

RATTLE UP

My Boys

A quarterly publication for those with an interest in sword dancing

Millennium year - issue 1, Series 9, Spring 2000

SWORD DANCERS GREET THE YEAR 2000

Every 5 or 6 years Boxing Day falls on a Sunday and throws the sword dancing programme into chaos (well perhaps a little exaggeration!). This time the Handsworth and Grenoside teams decided (as in the past) to dance on Monday - labelled in my diary as Christmas Day Bank Holiday.



The Christmas period dance events this time saw a number of changes. The most striking were the addition of a long abandoned figure (shown above) - the Rolls - to the Handsworth dance and the first outing of smart, new (and matching) jackets by the Grenoside team. Photo above by Tom Chambers.

World Millennium Sword Spectacular
May 25th to 29th, 2000 in Whitby- details on the back page

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR OUTINGS

Spen Valley are rained "indoors" and Barnsley debate whether to dance in the rain

The weather on December 26th was atrocious. The rain was so bad that I restricted my travels to see two teams, my "old" team Spen Valley Longsword who danced around the Cleckheaton area and Barnsley Longsword (who, for many years, have danced at Cawthorne on the Sunday after Christmas Day which, this year, was the "original" Boxing Day).



Because of heavy rain Spen Valley decided to dance indoors for their first couple of spots (they are past masters at dancing in small rooms with low ceilings)

Both teams were affected by the bad weather - as I arrived at Cawthorne Barnsley Longsword were in "discussion" about the wisdom of dancing inside or out. In the final analysis they did neither, settling for a single rapper dance done indoors.

THE SECOND "BOXING DAY"

Changes in South Yorkshire

It seems to me that the Boxing Day outings by the Grenoside Traditional Sword Dancers (outside The Old Harrow) and the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers (outside the Parish Church) get more and more crowded each year. Many people, like me, use the venues as a chance to meet up with friends, often for the first time in many months (or even years!).

This year both teams added something extra to their performances.

Grenoside performed for the first time in splendid new jackets - I have become so used to the previous collection of patterns and shapes that I almost miss the variety. It may be my imagination but I thought that the new jackets were a little "fuller cut" than the previous versions.

After practising for some months Handsworth decided to reintroduce the Rolls figure but at the beginning of the dance rather than at the end as recorded by Cecil Sharp. John Pitts, the team leader, has promised to supply more details of the change for a future issue.

Kirkburton dance on New Years Day

In their early years (see the piece by Bob Schofield in the last issue of *Rattle Up My Boys*) the Kirkburton Rapier Dancers danced out on New Year's Eve as well as New Year's Day. Time (and domestic pressure?) has caused them to confine

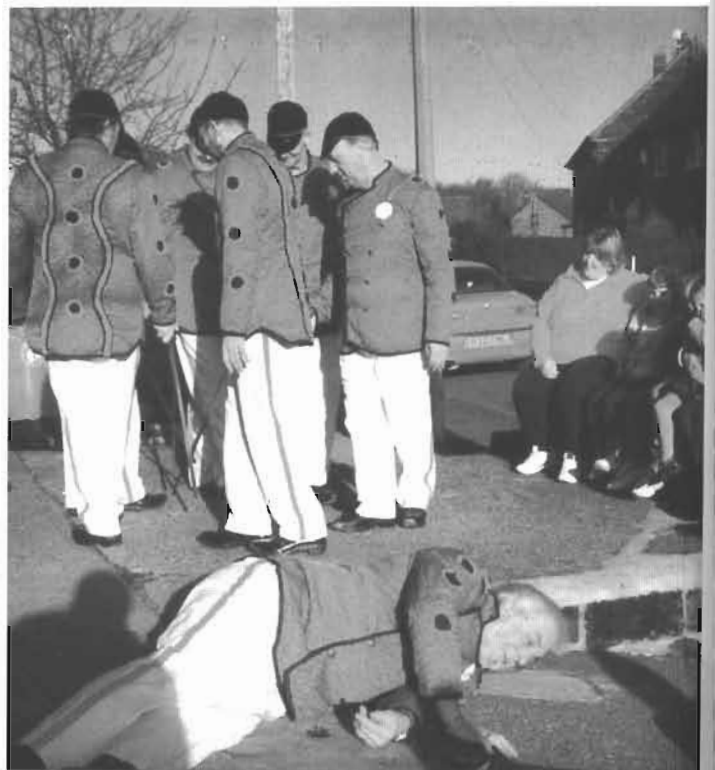


Over the years the Kirkburton Rapier Dancers have gradually increased their repertoire of dances with newly composed variants - the latest was given a first outing on New Year's Day.

their efforts to New Year's Day which I try hard to get to. Any outing with "Kirkburton" is enjoyable - to listen to the banter between team members and to hear tales from their massive store of amusing incidents is a good reason to join them, but if you add their hospitality and their obvious enjoyment in showing off their stimulating and different dances, you are guaranteed a good time.

The Grenoside Village Traipse

Three years ago the Grenoside team decided to reintroduce a tour of the village, apparently such an informal tour has taken place in the past but it died out some years ago.



To anyone frustrated by the crowds on Boxing Day the Grenoside village tour is a welcome chance to see the team in action "close up".

It's aim is to dance for the villagers, dancing at the Newsagents, the Post Office and other venues where they meet local people. In recent years the Boxing Day outing has become very popular and therefore very crowded while the village tour - now known as the Traipse - provides a chance to see the team "close up".

Plough Sunday at Bolton Percy

Handsworth dance at Bolton Percy

Since "discovering" two teams, York Gentlemen and their regular guests West Riding Longswordsmen at Bolton Percy (near Tadcaster) on Plough Sunday "regulars" Ivor Allsop, Les Seaman and Pat Malham (both of Handsworth) and myself have made a point of attending these enjoyable events.

This year was different in a number of ways - the two local teams were decimated by illness, forcing them to combine forces for a second year in what has become known as "York Scratchings".



The "York Scratchings", a combination of dancers from York Gentlemen and West Riding Longswordsmen, and the Handsworth team danced outside Bolton Percy Church and later retired to dance at the pub where a deep covering of gravel had been recently laid - not the ideal surface for dancing.

In addition, no doubt influenced by glowing reports of previous years events, the Handsworth team accepted an invitation to attend. The setting, outside the Church in the Main Street of the village, was perfect and allowed a much better view of their dance (including the newly reintroduced Rolls figure) than is the case on the narrow footpath alongside a busy main road outside the Parish Church at Handsworth.

York Gentlemen to become an occasional team

It was feared (and reported in the last issue of Rattle Up My Boys) that York Gentlemen had disbanded - I am delighted to correct this. Apparently they plan to operate as an occasional team mainly for the Plough Sunday event.

Church service at Kirkby Malzeard



Another favourite outing of mine is to attend the plough blessing service at Kirkby Malzeard when the dancers perform inside the church after the service.

Ted Dodsworth, organiser of the Highside (Kirkby Malzeard) team tells me that he received a letter asking when the team will next dance. It came from 91 year-old Norman Wood, son of Ralph Wood who was instrumental in reviving the village dance in the 1920's. Ted promises more information on this matter.

Goathland Millennium event

On Saturday, January 15th the Goathland Plough Stots marched from the Reading Room in Goathland to dance outside the Shops in the same way that they have done for many years - only this time they were not alone.

To mark the Millennium the Plough Stots decided to invite two guest teams - Lange Wapper from Antwerp and Sallyport Sword from the Newcastle area.

After a display by all three teams Goathland Plough Stots and Sallyport toured the village whilst Lange Wapper (because of their longer dance which needs more space) danced at the Malyan Hotel Car Park, Breerton Lodge, "Inn on The Moor" and Oakwell Avenue, Darnholm.



The evening event after the day's dancing offered a truly magnificent spread - and an opportunity to see the Goathland dance performed by dancers, some of whom were last active 20 years and more ago.



CONGRATULATIONS - MICK ATKINSON M.B.E.

Michael Atkinson, President of the Goathland Plough Stots, has been awarded the M.B.E. for services to the Fire Brigade, to sheep farming and to traditional dance. All who know him will agree with me that it is richly deserved.

Village sword dances

An extract from the weekly supplement to The Yorkshire Herald, dated June 18th 1927

I have a file marked "Possible future use" which contains material I collect when meeting people, when visiting The Library at Cecil Sharp House and occasional submissions which cannot be immediately accommodated.

The problem is that sometime I am less than disciplined in filing and recording such material and I have to admit that I have no recollection of its origin of this piece. If you recognise it please let me know so that I can credit it accordingly.

The extract reads:

In Poppleton the quaintest of many quaint things on Plough Monday was a sword dance, unique in England, and possibly unique in Christendom. It is supposed that this dance, handed down for centuries by unbroken tradition, was brought to England by the Danes and Norse men, and in that case is shown one way in which our Viking ancestors disported themselves and kept themselves fit. But there is reason to think it older than their coming. Though danced some years ago by men whose looks and speech was Scandinavian it may have been Celtic, for dances resembling it a little, if not just like it, are to be seen not only in Northumberland and Durham, but in Kirkby Malzeard, Wales, and in the South of France, where no Danes settled. The dance was picturesquely curious; it was done by six strapping fellows, of the type who fought at Marston Moor, and in the Rising in the North. The special feature of it was that forming a circle after a preliminary clash of weapons, they took a long series of subtle and intricate evolutions without once losing hold.

The last movement locked the swords in a triangle, and the leader held them aloft. However, that was not all. The Dance was produced with antique ceremony. To a reel the dance began. They formed a trotting circle and clashed their swords once round; stood inert for an instant, each man catching his left hand neighbours point, and then, from a sort of Sir Roger de Coverley start, proceeded to turn the circle inside out in ten or a dozen ways, steps the dance had none, it was a jog trot. That marked perhaps its savage origin, for the want of steps was certainly not due to want of skill. It was a dance that needed no steps, and probably admitted of none. What was to be seen was merely a group of lithe men's bodies moving in and out and round about, checked sometimes and then starting, bending as their arms were raised or lowered skipping over stooping under the loosely held swords. There were eight or ten minutes of liveliest movement.

Each Plough Monday a party of plough boys from Poppleton entered the City of York and carried a plough through the streets followed by the sword dancers, and others pretending to be seafaring men carried on their shoulders a model of a ship and description of the tithe barn. The dancers were headed by musicians who were followed by a King in an old military uniform and a man who personated a Queen with a long veil. Then followed the dancers.

The swords were blunt, of course, and they had no hilt guards, for these would have made the finger and wrist play difficult, perhaps impossible. They had wooden handles, like harlequins' wands or a "latten Belboc".

Gordon's silence ends.....

Recently I was amazed by lack of response from regular contributor Gordon Ridgewell - it couldn't be that I had managed a "perfect" issue or at least one with minor errors which escaped his eagle eyes. Apparently the silence was due to illness and a short stay in hospital - Gordon is back on form with a number of comments (Corrigenda and Addenda) from the last issue.

No Longsword at Thaxted

Gordon Ridgewell is a regular at the annual Morris Ring meeting at Thaxted and he often sends me photos of sword teams at this (and other) dance events.

He was disappointed to find that there were no Longsword teams at last year's Ring meeting but instead he sent this photograph.



Durham Rams Sword and Morris Men performing the choker figure in the Hamsteels Rapper Sword Dance at Thaxted. Photo by Gordon Ridgewell

I remind readers that I welcome photographs of outings (with or without written reports!) for publication. Colour prints present no problems so long as they are of reasonable contrast - photos are returned after use.

Gordon writes

Referring to the Summer issue of *Rattle Up My Boys* Gordon points out that Paul Davenport (in his book *The Forgotten Morris*) wonders whether Cecil Sharp or Gatty were responsible for Grenoside calling themselves "Morris Dancers" circa 1912. Gordon points out that, in an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of 8 January 1895 entitled "Twelfth Night on the Moors and sub-headed MORRIS DANCERS IN YORKSHIRE", the Grenoside team are referred to as Morris Dancers. Gordon asks who "Gatty" was and how he fitted in as he is not mentioned in the references or bibliography.

Mr Tiddy

In Gordon's piece on Sharp's Lecture at Stratford-upon-Avon mention was made of an earlier lecture by Mr Tiddy - I had him as Mr Tidy. Gordon adds that Reginald Tiddy was a gifted Oxford scholar who collected Mummers Plays. After his death in the First World War his collection was published by Clarendon Press in 1923 entitled "*The Mummers' Play*"

Slingsby & Terrington

Gordon's second contribution to the last issue referred to a record of dancing at Slingsby and nearby Terrington.

Unfortunately I was unable to get the details I had anticipated for the last issue (and planned into the pagination) for the next Sword Spectacular. This left me with a last minute need to fill space and so I added a map to illustrate Gordon's piece. It was my intention to add a caption to the map to point out the proximity of other sword dance locations but this too fell victim to the last minute changes. To make matters worse the printer cropped the map in a way that left off the location of Slingsby which is a little to the east of Hovingham.

Other dances at nearby locations in the area are Ampleforth, Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside and there are records of teams performing at Barton le Street, Stillington, and Malton.

Old photo in issue 2, series 7

In the issue for Summer, 1998 I referred to the sad news of the death of Fred Ignanni who was a regular dancer with Redcar Sword. Fred had supplied me with a copy of a photo which was featured with the news of Fred's passing. Gordon points out that the information with this photo was incomplete and he asks for details. Fuller details appear (with the photo) in issue 5, series 5, Winter 1995 (not dated on the publication) which described Pat Pickles collection of postcards and photos, including a copy of the photo in question. On page 4 item 13 the photo is shown (but I spelt Fred's surname wrongly). I understand that it is a copy of a photo displayed on the wall of a pub in Loftus but I do not know any more details.

Update of the Geographical Index

I have mentioned in a couple of earlier issues that I hope to update the sword section of the "A Geographical Index of the Ceremonial Dance in Great Britain" by E. C. Cawte, Alex Helm, R. J. Marriott and Norman Peacock published in the Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, Vol IX, No 1, December 1960. As pointed out by Gordon-Ridgewell I will persist in dating this work 1962 - it was published in 1960. I am still working on this project but, as yet, I have been unable to attract anyone who is prepared to tackle the Rapper elements.

German team found on the Internet

BÖCKSTEIN SWORD DANCERS Gastein Sword Dance

spotted by Bob Schofield on a German site on the Internet and translated by Kathryn Walker.

Centuries ago sword dancing was a particularly apt way for miners to express their class consciousness. On the one hand the carrying of swords was a privilege which was otherwise granted to no other occupational class. This vested right to arms has been in existence since 1405 and had its origin in the actual dangers to which the miners were exposed whilst marching through the mountains to the high-lying mines. After all here in the Gastein valley we were once plagued with bears and wolves.

Secondly, sword dancing strengthened mining class consciousness in the respect that it was one of them - and not some sort of representative of state power, for example the mountain judge or administrator - who was "raised up", an act which certainly had an enormously significant symbolic character. The sword dance was always preceded by a rustic boorish play. This shows that the miners here are not some sort of depersonalised proletariats but that they still remain connected to the rustic life through secondary occupations - i.e. the agricultural milieu. Why then the loutish, the clumsy in this prologue?

Albert von MUCHAR writing in "The Gastein Valley and Spa" in 1834 wrote:

"...the more simple daily way of life of the old, rich mine shareholders, the more splendid were their tables at special festivals of the year and at other events, in their families as well as at trade gatherings where the processions of their miners and metal smelters in ceremonial mining costumes, the **Miners Sword Dance**, jesters and poets, were always in evidence.

It was customary at such events for a rhyming poem: **From the Town Hall and Mine Shareholders**, penned by the miner *Wolf Premb* to be read"

Without a doubt the miners wanted to effect a contrast. Compared to the farmers they felt themselves to be refined, progressive people who were sufficiently skilled to perform even a highly stylised dance. Of course this dance makes a stronger impression than the more clumsy and coarse the foregoing rustic preliminary play. In a certain sense it was thus a friendly, gentle ribbing of the farming class, but at the same time an ironical look at their own rustic origins.

The sword dance was with certainty already being performed in the 15th and 16th century. The first details are handed down from 1631. At that time Duke Albrecht of Bavaria came to Gastein with his wife. In his honour the miners performed the sword dance at the Gastein Inn, the landlord of which was Caspar Rendl, and for this they received payment of 10 Talers. In the ensuing period the sword dance is often mentioned, usually however in connection with the brawling which regularly followed after and through which it ultimately fell into discredit and oblivion.

In 1979, in the general euphoria over the fact that the historic mining and smelting community of Altböckstein was finally to be placed under preservation with the intention of reinstating it, the idea was born to perform this sword dance again during a year-long folk and miners' festival in the centre of Altböckstein, although at that time there were no notes and clues available for performing the dances or for the preliminary play.

Thus on the advice of OSTR Prof Herbert LAGER, the Ebensee salt miners' and Pfannhauser's sword dance, which nowadays is no longer performed there, has been transplanted to Gastein and rehearsed here in accordance with the version originating from 1937 collected by Dr Hans COMMENDA. It is practiced under the direction of Frau Prof Ilka PETER with 14 young and ambitious Bocksteiners, some of whom belong to the miners band or who work in the Heil mining shaft.

The transplanting of a mining custom into other areas took place often, as the result of the wanderings of miners displaced after mining companies were closed down and thus is perfectly legitimate.

The reintroduction of the Gastein sword dance in this new form, and particularly also re-kitting of the dancers for the first time, has earned particular merit for Dir H VOLGGER, who was at that time the leader of the Salzburg Educational Institute in Badgastein.

The **BÖCKSTEIN SWORD DANCERS** however already formed their own group in 1979. They deserve our thanks for the annual staging of the **BÖCKSTEIN FOLK AND MINERS FESTIVAL** since then, with a country fair, miners' procession, the performing of the historic sword dance etc, in short for the revival of the mining custom, which has become a new tradition in the valley. Original text was by Fritz GRUBER and Peter SIKÄ

The web site Bob refers to can be found at <http://members.eunet.at/radhausberg/neu12/schwertanz.html> - it includes a number of photographs of the team.

Sword Dance Festival in Balingen (Germany)

June 8th to 15th 1999

a report by Renaat Van Craenenbroeck

It was during a trip at Easter with Trevor Stone to Traunstein in Bavaria in order to discover and observe a 70-year old sword dance tradition that we learned about a sword-dance festival to be held in Balingen, near Stuttgart in Germany. It was 25 years since the local group "Volkstanzgruppe Frommern" first presented a reconstruction of a German hilt-and-point sword dance and so they decided to organise a Sword Dance Festival to celebrate. The group is very active in research and owns a proper "Volkskunsthau" (House of Popular Art) in one of the smaller villages in the neighbourhood of Balingen. The "driving spirit" of the group is Manfred Stingel, author of various books on local folklore.

Phone calls resulted in the receipt of a very well presented Festival programme, containing a number of interesting photographs. However, some items in the programme made me a little bit suspicious. There was a Welsh group doing a rapper dance; an art-dance ensemble from Abchazia; and (to me at least) an unknown Flemish group ... Nevertheless I decided to visit the festival as I was intrigued by the involvement of Croatian and Austrian groups.

Arriving on Friday evening I was received in a very friendly way by the organisers and during the visit I made some German and Croatian friends. The most important show of the festival was planned for the Friday evening and on Saturday the groups were to dance in the pedestrianised streets. I will not spend too many words describing the performance of the Abchazian art-dance ensemble "Kaukasus", who performed a predictable show which involved throwing knives here and there, sticking them in the wooden floor and miming fights. Nor will I spend much effort on the "Ensemble Folklor of Istanbul", who presented a reconstruction of "the tactical training of the Osman Army in the 14th to 17th centuries". Again the dancers mimed combat sessions involving movements said to be done for military training.

The Welsh group "Cwmni Dawns Werin Caerdydd" performed an English rapper dance, led by a captain who called the figures - in Welsh! They confided to me that they learnt this dance especially for the Festival. They are a social dance group who usually specialise in Welsh dances. Something similar was the case with the Flemish group "Ossaart", who gave a good performance of a Flemish created sword dance "De Zevenster" (but to my taste it suffered from too much English influence) and of the stick-and-hoop "Trawantel" dance.

The German organising group "Volkstanzgruppe Frommern" gave me a shock with a performance by the younger members of the group who reconstructed a sword dance, "as described by Tacitus"! Tacitus mentions naked youths dancing between sword points but these youngsters were (happily) only half-naked! I found it too silly, a kind of folk circus, best forgotten. The elder members of the group gave a very good performance with two teams dancing a version of the hilt-and-point sword dance that was choreographed by Richard Wolfram in 1957. Surprising, but in a positive way, were the Austrians. The "Volkstanzgruppe Sankt Martin im Suimtal" displayed a miner's dance: a reconstruction, choreographed in 1937, of the hilt-and-point sword dance of Ebensee. The very quiet rhythm and subdued movements are unexpected in a sword dance and their black costumes give their dance a most distinctive character.

I was also interested in the performance of the Galician group "Gaiteros da Xistra", who presented the "Farsa de Carril". This is not really a sword dance as we know it: only the front men of each of three lines carry a sword which they hold by the hilt whilst the points of these three swords are held by the captain who precedes the dancers and issues instructions about the dance figures. A

red rope is held in their right hand which links the dancers in their lines. All dancers behind the front men play the castanets with their other hand. This dance was (is still?) danced in the religious procession on the day of the local saint, Saint Jacob. There isn't a definite number of participants in the dance but the number has to be uneven. The accompaniment is typical Galician music with drums and bagpipes.

It was the Croatian group "Kompanija Pupnat", from the island of Korcula, which was the most interesting for me. On the island there are four other groups who perform a hilt-and-point sword dance and a further two groups who do a Moreška (which is a sword dance of the fight mimicking type). Up to recent times nothing was known about the hilt-and-point dances of the island (there is no mention of the dances in Steve Corrsin's book - *Sword Dancing in Europe: A History*). Their dance was really impressive, mixing conventional hilt-and-point figures with some mimicked combat. The very simple, repetitive tune involved a bagpipe in combination with a drumbeat which gives a very "antique" sound. The dance is usually part of the Carnival festivities in the village of Pupnat and involves, beside the dancers, a lot of supplementary characters: a king, judges, lawyers, a doctor, etc... The current team is responsible for the revival of the dance.

On Saturday afternoon the "Überlinger Schwertanzkompanie" performed their sword dance. I didn't see them dance as I had to return home to vote (Voting is obligatory in Belgium!)

I regret that I didn't have more time to make contact with the teams, but I was happy to discover the Austrian and Galician teams, and even more delighted by the Croatian group. Thanks to "Volkstanzgruppe Frommern" and their leader Manfred Stingel for organising this very interesting event that attracted a lot of interest and was well attended by local people. It gave an excellent idea of the immense variety of sword dances in Europe.

Renaat Van Craenenbroeck, December 1999

Spen Valley's 25th birthday...

Spen Valley Longsword were founded in 1974 - that makes them considerably older than many of the Cleveland teams which proliferated in the 1930's. Their birthday celebration, on December 11th at a pub in Gomersal was a relaxed and enjoyable affair with much swapping of stories from the past and not a little wonderment at the young men depicted in the team's early scrapbooks.



Spen Valley Longsword at the Whitby Competitive Dance Festival in 1976.

L to R Kneeling: Keith Pearson (musician), Dave Bradford, Rob Bradford, John Browell (musician). Back row: Trevor Stone, Glyn Jones, Brian Gilbert, Russ Fleming.

Plans for a Sword dance web site

I mentioned in the last issue that Renaat Van Craenenbroeck and I had discussed the possibility of creating an Internet site. At our last meeting we put together some ideas for a sword dance site which would provide an introduction to beginners and a base for people with a developing interest in sword dance rather than add to the masses of out-of-date sites to be found on the web. I see it more as a meeting place to exchange information than an electronic magazine. However, the suggestion attracted considerable comment - most of it dealing with the difficulties of ensuring current information and keeping the site going after the initial enthusiast had moved on.

We will have another meeting at Lange Wapper's Half Lent event and will no doubt have a clearer idea of what we will (and will not) do. We are still seeking someone who is willing to help with the technical bits. If anyone is interested get in touch - by e-mail if you wish: jtstone@globalnet.co.uk.

Apologies to White Star Sword

In my haste to send out the list of Christmas and New Year dance events I was (again) guilty of not checking my typing. This time I gave the incorrect details for White Star Sword - apologies to Brian Tasker (who supplied the correct information) and to anyone who made a fruitless journey.

Whitby Competitive Dance Festival

Over recent years the Whitby Competitive Festival, on the go since the 1920's, has suffered from a shortage of entries. In my view it would be a great shame if this distinctive event were to fail. Can you persuade a team (not just sword dance) to take part? If so contact the Bookings Secretary, Mrs May Beeforth, 21 Kirkham Close, Whitby YO21 1JR phone 01947 604 203. This year's festival is on Saturday, April 8th.

I understand from Brian Pearce (leader of the Redcar team) that he hopes that the Redcar Sword Dancers will attend this year for the first time in over 15 years.

Flamborough Sword plan their first overseas trip

The Flamborough team have set to with enthusiasm in preparing for their planned visit to be guests of Lange Wapper at their traditional Half Lent event in Antwerp. Radio and press coverage has generated local interest and an Open Night was well attended by people from the village. In addition to boosting funds this evening also resulted in a lot of information, previously unpublished, about the history of the team since Cecil Sharp's visit in 1911. I think an article may come describing the planning and the event itself.

The Half Lent event in Antwerp is on April 2nd.

In De Kring to visit Handsworth

It is rewarding to hear of ongoing friendships between teams created as a result of contacts made at one of the international sword events (1996 and 1998).

The Handsworth team joined In De Kring for an event in Dunkirk last year and the French team has been invited to South Yorkshire by Handsworth. The get together will be held on the late (June) Bank Holiday weekend. Unfortunately this has meant that In De Kring will not be attending the Sword Spectacular.

First issue in new series - subs due

This is the first issue (three more to come) in series 9 - if you haven't already done so you should re-subscribe now. It would also be very helpful if other readers did as Gordon Ridgewell regularly does and suggest the names of possible new subscribers (I will follow up with free copies etc.). The future of the publication is on a knife edge with costs outstripping income by approx £30 for each issue - six or seven more individual subs. or three extra team subs. would safeguard the immediate future.

The new survey

Readers will recall that in January 1999 I issued a questionnaire which was intended as an update in the surveys which have been held at ten yearly intervals since 1979. Regrettably the response this time has been very disappointing and I have neither the time nor the inclination to chase up the non-responders.

Thanks to the teams who did reply -

Ashvale Longsword	Lord Conyers Morris
Carlisle Morris and Sword	North British Rapper
Coventry Morris	Old Star Morris
Goathland Plough Stots	Ryburn Longsword
Green Ginger Morris	Seven Stars Sword and Step Dancers
Highside Longsword	White Boys of Mann
Belmont School (Sexy Sword Squad)	

The returns sent in by these teams will be added to the earlier records and (when they have more space available) lodged at Cecil Sharp House.

Sword dancing in India

Wendy Price, one time musician for Spen Valley Longsword, is one of an army (a small but enthusiastic army) of people who pass on news and comment of teams they come across when travelling abroad, usually when on holiday.

Wendy's sighting was very unusual - whilst on a work project in India she came across a sword dance team, thought to be known as "The Kashmir Scouts" who performed an unmistakable version of a sword dance.

Wendy, who has returned to India for some months, has promised to supply more details, including photographs, when she returns to the UK.

Pete Coe's work at Boosbeck

A card from Pete Coe amongst my Christmas cards caught my attention - not only did it show a large group of school children (with swords) from Lockwood Primary School, Boosbeck where Pete has worked to revive the village dance, it also showed what appears to be a boys sword dance team which Pete captions as "The Sweepers Sword Team, Ganaktulir, Dhaka, Bangladesh". I plan to enquire if Pete has any more details about these two groups.

Workshop leaders needed

Ivor Allsop, a regular workshop leader at the Whitby Folk Week (and many other events) has decided to call it a day. He finds that workshop commitments interfere with his plans for trips around the country and more adventurous tours of North America. The workshops he has agreed to do at the Sword Spectacular this May may well be the last he will agree to.

Since moving to Driffield I have limited my commitments, preferring to use my limited free time watching teams. So we need a new generation of Longsword workshop leaders to take over.

The shortage of workshop leaders was drawn to my attention by an enquiry asking for a recommendation of a leader for the Longsword workshops for the next Whitby Folk Festival. If you think that you can fit the bill (in return for tickets - no fees!) contact Ross McKinlay on 0191 274 4837 who is making the arrangements

Sad news

It was sad to have to report some months ago of the demise of the Loftus Sword Dancers. It is even sadder to learn of the sudden death in early February of the team's long time leader.

Malcolm Gratton was leader of the Loftus team when I first came across them and it was he who drove the team to a high level of performance. I hope to encourage someone to supply an appreciation of his impressive work.

World Millennium Sword Spectacular

At last - the committee organising the Sword Spectacular has got around a number of problems and has supplied the following details about the event:

(The following (heavily edited) report from Vince Rutland is based on a handout, sent a few weeks ago, to RUMB subscribers. One or two overseas teams have pulled out because of uncertainty, other commitments and other reasons.)

Overseas teams who have accepted are

- Boerke Naas, St.Niklaas, Belgium
- Lange Wapper, Antwerp, Belgium
- Baden-Württemberg Sword Dancers, Germany
- Bal do Sabre, Bagnasco, Italy
- *Kompanija Pupnat, Croatia
- *Volkstanzgruppe St. Martin im Sulmtal, Austria
- Markinako Zerutxu, Markina-Xemein, Basque Country, Spain
- *Kemen Dantza Taldea, Irun, Basque Country, Spain
- Podsable, Komna, Czech Republic
- Bobkovnici, Bystrice pod Lopenikem, Czech Republic
- Orion Sword, Boston, Mass., USA
- *Velocirapper, Boston, Mass., USA

Teams marked * have not previously been to the UK.

Whitby, North Yorkshire 26th - 29th May 2000

This is your invitation to be a part of a unique event - it's going to be great and there probably won't be another chance, so book now!

ABOUT OUR FESTIVAL:

The Sword Spectacular will take place from Friday 26th May to Monday 29th May 2000, in and around historic Whitby, North Yorkshire.

Over 40 sword dance groups from 10 countries as far afield as Europe and North America have enjoyed the Festivals of 1996 and 1998. For 2000 the Bagnasco team will be making the weekend trek from Italy for the third time - that's how good they think it is!

WHERE YOU COME IN:

The Sword Spectacular is unique, you sponsor it. Over half of your ticket money goes towards looking after overseas dancers. We also receive help from Scarborough Borough Council and rely on street collections and other support to make the festival happen. For the Millennium event we want the best line up of overseas groups - and this doesn't come cheap.

HISTORIC WHITBY:

Whitby is an excellent and friendly home to the Festival. A sea port for hundreds of years, the town was once the home of famous explorer Captain James Cook. Whitby is also close to the beautiful countryside of the North York Moors National Park.

The World Millennium Sword Spectacular Festival will be based at the Pavilion Entertainments Complex throughout the weekend. This superb centre is close to the centre of town. Other performances take place in the open air throughout the town and in the surrounding area.

ACCOMMODATION:

Our accommodation opens on Friday 26th May at the Whitby Community College about half a mile from the town centre. In addition to camping we may be able to offer limited indoor camping (subject to a small additional charge). Visitors who prefer more comfortable accommodation should contact Whitby Tourist Information Centre on 01947 602674. When the Festival closes on Monday, 29th May (informal dancing in Goathland) you may wish to take advantage of reduced price bed & breakfast accommodation

CATERING:

Moor & Coast catering tent will be at the campsite throughout the weekend. Snacks are also available at the Pavilion. Or take your choice from Indian, Chinese and Italian cuisine plus incomparable fish and chips.

The Programme

Friday May 26th: Dancing in and around Whitby during the day. In the evening we will gather at Whitby Community College, our campsite for the weekend. As dancers arrive an informal "get-to-know-you" session will take place (with a bar of course!). If you were at Scarborough '96 or Whitby '98, you'll recall the fantastic evening atmosphere as dancers arrived from across Europe and the UK - and then proceeded to let their hair down.

Saturday May 27th: Dancing in Whitby and the surrounding area; we hope to offer everyone a short coach tour on either the Saturday or Sunday. Individual ticket holders can join these tours (included in the ticket price) - but you must book your tickets for the tour of your choice at the Festival Office on arrival. Tickets are subject to space being available.

On Saturday evening there will be a gathering of representatives of all dance groups hosted by the Mayor. A Late Night Ceilidh follows at the Pavilion (we've provisionally booked Whapweasel) - including guest dance displays by some teams.

Sunday May 28th: Teach your dances or learn those of other groups in our Workshop Sessions on Sunday morning, or attend one of the fascinating talks at our Sword Dance Conference.

Most sword dancers avoid processions but the one we organised in 1998 was widely acclaimed as the hit of the Festival - so we're doing it again. This will be followed by performances in and around Whitby. In the evening, there will be an indoor Gala Concert where all those groups still present will demonstrate their sword dancing skills. This will be followed by the Late Night Extra, with informal social dancing for all festival goers.

Monday May 29th: Our weekend will officially close with dancing in Goathland where sword dancing has taken place for centuries.

TICKET PRICES:

Remember that most of your money is sponsorship, going towards the cost of the overseas teams. All tickets include free camping and use of the Whitby Community College facilities. All-inclusive Adult Weekend Ticket includes coach travel on tours, workshops, conference and admission to concerts, ceilidh and craft fair and costs £26 (Junior £13). Junior rates are for children aged 10-16; children aged 9 and under are free BUT MUST HAVE A TICKET. NEW FOR 2000! A Family Ticket is available giving two Adult and up to four Junior tickets for £60. Day Tickets are available at £13.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

phone or write to:- The Festival Secretary, Vince Rutland, 37, Church View, Brompton, NORTHALLERTON, North Yorkshire DL6 2QX ENGLAND phone: 01609 780536 e-mail: rutlandsv@netscapeonline.co.uk Please note this is a NEW E-MAIL ADDRESS

This is the first issue in the 9th series - there has been a good response to a call for renewals but more subscriptions are needed to safeguard the future of the publication.

The next issue will contain a report on the World Sword Spectacular 2000 and a listing of folk dance venues and dates in Gipuzkoa Province, Spain. Hopefully there will be more about the decision by Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers to re-include the Roils figure plus a report by Gordon Ridgewell on The Forgotten Morris photograph.

Contributions are welcome ...

Copyright of all photographs, articles and other material used in this publication rests with the author or, in some cases, with the team or performer(s) involved. Where relevant, permission must be obtained before submitting material to RUMB. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily represent the views of the publisher. Reasonable efforts are made to check the accuracy of material published but I cannot be responsible for errors.