

RATTLE UP

My Boys

A quarterly publication for those with an interest in sword dancing

Millennium year issue 2, Series 9, Summer 2000

World Millennium Sword Spectacular

It finally arrived - the World Millennium Sword Spectacular, after delays and uncertainty caused by funding problems the event arrived - and it was most enjoyable!

After what must have been for the organisers a heart stopping couple of days leading up to the event when the heavens opened the rain gradually cleared on Saturday morning and held off for us to experience an excellent weekend which, from a spectators viewpoint, went smoothly and efficiently.

Overseas visitors

The claim for "World status" was always a little ambitious but, in spite of the absence of teams from some countries with sword dances, the event must go down as a very significant (and enjoyable) international gathering. There was an excellent mix of old friends and teams new to our shores, capably put together by Renaat Van Craenebroeck, leader of the Lange Wapper team. The overseas teams who attended were:-

- Baden Württemberg from Southern Germany
- Bal do Sabre from Bagnasco, North East Italy
- Bobkovnici, from Bystrice pod Lopenikem, Czech Republic
- Boerke Naas from Sint Niklaas, Belgium
- Jack the Rapper, from Norway
- Kemen Dantza Taldea from Irun, Basque Country, Spain
- Lange Wapper Dance Group from Antwerp, Belgium
- Markiako Zerutxu from Markina-Xemein, Basque Country, Spain
- Orion Sword, from Boston, Mass., USA
- Podable from Komna, Czech Republic
- Velocirapper from Boston, Mass., USA
- Volkstanzgruppe Sankt Martin im Sulmtal from Austria

Three of the overseas teams mentioned in an earlier handout were unable to attend - Gaiteros da Xistra and Danza de Espadas Redondela from Spain and Kompanija Pupnat from Croatia.

UK teams

There is a temptation to focus on the exotic and colourful overseas teams at the expense of the UK teams - this would be wrong. The weekend brought together Longsword and Rapper dancers from at least 31 UK teams although I cannot be certain of the total number as I doubt whether I managed to see them all. UK teams who attended this event (an asterisk indicates attendance for one day

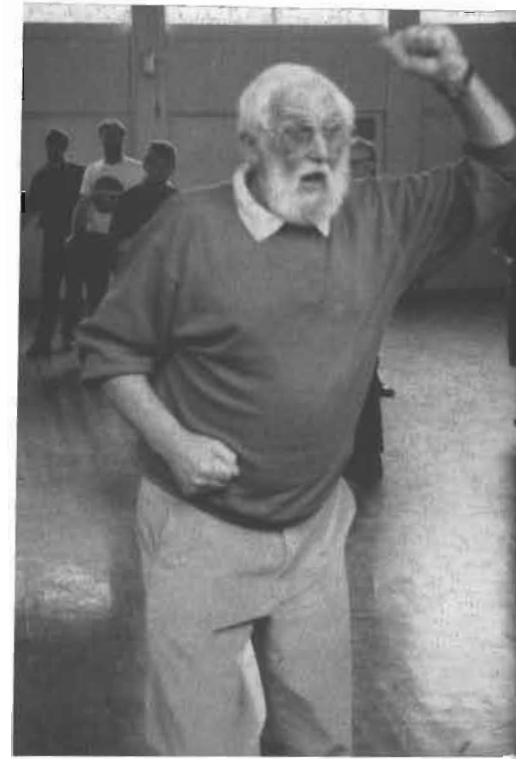


Records of the Austrian miner's guild dance, performed by the Volkstanzgruppe Sankt Martin im Sulmtal, were found by Richard Wolfram (working in 1937) to date back to 1586. This well travelled group were founded in 1974.

photo by Trevor Stone

only) were:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Airey Hill School (Morris)* | Newcastle Kingsmen |
| Brompton Scorpers* | Northgate Rapper |
| Carlisle Sword Morris and Clog Dancers | Pengwyn Rapper |
| Castleford Sword Dancers | Ryburn Longsword |
| Clydeside Sword and Step Dancers | Ryknild Rapper |
| Coventry Morris Men | Sallyport Sword Dancers |
| Flamborough Longsword* | Seven Stars Sword and Step Dancers |
| Fylingthorpe School* | Shaun the Sheep Rapper |
| Gift Rapper | Snark Rapper |
| Goathland Plough Stots | Southport Sword |
| Green Velvet Outlaws | Stevenage Sword |
| Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers* | Stone Monkey Sword Dancers |
| Horwich Prize Medal Morris Men* | Sullivan's Sword |
| Lockwood School - Boosbeck | Thrale's Rapper |
| Mabel Gubbins Rapper | White Rose Longsword* |
| Mr. Leslie's Rapper | Wype Doles Longsword |



There were some notable absentees - High Spen, Grenoside, Claro Sword, Highside, Redcar, Bishop Gundulf's, East Saxon Sword and White Star to name but a few. And one aspect which troubled me almost as much as it must have bothered the organisers was the reduction in the number of Longsword teams attending. On the other hand there was a further increase in new Rapper teams compared with the two previous events. Anyone got any suggestions why this should be so?

The programme

The weekend followed a largely similar pattern to that of the two previous events but a number of improvements were evident - a Conference was reintroduced this time and a helpful printed schedule giving details of display times and locations made it easier to find the teams you wanted to see- I doubt if anyone managed to see all teams (in spite of the organisers efforts in arranging a 5 hour long Gala performance). A good selection of workshops was on offer on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

The new overseas teams

Three overseas teams had not been to the Sword Spectaculars before.

Velocirapper proved to be one of the stars of the event. This USA "High School" team from Boston danced rapper with gusto and conviction. They obviously enjoyed all aspects of their visit to Whitby and impressed me just how smooth and attractive fast rapper can be.

Kemen Dantza Taldea are similar to their countrymen from Markina. This colourful and athletic Basque team presented their simple and elegant sword dance which was evidently a part of a religious procession. They are widely travelled and have won prizes at Llangollen in the 1980's. In common with many other overseas teams Kemen sent in a write up about their team and I hope to publish more of these details in future issues of *Rattle Up My Boys*.

The Austrian group from Sankt Martin im Sulmtal are from a mining area. They claim that their dance is very old and was once the property of the miners' guild. Miners were granted the right to carry swords in order to protect their property. Their figures are similar to the German dances but their distinctive all black costumes and especially their different music, gave them a unique style.

The workshops on Saturday and Sunday mornings were well attended. If you missed Ivor Allsop's workshop (shown above) I am afraid you have missed the last chance to join him - he has decided to retire from leading workshops.

Velocirapper (left) earned enthusiastic comments and applause from members of Stone Monkey who threatened to "pinch" some of Velocirapper's fascinating high speed movements.

photos by Trevor Stone

The Conference

Readers will recall my comments on the lack of an academic aspect at the 1998 event (*Rattle Up My Boys*, issue 4, series 7, Winter 1998/99). This time I was invited to "put up or shut up" and I spent some weeks preparing ideas for a Conference but shortage of time and pressure of work meant that I had to pull out. However I was delighted to take a lesser part (as compere or front man) in a two day Conference on Saturday and Sunday mornings. It is a pity that details of the speakers etc. were not available early enough to tempt those people who may not otherwise have attended the weekend but around 50 people enjoyed thought-provoking presentations by Steve Corrsin, Renaat Van Craenebroeck, Phil Heaton, Ivor Allsop and Richard Traves (Chris Metherell was scheduled to talk but he had to withdraw due to pressure of work). More details in later issues.

Thanks all round

The organisers have already expressed thanks to the overseas visitors for making the event so colourful and varied. I would like to add my thanks to everyone involved - to the hardworking organisers and especially to the UK teams whose financial support made this event possible.

I may be wrong but I don't think I heard any comments from the organisers about "the next event". I hope I am wrong - but if they decide not to go ahead I can at least be grateful that I saw this fitting climax to a truly remarkable trio of events.

Trevor Stone June 2000

MORE DETAILS OF THIS EVENT WILL APPEAR IN FUTURE ISSUES (INCLUDING SOME OF THE PRESENTATIONS AT THE CONFERENCE).

I have already received a number of nominations for "choice of star team" - if you wish to add your comments about the weekend send them to me as soon as practical.

Following up a lead!

By Gordon Ridgewell

Some months ago Paul Davenport asked if readers could help to find more about a photograph he came across in his ongoing researches into a type of morris once found in the Aire Valley and Holderness..



The photo which started the search - Paul Davenport believes that it was taken outside Chestnut Croft, a house in Carlton near Selby. It first appeared in *Rattle Up My Boys*, issue 2, series 8 when Paul asked if readers had more details.

Comments and information came from Norman Peacock (who was able to provide the approximate year the photo was published by reference to a stock market report on the back of a press cutting) and Chas. Marshall who suggested names of participants based on records of Blue Stots/Plough Stots from the same area and same time.

However, the fullest report came from Gordon Ridgewell who appears to have set up a second home at the British Library Newspaper Library at Colindale. It became apparent that sword dancing is not involved but I felt that Gordon's article was an excellent example of how determined follow-up can add to our understanding. Gordon writes:

"I have now had an opportunity to investigate and provide some supporting information relating to the photograph uncovered by Paul Davenport, showing four dancers dressed in white and accompanied by three musicians in heavy winter clothing, and published on the front page of *Rattle Up My Boys*, issue 2, series 8, Summer 1999. I understand that a note on the back of the print supplied for publication by Paul, stated that it depicted dancers from the village of Carlton which is located some six miles to the south of Selby in North Yorkshire.

Following a number of forays to The British Library Newspaper Library at Colindale the full report of my research, with newspaper reports in chronological order of publication, is as follows:

Firstly, an account of a party of Plough Stot Dancers in "Northerner's" column "This World of Ours", published in *The Yorkshire Post* on Saturday, January 4th, 1930, page 8:-

THIS WORLD OF OURS

Plough Stots

A Snaith correspondent writes: "Plough Monday, the first Monday after Twelfth night, used to be celebrated by the Plough Boys, who were called Plough Stots. Once I believe they were a very rowdy, wild lot, but the dance is unique. One family here seem to have it entirely among themselves. The centre figure wore horns on his head and a skin with a tail hanging down his back; his part was to move up and down in the centre and make most weird and wonderful noises. The time was beaten on a drum and dancers moved in turns from the corners to the centre; but all the while a swaying movement and step with the feet was kept up by all the party, who were all decked out in some kind of fancy dress.

This is what I wrote in my own diary, January, 1928, which was the last time I saw the dance done here properly: 'The Plough Stot Dancers came tonight. We were listening to the wireless when far away I heard the tapping of their drum, the strange cries got nearer, and the group came and danced up and down on the wide flagged path from the door to the old wrought iron gate. I went to watch, and as the nightmare figures passed into the darkness I called out goodnight, and very human voices answered a Happy New Year to you, and we waved to each other'

Last year only a few children came and the proper dress was missing. It seems a pity that the steps and movements should all be lost.

NORTHERNER

This report ties in nicely with the Carlton photograph on two counts. Firstly, Snaith, the village from where the correspondent was writing is only a mile to the south of Carlton; and secondly, the remark about the tradition being all within the same family ties in with the information from Chas Marshall (*Rattle Up My Boys*, issue 3, series 8, Autumn 1999) that it was one family - the Clayton family - that kept the Blue Stots/Plough Stots play and dancing alive in the area.

The Snaith correspondent's report was followed up three days later when in his column 'This World of Ours', published in *The Yorkshire Post* on Tuesday, January 7th 1930 p. 6, "Northerner" narrates a letter received from a Castleford correspondent. Under the subheading 'Plough Jags' this dispatch reads as follows:

THIS WORLD OF OURS

Plough Jags

With regard to your note on "Plough Stots", it may interest you to know that in Lincolnshire these are called "Plough Jags", writes a Castleford correspondent.

"On Plough Monday a group of these young men go round to various houses and act, what I should imagine is about the oldest play in the world. The character whom you mention with horns on his head is Beelzebub, but there are others more important. Tom Fool, a Sergeant, a Doctor, Lame Jane, and many others. At the conclusion of the play the Plough Jags rattle a box very suggestively and sing:

"Good master and good mistress,
As you sit round your fire
Remember us poor Plough Jags
That plough the muck and mire.
The muck it is so nasty,
The mire it is so strong,
Remember us poor Plough Jags
Who plough the muck along."

"In the days when I lived in Lincolnshire there was always tense excitement on the evening of Plough Monday, and everyone made their kitchen as bright as possible to welcome the Plough Jags".

NORTHERNER

Referring to the item 'More from Norman Peacock' in *Rattle Up My Boys*, issue 3, series 8, Autumn 1999, in which Norman thought that the photograph appeared in either *The Yorkshire Post* or *The Yorkshire Evening Post* around 1930 in view of the stock exchange report on the reverse of the printed photograph, I was able to discount *The Yorkshire Evening Post* as a source as stock exchange information is published in morning newspapers.

After further correspondence with Norman it was established that the photograph was published in a cropped form on the picture page of *The Yorkshire Post* on Friday, December 23rd, 1932, p. 9 where it appeared above this caption:

'FORTY YEARS AGO - A photograph, taken by a reader in 1890, of a party of "Plow Stots" in the neighbourhood of Selby. It was an old custom, now dying out, for agricultural labourers to dress up in outlandish costumes and parade the countryside about Christmas and Epiphany. "Northerner" refers to the picture on Page 4'.

Northerner's reference to the picture in his column 'This World of Ours' on page 4 is of special interest as it reveals who took the photograph. Here is Northerner's report below the subheading 'All Dressed Up':

THIS WORLD OF OURS

All Dressed Up

There is an odd kind of photograph on our picture page this morning - a row of men dressed in weird extravagance of costume and colour. It was taken over forty years ago by Mr W. T. Cliffe, of Pontefract, by whose courtesy we reproduce it.

The men were gang-about bodies - Selby labourers who had been thrown out of work by an exceptionally heavy snowstorm. That was partly their excuse for dressing up like that and calling themselves "plow stots", and asking for money. They attracted a good deal of attention then, and I think they would attract even more now. "Plow stots" are seen and heard no more, except in remote villages, and our demands in the way of fancy dress are more easily satisfied.

Droll fellows, they look - out to have, and to give, a good time, ready to sing and caper to the best of the old side-drum and the squeal of the tin-whistle.

NORTHERNER

As stated by Chas Marshall in the item 'Photo identified' (*Rattle Up My Boys*, issue 3, series 8, Autumn 1999) the photograph was also published in *The Yorkshire Post* on Monday, January 11th, 1937, p. 6 where it was used to illustrate an article about the Plough Boy's Play by H. J. S_____. Can anyone identify who H. J. S. was? My transcription of that article reads thus:

The Plough Boy's Play: A Version Recorded

(An illustration of two horses ploughing with the following caption: Today, the first Monday after Twelfth Day, is the festival of the plough.)

For many centuries the first Monday after Twelfth Day has been devoted to customs of the plough. Particularly in the North of England this day, which marked the resumption of work in the fields after the Yuletide festivities, was made a holiday with its own rites and ceremonies.

'Plough-bullocking, the procession of the plough through village streets, revelry in motley garb, and a final carousel at night all marked Plough Monday.

Most important of all was the Plough Boy's Play, which is still performed in some villages in the North and East Ridings. For centuries the words of this play have been handed down from father to son, and no trace of it in written form has ever been discovered.

This version of it was taken down a few years ago from a family whose predecessors had acted it from memory for many generations. It comprised four actors, who blacked their faces and borrowed their "properties" from the household wardrobe.

The characters (in order of appearance) are Beelzebub, King William, Old Roger and The Doctor'

(Space does not permit the inclusion of the full play which follows. It is different to the play I am used to. If you would like a copy of Gordon's hand-written transcription simply contact me - Trevor.)

Occasionally instead of King William the "hero" was St. George. Old Roger was sometimes known as The Slasher. Various interpretations of the story have been offered, the most probable being that which suggests that it portrays the yearly wax and wane of Nature. It may, of course, have had some obscure political significance, the meaning of which has now been lost.

H. J. S.

(The "Carlton" photograph with the caption "Plow Stots" near Selby 45 years ago. This Plough Monday custom has been revived at Goathland.)

Now that we have the identity of the photographer may I suggest that the investigation switches to Pontefract and a search is made for the descendants of Mr Cliffe to see if a photo collection of "Forgotten Morris" and related customs is waiting to be unearthed. I am reminded of the gold mine of information relating to the Goathland Plough Stots unearthed by Trevor Stone on a visit to a retired photographer and local historian at Whitby.

Good luck!"

Gordon Ridgwell, March, 2000

TEAM PROFILE Lord Conyers Morris

by John Ledbury

About four editions of *Rattle Up My Boys* ago your editor asked me for a profile of Lord Conyers Morris Men, so I thought it was about time I put pen to paper. We were formed in November 1974 to be a Cotswold Morris side, and have recently celebrated our Silver Jubilee with six of our original twelve members still active performers.

Our origin was the Kiveton Park Folk Club, which at that time met on Tuesday nights at the Lord Conyers Arms in the South Yorkshire village of Wales. We used to practice on Tuesday evenings in the club room for an hour and a half before the folk club. The need to accommodate more members and a longer time to practice led to a change of venue to the nearby Methodist chapel and a change of night to Wednesdays.

Over the years our repertoire broadened from Cotswold Morris. First we added a Mummers' Play, based on a local script published by J Pearce and Son of Gibraltar Street, Sheffield, *"The Mummers' Act; or Morris Dancers' Annual Play*

of *St. George, with Prologues, Songs, Recitations &c for the Amusement of Youth on Christmas Holidays*". We then learned the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance using antlers acquired from Woburn Abbey. In return for these we had to go down to Woburn and do a performance of the dance in the park. Border Morris, originally worked up as a surprise item for a side member's wedding, later became an addition to our repertoire in its own right.

We had often talked of doing a Longsword dance. As a Yorkshire side we thought it would be appropriate, but had difficulty in deciding which one to do. Both dances indigenous to the south part of Yorkshire were alive, well and being danced by their respective teams.

We thought it inappropriate to import one from further north. We followed up other local references to sword dancing, but found those in Ecclesfield and Wentworth to be performances by the Grenoside dancers, and those in Orgreave and Treeton performances by the Handsworth side. References to sword dancing in Poolsbrook, near Staveley in Derbyshire, proved to have been by dancers from Loftus in North Yorkshire who had moved down during a period of industrial unrest in the mines in their local area.

At our Annual General Meeting in 1987 it was suggested that I write a Sword Dance and so with some trepidation I accepted. I had written Morris and Country dances before, but this was a far more daunting project as I had never been a Longsword dancer. My knowledge of the Longsword tradition consisted of what I had learned in a variety of workshops at Folk Festivals and other events. With this basic knowledge at my disposal I spent my summer holiday that year reading through such collected material as I could gather on the subject and various notations of the Longsword dances of Yorkshire.

With a few basic preferences in mind: steel swords rather than wooden ones; a dance where the movements of the figure were governed by the music rather than just the timing of the steps; a multiplicity of locks; and a desire to use genuine sword dance tunes, collected with the dances rather than those that folk dance collectors thought suitable to substitute; I set off on determining a sequence of "ordinary sword dance figures" which could form the basis of a dance, from which I hoped over time would grow our own Sword dance.

A video of one of our practice sessions was of great assistance in sorting out some of the finer points of the movements and a timely article in *Rattle Up My Boys* gave us the suggested steel specification and length and width (but not thickness) of swords. The third dimension was added by persuading Pete Swift, the then custodian of the Grenoside swords to let me take a micrometer to these! Some eighteen months later the result of all this was the first performance of Lord Conyers Sword Dance at our Christmas Ceilidh in 1988.

At this point I was aware that having learned the dance and got it to a point where it was ready to be performed and that is how it could have remained. However, the hope that it would develop from there to grow into a dance with its own characteristics has exceeded my wildest expectations and we now have our own distinctive sword dance which, while not very old, has its roots firmly in the Yorkshire Longsword tradition.

In addition to the technical aspects of the dance I considered the social context of its performance to be important. It needed a time and place of performance to be focused on. We have danced it at numerous Christmas Ceilidhs and on the Saturday before Christmas at several venues in and around Kiveton Park and

Rotherham, and for the past few years have settled on The Angel at Killamarsh as part of a general Christmas Wassail, which also includes Border Morris and the singing of local carols, before moving on to do the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance at dusk at the site of Robin Hood's Trysting Tree.

More recent developments of our repertoire include the revival, after a break of some ten to fifteen years, of our Mummers' Play with a few enhancements including as a finale the Bellerby Sword Dance, courtesy of Ivor Allsop's book "*Longsword Dances*" but with a slightly different interpretation. This in itself has a variety of options for future development: the full Bellerby Play, our own local Mummers' Play with a different Sword Dance, another play altogether? Alongside these I hope that Lord Conyers Sword Dance is here to stay for at least the foreseeable future.

John Ledbury, February 2000

In 1990 John Ledbury produced a degree thesis and he agreed to its publication in *Rattle Up My Boys*. It was featured in three parts in issues 1, 3 & 4 of series 4. In his covering letter John pointed out that the team had completed and returned a questionnaire in reply to my planned survey which, because of a poor level of response, was later abandoned. I am also reminded that Lord Conyers is one of the few teams who regularly supply me with details of their team outings.

Whitby Competitive Dance Festival April 8th 2000

I am a subscriber/contributor to the e-mail Morris Dance Discussion List. It is often frustrating with much to-ing and fro-ing about such matters as VPL (visible panty line). However I occasionally come across something which makes ploughing through the trivia to be worthwhile. This time I was overwhelmed by reports about one of my "hobby-horses" - the Whitby Competitive Folk Dance Festival. A report came from Paul Draper of East Saxon Sword following the team's first trip to this event.



Spen Valley Longsword - regulars at the event for more than 15 years

photo by David Webster

This was followed by information from "Tom Paine" (who, if memory serves me correctly, features in the Greatham play - performed by Redcar Sword Dancers). These reports with photos by David Webster of Spen Valley Longsword enable me to get back on my hobby horse and urge other teams to at least try a trip to this unique event.

Paul Draper writes:

Here is a brief note about our first visit to the old fashioned EFDSS traditional dance competition held annually at Whitby.

As this year's DERT was held in the south East Saxon Sword were deprived of their annual pilgrimage north so they were easily persuaded to enter the sword dance class at the Whitby Competitive Dance Festival. This Festival has classes for school groups and adults and included maypole dancing, step dancing, longsword, morris, garland, country dance, Playford and Kentucky running sets! We had an easy journey with good weather although there was snow still on the moors as we approached Whitby. On arrival we went in search of beer and food which we found in the Duke of York where we had a few pints of Black Dog before retiring to our beds.

On Saturday we arranged to meet up at the Tap & Spile for a pre-competition warm-up but they were closed (at 11am!) so we went to Baxtergate and danced there instead. We popped into the Plough for a pint and to see if we could do a rapper but the pub was empty, and no wonder - there was no real ale. The dipsos stayed for non-real ale and had a chat with Sullivan's Sword from Nottingham who turned up. They told us that Spen Valley Longsword were going for a pint in the Elsinore. The Elsinore wasn't serving food so we crossed the road to the Little Angel where Black Sheep Bitter was to be had.

When we finished it was still raining so we headed off to the Spa Theatre to support the afternoon session of the competition. There we met Redcar Sword Dancers who confirmed our worst suspicions, they too were going to dance



East Saxon Sword performed the Greatham dance. photo by David Webster

Greatham. As they taught the Greatham dance to the Saxons some years ago it was going to be interesting to see if the dance had changed much. In the event I think it was just a matter of style.

The competition was poorly attended (the junior and school classes had been held in the morning) with some classes having only one entrant. The competitors in our class were East Saxon, Spen Valley, Sullivan's and Redcar. Redcar won but everyone scored high points. The dances performed were Greatham, Escrick and (I think) Boosbeck. (I'd be astonished if Spen Valley did anything other than the Helmsley dance they have performed for over 15 years. Sullivan's

did Escrick and, as Paul reports, both Redcar Sword and East Saxon Sword did the Greatham dance - Trevor).

After the competition we enjoyed a glass of Newkie Broon in the Pavilion Bar and arranged our evening. Saxons wanted to do a pub tour so we had an Indian meal and then went to the Tap & Spile to meet some of the other teams. As we went into the snug we were accosted by a hen-party from Middlesborough and gave them a dance which we then repeated out in the main bar. We then left and walked along the quay side looking for other likely pubs but they were all circuit pubs and a bit crowded. Opposite the bridge we were accosted by another hen party and duly obliged in the middle of the street before crossing the bridge to the Endeavour where we danced again. I checked out the pubs further along the road but they were unsuitable and everyone was feeling a bit bloated or tired so we retired to the Duke of York again hoping to meet Spen Valley. Spen Valley had gone to the Tap & Spile and the Duke of York was a bit small and crowded for dancing so we had another pint and went back to our beds.

Sunday was bright but cold and we set off up the coast to Robin Hood's Bay where we danced followed by Sullivan's Sword before heading across the moors to Beck Hole, outside Goathland where we met Spen Valley at Birch Hall Inn. The teams danced and ate Carling peas and parkin provided by the landlord - we hadn't come across this North Country delicacy before but apparently it's traditional to eat them on the Sunday before Palm Sunday (another mid-Lenten feast) in memory of a narrowly avoided famine. After this we set off for home. It would be fun to have a few more teams in the competition. There are also classes for morris and rapper.

Paul Draper, April 2000

"Tom Paine" added:

The Wilson Arms Double Diamond Trophy

The Sword Dance class at this year's Whitby Competitive Dance Festival was



Redcar Sword - with their version of Greatham photo by David Webster

strongly contested by four teams travelling from far and near. The team from furthest afield was East Saxon Sword from Essex, and other teams attending were Sullivan's Sword from Nottingham, Spen Valley Longsword from West Yorkshire and finally the 'almost' home side, Redcar Sword Dancers.

The side with the unenviable role of being first up were the 1999 winners, Spen Valley, who gave a spirited performance of their Helmsley dance complete with a perfect rendition of the 'windmills' figure. Second to dance were Sullivan's who danced Escrick commencing with a nicely sung calling-on song. The dance was well done and accompanied by some very fine concertina playing. Next came

East Saxon performing the Greatham dance, and they gave an excellent show. The music was understated and at a much slower pace than I remember in the past, and the dance, in my view, was the better for it. Last up were Redcar, also dancing Greatham. Redcar had not made an appearance at this competition for almost twenty years, and last won the cup in 1979 (four members of the 1979 team also danced this year) and gave a very good performance.

"Tom Paine". April 2000

A further e-mail came from Colin Messer who, after questioning the anatomical skills of the judge, went on to confirm that Redcar Sword Dancers won (96 points), Spen Valley Longsword were second (95 points) and Sullivan's Sword and East Saxon Sword drew for third place (94 points).

Meeting Norman Wood

by Trevor Stone

For many years (through the pages of *Rattle Up My Boys*) I have encouraged teams to support the Whitby Competitive Dance Festival. On the year that Redcar Sword returned (they were once regulars) and East Saxon Sword decided to enter I missed it. I was interviewing a 90 year old about his father's

They met for a pre-performance run through at the village of Snape (where Maureen Tinker and I almost doubled the audience) and then went to meet, and be organised by Norman, in Richmond where they danced at the Hospital followed by a dance at the Town Hall before moving on to Norman's village, Skeeby, to dance outside his home.

Norman was very talkative and was a natural born organiser. He insisted on carrying one of the teams posters "so that the dancers would recognise him!" He also ensured that all his neighbours came out to see the dancers and arranged for refreshments for us all in the Village Hall.

Norman was an enthusiastic raconteur but he insisted that his knowledge of the sword dance was limited as, when his father was involved, he was too young to be enthusiastic. He recalled correspondence with Cecil Sharp and talked about his father's opinions of the members of an earlier village team who were Sharp's main informants in 1911. Norman did however occasionally take part in displays as a reserve dancer and collector.

Ted Dodsworth of the Highside team hopes to follow up on this meeting and has promised a report if further information is forthcoming.

Trevor Stone, April 2000



Ray Waite, musician for Highside with Norman Wood photo by Trevor Stone

activity in reviving the Kirkby Malzeard dance in the early 1920's - I reckoned that the Whitby Competitive Dance Festival may be around next year but

The meeting with Norman Wood was a fascinating experience. It was set up by members of the Highside team following an enquiry from Norman about how and where he could see the team - he had not seen the dance since his father organised the revival team in Kirkby Malzeard in the 1920's. Norman needs to have a medical before renewing his driving licence and he was afraid that, if he failed and was unable to drive he may not be able to get to see the dance.

The Highside team decided to take the dance to him!

White Rose Sword dancers take Cecil Sharp House by storm

Cyril Swales, who has been involved with the folk dance scene in the Scarborough area for many years, told me about the team he trains, the White Rose Sword Dancers, who represented Yorkshire (and Longsword dancing) at the English Folk Dance Song Society Christmas Carol Concert held at Cecil Sharp House on Sunday, December 19th 1999.

Cyril says that the boys' team (there is also a men's team) from Scarborough gave a marvellous performance and a perfect lock brought thunderous applause. The men's team appeared at the Bandstand on Saturday afternoon at the Sword Spectacular - you may have seen them there.



The boys of White Rose Sword Dancers from Scarborough at Cecil Sharp House.

photo by Cyril Swales

Flamborough abroad

by Trevor Stone

In the last issue I mentioned that the Flamborough Longsword team had accepted an invitation from Lange Wapper to attend the Half Lent celebrations in Antwerp.

The Flamborough team, who have seldom travelled out of their village within the past 25 years, were at first a little daunted by the prospect of travelling so far but gradually it became apparent that enough men were interested to make up a team. The practical arrangements were enormous - for such an important event the team needed new kit (such as a banner and extra caps) and the travel costs were great but, with the support and encouragement from countless village organisations and individuals they got ever closer to their target.

The weather was fine and the event attracted huge crowds, especially for the



highlight of the trip on Sunday morning when both teams danced in front of the magnificent Antwerp Cathedral. The event was attended by researchers and experts from all over Europe and the Flamborough men were surprised to find that their sword dance is so well known. This boost to their esteem convinced the dancers to give a first class performance - which they did!

The weekend also included informal dancing, a guided tour of the City of Antwerp and a social evening with the hosts from the Lange Wapper team. Richard Traves, Organiser of the team, said *"The trip exceeded our most optimistic expectations. The Flamborough men were surprised to find that their sword dance is so well known across the Continent. The team were determined to be excellent ambassadors for the village"*

Village organisations gave the team support and encouragement and many individuals also helped both practically and financially including The Seabird pub

and the other village public houses who arranged collections in support of this venture.

The photo shows Flamborough Longsword outside Antwerp Cathedral on Saturday, April 1st. The members are (left to right) Sue Storey (musician), Jonathan Traves, Richard Traves (Leader), John Allison, Paul Crossland, Robert Kemp, William Traves, Ian Robson, John Pratley, Andrew Hall, Gareth Ibbotson, Craig Redhead, and Eric Storey (musician) - all set to do the village proud in the Green Market in Antwerp.

OBITUARY Goodbye to Ted Frost

A quick look through the photo archive at Cecil Sharp House soon impresses one or two faces on the viewer. One such regular was Edward (Ted) Frost, formerly leader of the Grenoside Traditional Sword Dancers. Grenoside were a regular team at Society events - the earliest record of their performances "down south" I have was in January 1926 at the Great Hall - London University). From then on the team appeared regularly - lead by Ted Frost.

I was sorry to learn that Ted died after a short illness. I attended his funeral at



Ted Frost gave up the role of Captain of the Grenoside team in 1990. At the Boxing Day 1992 outing he was presented with a print by a local artist.

photo by Trevor Stone

St. Mark's Church, Grenoside on May 12th. Grenoside Traditional Sword Dancers turned out resplendent in their new jackets. The Church was full to overflowing - in addition to his folk activities Ted was also an active member of the Grenoside Male Voice Choir and was well known throughout the community.

My sincere condolences go to his family. Every time I turn up one of those archive photos of the Grenoside Traditional Sword Dancers I will be reminded of Ted and the enthusiasm he encouraged for the Grenoside tradition.

The next issue will contain further details of the Conference at the Sword Spectacular and a report on a "find" by Andrew Kennedy in Workington. Also, as the first part of a History of the Grenoside team I plan to print an article on Grenoside, rediscovered by Gordon Ridgewell in the Pall Mall Gazette.

Contributions are welcome ...

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