



RATTLE UP My Boys

AN OCCASIONAL BROADSHEET FOR THOSE
WITH AN INTEREST IN LONGSWORD DANCE

This was unnumbered, but was actually
Issue 5: Series 5: Autumn 1995

SWORD DANCING PRESENTED ON POSTCARDS

Probably the oldest photographic record of an English Longsword team is depicted on photographs and a postcard of the Bellerby team which has been dated as from 1872 - a copy of the postcard is in the Vaughan Williams Library (and was printed in the article on the Bellerby team by Ruth Dodsworth in "Rattle Up My Boys" Issue 1, Series 5, Autumn, 1994).

Over the years large numbers of postcards showing dance teams (and other local customs) have been produced and many have survived. It was possible, in the days of black & white photography, to produce very short runs of cards - often of a dozen copies or so. When I first took up photography as a hobby in the 1950's it was possible to buy photographic paper in postcard sizes with a pre-printed postcard format on the back and produce short runs of your own cards. Today to have postcards printed (in colour) one needs to invest in a print run of at least 500 cards. This has not prevented a number of dance teams producing cards to publicise their presence.

Over recent years the best known collectors of postcards (who specifically concentrate on folk subjects) were Pat Pickles and her late husband Rennie. Since Rennie's death Pat has carried on collecting, and sometimes producing, folk related postcards. She kindly supplied the following material (in the form of colour photocopies taken from her display panels) from her extensive collection:



Pat & Rennie Pickles, and their display of "folk related" postcards, were regulars at many Folk events in the 1970's and 80's. Here they are at Dancing England at Derby in January 1985.

In addition to collecting old and new postcards Pat and Rennie also commissioned new designs. Rennie was involved in the early years of Castleford Longsword and played a part in the discovery of old notes of the Riccall sword dance.

**The Sword
Spectacular is
definitely on in
Scarborough**

Thanks to the committee got together by Keith Thompson (who have achieved many months work in a few weeks) and to the prompt response of the UK teams (well at least some of them didn't need chasing up) we can now safely say that the Sword Gathering is on. We have lost one or two teams along the way but gained others. Five teams - Flamborough, Grenoside, Handsworth, High Spen and Kirkburton can only attend for one day but that leaves over 40 teams, including 16 exotic teams from overseas. We offer weekend tickets or day tickets with or without camping. Send a stamped addressed envelope for details.

MAKE A NOTE OF THE DATE - BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND, MAY 24th - 27th

Please help to spread the word!

PAT & RENNIE PICKLES' COLLECTION OF POSTCARDS

1. Over the years there have been a number of postcards produced which presented Handsworth Traditional Longsword teams. This card was published circa 1950 by EFDSS from a photo by Kathy Mitchell.

2. The caption to the second reads "Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers from Sheffield, pictured here at Haddon Hall, Derbyshire. Their dance is one of the oldest surviving longsword traditions in England. Contact 0742 874761 - photograph Marg Lester"

3. A card was produced depicting the Grenoside Traditional Sword Team at the Sidmouth International Folklore Festival circa 1970. Printed by Oakhill Press.

4. This photograph by Thomas Watson of Lythe was printed in the "Down Memory Lane" feature in the Whitby Gazette - it's publication brought additional information about the team members. The team is from Ugthorpe, north of Whitby, and the photo was taken in 1938. The dancers were named as - standing left to right: Steve Stainthorpe, Aaron Hart, John Williamson, Rev. John Stewart, Frank Prudom and Earnest Bennett. Seated left and right: Sidney Prudom and Lesley Baker. Holding the lock are Lesley Agar and Tom Booth who are also the teams' mouth organ players.

5. This photograph (not printed as a postcard) shows the sword dance team from "Whitby Sea Scouts" [actually they are the *Ruswarp* group who danced at an EFDSS show at the Royal Albert Hall in 1952] which includes the late Joe Brown - back row at the left. The photo is one of three which was produced circa 1950 by Doran Bros. Copyright of the negatives belongs to Whitby Literary and Philosophical Society.

More information anyone?

It is very frustrating when, despite every effort, it proves impossible to uncover any details of the subjects depicted in a postcard or photograph - can readers help with details of any of the following cards?

6. In the past postcards were produced of many seemingly unimportant teams. This card (one of two - or more - in the set) was published by Glen & Co of Leeds and shows a school team from Carlinghow near Balley in West Yorkshire. Nothing else is known about the team.

7. "Little Wittenham Sword Dancers 1916" is chalked on the board held by one of the team. The printers were "J A Letter & Sons". Otherwise Pat has no other information. Can any reader help?

8. Written on the back of this card is the description "Blake Hall Pageant, July 16th 1913. Sword dance performed by outlaws". The wording on further cards in the set explains that the "outlaws" were part of the cast of a pastoral play. Blake Hall is at Bovinger, near Ongar in Essex.

9. A number of current teams have produced promotional postcards. This one from the 1980's depicts Claro Sword and Morris Men. The photo was taken by Marcel Boughton.

10. In recent years a number of photos have come to light of dancers from the village of Bellerby (see Rattle Up My Boys Issue 5, Series 2 and Issue 1, Series 5). This card is clearly marked "June 1926 No 1" and is similar to a number of photos which were obviously all taken at the same time. The dancers have been identified to Pat as - standing left to right: G Thistlethwaite (fiddler), W Robinson, J Beck, H Thistlethwaite (Bert), R Bell, R Bell, J Bowler, G Longstaff (drummer) - standing centre W Thistlethwaite - seated: J W Styan, H Breakwell, T Thistlethwaite.

Pat adds "names of the Longsword dancers, along with this copy of a postcard of Bellerby Feast where they performed, were supplied by Mrs Ellwood who is a descendant of the Thistlethwaites. A copy of the play, which later came into her



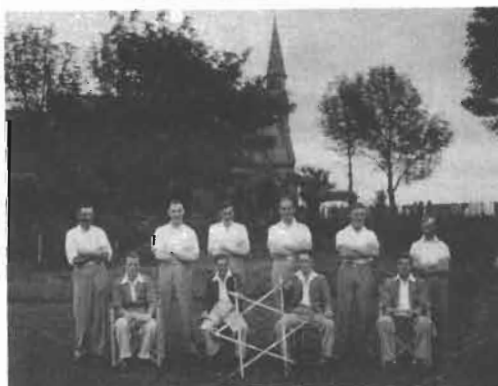
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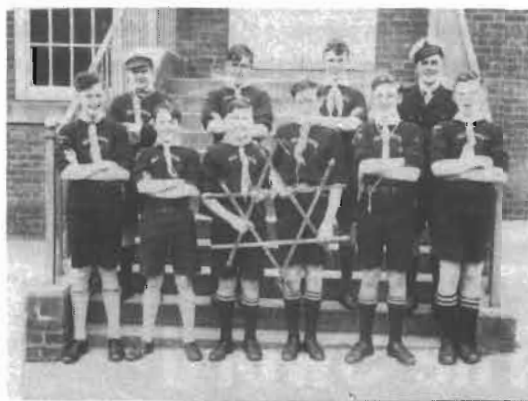
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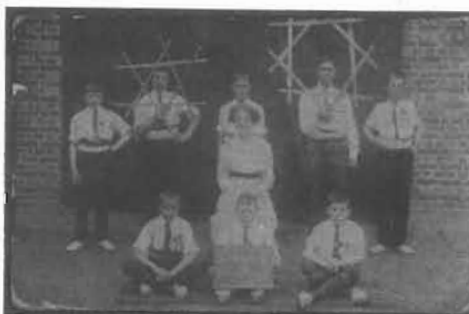
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Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers - above left on E.F.D.S. post card - photograph by Kathleen Mitchell in the 1950s, and above right on their team post card around the same time. Below: A team of Longsword dancers and a team of Morris dancers. No clue as to who or where they may be. Does anyone know them? ← ???

One of the A4 sized pages from Pat's display, Card No 1 is top left



8



9



10

Belleby June 1936



11

MONKSEATON MORRIS MEN Photo by Mrs. Widdows, Eborac, 1931



12

WELL DONE RICKY!

Gordon Ridgewell was one of a number of readers who drew my attention to a newspaper item (in the Newcastle Evening Chronicle March 24, 1995) which reported on efforts by High Spen Blue Diamond Rapper (and especially Ricky Forster) to introduce sword dancing to young people. As many teams meet in pubs it is virtually impossible for youngsters to become involved other than through school. Ricky, and his father and grandfather before him, have played an major part in ensuring continued interest in sword dancing.

possession was also provided. I am eternally grateful to Mrs Ellwood, and others like her, who are able to provide the extra detail and background information which makes a postcard come to life."

11. The Women's Institute published postcards depicting local traditions including this one showing Monkseaton Morris Men who have just 'sacrificed' their musician [in their presentation of the Ampleforth dance and play]. The photo was taken by Mrs Wanless of Earsden Grange Women's Institute.

12. A photo originally identified as depicting Lingdale but now thought to be of the North Skelton White Rose team with George Tremain playing the melodeon. Details of the dancers names have been supplied but were not to hand at publication date. The date is likely to be a few years earlier than the well known EFDSS film of the same North Skelton team which was taken in 1932.

13. Fred Inganni, of Redcar Sword Dancers, provided this photo suggesting that it was of Loftus Sword Dancers but it is likely to be of North Skelton. The original is hung in a pub in Loftus and on the back is written: "Standing L - R: Matthew Seymour, William Martin, George Featherstone; George Darby & John Watts - musicians; Seated Joe Winspear, Charlie Mayes, Robert Featherstone; Clowns are Tom Shaw and Tom Gilbert.

(George Martin, a Darbyshire (sic) miner, was in place of Tom Martin) This photograph was taken in Chesterfield - in 1892 team moved to Darbyshire at time of Durham Miners strike."

14. In 1911 Cecil Sharp visited a number of sword dance venues in North Yorkshire, including the fishing village of Flamborough. In common with Sharp's approach on many of his visits to other teams he arranged for a series of photos to be taken, in this case by W R Readhead, a professional photographers from Scarborough. A number of postcards were made from some of these photos, no doubt adding to the popularity the dance enjoyed from the 1920's onwards.

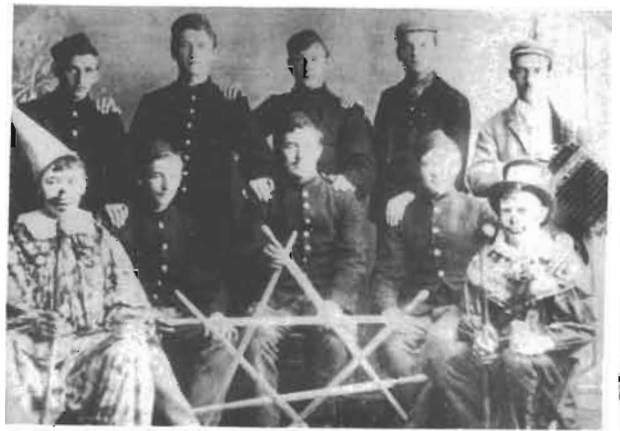
15. A line drawing of Handsworth Longsword Dancers [by Celia Kemp], one of a series produced by 'Art of Folk' of London in the 1980's.

16. Winster Morris have performed their version of the Flamborough sword dance for many years, possibly since the early 1920's. [See the note by the teams Archivist in RUMB Issue 4, Series 2 Winter 1989/90.] This card, one of a set of three printed in woodcut style, was specially designed by Ros Forster.

17. A card designed and produced by Pat and Rennie Pickles for sale at Dancing England 1986. Pat is absolutely certain that the illustration is based on a photo of Lingdale Sword Dancers!

Other key items in Pat's collection include 8 photographs of Goathland Plough Stots circa 1951 produced by Doran Bros. There are also 3 or 4 photos of Castleford Longsword in the 1970's and one from a photograph by John Tindale (a retired reporter and press photographer from Whitby) showing Redcar Longsword at Whitby Folk Festival.

Pat hopes to bring her collection and display of cards and her "jigging dolls" to the Sword Spectacular.



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Any hope of identification?

Another keen collector of folk related postcards is RUMB subscriber Tony Foxworthy. Ten years or so ago Tony sent me a photostat of one of his cards asking if I could help to identify it. I couldn't - but I have kept the photostat and it irritates me to be beaten. Can any reader help? My guess is that it may show a Continental team, by the look of the costumes from Holland, possibly one of the many teams taught by Douglas Kennedy, or anyone of a number of other teachers, who visited the Continent after the second World War.

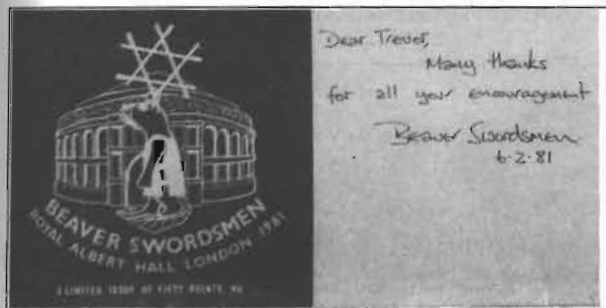
My collection of cards

My collection of postcards and related ephemera is rather haphazard - I am a kleptomaniac rather than a collector.

Over the years some first day covers depicting folk subjects have been produced. In my collection I have three first day covers:



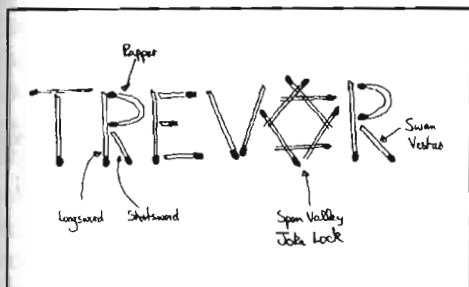
Goathland Plough Stots (produced by the village Postmaster to mark their Folk Weekend in April 1987).



Beaver Sword (produced by the magnificent school team from Beverley to celebrate their performance at the Royal Albert Hall in February 1981) who are also depicted in the postcards I produced in 1989.



Grenside Longsword dancing outside the Old Harrow on Boxing Day (produced by EFDSS in 1984, photo by Cindy Sughrue).



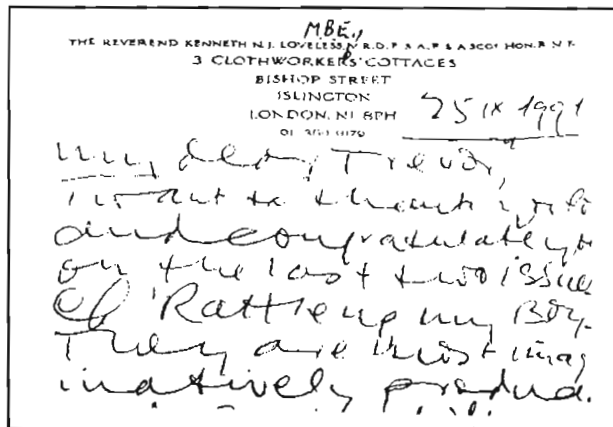
A letter from David Webster, the Secretary of Spen Valley Longsword, often comes in an elaborately decorated envelope.



I had printed 6 cards which featured Handsworth, Loftus, Beaver Sword, Spen Valley, Barnsley and a sepia photo of the 1912 Sleights team. The Handsworth card sold out but a set of the other 5 are £1.50, including postage.



In the past two or three years Handsworth and Grenside have reproduced paintings by Sheffield artist Bill Kirkby, both of which show the teams dancing on Boxing Day. Cards (and prints) are available of the paintings of both teams - contact the teams direct.



My favourite postcard is one of a number sent by Father Kenneth Loveless in which he comments about RUMB. It took hours to decipher his writing but the effort was always worthwhile.

CALL FOR TEAMS TO ATTEND AN EVENT IN ITALY

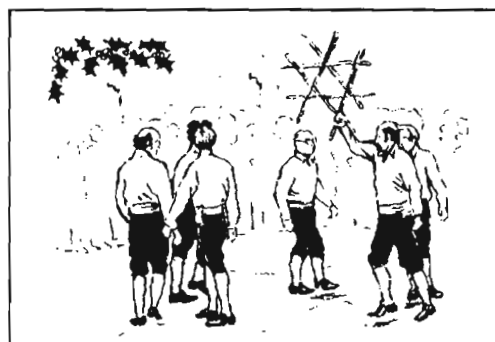
As a result of notifying them about the Sword Spectacular I have been put on the mailing list for the Europeade International Committee who regularly organise international events. They are inviting teams to apply (urgently) for an event featuring many teams and groups to be held in Turin in Piedmont in Northern Italy. The date is July 24th to 28th 1996. Contact me for further details.

Greetings and Christmas cards

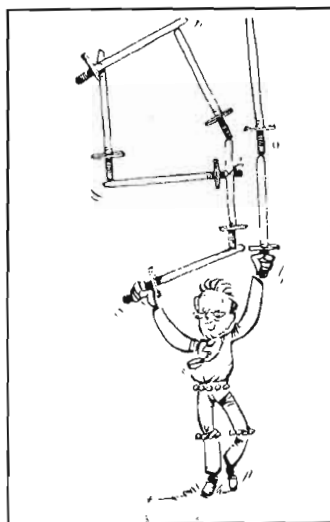
Over the years I have collected a number of greetings cards which caught my fancy. I look forward to receiving a Christmas card from Doc Rowe which usually features an illustration he draws himself and often features sword dancers.



One of the most striking Christmas cards I have seen was loaned to me by Margaret & Les Seaman. It depicts a Handsworth Dancer in collage and made by team member Peter Machan in 1993.



A number of people and groups produce their own cards - this one came from a member of Sussex Weavers.



Another New Year card of note is from Renaat Van Craenenbroeck, leader of the Lange Wapper team from Antwerp whose New Year cards feature a cartoon style illustration of Renaat drawn by Jean-Marie Bayche, one of the key men in the Dunkirk sword team and a graphic designer by training.



In recent years EFDSS have produced fund raising Christmas cards and they reproduced a woodcut design by Alex Hunter from 1937 showing a sword dance performance at Thaxted, which readers may recognise as the one produced with RUMB in Winter 1987.

If you have any cards why not send a sample? I will of course return them



An intriguing document

Renaat Van Craenenbroeck, prime mover of the Lange Wapper team from Antwerp, writes about an illustration in an ancient document.

I was talking to Jean-Marie Byache of the Dunkirk Sword Team "In De Kring" and his wife Annie about the Walloon stick dance from Marbisoux, which contains a lot of similar features to many sword dances. This Walloon dance is performed by the "pêlerins" (pilgrims), as they call themselves. The word pilgrims reminded Annie of a publicity leaflet they had seen describing a book on the Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Galicia. It showed an old print on which one could see persons holding sticks as if for a dance.

Some days later Jean-Marie sent me the leaflet which presented a page from the "Calendrier du Livre d'Heures de la duchesse de Bourgogne" from about 1450 (Museum Condé de Chantilly). It shows, in a corner, four pilgrims; two of them hold a stick in the hilt-and-point manner towards a third man who appears to intend to jump over it. The last one has shouldered his stick, whereas other people use their sticks for walking.

There is no certainty that this presents a stick dance but it is a very intriguing find. I thought it may be of interest to readers of RUMB. Perhaps other documents will turn up and complete the picture!

Sword dance Spectacular

at Scarborough

Spring Bank Holiday, May 24th to 27th, 1996

Teams who have confirmed to date:

In de Kring, Dunkirk <i>from France</i>	Dorset Button Rapper
Lange Wapper	East Saxon Sword
Quevaucamps Sword	Flamborough Longsword <i>Sunday only</i>
Boerke Naas <i>from Belgium</i>	Gift Rapper
Bystrice pod Lopenikem	Goathland Plough Stots
Strani	Grenoside Longsword <i>Saturday only</i>
Komna <i>from Czechoslovakia</i>	Handsworth Sword <i>Sunday only</i>
Baden-Württemberg	High Spen Blue Diamonds <i>Saturday only</i>
Überlingen <i>from Germany</i>	Kirkburton Rapier Dancers <i>Saturday only</i>
Bagnasco	Newcastle Kingsmen
Fennestrelle <i>from Italy</i>	Redcar Sword
Markina <i>from Spain</i>	Ryburn Sword
Half Moon Sword	Ryknild Rabble
Longwood Rapper	Sallyport Sword Dancers
Orion Sword <i>from USA</i>	Snark Rapper
Toronto Women <i>from Canada</i>	Southport Swords
AND FROM BRITAIN:	Stevenage Sword
Addison Rapper	Stone Monkey Rapper
Bishop Gundulf's Sword	Sullivan's Sword
Carlisle Sword & Morris	Thrales Rapper
Claro Sword & Morris	White Boys of Mann
Clydeside Step & Rapper	White Star Sword
Coventry Mummers	Wype Doles Sword

Ticket prices

Saturday Workshops £2 each, theatre shows £3.50; "Mainly Dance" or Ceilidh £5

Sunday morning Conference £6.50; High Tea and English Dance show £5

Foreign teams showcase £5; Evening show £5; "World of Sword" films and talk £2;

Weekend tickets with camping £32; without camping £22

Day tickets with camping £13; without camping £9

FREE OUTDOOR DISPLAYS AND TOURS

plus many informal and pub based events

PRESENTATION OF ENGLISH FOLK DANCE & SONG SOCIETY'S GOLD BADGE TO IVOR ALLSOP AND HARRY PITTS

In spite of getting my hands slapped by EFDSS for releasing the information on the Gold Badge awards whilst it was "embargoed" I must say that the Society excelled when it awarded the honour (after a few years without an award) to Ivor Allsop (at the Society's AGM in November) and posthumously to Harry Pitts (at the Carol Concert at Cecil Sharp House). Both events were most enjoyable.

Award to Ivor Allsop

After a few years without making presentations of their prestigious Gold Badge the English Folk Dance and Song Society made up for the omissions by honouring two major figures whose main activity was in the area of Longsword dancing. The first award was made to Ivor Allsop at the National Gathering following the Society's Annual General Meeting at Cecil House. The citation was by Richard Hankinson, Squire of the Morris Ring who has promised to supply a copy of his address for publication in a future issue.

Award to Harry Pitt's widow

On December 13th 1995, at the Carol Concert at Cecil Sharp House following an excellent performance by the Handsworth Sword Dancers, a presentation was made to Norma Pitts, the widow of Harry, of the English Folk Dance and Song Society's Gold Badge. As Gordon Ridgewell commented in a letter to me "it was a most fitting setting for a special occasion". An extract from the citation, which I had the honour to delivering immediately after the Handsworth team had danced, follows:

Harry Pitts was born - and died - in Sheffield. In that lifetime he had a major influence on the folk world and was an inspiration to those who knew him.

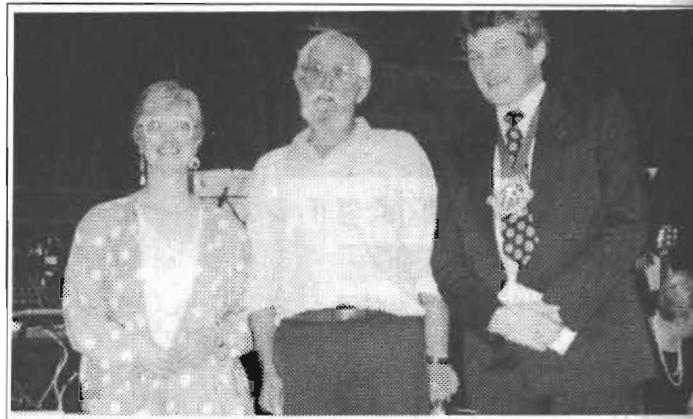
As a young man Harry took on the task of leader of the local Youth Club. He organised events for the club and quickly recognised the craze for folk dances. Harry pursued this new found interest with enthusiasm. He joined local EFDSS classes where he was 'guided' by Hannah Mawson who was keen to boost membership of the two local sword dance teams. Harry was persuaded to join the Handsworth team and in 1951 he danced out for the first time.

In 1954 he took over as Captain. Over the years the teams' standing improved and they were in great demand throughout the country and abroad.

Working with others he researched other sword dances, including the Poppleton dance from near York. During all this time his interest in social dance grew. He was an accomplished caller and created a number of dances. As leader of the influential Sheffield Teachers' Folk Dance Club, he introduced hundreds of young people to the delights of folk dancing.

Harry was an elegant and restrained dancer - in an obituary for his father his son John wrote "His style of dancing was uniquely dignified and controlled, and inspired many to seek an understanding of the longsword tradition"

Harry danced with the Handsworth Traditional Longsword team for more than 40 years right up to his death. During those years he encouraged the team to support the Society and the award of the Gold Badge honours the man and the team. As early as 1927 the team appeared at the forerunner of the Royal Albert Hall Festivals. They appeared at many Society events to thrill and excite audiences. Harry encouraged this commitment and during his leadership the team supported many Society events. The Society recognises the contribution to the folk movement made by the Handsworth team. They have done this by honouring Harry Pitts who for so many years epitomised the team.



Above: Ivor Allsop (centre) with Hillary Warburton, Chair of EFDSS National Council and Richard Hankinson, Squire of The Morris Ring after the presentation of the Gold Badge.

Below: Norma, Harry Pitts widow with her son John who is an active member (dancer and musician) with the Handsworth team and her grandson who intends to take up dancing as soon as he is able.



This is the last issue in the fifth series. I planned that this would be the last but the amount of material I have will support at least one more series - your continued support for the next series would be appreciated. The next issue will carry an article by Rhett Krause (from America) on variations on the sword lock.

Contributions welcome

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