

# RATTLE UP My Boys

AN OCCASIONAL BROADSHEET FOR THOSE  
WITH AN INTEREST IN LONGSWORD DANCE

Issue 1, Series 5 Autumn 1994

## 1992-93 North American Sword Dancing Survey

by Stephen D. Corrsin

Encouraged by the UK surveys reported in RUMB issue 4, series 3 Spring & Summer 1992 Steve Corrsin undertook a survey of the American sword dancing scene. The findings make interesting reading and I am particularly encouraged by the views Steve expresses in his summary. I found the American scene to be stimulating and free from some of the worst limitations which can be imposed in the name of tradition. My main concern was that such vibrant diversity may overpower the "real thing" - this risk was underlined when, during my visit, a woman dancer watched a minute or so of a video of the Shetland team performing Papa Stour (a

very popular dance in America) and announced that "they are doing it wrongly".

A major feature of the American scene, one might almost regard it as a fundamental part of their tradition, is that things change with regularity. It is therefore very interesting to have this record of the current situation. - *Editor*

In February-April 1992, I delivered 72 questionnaires to North American groups identified as performing long sword or rapper dances. They were identified or located through the American Morris Newsletter's 1991 and 1992 "Directories of Morris sides", the Country Dance & Song Society's group directories, an open letter to the Morris Dancing e-mail discussion group and personal contact at the 1992 Half Moon Sword Ale in New York City. I included

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*Stephen Corrsin researches European sword dances - he is the author of a useful bibliography published by EFDSS and is currently working on a book on the subject. Steve is shown here (holding the baby to the left of the lock) with the team he performs with "NEW WORLD SWORD" who, as well as English sword dances, also perform Continental sword dances.*



only groups that performed sword dances. I did not try to survey all Morris and related dance groups in North America to find others that performed sword dances. This was never, therefore, intended to be a comprehensive survey.

In May, 1993, I did some follow-up. I sent out surveys to ten additional teams, and to eight teams that I attempted to survey in 1992 (six of these eight had not responded, and two had responded but were just getting started as teams, so it seemed worthwhile to re-survey them). This follow-up turned up the news that several groups from the 1992 round that had not responded, either had given up sword dancing or had gone "belly-up" completely. In February-April, 1992, and May, 1993, I sent out 90 surveys to representatives of 82 groups. I have information on 61 of the 82 groups, or 74.4%. However, in a number of these cases the responses were merely, "defunct", "inactive," or "gave up sword dancing." There have been 49 more useful responses from teams which now perform sword dances.

This report will summarise the responses with respect to: geography, team type (men, women, mixed, or joint), membership, performance types and specific dances performed, and occasions for performance. I hope that it will be of interest, and will evoke more responses and lively discussions.

## 1. Responses

There were, in all, responses on 61 groups. Of these, 49 groups, which now perform sword dances, responding by returning questionnaires; five groups were "defunct" or "inactive" and seven were no longer doing sword dances.

### Active Teams that Returned Questionnaires:

#### United States of America

*Emperor Norton's Imperial Fire Brigade and Hose Company #2 (CA)*  
*Mayfield Morris and Sword (CA)*  
*Mystic Garland Morris and Sword (CT)*  
*New Haven Morris and Sword (CT)*  
*Rose and Thom Morris (CT)*  
*Foggy Bottom Morris (DC)*  
*Old Castle Morris and Garland (KS)*  
*Berea College and Country Dancers (KY)*  
*Fiddler's Reach Morris and Sword (ME)*  
*Chesapeake Sword (MD)*  
*Seneca Creek Sword (MD)*  
*Banbury Cross Morris (MA)*  
*Berkshire Morris (MA)*  
*Black Jokers (MA)*  
*Orion Sword (MA)*  
*Swift River Sword (MA)*  
*Thal Long Tall Sword (MA)*  
*Greenwood Morris and Sword (MI)*  
*Hole-in-the-Bog Mummies and Morris Dancers (MI)*  
*Assorted Nuts (MN)*  
*Individually Wrapped (MN)*  
*Ritual Drama Team (MN)*  
*Shortsword (MN)*  
*Vorpal Sword (MN)*  
*Prairie Waves Morris (NE)*  
*Griggstown Lock (NJ)*  
*Greenwich Morris Men (NY)*  
*Half Moon Sword (NY)*  
*Hillside Morris and Sword (NY)*  
*New World Sword (NY)*  
*Ribbonslell Rapper (NY)*  
*Six-in-Hand Sword (NY)*  
*Cutting Edge Sword Dancers (NC)*  
*Olenlangy Molley Morris and Sword (OH)*  
*Rhythm in Shoes (OH)*

*Steely Band Rapper (PA)*  
*Tenpenny Rapper Sword Dancers (TN)*  
*Green Bell Rapper (TX)*  
*Green Mountain Mummies (VT)*  
*Marlboro Morris and Sword (VT)*  
*Bluemont Morris (VA)*  
*Ten Penny Bil (WA)*  
*One Size Fits All Sword (WI)*

### Active Teams that Returned Questionnaires:

#### Canada

*Island Thyme Morris (BC)*  
*Tiddley Cove Morris and Sword (BC)*  
*Village Green Morris Men (MB)*  
*Forest City Morris and Sword (ON)*  
*Mall Mill Morris (ON)*  
*Thames Valley International (ON)*

### Other Responses of all Sorts

*Deer Creek Morris Men (CA) - don't sword dance*  
*Rocky Mountain Morris and Sword (CO) - inactive*  
*Step Sisters (CT) - defunct according to a member*  
*Rappscallion (MA) - defunct*  
*Wake Robin Morris (MA) - don't sword dance*  
*Ann Arbor Morris and Sword (MI) - don't sword dance*  
*Bells of the North (MN) - don't sword dance*  
*Minnesota Traditional Morris (MN) - don't sword dance*  
*Moonwood Morris (MN) - inactive*  
*Merrie Mac Morris (NH) - don't sword dance*  
*Albermarle Morris Men (VA) - don't sword dance*  
*Greenbush Flexible Sword Society (WI) - inactive*

No doubt a number of teams that occasionally present sword dances, or have just started doing so, were missed. The world of sword dancing in North America seems a volatile one, with teams appearing and disappearing in a brief period (though their names may live on in directories), or changing their repertoires and personnel.

As an example of this volatility, in two cases, responses came from the leaders of teams that were just being formed from scratch. It is not known how many teams included in the survey have since disbanded, or at least given up sword dancing; how many new ones have been formed; and how many existing teams may have performed sword dances for the first time.

## 2. Geographical Distribution

Grouped by region the 49 active and responding teams were distributed in this fashion:

<i>New England</i>	12
<i>Mid-Atlantic (NY to VA)</i>	12
<i>Great Lakes (with MN and ON)</i>	13
<i>West Coast (with BC)</i>	5
<i>Others: 1 each in Kansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Manitoba</i>	

While groups are spread across the USA and Canada, the largest concentrations can be found in the north-eastern states of the US, the Great Lakes states plus Minnesota, and the province of Ontario. West Coast teams are spread from the San Francisco Bay area to British Columbia. The plains and mountain states are sparsely represented, as is the south-eastern US. The New York, Minneapolis-St Paul, and Boston areas featured the largest concentrations of teams, with five based in New York, five in the Twin Cities, and three around Boston.

## 3. Team Types and Membership

Of the 49 teams one was founded in 1938 (Berea College Dancers), 14 in the 1970's, 27 in the 1980's and 8 in the 1990's. (Not all began sword dancing as soon as they were formed).

Eight of the teams are men only, eight are women only and 33 are mixed (men and women perform together) or joint teams (men and women in the same team but performing separately). On 45 of these 49 teams the responders stated that there were 492 active adult members, 219 men (44.5%) and 273 women (55.5%).

Only one team consisted of members predominantly in their twenties. Dancers were mainly in their thirties (225 or 45.7%) or forties (162 or 32.9%). This agrees with the observations of many that the community is creeping into middle age. However few were over fifty (40 or 8.1%). There were relatively few



*The interest in sword dancing in America extends to junior teams - the New York School team shown above performed a variant of North Skelton at the Grand Central Station as part of the 1990 Hall Moon Sword Ale. Hall Moon Sword, by organising the annual Sword Ale in New York (see RUMB Series 3, Issue 3 and Series 4, Issue 2 for more details), have contributed to the level of interest in sword dancing in the New York and Boston areas*

young members of these adult teams; 13 under twenty (2.6%), and 52 in their twenties (10.6%).

There were 4 youth teams, Old Castle (10 boys and 9 girls all high school students); the Berea College Dancers (45 students, 16 boys and 29 girls mostly under 20); Banbury Cross (14 school children, 4 boys and 10 girls) and Hillside (more than 60 students, evenly divided between boys and girls). I have heard of others in New England and the midwest. This data supports observations - that the sword dancing community is largely in its thirties and forties (with more grey hair, bald spots and knee braces). There are more female than male participants and mixed teams predominate.

A number of teams were uncertain whether to list their musicians as members and this leads to some inconsistencies.

Some teams restrict membership by sex, some by "invitation" and one mentioned auditions. Five referred to height requirements (one preferring shorter dancers).

Teams were also asked "Do you have restrictions on dancing with other sides?" to examine any potential problems similar to the one that existed in the UK. Only one team replied no to performing with mixed sides.

#### **4. Styles of Performance**

Nineteen of the 49 teams indicated that Cotswold Morris was their primary style, ten claimed Longsword, or Longsword with Mummers play, eleven stated Rapper, one claimed both Longsword and Rapper and one is "other sword" (they dance continental as well as English dances). The remaining seven were diverse including Northwest, garland, clogging and Border Morris. For secondary or occasional styles among teams which did not specialise in Longsword or Rapper, fifteen mentioned Longsword alone, four Rapper alone and six Longsword and Rapper. One mixed team who primarily dance Cotswold split with men dancing Rapper and women dancing Longsword.

Of the ten Longsword "specialists" one each mentioned Arbeau's Buffens, Abbots Bromley Horn Dance and the Flemish "Trawantel" dance, as secondary or occasional styles.

The survey asked which dances the teams do - the Longsword responses are clearer but Rapper responses are more likely to be vague or refer to "our own dance". Longsword dances are perceived and taught as complete dances whereas Rapper is likely to be "prefabricated".

Forty-three teams referred to a specific dance (some teams had more than one dance). The most popular was Ampleforth (7), followed by Papa Stour (5), North Skelton (4), Sleights (4), "our own" (4), Greatham (3), Haxby (3), Flamborough (2), Kirkby Malzeard (2), Loftus (2), Handsworth (2), and one each for Escrick, Grenoside, Askham Richard, Helmsley and "Cumbria" (based on a recently created dance by Carlisle Sword). One or two figures are danced by many teams from both the North Skelton and Sleights dances and these two dances are often used as a basis for "our own version".

The most common sources for learning the dance were Pinewoods Camp (17), Sharp's Sword Dances of Northern England (10), local dancer, teacher or "oral tradition" (11). Other references included camps, workshops, books, films and the Revels and specific teachers included Ivor Allsop, Andra Herzbrun Horton, Arthur Cornelius, Roy Dommett, Jim Morrison, Harry Pitts and Trevor Stone.

Of the 25 Rapper responses 10 mentioned "our own dance", others were Winlaton (3), Westerhope (2), Newbiggin (2) and one each mentioned "mostly Newbiggin", "based on Swalwell", Earsdon and Amble. No clear picture emerges - references are made to "all sources over the years", "travelling teachers", "books, videos and dance camps". There are many references to "much experimentation with our own material", "trading figures with other teams", and "filching". Such comments are reminiscent of the recollections of dancers and teachers in England in the inter-war period when they recalled that novel and ingenious figures were invented and prized, and might be bought or sold (and possibly stolen) between teams.

#### **5. Occasions for Sword Dancing**

I also asked the question "How many times do you perform in a typical year? Do you perform only for certain seasons or occasions? Please indicate typical performance occasions for your team?"

The replies were difficult to categorise but some trends appear - many groups present sword dances relatively rarely, often no more than 6 times a year, sometimes only on a single occasion or weekend; and when a particular season or holiday is mentioned it is likely to be in the winter. The association of the dance in England with Christmas or Plough Monday has survived in North America in spite of the harsh climate forcing the teams to dance indoors.

(Surprisingly, the answers to these questions give very similar results to the UK surveys - in spite of the different social circumstances and the available range of possible dance venues between the two countries)

Only 20 of the respondents mentioned a special season or occasion which included Columbus Day weekend, days around Halloween, the Minnesota Mumping and Sword Ale, the Half Moon (New York) Sword Ale, 12th night and "Plough Monday"

There was an understandable variety of responses to the question "How many times a year do you dance?" Seven of the 48 respondents said once or twice in a year ranging to as much as fifty times a year, the types of location being very similar to the range in the UK - festivals, tours with other teams, college shows, school or church events, paid gigs, displays at local country dance events, conventions, weddings, nursing homes and - typical of America - Christmas shows, such as the Revels in a number of towns. Some team members tend to dance sword only in the winter, usually choosing to perform Morris in the spring and fall.

## **6. Problems, Conclusions and Prospects**

I hope, in a few years, to do another survey to record changes and trends. Perhaps there will be responses from some of the teams who didn't bother to reply this time. I may include investigation into the music and the musicians - What tunes are used? Are they "traditional English" or our own? Where have all the fiddles and pipe players gone? Are we soon to be surrounded by a sea of pumping melodeons? Why are there so few drummers? And so forth.

I had considered surveying all "Morris" teams, even those that did not identify themselves in any forum as sword teams. Instead I decided to concentrate on the 80 teams who claim sword dance in their repertoire.

Few surprises have emerged - our community is ageing. While there has been a small "baby boom" over the past few years we are not restocking our ranks with young dancers. Those of us born in the 1946 - 64 baby boom will eventually toddle-off, bandaged, wheezing, and blurry eyed into our sunset years, to retirement homes where we will bore the attendants with tales of past glories and broken swords.

There are some school and college teams, some with significant histories such as the Berea College Dancers and Hillside Morris and Sword. But it remains to be seen if any of these youngsters will ever dance as adults.

Another conclusion is that mixed teams predominate, and women outnumber men by about nine to seven. This is remarkably different to Britain where women's teams are in a distinct minority; not to mention the European continent where there do not appear to be any women's teams performing sword dance at all.

Examination of the answers to questions on repertoire and occasions leads to comments on the adaptation of these (chiefly) English dances to multiethnic, multilingual, highly mobile North America. We as North Americans - coming from a variety of (mostly European) ethnic and immigrant backgrounds, heavily middle and upper middle class, many college and university educated professionals - may be able to perform the steps, figures, and music well. But what does it "mean" in North America? In New York's Grand Central Station in February, Newfane Common in Vermont in May, outside Big Ed's in downtown Toronto in September, or in the frozen Twin Cities in January?

This is perhaps a pointless question. The performance "means" whatever we, and our audiences choose it to mean. If Christmas stage shows and Renaissance fairs provide appreciative audiences (and some money), fine; if city dwellers enjoy the show and drop coins into a hat, the dance becomes "theirs" as well; if small town New Englanders see a dance weekend as an occasion to soak the city folks by selling them trinkets this too is a valid social statement.

Longsword seems now to be somewhat more popular than rapper dancing, even though the numbers of speciality teams is almost equal. Perhaps this is because it appears easier to work up a long sword dance more quickly than rapper. (A questionable view, but probably based on the simpler and slower stepping in long sword as opposed to rapper). It will be interesting to see if this balance shifts in the future.

In fact, in the matter of the sword dance adapting to North America, perhaps the most encouraging sign is interest in rapper. It seems particularly well suited to modern times; fast and flashy, it is almost guaranteed to catch the spectator's attention. Also encouraging, in a sense, is the lack of concern for antecedents and established texts which rapper teams often display. They take their knots, figures and combinations from whatever sources are available, or invent some new ones (or reinvent them) and end up with "their own" dance. This represents, in its lack of interest in anything but putting on a good show, a true continuation of the tradition of sword dancing over the centuries.

*The initials of American and Canadian states are:*

*America*

*CA = California; CO = Colorado; CT = Connecticut; DC = District of Columbia; KS = Kansas; KY = Kentucky; ME = Maine; MD = Maryland; MA = Massachusetts; MI = Michigan; MN = Minnesota; NE = Nebraska; NH = New Haven; NJ = New Jersey; NY = New York State; NC = North Carolina; OH = Ohio; PA = Pennsylvania; RI = Rhode Island; TN = Tennessee; TX = Texas; VT = Vermont; VA = Virginia, WA = Washington State, WI = Wisconsin*

*and for Canada*

*BC = British Columbia; MB = Manitoba; ON = Ontario*

*The following teams failed to respond:*

*USA*

*Holyrood (CA)*

*Swords of Gridlock (CA)*

*Maroon Bells (CO)*

*Angleterre (KY)*

*Hell's Bottom Morris (MD)*

*Longwood Rapper (MA)*

*Pinewoods Men (MA)*

*Keeweenaw (MI)*

*Midnight Rapper (NH)*

*Shandygaff (NJ)*

*Binghamton Morris Men (NY)*

*Pokingbrook Morris (NY)*

*Queen Anne's Lace (NY)*

*Kingsessing Morris Men (PA)*

*Westerley Morris Men (RI)*

*Shambles Morris and Sword (TX)*

*Ballard Lock Sword (WA)*

*Misty Cily Morris (WA)*

*Seattle Morris Men (WA)*

*Canada*

*Vancouver Morris Men (BC)*

*Toronto Women's Sword (ON)*

## **Appendix and notes**

The age data proved difficult to collate. Answers were described as "approximate" and numbers did not always tally but the overall picture is clear.

One team in the Midwest is an umbrella organisation for winter mumping by three Morris teams.

"Revels" is run in half a dozen cities by a Boston group who put on very good shows.

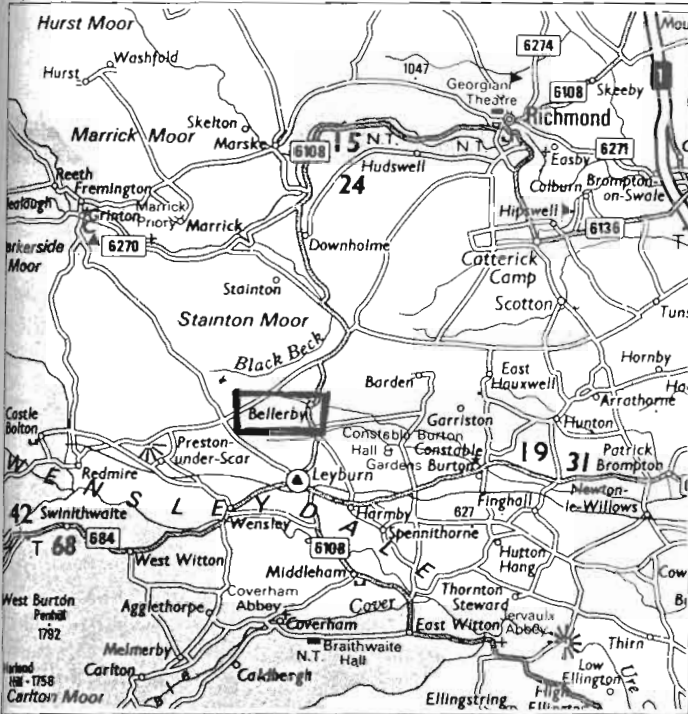
I am classifying the Papa Stour dance with English long sword dances as is the standard practice though this unique dance has many features quite different from Yorkshire dances.

I was once chastised by an English dancer for thinking of "Marching through Georgia" as an American tune. In the future I will leave the resolution of such musical questions to those more knowledgeable than I.

Steve invites anyone who requires more details to contact him - 15 Harris Lane, Harrison, NY 10528, United States; e-mail - sdcbc@cunyvmit.net.

## BELLERBY SWORD DANCE

by Ruth Dodsworth



The first photographs of the Bellerby team date back to 1872. They show the 6 sword dancers, 2 clowns and the "Bessie" character. These are two similar photographs showing the group posing, one with swords locked, the other with the dancers holding the swords, hilt and point, in a circle.

Highside Longsword had been considering learning a new dance to add to their current repertoire of one. So when Albert Atkinson, the retiring vicar from Kirkby Malzeard took his next post at Aysgarth, the sword dance from Bellerby seemed a natural choice.

With this possibility in mind and having collected together some rudimentary information and notations we thought, to visit Bellerby and possibly meet some of the residents, would be a courteous initial step. We had Sunday lunch at the Cross Keys and approached the landlady for help in meeting some of the locals. As luck would have it, there was a group of men playing cards, one of whom was one of the organisers of the Bellerby Feast and another who had been a part of the 1983 revival team of Bellerby Sword Dancers!

I did an impromptu interview with the group as a whole, but taking down details from many sources, all of whom had consumed a few pints, was very difficult. Their emphatic insistence that I visit Mary Clarke who would "tell me everything" led to my making an appointment to return and interview this lady.

This did indeed prove to be very fruitful and Mary Clarke was a very willing interviewee, generous with her knowledge. The following is a description of several of her photographs which gives a brief account of the Bellerby Sword Dance Play according to Mary Clarke.

She was born and had lived all her life in Bellerby and remembered her father, Harry Breakwell, playing the "Bessie". She constantly spoke of "Our Sword Dance Play", explaining that the prose was interspersed with the dancing and was always done as a complete performance, never suggesting that the play and the dance could, or should be separated.

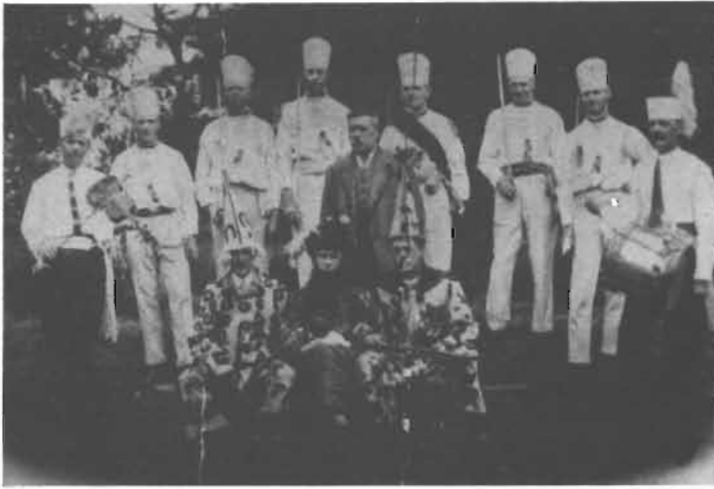
It should be noted that there are anomalies in the information gathered. The photographs show clearly that the dancers are wearing an all white kit with a dark coloured cummerbund whereas Maude Karpelès describes their dress as "dark

trousers with strip of red braid on outside of each leg" ("Some Fragments of Sword-Dance Plays" *Journal of the English Folk Dance Society*, 2nd series, No 2, 1928), the rest of her description is a fair representation of what can be seen from these 3 photographs.

Originally the sword dance play was performed at Christmas time for a week. In the play there is the line "this is Chris-a mas time" and was done to raise



The next photograph dates from about 1914, just before the first World War, and is of a group of 8 men accompanied by 2 men dressed in distinctive clown costumes. There is no evidence that this group actually danced as there is no one in dancing costume and no swords are carried. Among the group is a man carrying a drum, another holding a liddle and another armed with a sweeping brush. In the centre of the picture, two of the men are holding a wicker laundry basket. This was to make the collection in. At that time they would be given cakes and in particular the local fare, a Bellerby cheesecake. They wouldn't collect much money as the villagers had very little to spare.



There are a number of photographs available which date from either 1926 or 1928 (Maude Karpeles collected the Bellerby Sword Dance in 1926). Two of these show the dance being performed in the Vicarage garden for the village Fete.

The above photograph is thought to be taken at the same time as the "Vicarage garden" photographs. It was published in 'Rattle Up My Boys' in Autumn 1990. Mary Clarke insisted that it was wrongly dated as being taken in 1919. She went on to name all but one of the group in that photograph. She supported the claim for a revised date by pointing out that the man who played the "King" character, Raisbeck Bell, came to the village as the school master in 1925.

money to fund a dinner on New Year's Day for the participants. The performance has evolved over the years to what has become the Bellerby Clown Feast. The clown characters are all that have survived from the play to accompany the custom of collecting. Whether this continued to take place on a regular annual basis I am not sure. In the 1920's the Feast was held on Whit Wednesday, but then was moved to Whit Monday, to coincide with the Bank Holiday.

The Feast is now held annually on Spring Bank Holiday Monday, when some locals dress in clown costumes and collect, either cakes or money, from the residents of Bellerby and any passing motorists, although this can sometimes be a bit dangerous if the cars fail to slow down! All the collection is used at the children's sports day and is given in the form of prize money or consumed at the "bun fight".



The next time that the sword dance play was performed by the people of Bellerby was at its revival in 1982/83. This was a result of a WEA local history class and to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Bellerby School. Mary Clarke cajoled some of the local men to learn the sword dance play, using the notations published in the 1928 EFDS journal (a copy of which had been deposited in the church sale at the time it had been published).

She enrolled the help of local men to make the hats and a new set of wooden swords. A couple from nearby Hunton provided the music on fiddles. Although the original intention was to perform at the anniversary celebrations of the school, this was not possible due to illness of the school teacher.

But having practised, the group did a performance for the inhabitants of Bellerby and later went on to participate in the "Richard III Celebrations" at Middleham

The actual sword dance play seems to have been done only for short periods. In 1926 Maude Karpeles says in her notes "the play had not been performed for 47 years". Then in 1983 it was claimed that "the play was last performed in the grounds of the old vicarage 55 years ago". Why the play was performed so sporadically with so many years between is not clear. Only because the notations had been collected and published was it possible for the men of Bellerby to perform it again.

In the end, it was felt that due to lack of practice time and the play being longer than the dance, Bellerby was not added to Highside Longsword's repertoire. We felt that it would have been inappropriate to separate the dance from the play and to do so would have been detrimental to the context of the performance. The Bellerby Sword Dance was performed by Richmondshire Morris Men from Darlington, for a season about 4 years ago. They performed it at the Cross Keys in Bellerby on Boxing Day. But the lack of interest from the locals, combined with the feeling that the words of the play had lost any relevance to the present characters of the village, led to Richmondshire not continuing to perform it.

An interesting connection that is worthy of mention is in the Reverend Charles Albert White. He was the man who was instrumental in the revival of Bellerby Sword Dance Play in the 1920's and its collection by Maude Karpeles. His previous appointment was curate-in-charge at Kirkby Malzeard, 1912-17

Ruth Dodsworth 1994

Ruth Dodsworth has an enthusiasm for many aspects of local history and has carried out substantial research into the history of the Kirkby Malzeard Longsword dance. She is married to Ted Dodsworth, one of the founder members of Highside Longsword.

Bellerby is a small village 8 miles south of Richmond and 2 miles north of Leyburn in Wensleydale (grid reference SE 1192).

I have asked Keith Jackson who supplied the photograph of the Bellerby team printed in RUMB, Series 2, Issue 5 (Autumn 1990) to comment on the date attributed by Ruth

As far as I know the dance is not regularly danced - since the demise in 1990 of Phoenix Sword who included it in their repertoire for a number of years. A number of American teams perform a version of the dance based on workshops which I held on my trip to the New York and Boston areas in 1991. - Editor

## LONGSWORD DANCING AT EFDS & EFDSS FESTIVALS

Compiled by Trevor Stone and Gordon Ridgewell

In preparing detailed records of the masses of film and photographic material left by Kathy Mitchell I needed to check on the details of various teams (mainly Longsword) who she filmed performing at the EFDSS shows at the Royal Albert Hall. I was surprised to find that the shows started as early as 1926.

It seemed logical to prepare a list of the details that were readily available but I was frustrated by the lack of information in the Vaughan Williams Library relating to some years. My thanks to Gordon Ridgewell for adding much information and checking my original list.

From 1926 the English Folk Dance Society organised 'All England Festivals' around the time of the main Festivals. These events were 'decentralised' in 1935 to Brighton, Bath, Cambridge and York.

### 1926 January 1st & 2nd (Great Hall - London University)

Genoside Traditional Sword team

Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dance by a team from Ravenscar

North Skelton Traditional Sword team

### 1927 January 1st

North Skelton Traditional Sword team

### 1927 December 31st

Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dance by the Wharfedale men

Flamborough Sword Dance by the massed teams

Ampleforth Sword Dance and Play

**1929 January 5th**

Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers

Ampleforth Sword Dance and Play

**1930 January 4th**

Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dance by Ruswarp Sea Scouts

**1931 January 3rd & 10th**

Manx Dirk Dance by Billy Cain

**1932 January 2nd**

Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dance by the Scarborough & District Branch (Whitby Centre)

Argyll Broadsword Dance by Reel Club of the London Scottish Regiment

Manx Dirk Dance by Billy Cain

**1932 December 31st**

Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dance by the Woodlands (Dorset) and Whitby (Joe Brown's) teams

**1934 January 6th**

Massed teams dance Flamborough (described in the programme as Women's Sword); accompanist William Kimber

Ampleforth Sword Dance as part of "A Folk Dance Masque"

Manx Dirk Dance by Billy Cain

**1935 January 5th**

A feature named 'New Masque of Christmas' included the Boosbeck Traditional Sword Dancers. The dance was included as part of the Revesby Mummung Play, "the earliest of all the collected versions of the Folk Play"

Manx Dirk Dance by Billy Cain

**1935 July 17, 18 & 19th - International Festival**

Austria: Sword Dance from Upper Austria

Reif (Hoop) Dance

Great Britain: Argyll Broadsword Dance by Dancers and Pipers of the 2nd Battalion of the Queens Own Cameron Highlanders

North Skelton Sword Dancers

Manx Dirk Dance

Italy: Fennestrelle Sword Dance from Piedmont

Poland: Krzesany - Axe Dance from the Polish Highlands

Romania: The Calusari Dancers

Spain: Ball de Cercolets - Hoop Dance closely allied to Sword Dance

USSR: Dagger and other dances from Georgia

**1936 January 4th**

No Longsword

**1937 January 9th**

North Skelton Traditional Longsword team

Flamborough Sword Dance by a boys team from Bridport

**1938 January 8th**

Grenoside Traditional Sword Dance

**1939 January 7 & 8th**

The Calusari Dancers from Romania

**1948 January 3rd**

North Skelton Traditional Sword Dancers; G Hughil, F Hughil, J Hunter, S Winspear, A Green, W Marsey, J Templeman, Accordion George Tremain

Manx Dirk Dance

**1949 January 6, 7 & 8th**

Grenoside Traditional Sword Dancers

Manx Dirk Dance

**1950 January 6 & 7th**

Skelton Green Traditional Sword Dancers; Accordion Arthur Marshall

**1951 January 5 & 6th**

Flamborough Sword Dance; Melodeon Peter Kennedy

Scottish Sword Dance, Ghille Calum by John Armstrong; Piper Alex McColl

**1951 June 21, 22, & 23rd Folk Dances of the British Isles**

(Festival of Britain Event)

Grenoside Traditional Sword Dancers

Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dance by the Ruswarp Sea Scouts (Joe Browns' team) (see RUMB issue 3, series 1 Winter 1987 for more details)

Manx Dirk Dance by Billy Cain

**1952 January 4th & 5th**

Ampleforth Sword Dance by the Ampleforth College team; Musicians Fr Damian Webb & Fr. Theodore Young (see RUMB issue 2, series 3 Summer 1991 for more details)

**1953 January 9 & 10th**

Loftus Sword Dance by boys of Loftus County Modern School; Melodeon Arthur Marshall

**1954 January 8 & 9th**

Flamborough Sword Dance by Tooting & Balham Sea Cadets; Melodeon Peter Kennedy. Friday only

**1955 January 7 & 8th**

The Revesby Play involving a sword dance (photo in 1956 programme)

Papa Stour Sword Dance by team of Scots resident in London, Leader John Armstrong, Fiddle Elsie Avril

**1956 January 6 & 7th**

Lingdale Traditional Sword Dancers; Leader William Knight, Musician Richard Hogarth

Manx Dirk Dance by Roadley Archibald; Mouth Music by Aileen Hall

**1957 January 11 & 12th**

Flamborough Sword Dance by Tooting & Balham Sea Cadets; Accordion Peter Kennedy

Highland Sword Dance by Ian Simpson; Piper Kinnear Forbes

**1958 January 10 & 11th Diamond Jubilee Year of the Folk Song Society**

Loftus Sword Dance by boys of Loftus County Modern School

**1959 January 9 & 10th**

Trawanteldans by De Vendelzwaaiers (Flemish 'stick and hoop' Dance)

**1960 January 15 & 16th**

Massed Flamborough Sword Dance by Bushey Secondary School, North Downs, Glynn County, Heston Boys, Monckton Wyld, Reedham and Royal Ballet School teams; Musicians Peter Kennedy, Bobby Alexander and Paul Green

**1961 January 13 & 14th**

North Skelton White Rose Traditional Dancers; Group leader Mrs E M Readman, Musician Wilf Featherstone

German Sword Dance by Arbeits-gemeinschaft der Sing Tanz und Spielkreise from Stuttgart; Group leader Kurt Wagner

**1962 January 12 & 13th**

Skelton Sword Dance by Beaux of London City; Leader Hamish Fraser

Flemish Trawanteldans by Volkskunstgroep "Boerke Naas" from Sint Niklaas, Belgium; Group leader Ernest van Eynde

Manx Dirk Dance by Stephen Newbold; Musician Jimmy Coleman

**1963 January 11 & 12th**

No Longsword

**1964 February 28 & 29th**

Loftus Sword Dance by boys of Loftus County Modern School; Musician Arthur Marshall

**1965 February 19 & 20th**

Lingdale Primrose Sword Dancers; Leader Arthur Moody; Musician Richard Hogarth

**1966 February 18 & 19th**

Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers; Leader Harry Pitts (the programme mentions new uniforms these being copies of the originals)

**1967 February 17 & 18th**

Loftus Sword Dancers (not the school team from previous years); Leader H Normington; Musician Arthur Marshall

**1968 February 16 & 17th**

The Egg Dance by Portabello Scout Sword team (Hull); Musician Roger King (taught by Kathy Mitchell)

Flamborough Sword Dance by the Festival Dancers

**1969 February 14 & 15th**

Grenoside Traditional Sword Dancers Captain E A Frost; Musician W Fleetwood

Papa Stour Sword Dance by The Sussex Caledonian Sword Dancers;  
Musicians Brian Heaton and Robin Arzoni  
Bursa Kilie Kalkan Folklor Dernegi Turkish "Sword and Shield" Dancers;  
Leader Muzaffer Semiz

**1970 February 20 & 21st**

Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers; Captain Harry Pitts

**1971 February 19 & 20th Diamond Jubilee Year**

Greatham Sword Dance by Redcar Sword Dancers; Leader Colin Mather;  
Musicians Mrs Petch and Robin Petch  
Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dance by the Festival Dancers

**1972 February 18 & 19th**

Loftus Sword Dancers; Leader K M Gratton; Musician M Brignall

**1973 February 16 & 17th**

Boosbeck Sword Dance by the Guisborough Sword Dancers from Laurence  
Jackson School; Leader Len Mackenzie; Musician Wilf Featherstone

**1974 February 15 & 16th**

Grenoside Traditional Sword Dancers; Captain Ted Frost

**1975 February 14 & 15th**

Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers

**1976 February 20th & 21st**

Loftus Sword Dancers; Leader K M Gratton; Musicians M Brignall & J Waite

**1977 February 18 & 19th Silver Jubilee Year**

No Longsword

**1978 February 17 & 18th**

Haxby Sword Dance by Barnsley Longsword

**1979 February 16 & 17th**

Loftus Sword Dancers

**1980 February 22 & 23rd**

Greatham Sword Dance by Redcar Sword Dancers; Leader Brian Pierce;  
Musician Mrs Petch  
The Fools Sword Dance (with umbrellas)  
Trawanteldans by Volkskunstgroep "Boerke Naas" (The Flemish 'stick and  
hoop' Dance); Group leader Ernest van Eynde

**1981 February 13 & 14th**

North Skelton Sword Dance by Beaver Swordsmen from Beverley; Leader  
and Musician Roger Sewell

**1982 February 19 & 20th**

No Longsword

**1983 February 18 & 19th**

Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers

**1984 February 18th**

Papa Stour Sword Dance by London Folk

**1985 May 11th Folk Entertains - Dominion Theatre**

The last major show organised by the EFDSS. No Longsword

Trevor Stone & Gordon Ridgwell, December 1994

## WINTER OUTINGS 1994

*Check first if you require accurate details. All times are approximate!*

### **BOXING DAY December 26th**

#### **Flamborough Longsword**

12.00 'ish Rose & Crown followed by visits to other  
local venues

2.30 'ish Dog & Duck Square, Flamborough

#### **Highside Longsword (Kirby Malzeard)**

1.00 Grantley Arms

1.30 Queens Head, Kirby Malzeard

followed by a tour of the village

#### **Spenn Valley Longsword**

12.00 New Packhorse, Hartshead Moor

12.45 The Royal Hotel, Cleckheaton

1.30 Old Saw, Gomersal

2.30 Wheatsheaf, Gomersal

#### **Wype Doles (Whittlesea)**

"Whittlesea during Boxing Day" - for details contact  
Brian Kell (01733) 208245

#### **Grenoside Longsword**

11.00 The Old Harrow, Grenoside

#### **Handsworth Longsword**

11.15 The Crown, Woodhouse

12.00 Parish Church, Handsworth

### **Other teams - other times**

#### **Highside Longsword (Kirby Malzeard)**

Plough Blessing Service in Kirby Malzeard Church  
(which includes the sword dance performed in the  
church) is on Sunday January 15th at 10.30am

### **NEW YEARS DAY, SUNDAY January 1st**

#### **Barnsley Longsword,**

12.30 'ish The Shaw, Barnsley

1.00 'ish Spencers Arms, Cawthorne

#### **Kirkburton Rapier Dancers**

12.15 Carlton Club

12.45 The George

1.00 The Royal

1.45 Smiths Arms (High Burton)

2.45 Woodman, Thunderbridge

### **SATURDAY, January 14th**

#### **Goathland Plough Stots**

10.00am start to 3.00pm 'ish tour of Goathland and Darnholm ending  
up at Beckhole.

The Goathland plough blessing is held the previous Sunday.

### **SATURDAY, January 7th**

#### **Grenoside Longsword will tour the village**

Details from Ray Illingworth (0742) 453361

The next issue will carry a detailed report on a visit to Japan made by a  
group of American teachers. It is based on a published report by Ralph  
Page. I am waiting for comments and contributions by two other people  
who went on this trip. I also intend to add a summary of verse (and  
song) which refers to sword dancing - contributions are welcome!

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

### **Contributions welcome....**

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