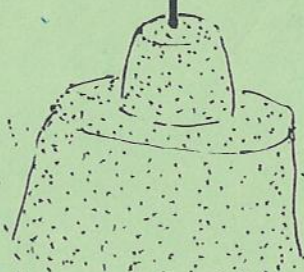


Vol. 3 No. 3
SUMMER 1980



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EDITORIAL

Although the truth about the origins of the Morris may never be known, one only has to pick up the handout from any Ring side to read the commonly held view of its history. "...possibly lost in pre-Christian fertility rites..." "the dances were performed to ...bring fertility to the soil..." and so on.

Although we believe there is no evidence to support this thesis, such is the power and attraction of the myth that it is now widely accepted as fact both by the dancers themselves, and by the popular press and hence the general public. The prevalence and persuasiveness of the myth is highlighted by the fact that even the newly-formed Open Morris subscribes to it, in spite of its otherwise even-handed policy.

We feel there is a need for sides to have access to a more objective view of the history of the morris.

A second myth has grown up, this time actively promulgated by the Morris Ring, concerning the history of the morris revival at the beginning of this century. The 'official' view of the period is of Sharp's seeing Headington on Boxing Day 1899, and immediately devoting the rest of his life to collecting the morris. Then, it is

implied, as the information became more widespread, a few men's clubs started and eventually the movement grew into what we have today. (See e.g. The Morris and Sword Dances of England, Arthur Peck.) This one-sided view, completely ignoring the crucial contribution of Mary Neal and The Esperance Club, is generally misleading.

In Roy Dommett's article in this issue (see p.4), a broader view is taken of those early days which we hope will do a little to rectify this injustice.

As a matter of policy we intend Morris Matters to be a vehicle for articles of this kind, in order that these myths should not go unchallenged.

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This issue of Morris Matters was written and compiled by Jill Coleman, Jenny Joyce, Beth Neill, and Alan Whear for Windsor Morris, 24 Alexandra Rd., Windsor SL4 1HN.

HOW DID YOU THINK IT WAS ?

....Roy Dommett on the political

background to the folk revival

Most people have an idyllic impression of the early days of the revival when in reality it was a very turbulent period. Some may be aware that Cecil Sharp (1859-1924) gave his first public lecture on Folk Song on 26/11/03 and that he crusaded to get Folk Song and then Dance accepted by the Board of Education for use in schools. However, the personalities were closely bound up with the burning issues of the time, especially Votes for Women. They were portrayed in the six episode BBC series "Shoulder to Shoulder" in 1974.

Mary Neal (1860-1944) worked with Emmeline Pethick (1867-1954), who had been born in Weston Super Mare and brought up a Quaker, at the Methodist West London Mission from 1890. Miss Neal came from a Manchester manufacturing family. The Mission seemed restrictive and not providing the help needed so they

founded the Esperance Girls Club in 1895. It is difficult now to imagine how restricted were the lives of the leisured middle classes in the last decade of the 19th century. The very idea that women should leave their homes and live in the comparative freedom of a community, in order to carry out rather subversive principles of social sharing, was a bombshell to the large mass of conservative, low-church and non-conformist opinion. Both accepted the gospel of socialism as it was preached then by Kier Hardie.

It is also difficult to imagine the conditions of the poorer classes in London. No canned entertainment, no travel, no access to the country - only the public house and the life of the street. Overburdened motherhood, overcrowded homes, drunkenness, dirt, starvation and brutality were the common experience and gave little chance of happiness.

The girls of the Club had the high spirits of the young and the recklessness of the repressed. They were out for any excitement that was to be had - they could not tolerate anything less vivid than the life of the street.

Esperance

Neal and her friends were pro-Boers, believing, with good reason, that international financiers wanted the Transvaal gold mines and were using British lives and money to get them. They were involved in many rowdy public meetings. The Esperance Club became well known for its "national dancing" and Emmeline met Frederick Lawrence at a club display in 1899. Neal made all the wedding arrangements at Canning Town Hall in October 1901. Lloyd George came. Herbert MacIlwaine became musical director of the Esperance Club following Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence's wedding.

Miss Neal founded the Esperance Club and Social Guild for girls with Emmeline as president, a senior boys club under W.G. Pearse, a junior club under Lady Katherine Thynne (later Lady Cromer), and "Maison Esperance", a dressmaking establishment in Wigmore Street with wages of 15/- per week, nearly double current rates, and a 45 hour working week providing work all the year round. The name with its associations of progress to a better state of affairs was suggested by the battlecry of Henry IV - "Now, Esperance! Percy! and set on!" It was not the custom in the trade to have holidays, but Neal bought in conjunction with a Jewish Girls' Club a house in Littlehampton and named it "The Green Lady Hostel" from a reference in the poems of Fiona Macleod. The Lawrences built a guest house for London

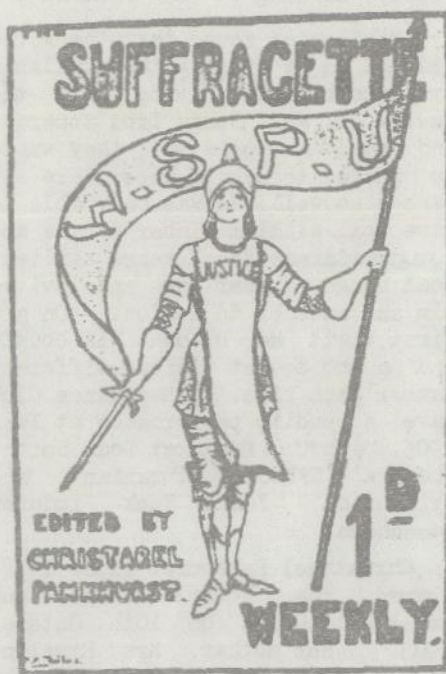
children next to their own, "The Mascot", Holmwood, near Dorking, Surrey, calling it "The Sundial".

MacIlwaine found that the girls did not enjoy singing the available art music and, having read the review of Folk Songs from Somerset and tried the songs out, they wrote to Sharp to ask if there were any dances as well. He was only able to give Neal William Kimber's name and a vague address from 6 years earlier. Neal sought Kimber out and invited him and another to London. On his first visit he brought his cousin and on subsequent visits a different dancer each time. The Esperance Club gave a public performance at Xmas 1905 which Miss Margaret Dean Smith, onetime EFDSS librarian and Britannica Year Book indexer remembers.

Christabel Pankhurst (1880-1958) formed the Women's Social and Political Union on 10th October 1903. Her mother, Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst called on Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence in February 1906, saying that Kier Hardie, whom Mrs Pankhurst was campaigning for at Merthyr Tydfil, had told her that in her she should find a practical and useful colleague who could develop in London the WSPU founded in Manchester. She went away disappointed, but when approached by Annie Kenny (1882-1960) the militant mill-worker and asked to be treasurer, she and Neal went to a meeting at Sylvia Pankhurst's lodgings in Park Walk. They there formed the London Committee.

arrests

A campaign of active intervention in by-elections against government candidates was started and the first arrests occurred, including Annie



Poster for Suffragette Magazine.

Kenney on 19th June. The Pethick-Lawrences' flat at 4 Clement's Inn became the centre of operations for the next few years and Fredrick who was the editor of several Socialist publications, including the "Labour Record", became editor of "Votes for Women". Parliament reassembled on the 23rd October, 1906 and Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence was arrested with the deputation to the House. She was sentenced to two months but nearly had a nervous breakdown and was released after two days so her husband took her away to Italy. Her husband took on her job and acted as adviser to women arrested.

Public opinion which had at first been outraged, began to change and three distinguished women writers,

Elizabeth Robins, Evelyn Sharp and Beatrice Harreden wrote articles defending the actions. A delegate conference in the September formed a national committee with Mrs Pankhurst as chairman, Mrs Pethick-Lawrence as Treasurer, Mrs Tuke as Secretary, Christabel Pankhurst and Mary Neal and, to represent the outside world, Miss Elizabeth Robins, the novelist and playwright who had made her name as an Ibsen actress.

Evelyn Sharp was Cecil Sharp's youngest sister and she knew well Max Beerbohm, Thomas Hardy and Laurence Housman. She played hockey and went to the gym of the Chelsea Polytechnic. After the death of her father in November 1903 she became a fulltime journalist for the Manchester Guardian. She was reporting the annual conference of the National Union of Women Workers when the session on women's suffrage fell on the day Mrs Pethick-Lawrence appeared in court on the charge of obstruction outside the House of Commons. She joined the WSPU and became assistant editor of "Votes for Women" in October 1907. She became the editor in 1912 after the Pankhursts ditched the Pethick-Lawrences. Evelyn did not join in the militant activities at first because of a promise to her mother but eventually she got 14 days for breaking windows at the War Office in a militant demonstration in Parliament Square on 11th November 1911 and another 14 days for refusing to disperse from outside the Houses of Parliament in 1913. Unlike most others who had refused to pay taxes without representation she did not pay up at the start of the war and was made a bankrupt. She danced with the Karpeles sisters and the embryo EFDS and went with the EFDS team to the Basque Festival at Bayonne.

Mrs Mabel Tuke had lived in South Africa and met Mrs Pethick-Lawrence when returning to England after her

husband's death in 1906. Some months later she wrote to Emmeline and spoke of her loneliness and asked to find something to fill her empty life. She came to stay with Emmeline. Anyone less like a militant could not be imagined. Charming and pathetic she touched the hardest of male hearts. Mrs Tuke collected the Abingdon dances for Neal from the Hemmings family which were published by Neal and she remained an active worker for the Esperance Club to the war.

MacIlwaine and Sharp collected the Bidford dances at Redditch in 1906. Because of the popularity of the Morris they published a book of instruction in July 1907, with a dedication to the Esperance Club.

From October 1907 the suffragette campaign intensified. The first stone throwing was on 30/6/08. When Mrs Pankhurst was released from prison in March 1908 there was a massed meeting at the Albert Hall. The government candidates were defeated at Peckham and North-West Manchester (Winston Churchill) due to Suffragette action. Rallies were large; 250,000 at Hyde Park (21/6/08), 20,000 at Clapham Common (15/7/08), 30,000 at Nottingham Forest (18/7/08), 150,000 at Manchester (19/7/08), and 100,000 at Leeds (26/7/08). On the 29th July Lloyd George was very effectively heckled at the International Peace Conference in Queens Hall. The colours purple white and green were adopted to signify justice, purity and hope. But the WSPU were not the main suffrage movement. By the end of 1906 it had lost the working class women and by the end of 1907 the Independent Labour Party. Militancy in 1905 seemed an inspired idea but each act has to be more violent and it only attracts interest, not support. On 2nd July 1909 Miss Wallace Dunlop was sent to prison for a month and

started the first hunger strike. She was released after four days. It soon became the general tactic. On the 24th September the government instituted forcible feeding.

Lady Constance Lytton (1869-1923) was the second daughter of a Viceroy of India. Her godmother died in 1905 leaving some money which Constance decided should do something useful. By chance she heard of a piece of social work that "contained an element of spontaneous joy" which contrasted with the "oppressive jackets" of ordinary philanthropists. She made the acquaintance of Neal, and attended the Esperance Club. She was asked to the annual holiday in 1908 at the Green Lady Hostel of friends and comrades of the Esperance



Club as a special guest along with the Kenney sisters. It was several days before she discovered she was among suffragettes but one wet Sunday the Club begged Jessie Kenney to tell them of her experiences having just been released from prison.

There was a sensational government defeat at Newcastle in September and a mass meeting was held in Trafalgar Square. On the 31st October most of the committee was arrested and Lytton no longer held back. She was imprisoned for stone throwing, but being a lady of title she was examined before being forcibly fed and found to have a weak heart and was released. Knowing she had received preferential treatment she disguised herself, cutting her hair short, and threw another stone under

the name of Jane Warton through the window of the prison governor. She was forcibly fed after four days; with her weak heart she collapsed. A week or two after release she had a heart attack which left her with a paralysed right arm. She had been a fine pianist.

Cecil Sharp went to Winster in mid 1908 but did not start to collect the dances effectively till he got William Wells of Bampton to come over to Stow in August 1909. This started a two year intensive collecting period. MacIlwaine left Neal in 1908 because of the Votes for Women campaign, publically pleading ill health, but they remained friends and Mary Neal adopted his son Anthony when he died. MacIlwaine was replaced as musical director by Clive Carey.

Sharp last lectured with Esperance dancers in 1909. That year the Board of Education syllabus of physical exercises recognised morris dancing. Between May 9 to 25 1909 the suffragettes organised a "Woman's Exhibition" at the Princes' Skating Rink, Knightsbridge. There were daily morris dancing displays by Neal's girls. Also in that year at the Stratford Shakespearean Festival Cecil Sharp judged the folk dance and song competitions. Cecil Sharp was a theoretical Socialist of the Fabian sort and had sympathy with many progressive movements although cautious in public pronouncements and conscious of social position. He had been able to dedicate the first volume of Folk Songs from Somerset to the Princess of Wales, later Queen Mary, and had given musical instruction to the royal children 1904-7. He did support political functions and when he had a men's side in 1911 he had them dance at a Fabian Society Soiree - it was teetotal but served ice-cream!



Mary Neal ran a major dance event at the Kensington Town Hall the night before King Edward died and Sharp sent the first letter of complaint to the press, the Daily News 29/4/10, about Sam Bennett, the Ilmington morris he ran, and the decadence of the Abingdon morris, lack of standards and why it was acceptable for women to dance the morris. Mary Neal ran the vacation school at Stratford in 1910 but Sharp took it over in 1911. There had been classes at the Chelsea Polytechnic and Sharp contacted them which lead to the founding of the EFBS in December 1911.

The Liberals' struggle with the Lords led to an election in 1910. A truce existed till November while a bill for suffrage was in parliament. On 19th November 1910 a procession from a protest meeting at Caxton Hall to the House was met with great brutality by the police. It became known as "Black Friday". For five hours Parliament Square was the scene of battle; 117 were arrested, 50 were laid up with injuries received, 2 died later from heart attacks. All cases were dismissed to avoid the happenings being discussed in court. A memo was sent to the Home Office by the WSPU about the violence, the methods of torture, the acts of indecency, and the after-effects. The memo was widely reprinted.

When the government put the bill off yet again the committee decided on 1/3/12 to end passive resistance, and at 5.45 pm window smashing started at shops. Mrs Tuke and others went to Downing Street and broke windows there, getting two months imprisonment. On release there started a conspiracy trial. Mrs Tuke was acquitted but others got nine months. In October the



Pankhursts disbanded the committee, drove out the Pethick-Lawrences and started a new policy of even greater destruction.

It is not suprising that Sharp with his ideals and hopes did not want to be associated in any way with the later lunacies but then few people were, and certainly not Neal. Many people at the time, except for the hard core of the EFBS, considered that Sharp behaved rather shabbily towards Neal, her efforts and achievements, in order to establish the artistic value of the Folk tradition. It should be remembered that the revival was made possible because of what both of them did.

OPEN



MORRIS

What is Open Morris?....

Morris dancing in England has become polarised into two camps represented by the Morris Ring (male) and the Women's Morris Federation (female). 'Open Morris' has been formed with the object of reconciling the two groups. We contend that it is now an established fact that the Morris is danced by both men and women and consequently intend to provide a common forum for all morris dancers, whether from male, female or mixed sides, to come together to share their experiences of the morris dance for their mutual benefit.

Traditional ritual dance forms, such as the Morris, arose from the ancient spring rituals and were part of ceremonies designed to re-awaken the land after winter, to bring good luck to the people and to ensure good crops. This mystical conjuring of 'power' was performed by the men of a markedly patriarchal society, but today that society has changed and the ritual dancing of the Morris by men and women together brings new life and interpretations to this essential part of our folk-heritage. Dance is a living tradition and must be allowed and encouraged to develop and adapt today

as it has done in the past. The power and strength of the morris lies in the dance itself and not in the individual performer.

Open Morris supports the view that the individual policy of each side of how they dance and who dances is a personal choice, but that all sides regardless of their traditions should be encouraged to become more open-minded with respect to each other. We intend to encourage these ideals by the organising of instructionals and tours etc. at which all dancers are welcome on an equal basis and to maintain open communications with all the interested parties such as the Ring, W.M.F., E.F.D.S.S., etc.

For details of Open Morris and of our programme of events contact:-

Richard Gregson, 27 St Ann's Lane,
Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire,
PE18 8JE

or

Jan Butcher, 5, Hall Farm,
Farnham St. Martin, Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk.

The next meeting will be at the Grand Hotel in Leigh-on-Sea on Sunday 14th September at 12 noon. All Welcome.

THE MORRIS AT SIDMOUTH

Sidmouth festival has long been of particular interest to those concerned with folk dance. Its guest list includes many foreign national dance groups as well as English dance display teams and morris sides. Over the last few years the guest morris sides have been a bit of a disappointment, and so it was a great pleasure to see this year's list:- Derby Crown, Gloucester Old Spot, Headington and Preston Royal.

Commenting on the performance of a morris side is fraught with difficulty. As a correspondent to the magazine put it recently, how can you criticise a side when you don't know what they're aiming at? It's our contention, however, that really good morris is recognisable by a gut reaction - you don't need any intellectual pondering to recognise it - it's just there. So really this review can only be our personal reaction - perhaps all we can really say is that we think it's worth while making time to see these sides for yourself!

Preston Royal are an all-male Lancashire clog side. They make an

amazing visual impact even before they start to dance - their kit is purple velvet with gold braid and turquoise satin trimmings. It is based on a surviving costume and photographs of the original Preston Royal side, and indeed you get the impression that they make a great effort to recreate the old side. It is evident that the dancers take great pride in themselves and the dances, and this leads to a convincing and satisfying show.

The dances are performed at a fairly brisk tempo with great energy and vitality. The evident enthusiasm of the side for what they do counteracts the tendency seen in some North West sides to allow the apparent simplicity of the steps and figures to lead to a lack-lustre performance. There was none of that here! Their dances (all collected from within a 20-mile radius of Preston) include some unusually intricate figures which were performed with the extreme precision and split-second timing so essential to the tradition. Mention should be made of the drummer whose crisp style kept the band together and provided the tight,

military music necessary for their style of dancing. The side must consider him a real asset.

Derby Crown are a women's side - perhaps one of the few sides we've seen that makes sense of the term 'women's ritual dance'. Their repertoire includes dances from many areas including Ilmington, Bidford, Gt. Wishford and Cheshire, as well as dances invented by the side. However whatever they do is transmogrified into a Derby dance somehow - they have come up with a style uniquely their own which manages to be exuberant without being at all hoydenish. The overall impression is of movement and energy, accentuated by the high lift of the hankies, the swirl of skirts, the crisp stepping and the high jumps.

As with the last side the great attention to detail was apparent, from the immaculate kit to the timing of jumps and the organisation of coming on and off. Above all, one is aware that to achieve this standard of a unified style, energetic dancing and professional presentation takes much planning and hard work - it doesn't happen by accident.

Old Spot are from Cheltenham, Glos., a men's side specialising in Longborough. When you watch them, it hits you like a ton of bricks - that's what Cotswold Morris is all about! It's difficult to imagine Longborough being danced any more convincingly than this - their vigour and athleticism is exactly right for the tradition. On past occasions the energy has sometimes been at the expense of the set's dancing together - you got the feeling that so much of the effort was going into getting off the ground that the dancers weren't able to keep together. This year however they were spot on and the set moved

as a whole - very satisfying. Flying morris indeed!

Their impact is at gut level - strong, exciting, forceful dancing. Mingling with the crowd at an Old Spot stand, we noticed how much their performance polarised opinion amongst other dancers. People we spoke to were either totally enthusiastic (not to say sycophantic) or were Definitely Not Impressed with a determination which seemed to spring from anything but indifference. It's as though dancing the way they do is a political statement - you can agree or disagree with it but you can't ignore it. Those who think morris ought to be vigorous don't criticise the finer points of their dancing - their overall impact is so convincing that it would seem like nit-picking. Those dancers from sides that don't subscribe to the morris-is-a-forceful, -virile-dance, -or-it-is-nothing theory feel compelled to defend their position, usually by attacking Old Spot's aims rather than their performance. We'd hoped that some of the detractors would turn up at the final workshop where the side talked about and answered questions on their philosophy and methods; however the participants in the discussion all seemed to be from the pro-camp.

The only traditional team were Headington Quarry. It's difficult to imagine a team more different from Old Spot, yet it was satisfying to watch in its own way. The style is totally different of course - the stepping brisk and crisp, no athleticism here - and anyone seeing both sides, even if they'd never seen morris before, would realise the breadth of the Cotswold tradition.

It's difficult to comment on a traditional side - after all they

RE Headington and so comment on how they do the tradition is super-lucous!(It does make you wonder why people want to dance traditions where there is a traditional side-what's the point?) One or two technical points were very noticeable however - the excellent posture of all the dancers and the surge into figures for example. The set moved as a whole all the time - you were scarcely aware of individual dancers. (How many years dancing together does it take before side style becomes so evident?)

It was a pleasure watching them dancing Headington but it's a shame that their own tradition isn't satisfying enough for them. Dancing Adderbury and Bledington they became just another side. A great pity!

Well, what's the conclusion? It's rare at a festival to feel so satisfied with the performance of all the invited teams, and it's tempting to extrapolate from the experience to

a generalisation of What Is Good Morris. There are certainly some obvious points to make. Firstly, all the teams had a pride in what they were doing - somehow the dances had become theirs, and their self-respect was bound up in performing these dances well.

Secondly, it was clear to anyone watching that much hard work and planning had gone into the performance. You can watch some morris sides and come away thinking 'Well, I could do that if they gave me bells and a pair of hankies.' That certainly wasn't true of these sides.

Lastly, each of the teams had some larger-than-life quality of excitement, energy or whatever-something that comes across to the audience during a performance and makes them feel better for having watched it. It's good to feel when you put your contribution into the hat that you would have wanted to give something, even if they hadn't asked!

Morris in the Cotswolds in recent years

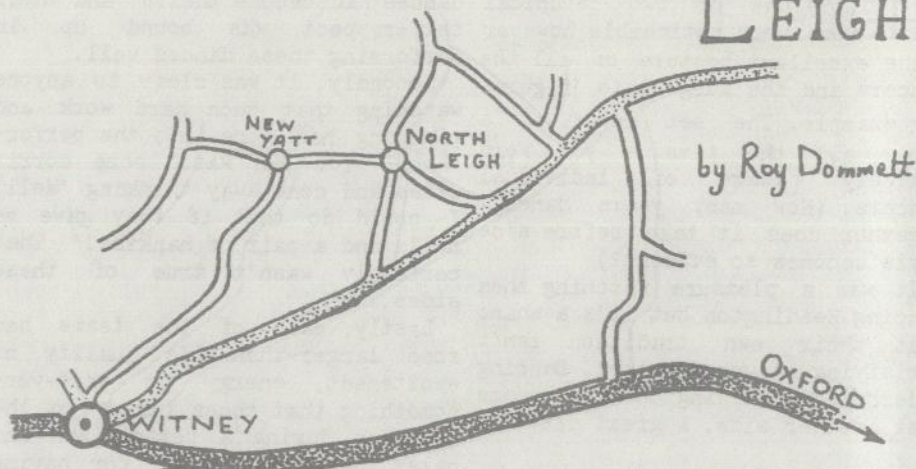
a lecture by Roy Dommett

on MONDAY, 15th DECEMBER at 7.30pm.

The Library, Cecil Sharp House,
(2, Regents Park Road, London)

ALL WELCOME.

MORRIS AT NORTH LEIGH



North Leigh is about 2 miles from Witney and called "Nor' Lye" by the locals.

Cecil Sharp met two old dancers, William Partlett, aged 79 in 1910 (b.1832) and Fred Gardner, aged 80 in 1912 (b.1833) and living in Corn Street, Witney.

The morris ceased between 1860 and 1870. They were taught by Billy Brown (b.1819) who used to play pipe and tabor and came from Hanborough, the next village. They danced to the playing of John Lansbury, the Ramsden fiddler, who also played at Ducklington. The fool was Charles Green (b.1821) who had his face blacked. They wore white trousers and had ribbons on their high hats and bells.

Fred remembered 20 morris teams meeting at Woodstock. First they danced before the Duke, then repaired to a booth in the town where they competed, Nor' Lye, of course winning. This was at a Lamb Ale which only took place once every seven years.

William danced the ordinary and

sidestep with a straight leg - "you must step out forward. Got to shiver your legs in the capers. Fetch out the sweat on you." William said of Fred, "He was as lissome as a cat out and out dancer, like on wires." They called a galley a hook-leg, a back to back a gypsy and half gip, half hands.

William said Handks only- not sticks-but Fred claimed they had a lot of stick dances and also used coco-nut halves. "You took a coco-nut, sawed it in half, scraped out the kernel, bored two holes in which you put a ribbon. That you passed your hand through like the strap of a concertina and then clapped them together or against those of other dancers. Mrs Kasey was a tune to which this was danced."

Partlett referred to Mrs Kasey, Princess Royal, Jockey to the Fair, Greensleeves, Constant Billy, Old Woman Tossed Up and Old Tayler, really Trunkles. Jigs were danced by two men who stood still between turns rather than walking round.

Fred said that the Old Woman was sometimes called "The Threadneedle" and indicated a movement with hands something like the ribbon dance in which partners joined hands together. This performed by the morris men. They had a stick dance in which tapping in the 4th and 8th bar was done as in the Fieldtown dance Bobbing Joe (Bobby and Joan) over the head. Often they would stop before half rounds and whole hey and kipper out and standing in their places sung a verse of the song through and then finished off the dance.

Cecil Sharp noted of Partlett's Princess Royal that the steps were almost exactly as Mr Taylor's of Longborough. He gave the order as Foot Up, Sidestep, Half Capers, and Upright Capers to the "usual slow" tune.

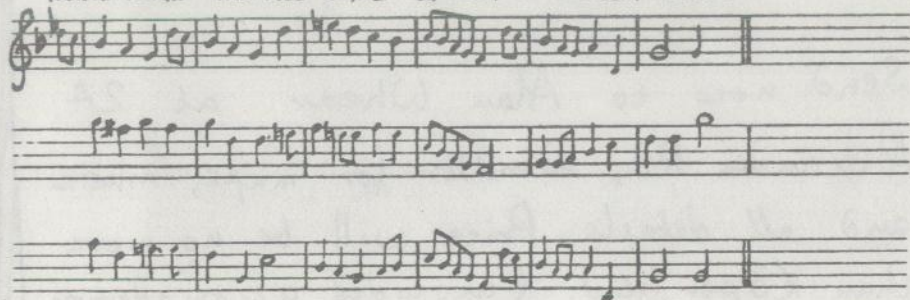
The North Leigh tune Boys of the

Bunch is given in Bacon for the Ascot dance. The Ascot Black Joke from the Williams mss is so close to the North Leigh tune as to make one wonder about the sources of the Williams tunes. The Ascot Mrs Casey is also close to the North Leigh Mrs Kasey. Sharp had a fragment of the Sweet Highland Mary tune and a Princess Royal with a shortened A music.

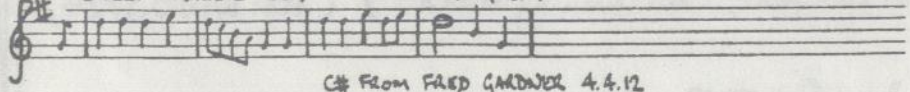
It may be presumed that the dances started with a Foot up and continued with half-gip, back to back and then singing followed by half rounds and whole hey and caper up. Mike Heaney suggests the following words for Mrs Kasey,

"Your rhino rattle, come men
and cattle,
Come all to Mrs Kasey,
Of trouble and money, my jewel
my honey,
I warrant I'll make you easy."

NORTH LEIGH PRINCESS ROYAL C# FROM W^m PARTLETT 16.5.10



SWEET HIGHLAND MARY B MUSIC FRAGMENT



C# FROM FRED GARDNER 4.4.12

WARNING!

DON'T MISS THE
NEXT MORRIS MATTERS
MUSICIANS WEEKEND

Nov. 8th. and 9th. in WINDSOR

Send now to Alan Whear at 24,
Alexandra Rd., Windsor for maps, music
and all details. Price will be no more
than £3 per head. (includes accomodation,
breakfast, Sat evening meal) (tel: WIN 53724)

WRITE NOW WHILE YOU'RE
THINKING ABOUT IT! OR BY
OCTOBER 25TH AT THE LATEST.

... The teams are by tradition
wholly masculine and the dances
have an earthy vitality and
movements that do not flatter
the feminine physique.....

.. from a morris handout
1979.

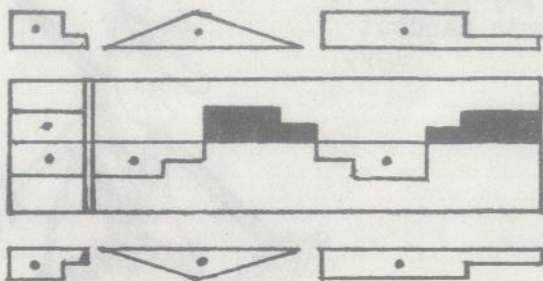


... an earthy mover ...

THE DUTCH ELM
LADS ARE AWAY ON
HOLIDAY BUT WATCH
OUT FOR MORE NEWS
NEXT TIME FOLKS



W.M.F. NEWS



WMF

Notation Group ----- Barbara Butler

Present at Notation Group 4, held on 7th & 8th June 1980 in Keynsham were Barbara Butler, Roy Dommett, Jenny Joyce, Tubby Reynolds and Alan Wear. Apologies for absence were received from Richard Ashe (music adviser), Patricia Davies, Val Parker, Gill Smith and Sally Wearing.

On Saturday morning the final reading of the Wheatley workshop was carried out, with a non-Morris dancer following the instructions. Several assumptions on the part of the writers were pointed out and remedied. Further variants were added to the dance descriptions. The music accompanying the workshop was discussed and various points on timing of music and dancing were aired.

In the afternoon a talk was given by a professional dance notator. The

system covered during this talk was Labanotation. This form of notation is used internationally to describe body movement in ballet, modern dance and folk dances. Many of the European folk dances have been accurately recorded for posterity using this method. We in Britain are very much behind in that virtually none of our Morris tradition has been recorded in the detail pertaining to this system and we only have at best the verbal descriptions which rely heavily on the fact that both author and reader understand the phrases used. This of course is complicated by the alteration in the meaning of some words and the loss of what were once common phrases and terms with the passage of time.

Labanotation has the advantage of being able to record the dances in a general form (to allow for future

growth and development of ideas) and in a highly detailed form (for a historic record to be built up of extant and extinct variants). It has the further advantage of requiring graph paper for its execution rather than the expensive stave paper used in Benesh Notation (used mainly for ballet). To ensure timing is accurate the music is written beside the movement and the length of an action can be clearly shown graphically. A floor plan, also beside the action, completes the picture of the movement ie showing the dancer what she is to do, where she will move and how long it should take her.

The only problem envisaged at present is from the stick tapping, and twirling dances. However this is at present being worked out by the Hungarian notators who have to deal with their stick twirling gypsy dances, the hand movements of which are considerably more complex than anything we are likely to come across in Brackley for example.

It was agreed that we should start to record the morris using Labanotation, both in the generalised and detailed form. It was also agreed that the Notation group should make an effort to become familiar with the basics of Labanotation. To become proficient in the use of this system takes several years, therefore it was envisaged that the Labanotation of dances would be for archival use and that the usual verbal description would be sent out to the dancing sides. Those interested in learning more about the system should refer to Ann Hutchinson's book:

LABANOTATION - the system of

analysing and recording movement, published by Oxford University Press 2nd edition, 1972.

The weekend's work continued by making a start on listing the dances for less than 6 dancers and the Molly Dances of East Anglia. The non-Morris-dancing guineapig was called in again for working through the Glossary and a somewhat large amount of re-drafting was agreed upon.

Finally the Brackley workshop was looked at with the help of the non-Morris-dancer. These discussions took the Group up to 3pm Sunday when the meeting was closed and a WMF committee meeting started.

It was agreed to hold Notation Group 5 on 14th & 15th February 1981, in Hampshire. Any enquiries to:
B.A. Butler, 3 Stockwood Vale,
Keynsham, Avon. (K.5212)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

- 1) Glossary final reading (BAB)
- 2) Labanotation - progress in assessing the system and its use trying Wheatley as an example (all)
- 3) Bucknell Workshop first draft - (PAD)
- 4) Brackley Workshop check figure draft and first chorus draft (BAB, JJ, AW).
- 5) Tabulation of historical dance terms (BAB).
- 6) NW Glossary (BAB Gp.) .
- 7) Notes on Glossop (RD).

a biographical INDEX to
traditional morris dancers,
fools and musicians

By Keith Chandler

..... the index K-R

KENDAL, E. Archie.

(Brackley) Piper; taught by his uncle
Charles Blackwell (q.v.).

KENT, John.

(Sherborne) Dancer. (Carey 1913).

KENT, ?

(Sherborne) Dancer. Brother of John.
(Carey 1913).

KERRY, Henry.

(Spelsbury) Fool for the ladies' side.
(Corbett, 'History of Spelsbury', p.243).

KERRY, Thomas.

(Bledington) See CARREY, Thomas.

KILBY, John.

(Salperton) Dancer? "Mrs. Griffen (née
Kilby)...used to go out dancing the
Morris with her father and six brothers"
(II:46). The 1851 census lists John
Kilby, born in Naunton in 1814, an ag.
lab. (C,sch.24), and also...

KILBY, Richard?

(Salperton) Dancer? Born in 1793 in
Naunton and also an ag. lab., who
appears to be John's father. (C,sch.32).

KIMBER, Fred.

(Headington Quarry) Dancer, c.1930's
(BGpc). Son of William jr.

KERRY, William.

(Bledington) Dancer, 1890's with the 'young' side. (CMM25,p.14).

KIMBER, William, sr.

(Headington Quarry) Dancer, 1868-1887/foreman c.1872-1887. Born 1849, he worked in the building trade. He also played concertina for the team when Frank Cummings was away; and taught the dances and tunes to his son William jr whom he tried to discourage from joining the side in 1899 because he feared the drink.

KIMBER, William, jr.

(Headington Quarry) Dancer/musician (Anglo). Born 8th October, 1872, "at the age of nine left Quarry school to take up 'bird starving'. Later he entered the building trade." His father took him around with the old morris, and William first danced at the Jubilee in 1887. (Anon. 'Notes on WK', VWL) Played for the team revived in 1899 by Manning, as well as dancing when Mark Cox played. Fell out with the side when he appeared to be making money from teaching the dances to Sharp, and so raised a boys side c.1910-1914, the first of several. Involved with various teams in the Oxford area throughout the next three decades, in addition to intermittent incarnations of the Quarry side. From the revival in 1947 to his death in 1961 he played for the Quarry men's and boys' teams, although he was increasingly less active as his health failed.

KIMBER, William.

(Headington Quarry) Dancer, 1910 (BGpc). Son of William jr.

KING, James.

(Wheatley) See RING.

KNIGHT, Mary.

(Spelsbury) Dancer, c.1820's. (I:123).

KNOCK, Richard.

(Brize Norton) Dancer, c.1850's? (d.200, fol.159).

LAINCHBURY, John.

(Idbury) Dancer, c.1850's? Worked as a labourer. (EG,p.21).

LAINCHBURY, William.

(Idbury) Dancer, c.1850's? A farm labourer. (EG,p.21).

LAMBERT, ?

(Sherborne) Dancer (Carey 1913).

LAMBOURN, ?

(Kirtlington) Dancer? (Diary p.59).

LAMBOURNE, Arthur.

(Eynsham) Dancer, 1937-39 (RD1). Born 16/7/1908 (PR). Brother of Percy and Philip.

LAMBOURNE, Percy.

(Eynsham) Dancer, 1937-39 (RD1). Born 16/8/1903. (PR).

LAMBOURNE, Philip.

(Eynsham) Dancer, 1937-39 (RD1). Born 26/7/1913. (PR) Currently collector for the revived Eynsham men, 1980.

LANE, Thomas.

(Oakley) Dancer, c.1850's? (d.200, fol.232).

LANKSBURY, John.

(Ducklington and North Leigh) Fiddler. From Famsden? (I:142). Also played pipe and tabor at Ducklington during the 1860's (I:144).

LANGFORD, Thomas.

(Ascott-under-Wychwood and Finstock) Piper, from Finstock. There was a 'Farmer of ten acres' by this name in Finstock in 1851 (C,sch.57). Ten years later he is described as 'Landed proprietor' (C,sch.67). Obviously Langford (assuming this to be the same man) was merely a smallholder and playing for the morris would not seem to be below his station. This might account for the fact that he was 'content with 5 shillings' (to play for the morris). His relative prosperity might induce him to charge less for his services. (For Ascott see II:43; and for Finstock see d.200, fol.184).

LARNER, ?

(Ascott-under-Wychwood) Dancer. "Mr. Larner (well over 80) ... has lived at Charlbury 65 years and danced at Ascot." (IV:101).

LARNER, Thomas.

(Ducklington) Squire, c.1860's. (d.200, fol.174).

LAW, Shadley.
(Brackley) Dancer. (IV:92).

LAY, Charlie.
(Bampton) Musician (flute), late 19th century. Father to Ted and Fred. According to Ted, one year the fiddler for the Morris was late in arriving and his father played the flute for the dancing until he had arrived. "My dad told me that several times".

LAY, Fred.
(Bampton) Dancer, 1920's until 1926. After lying about his age and fighting in the first war, he was invalided out of the army when a piece of shrapnel blew away his elbow. Died 1977 (Ted Lay).

LAY, Ted.
(Bampton) Dancer, c.1922-25, 1927-38. Born 30/6/1903, he left school at the age of eleven to work on the farm. Had a succession of jobs including woodman, labourer on the building and for the M.O.T. before joining the army during the second war. When on leave he was one of the dancers from the 'old' (i.e. Tanner) side who had a shake-up in civvies on Whit Mondays. Until recently, before his breath failed, he would have a dance with the Shergold side at Whit. Still living in Bampton (Ted Lay).

LEWIS, Tommy 'Gypsy'
(Abingdon and Bampton) Fiddler. An extant photo shows him playing at Abingdon in 1912. Jinky Wells said that he played just before Dick Butler (i.e. prior to 1880) but this is unlikely; and there is at least one photo in the village showing a line-up which includes Arthur Dixey (who first danced in 1896) where the fiddler isn't Wells, and is possibly Lewis. He was a great crony of Dick Butler. (CB).

LOCK, Daniel.
(Minster Lovell) Dancer, c.1860's? Baptised 18/4/1841, the brother of James, he worked as a farm lab. in 1851 (C, sch.47) and 1871 (C, sch.49); and was a road mender in 1914 when Sharp met him. (II:50).

LOCK, James.
(Field Assarts) Ragman, c.1854 (II:50) Baptised 3/5/1839, he was a field lab. in 1851 (C, sch.47). "I was rather too slow (to dance)." (II:50).

LOCK, John.
(Field Assarts) Dancer, c.1850's? (d.200, fol.183). Born 1817, brother of William, he was a stonemason in 1843 (PR). He must have danced prior to 1860 for his burial is recorded on December 19th of that year (PR).

LOCK, Robert.
(Field Assarts) Dancer/Foreman, c.1850's? Stonemason (d.200, fol.183). He was Carter's informant on the tradition.

LOCK, William.
(Field Assarts) Dancer, c.1850's? Born 1815, he married into the Pruce family (q.v.) in 1838, at which time he was a labourer (PR Asthall). In 1841 he is an ag. lab. living in Asthall. (C, p.11).

LONGSHAW, ?
(Shipton - under - Wychwood) Fiddler. "Former fiddler to the Shipton side" (GMW25, p.19). This may just conceivably be Shipton, Glos.

MAJOR, James.
(Winchcombe) Musician (melodeon), c.1880's? (EA).

MAKEPEACE, Tom.
(Brackley) Dancer (IV:92)

MAKEPEACE, William.
(Brackley) Piper, pre-1880, (IV:89). Died around 1882.

MANDEN, William.
(Aldsworth) Dancer/'trainer', (Sharp, Field notebook ii).

MARTIN, Bob.
(Abingdon) Dancer, 1912. Born 1861 (C, 1871, sch.III, 265).

MASON, John.
(Longborough and possibly other side in the area of Stow). Fiddler. "He was a farm labourer from (Church) Icomb" (Letter, Majorie Fennessey, 23/5/1977; VWL). He died in 1912 in his seventies.

MASON, 'Old Ted'.
(Winchcombe) Dancer, c.1880's?, c.1910 (EA).

MASSEY, Bill 'Old Mac'.
(Headington Quarry) Dancer, pre-1887, 1899 and later. He was the joint leader of a gang of well-diggers with 'Sip'

Washington (q.v.); but the family income was supplemented by his second wife taking in laundry from "all those big places in Oxford". (QR,p.180).

MASSEY, Charles 'Young Mac'.
(Headington Quarry) Dancer, 1899 and later. Son of Bill Massey.

MASTERS, Charles.
(Eynsham) Dancer, 1902. Born 13/5/1872 (PR).

MASTERS, George.
(Eynsham) Dancer, 1902.

MATTHEWS, Nibs.
(Headington Quarry) Dancer, 1939. "Kimber didn't have a side", so Nibs and some youths from Bishop's Stortford went to Bampton on Whit Monday, 1939 as the Quarry side. (Nibs Matthews).

MATTINGLY, Bill.
(Abingdon) Dancer. Joined around 1966, as one of the Longworth scouts who learned the dances to go to the World Jamboree that year. Last danced around 1975.

MAY, Ernest.
(Eynsham) Dancer, 1902. Born 11/1/1879 (PR).

MIDWINTER, Moses.
(Ducklington) Dancer, c.1860's. (d.200,fol.174). Baptised 15/1/1815, he was living in Witney in 1872, and was buried on 5/10/78 (PR).

MILLEN, David.
(Bidford) Dancer ('hyndeman'), 1886. He was one of the two men (see also William Trotman) hired by Ferrers to teach the new Bidford team, who had not danced before. Which side he previously danced with is not yet known.

MONK, Charles.
(Ducklington) Dancer, c.1860's. (d.200 fol.174). Born in 1829, he was working as an ag. lab. in 1861 (C,sch.80).

MORRIS, Edward.
(Headington Quarry) Dancer, 'odd man' c.1870's? (d.200,fol.189), 1899. Born 1844, he was a brickmaker in 1871 (C,sch.199).

MORRIS, 'Gentleman' Jack.
(Headington Quarry) Dancer, 1859. (II:106).

MORREY, William.
(Chipping Campden) Dancer, 1970's.

MORRING, Jack 'Slim'.
(Abingdon) Dancer, late 1940's/fool, early 1950's and 1960's.

MOSS, Benjamin.
(Ascot-under-Wychwood) Dancer, for "twenty years", during 1850's and 60's. Born 1827, he worked as a carter in 1861 (C,sch.6) but had become an ag. lab. ten years later (C,sch.40).

MOSS, John.
(Ascot-under-Wychwood) Dancer, 1864, (d.200,fol.133). Born 1840, he worked as a drainer in 1861 (C,sch.7).

MOSS, Joseph.
(Ascot-under-Wychwood) Dancer, 1864. Born 1834, he was a labourer in 1861 (C,sch.64) and an ag. lab. ten years later (C,sch.97).

MOSS, William, sr.
(Ascot-under-Wychwood) Sword bearer, 1864. Born 1790, he was the father of John and possibly other of the dancers. In 1861, then aged 71, he still worked as a labourer (C,sch.7), but a decade later was a pauper (C,sch.94).

MOSS, William, jr.
(Ascot-under-Wychwood) Dancer, 1864. Born 1824, first cousin to Benjamin, he was an ag. lab. in 1861 (C,sch.13), but by 1871 was employed on the local railway as a 'servant'. (C,sch.77).

MOULDER, Sam.
(Eynsham) Dancer ('Captain'), 1908 - 1910 and probably later (RD1). "The Morris Dancers do not practise much... 'The first day's work is cruel', as Mr. Mouldersaid. (He) served in the South African War... could not remember ever having been regularly taught it (ie the dances)..." (Oxford Times, 27/3/1909, p.10). He first appears in the parish registers in 1908 and was perhaps a relative newcomer to the village.

MUNT. ?

(Wheatley) Dancers of this surname were involved with the morris side at Wheatley, although none of their Christian names are known. "The Munts and the Curills, morris dancing families, occupied two of these cottages (at Littleworth) for more than a century." (VCH, Oxon, V, p.109).

NELSON. ?

(Bucknell and Stoke Lyne) Piper, c.1860's? From Steeple Aston. "Stoke and Bucknell sometimes interchanged dancers when there was a deficiency - they also had a common musician (Nelson) ... (Levi James) showed me the tree where they used to tie Nelson up when he was too drunk to stand." (Diary, 15 - 16/4/1913).

NEWBURY, Fred.

(Whitfield) Musician (drum), c.1905. Brother of Percy. (FH).

NEWBURY, John.

(Whitfield) Dancer, c.1911.

NEWBURY, Harry.

(Whitfield) Dancer, c.1911.

NEWBURY, Percy.

(Whitfield) Dancer, c.1904. "Left home at the age of 20 to join Bucks police". Brother of Fred (FH).

NEWBURY, T.

(Whitfield) Musician (fiddle), c.1905. Father of Fred and Percy. (FH).

NEWMAN, Jack.

(Ilmington) Dancer, 1907 and later.

NEWMAN, Tom.

(Ilmington) Dancer, 1907 and later.

OLIVER, Edward.

(Finstock) Dancer, c.1854. Born 1814, he was a dealer in fruit in 1851 (C, sch.90), a woodman in 1861 (C, sch.107) and a hawker in 1871 (C, sch.97).

OLIVER, John.

(Finstock) Dancer, c.1854. (d.200, fol.184). Born 1803, he was also a dealer in fruit in 1851 (C, sch.27), but an ag. lab. in the two successive censuses. (scheds.99 and 89).

PARKER. ?

(Headington Quarry) Dancer, 1910. (BGpc)

PARKER, William.

(Oakley) Squire, c.1860. (d.200 fol. 232).

PARTLETT, William.

(North Leigh) Dancer (I:143). Born 1832, he worked as an ag. lab. in 1871 (C, sch.33).

PARSONS, R.

(Headington Quarry) Dancer, c.1870's? (d.200, fol.189). There is a Richard Parsons in the Headington PR, bap.1844 who could be this dancer.

PATRIE, David.

(Sherborne) See JIM the LADDIE.

PATTERSON, Pat.

(Abingdon) Dancer, 1960's, (photos, VWL). Also carried the horns on occasion.

PAXFORD, Benjamin.

(Idbury) Dancer, c.1850's? (EG, p.21). Joseph Bond said of Paxford's dancing, "he wanted to do it lazy, he didn't want to put too much into it". (IV:128) Born around 1831.

PAXTON, John.

(Brackley) Dancer (IV:92). Born 1860? (C, sch.149).

PEARMAN, ?

(Kirtlington) Dancer, c.1850's? "Robert Pearman ... (was) one of four brothers who used to dance." (IV:99). The 1841 census for the village shows that Thomas Pearman had four sons living with him Anthony, Robert, Richard and Thomas (C, p.8), and it seems likely that these are the four dancers mentioned by Sharp. Robert was certainly a dancer (g.v.). Anthony was born around 1823, Richard around 1828 and Thomas around 1830.

PEARMAN, Robert.

(Kirtlington) Dancer/foreman, c.1860's? (IV:99). Born around 1826 he was the father of William.

PEARMAN, Thomas, Sr.

(Kirtlington) Dancer. "Will's grand-father had also been a dancer." (RD1). Born around 1786.

PEARMAN, William.

(Kirtlington) Dancer, c.1860's. "William danced in a short revival started a few years later and lasting only two or three years. His father taught him." (IV:100). Born 1856.

PERETT, Brian.

(Abingdon) Dancer, 1960's and 70's. (photos VWL).

PETTIFER, Joseph 'Fred'.

(Bampton) Dancer, 1928-38, 1946 and 47. Started as coat carrier for Wells' young side in 1928 and became one of the mainstay dancers during the 30's. Francis Shergold claims to have based his style of dancing on Pettifer.

PHILPS, Henry.

(Winchcombe) Dancer, c.1880's? (EA).

PHIPPS, ?

(Preston Capes) Dancer (IV:96), pre-1870's.

PICKARD, George.

(Abingdon) Dancer, mid-fifties - early sixties. Started as a dancer with the Dr. Barnardo's side trained around 1953 (BC).

PINE, Frank.

(Abingdon) Fool, 1970's.

PITTS, Thomas.

(Sherborne) Dancer/Musician. (CMM25, p.16).

PLESTED, Ormand.

(Chipping Campden) Fool, 1930's and "for many years". (EDS, Dec.1953, pp.106-7). Born 1887 or 8, he worked as a stonemason for a time then emigrated to Alberta and worked in North America as a professional clown. He returned to Campden in 1926 and took up gardening. He died 29/9/1953. "No longer fool in 1953 due to illness" suggests an involvement spanning the 30's, 40's and early fifties.

PORTLOCK, Thomas.

(Bampton) Dancer, baptised 18/11/1844, he married Harry Radband's sister Elizabeth Susan Taylor around 1868. Although his grandson Sonny Townsend thinks he danced during the 1890's and later, there are many photos from that period and none show Portlock. Given his age, a date of the 1870's and 80's seems more likely for his active phase of involvement with the side. Wells called him "a good dancer" (WWEBC). He died in 1936, aged 91. (ST).

POTTER, John.

(Stanton Harcourt, Ducklington, Bampton and probably others.) Piper, from Stanton Harcourt. There is a slight confusion over Potter's Christian name. Sharp gives it as John (II:86), but his son-in-law called him Bob. I have been unable to trace a Bob Potter in the village, but there is certainly a John Potter. Baptised 12/9/1813, he worked as a carrier in 1845 (PR), a 'Carrier and shopkeeper' in 1864 (P.O. directory Oxon, p.851) and an ag. lab. in 1871 (C, sch.24). When he became too old to play he went to Oxford and around 1895 was found dead in his home.

POWELL, Joseph.

(Bucknell) Piper, 1870's, 1880's? and perhaps later. Born 1846 (CMM25, p.16) or 1850 (C, Bucknell, 1871, sch.58) he learned to play the pipe and tabor "from old Tom Hall of Islip and another man, most likely old Woods of Deddington". (d.200, fol.80/81), although the Rolfes said that "he only knew a few tunes, and when up a tree used to drift into 'Maid of the Mill'." (Diary, 15/4/13). "He also made tabors almost up to the time of his death, at the age of 91, early in 1937". (CMM25, p.16). In 1871 he worked as a domestic servant (C, sch.58).

PRATELY, Richard.

(Field Assarts) Dancer, c.1850's? (d.200, fol.183). There are two men of this name in the village in 1871, one aged 48, a Labourer (C, Leafield, sch. II48), the other 33 years old, an ag. lab. (C, sch.35). The former fits in

better with the age structure of the rest of the team; in the late 19th century there were at least six distinct families with the surname Prately in Leafield, none of them related. (Source Freda Palmer, née Prately, of Leafield, Nov. 1978).

PRATELY, Thomas.

(Fieldtown) Dancer, 1850's (II:89).

PRATELY, William?

(Fieldtown) Dancer. Born around 1847. The TM met him in 1924 and 1931, (CMM25 p.15).

PRATELY, William.

(Ascot-under-Wychwood) Dancer in the 'young side', c.1870's? Born around 1838 or 39. Sharp collected from him in 1911. (II:42). Could this be the same man as the above entry?

PRESTON, Ambrose.

(Fieldtown) Sword bearer. (II:87). Dancer? Born 1818 in Field Assarts. "Worked most of his life round Burford" (Bodleian:Ms.Top.Oxon. d.191a, fol.171).

PRUCE, Charles.

(Asthall Leigh) Dancer, c.1835? (d.200, fol.134). He was born illegitimate to Sarah Pruce and baptised 17/8/1806. When he married in 1841 he was described as a lab. (PR).

PUGH, Charles.

(Oddington) Dancer. He lived at Stow in 1912. (RDpc).

PUTT, George.

(Wheatley) Dancer, c.1860's (II:99). Born 1842, he is listed as a bootmaker in 1871 (C, sch.219).

PUTT, Nathaniel.

(Wheatley) Dancer, 1860's. (II:99).

PUTT, William.

(Wheatley) Dancer, 1860's (II:99). Born 1841, he was the brother of George Putt; and was also a boot and shoe maker in 1871. (C, sch.131).

RAIBAND, Harry, 'Sarah'.

(Bampton) Dancer. Sword bearer (photos, in c.1880, 1894.) 'Captain' (1910, 1912).

Bap. 11/9/1836, he was the son of Hannah Radband who was herself the daughter of Thomas 'Jingle' Radband (q.v.), the piper for the team. By 1851 he worked as an ag. lab. (C, Weald, sch.147), also in 1861 (C, Weald, sch.173). Jinky Wells, Radband's nephew, said that his uncle had been involved with the morris for '52 years in all' (letter, 28/2/1922).

RAIBAND, Thomas 'Jingle'.

(Bampton) Piper/Sword bearer. The Radband family appears, from the available information, to have been the focal point of the Bampton tradition during the early 19th century at least, and other families (the Wells, Taylors and Portlocks for example), seem to become involved as they marry into it. Jinky always called his great-grandfather Thomas Wells.

RANDALL, John.

(Winchcombe) Musician (triangle). c.1880's? (EA).

RANDALL, Ted.

(Winchcombe) Dancer, c.1880's? (EA).

RAWLINS, Harold.

(Brackley) Dancer? (Hamer, 1955, p.215).

RICHARDSON, William.

(Bidford) Dancer? In his Mss., D'Arcy Ferrers lists Richardson in his wages bill, but his name is crossed out so perhaps he was dismissed before the team danced out in 1886, since he is not named in the advertisement from that date.

RING, James.

(Wheatley) Dancer, c.1860's. (II:99). Born 1838, he was the son of William and Ann Ring. (Ann was the sister of Samuel Rolfe (q.v.) of Bucknell), and in 1861 he was an ag. lab. (C, sch.52).

ROBBINS, Tom.

(Bidford) Fiddler and piper, 1886, 1904 (advertisements). Born around 1868 or 69, he was taught to play the pipe by Tom and James Arthur of Ilmington (q.v.) '...he had found an old shepherd's pipe, but it was useless from age and so he fiddled for most of the dances. He was (as usual) the son of a shoe maker.' (D'A Ferrers mss, VWL). Died 1948 (AH).

ROBERTS, Charles.

(Marsh Gibbon) Dancer, c.1847. (d.200, fol.231).

ROBERTS, William.

(Bledington) Dancer, 1890's. A member of the 'young' side. During the 30's he lived in Small Heath, Birmingham, when visited by Lionel Bacon. (CMM25,p.14).

ROBERTSON, ?

(Ilmington) Dancer, pre-1867. (I:135). '...the only one who did jigs...used to dance over the pipes with a pair of women's patterns on his feet' (I:133).

ROLFE, ?

(Bucknell) Dancer, c.1840's? Brothers to Samuel. (EDS, Autumn, 1975). Samuel had four brothers: William (bap.10/7/1786), Thomas (15/9/1790), Joseph (5/4/1794) and Richard (2/6/1807 - buried 16/8/1807). (PR).

ROLFE, Alfred.

(Bucknell) Dancer, 1870's (photo). Born 1850, he worked as an ag. lab. in 1871 (C,sch.42).

ROLFE, Charles.

(Bucknell) Dancer, early 1860's. He danced for two or three years when 'quite a boy', in a side which ceased around 1863, after which he did not dance again. (Diary, 15/4/13). Born 1837, in 1871 he was an ag. carter (C,sch.63).

ROLFE, Eli.

(Bucknell) Dancer, c.1870's and 80's. 'frequently as leader'. (Diary, 15/4/13). Baptised 9/2/1840, in 1871 he was, like his brother Charles, an ag. carter. (C,sch.62).

ROLFE, Samuel.

(Bucknell) Dancer, c.1830's? and 40's? He was baptised on 2/1/1797, and was the father of the dancers Charles (bap. Samuel Charles French), Eli, Thomas, Alfred and William. He still worked as an ag. lab. in 1871, at the age of 75 (C,sch.42), and died in 1884. (RD1).

ROLFE, Thomas.

(Bucknell) Dancer (foreman), 1870's and 80's? Born around 1847, in 1871 he worked as a domestic servant. (C,sch.42).

ROLFE, William.

(Bucknell) Dancer, (foreman), c.1870's, (Diary, 16/4/13) and 1880's? He was the youngest of the five dancing brothers, born 1852, and in 1871 was an ag. lab. (C,sch.23).

ROLLINS, Ted.

(Headington Quarry) Dancer, c.1930's. (BGpc).

ROUSE, Charles.

(Bampton) Dancer, c.1870's? (WWBBC).

ROUSE, Joseph.

(Bampton) Dancer, 1880's and 90's.

ROUSE, Robey.

(Ilmington) Dancer, 1907. (photo, Sunday Mercury 13/7/1958).

RUSSELL, Bert.

(Eynsham) Dancer, 1937-9. (RD1). Born 26/8/1907, the son of William 'Buff' Russell (q.v.).

RUSSELL, Cecil.

(Eynsham) Dancer, 1937-9. (RD1). Born 27/10/04, also a son of 'Buff' and Emily Ellen.

RUSSELL, Edward.

(Eynsham) Dancer (foreman), 1902, 1914, (squire or 'feathers') (RD1). Brother of 'Buff'.

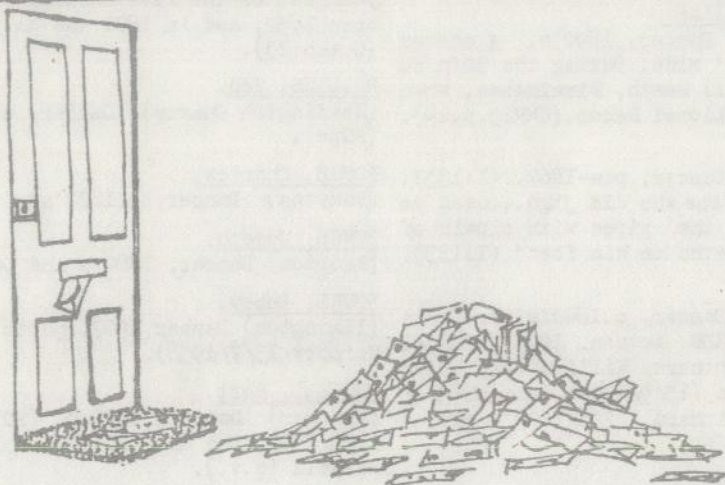
RUSSELL, Sidney.

(Eynsham) Dancer. "First went round with the side about 1906 when aged 9 to collect pennies thrown into the road for the dancers in a big red handkerchief." (RD1). He perhaps danced prior to WW1, and certainly during the revival of the 1920's, as well as being the 'Captain' of the side during 1937-39. He also trained several boys' sides at the local school during the thirties (RD1). Died January 1980.

RUSSELL, William Charles 'Buff'.

(Eynsham) Dancer, c.1890's, 1902, 1910, 1914, 1924-27?, 1937-39. Born 1863, he was the father of Sid, Bert and Cecil (q.v.). Reporting on the revival in 1937, the Oxford Mail reported - "Mr.W. Russell, although 76 years old, is an enthusiastic member and takes an active part in each dance." (14/5/37,p.5).

MAILBAG....



Morris today

Dear Morris Matters,
Just so's not to overexcite you this letter isn't going to be a girlishly breathless tale of how I became a morris dancer and found my true real-ale quenching identity ("I thought Trunkles was Dumbo's girlfriend until I discovered Longborough", etc,etc.). Nor am I going to recommend Hatha Yoga or Zen Buddhism as an essential pre-requisite for dancing (or "what the lotus position can do for your split-capers"). Nor am I going to indulge in an earnest, stolid, worthy, lengthy, and ultimately incomprehensible diatribe about "A woman's right to dance", "Tampering with tradition" (or kow-towing to Kimber). What then, if anything, have I to say? (Timely, if somewhat rhetorical). Merely these few remarks on Morris.

Basically morris today is a totally different phenomenon from the "tradition" that everyone harps on about, claims to belong to, lives, breathes and fails to define in any acceptable way. A genuinely traditional morris like Bampton have little in common, in composition attitude or behaviour, with the archetypal Surbiton Morris (hypothetical side, I hope). With most revival sides morris is a very middle-class pursuit - and the dancers are computer scientists, teachers, students and engineers. Why then dowe perpetuate a pathetic "ethnic" image - I'm not talking about the kit itself but the pewter tankard, collarless shirted, beer-gutted, waistcoated, red-spotted neckerchiefed morons who are to be heard loudly, drunkenly and with a

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total disregard for accuracy giving accounts (invariably apocryphal) of morris being "Moorish", "Horesco", "Fertility", and so forth to hapless auditors. (They also sing - also loudly and inaccurately - and carry around concertinas they can't actually play).

The whole issue of women's morris has spawned various species of chauvinist and feminist bores. Once again, it must be accepted that the nature of the morris has changed and that the 'tradition' is a living and developing one, and not a fossil. Women did dance in the 19th century (see K.C.'s Index for the facts). More importantly, women's sides do dance and, like male sides, run the gamut from very fine to abysmal. Arguments about "validity" are circular and unhelpful and are perpetuated by certain agencies within the Ring and the W.M.F. What we need - desperately - are organisations whose aim and practice is the spread of information, support for existing and new sides, productive meetings and workshops concerned with better teaching, etc., rather than timewasting arguments on irrelevant policies or self-congratulatory 'tours' of indifferent standard.

Trying to find a definition of what is morris now is complex - somewhere between busking and street theatre maybe? The crucial point is that most

of the time we perform for money - the ring of bells usually counterpointed by the assiduous rattle of the collecting box, top hat or similar. To "charge" for what is an incompetent, messy performance by a number of unfit, unskilled men or women in silly clothes is not particularly commendable. (There may be no strict "obligation" on the audience, but the moral pressures of the rattling tin under the nose are considerable. Also I have known people to be under the impression they are contributing to charity, and no-one too concerned to disillusion them. If we expect to be paid for beer, petrol, etc, we should at least be honest about it.) Whatever the discriminating power of the audience (and whether or not Longborough sported a side of three good dancers and three duffers) bad morris looks bad and ought to feel bad. A women's side I encountered last year were "moaning" (inverted boasting) about the huge amount of dancing-out they had done that summer. They had only formed in the spring, and were hardly demonstrating a consistent high standard or any real grasp of their chosen tradition!

Finally, then, let's stop shooting ill-informed mouths off, stop getting intense about issues that are unhelpful, and start practising and thinking about our standards. O.K?

Gina Irving.

MAILBAG

Morris Associations - is there a need?

Dear Morris Matters,

It was with great interest that I read Tony Barrand's article on Morris in the New World. I was particularly interested in the American attitude to the idea of forming a 'Ring'. I would not describe myself as the greatest supporter of American policy or way of life, but it seems to me that they have it right at last. I must say however, that my opinion that Associations of Morris clubs are not desirable has only recently been formed.

Just over a year ago, Steve Wass and myself attempted to form the Cotswold Morris Association. This was only to be a loose association of clubs within a small geographical area. I describe it as 'loose' because we did not wish to affect the policies of the member clubs, only to agree on certain aspects that we considered important for Morris within this particularly important area. We were able to interest a fair proportion of the clubs for the initial meetings. It was, however, immediately obvious that though we respected each others attitude to Morris, there was little chance that we would agree with each other on all aspects.

Consequently Steve and I came quickly to the conclusion that we, as a side, should carry on in our normal way and if anyone agreed with our methods, attitudes, etc. we would get together with them and that this was the best form of association possible.

There exists a feeling in certain Morris circle that a bridge needs to be formed between the Ring and the WMF, the latest idea being the Open Morris. Can I please make the suggestion that we make the continued dancing of good Morris that bridge, rather than forming associations that can even divide people who have similar basic ideas.

Tim Radford,
Adderbury Morris.

Accuracy in attributing dances

I am writing this letter to everyone to highlight a problem that has been increasing over the last few years. Instructionals are now being given by many people who know the dances but who are not familiar with their background. The result has been that at several instructionals for women, run by sides or folk festivals, material has been taught which was never part of the original dance. Since no comment was made by the instructor, beginners and dancers new to the dance have assumed that what they have been taught is "the dance" and have taken this idea away with them as fact.

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On encountering the original material the result has been, and continues to be, a great deal of unnecessary confusion and, in one case, a justifiably sharp letter from the traditional side who had observed an adaptation of their dance publicly proclaimed as the original. So please, instructors, do a bit of research and take care what you say because your words will be passed on as fact by new dancers.

One example which crops up frequently is Marston. So to save any more letters and queries, as far as we know Marston was not a Garland dance and its adaptation into one only started in the mid-1970's.

There is nothing wrong in adapting a dance then teaching it, but please tell your audience. This will save WMF time and money sorting out muddles and pouring oil on troubled waters. When adapting or changing a dance into something new, perhaps a new title should be considered, even if it is called "a dance based on X" or "our version of X".

This note also applies to footwear and the recent teaching of the indiscriminate use of clogs for any dance that is vaguely North-West.

Barbara Butler,
WMF Technical Officer.

