a high standard and conducted with the dignity of the Morris I see nothing wrong with giving the public what it wants to see. 'All ritual and no fun makes Morris a dull boy,' to paraphrase another well known saying. They are paying for the privilege of seeing massed morris. And much else besides. There have been many ritual aspects of the morris portrayed at these 'orgies.' My own feelings on this aspect of the Morris, is to send out the massed dances which will be used in any massed show with the first circular, so that teams will be able to practise them beforehand; and where

possible to keep to one tradition for all the massed dances at the massed display. I do not think this will harm the Morris as much as some of the abysmal displays that I have had to witness in the name of single club ritual dances.

At last year's A.R.M. we finally passed a new constitution, after two meetings, one a full day on nothing else but the constitution, and if the clubs had wanted to alter it drastically they had the opportunity to do so. Obviously they did not want any drastic alteration, and this was in spite of the very eloquent speeches of both Chingford and Chanctonbury Ring on the many points which they would have liked altering in the old constitution. My own club proposed the acceptance of the constitution because they were heartily fed up of me going on at them, putting forward all sides after each meeting and getting them to give their opinions. It might have been better from Chingford's point of view if they had come up with the constitution they wanted and to have put that before the meeting rather than relying on changing the old constitution; as members of the Ring this they could still have done; but now they have abrogated this right by resigning.

The final two paragraphs I would commend to any club.

I would like to comment on just one sentence from the letter: "It was at the outset of this period that one member/representative sought to bring into question our credibility and even our dancing ability on the grounds that one of our members had long hair."

This was one person expressing a personal opinion, and in no way reflects the views of the present Ring Officers. I• was present at the time the statement was made and as there was no apology then, I would like to make such an apology now in print.

One last point. You are the Ring. Not Mike, Barry or myself. I would commend paragraph 1 of the Constitution to all.

"1. The object of the Morris Ring shall be to encour-

age the performance of the Morris and to maintain its traditions; to bring into contact all the Men's Morris Clubs or Teams. The purpose of the Ring is not to replace or supersede the existing organisations, but to subserve them. The clubs shall in all respects retain their independence."

IVOR

Squire of the Morris Ring

****

From Russell Wortley, Past Bagman of the Morris Ring. The letter from the Chingford Morris Men appeared also in FOLK REVIEW. Russell Wortley's letter appeared in the December issue of that publication.

THE MORRIS RING Lest any of your readers should be left with false impressions regarding the Morris Ring as a result of reading Joe Tavender's letter in your November issue, may I bring to their notice a few facts which do not appear in this letter?

"The clubs shall in all respects retain their independence" occurs in the first paragraph of the Ring's Constitution. It follows from this that the so-called "policies of the Ring" (pace Mr. Tavender) can only represent a compromise derived from the varied opinions of the constituent clubs, as expressed not only at the annual meeting of club representatives but also through the elected members (recently increased from four to nine) of the Advisory Council. The Ring has no executive committee because this would nullify the independence of the individual clubs.

I can assure Mr. Tavender that the value of those large "weekend orgies of morris" has been questioned in the Advisory Council for at least 10 years. It is only in the power of the member clubs to dispense with them and there now appears at least to be a tendency away from the large-scale jamboree to gatherings of fewer than half-a-dozen clubs. I for one welcome this, though not without some regret at the necessary loss of contact with clubs in other regions of the country with their different traditions. Furthermore the "church parade" is in no way obligatory;

Ring meetings have been held without it, the decision resting with the organising club.

Finally, Tavender fails to mention that the "autocratic" Squire of the Ring is democratically nominated and elected by the member clubs and is limited by the Constitution to a single tenure of two years. Somebody has to preside at the annual meeting of an association and that is his essential function. On the many matters where opinions vary he can only speak for himself or try to convey the range of opinion among the clubs.

I hope that many other clubs, within as well as without the Morris Ring, will follow Chingford in pursuing their excellent aims "by example rather than by persuasion". It can hardly be disputed that if the morris should lose its "unique ritual aspect" it will lose everything that makes it distinctive. And it follows that over-popularisation is the biggest danger facing the morris as a meaningful tradition at the present time.

Russell Wortley, Bagman of the Morris Ring 1950-59.

****

Issue One of the Newsletter had an article, A Boys' Side.

A Boys' Side - The Wheatley Junior Morris Men.

I write in response to the article in issue no 1 of the Newsletter since our experience is rather different and, I believe, worth wider communication.

Our side might have begun as a school side but did not. The local primary school headmaster approached the Morris Men and requested instruction at the school but since our work commitments made this impossible we suggested that volunteers came to practice with us, from 7.30 to 8.15 p.m. on our practice night at the clubroom of our local public house. They came, and the Junior Morris Men have now danced in public for two seasons. Coming to our practices they have always danced with our 'live' musicians and have been helped by a variety of morris men, only two of whom are 'in education'.

There is a danger that boys' capabilities will be under-

estimated. We accept boys from six or seven years upward and have awarded full colours and bells to nine of them, after jigs, for their ability to dance proficiently in public. The average age of our present side is ten, but they range from seven to thirteen, Infants to Lower Secondary in school terms. We do not expect less of them than of the men - to earn their bells they must show proficiency in all dances of the Wheatley tradition, the Processional and seven others, including throughout fore capers. They do indeed dance the tradition proficiently and enthusiastically and go down extremely well with the general public. Most of their dances are done alternating with us at Saturday afternoon functions, but they have been specifically requested to join us at a ceilidh and have recently danced on their own at one in Oxford.

Our (admittedly limited) experience also suggests that one can be too pessimistic about the benefits' to men's morris. The oldest of our boys was promoted at fourteen to the Men with whom he has danced and for whom he has played ever since. We hope that he will be followed by the other boys at that age.

We are a 'traditional' side in that we dance our village's tradition but there was a break in the tradition, from c.1900 to 1975. The break means that the boys are particularly important to us as an insurance against a repetition of the past, but the existence of a break makes our emphasis different from sides claiming an unbroken tradition. Five of our present 'squad' of about thirteen Junior Morris Men are sons of Morris Men but I personally particularly value the involvement of the other eight since this means genuinely widened participation and informed interest.

Running a boys' side is hard work and sometimes very frustrating. It is also very rewarding and, in our experience, can be more than the limited exercise suggested in the first issue of 'The Morris Dancer'. I should perhaps add that we do not consider our experience to be a special case: the Wheatley tradition may appear at first sight to be uncomplicated, but, danced properly, it is an extremely exacting one.

John Brooks, Squire, Wheatley Morris Men.

From Norris Winstone, of the Kemp's Men:

After thirty years experience teaching morris to youngsters, I think that even under-elevens can do other than single steps properly - look what complicated steps they do in stage dancing. One has only to think back a few years to the competitive festivals, when EFDSS adjudicators wouldn't countenance any old steps - they "had to be correct". Since I retired, I have been visiting schools in Norfolk - on a voluntary basis - to teach morris and sword. Interest is growing, even in remote Norfolk villages, and part of this can be traced to "seeing it on the telly".

From Ted Purver, of London Pride:

I voluntarily trained a side of 14-16 year olds at Steyning Grammar School in Sussex years ago, and we did Bledington one,two, three hop as I style it, the step you do not recommend for boys. Some years ago I was directed at Bromley, where I now teach, to 'do' country dancing as set lessons on a Friday afternoon. And some three years ago I was directed to do morris. We started with Beaux Adderbury and the Fool's Jig Bampton, and we came out first at the Lewisham Festival (no other side entered!) Then we got on to Shepherds Hey and Lads a' Bunchun Adderbury. We came first again at Lewisham and at the Beckenham Festival (no other sides entered!) In Shepherds Hey the foot movements have given these 12 - 13 year old boys less trouble than the hands. When you advocate single step I imagine you are thinking of younger boys.

PIPE AND TABOR

I found the article by Chris Butler on the pipe and tabor in the first edition of The Morris Dancer extremely interesting; but a suggestion that he made in the last paragraph provoked for me the greatest food for thought - "trad-

itional music for traditional dances".

What is tradition and traditional music? What are traditional dances and traditional musical instruments? In the dictionary that I usually refer to, it describes tradition as being a "handing down; oral transmission from generation to generation; a tale, belief or practice handed down; anything bound up with or continuing in the life of a family, community, etc." In the first three parts of this description, tradition is clearly defined as being a transferring down of a particular belief or practice which does not allow greatly for development or variation. If this description had been rigidly adhered to then I feel that Morris would have been lost in the distant past or considered as something not worth bothering with. However in the fourth part of the description it does seem that there is some allowance for variation and it is in this section that I am interested; the development of tradition in Morris Dancing and music.

For me, tradition in the Morris is a continuing, developing entity reaching from the distant past to today; and likewise, traditional Morris Dances, tunes and musical instruments should range a similar period of time.

A Morris colleague once said to me that modern Morris Dances are not worth bothering about; but surely time alone will tell. If modern dances are accepted they will be danced, and will become part of the tradition. Those that are unacceptable will fall by the wayside as many dances have in the past. It would seem that in some circles the attitude is that because it is old, it must be good; but how many of today's dances are really old? How many dances have evolved over the years through interpretation to become unrecognisable from the original yet are still called old traditional dances? Fortunately Morris Dances have developed and new dances have been introduced over the years.

As new dances have been introduced, evolved, and survived the test of time, so too have musical instruments used in Morris. Looking back through time the Morris instrument

must have developed from instruments made by the musicians themselves, whistles, pipe and tabor, drum; then as society became more **affluent** and the craft of making instruments became lost to many, musicians bought their instruments, choosing those that were easily available, melodeons, accordions, fiddles, and, dare I say it, pipe and tabor. On a recent radio programme I heard it said, though not in reference to Morris, that the accordion is not a traditional instrument as it is only just over one hundred years since its introduction. I find this an odd statement in some ways. The F. A. Cup is about the same age as the accordion and that **is** surely established as part of British tradition. Although only just over one hundred years old the melodeon accordion family of instruments can be and is traditional. Certainly in Morris these instruments have become a major ingredient of the ongoing tradition.

Thus I come back to traditional dances and traditional musical instruments, and I continue to wonder what really tradition is for me. I think that in respect of dances I must come down in favour of any dance old or new that is danced to a fairly defined Morris pattern that will help perpetuate Morris. In the case of Morris instruments I feel that it is not really the type of instrument that is of prime importance; but, as was the case in the past, it depends on the availability of musical instrument end musician; the important thing is to have good music to dance to.

Barry Butler, Musician,
Isca Morrismen.

..**********

INFORMAL TALK ON THE EARLY MORRIS REVIVAL GIVEN BY RUSSELL WORTLEY AND WALTER ABSON (PAST BAGMEN OF THE MORRIS RING) TO THE ASSOCIATION OF THE MORRIS CLUBS OF LONDON AT CECIL SHARP HOUSE ON SATURDAY, 15th APRIL, 1978

Russell Wortley

In 1911 John Graham wrote: 'The worth of morris dances was only appreciated fully when they were dying': at least, people thought they were dying then, and it was pretty well

true - relatively true if one considers that there were over 85 teams active in the middle or just before the middle of' the 19th Century in the Cotswold area (let alone any other part of England) and they had been reduced to about half a dozen by the end of the century. So people had good reason to say that the dances were dying. Hardly anybody before then had really taken much notice of the dances, their existence being taken for granted,

If we start at 1880 and consider what the situation of the morris was then, we see that one of the important factors that had kept it alive was its relationship to Church Ales, such as Whitsun Ales in the case of the Cotswolds. These existed to raise funds for the Church and for the impoverished people of the parish, and the morris was always active in this connection. Some monies did undoubtedly go to the Church, but no doubt a lot didn't! Teams also danced other than on the actual 'ale-day', going around the countryside whenever they could. By 1880 those Church Ales had died out, since the beginning of the century in fact. The latest, probably, on record occurred at the beginning of the 19th Century at King's Sutton. Anne Elizabeth Baker, in her very interesting 'Glossary of Northamptonshire Words', has fascinating articles about the morris and about Whitsun Ales. Writing in about 1850 she relates an eye-witness account of a Whitsun Ale held at King's Sutton about 1801. The need for Church Ales was becoming not so much felt with the advent of other ways of raising money, e.g., rates.

Another thing of course, were the important meetings for morris dancers which happened, for instance, on Dover's Hill – the 'Cotswold Games'. Morris was only a small part of the totality of these games, but this was an important occasion for morris sides from a wide area of the Cotswolds. They used to flock there in the later part of Whitsun week for the Games. The Games died out by 1852, being ruined by a big influx of Irish labour - too much rough play. Kirtlington Lamb Ale, too, was a casualty about the same time: that had been a place where morris dancers gathered on the

Monday following Whit Monday. Bill Kimber used to talk about how his father was taken as a boy to the last Kirtlington Lamb Ale, and how his grandfather would tell his father that they danced for 'the ribbons and the cake'. Headington always got the ribbons (top prize) and Bampton got the cake! There were two or three other places that had Lamb Ales, but little is known about them.

So, after 1850/60 things did begin to decline. By 1880 there was not much morris to be seen in the Cotswold area. Up in Lancashire things were much better; the rushcarts were a very showy business and if they tended to drop there would be an outcry and they would be revived. This idea of local revival due to local pressures did occur to a certain extent in the Cotswolds. For instance, the 2nd Duke of Buckingham patronized the morris in no uncertain manner at the 21st birthday of his son in 1844. This was discovered by Philip Smither of Great Hormead by looking through some newspapers of that time after purchasing a painting of morris dancing in front of Stowe House, the seat of the Dukes of Buckingham. The Duke was very keen on morris and in 1844 presented new sets of costumes to teams in all villages in which he held property. Brackley was probably one of them, because Sharp mentions that Stowe House was one of their regular stopping places. These were then all 'internal' revivals. The first due to outside influence was that brought about by D'Arcy Ferris at Bidford in the 1880's. D'Arcy Ferris, who lived at Cheltenham, was a pageant master, and was responsible for the pageant at the Ripon Millenary Festival in 1886, and as such he travelled around a bit. It is uncertain whether the original impetus came from him or from a spontaneous movement at Bid ford. He made no attempt to collect dances, but was keen to get the morris going again. He had the Kirkby Malzeard sword dancers at Ripon that year and perhaps that gave him the idea of reviving the morris at Bidford*. In fact, it turned out that many of his group were not Bidford men. Some apparently hailed from Oxfordshire. (See John Graham's

book 'Shakespearean Bidford Morris Dances', published in 1907). Bidford morris had lapsed for quite a long time, but the new side settled down with some kind of a team and by March 1886 they were touring under D'Arcy Ferris's leadership. There is a local newspaper account of their performance at Clifton in March 1886, including a list of their dances - pretty well all the normal repertoire are there, including Saturday Night, Old Woman Tossed Up and Constant Billy. The list does not include 'Morris Off' or 'Staines Morris' (both published by Sharp and later expunged by him as untraditional). The Bidford revival continued for at least 20 years.

In 1897 Headington Quarry morris was revived after a gap of about 10 years through the agency of Percy Manning, who was an Oxford M. A. interested in collecting all sorts of relics and information about traditional morris. He sent a man called T. J. Carter to collect such relics, mostly from Oxfordshire villages, some of which found their way to Cecil Sharp House, only to be lost in the bombing of WW2. This revival led to a public performance in Oxford Corn Exchange in 1899, and also led to their coming out on Boxing Day that year - the famous occasion that is generally thought of as the beginning of the morris revival; from the foregoing you will appreciate that this was not quite so. On that day Cecil Sharp happened to be staying with a relative at Sandfield Cottage in Headington, and these dancers came up the drive to give a show. It was out-of-season, but it had been a hard winter and they were out of work. Sharp was very struck with the performance and the music in particular. He became friendly with Bill Kimber, and the following day asked him to come over again and took down 7 or 8 tunes. These stayed in his notebook for about 5 years. In 1905 Sharp met Mary Neal, who ran a club for working girls in Cumberland Market, St. Pancras, called the Esperance Club. She had heard about Sharp's folk songs, and had introduced them to her club, but she was also very interested in dances. This reminded him of his experience

at Headington in 1899. So they both went back to Headington, and eventually Kimber and his cousin were brought up to London to the Esperance Club, where they taught the girls the Headington dances, with considerable success. Mary Neal subsequently contacted dancers from Abingdon and sword dancers from Flamborough. Hence her club's repertoire was mainly Headington, Abingdon and Flamborough Sword. She also organized men's teams.

The Esperance Club got on so well that they began to give public performances in 1906. In 1907 Sharp brought out his first 'Morris Book', and Graham at the same time brought out his 'Bidford' book. In 1908 Frank Kidson, well known musician, published his small collection of Country Dance and Morris Tunes. By that time, Sharp and Neal had begun to disagree on various aspects of the revival; in a nutshell, Sharp was keen on artistic standards. It seems that Kimber had made a great impression on him, and this led him to believe that Kimber's style was morris as it should be danced, and that other styles were inferior. Mary Neal had taken note of the way the Abingdon men danced and also of the way in which other Headington dancers performed. She thus took a wider view of what morris should be. In 1909 Sharp got the Board of Education to recognise morris as a suitable subject for schools, which Mary Neal regretted. She also (in her book of 1915) regretted the necessity of books of instruction, preferring the passing down of the morris by word of mouth; however she accepted in the present day and age that the former were unavoidable.

In 1909 Sharp started his school of morris dancing at Chelsea Polytechnic to train teachers. In 1910 Mary Neal brought out her own 'Esperance Morris Book', though this was more of an 'aide-memoire'. Also in that year the third Sharp book was published, and in 1911 the fourth. For the first time,the fourth book indicated which dances belonged to which places. 1911 was an important year also since it was the year that Thaxted first saw the morris.

Mary Neal was responsible for this with her pupils. It was also the year of the foundation of the EFDS. John Graham brought out his book on North-West morris. In 1912, Sharp realized that his earlier books were out of date and so he brought out a new edition of the first book with a long new introduction, giving his own views on the history of the dance (still well worth reading).Mary Neal brought out her second Esperance book and Sharp his first sword dance book. 1912 was indeed a great year for activity and expansion.

In 1911-13 Sharp got a men's team going. Four of that team lost their lives at the Somme in August 1916 (Reginald Tiddy, Perceval Lucas, George Butterworth and George Wilkinson), a terrific blow to the revival. This left only Douglas Kennedy, James Patterson and Claud Wright. That team danced in white plimsolls. As mentioned earlier, Mary Neal also had men's sides, but her movement died out completely during WW1. This left the field clear for the EFDS.

At that time practically all the teaching was done by ladies, but then around 1920/21 a men's group appeared at Cambridge, including Rolf Gardiner. It was there that the feeling seems to have been born that if the morris was to stay as something worthwhile then it should be kept as a men's dance. In 1922 Gardiner took a group of dancers on tour to Germany, the first cultural contact since the war. This went down very well. However the EFDS frowned on this and Gardiner on his return to England paid Sharp a visit to convey his apologies! Sharp remarked that he could not see any future for the morris now that women had taken it up. In 1924, Gardiner and Arthur Heffer together ran the first Travelling Morrice tour in the Cotswolds. On the very last day of that week-long tour Cecil Sharp died.

* P11. This was my mistake: the Bidford revival preceded the Ripon Pageant by several months. R.W.

Walter Abson's section of this talk will be in Issue Four.

Headington Quarry - The Social Background.

It is a popular conception that the traditional Cotswold morris side survived in isolated settlements that typified the idea of the sleepy, idyllic, agricultural village. It is true that Headington Quarry did enjoy a certain amount of isolation, but it was in no way typical of a country village. Its 19th century life has been excellently described from tape recorded interviews with the inhabitants in a study by Raphael Samuel called "Quarry Roughs" published in "Village Life and Labour" (History Workshop Series, Ed.R Samuel, published by Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975). Anyone interested in the historical background to the morris is strongly advised to read it. The following article mentions some points of interest that relate to the morris side, which, through Sharp's chance encounter, have played such an important part in the modern revival.

Headington Quarry had its origins as a squatters' settlement, an encroachment on the edge of a royal forest, and until the disafforestation of Shotover in 1662, its very existence was illegal. Men were originally drawn to the site to quarry Headington stone for the Oxford colleges and in the 19th century the local clay gave rise to a brick-making industry. There was a lot of waste ground and an availability of building materials, and this led to many people building their own houses in amongst the stone pits. Because of this there were no tied cottages, many owner-occupied buildings and an absence of any major landowner. It was what was known as an'open village' and never part of a great estate. Raphael Samuel describes Headington Quarry as enjoying an "extra-parochial existence, a kind of anarchy in which the villagers were responsible to nobody but themselves".

Consequently, the physical appearance of Headington Quarry did not conform to the usual English pattern. There was no centre to Quarry, rather the houses were arranged in a haphazard fashion, in amongst old quarry pits and clay hills, connected by a maze of indistinct paths. The Fits

provided the focal point for the village. The maypole was set up in an abandoned pit, as one inhabitant remembered - "it was just derelict ground.....a pit that was run out". It was "the big pit': the one outside the Six Bells, that tended to act as the village green, and it was here that many of the village pastimes, including the Whit Tuesday dance by the morris side, used to take place.

The village tended to produce very independent individuals, and they had a very bad name locally, known as the 'Quarry Roughs'. An Oakleigh man said of Headington Quarry "If you didn't know somebody you were wise not to go - you might not get back - it was one of them sort of places." The children were described as being "more like Zulus than respectable English youths"; but an old Headington man stated "..when they knew you it was all right - they were the best of blokes - but you didn't have to interfere with them.....you had to mind your own business. They was [redacted] that type. I think it was just suspicion."

The morris men danced on Whit Tuesday each year, and this and the November sheep roast were the two most important holidays of the year. During the rest of Whit week they appeared in Oxford and the surrounding villages. Drink was closely associated with the Morris, and Merry Kimber's father (William Kimber is always referred to on the tapes by his village nickname of 'Merry') forbade him to join the side because he was afraid of the drink.

Jim Hedges was Squire of the morris. His wife used to take in laundry from the colleges. Jim used to take the hampers of laundry to and from the colleges, and helped with the mowing and harvest; but is chiefly remembered by one of his family as doing nothing much, only 'roam about', 'see to his horse', and show off his onions at the pub. Another inhabitant said of him "he used to get drunk but he wasn't one as 'ud quarrel with anybody; he'd get drunk and 'ee'd very likely have a jig, because he was one of the Morris dancers, 'ee used to whistle the tune and a man used to come with the fiddle and pick the tune up on his fiddle

and that was how the Morris dancers started. I used to do it meself, 'ee used to whistle it: 'come on Luce' he said, "Whistle this one' and I used to do it."

The book contains one photograph of the Morris side taken in the Cowley Road Oxford, about 1900, and must have been more the sight Sharp saw on Boxing Day 1899, rather than the immaculately turned out side that posed for photographs taken for the Morris Book. Six dancers are standing in set, with short sticks crossed. All six are wearing white shirts or tunics and cloth caps, but none had white trousers. Bell pads are worn over grey or black trousers, but only three of them have baldricks. The fool is the only one to be wearing white trousers, with a dark colour-jacket, scarf and top hat. Mark Cox, the fiddler, and the collector, who is holding up the collection box towards the camera, are both dressed in ordinary clothes. The photograph was taken outside the Pearl Assurance branch office and was reproduced in the Pearl Magazine for January 1962.

None of the Morris men, or any of the Quarry inhabitants, appear to have been regularly employed, but turned their hands to a multitude of jobs. Sip Washington was a bricklayer, labourer and builder who with Mac Massey (another dancer) led a well digging gang. Mark Cox, the fiddler, was engaged in mowing, clay digging, bricklaying and shot snipe and grew roses which he sold in Oxford. Saccy Horwood went in for a variety of things. He traded in nuts and oranges, caught snakes which he sold to the University, made nets, grew potatoes and went rag-a-boning. Most of the villagers had several sidelines and most families kept at least one pig. Merry Kimber wrote to Cecil Sharp in 1913 when he lost his sow and eleven piglets, which were worth £14. He complained, "I have lost all my whole summer's work throwed away, it's fairly knocked me up". Indeed, when Sharp first met the Morris they were dancing to earn "an honest penny" because work was slack.

So it was probably this very independent and self-

contained life, untypical of most English villages, that accounted for the survival of Morris dancing at Headington Quarry, whereas the Industrial Revolution and the pull of the towns was disrupting village traditions elsewhere. Fortunately for Morris dancers this did not happen at Headington Quarry until after the First World War.

Jonathan Hooton, Squire of Wheatsheaf Morris Men.

****

From the first Log Book of The Morris Ring; Walter Abson recorded Alec Hunter, the first Squire of The Ring, at the Inaugural Meeting of The Ring, 20th October, 1934:-

> I am going to ask you to drink to the memory of the one man above all others to whom we owe our knowledge of the English Morris. Cecil Sharp, through a chance meeting with the Headington dancers, perceived the full beauty of the English folk tradition at a time when it was either unknown or despised in the wider world. By his delight in all that is strong and vigorous in art, his love and respect for humanity and his boundless enthusiasm, he was able, in spite of physical illness, to collect and preserve the great tradition of the English Morris and to hand it on to us who are here today. Many of us knew and loved him, all of us have delighted in his work. Let us drink to his immortal memory.

****

Acknowledged, with thanks, are the magazines of the Earls of Essex N.M., and Leyland N.M.; and the South Yorkshire Folk Diary Nos.16 and 17; and the annual report of that very active club, Thames Valley N.M. - the latest in a line of detailed reports going back for a quarter of a century. At their A.G.M. in October the club members expressed their "thanks to Alison Bailey for her preparation and gift to the club of a finely bound copy of the Log of the first twenty-five years' existence of the T.V.M.M."

Ever since 1962 T.V.M.M have danced in Kingston Parish churchyard at Hocktide. Hocktide really occurs on the second Tuesday after Easter: we have moved it to the nearest Saturday. Hocktide is a celebration of a victory over the Danes in 800 A. D. or is a labour hiring gathering - or both: In the churchwardens' accounts of the church in 1507 are entries relating to the provision of food, clothes and bells for the morris dancers. In 1962 the church bells had to be recast and an appeal was made for money to pay for it. T.V.M.M. thought it would be a pleasant thing to help buy bells for the church as the church had bought bells for our ancestors of four hundred years ago.

Leyland...."..... we tried something a bit different: a tour with our friends from the Parish Church Band. This took in the Hob Inn, Leyland Market and Blackburn. It was certainly different, and most enjoyable. The collection included £15 from one man at Leyland when he knew what the proceeds were going to! We donated our part of the collection to the band's new uniform fund."

Some possessions of the Morris Ring.

Any man attending a Ring Meeting, or a function where the Squire of the Ring is present in his official position, will see the Squire's Badge; The Squire wears it on his chest, the suspending ribbon being in his own club's colours. The Badge was designed by Alec Hunter, first Squire of the Ring; and, as a commission by the English Folk Dance and Song Society, was made by the Silversmith A.H.Guise. It was presented to the Morris Ring by the Society during the Friday Ale of the London Ring Meeting in 1955, at Cecil Sharp House; the actual presentation was by Dr.Ralph Vaughan Williams to Donald Cassels, Squire of the Ring.

The Squire's Staff of Office, designed by Alec, was made during the summer of 1934 in Warner's workshops in Braintree; it was the gift of the EFDSS at the Inaugural Meeting of the Ring in October, 1934. Alec asked the Society

to pay the sum of £1 for the making!

Donald Cassels, ending his Squireship in 1956, gave the Squire's and Bagman's "carry-on" tankards - the epithet used for them by Alan Tetlow of Westminster, who has engraved many names on both. The Treasurer's tankard was purchased in 1977, when his office was created.

The stands upon which the Squire's Staff rests at Feasts, with the case, were given by the Manchester N.M. in 1971. The candlestick, holding candles in host club's colours at Feasts, was given in memory of Percy Sephton, a Hartley Bagman. The carrying cases for that, and for the eleven C.Sharp morris and sword books, in a lovely binding the gift of John Cox of St. Albans, were made in Squire of the Ring Alan Brown's school's woodwork room.

The Bagman's and Treasurer's silver Badges were purchased from clubs' donations; and presented to those two Officers of the Ring (Mike Garland and Barry Care) by the Squire of the Ring, Ivor Allsop, at the Albert Hall, Saturday 17th February, 1979. They were designed by Barry Care; and made by the Silversmith Mrs. Jane Featherstone, of Roade, Northampton-shire.

Proposals to increase the number of Ring possessions have to be considered carefully; everything belonging to the Ring has to be kept in private houses; as Bill Cassie put it when he was Squire, considering just such a proposal, "the Ring has not any abiding place."

EJR