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So there was no rainfall till it was time to start dancing out again. In all the years I've been around morris I had never danced at dawn till this year – and our hosts insist it has never rained in previous years. This issue concludes Roy Dommett's fascinating notes on the Olympic links to Robert Dover & morris generally. We also celebrate several citations to people who have contributed enormously to the morris world we know.

Following on from Roy's Olympic researches, I heard on the radio that during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, there was a vogue for writing operas with an Olympic theme – they didn't elaborate except to play a Vivaldi overture and say there were over 40 such operas. I don't know how good they were... a possible source for dance tunes?! I don't know how the composers made the music "Olympic" – a thesis for someone out there?

On a less academic theme, Long Lankin has a personality test for your morris team. It may cause you to reflect next time you go away for the weekend how you are perceived!

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Robert Dover, Dr William Brookes and all the Olympic Games (part 2)

Baron de Coubertin and the Modern Olympiads

On September 1st 1870, France was heavily defeated at the battle of Sedan, only eight weeks after Napoleon III had declared war on Prussia, Three days later France was proclaimed a Republic, in another ten days Paris capitulated. Then Alsace and Lorraine were annexed. It brought a lasting gloom to France.

Pierre de Fredi, Baron de Coubertin, was born in Paris at the family hotel on New Year's Day 1863. His grandfather had been made a Baron by the Bourbon Louis XVIII in 1821. His father died in 1908. Pierre was unusually small and took an un-French attitude to games and fitness, even practising boxing. The *lycées* had no playing fields, no games and little physical training. Coubertin first visited England in 1883 to study English Public Schools and their sports. As an admirer of Dr Arnold, Coubertin had read *Tom Brown's Schooldays* in 1875. He then made a similar but a commissioned official visit to the USA and Canada in 1889. Many sports were standardised only from the 1850s, and purely athletic meetings only started late in the nineteenth century. The Olympic Club of Montreal was founded in 1842. America presented Coubertin with the first evidence of the mass popularity of spectator sports, whilst the 1889 Paris Universal Exposition alerted him to the attraction and symbolic power of international public spectacles. The first truly international exhibition had been at the 1851 London Crystal Palace. Our Prince Albert's role in that was similar to Coubertin's for the later Modern Olympics. Coubertin was 15 years old when the 1878 Paris Universal Exposition opened only a few blocks from his apartment on the rue Oudinot. It included a German pavilion with a diorama of the Olympia archeological site. The next was that in 1889 for which the Eiffel Tower was built. It had ethnic displays and the first European appearance of Buffalo Bill's "*Wild West Show*".

In 1884 Coubertin enrolled at the Sorbonne, but ignored the lectures on law, and entered in 1885 the Free School for Political Science, a private school for training for government service. He read about theories of education. He participated in a small group called the Society of Social Economy, whose procedures he introduced later when he organised the International Olympic Committee. He visited Rugby school in 1886. 'Alone', he would later write, 'in the great Gothic chapel of Rugby, my eyes fixed on the funeral slab on which without epitaph, the great name of Thomas Arnold was inscribed, I dreamed that I saw before me the cornerstone of the British Empire.' Coubertin was wrong about many things, including Rugby school and Dr Arnold (Headmaster from 1828-1842, he detested sport). Early sporting activity in Britain was driven by betting and prizes until well into the 19th century, then grew the cult of the amateur, as much to separate the moneyed from the working classes. The many new sports clubs from 1860 were by definition exclusive, not designed to provide sporting amenities to the deprived general public. Coubertin swallowed it all and the idea lasted 90 years.

After the visit to England, in 1887 he approached the French Ministry of Public Instruction with ideas and was given an office, a budget, and a mission to find

ways of improving French education. It took him throughout France. At one school he learned a Latin motto, *citius, altius, fortius*. To encourage interest in sports he created the Union of French Athletic Sports Clubs, with a monthly newspaper, *The Athletic Review*. Coubertin realised that the ancient Olympics had much in common with his ideas for athletic internationalism. Both brought athletes together for friendly competition, were designed to glorify individual achievement instead of national identity, and created an island of peace and friendship in the midst of conflict.

While Coubertin was setting up the Congress of Physical Training for the 1889 Paris Exposition, Dr Brookes responded to a newspaper notice, and Coubertin was invited by him to visit Much Wenlock, which he did in October 1890, and his published description has been quoted above¹. During his visit he planted a tree at the Linden Fields, whose original commemorative plaque is now in the local museum, and he was made an honorary member of Brooke's Olympic Society. It was in 1892 that he made the first public suggestions in his campaign for the acceptance of the concept of the Modern Olympics. His lecture at the Sorbonne on November 25th 1892, at his dinner to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Sports Clubs Union, was received with an ovation. But there were many inspirations; Coubertin did not so much dream up the idea as make it a reality. Though throughout he rarely had contact with any athletes.

He was utterly bemused and delighted by what he saw at Much Wenlock. Coubertin was not usually taken by such an amalgam, but the ceremonial and *bonheur*, indeed what we might call the theatricality of the Wenlock Games quite distracted him. For all its strangeness, Coubertin found such syncretism tasteful and charming. The processional opening likely added to the impressions he had already received from the opening solemnities of the Paris Exposition and contributed with them to the character of the later opening ceremonies of the Olympic Games. In his 1897 article on the history of modern sports and gymnastics he remarked,

"... such meetings are of essentially modern character; the games are modern; modern are the rules, the dress and the prizes. In Wenlock only something of the past has survived; it is safe to say that the Wenlock people alone have preserved and followed the true Olympian traditions."

This seems to have been occasioned by the inclusion of prizes for literary compositions and artistic works, the Greek banners, slogans, and songs and above all, "such displaying of etiquette and stateliness" as "no modern athletes" had ever known. In his periodical *La Revue Athletique* of December 1890,

"... and of the Olympic Games which modern Greece has not yet revived, it is not a Greek to whom one is indebted, but rather to Dr William Penny Brookes ... now aged 82 ... still active, vigorous, organising and animating them... Athletics does not count many partisans as convinced as W P Brookes."

¹ See Morris Matters Vol 25 number 1

Only rarely have women crowned champions in the modern Olympic Games, but since the 1920s it has become a regular custom to have the prizes borne forward by young maidens from the host nation. This practice, with the idea of victory ceremonies themselves, was planted in Coubertin's imagination at Much Wenlock. He arranged sporting meets in Paris in the early 1890s, combining them with parades, banquets and ceremonies.

His second official visit to the USA was in 1893 representing France at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. He formed the first International Olympic Committee in 1894 in Paris at an eight day long meeting, funded by himself, now remembered as '*The Congress of the Sorbonne*' held from 17th to 24th June, attended by 79 delegates representative of 12 nations and 21 others sent messages of support. But 2,000 attended the opening dinner! It closed with unanimous support for a resolution for a revival in 1896. On 24th May a meeting of the Wenlock Olympic Society read the programme for this International Athletic Congress about '*Amateurism and Professionalism in Athletics*'. They wanted them to be only amateur, to underline de Coubertin's view of the noble and chivalrous character of physical exercise. Dr Brookes sent his best wishes but was unable to attend because of failing health, but he was listed as an honorary member of the Congress. However the Olympic committee did not become a working one until after 1908.

The International Olympics Begin

Athens

Coubertin intended that the first Olympics would be in Paris in 1900, but it was considered that the wait would have been too long, so IOC opted for 1896 in Greece. They were not genuinely Olympic, in that only the running, long jump, discus and wrestling were borrowed from the original, and each was now different, the rest of the events were either unknown or never included by the ancients. The choice of events was appropriate to the times.

The Games in Athens ran from Easter Monday, April 6th 1896 until April 13th. The Stadium had been restored, according to the ancient plans, in marble through a gift of nearly one million drachmas (roughly £36,500 at the 1896 exchange rate) from Georgios Averoff, who lived in Alexandria, from a lottery, and from the sale of souvenir stamps and medals. The money for the Zappeion Olympics was not released as had been hoped. As the IOC was helpless, Coubertin created the Olympic Organising Committee (OOC), all of whom were Athenians who knew how to get things done in their city. The new cinder track, laid by men from London, measured 333.33m, had very sharp turns, and the competitors ran in a clockwise direction. They were the first meeting to have a unity and integrity of rule, purpose and form. Much of the organisation was owed to the efforts of Crown Prince Constantine and his brother Prince George. On the first and fifth days the crowds, perhaps 60 to 80 thousand or more, were for then the largest ever gathered for a peaceful celebration in the modern world.

Many athletes entered privately, including holiday makers, and two employees from the British Embassy in Athens tried to enter the bicycle race, but were told

that as working men they were not strictly amateurs and therefore did not qualify. A French sprinter insisted in wearing his gloves to run before royalty. Some nearly missed the occasion not realising that Greece still used the Julian not the Gregorian calendar!

One unrepeatable event occurred, Robert Garrett of the USA Princeton team, took up a discus, never having seen one so light and small, and threw it further than the Greeks for whom it was the classic exercise! Another American, James Connolly won the very first medal, this for the triple jump. For these Games the event winners received a silver medal and a crown of olive leaves and the second a copper medal and a crown of laurel, at the insistence of Prince Constantine. A gold medal was thought to be too much like a cash prize.

All the associated ritual symbols of the games, solemn music, processions, flights of birds, sacred plants, flags, mythic and divine images, invocations, crownings, wreath laying, statue dedications which populated the opening, victory and awards ceremonies, followed by banquets, group photograph sessions and ceremonial leave taking, were more novel than the actual Olympic Games, but have lasted. The king had all the competitors to breakfast on the first day. Another innovation was the raising of the national flag of the event winners. The Olympic Hymn was written in 1896 by two Greeks and, despite various attempts to modernise it, it still remains in use. There were artistic events in Athens associated with the Games, concerts, performance of ancient drama, a non-competitive torch race, many receptions and extensive flood lighting. It amounted to a charming carnival of Boy Scoutish idealism and with a minimum of the pompous military and religious ritual of later games.

The swimming events were held in the ice-cold sea at the Bay of Zea. The cricket and soccer competitions were cancelled for lack of entries! The yachting was cancelled because of bad weather. Sir George Stuart Robertson, the Greek scholar and hammer throwing Oxford blue, entered the tennis tournament because it was the only way to obtain the use of a court! He also did the shot putt and discus, and composed and recited the valedictory Greek Ode at the final day.

Coubertin set about organising the 1900 Olympics. The argument about it being kept in Greece failed because of another war between Greece and Turkey. The Parisian World Fair organisers ignored his proposals. Instead of having a separate zone, they chopped the events up and distributed them around, gymnastics with the fair's children's games, rowing and yachting in the exhibition of ocean-going ships, and fencing next to a display of knives and forks. In Paris the OOC were the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Public Instruction. Coubertin formed an alternative OOC, but then the Union of French Athletic Sports Clubs declared itself the only legitimate OOC. Its list contained many prominent active politicians, and as a non-political President of the IOC, he could not associate closely with them. He concentrated on the non-OOC matters and tried to set up permanent National Olympic Committees in each country. There was no track, only stakes marking a course across a badly cut grassy field full of hills and bumps. Clumps of trees stood where the throwing events were and often throws could not be measured.

Paris

The games in Paris (July through October 1900 in the Bois de Boulogne, spread over 5 months) as part of the 5th Universal Exposition, and at St Louis (1904 at the Washington University, spread over 4½ months) World Fair were relative disasters, with epidemics of bad temper and high level confusion, and that at London (1908 at the Shepherd's Bush Stadium), replacing Rome because of financial difficulties following the 1906 eruption of Mt Vesuvius, was transitional, because they were all amalgamated with world fairs. Only those in Stockholm (1912) and Paris (1924) were independent triumphs for the Olympic Movement. At Paris in 1900 many athletes learned that they had participated in the second Olympics of the modern era only when they noticed the inscriptions to that effect on the medals and certificates. The official programme did not even contain the word Olympics. There were more contestants than spectators. The 1896 winner of the discus in 1900 threw on each attempt into the crowd! The swimming was held in the River Seine, going downstream. Raymond Ewry, who was a former polio victim, eventually won eight gold medals over several Olympics, all in the standing jump events that have been dropped since. His records are high jump 5' 5", long jump 11' 4½", triple jump 34' 8½". Paris included team sport events which Coubertin opposed vigorously but he was outvoted. In later Olympics there were less familiar sports introduced as demonstrations, but the 1970 regulations defined the amateur sports that could qualify as those if men played them in 40 countries on 3 continents (or women in 20 countries on 2 continents).

St Louis

The 1904 games had been intended for Chicago, having first considered Philadelphia and then New York, but were transferred to St Louis to join the 100th anniversary celebration of the Louisiana Purchase at the request of the US President Theodore Roosevelt. Here the carnival-like atmosphere sunk to a grotesque low with a two Olympic '*Anthropological Days*' of demonstrations in which African Pygmies, Patagonian and Phillipine Igoets and Moris from sideshows at the World's Fair competed in mud fights, pole climbing, stone throwing, steeplechase running and other so called "native games". But a Zulu was 9th in the formal marathon! Fred Lorz was the first arrival in the marathon and looked remarkably fresh. He was found to have received an eleven mile lift in a car after having cramp, and then had returned to running after the car broke down. Incredibly George Eyser, aged over 30, won 6 medals in the gymnastics, and he had a wooden leg! One event was for Roque, similar to croquet, but played on a hard surface with raised sides, another was proposed for tobacco juice spitting!

If the marathon, the most popular event in the first Olympics, had not been won by a Greek, Spiridon Loues, there might never have been a repeat Games four years later. The response amongst the populace was the momentum that carried the Olympic experiment on to Paris in 1900. Unfortunately the French reaction was less than enthusiastic and the ensuing St Louis competition, involving mostly Americans, drew even less support. The whole movement would have ground to a halt had not the Greeks come to the rescue with the Panhellenic Games, now the so called 'Intermediate' or 'Intercalated Games', held in Athens in 1906. The excellent competition and the public support rekindled interest. These Games introduced the gold, silver and bronze medals for the first three places. It was planned to hold a Games in Athens every four years between the main Olympics,

but that for 1910 was cancelled because of the economic situation and the political unrest between Greece and Turkey and in the Balkans generally, and were never reconsidered after WWI.

London

The 1908 Games had been intended for Rome, but they backed out for financial reasons and they were given to London at the Shepherd's Bush Stadium. 1908 was the first Games for which the entries were by countries rather than on a personal basis, and the teams entered behind their national flags. About a quarter of a million people watched the marathon. This was never an ancient event; but still it commemorated the run of Pheidippides to Athens in 490 BC, he having already twice run long distances to ask for reinforcements. The marathon distance was supposed to have been about 25 miles, but when the start in 1908 was moved to Windsor it became 26 miles. Then Princess Mary asked for the start to be moved to below the royal nursery, making it 26 miles and 385 yards, which it remains! At London medals were given to the third placed for the first time.

Introductions

A public address system and electrical timing was introduced in 1912, but there was no boxing as it was illegal in Sweden. The IOC flag of five interlaced rings on a white ground, based on an emblem found at Delphi in 1913 by Coubertin himself, was first unfurled at Antwerp in 1920. They are to represent the five participating continents of Europe, Asia, Oceania, Africa and the Americas. The public pronouncement of the Olympic Oath by a representative also started in 1920. The Olympic motto, *Citius, Altius, Fortius* (faster, higher, stronger), learnt in 1895, was used from 1924, but it was first displayed at a huge party Coubertin hosted for the IOUs 20th anniversary meeting in Paris. This was extravagant even by the Baron's standards; there were 17 receptions, plays, operas, choral concerts, banquets and a speech by the President of France. The Olympic Flame was introduced at Amsterdam in 1928, burning throughout the Games, together with a large results board and the release of pigeons, the three-level winners' podium at Los Angeles in 1932, the torch relay from Olympia in Greece where the first one was ignited by focussing the sun in 1936. From that year there was a special torch design for each host city. The first time all the athletes entered *en masse* at the closing ceremony was in 1956, and mascots for each Games were introduced in 1968, as was sex testing for women. After the closing ceremony of each Games, the host of the next Games was ceremonially presented with the Olympic flag.

The Pattern

At the opening ceremony Coubertin's words are displayed,

*"The important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning, but taking part.
The essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well."*

Then the IOC President and the president of the organising committee and head of state enter. "*Citius, Altius, Fortius*" is displayed.

The teams enter. The Greek athletes always lead the opening procession, then nations follow in local alphabetical order, but with the host country last.

Then the head of state is asked to open the Games. The Olympic flag is raised to the Olympic Hymn and the official flag, given in 1920 by the Belgian Olympic Committee, is handed to the mayor of the host city to keep to the next celebration. Pigeons are released, a salute of three guns fired, the final runner with the Olympic torch arrives, and the flame is lit.

The Olympic Oath is taken by a competitor from the host country,

"In the name of all competitors I promise that we will take part in these Olympic Games, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, in the true spirit of sportsmanship for the glory of sport and the honour of our teams."

Obsolete Events

These early Games also included such athletic events as standing long, high and triple jumps but also free style javelin throwing, as well as discus, shot and javelin where the winner was the one who threw the best aggregate distance with their left and right hands separately. 1896 saw one handed weight lifting. The gymnastics, on and off; between 1896 and 1932, included climbing a 10m rope. There was a 200m swimming obstacle race in 1900, involving three sets of obstacles, the swimmers had to climb over a pole, over a row of boats and under another row of boats. Also there was underwater swimming with 2 points for each meter and one point for ever second underwater. Even live pigeon shooting occurred! Croquet and Cricket were also played in 1900. England hold the only cricket gold medal when the Devon Wanderers CC beat a French team of largely British expatriots living in France by 158 runs. The sports included archery, golf, handball, lacrosse, polo, rackets, and tennis. The 1900 schedule also mentioned angling, cannon-shooting, bowling, leapfrog, three legged races, automobilism, pelota and running wild boar shooting but it is not known if they ever happened. In 1904 there was throwing a 56lb weight, and in 1906 throwing a 14lb stone. In 1906 at Athens there were rowing races for 6 and 16 sailor naval boats. The London City Police beat the Liverpool Police in the tug o'war in 1908, in an event recognised from 1900 until 1920. The USA are the reigning rugby union champions, the sport having been last competed in 1924. They also are the champions at the western martial art of *single stick* as part of the fencing held in 1904. There has been considerable technical progress in the classical events, no more so than in the high jump, which has progressed through scissors, eastern roll, western roll, and straddle to the fosbury flop.

There have been odd combinations of sports by some contestants. G Fuchs competed in sabre, rowing and bobsledding, Ralph Craig was a sprinter and a yachtsman, Evgeny Grishin a cyclist and speed skater, and Eddie Eagan a boxer and bobsledder.

Women

Coubertin did not want women in the Olympics, he called this kind of mixing "promiscuity in sport". His genteel belief was that women have but one task, that of crowning the winner with garlands. Their participation grew very slowly. The women's events in 1900 and 1904 were unofficial; at London they were recognised as official competitors, and at Stockholm there were the first real athletic events,

albeit swimming. In 1900 it was for croquet and lawn tennis, in 1904 for golf and archery, and swimming from 1912. In 1921 at Monte Carlo there was a special women's only meeting with 100 competitors, including javelin, high jump, shot putt and six running distances. There were 300 women in 1922.

Mini-Olympics were held in France and then Sweden so successfully that women's athletic events were introduced into the full Olympics from 1928. But mixed teams had been accepted in yachting from 1908, and women competed directly against the men in equestrian events from 1952 and in shooting from 1968. Some women were very distressed in the longer distance track event of 800m in 1928 so distances above 200m were not included for many years, but now, with proper training, from 1984 there is even a marathon event. However one woman, Melpomene, actually tried to enter the marathon at Athens in 1896. Of course she was refused, but she ran anyhow and finished only 1½ hours behind the winner, as many do in the London Marathon.

Cultural Side

Coubertin intended from the beginning that the Modern Olympics would include cultural events as in the ancient festivals. His conference in Paris in 1906 recommended five aesthetic areas, architecture, sculpture, painting, music and literature, with prizes for the best new works that found their inspiration in sport. He tried in vain to interest the organisers, London was sympathetic but too pressed for time. Stockholm made a valiant first effort with all the fine arts entries to have an appropriate affinity to the Olympic sports. The first literature prize was for a long poem called "Ode to Sport" submitted under a *nom de plume* by Coubertin himself. The modern art competitions introduced were architecture, painting, graphic arts, sculpture or plastic arts, applied arts, literature and music. Uniquely Walter Winas of the USA in 1912 won a silver medal in shooting and a gold medal for sculpture. The competition lasted from 1912 until 1948 after which it was abandoned because of the mediocre quality.

In April 1915 Coubertin moved the IOC to Lausanne in Switzerland on the shores of Lake Geneva. His family moved to a simple hotel called Beau Sejour made available by the city where the IOC office was accommodated in his hotel suite. He now had to live frugally, and the days of huge banquets and parties were over. The IOC meeting in April 1919 asked Antwerp to host the 1920 Games, even though the city was in ruins. Athletes had to sleep in children's cots in a schoolhouse, eight to a room. Belgians were so poor in 1920 that few could afford to attend, so free tickets were given to schoolchildren. Coubertin asked that the 1924 Games be switched from Amsterdam to Paris before he intended to retire. Lausanne was so proud of Coubertin that it gave a substantial mansion, Mon Repos, for the IOC headquarters. When he retired he was given the honorary title of "President for Life of the Olympic Games" and promised that the title would never be given to anyone else. The IOC headquarters is now Olympic House in the grounds of the Chateau de Vidy.

Amsterdam had a final exhibition of 1,150 works of art, 450 architectural, 40 literature entries and 22 musical. There were 1,100 exhibits in Los Angeles (1932), at which a German won a prize for poetry. However there never were classes for

the other performing arts, other than the Ice Dancing since WW II, and certainly no obvious chance for folk dance, except perhaps in the opening non-competitive displays. However in the English Folk Dance Society magazine, EFDS News No.7, May 1924, page 169, it stated,

“Olympic Games: It is just possible that the [EFD] Society will be represented in Paris at the Olympic Games.”

So there may have been a possibility. It has been impossible to follow this particular implication up as the Director of the EFDS, Cecil Sharp, died after a short illness on 23rd June 1924, just before the Games were to start, and his death preoccupied all the EFDS records of the period. There may be an indirect reference in Coubertin's deposited papers.

The opening displays have become enormous. There were 3,500 musicians at Los Angeles in 1932. At Moscow there were 16,000 performers. At Los Angeles in 1984 there were 10,000 performers, flags, pageants, a 960 voice choir and 84 baby grand pianos, and the release of millions of white and gold balloons. At Seoul there were 13,625 performers with displays of folk dancing, rituals and martial arts. \$28m was spent at Barcelona for an allegorical confection.

However the loss of competitions did not stop exhibitions, performances, dramatic ceremonial and often spectacular new architecture. In Mexico in 1968 it was coupled with a year long Cultural Olympiad. At Munich in 1972 there was colossal sculpture by Otto Piene. Los Angeles in 1984 had a ten-week Arts festival with 100 exhibitors and performers from twenty countries. Barcelona in 1992 had fifty newly commissioned urban sculptures. There has been a parallel art exposition at Atlanta in 1996, but how to find the details is unknown!

From the beginning the Official Posters blending the Olympic symbolism with the spirit of the host cities were considered part of the "National Art Exhibitions" called for by the Olympic Charter. The poster for 1912 was considered so daring, with a naked man barely decent with a few strategically positioned ribbons, that it was not distributed to a number of countries. The Olympic symbol of the five rings has appeared on every poster since the Winter Games of 1928. Commemorative medals besides the victory medals have always been provided for all competitors and officials. Anyone attending in any role or as a spectator could always obtain an Olympic Pin. Often there have been special host country commemorative postage stamps.

Coubertin was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1936, but he was not selected. His sponsor surprisingly was Hitler, because he was against the other nominee Carl von Ossietzky, a pacifist and writer who was being tortured in a Nazi prison camp. He died from a stroke on 2nd February 1937, aged 74. He had gone for a walk and sat down on a park bench. He was buried in the Bois de Vaux cemetery in Lausanne, but his heart was buried at Olympia.

Modern Games

Protests and Problems

Because of the attention that focuses on this summit of sports and games there have always been problems and protests. In Paris in 1900 the French judges refused to be impartial. The London Games were a contribution to international acrimony rather than to harmony, particularly between the American contestants and the British judges. In 1924 the French spectators booed during the national anthems, but in 1932, during the US Prohibition exception was made for the French team because they claimed wine was a necessary part of their culture.

Medals were withdrawn from winners who were found to have even slightly infringed the rules on amateurism, although sham amateurism was rife, often playing under false names. For example, Jim Thorpe, a Sac and Fox native American Indian, was outstanding in 1912, but was asked to return his medals as it was found that he had when young accepted expenses for playing American football.

Colour and race have been an issue at times. As a sign of things to come, in 1908 England tried to prevent the use of the Irish flag and the Russians of the Finnish flag before these countries became independent. In 1936 Hitler refused to meet Jesse Owen, the US gold medals winner, but also that year Helene Mayer - who was half Jewish and had gone to the USA because of racial prejudice - returned to fence for Germany but received little recognition for her achievements even though she responded to winning with the Nazi salute. Then there was a fuss about the athletes who used the "black salute" of a raised clenched fist.

The ill feeling against the belligerents in the two World Wars meant that Austria, Bulgaria, German, Hungary and Turkey were barred from the 1920 Olympics, Germany in 1924, and Germany and Japan in 1948. The USSR did not join the Olympic movement until 1952, South Africa was suspended after 1960.

There have been boycotts. Many were unhappy at the award of the 1936 Games to Berlin and an Alternative Games were proposed for Barcelona, but these were cancelled as the Spanish Civil War started the day before they were due to begin. The 1940 Games had been given to Tokyo, but were taken away because of the Japanese invasion of China and given to Helsinki. These in turn were cancelled when Russia invaded Finland. The 1976 Games were boycotted by African countries, the 1980 Games by America, etc.

Local Contributions

The Aldershot area was used for some events in the 1948 Olympics because of a lack of equestrian facilities near the White City. The individual and team dressage, and the dressage section of the three day event were held on Twesledown. For the cross country section the eventers covered 15 km of roads, tracks and a steeplechase course, starting from Queen's Parade across Twesledown to the Sandhurst, the Royal Military Academy's training ground at Camberley, involving 34 jumps in the area around Saddleback Hill, Old Dean. The show jumping was held on the Command Central Ground in Queen's Avenue. The modern pentathlon included riding, fencing and swimming. The fencing was held

in the gymnasium in Queen's Avenue and the swimming at the Aldershot Municipal Bathing Pool, now the Lido.

I knew Raymond "Neddy" Harrison who was part of the British épée team under Alan Jay which came second at Rome in 1960. As a Flight Lieutenant in the RAF he had worked for me in Guided Weapons Department, at the Royal Aircraft Establishment, for a couple of years. He was a left handed fencer, noted for quirks like painful blows to opponents feet. At an RAF mess party at Farnborough he cut an artery and a nerve in his left wrist on a broken wine glass. The nerve was rerouted by surgery and he had to work a tennis ball endlessly to regain flexibility and his grip. Naturally all the work he did for me was indecipherably written with his right hand, but he did produce the design and did the calibration of a copper heat transfer calibration rig used in rocket exhausts at Westcott and in a ram jet at Bristol. His fencing continued but he arranged to have the weapon bound to his hand, to claim it was "slipping" was a useful ploy that would break opponents concentration.

Remembrances Involving Wenlock

In 1980 a special Festival was held to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the Amateur Athletic Association in 1880. In 1986 the Society celebrated its own 100th Games with distinguished visitors from the British Olympic Association, and the International Olympic Committee, with the grand-nephew of Baron de Coubertin, Geoffrey de Navacelle as the Guest of Honour.

Following their failed attempt for the 1992 Games, as part of the Manchester bid for the 1996 Olympics, the preparing team visited Much Wenlock in July 1990 to gain some historical support. They bid again in 1994 for the 2000 Games. There is very little documentary evidence in the Manchester reference library for the 1992 bid, more, quite a nice book but not the full bid for 1996, however with the full bid for 2000. Apparently none of them make any reference to Much Wenlock. Birmingham bid in 1986 for the 1992 Games.

As 1990 was the centenary of Coubertin's visit, the Guest of Honour was HRH The Princess Royal, as a Member of the International Olympic Committee and the President of the British Olympic Association (BOA). She led representatives from the BOA including the chairman Sir Arthur Gold and Dr Don Anthony, who had done so much to forge the link between the Wenlock Society and the BOA. She also planted a tree.

The 7th president of the International Olympic Committee, Juan Antonio Samaranch, the Marques de Samaranch, visited Wenlock for two hours on Wednesday 13th July 1994, to plant an oak tree near that planted by Coubertin in 1890, which now towers over the playing fields, to acknowledge its part in the rebirth of the Olympic movement. This event followed the 108th Wenlock Olympic Games.

Although the Morris has not been associated with any Olympics since the end of Dover's Games in the middle of the nineteenth century, other than a Carnival Morris Troupe on a special occasion at Much Wenlock, there is expectation that it

could be shown as part of a future opening ceremony. Dances were performed by the Auckland Morris at the start of the Commonwealth Games in Auckland, New Zealand in 1990, both to illustrate the white immigration, in an adaptation to a somewhat Celtic tune to which all the British groups danced simultaneously, and then the English Cultural contribution with more authentic material. A video of the performance exists.

V 1.0 © R L Dommett, 1980:

V 3.6 © R L Dommett, 2002

References

A comprehensive bibliography and ideas for further research has been compiled by Roy Dommett and can be supplied to anyone who is interested – contact Morris Matters.

Hitler's 1936 Games generated a masterpiece of Nazi Cinema directed by Lem Riefenstahl, released on video in 1996 by DD Video under the title "Hitler's Olympics, The Nazi Olympics 1936", in two parts, "Festival of the People" and "Festival of Beauty".

There is an Olympic Museum at Lausanne in Switzerland opened in 1993. This is the third of its kind there. Coubertin organised the first which closed in 1970. In 1980 a temporary one was set up. The current one is in a white marble building, tracing the history of the Games and of individual sports. There are exhibits of medals, posters and pins, and many letters and documents. There is a museum at Olympia with many of the surviving statues on exhibition. It is also the site of a learning academy run by the Greek IOC members covering athletic training, sports administration and sports medicine.

A list follows giving current views of the historians of the Olympics up to 2004. Numbering of the Olympiads continues whether there is one or not. Bracketed dates are the full extent, first are the period of core athletic events. Numbers of participants for any of the games vary between the sources depending upon which events are included in the total.

Annex : Olympiad Statistics For The Modern Olympic Games

No.	Year	Venue	Date	Nations	Women	Total	Sports	Events
I	1896	Athens	06 - 15 April	14	0	211	9	43
II	1900	Paris	14 May - 28 Oct	26	19	1225	24	166
III	1904	St Louis	29 Aug - 07 Sept (01 July - 23 Nov)	13	6	687 t	6	104
IV	1908	London	13 - 25 July (27 April - 31 Oct)	22	36	2035	21	110
V	1912	Stockholm	06 - 15 July (05 May -22 July)	28	57	2541 + 13		102
VI	1916	Berlin	cancelled					
VII	1920	Antwerp	14 - 29 August (23 April - 12 Sept)	29 a	64	2607	21	154
VIII	1924	Paris	05 - 27 July (04 May - 27 July)	44 b	136	3092	17	126
IX	1928	Amsterdam	28 July - 12 Aug (17 May - 12 Aug)	46	290	3015	14	109
X	1932	Los Angeles	30 July - 14 Aug	37	127	1408 t	14	117
XI	1936	Berlin	01 - 16 August	49	328	4069	19	129
XII	1940	Tokyo then Helsinki, finally cancelled						
XIII	1944	London	cancelled					
XIV	1948	London	29 July - 14 Aug	59 c	385	4689	17	136
XV	1952	Helsinki	19 July - 03 Aug	69 d	518	4925	17	149
XVI	1956	Melbourne	22 Nov - 08 Dec	67 a	384	3342 t	17	151
XVII	1960	Rome	25 Aug - 11 Sep	83	610	5348	17	150
XVIII	1964	Tokyo	10 Oct - 24 Oct	93	732	5558	17	163
XIX	1968	Mexico	12 Oct - 27 Oct	112 f	844	6059	18	172
XX	1972	Munich	26 Aug - 11 Sept	121 g	1070	7156	21	195
XXI	1976	Montreal	17 July - 1 Aug	92 h	1251	6085	21	198
XXII	1980	Moscow	19 July - 1 Aug	80 i	1088	5326	21	204
XXIII	1984	Los Angeles	28 July - 12 Aug	140 j	1620	7078	21	221
XXIV	1988	Seoul	17 Sept - 2 Oct	159 k	2186	8405	23	237
XXV	1992	Barcelona	25 July - 8 Aug	169	2707	9364	24	257
XXVI	1996	Atlanta	19 July - 4 Aug	197	3513	10310	26	271
XXVII	2000	Sydney	15 Sept - 1 Oct					
XXVIII	2004	Athens						

Boycotts

e, h, i, j, k = various politically motivated boycotts by the following number of countries, (7), (24), (45-50), (19), (2) respectively.

Ins and Outs of Countries

a = Germany, Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey excluded; b = Germany excluded; c = Eastern European Communist countries for the first time, except the USSR who were not affiliated to the IOC, Germany and Japan excluded; d = Communist Russia for the first time; f = South Africa and Indonesia excluded; g = South Africa and Rhodesia excluded; t = numbers limited because of travel difficulties; + = plus 1854 gymnasts in demonstrations.

Recent Books on the Tradition

Last Christmas, I was charged with the task of finding and buying a book that was reviewed the previous May in *The Independent*, as a present for a friend of the family. Its title was *The Magic Spring – My Year Learning to be English*, written by Richard Lewis, and published by Atlantic Books, priced £14.99². It is one of a new wave of books seemingly devoted to traditional topics intended to captivate and entertain its readers, rather than educate or give a foretaste of the subject matter lying beneath. In the 1970s, Batsford (among others) was instrumental in producing books on county folklore, and other such ‘coffee table’ merchandise. In my opinion the best of the crop was Brian Shuel’s book produced for the National Trust – mainly photographic in nature, but certainly a bible for researchers. More recently, Alan Sutton and Tempus Publishing have been putting out books that act as a primer for various topics on Tradition and Folklore, but are more factual as a result.

But I digress. I am yet to find Richard Lewis’s book (what a confession!), but the review definitely hints this is a ‘must read’ effort. Lewis sets himself the task of defining Englishness, this time through its customs and traditions. Nick Groom in his review in *The Independent* commented: “*Why do many men feel embarrassed by the morris (which is basically a few blokes dancing with hankies, bells and ribbons), while becoming insanely passionate at the sight of 22 prima donnas prancing and pouting their way over a football pitch?*” Groom then goes on to highlight Lewis’s ‘sobering juxtaposition between celebrations to bring in the May in the West Country and simultaneous May Day anti-capitalism protests in London.’ The book was launched with The Outside Capering Crew in attendance who Lewis describes in his book as “compelling and edgy - a far cry from traditional morris dancing.”

All three of the books mentioned here are composed with a great deal of humour. Whilst one assumes that Richard Lewis himself is English, J. R. Daeschner is definitely an American journalist from Colorado, currently working in Fleet Street. I found *True Brits*, which was published by Arrow Books in 2004, in my local village library. Like *The Magic Spring*, this includes entire chapters devoted to, for example, Padstow’s May Day and the Abbots Bromley horn dance of interest to readers of *Morris Matters*, as well as reports on the Haxey Hood, Dover’s Olympick Games, the Burry man of Queensferry, cheese rolling in Gloucestershire, and gurning in Cumbria. The thing I liked about the narrative was how Daeschner gave the impression he was inside each event: he actually did take part in the maul at Haxey, and go bog-snorkelling in the gunk at Llanwyrtd Wells. He interviewed the participants of each custom. His meeting with Abbots Bromley’s Lady Bagot, whose family sponsored the event in times past, gave an intriguing insight on the latter-day aristocracy. He met with Mark Fowell, son of Tony Fowell, the musician of the dancers – a young man imbued with the modern culture of punk rocker complete with multi-piercings and whatever – and

² reviewed in *Morris Matters* Volume 24, Number 2

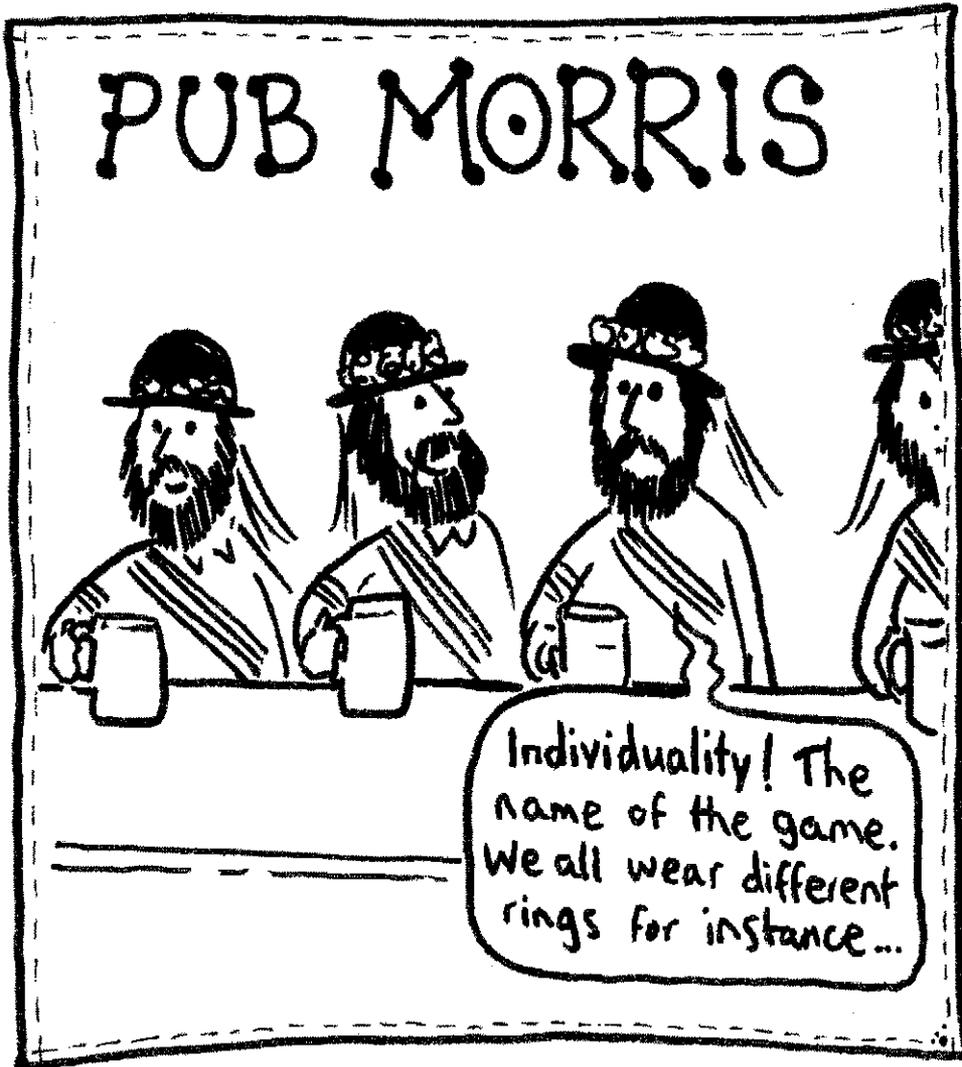
entrusted by his father to take on the mantle of the music as his family had done for generations. The name Doc Rowe is cited by Daeschner on numerous occasions as responsible for pointing him in the right direction. I myself recall the time when I encountered Colin Corner and his wife at Hungerford on Hock Tuesday (Ah! The soybean sprout sandwiches!), then meeting Doc, and somehow finding myself witnessing the 'shoeing of the colt' initiation ceremony with its blacksmith at the privately-held dinner in the Guildhall!

Like Richard Lewis's book, Colin Irwin's *In Search of Albion*, as apparent from its title, focuses on custom in England alone. Irwin, a former editor of *Melody Maker* is a feature writer and reviewer for *fRoots*. His approach is understandably subjective rather than objective as in Daeschner's case, flitting from one event to another within each chapter, rather than selecting a few to write about. In a nutshell, Colin Irwin and his wife set out to circumnavigate England in their car, seemingly sequentially from one custom to another in one year. They start at Padstow for May Day, then progress around the country taking in Tolpuddle, Dartmoor Prison, the Durham Miners' Gala, and Bacup, to name but a few places. Interspersed in his narrative are interviews with luminaries on the Folk scene, such as Kathryn Tickell and Seth Lakeman, as well as anecdotes tangential to the subject. For instance, he reminisces about Fairport Convention's ambitious 'folk opera' *Babbacombe Lee – the man they couldn't hang*, upon visiting Torquay, then describes how their songwriter Dave Swarbrick woke up in a Coventry hospital to read his own obituary in *The Daily Telegraph* which was written by Irwin himself!

He visits Bampton on Spring Bank Holiday and interviews Francis Shergold. He visits the January Straw Bear festival in Whittlesey, and is so taken with the gothic glory of Pig Dyke Molly dancers as well as Old Glory and Gogmagog molly, that he forgets to scratch behind the history of the revival or even mention Brian Kell's name. (Disgraceful!) Barely a page later, and he's off to Broughton in Northamptonshire to witness a tin can band tradition in action – although retrospectively, since the custom actually takes place in December. He also visits Abbots Bromley – but on the day after the Horn Dance custom by mistake – making up for it with notes on the Fowell family's contribution. The friend for whom I bought the book thanked me for the very enjoyable read, and told me he didn't know whether to file the book under 'folklore' or 'travel' on his shelves! It could equally have been filed under 'autobiography'. It certainly jogged my memories of the Folk Revival in the 1970s, when Irwin indulgently described travelling the Yorkshire Dales villages cited by Bob and Carol Pegg as Mr. Fox, denoting the title track of their album 'The Gypsy'. Now there's a vinyl gem I have lurking in my sideboard! All in all, I found the book endearing despite its seeming haphazard progress, and definitely a good purchase.

Let us hope these will not be the only new books in support of 'Tradition' that might capture the hearts and minds of the new generation interested in calendar custom and its associated music. We shall see.

George Frampton
March 2006



What Makes a Good Morris Side?

Try Long Lankin's Questionnaire.....

Having attended various Morris gatherings I have decided that Morris sides are not really rated by their dancing at all. What actually makes a side stand out from others is their team identity and spirit. This is particularly apparent at Morris weekends when you get the chance to observe them between dances, during the lunch break and in the evening. It can soon become apparent that the best Morris sides are all about "esprit de corps" and it's the little touches that really count. Do they look and behave as a team, as a rabble or as a bunch of strangers to each other.

Just how far do you identify yourselves as a group apart, how strong is your Morris Side as a team? Try this simple test. Choose the response that best reflects your Morris side then total up your score and read the result.

1. When out as a side and not actually dancing do you...?

- A. Split up and go shopping or whatever you each want to do
- B. Split up and go to different pubs
- C. Do whatever most of the other sides are doing.
- D. All go to the pub
- E. All stay to watch any other sides that are still dancing and loudly criticise their performance.
- F. All do something else you'd prefer not to talk about.

2. When in a pub and told by your Squire to go out to dance do you....?

- A. Have another round while you think about it
- B. Take your time but then leave
- C. Drink up quickly and leave
- D. Leave but take your drinks with you
- E. Leave immediately without finishing your drinks
- F. Beat up the Squire

3. Do you have a side song?

- A. No, we don't sing
- B. No, but it's a nice idea
- C. Yes - a few know it and the rest join in the chorus
- D. Yes - we all sing it in unison
- E. Yes - we all sing it in four-part harmony
- F. We have a whole songbook.

4. When away for the weekend, at the end of the evening's entertainment do you..?

- A. It never arises because you don't do weekends
- B. All go off to bed
- C. Hang around in the hope that somebody will start a session
- D. Start your own session and let others join
- E. Have a private party with a few invited others
- F. Go off into the woods for some drum beating and communing with nature.

5. Do you have side accoutrements or other paraphernalia?

- A. You what?
- B. No, we can't afford it.
- C. Sort of - we have a fleece top with the side logo on
- D. We bulk purchased these snazzy rucksacks and matching sun hats with the side logo on
- E. For @#~\$ sake not more stuff! We'll all be wearing matching dressing gowns next!
- F. So you think insisting on the same colour and style of underwear is going too far do you?

6. Do you have an obscure drinking ritual?

- A. No, we don't drink
- B. No, we're too busy drinking
- C. Yes, but its quite simple and all can join in
- D. Yes, but I do not understand it enough to explain it
- E. Yes, it's based on an ancient Scandinavian rite that is actually referred to in Beowulf.
- F. On pain of death I cannot divulge such information to a non-believer.

Scoring:

For each response, award yourself points as follows:

A=0 B=1 C=2 D=3 E=4 F=5

How do you rate?

25-30: Are you sure it is a Morris side you've joined and not some secret cult?

20-24: You all take yourselves a bit too serious at times and are in danger of getting carried away with things or even being seen as elitist. This is OK provided your actual dancing matches your self-belief.

15-19: On the whole you have a good team spirit and a strong identity though you have a tendency to take things a bit too seriously at times. If your dancing is no good you will just be seen as a bunch of prats.

10-14: A fairly strong team but there is room for improvement. You need to tighten up on some aspects of the team identity.

5-9: Less of a side, more of a rabble. You need to come up with some ideas: a late night session with a couple of bottles of whisky should help.

0-4: Why was it you all took up Morris dancing? Do you know the names of the others in the side?

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DETR:06***“The Original Northern Sole”; York – 17 to 19 March 2006***

Dancing England Rapper Tournament (DETR) was held in the medieval walled city of York earlier this year. It is an ideal spot to hold the competition as it has a wealth of pubs and eating establishments. The competition was hosted by previous DETR winners, Black Swan, who were disappointed that they couldn't compete to take the Tyzack Shield for the 5th consecutive year! Altogether, 23 rapper teams participated, including 3 teams, who flew over for the weekend, from Boston, U.S.A.

Accommodation was arranged at the Backpackers' Hostel and York Youth Hotel. I stayed in the Backpackers' Hostel which was complete with its own cellar bar. It made it so convenient for late night sessions!

Friday night was spent catching up with old friends after attending a meeting of the Sword Dance Union. We registered at the Brewery & the first tasting of the Double Tumbler beer, especially brewed for the occasion, was partaken.

The competition took place during Saturday, starting with a warm-up pub and then 4 competition pubs. The judges stayed at each of the competition pubs so, generally, there was plenty of time for them to enter their marks and add their comments before the next tour arrived. Because the pubs were so close, there was even time to have a lunch break as well. Altogether 55 pubs had been identified as dancing venues, 13 of which were competition pubs. All 5 pubs that we danced in had decent wooden floors and enough room to dance without too much furniture moving!

We toured with Valknut, a team of young rapper dancers that is so good to see on the scene these days; Triskele Sword, fine dancers and good friends and Beside the Point, a highly inventive and innovative young team from the US. Occasionally we stayed later or arrived earlier to watch one of the teams on the other tours but, generally, the only time we saw the other teams dance was at the evening display.

The whole day seemed so much more relaxed than on previous years. We even had time to take a few hours break before the evening festivities. Besides the usual prizes, there was a prize for dancing in the Most Unusual Location & most teams chose this time to hunt around. We went to Betty's Tea Rooms and discovered that the toilets were rather lovely and quite ornate so took our dance photo in there.

The evening was spent in a setting beloved by old and young boys alike: the National Railway Museum. All teams danced a display and, here, the US teams came into their own as there was enough space for them to demonstrate their spectacular tumbles. They are used to dancing in outside locations and found our pub dancing quite a squash! Black Swan, scrubbing up very well in their suits, judged the Best Display Dance.

Then came the presentation of the awards. Another innovation this year was the half-time scores displayed at the first pub spot after lunch. Whether this made some teams complacent and other teams strive harder I don't know, but the final results seemed to bear no resemblance to the earlier placing! Once the prizes were awarded, we dispersed to a local pub for post-mortems, music sessions and general hilarity. Partying carried on in the Backpackers' hostel with Anglo-American relations improving hourly. A sign of the times meant that the bar was filled with a rave while more discussions and music sessions were held in the social area outside!!

On Sunday, there were a couple of dance moves taught in the Brewery. Space was a little limited. Afterwards, we retired to the Brigantes to see Phil Heaton and Aubrey O'Brien presented with their EFDSS Gold badges, by Paul Davenport, for service to rapper dancing. A tribute richly deserved and quite fitting to be held at the DERT weekend as Phil was instrumental in starting the original Dancing England in Derby.

After that, fond farewells were taken and promises to meet at the next DERT, to be held in Nottingham on March 9 – 11 2007. Put the date in your diary now!



Mabel Gubbins Rapper (photo: Richard Reeves)

Thanks must be given to Black Swan who showed they were as professional in their organisation as they are in their dancing. I just wonder how long it'll be before they can be persuaded to host it again!!

*Jill Griffiths, Mabel Gubbins Rapper
June 2006*

Results

Premier:

- 1st Sallyport
- 2nd Newcastle Kingsmen
- 3rd Stone Monkey Sword

Open:

- 1st Thrales Rapper
- 2nd Triskele Sword
- 3rd Mabel Gubbins

- Tyzack Shield: Newcastle Kingsmen
- Best Musician: Newcastle Kingsmen
- Best Character: Newcastle Kingsmen
- Steve Marris: Sallyport
- Unusual Location: Valknut, who danced in the Minster.

Paul Davenport, Aubrey O'Brien and Phil Heaton
(photo: Sue Swift)



Gold Badges for Phil Heaton and Aubrey O'Brien

Rapper fanatics are all aware of the enormous influence these two men have had upon the rapper scene. With thanks to the Nut³ in which the citations were published, a few excerpts:

Phil Heaton

"In 1970 he joined Sallyport Sword dancers... In no particular order, he has also danced with Murton, Five Quarter, Black Cap, Snark, Phoenix, High Spen Blue Diamonds, Beltane, Addison, Redcar Sword Dancers and Stone Monkey. He has been 'associated' with Newcastle Kingsmen. Few could match Phil's unparalleled contribution as an ambassador, teacher and enthusiast, He has tirelessly assisted and encouraged new teams, advised and taught at countless workshops, travelled the length and breadth of the country, not to mention abroad, to promote rapper dancing. Plotted and schemed to make things happen, taken on bookings without consulting the team and persuaded and bullied the faint-hearted to take up dancing, he has invented new figures and made them work, he has invented new figures that couldn't possibly work and organised enough pub tours to fill a CAMRA directory – in short he is the epitome of the totally committed and dedicated enthusiast., the vibrant and healthy state of rapper dancing today is in no small part due to Phil Heaton and it is particularly appropriate that it is at DERT 2006 that we are gathered to acknowledge his achievements."

Aubrey O'Brien

"At the tender age of just four Aubrey was thrown into the world of traditional dance when he saw his first rapper dance in Lanchester Village Hall He was fascinated. Over the years he discovered his dad had been taught the dance in the late 1920's ...by nuns at All Saints School in Lanchester. After a sojourn at Newcastle University where he went along to a few (Newcastle) Kingsmen practices; he joined Addison Sword and Clog dancers. He next joined Gosforth Dancers and later became squire of Addison. He became a founder member of the North East Traditional Music Association.

In 1983 he met Phil Heaton, who whispered the immortal line "Giz a lend o'yer frock and aa'll Betty for ye". Their unique partnership has been based on swapping stories, ideas and frocks ever since. The award of the EFDSS Gold Badge is a measure of the esteem in which he is held by rapper dancers on several continents., Aubrey carries with him the true essence of the dance and his teaching all over the world is typified by pride, dignity and unbounded enthusiasm, tempered with precision and control."

³ Extracts from The Nut Issue 23, Summer 2006

May Day – the Coming of Spring, by Doc Rowe

English Heritage in association with the English Folk Dance and Song Society has published a small book compiled and written by eminent folklore writer and archivist, Doc Rowe.

Although intended as a primer for the casual reader, Doc selects nineteen examples of May Day festivities still practised around the country, focusing on each event as a celebration of community by that community. Elsewhere, he describes these as private parties held in the public eye, rather than any colourful piece of pageantry held to justify the existence of any tourist board! Indeed, in my own experience, both at Padstow on May Day itself and at Great Wishford on its Oak Apple Day, two events described by the author, one quickly becomes aware of the intimacy of each occasion regardless of the prying eye of the visitor.

Doc spends nearly a third of the book introducing May Day and its relevance in history, placing in context some of the misconceptions any future generation might have about its characters. For example, he wastes no time in disentangling the Jack in the Green/Green Man conundrum which he describes as ‘frequently erroneously’ associated – how I nearly cheered when I read that on the train, what with my 22 years service animating the Guildford Jack. What a person dressed as a mobile shrub has to do with foliate bosses found on the walls of some mediaeval churches, I have never understood. Half an olive branch goes out to anyone wishing to think of the morris dance portraying “ritual origins – pagan sacrificial rites, fertility cults, scaring evil spirits, even controlling the weather. Whether these were once ritual dances or not has to remain a mystery – we simply don’t know.” He then goes on to give the evidence of the use of the morris in sixteenth century courtly life, and its continuation through to the Victorian and Edwardian era when Cecil Sharp and others took note.

Some coffee table book! There is much in here that this researcher of 25 years or more was unaware of. Doc’s appraisal of May Day in history, carries with it many examples I had never heard of or overlooked. I recall the late Roy Judge thanking me for a news cutting I gave him describing a plaited maypole dance from the 1850s near Maidstone, telling me it predated anything he had on the subject at that time. Doc states with authority that ‘the plaited-beribboned maypole’ first appeared in J. T. Haines’s play *Richard Plantagenet* in 1836. He then goes on to quote its antecedents in Philip Stubbes’ *Anatomie of Abuses* and later incidence of milkmaids’ garlands and Jacks in the Green.

The book doesn’t restrict itself to May Day in the context of the first of May and its associated bank holiday since 1976, but also to describe any community event that occurs during the month. Well-known examples such as the hobby horse customs of Padstow and Minehead are here, along with the revival at Combe Martin. The section of morris dancing focuses on that at Bampton. We also have cheese rolling at Cooper’s Hill, beating the bounds at various locations, well-dressing in the Midlands, the Corby Pole Fair, and Whitby’s penny hedge. The only common denominators of these, so far as custom is concerned, are that they all take place in May and involve the celebration of a community.

But the sight of Doc Rowe in the field without a camera is unthinkable, and the second half of the book itemises each example of May custom with a glorious image, mostly his own work. There are only a few illustrations from archival sources, but this book describes May Day today with reference to the past, rather than the decline of any custom yet to be considered for revival. A note has to be made about the uneven proofreading which in some places inverts the sense of the actual text. The result of this is that, at times, sentences end up looking like the uncompleted efforts of a GCSE candidate. Fortunately, these errors don't include Doc's technical content, and fail to spoil the pleasure of this welcome addition to the bookshelf. Hopefully, English Heritage won't be so cavalier in future with any similar venture with the EFDSS.

On Friday 7th July, Doc Rowe received the Gold Badge of the English Folk Dance and Song Society after delivering a talk entitled 'Barges, Buns and Boundary Beatings' on London traditions, some of which were covered in his book. Malcolm Taylor O.B.E., the librarian of the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, read the citation, the badge being awarded by Michael Wright, chair of the EFDSS National Council.

May Day – The Coming of Spring is priced £8.99 and should be available at all English Heritage sites and the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library.

*George Frampton,
July 2006*

Noticeboard

Sidmouth festival

The John Gasson memorial competition will be held on Sunday 6 August at 3pm in the Manor Pavilion. Categories are best ...solo jig ...double jigaudience appeal, ...new entrant and ...“over 40”. Please email Tracey Rose on tracey@ewell.demon.co.uk before 27 July 2006 to let her know you will be entering. Any queries telephone 01795 530335. This could be your year!

George Frampton will be leading a series of talks to include “Deptford Jack in the Green - When the Police Stopped All Such Customs” (Sarah Crofts), Martin Carthy (interviewed by Eddie Upton), Let’s Make a Record – But What About the Copyright? (Gordon Potts), A West Country Winter (Bob & Jacqueline Patten) – and lots more.

Towersey festival

24 – 28 August 2006

By the time you read this, Sidmouth will be approaching but Towersey is still in the distance. If you’ve not made up your minds –a reminder of what is on – ceilidh bands include Whapweasel, Old Swan Band, Stomp, Random, Twm Twp and Tiger Moth. Morris teams booked include Dogrose Morris, Black Adder & Step and Gog Magog – all great performers. Morris Offspring and English Acoustic Collective will perform “On English Ground” – a superb show and there will be a performance of “Lark Rise to Candleford”. Younger festival goers will have the Shooting Roots project and the Children’s Festival. Tickets from Festival Box Office on 01629 827016 or info@towerseyfestival.com

Spotted in The Times, Thursday 13th.July 2006.....

Jester Inspired to Jig 100 miles

A modern-day jester is on a 100-mile jig in tribute to a 16th-century counterpart. Peet (sic) Cooper, otherwise known as Peterkin the Fool, English Heritage's jester, left Bristol with the aim of dancing to Northamptonshire. He was inspired by the Shakespearean actor Will Kemp, who in 1599 danced from London to Norwich in what came to be known as the Nine Daies' Wonder. Peterkin hopes to avoid blisters using a traditional Elizabethan treatment: urine.

Ed: Having followed a bit of Ben Dauncy’s record attempt in April I think blisters were the least of his problems but it was good to see that he made an entry in the Guinness Book of records (146 miles and a bit in 7 days). A huge amount of effort went into it and he deserves to have made a huge amount for charity from it (see www.nextfootup.com).

Magic of Morris – Volume II

The second CD has been released – lots of tunes on it by current teams including Mortimers Morris, Motley Morris, Loose Women, the Fabulous Fezheads, Witchmen and Sidmouth Steppers. This seems a fairly eclectic mixture, interspersed, as on Magic of Morris 1, with tracks from old Ring tapes and it's interesting to hear the different styles. It's not clear how the choice was made – were the compilers all at the same festival where several of these teams appeared? There seems to be a heavy Gordon Newton influence in the selection. The flyer says, "spending many, many hours scouring the country" but the featured teams don't seem to match this spread.

Morris seems to be a broad definition for this compilation since it includes Tap Roots (Appalachian) and Fezheads (evolved from border style and now great street theatre, but is it morris?). I was a bit disappointed in the choice in that there are several "straight" morris teams out there now, with great musicians, who don't appear on either CD. Where are the traditional/revival Cotswold teams dancing on this new compilation – Adderbury, Bampton, Eynsham, Headington Quarry; or well established "new" teams such as Hammersmith and Berkshire Bedlam? Sidmouth Steppers are fine in Sidmouth but what about a long established & respected team like Chinewrde, or even... a "real" northwest (dancing north of Birmingham) to display the magic of North West style? Where were Britannia Coconut dancers, Shropshire Bedlams, Seven Champions? Was there a copyright issue that prevented some teams being featured? Anyway there are some ideas for compilation 3.

Although it is called the Magic of Morris, where are the morris dancers on the CD? They are barely audible, if at all. Less than half the tracks are live performances, the remainder being tracks from CD's (or old tapes). Although this in itself is a change from Magic of Morris 1, on which all the tracks were from compilation tapes or CD's, Witchmen are the only dancers you can hear clearly (apart from the taps of the Appalachians). I would like to have seen dates given for the tracks – many cited a source CD or tape, but unless you have them you are none the wiser. Also there were some "new" tunes – it would be good to see who wrote the tunes. Nitpicking over, I did enjoy playing this double CD especially when it was cold & rainy outside (just like on recent morris tours) and I could think ahead to summer, festivals and watching some good morris.

Magic of Morris 2 is available from a good independent supplier for £13.99 – Talking Elephant Records at 8 Martin Dene, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA6 8NA; they also supply old Morris On (all the generations) CDs. See their web site www.talkingelephant.com for any more information.

Beth Neill
July 2006

From the Magic of Morris 2 insert, I learnt of another CD.....

Lost Morris

Cecil Sharp collected a number of morris tunes around the 'Cotswold' area but didn't notate the dances to go with the tunes, with the result that these traditions have become 'lost'. A project has been set up to find & record these tunes for the morris repertoire. Much of the information for this CD was found in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. Tunes come from the counties of Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, and Oxfordshire, from locations such as Stow-on-the-Wold, Lower Swell, Clifford's Mesne, and Brill. A few are subtly different versions of well-known morris tunes, but many are tunes that don't turn up in other traditions. So this could be a great source for new dance tunes.

CD available for £11.50 from
Beautiful World Ltd.
Sauchenward
Drummuir
Keith
AB5 5JF
Scotland

Or check out www.acornrecords.co.uk

Hands on Music weekends

Dates just released:

Concertinas: 23-24 September 2006

Melodeons: 11-12 November 2006

Strings: 3-4 February 2007

Accordions: 17-18 February 2007

Village Music Weekend: 3-4 March 2007

For details contact Hands on Music at PO Box 1162, East Oxford D.O. OX4 4WS
(phone 01865 714778) or www.handsonmusic.org.uk