

Trevor Stone 6-8th August 1984

## SIDMOUTH FESTIVAL 1984: Longsword dance workshop

### KIRKBYMOORSIDE DANCE

Many people are unaware that there are records of Longsword dances from over 70 towns and villages throughout Yorkshire. Many of these dances are not fully recorded but we still have performance details for more than 25 dances, some unpublished.

A group of such dances come from Ryedale and the Vale of York. They have been neglected by both researchers and performers alike but there are some interesting features apparent in the few available records of dance details.

One of these dances is from Kirkbymoorside, it was noted by Cecil Sharp in 1913 when it had not been performed for 30 years. Even though Sharp collected the briefest of details, it is possible to use his information plus details from other dances in the "family" to recreate a dance based on the Kirkbymoorside dance. The original records can be found in Sharp's MSS in Cecil Sharp House.

#### Features

There is no record of a play or calling-on sequence, but the dancers were accompanied by a Fool or Clown in a smock, a grandly dressed King and Queen and two Beggars with collecting boxes.

No details exist of the six dancers costumes but they carried rather fancy metal swords similar to the Ampleforth College swords.

#### The Dance

The step is described by Sharp as "walking not springing" and was performed to tunes such as "The Girl I Left Behind Me". Swords are held in right hand throughout, dancers number in clockwise sequence.

#### High Basket

All stand in circle facing clockwise with swords in to centre. Clash as music starts - start stepping on left foot. clash and circle clockwise for 8 beats turn sharply and return counter clockwise.

#### Circle

With swords in a hilt and point ring, clockwise then back.

#### Third Man Over

No 1 sword down low 5 followed by 4 go over and turn left, 3 over and turn right. 2 turns left and all back to place. Repeat without pause with other swords down in turn.

#### Circle

In hilt and point ring, clockwise then back.

#### Three Reel

Break in two three man hilt and point rings 1, 2 & 3; 4, 5, & 6. Each group moves as follows: No 1 raised sword, 2 goes under and turns left to place followed by No 3 who backs through. Then next sword up etc. 4, 5 & 6 perform same moves.

### Lock

Break from 3 reel into hilt and point ring and circle clockwise only. Lift hands above head, full turn under left shoulder back to face centre, and form lock. No 1 holds up lock whilst team circle clockwise then anti-clockwise.

### Behead Fool

Fool enters ring during circling and lock is lowered over his head. At end phrase of music swords are drawn out with a sweep. This is followed by a slight pause whilst "dead" fool crawls out of circle.

### Hilt & Point Ring

All circle clockwise for a phrase of music.

### Fourth Man Over

Similar sequence to third man over but 4th dancer turns right after going over No 1 sword - all swords down in turn. At end of last sequence dancers form two files 1 faces 6; 2 faces 5; 3 faces 4 and each hold tip of opposite sword. Each pair stand well apart.

### Poussette

3 & 4 roll twice towards others, at same time 1 & 6 and 2 & 5 change places, No 6 & 2 pushing partner. 1 & 6 then change places with 3 & 4 but this time No 1 pushes (to form a full zig-zag) 2 & 5 roll twice towards others.

### Roll

Similar to dip and dive but couples going over also spin. 1 & 6 go over, 2 & 5 under for first change whilst end couple spin away and then towards.

### Hilt & Point Ring

All circle clockwise for one phrase of music, swing swords in and make a hilt-over-point lock. This is displayed as team dances off.

## **rattle up, my boys**

the story of Longsword dancing - a Yorkshire tradition  
by Trevor Stone

For further information on this fascinating Yorkshire tradition  
send for a copy of the only booklet on this subject.

Trevor Stone, 6 Priory Road, Sale, Cheshire M33 2BR.

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