



# RATTLE UP My Boys

AN OCCASIONAL BROADSHEET FOR THOSE  
WITH AN INTEREST IN LONGSWORD DANCE

Series 3 Issue 4 Spring & Summer 1992

## SURVEY OF LONGSWORD DANCE TEAMS 1979 to 1989

This issue brings the long delayed article based on the results of the sword dance questionnaires referred to in previous issues. This time the delays cannot be blamed on "pressure of work".

The main problem has been to obtain a sufficiently high level of response to provide meaningful results. Analysis of results received by the date the project officially "closed" (March 1990) involved too few responses and it was necessary to re-approach many teams. I am aware that the Secretaries of many teams are overburdened by their duties - one complained to me of the time it took to "fight off the invitations to garden parties". The work involved in completing a detailed questionnaire was therefore an added burden. However, anyone who has carried out research will appreciate what an excellent base such material can provide. Visual ephemera such as minute books and scrap books disappear and so material such as was gleaned by these questionnaires becomes doubly important. In spite of the follow-up nine teams did not reply (perhaps they no longer exist) and one Secretary refused to complete a form.

### Background

Questionnaires were sent out in 1979, 1981, 1986 (by Cindy Sughrue) and 1989. With hindsight a higher degree of consistency between each of these surveys would have improved usefulness and, given the chance, I would certainly change a number of the questions asked. However, my purpose was to gather general information about Longsword teams rather than carry out formal research. It is especially interesting to compare the first and latest surveys as they are a decade apart.

The details of the first two surveys (1979 and 1981) were combined into a report which was made available to interested parties in the Summer of 1982. A third survey was carried out by Cindy Sughrue in 1986 as part of her work on a Masters degree.

The English Folk Dance and Song Society, the Morris Ring and some teams and individuals helped with circulation of questionnaire forms but have not been involved with the funding of the project. The method of issuing the various surveys differed. The 1979 survey was sent out with Morris Ring material. For the 1989 questionnaire 95 forms were mailed direct to teams already known to me, 600 forms were supplied to the Morris Ring for distribution to their mailing list, approx 200 forms were distributed with "The Morris Dancer" and further forms were made available at various workshops and Festivals. Copies of the survey forms are available to interested parties.

Some information was added from personal knowledge and telephone enquiries about teams who did not return their questionnaires. I am particularly grateful to Ivor Allsop for checking and amending the proofs of this report and identifying some more recent changes - for example he pointed out that Phoenix Sword (of Loughborough) have folded in the last few months.

Information from overseas teams (from Boerke Naas, Belgium; Baden Wurtemberg, Germany; Hong Kong Morris; Half Moon Sword, USA; Helmond Morris, Holland; Lange Wapper, Belgium and Strani, Czechoslovakia) has been omitted from the report.

### Observations

In the years covered by the surveys some trends can be detected. The number of teams performing Longsword has increased. In 1979/81 the figure was 68, in 1989 the figure was at least 87 - with recent "fatalities" it has dropped to 85. This increase is mainly in Morris teams dancing Longsword as a secondary part of their repertoire.

15 new teams, or existing teams who adopted Longsword, are recorded by the 1989 survey but 8 teams have folded, some before they became properly established. The number of teams dancing Longsword exclusively has increased by four.

The number of members per team now averages 11 dancers. This has increased by approx 10% since 1979 but wide differences are reported by teams, some are well off for numbers and others are restricted by not having enough. One team, Lilford Longsword, report that they recruited a woman dancer rather than fold when a dancer left the area. More teams have added new members than have reported a loss of membership (one team has added 6 new members - a 50% increase).

A question on distance travelled to the practice venue was introduced in 1986 in Cindy's survey. By 1989 there was a drop in the mileage travelled. Leaving out the exceptions (one team claimed that a member travelled over 100 miles to practice) the overall trend is for teams to draw their manpower (in sword dancing men outnumber women by a large proportion) from a smaller geographical area.

The occupations of those involved in Longsword dancing have changed somewhat over the years. The trend is away from the professions with over 15% involved in manual and blue collar occupations. There are less Teachers and Educators involved in 1989 than in 1979 although, together with Engineers and Chemists these groups continue to dominate. A number of those who completed the survey forms commented on the "middle class" bias in their teams. One team includes seven Computer Operators on its roll.

In 1989 there were double the number of Retired dancers than in 1979 and Unemployed dancers now show on the results. This increase in members who do not have a regular wage or salary will obviously impact on a team's ability to travel to events.

The average age of those involved in Longsword dancing has increased from 34 in 1979 to 36½ in 1989 however in many teams there is an increase in the number of dancers under 30. There is no change in the number of junior or school teams although none of the surveys set out to separately identify youth teams.

There are more "mixed sex" teams performing Longsword (three - Ashvale, Lilford and Waterside compared with only Ashvale in 1979) but the number of "women only" teams remains at two - Corn Dollies and Frithwoods. Sword dancing has not proven as popular with women's teams as has Cotswold or North West.

The need to provide a "show" appears to influence teams' repertoires. Many are performing more than one dance type. For example Handsworth now perform their own dance, one other Longsword dance (a version of Salton) and Cotswold Morris. There is an increase in teams choosing the "popular" dances (North Skelton, Flamborough and Ampleforth). "Unknowns", such as Riccall and Stillingfleet now appear on the list as some teams look for different or unusual dances. To the best of my knowledge there are currently no teams dancing the Askham Richard, Skelton Green or Lingdale dances. And why is it that teams will do "cover versions" of the Grenoside, Goathland and Flamborough "traditional" dances but not the Loftus dance?

In 1989 the adult "Longsword only" teams are thought to be Flamborough, Goathland, Grenoside, Highside, Kirkburton, Lilford, Loftus, Phoenix, Redcar, Shetland (Papa Stour), Spen Valley, Sullivan's, Waterside, and if they still exist, White Lion Longsword - four more than in 1979.

**Table 1**  
THE TEAMS DANCING LONGSWORD IN 1979

- 68 teams danced Longsword
- 10 teams performed Longsword exclusively
- 18 teams performed Longsword regularly
- 40 teams performed Longsword occasionally

Directly comparable figures are not available for 1989 but the total number of teams thought to be currently performing Longsword exceeds 85 teams.

**Table 2**  
TEAMS DANCING LONGSWORD  
(REGULARLY OR EXCLUSIVELY)

- ✓ Teams which appeared on the 1979 survey
- added at the 1986 or 1989 surveys
- ☒ Teams which have folded or abandoned Longsword
- \* junior teams      ??????? teams current existence (or details) uncertain

Name of Team	Longsword Dances performed	Other dance interests
✓ Adlington Morris	Kirkby Malzeard and Helmsley	Cotswold
✓ Anlaby Morris/Sword*	Flambr'gh & North Skelton	Cotswold
• Ashvale Longsword (Hertfordshire)	Own composition and Salton	Broom dance
✓ Banachory Ternan Morris (Grampian)	Papa Stour	Cotswold & Rapper
• Barnsley Longsword	Kirkby Malzeard & Haxby	Rapper
☒ Beaver Sword*(Beverley)	North Skelton	
✓ Beltane Rapper (Edinburgh)	Ampleforth (inc play)	Rapper
✓ Bentfleet Hoymen (Southend)	Kirkby Malzeard,	Cotswold
☒ Black Cap Sword (Derby)	Stillingfleet	Rapper
• Bishop Gundulfs (Rochester)	?????????	?????????
• Boars Head Morris (Bradfd)	Flamborough	Cotswold
✓ Bristol????	North Skelton	Playford & Country
✓ Broadwood Morris (Crawley)	North Skelton	Cotswold
☒ Broken Cross Sword	????????????	Rapper
✓ Carlisle Sword	Papa Stour, Flamborough and Cumberland	Cotswold
• Caedmun School* (Whitby)	Sleights	Cotswold
✓ Castleford Longsword	Escrick, Boosbeck and Riccall	Rapper

• Churchwardens Morris (Devon)	?????????	Cotswold
✓ Claro Sword (Harrogate)	North Skelton, Kirkby Malzeard and Ampleforth	Cotswold
✓ Clitheroe Morris	Practicing Flamborough	North West
✓ Colchester Morris <sub>2</sub>	Kirkby Malzeard	Cotswold
✓ Corn Dollies (Women) (Reigate)	North Skelton	Cotswold, NWest and Playford
• Coventry Morris	?????????	Cotswold
✓ Coventry Mummers	Escrick	Mumming
✓ Cup Hill Morris (Surrey)	North Skelton	Cotswold
✓ Datchet Morris <sub>3</sub> (nr Windsor)	North Skelton	Cotswold
✓ Duffy Sword (Manchester)	Ampleforth, Papa Stour and North Skelton	Cotswold & Rapper
✓ Eagle Yard Sword (Cambridge)	Kirkby Malzeard	Rapper
✓ East Saxon Sword (East London)	Greatham, Ampleforth and Kirkby Malzeard	Rapper
• East Suffolk Morris	North Skelton	Cotswold & Border
✓ Ebor Morris (York)	Escrick & Poppleton	Cotswold
✓ Flamborough Sword	Own dance	
(E) ✓ Friarmere <sub>4</sub> (Saddleworth)	Loosely based on Escrick	North West
✓ Frithwoods (Women) (Buxton)	Flamborough	"Clog"
• Furness Morris (Cumbria)	North Skelton	Cotswold & NWest
✓ Goathland (Seniors) Plough Stots	Own dance	
✓ Goathland (Youths) Plough Stots	Own dance	
✓ Green Ginger Morris (Hull)	Goathland and Ampleforth	Cotswold, Rapper and Border
✓ Green Mans Morris (Birmingham)	North Skelton and Papa Stour	Cotswold
✓ Greensleeves Morris <sub>5</sub> (London)	North Skelton Figs 2 & 3	Cotswold
✓ Grenoside	Own dance	
✓ Guisborough Sword*	Boosbeck	
✓ Hagneth Morris (Norfolk)	"one dance"	Cotswold & Border
✓ Handsworth	Own dance and Salton	Cotswold
☒ Heworth Cedars* (York)	Haxby & Poppleton	
• Houghton Rapper	?????????	Rapper
• Jockey Men's Morris (Birmingham)	North Skelton and Kirkby Malzeard	Cotswold
☒ Keele Rapper	"Variant on Barnsley"	Rapper
✓ Kesteven (Lincs)	North Skelton	Cotswold
✓ Killingworth Sword (Newcastle-upon-Tyne)	Grenoside and Flamb'gh	Rapper & N/W
• King Vortimers Sword (Chatham, Kent)	Sleights & Papa Stour	Rapper
✓ Kirkburton Rapier	Kirkburton Mk 1 & 2	
• Lilford Sword (Kettering)	North Skelton and Kirkby Malzeard	
✓ Loftus Sword	Own dance	
✓ Loftus Sword Boys*	Own dance	
• Lord Conyers Morris (Sheffield)	Own composition	Cotswold
✓ Lutterworth Morris	North Skelton	Cotswold
☒ Malton Longsword	Kirkbymoorside & Sleights	
✓ Matlets Sword & Morris (Chichester)	North Skelton & Flamb'gh	Cotswold
☒ Men of Sweyens Ey (Swansea)	North Skelton and Papa Stour (not in public)	Cotswold & Rapper
• Merrie England Mummers (East Sussex)	North Skelton	Mumming

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☒ Middleton Longsword (Beverley)	North Skelton, Helmsley and Flamborough	Rapper
✓ Milton Hall Morris* (Southend)	Helmsley	Cotswold?
✓ Monkseaton Morris <sub>6</sub> (Whitley Bay)	Ampleforth and Flamb'gh	Cotswold & Rapper
✓ Newcastle Kingsmen	Grenoside and Flamb'gh	Rapper & NW
☒ Phoenix Sword <sub>7</sub> (Loughborough)	Sleights & Bellerby	
• Plymouth Morris	North Skelton	Cotswold
✓ Ravensbourne Morris <sub>8</sub> (Kent)	based on North Skelton	Cotswold
✓ Redcar Sword	Greatham and North Skelton	
☒ Roding Valley Morris (Ilford)	practicing Ampleforth	Cotswold
• Rombolds Mummers (Ilkley)	Bellerby & Ampleforth	Mumming
✓ Royal Liberty Morris <sub>9</sub> (Hornchurch, Essex)	Escrick	Cotswold, Border and Rapper
✓ Sadlers Hall ?????? (Leeds University)	Flamborough	Rapper
✓ Sallyport Sword	?????????	Rapper
☒ Scarborough Sword???	Boosbeck and Flamborough	
✓ *Shetland team*	Papa Stour (the sole team on the Islands)	
✓ Southport Swords	North Skelton (6 figures) and Papa Stour	Cotswold
✓ Spen Valley Longsword (Cleckheaton)	Helmsley, North Skelton and Flamborough	
✓ Stevenage Sword	Greatham	Rapper
• Stockton Morris	????????????	Cotswold & Rapper
✓ Sullivan's Sword (Nottingham)	Sleights, Ampleforth, Escrick and Helmsley	
✓ Sussex Weavers?	Flamborough	Rapper
✓ Thanet Morris	North Skelton	Cotswold
• Waterside Longsword (Hythe, Hants)	Ampleforth	
✓ Wessex Morris	North Skelton	Cotswold & Rapper
✓ Wessex Wassailers	North Skelton	Mumming
✓ West Somerset Morris	Papa Stour (not in public)	Cotswold & Border
✓ Whitby Boys*	Kirkby Malzeard	Cotswold
various junior teams taught by Joe Brown		
• White Lion Longsword (Ivinghoe)	Greatham	
☒ White Rose Morris (Huddersfield)	Flamborough	Cotswold
• White Boys of Mann (Isle of Mann)	White Boys	Manx traditions
• White Star Sword (Kent)	????????????????	Rapper
✓ Winster Morris	Flamborough & Sleights	Winster tradition
• Yateley Morris (Surrey)	Poppleton, North Skelton and Kirkbymoorside	Cotswold & NWest
✓ Yorkshire Coast Morris (Scarborough)	Sleights, Poppleton and Boosbeck	Cotswold
☒ York Castle*	Haxby and Poppleton	Cotswold
• Yorkshire Gentlemen (York)	????????????	??????????

Team data has been included in the above list based on the first report I have from them - a number have since folded or changed their dance repertoire and these teams have been omitted from the summary in table 3.

Independent junior teams (for the purpose of this survey under 16 years old) currently exist at Anlaby, Caedmon School (Whitby), Goathland, Guisborough, Loftus and Whitby.

#### NOTES SUPPLIED BY TEAMS

1. Re-adopted Longsword (Helmsley) circa 1984; danced Longsword for many years previously
2. Have danced Longsword for 54 years (in 1989); details came from CSH classes
3. Have danced Longsword for 20 years (in 1989)
4. Changed their name to Lordsmere circa 1987

5. Have danced Longsword for over 50 years (in 1989). Claim to be first team in England to dance Papa Stour
6. Learnt the dance from the 1950's Ampleforth revival team
7. Added Bellerby dance prior to 1989
8. Have danced Longsword for 33 years (in 1989); info from G Metcalfe
9. Details from Dick Shepherd (ex Grenoside)

**Table 3**

### THE LONGSWORD DANCES PERFORMED

Dance	1979	1989
North Skelton	20	26
Flamborough	14	16
Ampleforth	10	11
Kirkby Malzeard	10	10
Papa Stour	7	6
Escrick	6	6
Helmsley	4	4
Grenoside	4	3
Greatham	3	4
"Variants"	3	2
Sleights	3	4
Boosbeck	2	3
Poppleton	2	3
Goathland	2	3
Own composition	2	4
Bellerby	1	2
Handsworth	1	2
Haxby	1	1
Kirkbymoorside	1	1
Loftus	1	2
Stillingfleet	-	1
Salton	-	2
Riccall	-	1
Unknown	2	8

This information includes dances reported by teams as "not performed in public" but omits details of dances from teams known to have died out.

The figures for both Goathland and Loftus include their junior teams.

**Table 4**

### OTHER DANCE INTERESTS IN 1979

- 15 teams also dance Rapper
- 32 teams also dance Cotswold
- 6 teams also dance North West
- One team each danced Border, Playford, Country dance, Broom dance and one "other".
- 2 ladies teams and one mixed team danced Longsword.

**Table 5**

### CHANGES SINCE 1979 TO TEAMS DANCING LONGSWORD

- Adlington Morris - re-adopted Longsword in 1984
- Ashvale Longsword - founded in 1985
- Beaver Sword - junior team disbanded in 1981
- Black Cap Morris - added Longsword in 1984, disbanded in 1990
- Boars Head Morris - added Longsword in 1982
- Broken Cross - founded and disbanded circa 1989
- Churchwardens Morris - added Longsword in 1986
- Grenoside - junior team disbanded circa 1982
- Eagle Yard Sword - disbanded circa 1989
- Highside Longsword - founded in 1987
- King Vortimers Sword - founded circa 1988
- Lilford Longsword - founded in 1985, became a mixed sex team in 1992
- Lord Conyers Morris - added Longsword in 1987
- Malton Longsword - founded in 1984 - disbanded in 1986
- Men of Sweyens Ey - dropped Longsword in 1982
- Middleton Longsword changed their name to Beverley Sword - disbanded circa 1986
- Mike Cook's junior teams (Heworth Cedars & York Castle) - founded in 1989 - disbanded in 1991
- Phoenix Sword - disbanded in 1992



Roding Valley Morris - disbanded in 1991  
 Sadler Hall (Leeds University) - not heard of since 1987  
 Scarborough Sword - not heard of since 1980  
 White Boys of Mann - founded in 1989  
 White Rose Morris - danced Longsword to circa 1980  
 White Star Sword founded in 1986

**Table 6**  
**NUMBER OF DANCERS, AGES, YEARS DANCING AND DISTANCE TO PRACTICE VENUE**

(regular members of selected teams from the 1989 survey)

Team	No of dancers and + or -	Average age	Years danced	Miles travelled to practice
Adlington Morris	16	32	8½	4
Ashvale Sword	14	43	2½ <sub>1</sub>	17
Carlisle Sword	10	36	6	17
Churchwardens Morris	25 +10	-	-	-
Claro Sword	20 +3	45	8½	5½
East Saxon Sword	10	35	12½	15½
Furness Morris	20	49½	13½	9
Goathland Plough Stots	12	37	11½	3 <sub>2</sub>
Handsworth Sword	20	42	14	5½
Highside Sword	10	38	1½ <sub>1</sub>	5
Kirkburton Rapier	12	40	9	7½
Lilford Longsword	7	43	3½	9½
Lord Conyers Morris	12 +3	39½	10½	6
Southport Swords	23 +4	35½	8½	7½
Sullivans Sword	10	35½	7½	6
White Star Sword	9 -3	34	2 <sub>1</sub>	4½

**NOTES**

1. New teams
2. One extra man brings this figure up to 8 miles

**Table 7**  
**OCCUPATIONS OF MEMBERS OF SELECTED TEAMS**

teams selected at random from the 1989 survey

Education	Count	Percentage
Teachers/Lecturers etc	41	17.8%
Full time students	12	5.2%
<b>Public Servants</b>		
Police, Post etc	14	6%
Nursing/Social work	9	3.9%
<b>Professions</b>		
Engineers	15	6.5%
Architects/Draughtsmen	10	4.3%
Chemists/Scientists	18	7.8%
General professionals	2	0.8%
Computers	13	5.6%
Media	8	3.5%
Management/Clerical	16	6.9%
Tax/Customs/Legal	11	4.8%
<b>Blue Collar</b>		
Farming	4	1.7%
Various manual	29	12.6%
Craftsmen	4	1.7%
<b>Retail</b>		
Sales etc	12	5.2%
<b>Retired</b>		
	9	3.9%
<b>Unemployed</b>		
	7	3.0%

**Table 8**  
**TEAMS WHO ARE THOUGHT TO DANCE LONGSWORD BUT UPDATED INFORMATION IS NEEDED**

These teams could not be contacted, did not reply, or did not give sufficient detail, but some are likely to perform Longsword dances. Current information is needed.

- Addison Rapper & Clog - Tyne & Wear
- Beltane Rapper - Scotland
- Bishop Gundulfs - Rochester
- Carn Brae Morris - Cornwall
- Corn Dollies (Women) - Kent
- Deva Morris & Sword - Chester
- Duffy Men - Manchester
- Eagle Yard Sword - Cambridge
- Foresters Morris & Sword - Nottinghamshire
- Frithwoods Ladies Sword & Clog - Derbyshire
- Green Ginger Morris Men - East Yorkshire
- Guisborough Sword Dancers - Cleveland
- Hageneth Morris Men - Norfolk
- Izaak Waltons Rapper - Staffordshire
- Kesteven Morris - Lincolnshire
- Killingworth Sword Dancers - Tyne & Wear
- King Vortimers Sword - Chatham, Kent
- Lutterworth Morris - Leics
- Malvern Longsword - Worcs
- Martlet Sword & Morris - West Sussex
- Merrie England Mummers - East Sussex
- Rombalds Mummers - West Yorkshire
- Royal Liberty Morris Men
- Sadler Hall (Leeds University) - West Yorkshire
- Stockton Morris Men - Tyne & Wear
- Test Longsword - Hants
- Wessex Morris Men - Dorset
- White Rose Morris - West Yorkshire
- White Star Sword Dancers - Kent
- Yateley Morris Men - Surrey
- Yorkshire Gentlemen's Longsword - York

**Conclusion**

The information presented in this report is far from ideal - some of its detail is unreliable and some is skewed by low response levels. My habit of adding known information about teams who did not reply may also have introduced bias. However, for all its shortcomings I hope the survey is of interest. I intend to continue the process at irregular intervals in future years. If any reader has any comments about the results and the way they are presented, or suggestions about improvements or questions that could be added to the survey form, I would be delighted to hear from you. Equally if anyone wants to help with the work involved in the project they would be welcomed with open arms.

Details of any new or defunct teams are most welcome.

Trevor Stone April 1992

**Contributions welcome....**

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Reasonable efforts are made to check the accuracy of material used and ensure that the author has the undisputed right to publish such material. However we rely heavily on authors to follow the usual conventions and obtain approval.

The next issue will carry the second part of the article on the Goathland Plough Stots that was started in Series 2, Issue 3. The article, which is illustrated by a number of new photos, takes the story of the team from the revival after the Second World War to the present day.

Be sure to let me know if you change your address.