



RATTLE UP My Boys

AN OCCASIONAL BROADSHEET FOR THOSE
WITH AN INTEREST IN LONGSWORD DANCE

Issue 3, Series 5 Spring & Summer 1995

(July)

Father Kenneth Norman Joseph Loveless - Priest an appreciation by Ivor Allsop



It seems almost unbelievable that I will never again marvel at the unique, and unusual, style of Kenneth Loveless who has, for many years, dominated the dance world with his larger-than-life image. I first met him, fittingly enough, at a Thaxted Ring Meeting but I shall remember best the occasions we met at the home of Joyce and Ivor Allsop when they acted as hosts after Barnsley Longsword's Christmas/New Year dance out. It therefore seemed fitting to ask Ivor to provide an obituary for this grand old man. Ivor writes -

Kenneth Loveless died on March 19th 1995 as a result of a heart attack.

I first became acquainted with Kenneth in the late 60's when, at a St Albans Morris Men's Day of Dance, we suggested that he ought to have been an actor and in that stentorian voice he possessed he replied "Me! an actor! Boy!" From this meeting a friendship developed which lasted until his death.

As a priest he was much needed by his fellow Christians. As a Morris man he was in great demand from Morris and Sword Clubs, many of whom made him

an honorary club member. There are many people - in many fields, who remember Kenneth with much affection.

He was born on August 1st 1911. His parents were of the upper middle class. He was educated at Highgate School and at London University. In 1936, whilst he was presenting Gramophone Record evenings at the London store "Imhof's" he heard recordings of Playford dance tunes played by the Arnold Foster Folk Dance Orchestra - and thus began his lifelong association with Folk Music and Folk-lore. He joined the English Folk Dance and Song Society immediately and attended classes at Cecil Sharp House.

He joined the navy as an ordinary seaman, much against his father's wishes. During the war he was torpedoed twice but survived to rise to the rank of Lieutenant Commander and finished the war as a member of Lord Mountbatten's staff in India.

After the war, as a result of what he had seen and experienced, he decided that he had been 'saved' for greater things and decided to become a priest - much against the wishes of Mountbatten. But Kenneth had made his decision and, after a short time in Oxford as a curate, he became the vicar of Holy Trinity, Hoxton in the East End of London, a part of the capital to which he was drawn by his experience of the people many of whom were fellow crew members of his. He became the Area Dean of Hackney responsible for thirty-two parishes.

All this time he kept up his folk activities, turning up at meetings of the National Executive Committee of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, eventually becoming chairman of the Society's Editorial Committee for the Journal, a position which gave him great joy.

On his retirement from the church he was able to use his new found leisure time not only to preach as a 'free-lance' but also to become Squire of the Morris Ring.

He was a man much respected by his fellow priests and by his many friends from all walks of life. He was a member of the Fair Ground Association of Great Britain, the President of the International Concertina Association, and was Padre to many Naval Societies.

He will be sorely missed.

Father Kenneth Norman Joseph Loveless BEM

Folk-lorist

SWORD DANCE SPECTACULAR MAY 24th - 27th 1996

44 teams have already expressed interest in the Sword Spectacular

Over 70 teams have been contacted from the UK and Northern Italy, the Basque area of Spain, the Flemish area of Belgium, Southern Moravia (formerly part of Czechoslovakia), Germany, South Eastern France, the Dunkirk area, the shores of Lake Constance, and as far away as Japan, Canada and USA. Teams who have expressed interest to date are: Papa Stour from the Shetland Islands, In de Kring from France, Lange Wapper, Boerke Naas and Quevauucamps from Belgium, Bagnasco and Fennestrelle from Italy, Strani, Bystrice pod Lopenikem and Komna from the former Czechoslovakia, San Sebastian and Markina from Spain, Überlingen from Germany, Half Moon Sword, Orion Sword, Marlborough Sword and Longwood Rapper from America and Toronto Women's Sword from Canada and from the UK: Addison Rapper, Barnsley Sword, Bishop Gundulf's Sword, Carlisle Sword, Castleford Sword, Claro Sword, Coventry Mumpers, Deva Sword, East Saxon Sword, Flamborough Longsword, Gift Rapper, Goathland Plough Stots (including a junior team), Grenoside Longsword, High Spen Blue Diamond, Kirkburton Rapier Dancers, Pengwyn Rapper, Redcar Sword, Sallyport Rapper, Snark Rapper, Southport Swords, Spen Valley Longsword, Stevenage Sword, White Boys of Mann, Wype Doles and more.

If you've ever wondered what the Papa Stour team - or the Flamborough team - are like here is your chance to see them in action.

Extensive programme

The programme includes performances and displays by a number of invited teams who perform other British dance traditions (North West, Cotswold etc). Overseas teams will also perform dances (other than their sword dance).

Some of the teams listed will not attend for the full weekend - details in future issues. A provisional programme is being prepared.

ÜBERLINGEN ON JULY 9TH

One of the overseas teams who have expressed interest in attending the Sword Spectacular in May, 1996 is the group from Überlingen, Germany (on the shores of Lake Constance). The team perform a sword dance which was granted to the Vintners Guild by a grateful monarch in return for their support and their defence of the town in the Thirty Years War in the 1600's. Although there are records of dancing having taken place earlier, the detailed records of the Überlingen dance, and its period of continuous performance, make it unique.

I saw the team perform some years ago at an event in Sint Niklaas in Belgium and I was delighted when they expressed interest in coming to the UK. I visited the group on their traditional day on July 9th of this year - a report will follow.

DEREK SCHOFIELD'S PRESENTATION ON THE 1935 INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL

On Friday, April 28th I attended a well attended Library Lecture at Cecil Sharp House in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. The presentation, one of a series arranged by the hardworking and highly regarded Librarian Malcolm Taylor, was given by Derek Schofield to an enthusiastic audience which included Ursula Vaughan Williams and Nibs Matthews.

Derek concentrated on the background to the major International (European) Folk Festival held in London on July 15 - 20th, 1935 which involved 515 dancers from 13 countries.

Derek brought out some fascinating facts. The event was organised by a committee which involved EFDSS but which also obtained the backing of many national and International organisations. The League of Nations was active at the time and Britain had a National Government which, through the Foreign Office, gave support to the organisers. Much emphasis was placed by the organisers on the desire to popularise folk dance and music and they also set out to promote International understanding and peace (the Festival was held a few months from the outbreak of the Second World War).

↓ Declaration of War. 3.9.1939

↓ 49 months.

Derek's presentation included much well researched detail about the planning and background to the event and left me with the feeling of regret that such high powered support would be impossible to generate today.



An interesting discovery relating to sword dance arose from the evening - the programme lists sword dance teams at the event as Fennestrelle (from Northern Italy); a sword dance from Upper Austria and the North Skelton team from Cleveland. However a scrapbook of the event, brought to the meeting by Nibs Matthews (the Society's ex Director) carried a photo of a team named as the Boos-beck (sic) Tullps, a team unknown to me until the evening.

Catching up VISIT TO WYPE DOLES

I was delighted to take up an invitation to a Day of Dance from a sword team which was new to me which goes by the fascinating name of Wype Doles. The visit was doubly interesting as the other 5 teams taking part were also new to me. The team, who are 'related' to the group who organise the Straw Bear Ceremony, were founded three years ago - but I'll leave the detail until later for they have promised to supply a team profile.

The organisers of the Whittlesey Straw Bear event have asked me to draw attention to an appeal that they have launched in memory of 10 year old Jon Ke who was very involved in the Straw Bear ceremony until his death from cancer last August. If walking is your forte you may be interested in a Letter Box trail set up in Dartmoor. Further information and a list of clues (only £2) may be obtained from Pat and Patrick Freen, 43 Reddicliff Road, Plimstock, Plymouth PL9 9NF.

SNARK AT ANTWERP

As regular readers will know Lange Wapper regularly invite foreign teams to join them at their traditional dance event at Half Lent in Antwerp. This year they invited Snark Rapper - the first time that most of the audience (and many of the Lange Wapper dancers) had seen the Rapper tradition.

This version of Snark, (they change their line-up every time I see them) together with a Northumbrian piper and a step dancer (and an expert balloon sculptor!), made an impact on the Belgians with their combination of relaxed sociability and attractive dancing, especially in the intimate and informal sessions. The teams performance with Lange Wapper's fool Mark was one of those events which combine great skill with entertainment. For me the weekend will stay in my memory as hugely enjoyable, mainly due to the character of the Snark team.

Photos on the centre spread

BISHOP GUNDULF'S SWORD

Prompted by the recent article from Mel Howley about the problems and progress of the new team at Ryburn, Ken Anderson, the Foreman of Bishop Gundulf's Sword team wrote to say that they too found problems with Bellerby "but only because they (the Bishop Gundulf's team) are overweight, smoke too much and drink too much (if that is possible). The figures are simple but the pace leaves them breathless"

Ken goes on to tell of his colleagues concern about news of the Japanese dance. Ken is a 2nd Dan (Karate) and has trained in laido (Japanese sword) and the men of the team are worried that he may take their swords home to sharpen!

The team is low on numbers and Ken is offering a bounty of £10 per head (an unfortunate phrase!) or £15 if they have seen the videos or read the book.

Photo on the centre spread

CORRECTION TO GORDON RIDGEWELL'S ITEM ON DIARIES

Gordon Ridgewell points out that I have added to the confusion about the Boxing Day problem described in his article in the newsletter for the last issue (Issue 3, series 5, Winter 1995). In transcribing part of his letter (the quote from the Editorial Supervisor for Letts Diaries) I got it wrong - it should have read: "If Christmas Day was a Saturday, then they would return to work on Monday and not Sunday, the day of rest. In this instance, Monday would have been Boxing Day."

I'm afraid I don't go along with Gordon's suggestion of drinks all round but his suggestion that the Newsletter could be combined with the Broadsheet seems to me to be worthwhile and I will try it out for the next few issues. Let me know if you have any comments on this or any other subject.

Gordon also drew my attention to an article by Lynne Greenwood in **The Daily Telegraph** on June 10th 1995 which reported on the impact that the tourist industry is having on Goathland as a result of the television series **Heartbeat**. The article also refers to similar problems with the Woolpack pub featured in the **Emerdale** series. I would add to the list the town of Holmfirth which has changed dramatically following the popularity of the series **Last of the Summer Wine**. The impact of the invasion by dozens, sometimes hundreds, of actors, technicians and support crews is often only the start.

MORE POEMS

Gordon Ridgewell has supplied two more items for the promised follow-up item on poems which refer to sword dancing.

The first item is a second calling-on song collected by Frank Dowson and published in the 1974 FOLK MUSIC JOURNAL, Vol 2, No 5 in an article on the Goathland Plough Stots by Geoffrey M Ridden and described as "a version of the opening song of the Goathland Plough Stots of ninety years ago and earlier".

Here's a host of us all	So now you see us all
From Goathland go wee	Dressed in our fine array
We're going a rambling	Think of us what you will
The country for to see.	Music strike us and play.
The country for to see	
Some pastime for to take	
So freely you will give to us	
And freely we will take.	

Jack Scarth, Ridden's main informant, told me that this version of the song was used by the Sleights team in the 1930's - Editor.

Gordon's second contribution was a stanza I missed from the poem THE LAND WORKERS by John Masfield (not Mansfield as printed). Here is the second stanza to set the record straight:

And Mummings went at Christmas, with their play,

With Mrs Vinney who revived the dead;
Men danced a sword-dance still, not far away,
At ploughings still, a mouse's blood was shed.

A number of people, including Ron Shuttleworth, drew attention to TH' UPSHOTT by Mark Lonsdale. Ron suggests it was written circa 1780 but has found it reprinted in **Jollies Sketches of Cumberland Manners and Customs**, Francis Jollie, 1811. Here are some relevant verses from a long dialect epic.

What matter, - when sword dance com' on
They lockt an' meade a bummel
For Wulliam Strang - girt gammerstang! -
Ran foul o' Jacob Trummel.

Reet unkat figures did they cut,
And ay they skipp'd and chanted,
Their spangs an' vapours pass'd for wut,
An' that was aw they wanted.
Jack out wi' monie a menseless word,
But lasses bude his mockin',
An' whate'er he spak' criet "Never ak,
Sae lang as he is but jwokin".

But when they cut of Hector's head
Miss Greace began a faintin';
La'ye! quo' th' lave, as seer as dead,
She ne'er was born a' Banton!
The leevin' surs! she towpt her owre
'Or yen could say, 'od bless her!
And Hector sware as he lay on the fleer,
Dall him, but he wad kiss her!

Sword dancers had nae suiner duin
Nor yen cry't out, "'Ods wonters!
Wad tay wad give us s'unkets suin,
We're aw as haw as hunters"
Quo' Ritson, "Weel said, greedy gut!
But nin o' this miff-maff mun,
For l's weel seer, Hob Thross'll ne'er
Ha' thee chowk wi' kaff, mun."

KIRKBURTON'S BIRTHDAY

Kirkburton Rapier Dancers held a day of dance to celebrate their 21st Birthday on June 11th this year. The team, who are very sociable and well travelled, attracted over a dozen teams to a pleasant relaxing day which included performances by Kirkburton, Grenoside, Spen Valley and the new sword team from Ryburn (who performed the Bellerby dance with style and confidence).



A



B



C

CATCHING UP ON PHOTOS

Over the past couple of issues the volume of written material has ousted the usual smattering of photographs I like to use, where relevant, to illustrate articles. In my view some of the displaced photos are too least interesting to miss so I intend to use this issue to catch up by presenting some of these photos, most of which relate to articles printed in earlier issues.

I have had difficulty in finding photos to accompany obituaries - but there was no problem this time. Father Kenneth attracted attention in a manner that ensured lots of photographic records!

Picture A

Ron Ledger of Barnsley Longsword Dancers with Father Kenneth when he went to collect the award of Member of the British Empire at a ceremony at Buckingham Palace.

Picture B

Father Kenneth on Christmas 1993, proudly sporting his Barnsley Longsword kit.

In the hope of getting a good position to video the Boxing Day performance by Grenoside outside the Old Harrow pub I decided to position myself behind Father Kenneth in the certain knowledge that no one would dare to stand in front of him. I now have a tape with excellent video - but a commentary on the dancing by Kenneth dominates the sound track!

Picture C

Grenoside Longsword initiated a post-Christmas tour of their village in January 1994. In Issue 2, Series 5 I reported on a visit to see the team on their 1995 village tour - here they are seen outside the home of Fred Myers, for many years a regular dancer.

Picture D

Snark Rapper visited Antwerp to dance at the Half Lent event organised by Lange Wapper. One of the distinctive features of the

trip was the activities of a dancer who specialised in balloon sculpture who entertained children and adults alike. The Lange Wapper jester was decorated with an elaborate balloon sculpture.

Picture E

Perhaps I should offer a prize for the best (printable) caption for this photo of a Snark dancer explaining - what?

Picture F

The musicians for Sullivan's Sword won a new cup for the best musicians in the 1995 Whitby Competitive Festival.

Picture G

Flamborough Longsword Dancers, together with a women's team, tour their village every Boxing Day at a relaxed and enjoyable village event which attracts surprisingly few 'Folkies' Those who have never seen Flamborough dance can rectify the situation at the Sword Spectacular in Carlisle.

Picture H

In January of this year Spen Valley Longsword and Castleford Sword where guests of Boar's Head Morris on a walking tour of Bradford. Even Spen Valley's colourful costume was outshone by the fool from Boar's Head.

Picture I

In the 'Poems' article in the last issue I credited the poem "The Longsword Lament" to Keith S Anderson, the Captain of Bishop Gundulf's Sword. At least I got the team name right! Here is a photo of Ken Anderson, Foreman of Bishop Gundulf's Sword.

Picture J

Gordon Ridgewell sent this off-air photo of the Emeraldale episode involving Spen Valley drinking (real Ale!) in the pub while, as Gordon says, viewers were awaiting the team's appearance at the Gala.

Picture K

The poems in the last issue which attracted attention were those by John Browell and Glynis which described the antics of Spen Valley Longsword. This photo shows Glynis, the landlady of the pub at Beckhole.

Picture L

Gordon Ridgewell supplied two photos but I only have space for this one of Redcar Sword at the Morris Ring meeting at Thaxted on Sunday May 31st 1992



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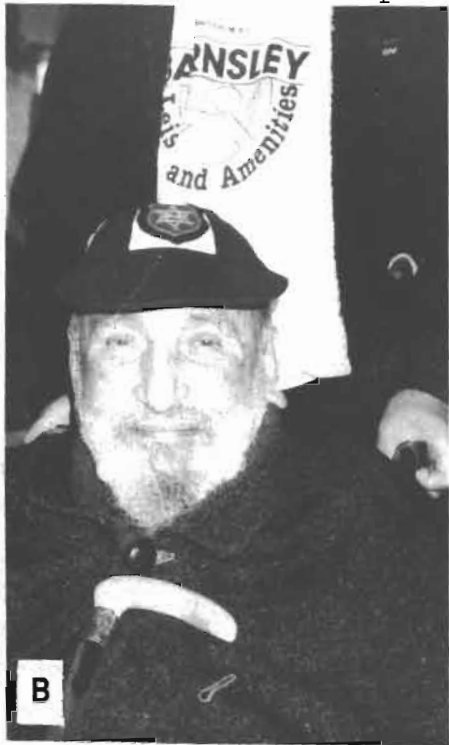


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Some photos were printed across two pages and are repeated on this and the next sheet.



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1995 WHITBY COMPETITIVE FESTIVAL

The latest Whitby Competitive Festival was held on Saturday April 1st and the Wilson's Arms Double Diamond Trophy for the Longsword class was won by Goathland Plough Stots who, with a score of 93 points beat Spen Valley by one point and Sullivan's Sword by two points. The sole entrant in the separate rapper class was Addison Rapper who were awarded 91 points by Eddie Upton.



Sullivan's Sword, for many years kitted up as 19th Century agricultural workers in their Sunday best, have changed outfits. Here they are shown performing in the streets of Whitby shortly before the Sword class at the Whitby Competitive Festival.

THE BLUE STOTS

Last August Chas Marshall, who researches Mummings plays, wrote as a result of reading John Ledbury's article (Issue 4, Series 4, Spring 1994) which mentioned that Highside Longsword perform a Plough Stots' Play from Skelton upon Ure. Chas writes:

"The village is marked as Skelton on Ordnance Survey maps (Skelton on Ure on the village boundary signs) and is situated between Ripon and Boroughbridge. This play was collected by Mike Dearlove (a founder member of Hornblower Morris) from his father Tom, who knew it as the Blue Stots. In North Yorkshire dialect "plough" was pronounced as "pleaf", "pleaugh" or "plew". Thus "plough stots" became corrupted via "blew stots" to "blue stots". There are a number of other instances in neighbouring villages of the play being known as the Blue Stots. The mummings plays in the area, while bearing all the hallmarks of the Hero Combat play, show a number of features which are sufficiently different from other Yorkshire Traditional Drama to constitute a recognisable group in their own right - The Blue Stots Plays. Examples of this group of plays can be found in the arable lands of the Vale of York, from Coxwold in the north to Selby in the south. Quite a number of these, including the Skelton play, have been collected since the publication of "English Ritual Drama". More information can be found in "The Return of the Blue Stots - an aspect of traditional drama in Yorkshire" by Stuart Rankin published in Tykes News in Autumn 1982."

Keith Thompson, Secretary of the globe trotting Goathland Plough Stots (or should it be "Blue Stots"?) reports on their latest trip abroad

DUNKIRK - A FRENCH LETTER

(Some names have been changed to protect the innocent - and the guilty)

Setting off

March 10th 1995 saw the embarkation of the 'Stots' to attend the Half Lent Festival in Dunkirk which was hosted by the local team 'IN DE KRING'. Thirteen

'Stots' together with two wives set out with high expectations of another adventure, hoping it would match the teams experience in Antwerp 2 years ago. This time our departure from England was through Dover, a team first of nothing else, served to save the travellers money by reducing the time at sea and therefore reducing the money spent at the bar. Our pilots Tim, called 'Chuckles' and Ian, also answering to 'Doc' managed to transport the group there (and back) in a hired minibus without major mishap, though one individual seemed to have a mental block regarding UK speed limits!

The first 'pit stop' saw one of our number Mike, renamed 'Rodders' star outside the gents bemoaning his urgent needs and complaining of the time taken by the current incumbent of the toilet. After almost 10 minutes of waiting he was offered the advice to pull, not push the door and to his surprise and relief he found the stall to be empty. Cameron's Bitter tends to have odd effects.

We experienced the dizzy heights of Dartford Bridge and, after we had been around for change with which to pay the toll and argued about which change should use, 'pit stop number two' passed as excitement mounted.

Dover hove into view on a beautiful English afternoon. For once we were able enough to catch an earlier than planned ferry so increasing our time in France by two hours. Another first - only one man ('Rodders') sampled the beer on the ferry whilst the rest of us admired the White Cliffs, soaked up the sun and generally enjoyed the trip. The exceptions were 'Pixie and Dixie' who attempted to buy some school children who rather foolishly handed cash to our dynamic duo.

When we had acquired our beer vouchers at the exchange desk (foreign currency exchange???) the party then awaited the embarkation signal with anticipation. On the trip along the Auto-route we were impressed by the quality of the ceramic tiles used on the bridges in France. Early arrival in Dunkirk on time for 'Doc' to show his knowledge of the sights of Dunkirk, we meandered around the Dock area - and very scenic it was, the highlight being the sight of two pigeons in flagrante on a local landmark.

Arrived early

Our French hosts were a little surprised when we rounded a corner on time to meet them. But introductions were made and 'Chuckles and Doc' set off to find our vehicles. 'Doc' returned but there was no sign of 'Chuckles' so off we went to find him. When they eventually appeared 'Chuckles' was in hysterics after only two hours in France one of our drivers had been breathalysed. Nat had passed (he is an expert in the art of blowing into a bag for the police) and was given the tube as a souvenir. One of the things which was suggested in the car was the thought of piddling on a French bobbies bonfire - a thought that appealed to 'Chuckles' who was by this time in hysterics.

Introductions completed we went with our hosts for the night to meet up the next day at noon. Saturday was a beautiful day which helped to set the scene for a wonderful footling. During the afternoon the older members set off, with the wheel, heading for a trip to Belgium where they walked around unabated anything due to lack of Belgian currency despite valiant but unsuccessful attempts to access a cash point so we went in search of the beach. The members had set sail for the bars of Dunkirk but, for some reason, 'Doc' urged us to see the beach. On their return to Dunkirk the 'OAPs' had their fix: beers followed quickly by large ones. Our President was complimented on his wife on his abstinence and so she celebrated, as did 'Doc', by having an ice-cream which, when it arrived, we were unsure whether it should be framed.

At 19.00 hours we met up again when we came across the first hitch - we expected to take our minibus to the evening social event but we had problems with the need not to drink when driving. This was resolved by our bus being overnight in a well lit car park close to the Police Station. The evening dance to be enjoyable (aided by copious quantities of free Stella). We had bets on 'Boy' falling over but our gallant hero survived a dance similar to the Whirling Dervishes, though his rendition of Old English Folk Songs set the seal on a glorious evening. He dispensed the Glenfiddich with glee as the French drummer became seriously 'rat-arsed'.

Some of our friends from the Lange Wapper team turned up to the evening and sang a new anthem "Day-O" as the Stots entered the hall at the eve-

Sunday morning and the big event

The next morning saw the teams assemble at a bar, with Herman from Lange Wapper intent on reviving us with Slimovitch, the original rocket fuel. The

mood changed when 'Chuckles' turned up with the minibus minus front grille, number plate and front indicator - some safe car park that turned out to be.

However down to the business we had travelled here for - we danced five times, once every forty minutes, in the main square at Dunkirk and, although it was cold it stayed fine until after team photos to celebrate a superb event and a great spirit between the teams. At lunch time when the dancing ended 'Del Boy' was despatched to the Police Station with the Dunkirk team Captain to report the damage to our minibus. 'Sergeant Clueseau' at the local Police Station recorded the details on the oldest typewriter in the world using two fingers while he commented on the length of English addresses and the fact that some English houses don't have house numbers.

The rest of us the afternoon was spent with singing, drinking and music followed by presentation of gifts and certificates. As a finale our President was baptised with beer donated by the barman as a gesture of friendship. The owner of the bar was impressed by our suggestion that hooks could be provided along the bar rail to which one could attach ones trouser belt to prevent one from falling over - a safety device and a must for serious drinkers. The Goathland choir were in good voice with much appreciated renditions of English folk songs and were presented with a besom brush by the bar owner who by now was dispensing free wine and beer that got cheaper as the day went on.

Sunday evening in a Convent

Finally it was time leave the bar for "the convent" where we were to spend the night, a hostel close to a Hypermarket. In spite of prominent notices (DRINKING OR SMOKING ON THESE PREMISES STRICTLY FORBIDDEN) we found sufficient drink to see us through the night. At this time we met a genuine French farmer who asked how much subsidy 'Acky' got (Acky is a farmer himself) which brought a very Anglo Saxon reply.

It was during this drinking session that 'Horizontal Henry' made his debut as an example of sobriety and abstention - until he fell of the bed and, we feared, stopped breathing (to receive little sympathy from his brother). The event got the assembly to bed to prepare for the following day and the homeward journey.

The journey home

After breakfast (and some bottle sweeps which yielded three carrier bags of bottles to be taken to the bottle bank) the team set off for Calais. The 'President', 'Horizontal', 'Pixie and Dixie' and the 'Tramp' were feeling very poorly. Our President vowed to give up red wine for at least a year but as he recovered the period of abstinence became less and less - perhaps £2.20 for a bowl of tomato soup had something to do with it. Or was it that he missed the M25 and took us into London just as he had done on an earlier foray abroad?

With hindsight

We all agreed that the trip was superb. 'Roddors' escaped from the cuckoo's cries for a few days though he lost the stilsons he had bought on the holiday! The Sunday evening was memorable for many things, including the appearance of the Muppets - 'Doc' got so excited that he insisted on getting out of bed and recording the stars on film and he will be able to tell his grandchildren of his brush with fame. One of our ladies discovered a revolving loo seat, just press to go. And what did 'Horizontal' buy his mum that so amused 'Chuckles'?

Our thanks must go to our hosts "In de Kring", the Dunkirk sword dance team who made the weekend so enjoyable. Roll on the next trip abroad!

Keith Thompson

THE BROMPTON SCORPERS

a local tradition revived - Vince Rutland supplies details of a new team

A year or so ago, I almost dropped my copy of RUMB in surprise - there on the Longsword map, was Brompton, my home village. (See Issue 4, Series 3, Spring & Summer 1992). I could picture the scene, long ago, when the dancers must have performed outside the pub. Surely they'd have called in for a pint?

Later, I mentioned this to the regulars in my local. They had little idea what I was talking about, although they had seen occasional visits by rapper teams. A piece of village life, I told them; we should revive it for the carnival in six months time. Most stuck to their pool, darts or doms.

Come January, however, we found ourselves with six volunteers and a set of swords in the bar one evening. None had danced longsword before, although I had been to workshops and two others were retired Morris men. From the outset we decided not to learn a named tradition but to base something on notes of the nearby Sowerby dance, kindly supplied by Trevor Stone. Then we'd let creative interpretation take its course so that our dance, whilst fairly typical, would be unique to Brompton.

After a few false starts, the loss of one member who had two left feet and the recruitment (press gang?) of a couple more. It slowly started coming together. By



The Brompton Scorpers, are set to continue - a local tradition revived.

April, when we finally tried it to music, it actually resembled a dance.

We chose our kit of cord trousers, granddad shirts, and waistcoats decorated with red and gold ribbons - most of us had it all already - and, on May 22nd, had a final practice before venturing outside for a public performance. Monday was chosen because few spectators would be about and two of our men are publicans who find time off a problem. After spots at four local pubs, our confidence was high and our song produced the required result ,,,,,

"I heard the landlord say
that he would give a gallon of beer
before we go away"

After the success of our low-key warm up, we were ready to face the throng on Carnival Day. The first performance was fine; the second featured a new call - "John, turn left, no LEFT, LEFT, LEFT!!". He turned right, of course. In the third dance, we were nearly run down by the Carnival Parade - and then the heavens opened. Another performance in a pub (more free beer!), then we find ourselves performing at a rock festival - and they enjoyed it!

So now the Brompton Scorpers (a local village team - a pint will buy an explanation) are set to continue on an occasional basis. A local tradition revived - well sort of - hopefully to surface again in future years.

Thanks to Mick at The Three Horse Shoes for the use of his room for practices, and to Highside for an impromptu performance in the car park of the Crown early lastwinter, which helped to recruit a couple of members.

NORTH EAST SHINES AT THE 'DERT' SWORD TOURNAMENT

Rapper teams from the north east figured highly at "Rapper '95" - this year's Dancing England Rapper Tournament (DERT) held in April at Leytonstone, London. A report from Vince Rutland

Sixteen teams from around the country - plus representatives from many sides - took part in the event which, in recent years, has become a unique gathering for the rapper fraternity and the tradition's major event of the year. Hosts East Saxon organised a very enjoyable weekend, which opened with dance spots in several local pubs.

The competition itself took place in a large hall at the Heathcote pub. After East Saxon themselves had "broken the ice" with an opening dance, there were non-competitive displays by several teams, some of which put sets up for the contests. In this exhibition section High Spen rendered their usual competent performance.

By now nerves were tingling amongst those entered in the competitive categories. First there was the "Open" class, to which the Dorset Buttons made a welcome return with their tremendous clog rapper. This year the lads seemed to please the judges, finishing second in front of Bath's Northgate. Ryknild's youngsters also impressed in winning the "traditional" section.

But it was Newcastle's Pengwyn Rapper who proved winners with a polished and entertaining dance. This women's team, based at Byker's Cumberland Arms, achieved their deserved victory over some good opposition - despite the fact that this was only their fourth time out in public! Next year they will be elevated to the "Premier" class, where they would not have been outclassed this time.

Five teams contested the "Premier" section which, as usual, was split into "Traditional" and "Own dance" categories. Two more Cumberland Arms-based teams - Sallyport and the Newcastle Kingsmen - mounted determined efforts to



Newcastle's Pengwyn Rapper, a women's team based at Byker's Cumberland Arms, were winners of the "Open" class at DERT this year.

lift the "Traditional" title. It was an extremely close call between two very different styles and arguably the best dances of the event.

In the end, it was Sallyport's rendition of the Newbiggin dance which shaded it for their first win in the top section. Interestingly it was a "first" for the dance too as the original Newbiggin team never progressed beyond runners-up spot in Newcastle's famous Cowan Trophy in the early years of this century.

The "Own dance" class produced welcome newcomers to DERT in the form of Stevenage Swords, whose performance included some very interesting figures which were greatly appreciated by the audience. Grand Union made a reasonable entrance to the Premier league following their 1993 "Open" success but it was Hoddesdon Crownsmen who came out top with a slick display.

Strangely the organisers had omitted or dropped the overall champion's title this year. Introduced in 1994, it gave an opportunity for the "Traditional" and "Own dance" categories to be compared. Would it have gone to Sallyport, Hoddesdon or even Pengwyn? Sadly, we will never know. Two other awards were also missing - for the best character(s) and for musician, which would surely have gone to Pengwyn's Dominic Cronin, whose harmonica led the judges to comment "it made us all want to dance".

On the plus side the judges' comments were summarised very well, their positive tone being a major advance on 1994. However the lack of a definitive scoring system made it difficult for competitors to make comparisons or focus on particular areas for improvement. Many spectators also commented that the overall standard of dancing seemed to have risen, a good omen for the future.

At the end of the day, DERT isn't really about winning. The biggest difference between the cut-throat competitions of the north east in the early years of this century and today's tournament is the atmosphere of friendliness which pervades. Modern dancers have a genuine interest in what each other are doing and a certain respect for the different ways they go about their dances.

Thanks are due to East Saxon Sword for taking on the organisers' mantle and producing such an enjoyable weekend (how DID they arrange the weather?). As for next years there is a rumour that Ryknild will organise the next DERT during October 1996. Their Lichfield base would certainly be a popular venue - central for everyone and with a superb setting in the wonderful Guildhall. Go for it folks!

Vince Rutland May 1995



At the 1994 DERT the stars of the show were Stone Monkey Rapper

SCARBOROUGH FAYRE

For the past three years Yorkshire Coast Morris have organised a Morris Dance Festival in the town as part of Scarborough Fayre. This year more than 20 teams attended including Gift Wrapper (a women's from Sheffield) and Stevenage Sword. In spite of indifferent weather Yorkshire Coast are to be congratulated on organising such an event - and they have plans for an even more impressive event - in the year 1999 they are hoping to put on a 9 day event to which 1,000 teams will be invited. I understand that Yorkshire Coast no longer dance Longsword as they cannot get together 6 men - in past years they performed the Boosbeck dance and took part in some Whitby Competitive Festivals.

DANCE PROGRAMMES

In spite of many requests I am afraid that few teams have taken up my offer to publish their dance programmes if they send them in. The notable exception is Lord Conyers who regularly send me a well produced printed leaflet which gives background to the team and their dances and sets out their annual programme. The late Summer to Autumn programme is:

September 9th & 10th Visit to Standon Morris Men's weekend
 December 9th Lord Conyers Morris Men's Christmas ceilidh
 23rd Conyers Yuletide Frolic - ring for details

Contributions welcome....

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The next issue will carry more details on the plans for the Sword Spectacular - particularly details of the overseas teams. I also hope to present Longsword in print - postcards, Christmas cards and the like. Any submissions gratefully received.

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