

# THE MORRIS DANCER

No.FOURTEEN \*\*\*\*\*NOVEMBER 1982

In sending his warm Christmas Greetings to the readership, the Editor renews his thanks to all those who have sent magazine material during the past four years; and renews the plea for yet more, so that he has adequate freedom of choice for each issue.

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He offers warm greetings to the men dancing out on Boxing Day - generally, for a charity.

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

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MY LORD OF SHERBORNE'S JIG

The collectors found that this jig, although not a favourite, was widely known around Stow, being remembered by dancers from Sherborne, Longborough and Lower Swell, Bledington, Oddington and Shipton. Fiddler Mason gave a version of Lumps of Plum Pudding for this title. Its fame was widespread enough for Jinky Wells' Flowers of Edinburgh jig to be taken for it, because of the kneeling element or perhaps because the Ascott Flowers jig was the same? The tune was known as far away as Headington Quarry. Its age is impossible to guess - the peerage was created in the late 13th century - but this may only account for one local title. It has steps in 6/4, the galliard rhythm, but so many galliard steps are known that it is not surprising that similarities can be found. One can not generalise about survivals on the evidence of only one dance. The Cotswold source will remain unknown till some literary evidence appears. The jig is not structured as a galliard. It is usually sets of 3 or 4 "capers" in 6/4 time, each set different, and each set preceded by a Foot-up. This is similar only to the common form of Shepherd's Hey, which is believed, with no evidence, to be a very old dance.

Musically there are 6 beats to a "caper" instead of the usual Cotswold morris 4, but really this is only five steps when the actual time for the caper is allowed. Because a dancer can only stay off the ground so long in a caper, this suggests that the 6 beats occur at such a pace that the spring takes just as long as in a 4 beat sequence. Thus.

5/4     1 2 3 4 5 6     J. J. J. d. J.  
          . . . Ω     musically     J J J J     It can not quite match.  
 1/4     1 2 3 4     (Ω = spring as in C#)

The only real indications of steps is at Sherborne (Bacon p 290). Even then the ms source is full of alternatives. Thus,

(a) /x x x/t kneel - /; (b) /l r l / R 1/; (c) /l rH l / R 1 / or with the more normal change of foot /l rH r /L r1/ or alternatively / 1 rH rH / R 1/.

The fact that the spring occupies two beats of the 6 means that the tune allows only one caper, not two. At Longborough (Bacon p262) it is suggested that the first "caper" was /x x x / kneel - kneel / and so by analogy the others are, / x x x /L r/ and /rtb t r / L r/ (It does not take much to stretch the tune to make it two plain capers). The same argument extends to Bledington and Oddington. It should be noted that the / x x x / L r/ gets very close to the normal caper described by the young Bledington side. There is reason to believe that in the 1390's there was only one side in the Stow area, drawing on all the villages. But what does one make of the dance at Headington? It was called by Trafford "Shepherd's Heel and Toe". The tune is given here along with that from Bledington and Shipton-on-Stour.

BLEDINGTON - "Lord Sherborne's Jig", col. Schofield from G Hathaway  
 HEADINGTON - "Shepherd's Heel & Toe", col. Carey from Trafford  
 SHIPTON-ON-STOUR - "Sherborne Jig", col. Sharp from Sturch

R. L. DOMMETT © 1982

There will be a Vaughan Williams Memorial Library Lecture on Friday the 21st of January, 1933, at 7.30 p.m., by Roy Judge, on "D'Arcy Ferris and the Bidford Morris." It will be given at Cecil Sharp House, 2, Regent's Park Road, London NW1 7AY, tel. 01 485 2206

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 \*The MORRIS DANCER, No.13, August, 1982, carried an article by Paul Davenport on THE MORRIS AT LOWER SWELL. Comment upon that article has come from Roy Dommett, and Philip Beath-Coleman :-

Philip Heath-Coleman, 16th August, 1982

I should like to add the following to the pieces on Lower Swell and Mary Neal's notes which appeared in Morris Dancer 13.

LOWER SWELL The Lower Swell tunes which Paul Davenport lists in "The Morris at Lower Swell" were all (with the exception, as far as I can tell, of 'Jockie to the Fair', but the addition of 'Country Gardens' and 'Highland Mary') written up by Cecil Sharp in his fair-copy "Folk Dance Tunes", copies of which are held by the Vaughan Williams Library at Cecil Sharp House. With the exception of some detail about 'The Marriage Vow', the only information (if any) is the classification ('corner-dance' or whatever) given by Paul. Sharp collected the tunes from the fiddler William Hathaway of Lower Swell, in Cheltenham in March/April and August 1907 (though it should be noted that in his "Field Note-Books" four are attributed to one Jim Hathaway). Sharp's reference numbers are 1269-76, 1301-07, 1372-75. The "Folk Dance Tunes" contain details of sources and other information not included in Sharp's rough "Field Note-Books" (from which Paul worked,) and they reveal that the 'Hey diddle dis' ditty, the detailed version of the jig 'Princess Royal', and the description of a costume, for which no sources are given in the "F.N.B.s", were, in fact, collected from Harry Taylor, the Longborough foreman, and not from a Lower Swell man. The same is true of the 'caperless' 'Swaggering Boney'.

There are slight differences between the "F.N.B." and the "F.D.T." transcriptions of the jig 'Princess Royal' (the latter being the same as that to be found in vol. IV of the "Morris Book" - such variation between Sharp's mss and the M.B.s is not uncommon), but their identity is borne out by Sharp's ref. no. - 2484 which appears by both. The ref. no. for 'Hey diddle dis' is likewise 2483, and the tune precedes 'Princess Royal' in both the "F.N.B." and the "F.D.T.". (According to the "F.D.T." Sharp collected them from Harry Taylor in May 1910.)

On a lesser point it was Dennis Hathaway of Chipping Campden who "picked up" a tune/dance ('Constant Billy') "at Longborough".

I should like to make up for having thus thrown some cold water on certain aspects of Paul's postulated Lower Swell by

agreeing that some of Wm. Hathaway's limited dance descriptions (e.g., 'Cuckoo's Nest' and 'Gallant Hussar' as corner dances) are surely worth pursuing, and there is indeed a likelihood that the Lower Swell dancing was similar to that at Longborough. Indeed, Harry Taylor used to lead the Lower Swell dancers when he was there, and Roy Dommett has suggested that there was an 'area' style based on that of the 'master'. A number of Wm. Hathaway's tunes are included under Longborough in Bacon: e.g., 'Gallant Hussar', 'Cuckoo's Nest' (the alternative a-music) and 'Marriage Vow' (the second version of 'Saturday Night').

This last, as I have said, has the least patchy description of the Swell dances in Sharp's mss. The "F.N.B." have: "all stand in a string, a sort of side-step" and later "In single file (all 6 of them), 1st man dances towards fiddler half-side-stepping (sic) and half-capering: side-stepping is 123 cross feet then 123 straight - repeat crossing other way, right foot first" (the last statement is apart, and clearly relates to the very first step of the side-step sequence). In the "F.D.T." (no. 1372) this has become: "six men in single file. First advances and recedes towards fiddler, side-stepping and half-capering".

The description is interesting, in that it includes side-stepping - absent from the Longborough version collected from Harry Taylor by the Travelling Morrice (see Bacon p.261). Although Sharp's description suggests that the Swell dancers started with side-stepping, it will be noted that the Version of the tune noted from Hathaway is 'back-to-front' (in comparison with other versions) - i.e., the B-music precedes the A-music. This suggests that the side-stepping and half-capering accompanied the B-music, as would be expected from comparison with the Bledington version, which the Hathaway Swell dance seems thus to have more closely resembled than it did the Longborough version (though there is always the possibility that Harry Taylor had merely forgotten the side-stepping).

HEADINGTON What I think must be a misprint confuses one of the points in Mary Neal's Notes (published in Morris Dancer 13 courtesy of Roy Dommett). Further to his claim that Kimber (and the reference here is to William Kimber the younger rather

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than to Richard Kimber, whom Neal mentions earlier) left the side-step out of the shake-up (foot-up) in 'Jockey', Joe Trafford also told Mary Neal that he (Kimber) made the "same omission", not "some omission" in several other dances. Trafford's observation would seem to be confirmed by details of the dances collected by Miss E.D.Herschel from James Dandridge, who told her he had been taught by Joe Trafford. Dandridge's version of the jig 'Old Mother Oxford' includes side-steps in the fifth and sixth bars (or equivalent for slow capers) of both figures. His version of 'Laudanum Bunches' (which he called 'Oddington Bunches' - the reference being to Oddington on Otmoor, presumably, and not the Oddington near Bledington more familiar to revivalists) likewise has side-steps in the fifth and sixth bars (or equivalent) of each corner figure. William Kimber did ordinary double-stepping in these bars (see Morris Books/Bacon). When Sharp told the Williams Kimber, father and son, that Mary Neal had told him that Trafford and Dandridge had taught William Kimber the younger, they claimed together that the latter had in fact taught Dandridge. However, the agreement between Trafford's comments and Dandridge's dancing, as against the details of Kimber's own dancing, suggests otherwise. It would appear that Trafford taught Dandridge, as the latter claimed.

I realize I am straying (once more!) into Bob Grant's territory. Perhaps he has some non-collector-derived information which might have a bearing here.

If I might lastly refer once more to Paul Davenport's item, he reveals that Sharp mentions a Fieldtown dance called 'The Duke of Grafton', and there is a march of that name in the seventh edition (appendix) of Playford's "English Dancing Master". However, might there perhaps (and this is only offered as a very long shot) have been some confusion with "The Marquis of Granby", a name of the march used for the Fieldtown procession?

Philip Heath-Coleman

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Roy Donnett, 17th August, 1982

A CRITIQUE OF "THE MORRIS AT LOWER SWELL"

An article by a key member of the Morris Ring Archival Comm-

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ittee which arises from the archival activity is important. The objective, despite the disclaimer, is to combine the results of recent archival activity with the skills and intuitions of experienced performers of the morris. However archival activity is most effective when all the available information is used. The author has found the problem met by all users of Sharp's field material that it is not annotated by "tradition". The material in the Field Note Books has to be sorted by relating to the corresponding entries in his MSS, which is the properly written up source. This relating was first done by Alex Helm 20 years ago, and can now be found in the Folk Lore Society Library. Then I identified the dance material and produced a master index that was first written for the Morris Ring Advisory Council 20 years ago and available ever since in the Vaughan Williams Library. Much use has been made of the material in recent years, despite the impression given, and I for one have written brief accounts, brief because that is all there is, on Brailes, Forest of Dean, Hoke, North Leigh, Steeple Claydon and Withington, sticking very closely to the collectors' own words.

There are many pitfalls in collating material, usually from ignorance of the background. For example the "Stretton-on-Fosse" morris mentioned not for the first time by the Archival Committee is nothing more than San Bennett's 1906 Ilmington side, none the less important but already included in Bacon under Ilmington 1906. Most relevant Ilmington material has been available for many years in "Mss Material on the Ilmington Morris 1805-1930" which was prepared for the Advisory Council and fairly widely circulated. This document quotes from Sharp's and Bennett's letters about the side (Daily News 25.4.10, 29.4.10, 10.5.10 and Morning Post 25.5.10) and from Sam's letters to Douglas Kennedy, all of which are available in the Vaughan Williams Library. Sam's side used to dance at the Stretton Flower Show. One year the side would not dance while Sharp was there because of his adverse comments on their standard of dancing in the competition at the Corn Exchange, Stratford. But as Sharp said, he already had the dances in his collection but he would not dream of publishing them.

Much of the available background material to the Longhorough

and Lower Swell tradition was sold as notes at the Ring Instructional in 1964 and an update, including Keith Chandler's work on kinship and newspaper reports, is to be published in serial form in Morris Matters. There is much to suggest that there was only one team between the two places and perhaps it was really the "Lower Swell" tradition originally. There is a newspaper advert in the Moreton Free Press of 19.6.86 for the "Longborough and Lower Swell Morris." A draft of this revised paper was sent to the Morris Ring Archives. The sources quoted, William (Bill) and Jim Hathaway were seen by Sharp on 30.3.07, 4.4.07 and 1.8.07. There is no material for 1909 that I am aware of that is relevant to Lower Swell or Longborough nor am I aware that these two Hathaways were ever seen again by Sharp. In the Field Tune Books for 1910 volumes 1 and 2, for the period April and May there is Longborough material from Harry Taylor that matches the material in the Sharp MSS and appears to me to be the smite material for the dances in the article.

The material for this period was used by L. Saunders of the Westminster M.M. in evolving the WMM view of Longborough and some notes by him were available before the 1964 Ping Instructional which emphasised the movement and caper variants. The list of Hathaway tunes omits the 18th title which presumably is "Country Gardens", although the tune given to Sharp was actually "Highland Mary". Both the Hathaways, John Mason and Harry Taylor seem to have made the same confusion when talking to collectors. We think that John Meson of Stow married the daughter of the old Longborough fiddler Richard Webb and as the morris was kept within families he probably was associated with the Longborough and Lower Swell morris. Mason had a Black Joke jig "as played by Bill Hathaway". Mason also said that Highland Mary was a handkerchief dance but sometimes sticks. Taylor stated that there were no stick dances at Longborough but Chipping Campden called their stick dance at one time the "Longborough Stick Dance" so perhaps there was a time, either early or late, when they did not bother to carry sticks. Sharp published Constant Billy, London Pride and Marriage Vow in Folk Dance Airs 1909. He used Constant Billy for Taylor's Longborough dance and Maid of the Mill for the Ilmington dance. This hardly counts as using freely. Jockey to the Fair did not

come via Sharp but through Bill Hathaway's friend Stagg (Spragg). He copied out the tunes Sharp had noted and later added Jockey. He gave the tunebook to Helen Kennedy and this includes in its annotations

Marriage Vow - sidestep and hey dance, also called Saturday Night

Country Gardens - called it Morning Star

Highland Mary - called it Country Gardens and said it was a jig

Young Collins - a stick dance

This adds Highland Mary and Morning Star as possible tunes. If one ignores what I believe to be Taylor's material then I do not find that Constant Billy or Young Collins are handclapping dances or that Shepherd's Hey is a handclapping jig. My note against Greensleeves says "over baccapipes finishing up with the broom stem dance." Again I have no note that tunes came from elsewhere, only that Sharp was identifying the place names in titles, or cross referencing to similar tunes collected three years later at Sherborne.

Sharp had from Jim Hathaway that side stepping was 123 cross feet, then 123 straight, repeat crossing other way, right foot first. Sharp's MSS (Tune 1372) repeats this in a more confusing way. As Taylor had the different sidestep dances done with small variations no general deduction is possible. In 1907 Sharp was still three years away from his major morris collecting and hence his detailed understanding of the varieties of morris movement. When he first met Harry Taylor he was still meshed in the terminology of the Esperance Club days, for example "come and go" for half gip. One interesting point is the use of "hey" for half hey and "double hey" for whole hey by informants. The Field Notes are often closer to the traditional terminology than the Morris Books which as Sharp pointed out had to include rationalisations.

The dance notations contain more than "a certain amount of reconstruction" - why spoil good honest inspiration by expressing it thus? Why say a "dance consisted of" when the mss only said "morris off, ring once or twice, making obedience and then straight off."? Also why say "but the half capers appear to be missing which means that each distinctive figure is a fighting

type" when what is really meant is that "only fighting is mentioned so let us ignore other possibilities and fight every time." The Travelling Morrice found that Sharp had not collected all the corner movements of the Longborough dance, but the kicking chorus was included in Shari's MSS, but not the Field Notes.

Where is the mss evidence for the suggested or the Longborough half rounds stepping? Does the author intend one 4 step, ft.j, 4pC because "2 bar 4 step, j and caper" or "2 bar 4 step, ft.j and 4pC" do not add up to 4 bars of movement. Gallant Hussar is not similar to William and Nancy, Bledington, which is either corners half through or couples two by two.

The mss says of Marriage Vow,

1. The Marriage Vow is a morris. All stand in a string, a sort of sidestep.
2. In single file (all 6 of them) first man dances towards fiddler, half side stepping and half capering.

Under entry Tune 1372 Sharp says,

3. 6 men in single file. First advances and recedes towards fiddler, side stepping and half capering.

This could imply the second half of the Bledington movements or even the whole of it, but, most significantly, it is the only piece of information that is not like Taylor's dances.

I am prepared to be told that some of my transcripts are incomplete or inaccurate and that not all of my comments are justified and I hope someone will correct any errors of fact. However, I do not see why accurate scholarship and practical inspiration can not go hand in hand. Also I think it is a good concept to combine alternatives within a tradition with some new ideas to provide yet another starting point which must surely have been the traditional process.

R. L. DOMMETT 17.8.82

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The August, 1982, Issue carried Pruw Boswell's THE NORTH WEST MORRIS DANCE. Roy Smith, of the Leyland M.M., writes:-

I'm sure that a number of points will be raised in connection

with Pruw Boswell's article on 'The North West Morris Dance' - I'll restrict myself to the following:

1. I am most surprised at the claim regarding 'Lancashire' teams, that the only ones which continued to perform up to 1914 were two of the Preston juvenile teams and the Horwich Prize Medal Morris Dancers. Certainly Leyland Morris Dancers performed up to that date AND promptly reappeared after World War I, in 1919! (Sadly, many of the pre-WWI teams were not seen again.)
2. The sub-division of the North West into 'Lancashire Plain', 'Cheshire', and the areas around Manchester, misses out on teams which have existed, or still exist, further north and east e.g., Clitheroe, Clayton-le-Moors, Colne etc.

I suppose that if we were to accept the Ribble Valley as a part of the Lancashire Plain, then Clitheroe could come under the 'Plain' division. However, accepting Clitheroe under that heading would then possibly negate the claim that the morris dance in Lancashire "does not date any further back than 1890" for there is a claim that a Clitheroe team was dancing from the mid - 1880's. Gets complicated, doesn't it!?!!

3. Referring to the teams of the south east, the areas around Manchester, I'm perplexed by the statement that "the most popular form of headgear was an ordinary hat." Would this be a bowler hat? A straw Panama hat? A straw 'boater'? A cricket cap? A flat cap? A beret, or a Tam O'Shanter? How 'ordinary' was 'ordinary'?

Roy Smith 7th October, 1982

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The July Issue of The American Morris Newsletter gives a whole page to the itinerary of the HAMPTON TRADITIONAL MORRIS 1962 U.S. TOUR, from Wednesday July 28th, when the team arrived at J.F. Kennedy Airport on flight B.A.175, to Tuesday August 10th, when it left on flight B.A.176. The Editor would welcome an account of the tour.

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CHIPPING CAMPDEN, on Saturday 4th July, 1982, wrote John Jenner, Squire of the Cambridge M.M., came "over for the day to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our first meeting (actually the

Travelling Morrice) and joint show with them on 19th July, 1932, in Campden. During the morning we danced in Cambridge as part of the Cambridge Festival, and were stopped by a local bobby who knew nothing of the six two hour shows of folk dancing organised by the E.F.D.S.S. under the auspices of the City Council and was "stopping them all for obstruction." So the men went off for some ale. Anyway, we came out after twenty minutes and all was well. (Needless to say the Police knew all about the arrangements.)"....."After tea and another show in Cambridge, without the E.F.D.S.S., we went to Comberton, the last of the traditional Molly villages in southern Cambridgeshire, for a show lasting three-quarters of an hour at the crossroads, during which a side danced Dearest Dicky, led by John Coales, who had led the T.M. side fifty years before; and two other men who had danced on that occasion. (Two other men who had danced in Campden before the war, and I, as Squire, made up the side; in fact, another of the original men was present, but not dressed.) Cyril Papworth danced his Comberton Broom Dance, and just before Bonny Green Garters we all stood for a few moments in silence, in memory of Russell Wortley, who had died on this spot two and a half years before. The large crowd had clearly appreciated the whole show. We went to Barton for another show; then to the village hall for food, ale, song and dance for 26 Cambridge men and a dozen from Campden; who left soon after midnight to return home in the usual condition of men after joint evenings together - tired and happy.

JOHN JENNER 8th August, 1982

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Issue 9, March 1981, gave details of the illustrated RUSSELL WORTLEY book, containing 17 or 18 of his articles, and an extensive bibliography of the Morris Dance. Continuing sales have decided the Cambridge Morris Men to print a further 250 copies; they have "further notes and errata", states John Jenner. Write to him at Springfield, 47, Spring Lane, Basingbourn, Royston, Herts SG8 5HT

Readers will recall the research done by KEITH CHANDLER and MIKE HEANEY, Oxfordshire men, with newspaper files - see Issue Eight, November, 1980: Nine, March, 1981: Ten, August, 1981: Twelve, March, 1982. Mike Heaney's latest list of extracts includes:

Jackson's Oxford Journal 1828/5/24 p3

WHITSUN ALE AT MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD

The preparations for a renewal of that enchanting Festival, called a WHITSUN ALE, at that pleasure-devoted time, Whitsuntide, are great indeed. Casks of home-brewed beer, as fine and exhilarating as the fountains of Bacchus, are provided! and Ceres, from her bounteous hoard, has selected the finest flour, to be made into rich cakes for the fair, and to be carried away with triumphant joy by the sprightly MORRIS-DANCERS; while ribbons, of more various colours than those displayed in the rainbow, will wave in silken streamers to the Sun - gay presents for each favoured lass on these delightful holidays!

Haste, then, ye friends of rural pleasure and innocent mirth, and again pay your homage in the pleasing temples of festivity and love! An excellent hand of musicians will attend, to add delightful harmony, and complete the fete.

Disorder and riot will not be admitted into our shades; but gentle peace, appropriate demeanour, and wakeful diligence, will be the guardians and attendants of those festive boards.

Milton, May 8, 1828

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BERNARD OAKLEY, Coventry M.M. and the Coventry Mummers, wrote, 2nd October, 1981, "My own interest is mainly historical nowadays, and I would appreciate more information on the early references to Long Sword and N.W. Morris - Cotswold is comparatively well documented. Also, a good account of the early morris revival (Post WWI) needs collecting before it is too late."

Past Squire of the Ring DOUGLAS KENNEDY, asked about the immediate Post WWI period, wrote, 12th October, 1961,

"Of course your Coventry 'Old Hand' is right. There is a gap between the Great War and the emergence of the Oxford and Cambridge M.M. (which have both been historically recorded) and

the other clubs then in the making later to join up to make the Ring.

After the war I was de-mobbed in 1919 and able to link up actively with Cecil Sharp, who was quickly on his old warpath of lecturing on Folk Song and Folk Dance with illustrations and re-establishing the propaganda work of the EFDS. We could raise a tolerably decent team of mixed country dancers - the Flamborough Sword, a very feeble Rapper, and Morris Jigs, but no 'Side' like the pre-war one. The main recruiting machinery was the succession of Holiday Courses at Easter, Summer and Christmas. The Easter was moveable; York, Scarborough, Exeter, Bath, Aldeburgh etc. Christmas was concentrated in London. The Summer, formerly at Stratford on A., we had to shift from the old venue when the old Theatre was burnt down and until the new one was built.

To these courses came individual men from up and down the country and at them we screened our potential public performers. Their coaching was largely dependent on my own efforts supervised at first by Cecil Sharp. After his death in 1924 the responsibility fell heavily on me; but I was helped increasingly by men who were themselves promoting the Club sides; e.g., Schofield, Arthur Heffer, Ken Constable and others. I recollect in Sharp's time while he was conducting an Easter School at Exeter I was in charge of one at Scarborough where the N. Skelton sword dancers first appeared to show us Longsword tradition. At Sharp's School were the Fox brothers, Peter and Roger; and Jack Bergel (killed in World War II). At mine were Schofield, Callender, Billy Lee.

The Summer Schools were moved first to Cheltenham in the School premises, and then we had a good Morris side with Willy Thorold, Heffer, Phillips-Barker, both Foxes and a new recruit, Alec Hunter, Honeybone.

But my memory is now become very episodic and I need stimulus to prompt its working. Perhaps some queries by yourself or others would produce more information.

DOUGLAS

Two other men long in the Morris, WILLIAM PALMER and CHARLIE WILLIAMS, asked for their recollections of early days, wrote the following:

William Palmer, November, 1981

Some early memories of the Morris

Letchworth I first saw the Morris in 1909, a side of boys or young men dancing some Headington dances at the opening of a new school (which enables me to confirm the year). I learned some Morris at school a year or so later, and in 1911 I took part as a member of a side of little boys in one or more public shows, including the local celebrations for the coronation of King George V.

From 1906 Letchworth had May Day revels, on the model of those at Ickwell Green, Bedfordshire, where the tradition goes back to the sixteenth century at least. From 1908 the Letchworth May Day always included some Morris by man or boys, or both, as well as other dancing. It seems that Mary Neale was a considerable inspiration to the Morris in Letchworth in these early days. To me, as a child, she was only a shadowy figure who visited the place occasionally. Much more recently, about 1933, I met her as an old lady when she came to watch the Travelling Morrice, and I had a long talk with her about early times.

After a lapse during the Great War, Morris was revived in Letchworth about 1920. Alec Hunter was the leading spirit, and he trained one of the best Morris sides of the revival. He danced with the Cambridge Men from time to time, and he also made contact with the Thaxted Men. During the early and mid nineteen twenties, the Letchworth Men were much in demand to give shows, mostly in gardens and sometimes in village halls. A few other sides of Morris Men were started from Letchworth, in such Places as Ashwell and Stevenage. At Whitsun 1921 Alec took the Letchworth Men, and women for country dancing, to join with the Thaxted Men for Morris and other dancing. This was the first of a series which still continues, though latterly not at Whitsun, with camping in the Vicarage garden, dancing in the streets of the town, Church on Sunday in our Morris clothes, and country dancing on the Vicarage lawn on Sunday



afternoons.

Cecil Sharp came to Letchworth on one or two occasions, and in August 1923 a large group of Morris and country dancers went to the last summer school he ran, at Aldeburgh in Suffolk. My wife, Dora Palmer (nee Sunderland) has a folk dance certificate signed by Sharp, which she won at this School. Cecil Sharp House was being planned and built at this time, and at many of our shows we collected towards the funds for building and furnishing the House.

Thaxted Morris was started at Thaxted in 1910 by the Vicar, Conrad Noel, and his wife Miriam. They were much inspired and helped by Mary Neale, and she took them to Cambridge in 1911 for their first public show. Morris weekends started with Letchworth and Thaxted in 1921, but from 1927 Cambridge, and later other clubs, joined them.

It was at the 1934 Morris weekend at Thaxted that the Morris Ring was constituted, and they have continued ever since much as we held them in the nineteen twenties. In those days Thaxted was a quiet country town, with no through traffic. It was pervaded by the pageantry of the Church and of the Morris, and with haunting music of the Church and of the Morris and Playford dances.

Ardeley Among the many villages in which we went to dance from Letchworth was Ardeley, where the Vicar and his wife were enthusiasts. I have a bright memory of a show on their lawn in 1924. Then in 1926 there was a gathering of Morris Men there, the first in which more than two clubs took part. This was followed in 1927 by a similar extension of the Morris weekends at Thaxted, so setting the pattern of the future Ring Meetings.

My memories of dancing in the middle nineteen-twenties are idyllic: cycling through quite unspoiled lanes and countryside, dancing in beautiful gardens, and pretty girls of whom the acknowledged prime was she who later became my wife.

William

(William Palmer was in the Travelling Morrice side at Chipping Campden in 1932; and danced in the Dearest Dicky shown at Comberton in 1982: see P.12 of this Issue.)

Charlie Williams, November, 1981.

Letchworth Morris

1908 has been mentioned as the earliest date for the Letchworth Morris. My first recollections of Morris were back in 1912 when a team of men from Cambridge performed at May Day celebrations at Letchworth (Garden City), held on the Haward Park, when the May Queen was crowned with all ceremony. There were Maypoles and Country Dancing (Folk Dancing was not the vogue in those days).

The elementary schools had country dance classes in the curriculum, starting in the infants, 5 - 10 years. The first demonstration I took part in was dancing Goddesses, at a parents' afternoon. At the May Days we were rigged out in green and brown (gnomes) for dances. During the First World War May Days were curtailed. In 1918 we were formed into a sword team, starting with Flamborough, and working on to Bean Setting and Bampton Shepherds Hey. In 1919 the Letchworth Folk Dancers performed a Nativity Play, the main performance being held at the Pixmoor Institute on Boxing Day, and around the villages, proceeds going to help unemployed; yes, we had them then, just after the war. Morris dance was Shepherds Hey in the shepherds' adoration by the manger. Mumming plays were also performed incorporating sword dances, and Morris.

A weekly country class, and Morris class was started; this was held at Norton Road School. The Letchworth Folk Dance Society was formed about this time, and guest instructors were invited from the E.F.D.S., at various times. We also had the privilege of visits from Cecil Sharp, Douglas Kennedy, Arthur Heffer, Tommy Adkins, Kenworthy Schofield, among others.

Letchworth Folk Dancers first visited Thaxted, camping in the orchard of the Vicarage and the Barn, in 1920 at Whitsun weekend. This was an annual fixture, until the Ring was inaugurated. Letchworth Morris team was very widely travelled, members demonstrating all over the country on behalf of the E.F.D.S., in county centres, and places like the Lake District, Hereford, Bristol, Southsea, London and Colchester. We also performed on the turf in Wembley Stadium. I think it was the "Keep Fit" organization; Prunella Stack seems to be a bell that rings

concerning this; one Morris team in a great expanse. Performances were also given at the Imperial Institute, Kensington, and in the Royal Albert Hall. One E.F.D.S. shin-dig provides an interesting memory of a heavy night in 1929, when we visited Sheffield for a ceremonial St. George's Day Dinner; the Baron of Beef was danced in to 'I'll Go and Enlist For a Sailor', by T. Adkins and Richard Callender, Kenworthy Schofield playing pipe and tabor. The ceremony closed with Trunkles and Bonny Green Garters.

It will be noted that sneakers were used up until about 1930's for Morris dancing, when we developed the musical side to individual instruments, necessary for al-fresco dancing as in low pubs, which was a bit de trop in the E.F.D.Soc! Hard shoes, Road work, and Feasts and Ring Meetings were on their way. Today instruments are taken for granted as part of the Morris, as was always traditionally; but in revival times pianos were most usual, violins occasionally, sometimes a concertina. When the rapper teams came south to show their prowess, with melodions, and the availability of accordions in the late 'twenties and early 'thirties, Thaxted and Letchworth were some of the first teams to avail themselves of same.

The pipe and tabor was almost an event, until Kenworthy Schofield got together with a musician from a visiting Spanish dance team, and developed the metal version with its more powerful performance. Drums were also connected with this event, a memorable performance at the Royal Albert Hall of "The Bolero" by a large contingent from Spain (1929 - 1932?).

Over the years from 1919 Letchworth sword teams produced Flamborough, Kirby, Sleights, Earsdon, Askham Richard, Handsworth, Winlaton, and Grenoside.

Charlie (C.H. Williams)

The Sheffield occasion mentioned by Charlie was the Festival Banquet of that city's branch of the Royal Society of St. George. He sent the menu; the centre page is reproduced here. Douglas Kennedy was there; and wrote, 15/12/81, "I recollect some patches of that remarkable Sheffield gathering. At first the names (on the menu) puzzled me, apart from the actual Morris

## THE CEREMONY

The Traditional English Baron of Beef will be carried by those responsible for its preparation escorted by Morris Men and a Guard of Honour.

The Procession will be headed by the piper and two men dancing the Morris Dance "I'll go and enlist for a Sailor."

The Baron of Beef immediately follows, closely attended by—  
Two Drawers with Tankards,  
Two Serving-maids bearing the Carvers,  
The Master Steward with the Flagon.

On either side are Morris Men, with a Trumpeter and Escort of Beef Eaters.

When the Baron is placed before the Chairman

The Company will sing:

"The Roast Beef of Old England."

The Serving-maids present the Carvers to the Chairman.

The Chairman addresses the Vice-Chairman, who replies, on behalf of the Company, in suitable terms.

In giving the Company the motto of the Society,

"St. George for Merrie England."

The Chairman indicates the dispensation of English Hospitality by Cutting the Joint when

The Escort Salutes,

The Trumpeter sounds a Tucket.

The Chairman then completes the indication of Hospitality by handing a tankard of Ale to each cook.

In the age-old ceremonials of England were embodied dances to influence the gods to grant plenty and to celebrate a fruitful Harvest and a Successful Hunt. It is therefore appropriate that this Ceremony should be concluded with a

Morris Set Dance and finally the "Trunkles"

Morris Processional "Green Garters"

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## MAIN OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY.

1.—To encourage and strengthen the Spirit of Patriotism amongst all classes of Englishmen, irrespective of Creed or Party.

2.—To revive in every part of the World, and especially throughout the Empire, the recognition and Celebration of our English National Festival on St. George's Day, April 23rd, which date is also the Anniversary of the birth and death of Shakespeare.

'side', which was mainly Cambridge apart from me and Callender, viz., John Oliver, Coales, Schofield, Adkins. Hugh Nicholson was a Commander R.N., who ran the 'Party' (his synonym for a Branch) in Sheffield. He was also a Director of Hadfields the firm that made the 16" shells for the Navy; more importantly in this connection he was a Cutler, and had organized our visit. I suspect that Nicholson had persuaded the Cutlers to introduce the Morris as part of the English Tradition (of St. George etc.)

I recollect my own reluctance to be personally involved, for 1929 was a heavy year. The C.S. Memorial nearing completion; I was to take a team to U.S.A. and across Canada that autumn, and I think I tried to land the job wholly on Cambridge. Since both Callender and myself were present I expect Nicholson 'pressurized' me to strengthen what he might have regarded as an 'unseas-oned' side!

The Trunkles we danced was Bledington. I'll Go and Enlist in procession was easy as the progress was slow behind the Baron of Beef. I have an idea the 'piper' was in fact Kenworthy playing the jig on his three holed pipe and tabor. He could control the pace, and the 'dance round' could encircle him and the Baron, for the space (in front of the head table) was wide. Who actually danced the jig? I think probably Adkins and Oliver, but I am not at all certain.

Who is Charlie Williams? Is he the Williams who danced with Alec in the Letchworth side and looked after Margaret Hunter's bees? I have scribbled this at speed lest the dimly visualised picture fades even more as I scrutinize it.

P.S. We travelled by train; perhaps we picked up the Cambridge chaps at Peterborough."

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Charlie Williams, writing again, said, about travelling, "...from Letchworth to Luton by bus, thence by L.M.S. to Sheffield. We were booked into hotel overnight, returning following day with mighty hangovers. "I'll Go and Enlist", as far as I can remember, was danced round the Baron of Beef, carried on the shoulders of four chefs on a dish. Then again the Jig may have been danced leading, the route being about fifty yards.

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