

THE MORRIS DANCER

No.FOUR ***** AUGUST 1979

The subscription rate for the Newsletter will be given in the Ring's first Autumn circular; that will be for Issues 5, 6 and 7 (expected to be Nov.'79, March and August 1980). One copy of this issue (and of No.5) is being sent free to all associated clubs; further copies must be paid for. Issues 1 and 2 are being treated as all complimentary; money subscribed so far will be set against the actual cost of sending out No.3; each subscriber should find in the envelope a statement of the sum to be added to or deducted from the subscription as calculated from the Sept. circular, so that the cost of Nos.4, 5, 6 and 7 will be met.

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

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WALTER ABSON'S SECTION. OF THE TALK GIVEN TO THE MORRIS CLUBS OF LONDON, 15th APRIL, 1978. SEE ISSUE THREE.

What I have to say falls into two parts: first the kind of thinking and attitude during the late 1920's and early 1930's which provided the background to the formation of the Morris Ring, and secondly the actual events which led to its institution and inauguration in 1934.

Any organisational change which is going to be permanent doesn't really occur because of one or two isolated incidents, although they may be the trigger which sets off the change. Such a change must be something that meets a need, and we should first consider what was the need in people's minds to have something done which the EFDS was not doing. The Society up to Sharp's death had done an extremely difficult job (and still does), but where the Morris was concerned it was not doing all that was needed. It had become a learned society led by Cecil Sharp with his very strong scholarly feeling for accuracy in everything that he was doing, and it had also been highly successful at the reintroduction of country dancing, mainly Playford. It had acted as a learned society and teaching organization where the Morris was concerned, but rarely seemed to know what to do with the Morris beyond that point. To show you the feelings of men at that time I can do no better than to quote extracts (by his kind permission) from Roy Judge's account of the early history of the Oxford Morris dancers. One dancer, speaking of the early 1920's, wrote:- "The Society at that time was a monarchy ruled over by Cecil Sharp; control was centred exclusively in London, and where there were teachers in other places, in status they were branches under the London headquarters, from whom they took their instructions both on dance policy and organization. General emphasis was laid on country rather than on Morris and Sword, which were looked upon as specialist activities. Parties were few except at Christmas and special occasions; communication was mainly by practices and classes, well enough attended by both sexes

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with regard to country, but apt to peter out in Morris because of one's lack of opportunity to broaden one's outlook. Sharp in fact very much disliked any man taking part in the Morris with galleys or advanced capers unless he had already obtained his advanced folk-dance certificate or was a serious aspirant. Headington was the staple diet: Rigs o' Marlow and Blue-eyed Stranger till you danced them in your sleep, followed by other Headington stick dances, leading at last to Trunkles and Laudnum Bunches. Ilmington was also done, but Bampton was largely the prerequisite of the ladies. Mixed shows around the country were pretty common in the summer, comprising country and sword as well as Morris. The country repertoire was much more extensive than the sword or the Morris. Music both for classes and shows was nearly always the piano, sometimes accompanied by the violin."

Another Oxford dancer, speaking of the 1924/5 era, says:- "Men morris dancers were scarce; in few places could a man hope to be instructed in morris by a man, and among these places even fewer had anything in the nature of a morris club. Morris had to be learnt through EFDS teachers who were normally women, selected by Sharp and his senior staff after they had passed examinations based on their dancing ability. Any fully qualified teacher could teach reasonably well; the best of them were very good indeed. From the man's point of view this situation had advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantages were that he could quite possibly be the only man in a class of women; secondly, the teaching would be largely geared to the examination syllabus. Thus at the elementary stage he would be confined to the traditions for the elementary examination - Headington, Adderbury, Ilmington and Bampton. Thirdly, he would not be allowed to touch the advanced dances until he had taken the elementary examination. The advantages of the method were that the teaching was thorough and ensured that he got the fundamental movements of the Morris right. Secondly, as all teachers taught exactly the same things, he would find identical interpretations wherever he went in the EFDS with no individual variation throughout the country, standardised from Sharp downwards through the hierarchy. Thirdly, because men were rare, teachers lavished

special attention on them."

The picture we have of that time was a Society with high standards and first-rate teaching, but the ultimate achievement for morris dancing was to pass an examination or occasionally to take part in a demonstration under rather artificial conditions. Alec Hunter, first Squire of the Ring, looking back on those days, said:- "In my dreams I saw team after team show a skill and artistry all of their own, but before my eyes I generally saw men who were the products of the dancing class spread out in groups of six."

There was obviously something wrong, something missing. The problem was quite simply this - how to get the Morris out of the classroom, out of the examination hall and away from the women, and into the clubs and pubs and streets where the Morris really belongs. The key to the answer, of course, lies in the word 'club'. Morris clubs, which were after all the traditional organization of the Morris, were just beginning to be formed, and by the mid - 1920's there were clubs at Cambridge, Oxford, Letchworth and Thaxted, plus a few groups of dancers in other parts of the South-East. These clubs had to place very heavy reliance on the EFDS; all publications, all learned society aspects of the Morris and almost all teaching came from the EFDS. It was quite exceptional for clubs to do any 'ab initio' teaching. But the EFDS could not take the situation beyond teaching, and the development of a club was something that had to be done over and above the dance tuition. The only person who might have tried to do this task within the ambit of the Society was Kenworthy Schofield, but I do not think that he ever contemplated making the attempt.

The gradual move to form morris clubs continued throughout the late 1920's. A parallel set of events was also important; this was the beginnings of the meetings between the revival sides. In 1925 a proposal was formulated by the Letchworth and Thaxted clubs to have a meeting at Royston Heath, to which dancers from Thaxted and Ashwell would be invited. This came to nought for some unrecorded reason. In 1926 Alec Hunter, then at Letchworth, and Kenworthy Schofield at Cambridge got together and persuaded Francis Harton, the vicar

of Ardeley (a village between Buntingford and Stevenage) to provide accommodation in the village hall and a weekend of dancing was held there with men from Thaxted, Ashwell and Emberton as well as from Letchworth and Cambridge. This was, I think, the first recorded get-together of revival morris sides. The following year, 1927, Harton had gone off to Africa and there was no-one at Ardeley to act as a focal point. Ashwell hoped to have a meeting based on the Women's Institute hall in Ashwell, but as no Sunday dancing would be allowed there the site of the meeting was moved to Thaxted. From that time onwards (apart from the war years) there has been an annual Thaxted meeting. By 1933 it had evolved to the stage where the EFDS was taking a strong interest in it and Douglas Kennedy with other Society teachers usually attended. It is important to mention about the revival sides at that time that we rarely got out into the streets, we were still dancing for our own amusement and at rather formal demonstrations. For most of us the Thaxted weekend was an unique occasion, when we danced in public very much as we do nowadays.

We thus have two strands which were beginning to come together; the revival of the morris club and the start of the morris gathering. The actual setting up of the Ring was triggered off by the Cambridge Morris Men, who during their Travelling Morrice tours during the summer had met many dancers up and down the country and felt the need to try to keep in touch with them. It did not seem quite right to make them honorary members of the Cambridge club (although this had been suggested) and in late 1933 the club had a lot of discussion about all this. A meeting on 2nd November 1933, when Joseph Needham was Squire, discussed the problem and decided that it wasn't really one of keeping in touch with individuals, but by what means could clubs which were beginning to arise in different parts of the country make and keep contact with each other. Joseph was authorized to write to one or two of the known clubs proposing a very loose kind of federation of the clubs, and this was the beginning of the Morris Ring. The name was suggested by Conway Waddington. In the period between late 1933 and April 1934 the clubs of

Oxford, Letchworth, Thaxted, East Surrey and Greensleeves were all in touch with Cambridge and with each other, either by correspondence or by meetings of individuals, and agreed on the very general principle that a federation of these clubs would be a good thing. At the annual meeting of the Cambridge club in April 1934, which included Alec Hunter, an honorary member, it was felt that the time had come to take formal action and a motion was proposed and agreed that the Ring should be instituted. We spent a few weeks discussing details with the other clubs and prepared a draft constitution for discussion at the Thaxted meeting at the beginning of June. At 9pm on Saturday 2nd June there was a meeting of representatives of five of the six founder clubs (Oxford could not be present), together with Alec Hunter and myself, the proposed first Squire and Bagman of the Ring. The draft constitution was discussed and some alterations agreed upon. The following day, Sunday 3rd June, Alec spoke to the men attending the weekend and outlined the proposals for the Ring. It was glorious weather and all this was done in the Vicarage garden. In the afternoon there was a meeting of representatives, augmented by Douglas Kennedy, Joseph Needham and Kenworthy Schofield, at which the draft constitution was approved and various suggestions of symbols of membership and other matters were discussed.

During that summer, Alec, Kenworthy and I spent a lot of time talking to people and visiting various clubs, and the inaugural meeting of the Ring took place at Cecil Sharp House on 20th October. The clubs who were formally represented included the initial six plus Chelmsford, St. Albans, Clifton, Liverpool and Wargrave. Dancers from four other clubs were also present: Lakeland, Colchester Junior, Morley College and Bishop's Stortford. The meeting was organized by Kenworthy and Douglas presided. The representatives of the clubs sat in an inner circle in the main hall, surrounded by the other morris men looking on. As no other nominations had been received, Alec and I were declared elected Squire and Bagman. Douglas, holding the Squire's stave (the gift of

the EFDS) in his hand, spoke at length about the Ring's task, welcoming its inauguration because, being composed of clubs, it could do work which was beyond the scope of the EFDS. He then presented the stave to Alec, who thereupon took the chair and presented the Bagman with his symbols of office - minute book and cash box. The business part of the meeting was followed by dancing and a Feast, at which William Kimber was our guest.

So by the end of 1934 the Ring was fully in being, and Alec, Kenworthy and myself spent a good deal of time going around to clubs and groups. We also began to arrange Ring Meetings. We received a very good reception from clubs, viewed though with a certain amount of quite natural suspicion on two grounds, both perfectly legitimate. These related first to the Ring's relationships with the Society, and secondly, to the effect the Ring might have on the autonomy of the individual clubs. The answer was simple - the EFDS would be left to get on with its job as a learned society, responsible also for teaching and for publications, and every club would be autonomous with no effort being made to impose upon it any particular pattern of organization. It was hoped, however, that in every club there would be some kind of organization which would make it an entity through which a corporate spirit would develop, as it was felt that only through this would the Morris flourish successfully.

THE TRADITIONAL REPERTOIRE

Much is rightly made of the differences between the characteristics of the known Cotswold village sides. However the assembly of a collection of material on the morris has enabled a re-examination of the older idea of "one morris" of which these teams' dancing was a reflection. Lists of dances performed exist in varying degrees of completeness for 34 villages. These give over 600 separate usages of tunes and more than 300 separate usages of a dance idea. Statistically the average list contains about 17 dances of which about 7

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were jigs. The information for some teams is severely limited and it would be expected that in reality the old teams had much larger repertoires. Where it has been possible to obtain information which reflects the change in repertoire over a period of years, it seems that each side had a little over 20 dances, old and new, in regular practice. When the side was a living tradition nearly as many again seem to have been remembered to some extent and unused for a variety of reasons - both old ones superseded and new ones that did not catch on.

The tune lists show that 7 tunes were almost universal, given below underlined, and that 10 others were probably used by more than half the teams. However about 10% of the tunes seem to be titles that were unique to the particular side and not normally associated with the morris.

The dance notations have been considered for the content of their distinctive figure. A total of 22 dances, which include 14 set dances, is best to obtain a proper balance between the ideas. The 14 set dances should include Trunkles, 2 clapping dances, 3 stick dances, 3 slow caper dances, 3 corner dances, 1 tune that has two distinct dances to it, most likely a stick and a clapping one, 1 tune that is used for both a set dance and a jig, a processional and 2 elementary dances. Obviously some dances can satisfy more than one of these requirements eg Trunkles is also a corner and a slow caper dance and Shepherd's Hey is often a stick dance, a clapping dance or a jig.

It is possible to offer a list of dances and tunes which produce the traditional repertoire.

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Processional | Hey Diddle Dis |
| Dance in position | Brighton Camp |
| Simple handk dance with "different" idea | Maid of the Mill |
| Sidestep and half hey | Black Joke |
| | Highland Mary |
| | <u>Old Woman Tossed Up</u> |
| Corners with slow capers | Cuckoo's Nest |
| Corners without slow capers | Local unique tune |

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Corners twice and slow capers
Sticks - hitting ground
Sticks - hitting in air
Sticks ditto and as hand-
clapping dance
Handclapping and as a jig
Misc slow caper dance, heel
and toe or leapfrog
Jigs

Trunkles
Young Collins
Balance the Straw

Constant Billy
Shepherd's Hey

Local unique tune
Jockey to the Fair
Lumps of Plum Pudding
Nutting Girl Old
Mother Oxford
Princess Royal
Sherborne Jig
Greensleeves

Baccapipes and Broomstick

The marriage of dance and tune should immediately recall traditional dances. Much of interest can be deduced from the degree of fit of various teams to the above list as well as from the geographical distribution of particular dances and tunes. An interesting result is that the fit to the tunes is much closer than that to the dances. It could reflect that some pipers played for many morrises. It also suggests that the average piper had a severely limited selection. With the dances there is usually some compensation that maintains the balance of ideas; eg at Bampton there are not stick dances but there is an increase in the sidestep and half hey dances. The repertoires of sides that survived to or into the 20th century have diverged, so an explanation is needed of the older similarity. Either close contact, eg competition, kept them in line or perhaps, heretically, the Cotswold morris is not as old as we have been thinking. Another area of interest are the older revivals in the traditional environment. Where there is no antiquarian drive to revive everything good or bad, from 7 to 10 different dance ideas are sufficient but fewer have been tolerated, like 5 at Chipping Campden and at Abingdon for many years, and even as few as two and a mumm-ers play as at Eynsham. This could be the difference between an emphasis on the recipient and an emphasis on the performer.

Lessons that can be drawn for those interested in the traditional way are,

1. the set of dances for massed dancing at Ring Meetings are not an unreasonable selection apart from the insistence on particular traditions.
2. there was a greater emphasis on jigs so that the experienced and skilled dancers expressed themselves in these rather than in rare or additional set dances imposed on the others.
3. by contrast there were few corner dances featuring capers so that the deficiencies of the poorer dancers are not exposed.
4. the number of set dances to keep in practice is not high, perhaps 14, without lowering standards in public performance.

R.L.DOMMETT © 1979

See RLD, Issue Two, Nov.1978

ISSUE THREE had an article about the possessions of the Ring; mention should be made of a large copper collecting box, heart-shaped, held by the Bagman of the Ring. It was given by Ernest Makepeace, of the Clifton M.M.; he had had it made by Miss Winsome Bartlett of Portishead, a skilled worker in metals. The box was used for the first time at the Wargrave Meeting, 5th September, 1936. A week later, at the Grasmere Meeting, when the men danced at Coniston, the First Log Book says:- "The Chief Constable of the County (Lancashire) had refused permission for any collections to be taken, so a subterfuge was adopted. The Squire (Alec Hunter) explained to the audience that we could not collect from them, but showed them the very fine collecting box presented by Ernest Makepeace in which we had intended taking the collection. This he placed ostentatiously on the ground, remarking upon its beauty but its emptiness, whereupon the audience placed 9/- in it in obvious disapproval of Chief Constables."

Ernest Makepeace lives at Wraxall, Bristol.

To The Editor,
The Morris Dancer.

28.4.79

I have read Mr. Jonathan Hooton's essay on the social background of Headington Quarry published in the No.3 edition of The Morris Dancer.

As a village inhabitant and member of the Headington Quarry Morris Dancers (nephew of the late Charles Jones and with a father and another uncle who danced the morris) perhaps you will be gracious enough to allow me to comment about our own history.

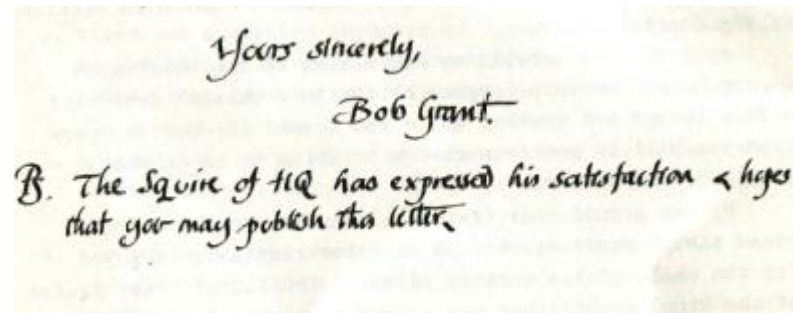
My own grandfather (father of Charlie Jones) was a steam plough manufacturer and was thus regularly employed for the whole of his working life. Jim Phillips' (Past Squire of the Ring) grandfather was a much respected local landowner and lawyer as well as a lifetime churchgoer. There were many others at that time who had regular employment in local industries. The village possessed its hierarchy like any other, including of course its feckless and lawless elements.

With regard to the photograph in Mr. Samuels' book and Mr. Hooton's comments based upon it about the dress worn by Jim Hedges' side, I fear that he has drawn a wrong conclusion. I have this morning spoken to Jim Hedges' granddaughter, a sprightly old lady and near neighbour of mine, who remembers the side well. She still possesses the baldrics worn by her grandfather (the bell pads are in the hands of another relative) and she cannot recall the team appearing in anything but 'regular' dress, which is substantially the same as that worn by the present team. She thinks that their sense of pageant would not have allowed them to do otherwise. Our own massive scrapbook contains some very early photographs - indeed, they may be the earliest photographs of Morris Dancers ever taken - and all show the men in the same characteristic dress of the Headington Quarry Morris Dancers.

There remains the possibility that as the photograph was taken during the era of the rapid expansion of the East Oxford suburb along the Cowley Road and as many of the

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Headington Quarry men were building artisans there employed, that the dress may have been extempore for the occasion, hence the mason-type smocks and working trousers. Such 'civilian' style appearances are not unknown amongst some sides today:



*Yours sincerely,
Bob Grant.*

B. The Squire of HQ has expressed his satisfaction & hopes that you may publish this letter.

ISSUE TWO contained a reprint of an article written by Geoffrey Metcalf when he was Squire of the Ring in 1953; Past Bagman of the Ring Russell Wortley wrote "I was very glad to see Geoff Metcalf's piece re-printed - it is still highly relevant even though advances have been made in the directions he indicated - advances in outlook as well as

Asked for a footnote to his original article, the Past Squire wrote.- "...I expressed the hope that the largely standardised morris of that time would over the years give way to a much greater diversity, with each club having its own unique set of dances and style of dancing."

The past 25 years have in fact seen some development along these lines, particularly in the sword and north western morris clubs. In the Cotswold morris many clubs now have their own individual style and a few have become specialists in one of the recognised traditions - but none as far as I am aware forsaking all others.

At the same time the morris in general has continued in a standardised form. The increased mobility of clubs and of

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dancers between clubs, Ring Meetings attended by hundreds of dancers, massed dancing, instructional meetings and the wish to be traditionally correct have all contributed to this.

The ever increasing number of clubs is bringing problems - there is now too much dancing in many places and the sense of special occasion (i.e. ritual) has been lost - but it does not seem that uniformity is one of these. Clause 1 of the Ring constitution reads "the clubs shall in all respects retain their independence" and the prospect of edicts as to how the dances are to be performed coming from "head office" seems very remote.

With a little toleration of others' views, and humility towards the splendid tradition which has been saved for us, I believe that "natural development" can and will continue alongside a more conservative "no change" approach to the morris.

10th March, 1979

25th May,
Southampton.

I have read the three numbers I have received, and especially the last, with the greatest interest. I have often felt that what we have needed is some kind of a social history of the Morris over the past five hundred years. I have always found the comments and contributions to knowledge of the Morris by such as Russell Wortley and Roy Dommett to be of the greatest interest. I am sure there must be a tremendous body of anecdote and historical snippets in the logs of the Travelling Morrice and the Ancient Men which would interest a wider public.

Has the Ring given serious thought to the compilation of some kind of historical record of Morris through the ages? Our record of the dances is now in good shape and the systematic production of recorded Morris Music is another great leap forward, but I feel that the record of the Morris

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as an institution needs to be compiled and presented to the world.

JOE SMARTT

9th May, 1979.

Headington Quarry.

Thank you for your letter of the 1st May - an appropriate date! We were dancing at 6.30 am in Oxford and of course later that day we escorted Harry Kimber's coffin from the church portal to the graveyard - as we have done for all of that 1947 side.

With Harry's passing, our last 'authentic voices' of those days, have, (with the exception of Fred Kimber) gone. Accordingly as club archivist our Squire has asked me to set down our known history in brief form for club members' consumption. I am now in the process of doing this and as you will appreciate it promises to be a lengthy and detailed task. There is one serious gap that will take some filling, that of the period 1900 - 1920; apart from what Bill was doing, we have little knowledge of what actually happened to the side.

No doubt when the review is finished that the club will give its permission to have the story published.

BOB GRANT

(Please, if anyone knows anything for the period mentioned, write to Headington Quarry or to me. Ed.)

13th April, 1979

Coventry

Performance of the Morris

If I may reply to Barry Butler's article in your last issue, he has raised the issue of 'modern morris' re 'historical morris' which has been the subject of controversy between clubs, and between members of clubs, for years, and has been one of the two principal subjects of serious discussion in pubs at any morris gathering (the other being

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women's morris!)

I may be able to contribute a different viewpoint by considering the similar problems with the mummings play, and how the Coventry Mummings have tackled them. Within a few miles of Coventry there are three variants of the St .George play that have been collected, none of which are being performed by a side from the village of origin, and there are far better versions of the play elsewhere. When the club was formed some twelve years ago, Ron Shuttleworth looked through a considerable number of scripts of the various types of play, and from these compiled four plays - one of each of the main types - St. George, Plough, Sword and Tup - which, we think, retain the essence of the play, but, by taking the best from a number of sources, are more convincing and complete than any. With the traditional plays in our vicinity, we take a completely different attitude, these we make as authentic as possible, keeping to the text, the dress (where known) and to the date of the performance as much as we can, and performing them only in the village from which they were collected. Our aim here is to encourage the locals to take them up, in which case we can hand them back and remove them from our repertoire.

I would suggest that something like this needs doing with the morris in that one of our main aims should be to get Sherborne danced in Sherborne by a Sherborne side, and ditto with Longborough, Bucknell, Bledington, Badby and so on, and I am delighted to see there is a revived side in Ilmington and Adderbury. When a traditional side is revived, I am strongly convinced that the rest of the sides should leave this tradition alone, as should have been done with Headington and Bampton years ago, and has been done with Abingdon and Chipping Campden. Until the traditional side is reformed I feel that other sides should consider themselves only as custodians of their dances, which means that the performance should be as authentic as possible, ideally with the same dress and the same instrument for music - foreign teams are much more particular about this sort of thing than we are. I know that this is an unattainable ideal if only

because there is not time to change gear during a morris 'spot' and if you have not the correct instrumentalist in the side there is not much you can do about it except train one. I have had to play the pipe and tabor for the long sword dance, but I don't if there is a musician with a more suitable instrument at hand! What I particularly object to is the increasing habit of improving or inventing dances in a particular tradition; Balance the Straw, Phieldtown (as Bert, Cleaver puts it) or Upton on Severn (Albion version) are cases in point. They are good show dances, but why say they are from Fieldtown or Upton if they are not? To me, the correct solution for a side that finds the dances as collected to be inadequate is not to adapt them but to do as Coventry Mummers did with the plays, have a good look at the 200 or so recorded dances, decide on the arm movements, backstep, figures and so forth that the side prefers, and then construct a dozen or so dances based on the traditional material but not from anywhere in particular, and let it develop from there.

The side will be judged on its merit, and if - to return to Barry Butler's article - the music includes banjos, bodhráns and balelaikas it may be a good show even if it is questionable morris; the traditional morris however will remain.

BERNARD OAKLEY, Musician, Coventry Mummers.

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The Newsletter is grateful to

Past Squire of The Ring DOUGLAS KENNEDY, O.B.E.,
for this memory of long ago.....

CECIL SHARP 1911 - 24

My first meeting I owed to my sister who wanted me to meet the man then turning her ideas of dance upside down. I had gone to the College at Chelsea directly from my Drill Hall and wearing my Territorial Army boots. These caused my new acquaintances to shy off but not Cecil. He wanted to know what I thought and what my sister had said of the

Morris, which at that time possessed his very soul. That time, the autumn of 1911, was in itself a world now lost and almost now unbelievable. A new friend that night was George Wilkinson recently graduated from Caius College and doubly a disciple of Sharp for he had inherited two jobs from him teaching music at the Prep Schools at Northaw and Ludgrove. So I had Sharp interpreted to me by this George and the other George - Butterworth - as well as by my sister and the two remarkable Karpeles girls Helen and Maud. For us all, Sharp distilled magic, for his piano playing was real dance rhythm and the two Georges were only a shade behind the master. There was much discussion of steps and handkerchief movements. Into these I could not enter being content to listen while my betters wrangled over St. and Ju. and Tog. and Ju.

Sharp was very supple; able to show how a galley was no hook-leg but two clear circles of a hind-leg. I shared with Percival Lucas the honour of being the least co-ordinated in the side or as he preferred to phrase it, the most spasmodic, often reducing our patient coaches to helpless laughter. Of course we tried to run before we could walk plunging into Sherborne Constant Billy when we were not even up to Headington examples. But Sharp never depressed us with his criticism. On the contrary he was always delighted with the side's performance. Standards went up in the jigs. Claude Wright, a gymnast, and George Wilkinson in I'll Go and Enlist invariably gave a breathtaking show. But Butterworth was the man we all modelled ourselves on. He had seen and collected from nearly as many real Morris Men as Sharp, and was much younger and spryer. But he believed in chaps finding out and if I plagued him to show me a half-caper slowly he would just laugh and say "Work it out". Yet he took infinite pains to teach me the elements of Eton Fives at which he was adept, It was this skill that led to his fatal success at bombing trenches with Mills grenades. For me just to dance in the side with men who were much my superiors, inspired as we all were by Sharp's superlative playing was the constant spur to better dancing. Looking back over

sixty-eight years to those dim and distant days, I realise more than ever how lucky I was in my company, as I was fortunate indeed to have been born a Victorian and inherited a large proportion of the Globe.

Dancing in Sharp's Morris side gradually took over from my other interests, prompting many of my friends to shake their heads sorrowfully and regard me as a soul lost to M.D.

Until the autumn of 1914 Sharp's team of dancers performed for him nearly every week-end except in the holidays when we were involved in the staffing of the Vacation Courses at Stratford on Avon and other selected centres. Then the balloon went up in August 1914 and the world as we then knew it came to an end; but not the Morris, thanks to Sharp.

(See P.14, Newsletter Three)

There are two notices from Past Squire of the Ring Morris Sunderland:-

1. Morris and Barbara Sunderland would like to thank all those who joined in their Wedding Celebration on Monday 7th May, and hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as they did. They also apologise to the rest of the Ring (and others!) that there was not room to invite all of you as well. Really we should have used Westminster Cathedral and the Albert Hall:

2. Morris and Barbara Sunderland are off to America on August 23rd to visit American Morris sides. They do not return until 11th October. The next printing of the Aide Memoire is now ready. Orders by post will be dealt with up to 23rd August, and after 11th October. While Morris is away copies can be bought personally from Mike Chandler and Jack Thompson; but no orders by post to these two men, please. Cost, Z6. With postage, £7.

Issue One had a note on the Colchester club. Issue Three had something about Thames Valley. A cutting from

the Victoria Morris Men (Vancouver) led to Newsletter's asking Pomfret Morris Men for a note about the club, and an account of a great journey.

(Club histories are welcome inclusions in the Newsletter, which can be a repository for information not in print elsewhere.)

POMFRET MORRIS were formed in 1974 by Bob Williams, a Somerset lad who came into the area as a teacher. We see so many sides doing several different traditions (and in the process, it is inevitable that they tend to look similar) so we decided to stick to one only; in choosing Bucknell we thought we would be concentrating on one which few other teams performed, as well as one which we knew had to be danced vigorously. It seemed to us that as in the old days teams would jealously emphasise their own style, we thought it made more sense to do the same. The problem arose, of course, when the novelty began to wear off some dances, and due to the limited knowledge which has survived about Bucknell, there was no more to learn. We have tried to solve this by developing our own dances and we are not averse to stealing an interesting movement from another tradition and adapting it to Bucknell style. In defence we can always claim that there is evidence that this happened with the original teams too!

Not a great deal is known about Bucknell and three of our original members spent a week at Cecil Sharp House and elsewhere doing a great deal of research. From there we put our own interpretations to the notes, and filled the many gaps with what we hoped were reasonable guesses. Our main object is to dance with vigour and energy and to convey the masculinity of the tradition - something we feel is lacking in many sides today.

Our dress we took from the famous photograph of the last of the Bucknell dancers - top hat, whites, red braces, coloured sash, red white and blue ribbons. There is no evidence of a fool in Bucknell, but we have an excellent horse which is usually a great crowd favourite but not so popular

with those who have to dance in it, especially in hot or windy weather! Pomfret is the Shakespearean form of Pontefract, our base.

The Pontefract area, predominantly engaged in coal-mining, has never been known for its enthusiasm for folk traditions and culture, and consequently we are few in numbers when compared with the likes of Boars Head or Shropshire Bedlams. In fact despite a population of well over 100,000 within five miles of the town, there isn't even the interest to maintain a folk club. But we are grateful to some of our members who travel up to 40 miles.

POMFRET IN CANADA

A nine-hour flight by Jumbo Jet, a 22-hour 650 mile train journey across one of the world's most spectacular mountain ranges, basking in 90 degree F sunshine on the side of a private swimming pool surrounded by bikini-clad beauties - it sounds like a fireside dream but these are some of the highlights of Pomfret Morris's 3- week visit to Canada.

We were originally invited to Canada by a member of Calgary 'Lions' (the International charity organisation) who met us whilst holidaying in the U.K. He suggested we might like to visit Calgary in July for the Stampede. We decided that we would also like to see Vancouver, on Canada's scenic west coast. And so, after sundry enquiries with travel agents, Canadian contacts and, not least, bank managers, the plan was tentatively thus:- 1. Fly Heathrow to Vancouver, dancing out there for one week. 2. Across the Rockies by train to Calgary, again dancing out for one week. 3. Return across the Rockies to Vancouver Island, 40 miles offshore and the provincial capital of Victoria. Dance there for a week then

fly back to Heathrow with, hopefully, pockets bursting with Canadian dollars willingly donated by enthusiastic expatriate Brits and pro-British Canadians.

(To be continued in Issue Five.)