

THE MORRIS DANCER

No. NINE*****MARCH 1981

As this magazine completes its third year there is some satisfaction that it has put into printed record the results of considerable scholarly research, as well as club histories and information not otherwise likely to have been recorded.

The Morris Dancer goes to the Vaughan Williams Library, to the University Libraries of Cambridge and Oxford, to the National Library of Scotland, and to the Library of Congress. Many men must have complete sets.

Another ten years, and the accumulated record will be majestic; it will have an index or two; and, of course, have another editor.

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

2.

Issue No.8 carried Keith Chandler's LOCAL NEWSPAPERS AS A SOURCE FOR THE HISTORY OF MORRIS IN THE SOUTH MIDLANDS Here is his

A CASE STUDY: EYNESHAM

The bulk of our knowledge on the dancing at Eynsham derives from the manuscripts of Sharp (1) and Manning (2), but these contain very little definite material on the state of the side prior to 1900 and have no confirmed dates of existence before that date, although it is certain that there was dancing in the village much earlier (3). A newspaper account confirms that a side was dancing in 1856, the earliest written reference so far discovered:

"EYNESHAM (Whit week)...on the Wednesday some of the villagers entertained the inhabitants with morris dancing..." (4)

Dommett, in his manuscript (5), mentions that the musician of 1914, Joe Evans, had a father and grandfather who danced before him, and this mid-century reference would be around the period of the grandfather's active phase (6). Evans' father, William (7) featured in a curious account of proceedings in the Justices Room at Witney in June 1877:

"Thomas Buckingham, Thomas Ayers, William Lambourne, William Day and William Evans, all of Eynsham, were charged with damaging growing grass at Eynsham, the property of Robert Day, on the 17th inst. Buckingham was fined 6d. and 10s 6d costs, and the others were fined 6d and 6s 6d costs each. Buckingham, Day and Evans paid; Lambourne and Ayers were committed for seven days." (8)

Evans, we know, was a dancer, and men with the surnames Ayers and Lambourne have also been involved with the dancing at Eynsham at various times, and it is tempting to suggest, given the proximity of the date to Whitsun, that these men were members of the morris side which had trampled grass being grown for hay. In addition, the fact that Buckingham was fined more costs than the others may indicate that he was the leader. I must stress that this is still very speculative, in the absence of the criminal records which might clarify the charge, but I offer it as a possibility. (9)

3.

At Christmastime in 1899, "A party of Morris dancers paid Witney a visit on Saturday (i.e., December 23rd), and proved a great attraction in the streets." (10). There are two possible sides which could have walked to Witney, and Bampton is never known to have danced at this time of year. Therefore, it looks as if this is a visit of the Eynsham morris. There has been some speculation over the past few years that there were two teams in Eynsham prior to the first war, arising from the confusion over whether the Russells or Sam Moulder was leader when Sharp saw the scratch side in 1908. A recently discovered account in the Witney Gazette helps to clarify the situation:

"Christmas celebrations. The mummers, being conspicuous by their absence, their place was taken by a band of boy morris dancers who were led by a mouth organ performed with no small credit...On Boxing Day, not only the boy morris dancers but the usual party of young men were out, and in their picturesque old country costumes caused great attraction during the day." (11).

Now the "usual party of young men" are probably the team met by Carter in 1902: Edward Russell (foreman), William Russell, Horace Belcher, Ernest May, Charles Masters, Henry Hedges, George Masters, Fred Harwood and Ben Hares (i.e., Ayers), of whom it was noted, "These are still dancing at Whitsuntide and Xmas." (12). Several of the men in this team could be labelled "young": May (born 1879), Charles Masters (1872) and Ayers (1872). The boys side are more of a problem. Sam Moulder is not mentioned as being involved at this date; and perhaps the statement be made in 1909, The boys 'pick it up'." suggests that he was organiser of this younger team (13). The implication of the newspaper item is that the morris and the mummers were two separate entities at this stage; and this is further corroborated by the fact that when the 1930's revival decided to include the play as part of their repertoire, "Sidney Russell had been in this and got the text again from an old mummer..." (14). Note Dommett says "mummer" and not "morris dancer".

The 1909 Oxford Times article has some fascinating

material from Sam Moulder, including the names of the tunes used by the team at that date. He says that the dancing is more often done to a "performer on a mouth-organ or tambourine" (my emphasis); that the "Morris dancers do not practise much, and consequently the first day's work when they go out on their rounds is tremendously tiring"; and that he "could not remember ever having been regularly taught it."

The team packed up at the outbreak of war in 1914, then got together again around 1922. The newspapers I have consulted for this period do not mention the morris. There is, however, a photo in the Oxford Journal Illustrated for 30.12.1925 (page 1) showing a troupe of mummings visiting Oxford. There are ten men, dressed in tattered clothing, one with a mouth-organ and another with a tambourine. It seems likely, especially in the light of Moulder's statement that dancing was often done to these instruments, that this is the Eynsham team which continued in the town until 1927.

The final phase of dancing at Eynsham came with the revival in 1937, and this was reported in the papers:

"Morris Dancing at Eynsham - A team of old-style Morris dancers and mummings has been revived in Eynsham. Mr. W. Russell, although 76 years old, is an enthusiastic member and takes an active part in each dance." (15).

This side danced with the revived Abingdon men and other teams in the Abbey grounds at Abingdon on August Bank Holiday that year (16); and several photos of the boys side were printed in the Oxford Mail, for March 7th, 1938. Both adults and children's teams broke up as World War Two started.

Now there is another revival within the town, and as recently as July 17th this year The Witney Gazette ran a centre-spread consisting of photos of the revival side and of Edward Russell taken before the first war, with an interview with the present squire of the team, Keith Green. Quite a bountiful collection of references in all; each one contributing a little more to our understanding of the traditional morris.

Notes to Part Three

1. Folk Dance Notes, vol.1, fol.101; copy in Vaughan Williams Library.

2. Mss. Top Oxon, d.200; in the Bodleian Library.
3. The present squire of the revived Eynsham side was interviewed for the Witney Gazette, on 17.7.1980, in which he lamented the fact that they had no earlier written sources.
4. Oxford Chronicle. 17.5.1856, p.8.
5. Housed at Vaughan Williams Library, no pagination, but under 'Eynsham'.
6. Despite some preliminary checking of the parish registers I have yet to discover the name of Evans' grandfather.
7. William Evans was born in Cumnor in 1826 (1871 census, Eynsham, schedule 158).
8. Oxford Times. 23.6.1877, p.8.
9. The records apparently never reached the County Archives, but there is a possibility that they still exist in a lawyer's office in Witney.
10. Jackson's Oxford Journal. 30.12.1899, p.9.
11. Witney Gazette. 5.1.1901, p.8.
12. Mss. Top. Oxon, d.200, fol.178.
13. Oxford Times. 27.3.1909, p.10.
14. Dommett mss., op.cit.
15. Oxford Mail. 14.5.1937, p.5. An identical report in Witney Gazette, 21.5.1937, p.2.
16. North Berks Herald. 13.8.1937, p.4.

An Examination of the

WITNEY EXPRESS 1869 - 1888

(week before and two weeks after Whitsun; week after Christmas; Golden Jubilee period 1887).

- 9/VI/70 p.8. BAMPTON Club feasts...The morris dancers made their appearance in the streets...
- 25/V/72 p.8. BAMPTON Club. The morris dancers also put in an appearance, as is their wont on Whit-Monday, and they cut some fine capers when performing their grotesque dances; "Joey" was as facetious as ever as clown, and caused much merriment with the juveniles, and also to some of the children of a more mature growth.
- 8/VI/76 p.8. BAMPTON Benefit club. The morris dancers were busily engaged from home to home in their accustomed

fashion, with leg-bells, handkerchiefs, &c.

17/V/77 p.8. CHARLBURY Action for damages. At the Chipping Norton county court, held last week, Frederick Shayler, a gamekeeper at Cornbury lark, was sued for £50 as damages for an assault on Kate Bowl, the daughter of a grocer of this place. ...It seems that just before Easter the little girl, with some other children, were in a coppice gathering moss and flowers for decoration for Easter, when the defendant rode up and enquired the child's name, and asked what business she had there? He then struck her several times with his riding whip, raising weals on her shoulder. ...The Jury gave a verdict for the plaintiff, with £20 damages.

24/V/77 p.8. BAMPTON Whitsuntide at Bampton. It has been the custom here for many years for the juveniles to parade the streets at Whitsuntide, carrying garlands and other floral designs. We observed one or two really pretty devices of this kind on Monday, and the morris dancers busily tripped the "Light fantastic toe" to the sound of fiddle and tambourine.

20/V/80 p.8. BAMPTON Whitsuntide. ...the morris dancers were as usual very busy during the day...

9/VI/81 p.8. BAMPTON Friendly societies. The morris dancers, as of yore, did their grotesque bit of jigging, to the delight of the onlookers.

1/VI/82 p.8. BAMPTON Whit-Monday. The Morris dancers, as usual, were very busy.

17/V/83 p.5. BAMPTON Whitsuntide festivities. The Morris dancers also made their appearance, and much amused a multitude of people.

4/VI/85 p.4. WITNEY Petty sessions May 28th. Richard Bennett, a lad of Eynsham, was charged with unlawfully damaging the Eynsham Church door and tearing certain papers therefrom on May 15th...Henry Hedges, of Eynsham, labourer, said that...he saw the defendant with a piece of iron tearing down the papers from the church door.

Shayler (1877) was a Fieldtown dancer in the 1850s;

Hedges (1885) an Eynsham dancer in the 1900s.

MIKE HEANEY 9.1.81

Both KEITH CHANDLER and MIKE HEANEY, who live in the Oxford area, are doing extensive Cotswold Morris research. They keep each other informed. It is expected that as their work, and that of other men, grows, an index will be set up (probably housed by Past Squire of The Ring Ivor Allsop) from which enquirers can be given information. Keith Chandler has just sent The Morris Dancer a list of twenty-two Oxfordshire papers, with dates, which he has searched. Please, will anyone intending to make a search of that county's newspapers, tell me first; so that this unavoidably time-consuming work is not done twice. (Editor.)

BONNY GREEN GARTERS

Some notes on the dance at Headington and Bampton

Mike Heaney's article about 'Glorishears' in the Morris Dancer No.8 (November 1980) mentions the Headington leapfrog dance of that name and its tune, which are given on pp.192 - 193 of Lionel Bacon's 'Handbook'. The 'Handbook' also gives William Kimber's version of 'Bonny Green Garters' (whose tune is now most familiar from its use with the Bampton dance), which Kimber describes as a leapfrog dance. The 'Handbook' suggests that there were either two leapfrog dances, or that the Morris On and the leapfrog dance were confused because of their common ring figure. It also states, under 'Morris On', that "the mss suggest that there was an alternative Morris On to the tune of 'Bonny Green Garters' ".

The Headington 'Glorishears', dance and tune, was collected by Clive Carey in 1913 from Joseph Trafford, a prominent Headington dancer born in 1835, who had first danced as a boy. Percy Manning's mss name him amongst the side of 1847, and he seems to have been foreman at some time. (1). Carey also noted a version of 'Bonny Green Garters' from Trafford in 1910 and again in 1913, which is a variant, albeit a distinctive one, of the usual tune:

BONNY GREEN GARTERS (Headington)

Noted by CLIVE CAREY 7th/8th October, 1910.

(from Clive Carey MSS at Cecil Sharp House)



When he again noted the tune on **13th** May 1913 (on which occasion Trafford referred to it as 'The 29th May'), Carey was given the 'B' music as follows:

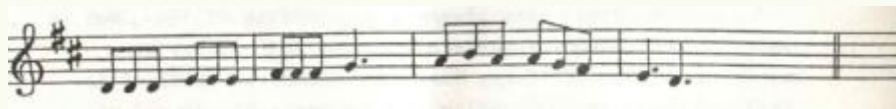


To the '**A**' music Trafford sang:

"First for your stockings and then for your shoes
And then for your bonnie green garters".

He told Carey that it was always the first dance at a new spot, danced thus: "First walk round, waving handkerchiefs, then singing dance RL" (i.e. caper) "for three bars and jump at "J" (see tune) "with handkerchiefs thrown up".

Towards the end of the nineteenth century Thomas Carter, collecting on behalf of Percy Manning, who was involved in the celebrated 1899 Headington Quarry revival, had noted the following snatch of 'Bonny Green Garters' from one R. Trafford (2):



Carter noted: "This was called the Shake -up, which was danced round and round to form a ring so that the set could have room to dance other tunes. Although a short piece it was danced in something like ten different positions". He was also told by Joseph Trafford that the following words were sung to 'Green Garters':

"A diddle dis

And what d'you call this

Why here comes Headington Morris".

Cecil Sharp noted the same words from H. Morris (3), and it is interesting to find both the 'Hey Diddle Dis' song and the 'Bonny Green Garters' song being sung in the same place. (4).

On 28th January 1908 William Kimber wrote to Sharp: "I shall have some more tunes for you one of these days but I must get them quite right before you have them namely Leap Frog, Maid of the Mill, The Willow Tree, Bob and Joan..." On 17th April 1908 Sharp noted the tunes 'The willow Tree' (the first version under Headington in 'Bacon') and 'Bonny Green Garters' from Kimber, who told him: "...Bonny Green Garters is a Leap Frog dance. Shake Up first. Begin with a ring. Jump over leapfrog fashion in pairs vis-a-vis, each does two leaps, i.e. four to the pair going round in a ring".

Now, if we take Leapfrog to be 'Bonny Green Garters', the four tunes listed by William Kimber in his letter to Sharp were all published by Percy Manning in 'Folklore' in 1897 (5), having been collected by Thomas Carter and C. Taphouse from Charles Tanner, an old Bampton dancer in 1894, when he was 78. He was an uncle of Jinkie Wells, who said of him "a wonderful man of memory: he had all the very old ancient songs and all the old original morris dances". Moreover, the tunes 'Willow Tree' and 'Bonny Green Garters' noted by Sharp from Kimber in 1908 are as good as the same as those from Bampton published by Manning (6).

In the light of Percy Manning's relationship with the Headington Quarry side at the turn of the century it would seem safe to assume that William Kimber learnt the Bampton tunes, including 'Bonny Green Garters', through him. As to the dances attaching to the tunes actually noted by Sharp, to wit 'The Willow Tree' and 'Bonny Green Garters', the chorus of the former (unless it was as danced at Bampton) may have suggested itself to Kimber on account of its title, and he may have drawn on Joseph Trafford's 'Glorishears' for the latter. (7).

(1) Different collectors were given conflicting information about the foremanship of the Headington Quarry Morris in the 19th century.

- (2) Joseph Trafford had a cousin Robert Trafford, who may have been the informant.
- (3) C. Sharp mss (Vaughan W. Library) 'Folk Dances' 2/10
- (4) Generally speaking, it is more usual to find the 'Hey Didd-
le Dis' words along the Oxfordshire/Glos'shire border.
- (5) 'Some Oxfordshire Seasonal Festivals'. Folklore: vol. VIII, Dec. 1897; pp. 307-324
- (6) The Bampton version of Bonny Green Garters is very slightly different from Kimber's, which shows some 'evening out' of the tune.
- (7) It may, however, be that the Glorishears tune and dance were never actually performed by the Headington men, and that Joseph Trafford had met them elsewhere and remembered them. Another explanation for its absence from later Headington repertory is that it was lost after the side ceased to have any contact with other sides when these broke up, or the Kirtlington Lamb Ale gathering was abandoned. Kirtlington, for instance, knew a dance of that name (see Mike Heaney's article referred to above), and this would seem to be the case with 'Saturday Night', a tune for which Trafford gave Thomas Carter, describing it as a competition dance performed at Kirtlington by Headington and other sides.

P.H. COLEMAN, 9/1/81

(The Clive Carey music lines printed by courtesy of Hugh Carey)

In attaching a form to this Issue, for Ravensbourne's Jim Bartlett, The Morris Dancer is experimenting; not more than that, just now. The cause justifies the experiment. Jim lives ten miles from work; several times a week he runs and morris steps the journey home. If you sponsor him, please make cheques etc. payable to Multiple Sclerosis Society Bromley Branch; send to Northlands, Freelands Grove, Bromley, Kent. The result will be printed in this magazine, as well as announced elsewhere. (Editor.)

RUSSELL WORTLEY The Cambridge Morris Men and the Hive Printers have published a book which reproduces some seventeen or eighteen of Russell's articles; it is 30cms by 12 cms,

has 47 pages; many illustrations; and an extensive bibliography of the Morris Dance. It is beautifully produced. The cost is £2.50, plus 30p postage, from John Jenner, Springfield, 47, Spring Lane, Bassingbourn, Royston, Herts., SG8 5HT

Another fine book is RATTLE UP MY BOYS The Story of Longsword Dancing, by Trevor Stone; it has 40 pages, 17cms by 23cms, is illustrated; price approximately £1 - but write to Trevor Stone, 6, Priory Road, Sale, Cheshire, M33 2BR

A magazine with which The Morris Dancer has an agreeable exchange is TRANSMISSION, "A newsletter for researchers in cultural traditions." It is "produced to meet the need for information exchange amongst folklorists and others working in the field of cultural traditions in the British Isles." The January 1981 issue gives dates and details of no fewer than 35 conferences and meetings to be held this year. The annual subscription is 50p in the U.K., or £1 overseas. It is free from folklore centres. The contact is, Paul Smith, Cultural Tradition Research Press, 2a, Westfield Road, Bramley, Rotherham, South Yorkshire. Tel. 0709 548426

Also received is the second issue of ROOMER - "An occasional newsletter for researchers in Traditional Drama" - which came out in December last. To quote, "Research in any field is, as often as not, hampered by the lack of communication between individual researchers, and traditional drama is no exception. We are acutely aware of the fact that there are many people doing valuable work who have little or no contact with others in this field and, consequently, no opportunity to compare notes or air their views. Roomer then is designed to fill this gap by providing an informal forum."

Write or 'phone Paul Smith, as above; or Steve Roud, 22, Adelaide Road, Andover, Hants. Tel. 0264 4397

Issue No.5 of The Morris Dancer, Nov. 1979, had a note asking that anyone who knew anything about the pre-war Chelmsford club should write to the Editor. The present club in that

Essex town started in 1972. It knows that the Chelmsford Morris Men were represented at the Inaugural Meeting of the Ring in 1934 (which would indicate that it was in existence for some time before) and attended Ring Meetings; it did not appear in Ring records after 1937. From enquiries so far it appears that the late Sandy Heard was a leading light, and that the Bagman was a Mr.D.W. Collyer. The side seems to have sprung from the old Essex Folk Dance Club and enquiries have often led to a confusion with the activities of a morris nature pursued at the club. If anyone has any knowledge, even of the vaguest kind, about the pre-war Chelmsford Morris Men, or of the Essex F.D.C. in pre-war days, (e.g., photograph or club Log entry) please write to Bob Peck, 10, Eastgate Gardens, Guildford, Surrey. Tel.Guildford 35110

Past Squire of The Ring Lionel Bacon wrote, 19.3.1980, "I offer you here a few personal reminiscences of my earliest Morris years; and...have extended these for two or three years after the formation of The Ring to include references to some activities of traditional sides which I filmed in the middle thirties."

Like a good many other men in those days, I entered the folk-dance world by joining the E.F.D.S. The Cambridge District Branch was chronically short of members (especially men) and I was dragged by a country dancing friend somewhat reluctantly along to a 'bob-and-tanner' party: the charge to members was a shilling, but if they could bring along a new recruit the charge was sixpence the pair! Another recruit to that same party was Walter Abson, who needs no introducing to readers of The Morris Dancer. Presumably we were not a big enough catch, for the bob-and-tanner party was never repeated. This was, I think, in 1930. The main activity of the E.F.D.S. was country dancing, but there was some morris too, and I soon became booked on this, and was fortunate enough to have some teaching from Arthur Heffer, a magnificent dancer and an excellent teacher, before his untimely death in November, 1931. After Arthur's death, his widow 'Barney' formed a class for young men morris dancers in Cambridge, and from this I was invited to join the Cambridge Morris Men.

There was an implied condition, that I should attend one of the society's courses at Cecil Sharp House. This was, for me, a telling event. I think it was a week's course, hard and intensive, with excellent teachers strong whom I remember in particular Douglas and Helen Kennedy, Richard Callender, Miss Sinclair ('Sinner') and Amy Stoddart. It must I think have been an interesting time in the development of morris teaching. A somewhat rigid straight-armed version of Headington was still the order of the day; but some at least of the teachers were, so far as I remember, laying considerable emphasis on the differences between the dance-styles of different traditions. Field Town in particular was taught as a far more relaxed form of the Morris than Headington.

In the Spring of 1932 I danced with the Cambridge N.M. and was 'let in' to the Club; and in June went on tour with the Travelling Morrice in the Welsh Marches. I suppose one's first morris tour must inevitably be an especially treasured memory. We danced the week through from Montgomery in the north to the Black Mountains in the south: mostly Cotswold morris, but some rapper (Earsdon) too. Several of the dancers on that fine tour are happily still with us, and at least four are still dancing.

From then on until the outbreak of war (and happily from the end of the war until now) the Travelling Morrice has continued to go on tour once or twice in every year. We visited the Cotswolds in most of those pre-war years. It was not then of course an 'over-danced' area - quite the reverse. The morris was far from well-known in the country generally, though in the Cotswolds memories of it lingered and the T.M. made many valued contacts with surviving dancers or those who had met them. Away from the Cotswolds we were objects of curiosity, and occasionally of some derision, though it was always interesting to see how those who initially derided became silent and interested, and even enthusiastic, as the dancing proceeded: and of course the little children jigged around unselfconsciously as they do now. In those days the questions were - 'What are you?' 'Who are you?' 'Do you do it for a living?', and especially 'What nationality are you?' - for few could believe that the dances were English.

A second tour of the T.M. in 1932 was in the Cotswolds,

and it was on this occasion that John Coales, the Foreman of the tour, went to Chipping Campden and made contact with the Ellis brothers, leading members of the recently defunct Chipping Campden morris side - a visit which resulted in the revival of the side. I was not able to be on that tour, but the following year, 1933, the T.M. were in Campden again, dancing with the Campden Men, and I was fortunate to be able to obtain film of their dancing and of the expert fooling of Ormonde Plested. A copy of this film is now in the Ring archives. It was also on this 1933 Cotswold tour that we renewed contact with George Hathaway, of Maugersbury near Stow-on-the-Wold, who had formerly been a member of the 'young' Bledington side, and I was able to film our meeting with him. The T.M. had met him and other 'young' Bledington dancers in previous years, and had learned from them the Bledington upright capers and hooklegs as well as the Bledington Hey-away. I walked from Thaxted to join this tour, and on the way called on Joe Powell, who had been pipe-and-tabor man to the Bucknell Morris. He had broken some fingers, and could not play much for me; but his main complaint was that 'she' (a member of the E.F.D.S. H.Q. staff) had taken his pipe and given him in exchange a new one which was differently tuned.

We met Henry Hathaway, a former Longborough dancer, at Lower Swell on this tour; and also, at Longborough, George Joynes, a fiddler who had learned some of the Longborough tunes from Henry Taylor and had given them to the T.M. in 1924.

In 1934 the T.M. toured in Derbyshire and visited Winstler and met the traditional dancers there, and I made a short film record.

A major morris event in the early 30's - as now - was the annual meeting at Thaxted, where many fine dancers met together (though happily not so many as nowadays!) - but the story of Thaxted is a tale in its own right, which I hope someone will tell in *The Morris Dancer*.

In those days I was a Rover Scout, and morris dancing appeared in the list of commended scouting activities; so when in 1933 I went to an international Rover Scout Jamboree in Hungary I took my morris bells with me. I believe there were three large train-loads of British Rover Scouts trundling

their way across the Continent, but as luck would have it somewhere in France I heard the piping of a morris tune in the next compartment, and rattled my bells loudly. Thus I met Francis Fryer, of Wargrave, who was as much a beginner at the pipe and tabor as I was in dancing. The result, a week or so later, was a badly danced and played Bledington 'Ladies Pleasure' jig in the heart of a vast pine-forest near Budapest. Among the thousands of Rover Scouts, from scores of nations, at Gödöllő only the English, it seemed, knew or cared nothing for their national dances and songs - though by a peculiar quirk it was the recorded music of 'Galopede' and 'We Won't Go Home Till Morning' that blared through the forest to waken us at 5 o'clock each morning! There were great displays of national dancing, but the English contribution was confined to my one feeble jig and a pathetically lifeless presentation of Adderbury 'Lads'. My own North London Rover Crew were sufficiently ashamed by this state of affairs to let me teach them the Ampleforth Sword Dance which we presented at our annual show the following Christmas.

By this time I was a student at Barts., living near Enfield. I chose Barts. partly because I'd heard that there was a morris dance class there. I never regretted the choice, though I soon discovered that the class was held in Bath, not Barts! There was country dancing in Enfield, but not morris, and so I used to go to Cecil Sharp House from time to time. Another morris man from Enfield was Joe Whiddett, later of Greensleeves and now I believe still occasionally dancing with Ravensbourne. But most of my dancing at this time was with London Pride, a mixed morris and country dancing club which even then was of several years' standing. The story of L.P. is a saga in itself, not to be sung here - though one facet of our dancing is perhaps relevant to the present-day controversy over women's morris. There were few folk-dancing groups in those days in which women did not outnumber men, and many of the women danced morris (and some of the best teaching of morris at Cecil Sharp House was by women). Certainly in L.P. we were very glad of women dancers to make up our sides for practice purposes, yet never do I recall any suggestion that they should take part in any display of either morris or sword

dancing before an audience.

One particularly treasured memory is of a combined morris, sword and country dance tour in Somerset in 1935. It was organised by Barbara Price, and the party included Kenworthy and Joan Schofield, William Ganiford, Jack Hannah, Ernest Makepeace, Roger Pinniger and Robert Richards. Jack was a member of the Letchworth M.N., one of the Founder Clubs of the Ring; and Ernest and Roger were members of the newly-formed Clifton M.M. Ernest Makepeace later presented The Ring with its copper collecting box, which he had had made by Winsome Bartlett (see *The Morris Dancer*, No. Four). Winsome, also a member of our party and at that time at Dartington Hall, played the pipe and tabor, but our main music was from Kenworthy's pipe and tabor and sometimes his squeeze-box (accordion, I think). One of our finest dancers was Roger Pinniger, stone-deaf and needing another dancer to lead him into a jig but thereafter dancing in perfect rhythm to the piper whom he closely watched. This mixed tour was highly successful. The combination of Royton or Helston Processional, morris, Newbiggin, country dancing and high-speed running-set provided variety and spectacle for the audiences which clearly was of great appeal. After the evening shows we sang shanties, with Kenworthy as soloist - the mouth department of the foot-and-mouth disease, as Jack Hannah put it.

A number of members of both the C.M.M. and L.P. in those years are I am glad to say still with us, including Past Bagmen of The Ring Walter Abson and Robert Ross; and also Joseph Needham who, although he was not an officer of The Ring, played a very important part in its inception (see Walter Abson's articles in *The Morris Dancer*, Nos. Four and Five). Other members of the C.M.M. and L.P. who were active at that time are unhappily no longer with us, and they include Past Squires of The Ring Kenworthy Schofield and Arthur Peck, and Past Bagman Russell Wortley. The contributions of Kenworthy and Russell to The Ring and to the morris generally are I think widely known; but Arthur Peck made few appearances at Ring functions after about 1964, and his important contributions both to the dance and to the Ring, of which he was for many years Recorder as well as a Past Squire, perhaps tend to be forgotten. In the 1930's he was not only an active dancer

and teacher of the morris, but also was a leading figure in the researches which the C.M.M. were making into the morris. He became specially interested in the Hampton dancing, and produced the booklet on Hampton which many years later formed an important part of the material on that tradition in my *Handbook of Morris Dances*. He and other leading dancers of that time made frequent visits to Hampton, both at their Whit Monday performances and also by special arrangement, studying carefully the steps and sequences as well as the tunes. I was present on several such occasions, and filmed some of the dancing and instruction; but I have to confess that my enthusiasm for the morris has always been as a dancer rather than as a research man, and I filmed for entertainment and the fun of the thing rather than for the sake of making records of archival value. How I regret this now - Nevertheless the films do contain matter of considerable interest, most of which the Ring has now copied onto 8mm, stock from the original 9.5mm.

Arthur Peck's main informant was Billy Wells, who at that time was the fiddler, sometimes the Fool, and appeared to be the leading figure in, and the main spokesman for, the side. He was old, arthritic, and more or less blind, but still a beautiful dancer, neat in his footwork and graceful in body and arm-movements. The Hampton dancing was undergoing transition at that time: I suppose it always has been, but it seemed then that one was seeing an intermediate stage between the Hampton that Sharp recorded and the Hampton that we see now. In particular it was interesting to see Billy Wells clearly and repeatedly demonstrating the Hampton full capers as a four-step sequence (as Sharp described them) while other dancers were using sometimes a four-step sequence and sometimes a three-step, such as is used nowadays. Willy Ganiford, Kenneth Constable, Alec Hunter and Douglas Kennedy were present on some of these occasions in Hampton.

In 1936 there was a Ring Meeting based on Wargrave Hall, by courtesy of Francis Fryer, whom I had been so fortunate to meet en route to Budapest. This gentle, kindly man had by now I think given up his pipe and tabor (he had been gassed in the first World War and was very breathless) but retained his inter-

est in the morris and played an accordion; and with others he had founded the Wargrave Morris Men, an inaugural member club of the Ring. The main show of this meeting was in Abingdon. Billy Wells was there, this time fooling and dancing. It was here too that, while I was filming the dancing in the old market place, a little old man in a dark coat danced in with handkerchiefs in his hands. He was one of the Hemmings family, a survivor of the defunct Abingdon side, and his appearance led, with the encouragement of Kenworthy and Francis, to the resurgence of the Abingdon side the following year.

Perhaps of greatest interest, because so far as I know it is unique, is my film of the Eynsham dancers, taken mainly in 1937, when they were visited by the Travelling Morrice. There had I think been some contact between Kenworthy Scho-field and Sid Russell, the Captain of the Eynsham men, prior to 1937, and they had I believe, though I am not sure, turned out to dance in the King George Vth Silver Jubilee celebrations in 1935. They certainly danced for the Coronation celebrations in 1937. Their dancing was somewhat ragged and ill-rehearsed, but nevertheless their remarkable vigour and large limb-movements made their dancing very distinct and impressive. They also put on their version of the Mummers' Play, with the usual death and revival theme, but no characters so far as I recall other than the morris dancers themselves.

I hope that these rather diffuse notes of my memories of morris events of the 30's will lead other men to say their piece - for there are still many survivors from that time, including indeed a number who are still dancing vigorously.



From Past Bagman of The Ring Bob Ross, 1st December, 1980.

In No.5 of The Morris Dancer you asked for the names of men still alive who danced the morris before the institution of the Ring. A number of names immediately sprang to my mind, but I have hesitated to write to you with a list that I knew would be incomplete and that might, by its omissions, give

offence to those left out. However, as no-one else has come forward, I send this partial one of men who were dancing before October, 1934 and are still active, to a greater or lesser extent, in the morris. It consists primarily of members, ordinary or honorary, of the first club to which I belonged and of which, like all men admitted to it, I am still a member - the Cambridge Morris Men, a founder club of the Ring. Here, then, is my list:

Walter Abson: Lionel Bacon: Arthur Caton:

John Coales: Percival Hornblower: Geoffrey Metcalf:

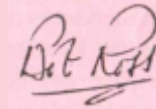
Gordon Neil: William Palmer: Bob Ross:

Robert Saunders: Morris Sunderland: Jack Thompson:

Webber (S.Webster-Jones)

with apologies to those I should have included but have missed.

I could readily produce a list two or three times as long of men who started dancing before 1934 and continued for longer or shorter periods but no longer dance the morris, but I will mention Joseph Needham, who played a prominent part in the founding of the Ring, and three men from the traditional Chipping Campden side, Don Ellis, Lionel Ellis and Henry Hart



Issue No.6 reprinted Fred Breunig's Editorial from the American Morris Newsletter of July 1979. Issue No.7, of 7th March, 1980, carried some comments on that Editorial by Past Squire of The Ring Lionel Bacon: the following is from Fred, dated 3rd October, 1980:-

I am glad to see that the reprinting of my Editorial re "Overdancing" produced at least one thoughtful response! I would like to clarify a few things to which Lionel Bacon referred, however. First of all, I believe that Dr.Bacon and I agree on several basic points. We both enjoy dancing and dancing well. His description of the ideal morris club matches my own: "a fellowship of enthusiasts" deriving dancing pleasure

"from greater expertise and from greater audience appreciation." Regarding the Editorial, though, he should remember that it was written for an American audience to suggest consideration of England's problems with "overdancing" as we develop the morris in America. It outlined one man's (and one club's) approach to dancing here in the U.S. which uses a variety of ceremonial dance forms to match different seasons of the year. Rather than performing Cotswold from April to October (thus needing "as much variety in the dance as the Club can perform well") we dance 1.a limited Cotswold repertoire in the Spring; 2.a Northwest clog processional in the July 4 Independence Day parades; and 3. longsword in autumn (it is too cold to dance outdoors in winter). This does not address England's problems, but I never intended to do so: (it was my impression that Russell Wortley had suggested the reprinting of my editorial because it spoke to one of his favorite topics: relating one's morris to appropriate seasons.) The other point which needs clarification is that Dr.Bacon implies that I am one of "some men (who) have laid great emphasis on the ritual nature of the Morris..as a fertility rite" and would advocate adherence only to correct "practices as are known of the chosen traditional side." While the ceremonial nature of the different forms of the Morris is indeed important and rewarding to me (e.g., dancing in a particular community at the same time of year every year and celebrating the changing seasons) I too am skeptical of the "ritual" origins of the dance. Furthermore, I believe that the kind of strict guidelines that Dr. Bacon mentioned would create a mere museum piece, stagnant and unchanging. Actually, the two of us agree that the Morris must be alive and adaptable, enjoyable and meaningful to the dancer. We seem to disagree only on the means to achieve this end; he prefers to present Cotswold morris with a variety of different traditions "to any audience which will appreciate it, at any time of the year." I like to change the kind of dancing with the season, presenting colorful lively Cotswold in the spring, Northwest in summer parades, and longsword (with mumm-ers play, I might add) when the earth is dying in the fall.

I hope this is not too long; I appreciated Dr. Bacon's thoughts and ideas, but I felt he missed the mark on the two I mentioned above.

Best wishes to you all

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