

THE MORRIS DANCER

No. SEVENTEEN ***** NOVEMBER 1983

Several pages of this issue are to do with information contained in old newspapers. While it is unlikely that dance material can be found, the Editor thinks that how the morris men were regarded in their own times, and in their own communities, can be of interest (and value) to their successors who present to the public, now, the male ceremonial dances of England. The MORRIS DANCER will be grateful for a view of any early newspaper report on the Morris.

Christmas Greetings to you all; particularly warm to those men who are out on Boxing Day - may it be unnecessary to clear snow from the pitch.

Write to Ewart Russell,
 50, Mile End Road,
 Colchester, CO4 5BX

From Bob Grant, Squire of the Headington Quarry Morris Dancers.

Perhaps your readers would be interested in the following information about James Dandridge as a continuum to Philip Heath-Coleman's letter in No.14 and Mike Heaney's in No.16.

James Dandridge was born on the 17th June 1883 at Sandford, the son of a farm labourer. Sandford is a village on the Thames some 31/2 miles south of Oxford. At some time prior to his marriage in 1904 he was probably living in Headington Quarry, being confirmed at Headington Church in 1900. His bride was Bessie Moore a Horspath girl (she died in 1981 aged 95) and it seems likely that he moved to Horspath after they were married and there he stayed until his death in 1962. He was a brickmaker by trade and spent most of his working life at the Sandford brickworks but his sojourn in Headington Quarry may be explained by a temporary following of his trade in the Quarry brickworks. A number of related Dandridges were established in Quarry at this time. Horspath is a village some 21/2 miles from Quarry over Shotover Hill.

His letters of 1909 and 1910 concerning the morris to Miss Herschel, quoted by Mike Heaney, are written from Horspath. Further light on the matter as to who taught him to dance is given in an undated letter from William Kimber to Cecil Sharp (which by reason of Bill's address at the time must be after 1908) the original of which is at Cecil Sharp House. Bill states that prior to 1905 he taught 'a side of boy chaps to dance Dandridge was one' later coming over 'from Horspath on purpose' to learn the jigs. Dandridge had gone to London with Bill at one stage to dance for the Esperance Club, but they evidently fell out over a claim that James Dandridge made to Miss Neal that his father was a dancer. After that James went his own way. His contact with Miss Herschel continued and in June 1910 she published for private circulation a mimeographed book to which the introduction reads "All these tunes, steps and figures I learnt first hand from a young morris dancer named James Dandridge of Horspath, Oxon; he learnt them from an old man named Joseph Trafford of Headington Quarry (Oxon). They differ slightly from the printed book (i.e., Morris Book; R.G.) but I give them as they were given to me." The dances are;

Mallow Fair; The Blue-eyed Stranger; Oddington Bunches; Trunk-hose; Country Gardens; Bean Planting and the jig Old Mother Oxford.

James also taught his morris to a team of boys from Horspath shortly after World War I.

3rd September, 1983

Bob Grant

From Mike Heaney.

If I may add a note to Philip Heath-Coleman's article on Queen's Delight, I should point out that Miss Herschel apparently collected a tune for How Do You Do Sir, probably from Trafford via Dandridge. It is an interesting halfway stage between the versions noted by Carey from Trafford and Cox. (Cox had the tunes whistled to him by Norwood in 1898). Miss Herschel's version is as follows (from the Herschel MS Top. Oxon c.452 in the Bodleian):

How do you do, Sir

This indicates that Trafford's version as given to Carey was meant to be played slowly, but that only two corners danced the chorus: a photograph in the Herschel MS shows the dance being performed by four boys in costume typical of the Esperance **boys'** sides (top hats, dark breeches).

MIKE HEANEY, Eynsham.

17th August, 1983

In sending still more newspaper references from old papers, to add to an already extensive collection, Mike Heaney wrote, "The Campden pieces are an example of the occasional gems that can emerge from newspaper searches. As the full story is in none of the accounts, I've written it up as an article."

A MORRIS MURDER

On 24 May, 1772, a Sunday morning, a gardener and nurseryman named Richard Dyer was walking towards his home near Chipping Campden after collecting ten pounds due to him for work just completed. At about noon he was coming back up Broadway Hill, and called at the Fish Inn for a drink. He pulled out a thirty-six shilling piece to pay for it; but the landlord did not want to change it, and told him he could settle the account on his next visit. But there was not to be a next visit. Someone followed him out of the pub when he left after an hour, and walked a little way with him. On reaching a stile his companion demanded the money. Dyer declared he would not be robbed, but his companion then struck him with a hedge stake, breaking his skull, and then struck him again across the face. When his body was found soon afterwards the piece of paper in which the money had been wrapped was lying empty and open by his side.

His murderer did not remain free for long. A girl saw him going home to Chipping Campden with blood on his breeches, and he was arrested at once. The gentry of the town were immediately convinced that he was guilty, for he was a Morris dancer, and there was a call in more than one newspaper for "the Justices (to) suppress such nurseries of idleness as Morrisedancings have generally proved".

The story soon emerged in full. William Kealey, the arrested man, confessed all. The day in question was just two weeks before Whitsun. Although he was only 22 years old Kealey was famous as a Morris dancer in his native Campden and beyond, and had spent that morning training a set of dancers for the forthcoming season. He was having a drink in the Fish Inn after the practice when Dyer came in and unwisely showed his money. The temptation was too much for Kealey, and he resolved to rob him. In the event the robbery ended in murder.

On first being accused of the murder, Kealey denied it, but soon broke down. He said one Tracy (another Morris dancer?) had been his accomplice, but on his parents' pleading admitted that this was not true and that he had acted alone. He was hauled off to Gloucester Castle gaol. On the way to gaol he changed his story yet again, and said that the Morris side's pipe-and-taborer James Warner was involved. Warner, too, was fetched to Gloucester Castle, but Kealey repented of his false statement, and Warner was set free without being brought to trial.

On Wednesday 26 August 1772 the next Gloucester Assizes came to an end, and Kealey was sentenced to death. On the Thursday he was taken back to Chipping Campden, and the next day he was executed at three o'clock in the afternoon before a crowd of thousands of people. His body was hung in chains from a gibbet thirty feet high, erected for that purpose on Campden Hill.

True to form, the newspapers described his execution in moralising tones, including the inevitable "gallows confession". This is how it appeared in the Gloucester Journal:

He persisted in denying the fact in the most solemn manner, calling God to witness his innocence, 'till he came within sight of the spot where he committed the murder. He could then hold out no longer, but confessed "that he alone committed the murder; and declared that the want of money was the temptation; that he overtook Dyer on the road to Campden, walked with him some way, and as they passed along he (Kelly) [sic] picked up a stake as it lay in the road; that at that instant, and not before, the thought of murdering Dyer came into his head, and soon afterwards, as Dyer was getting over a stile, he knocked him down with the stake and killed him; but when he saw Dyer lie dead on the ground, he said, his heart would not let him search him, but he immediately ran away." His father and mother met him on the road not far from the place of execution, and the scene of their parting was very affecting. At the place of execution he gave a letter to some person he knew, and desired him to read it to his father. He joined the Rev. Mr. Simmons, Curate of Campden, who was so kind as to attend and assist him in his last moments, in prayer, with great fervency and

devotion, and earnestly requested all present to pray with him and for him, and to take warning by his untimely end, which he imputed to his disregard of the sabbath, and said, he wished he had loved God more than he had done. When the executioner left him, he put a little straw in his hand to give the signal by, and afterwards being told by one of the officers, that when he was ready he was to drop that straw, he with great eagerness answered, Do ye think God Almighty is ready for me? and soon after gave the signal, and launched into eternity. He was about 22 years old, and has left a wife and children behind him.--We cannot speak too highly of the spirit which the people of Campden have shown in bringing this villain to justice.

The story is written up in dramatic terms, and the confession is more concerned to show the futility of his criminal act than to bring out the truth. Although he had already confessed, the newspaper has him denying the murder until confronted with the place of his dark deed, when the truth emerges willy-nilly. He is said not to have been able to take the money for which he had committed the crime, although earlier newspaper accounts stated that the robbery had taken place. For those who knew the circumstances of the case, his blaming of his fall on his disregard of the sabbath was clearly a reference to his practising Morris dancing when he should have been at church.

There is a Kealey's Hollow in Chipping Campden where a sheep-stealer is said to have been hanged; but it is not close to Campden Hill where our Kealey was strung up.

The Warners were a long-established and respected family of clockmakers and musicians in Campden even in Kealey's day, and James Warner would certainly belong to this family. Interestingly enough, a later member of the family, Isaac Warner, set the tunes on the church carillon in 1816: one of the four tunes was "Belle Isles March".

MIKE HEANEY

16/VIII/1983

Sources

The text is largely a conflation of accounts in:

Berrow's Worcester Journal, 28/V/1772, p.3; 4/VI/1772, p.3; 11/VI/1772, p.3; 3/IX/1772, p.3;

Jackson's Oxford Journal, 30/V/1772, p.3; 29/VIII/1772, p.3; 5/IX/1772, p.1;

Gloucester Journal, 1/VI/1772 ,p.3; 8/VI/1772, p.3; 31/VIII/1772, p. 3.

Also used:

P. C. Rushen, The history and antiquities of Chipping Campden, London 1911, pp. 104, 120

KEITH CHANDLER writes to say that the first two volumes of a series,

Morris Dancing In The South Midlands are now on sale. Volume I is

An Interim Checklist Of References To Morris Dancing In Local Newspapers. Part One:
1733 to 1914

It costs £1.50, plus 25 pence p. and p., and has 48 A5 pages and one map.

Volume II is
Morris Dancing At Bampton Until 1914,

price £1.25, plus 25 pence p. and p.: it has 36 A5 pages. (If the. two are ordered together postage and packing is 25p. only).

Cheques payable to K. Chandler, at The Bungalow, Hill Grove Farm, Minster Lovell, Oxon, OX8 5NA

The advertizing sheet has, "These volumes should prove of interest to anyone with a general interest in the history of morris dancing, social historians researching leisure, custom or tradition, and archivists, librarians and local historians in the counties covered by the research."

VOLUME ONE This is intended to classify and draw attention to this valuable yet little-known body of source material. The checklist identifies three hundred and twenty newspaper references which give details of the performance of morris dancing in a traditional context. Each reference contains full details of the newspaper in which it may be found, identifies the individual morris side or locality in which the performance occurred, and

(by means of a coded legend) describes the nature, quality and character of the information it contains. In addition there is a chronology of the one hundred and seventy-eight occasions when morris dancing was performed, as extracted from the references, and this gives date and location of performance with the identity of the morris side, and is also cross-referenced to the checklist. The volume also contains a lengthy introduction on the nature of the source material and the development of recent scholarship in this field, several appendices and a fold-out map showing the location of all seventy-six communities mentioned in the text.

VOLUME TWO This is the first monograph to examine the historical development of an individual dance side and concentrates on the morris team at Bampton, Oxfordshire, during the century prior to 1914, for which accurate historical sources exist, and assesses the evidence of the oral traditions which imply an extant dance set in the town since the seventeenth century. Among the facets which are examined in depth are the rapid turnover of dancers; music and musicians; the transformation of internal and external perceptions and motivations with regard to the dance tradition; the role and changing character of patronage; and the positive effects of the enthusiasm of William "Jingy" Wells. The sources which are drawn upon are far-ranging and include material from the early collections of, for example, Sharp and Manning; extensive references from the local newspapers; and the copious writings of "Jingy" Wells himself. Also included is a family tree showing inter-relationships between the main dancing families, and an appendix listing the dancers in the Bampton side between 1840 and 1914.

(Keith adds that a stamped addressed envelope will ensure that the sender will hear of future volumes in the series).

28th September, 1983

KEITH wrote again on 16th October, 1983, to tell the Editor that the latest issue of Oxfordshire Local History has an article by him on the Morris at Spelsbury.

THE NEWSPAPER LIBRARY of the BRITISH LIBRARY has sent to the Editor an eighty-page booklet "Microfilms Of Newspapers And Journals For Sale". The Introduction states "the coverage is worldwide..." "The Newspaper Library is happy to answer any enquiries and give free estimates for the microfilming of any titles it is known to hold in the original. For titles published prior to 1971, the published Catalogue of the Newspaper Library London, 1975, 8 vols) gives a comprehensive guide." Send all enquiries to The Newspaper Library, Colindale Avenue, London, NW9 5HE Tel.(01) 200 5515.

Deck House, Suffolk, 6.10.1983

"Liz and I were away for a week visiting relatives and hoping to see views across the Mendips - Quantocks etc., but we were in a fog (from the Bristol Channel) for the first four days. We enjoyed the rest, for we were coming back to a Diamond Wedding (Liz's parents) and the usual village activities, and with three remaining weeks of our sailing season (over 70 trips to date)."

Past Squire of The Ring DOUGLAS KENNEDY,
 in his ninety-first year.

 Issue No.15 had a note that the Kennet M.M.'s programme in 1982 listed 59 planned displays, including five tours with other clubs. It induced the Datchet Bagman, Keith le Page, to ask his foreman, Gerald Stowell, to look up the number of occasions when the Datchet men were in dress. A five-year tabulation was made (1978-1982), of a dozen kinds of event (e.g., pub stops, Windsor Sunday shows, Ales, Ladies' Nights); the annual average was 74.4 shows. One congratulates a club that has such an available record. For 1983 the printed programme had 40 timed shows, plus a Day of Dance; and attendance at three other clubs' D. of D., and at a Ring Meeting. Keith writes, "Perhaps there is something in the water of the Thames which keeps sides along its banks so busy:"

The Sixth DANCING ENGLAND will be held in Derby on the 14th of January, 1984, at 6.30 p.m. Tickets for this remarkable event are **£4; buy** ten and get one free. For details, write to

Dancing England, 51, Toton Lane, Stapleford, Nottingham NG9 7HB

Datchet
Morris Men

and the STANTON HARCOURT tradition.

At the Autumn 1980 Policy meeting of the Datchet Morris Men, it was agreed to establish 'Stanton Harcourt' Dances as a 'Core' tradition.

Very little precise information appeared to be available in written form, but, one member of the side, Eric Walton, had attended some isolated workshops run by members of the Folk Camp Society. Members agreed to work on the Basic information and existing interpretations to develop a Club style for Stanton Harcourt, within the guide lines laid down in the Morris Ring Handbook. Five dances, Greensleeves, The Black Joke, Bean Planting, Brighton Camp and the Nutting Girl, were practised during the Autumn/Winter Club nights and the Datchet Morris Men performed the Stanton Harcourt tradition in public for the first time on Boxing Day 1980, and the five dances were performed regularly during 1981 and 1982.

During the Autumn practices of 1982 the Squire decided that we should tackle the remaining dances in the tradition. We quickly realised that eventual performance might owe more to invention than interpretation. By this time, the tune 'Sweet Nightingale' had appeared in a supplement to the handbook, so we put together a dance not too removed from the conventional interpretation of the notes in the Morris handbook. Constant Billy developed along lines similar to Headington, but keeps faith with the one piece of information available, i.e., Hand Clapping chorus. Princess Royal sticks closely to Roy Dommett's interpretation, but 'The Clock' is almost entirely invented.

The Four Dances were put together by the Datchet Morris Men at a practice night on Monday, 8th November, 1982, and will be included in our programme in 1983. The Datchet notation of these Stanton Harcourt Dances, compiled by the Squire, Ian Turvill, is given below.

HAND CLAPPING

F = Front - Two Hands together (Own)

R = Two Rights

L = Two Lefts

P = Partners both hands

THE CLOCK

Music - Grandfathers Clock (Reel) A - AB at will.

Eric Walton came up with the idea, and the club decided that 'The Clock' should be used as a processional dance similar to that of Saturday Night Bucknell, but maintaining the Stanton Harcourt Style. Dancers start from either end of the hall or dancing area.

(8 Bars) A1 2 Bars Steps 2 Singles & Step Jump

(8 Bars) A2 " " "

B Clapping F. R. F. L. F. R. L. F.
Step Right and Jump to the left.
(Music Blocking for effect)

1 Bars Step. 2 Singles & Step Jump.

Repeat till all Dancers have progressed to Opposite end. Dancers falling off to form a Circle. (Each No. of Clock for 12 men). All joining in for Standard finish, i.e., Circle with 4 Capers at end.

PRINCESS ROYAL

Sequence as Greensleeves

O.Y. In line D.F. Amr D.F. CO DF BB DF WR

DF is Clapping - P.P.P. R.R.R. L.L.L. F.F.F.

During F.F.F. Dancers step away from partner to form a set

NOTE: The tune has been noted as playing 'A' to yourself, followed by A, and the B's continuous. This signifies that the clapping is done during 1st half of **B** and 2nd part is straight

into figure. No Repeat or Hey during DF.

12.

THE NIGHTINGALE

Stick Dance. Sequence as Greensleeves

DF is Evens turn right, and hold sticks above head as Bobby and Joan. Whilst Odds strike stick three times. Evens raise stick for each clash. Half Hey.

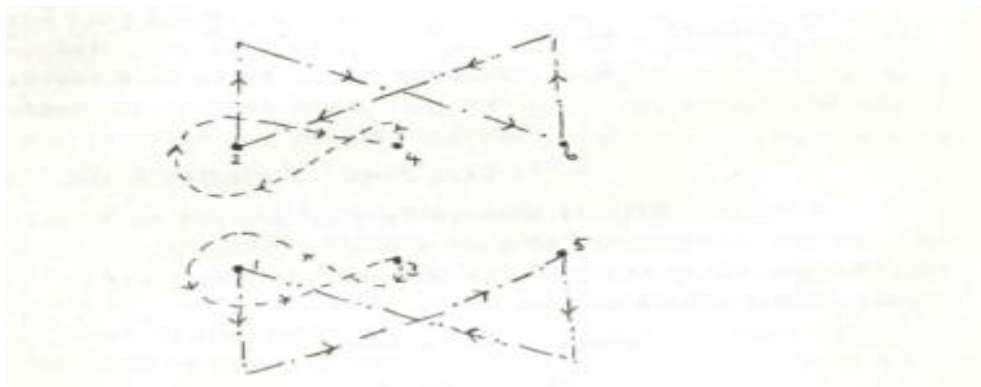
Repeat - Odds turning right.

CONSTANT BILLY

Clapping Dance. Sequence as Greensleeves

DF is F.R.F.L.F.R.L. Lean two hands. Push off. Feint step and dance into hey.

To get into Hey - Turn easiest way in - No's. 1 and 2, 5 and 6, Large push off to get into position whilst 3 and 4 small push for position.



THE DATCHET MORRIS MEN, 21st March, 1983

WALTER ABSON writes:-

One of the legendary figures in the ever-growing mythology of the Morris Ring is that of the Anonymous Donor.

He flits through the pages of the early minute books, associated with various good deeds. There is frequent mention that the ale and cider at Ring Feasts were the gift of an

13.

anonymous donor, he came to the rescue at times of financial crisis (the accidental delivery of firkins instead of pins, recounted in No.15 of the Morris Dancer, was one such occasion), and the tankards given to the fist four Squires and first two Bagmen were presented by him. Luncheon or dinner parties, usually at the National Liberal Club or the Connaught Hotel, were convivial events dimly remembered by some of the early officers of the Ring.

He would not have wanted any open acknowledgment of his generosity during his lifetime, as although he was a warm and friendly man this was combined with a rather shy and retiring disposition, but it ought now to be put on record that his name was Llewellyn Thomas. He was a solicitor by profession, a man of considerable erudition and remarkable memory, and the possessor of a large private library which gave him one of his greatest pleasures in life. In the 1930s he danced with several clubs in different parts of the country, but after the war he joined London Pride and remained a member of that club until he retired to his native Wales.

It seems fitting that he chose Fishguard for his retirement home, not far from the coastal plain of Cantref-y-Gwaelod where according to Welsh legend The Lord Commissioner of the Royal Embankment was once Seithenyn-ap-Seithin (1). It is pleasant to imagine that Seithenyn's habitual cry of "Cupbearer, fill" may still have been heard in those parts, faintly but clearly across the centuries, to cheer Llewellyn in his retirement and to remind him of so many events in which he had played a leading part. He died in Fishguard in 1980, unfortunately before he could take up the honour offered to him of becoming Mayor of the town.

To give a glimpse of him in action I can do no better than to quote a letter to the EFDSS concerning one of his benefactions:-

F. H. Llewellyn Thomas to the Assistant Secretary, EFDSS, 22nd March, 1949.

Dear Miss Lightfoot,

The Ale and Cider for the Morris Ring for Saturday's meeting will, I understand, be delivered at 10.00 a.m. on

Friday. If at all possible I shall come up to see that everything is satisfactory.

I understand from Mr. Robert Ross ⁽²⁾ that on the last occasion that Ale was delivered on behalf of the Ring the language used by the draymen did not fall within what might possibly be termed the precise and rigid limits to which one is accustomed at the House. The draymen concerned, on being informed of the gravamen of this charge, rebutted it with no little heat.

To make quite sure that all is in order on Friday, draymen of a particularly meek and gentle disposition have been chosen, and on the score of language there should be no complaint whatever. In fact I am sure that their guiding rule in life, hanging as it were in the empyrean like Plato's Ideal Values, is that "suavitas sermonum atque morum", ⁽³⁾ a standard which we should all like to observe.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Notes

- (1) A colourful account of Seithenyn is given in T. L. Peacock's "The misfortunes of Elphin".
- (2) Bagman of the Ring at that time.
- (3) Cicero "De amicitia", xviii 66: "Suavitas sermonum atque morum haudquaquam mediocre condimentum amicitiae".
(gentleness of speech and manners is by no means an unimportant seasoning to friendship).

WALTER ABSON, 7th October, 1983

Ivor Allsop, on the RING ARCHIVE, 8th December, 1982

"..... the Ring Archive - all the stuff that the Ring has got or collected over the years since its inception is gradually being brought here so that it can be incorporated into the rest of the Archive." ..I am pleased to say that the Ring is becoming well known for its archive work and is now often the first choice of people who want a safe home for their work or for films which they have found. It's getting to the stage when I shall have to get in touch with the National Film Archive so that we can rent space there."

On the 6th January, 1983,

"The amazing thing about the archive is how quickly it has made its name. Malcolm Taylor, the Librarian at the V.W.M. Library, has done a lot in getting the name of the Ring known to outside sources; the latest thing - some Ad. Agency wanting Morris teams to advertise a brand of bread. People are sending stuff to me for copying so that they know that at least one copy will be in safe keeping - two films came my way recently, one of Winlaton Rapper which was found in Winlaton by one of the sides up in that neck of the woods, original 35mm cine film which belonged to someone in the village. This has now been returned - the date 22.2.1928. Anne Cohen of Poynton Jemmers sent me a film of Peover from 1938 and 1939, again from a private source, again for copying before it's returned to the people who loaned it to her.

We are working in close contact with C.E.C.T.A.L. at Sheffield University, and they are sending students to us for as much information as we can give on the Ritual Dance as part of their degree courses; we are also working on Chris Cawte's Index to the Morris Books which I hope to have out in time for the Ring A.R.M., in conjunction with the University. I get many requests both by letter and by 'phone for information from many clubs on all sorts of subjects, many of them being answered with photocopies within a week."

IVOR

Ivor Allsop, Past Squire of The Ring, 36, Green Spring Avenue,
Birdwell, Nr.Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 5RY

THE TRADITIONAL PIPE AND TABOR

Some Missed Opportunities

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, when Percy Manning and his assistant Tom Carter were undertaking their valuable work in noting Cotswold traditions, many of the old pipers had either given up through old age or had died. Indeed there are several morris sides said to have given up dancing because their piper had died. For instance, Ilmington ceased when Tom Arthur died in 1867, and the later

revival in 1886 and 1887 was very short lived as James Arthur became too old to play.

At around this time, then, there were a fair number of sets not being used. One of the main aims of Manning and Carter was to obtain specimens, which they finally did. A photograph of these is in Folklore 1897. These were a set from Leafield, a tabor used by Joseph Woods of Deddington, and a pipe, once of Bampton, but I suspect used by John (Bob?) Potter of Stanton Harcourt.

However, there were not only folklore collectors at work, but musical instrument collectors such as T.W.Taphouse and Canon Galpin. So far, so good. The instruments were being collected, put into private collections or museums and being saved the fate of the Marsden set which was broken to pieces by the grandchildren of a former player. But where are these instruments today? There is a very good set locked in a glass case in the Victoria and Albert Museum and a few three holed pipes scattered around other British museums.

Those collected by T. W.Taphouse were sold at auction by Sothebys in 1905. They went into the C. Van Raalte collection at Brownsea Castle, Bournemouth. An opportunity was missed there by the folk movement (a set was sold for about £5). A second opportunity to buy the same instruments arose when the C. Van Raalte collection was itself auctioned in 1927. This time a set, formerly belonging to Thomas Humphries of Haley near Witney, fetched £6 15s 0d. It was bought by the American flute collector Dayton C. Miller, and is now in the Library of Congress, Washington, U.S.A.

Canon Galpin had two tabors and several pipes. The time came when he wished to see his collection in a museum. He approached all the main museums in the U.K. but was refused by all of them! His valuable collection is now in Boston, U.S.A.

The folk movement was, of course, anxious to obtain such instruments. Joe Powell had been commissioned to make tabors, and his pipe had been confiscated by a member of EFDS staff, who replaced it with a new one but in a different tuning, making it impossible for Joe to play! This instrument, I believe, was destroyed in the War. Joe Powell had at one time

refused to sell his instruments for a guinea. Tom Carter also bought a set of Bampton bells, once the property of Henry Wells, for 7s 6d. These also ended up at the Brownsea Castle auction, and were sold in 1927 for £2 5s 0d. Dayton Miller did not just attend auctions. He bought a pipe in London 11 September 1935, another pipe in London 18 August 1936 and on the same day a set of both pipe and tabor. If these were available for sale, and in London, why were they not bought by a morris dancer? There may be some excuse for the 1905 Sothebys sale, but by 1936 the EFDS and EFSS were well established and had amalgamated, and the Morris Ring was coming up for two years old. The only consolation is that the instruments were saved from the blitz.

The imbalance in museum specimens between the UK and USA is reflected today in that the only good, wooden replicas of nineteenth century d tabor pipes that I have found are made in the USA (by Ralph Sweet). Even Arnold Dolmetsch Ltd., the Surrey firm that has done much for the revival of old instruments, only makes copies of a nineteenth century French galoubet in the key of, I believe, B \flat or A \flat . Most English players seem to be content with the thin metal and plastic mouthpiece whistles by Generation or the brass whistles by Jim Jones or Bill Warder. Incidentally, I have heard, although I can not remember where, that it is now illegal to make or sell a whistle instrument with a brass mouthpiece. No doubt this is some Common Market regulation!

The message is this. Let us not miss our opportunities again! I shall certainly be watching the London auction houses' catalogues. There are still some valuable historic instruments in private hands. Joe Powell's tabor is said to be with a grandson. (Does anyone have his address?) William Kimber's concertina is with the Rev. Kenneth Loveless, and no doubt the present incumbent will make sure it remains in safe hands:

Lastly, a request. If anyone knows of any such instruments in his or her local museum, please let me know, as not all museums publish a catalogue or even a check list.

CARL WILLETTS, 4th April, 1983

7, Beckenham Drive, Allington Park, Maidstone, ME16 OTG

MORRIS DANCERS AT CHELTENHAM

In the course of his travels through England, John Byng noted in his diary on 28th June 17842 While Mr.P was making visits, I attended to a troop of Morris-dancers headed by the buffoon but to me their mummery seem'd tedious, and as little enjoyed by the performers, as the spectators: the genius of the nation does not take this turn.

This from a man who often made a point of asking his hosts, as he travelled about the country, whether there were local Morris dancers and other survivals of ancient tradition! Either the performance was very poor, or Byng had had a bad time the night before!

Byng was in Cheltenham when he wrote his note, and it is the first written reference to Morris dancing in the town. The day in question was a Monday, but it was four weeks after Whit Monday, and one wonders what had brought the dancers out onto the streets. There is no hint of whether the dancers were indigenous to the town or were visiting from one of the neighbouring villages.

The next record of dancing in the town comes fifty-seven years later, when on 26th May 1841, according to the Cheltenham Examiner of 2nd June (p.2), "Application was made by three men to the Magistrates for permission to perform Morris dancing: but the Bench refused their permission." According to the Cheltenham Free Press (29th May 1841, p.5), "the Bench informed them that they could not give any such permission"; this leaves unclear whether the Bench was, in fact, refusing permission, or simply stating that the matter was not within their jurisdiction. None of the three men who applied is named, but one wonders what had caused them to take such unique action. Had there been quarrels within the side or between sides the previous year? There were none reported. Were they hoping to steal a march on other sides? The date was the Wednesday before Whit Monday, so the application was not for a "special" out-of-season occasion; it was clearly intended to cover the normal Whit Monday festivities.

The presence of more **than** one side - and therefore

the likelihood of disputes - is confirmed by a report of the Whitsun activities two years later, in the Cheltenham Examiner for 7th June 1843 (p.2):

The streets during the day were thronged with visitors from the neighbourhood, who appeared much gratified with the grotesque performance of two bands of Morris dancers, who, decorated in gaudy colours, performed that well-known dance of olden time, with much spirit and precision.

The Morris dancers are mentioned in subsequent years: in 1844 they "exhibited their antics in the streets" (Cheltenham Free Press, 1st June 1844, p.173), in 1845 "The Morris dancers have been about the town during the week" (ibid., 17th May, 1845, p.157) and "What with clubs, morris dancers, and perambulators, the 'Queen of Watering Places' has presented an unusual scene of life and excitement during the last week" (Gloucester Journal, 17th May, 1845, p.3).

In 1846, in a heatwave, the Cheltenham Journal reports (8th May 1846, p.2):

The streets of this town have seldom worn a more animated appearance. In addition to the great and teeming population of Cheltenham, there were the teeming hundreds from the neighbouring towns and villages, all anxious to see the clubs walk, and the morris dancers perform; there were the full band of the one, peeling through the street; and the primitive pipe and tabor of the other, reminding one of boyish days, and boyish toys.

After 1846 there is nothing. Although the general absence of reports of Morris dancers before 1841 is more a reflection of lack of interest by the newspapers than of lack of activity, the absence of reports after 1846 is more indicative of the probability that Morris dancing was not taking place. The Whitsuntide festivities and the clubs continue to be reported faithfully, but by 1858 the Cheltenham Journal was reporting (29th May, p.2), "Whitsuntide has passed by in Cheltenham without any public festivity".

Several factors may have influenced the demise of dancing. Cheltenham was a rapidly expanding town, with a population of 3076 in 1801, 22942 in 1831, 31411 in 1841 and 35051

in 1851 (VCH Gloucestershire, vol.2, p.177), and this may have contributed to a loss of the sense of community. The railway reached Cheltenham in 1840 (Lansdown Road), and the central St. James's Station opened in 1847; they made large-scale holiday excursions out of town feasible (G.Hart, A History of Cheltenham, 1965, p.233-4).

We cannot even be sure whether the dancers were native to the town or not. In 1881 a W. E. Adams wrote that

Morris dancers were common at Cheltenham in my younger days; indeed I formed one of a company myself when a lad, some forty years ago. The dancers appeared at that time, and for many years afterwards, appearing as regularly in the streets at Whitsuntide as Jack-in-the-Green on May-Day.

(Notes and Queries, 6th Series, IV,4,p.524)

Unfortunately Mr. Adams does not say whether he was living in Cheltenham when he danced there (if his dates are accurate, in 1841, the year in which the application was made to the magistrates). The presence of at least two sides, hinted at in 1841, reported in 1843, might indicate that they were not native to the town. Two groups within the town would almost certainly be rivals, but if both groups were on "neutral" territory co-operation might be easier. There certainly appears to have been co-operation at some stage, to judge by this note by R. St. Johnston, writing in 1905:

I was not long ago given an account, by an eye-witness, of the last time it (Morris - MH) was apparently danced in the town of Cheltenham, about forty years ago.

He told me that the performers appeared in knee-breeches, tall or "box" hats, as he called them, and short jackets with white sleeves. They were about twenty in number, and formed up in two lines facing each other. The music was supplied by two men with long tin whistles, and also by the clashing of the two wooden sticks of the dancers, the last remnants of the pipes and sword-staves of the earlier Morris. The Sherwood foresters had been reduced to two clowns or fools, who armed with inflated bladders, cut capers and went about among the onlookers demanding contributions. (This article, by Mike Heaney, will be completed in Issue 18 of this magazine. ED.)