



# RATTLE UP My Boys

AN OCCASIONAL BROADSHEET FOR THOSE  
WITH AN INTEREST IN LONGSWORD DANCE

Issue 3, Series 6. Spring, 1997

## MORE INVENTED LOCKS

After his visit to the International Sword Gathering Rhett Krause wrote to me, keen to share his enthusiasm for further developments in the format of locks. Rhett writes:

"Here are some further thoughts on sword locks, based on my experience at the Sword Festival. The event was a great opportunity for me to see what innovative locks are used in England and also to get feedback from dancers on which locks and which methods of tying locks they prefer. The best time for this was at my Monday morning workshop on locks. I am grateful to the participants (mostly members of East Saxon Sword, Bishop Gundulf's Sword, Toronto Women's Longsword, and Stevenage Rapper) for their input.

I had suspected that some of the locks that were new to me would be independently "invented" by other teams, and I was pleased to find three examples of this. The Bishop Gundulf's boys team had at one time used the 4/3 lock (when they had only four dancers), and I was shown a very quick and easy method of tying it that I was unaware of. The Bishop Gundulf's men's team are the only team I am aware of that uses the 3 x 3 portcullis. I had written that the 8/6B lock was impossible with the usual British longswords, but was theoretically possible with unusually long or flexible swords. I was delighted at the Sunday stage performance to see that this lock is a regular part of In de Kring's dance, and would be curious to find out how many years it has been so. (*The team have created this lock ever since they first performed in public in March 1990: T.S.*)

I found two locks of which I had been unaware. The first of these was accidentally created at my workshop when one group (of mostly East Saxon men) tried to tie the 6/5 lock with relatively stiff longswords, ignoring my warning that this would be impossible. Indeed, they could not make the last cross, but went as far as they could, creating the lock shown opposite. In one sense this is just the usual 6/4 lock with the six points pushed together in three pairs. However I think it would look different enough to an audience that I consider it a brand new radially symmetric lock (Similarly, I suppose that yet another lock could be created by making all but the last cross of the 8/5 lock). The other new lock I saw was on a videotape of the Coventry Mummers, and was in essence the usual 6/4 lock with one sword absent (still perfectly stable). This was part of



their brilliantly innovative "Diminishing Sword Dance" that also included a variant of the usual 6/4 lock that could be broken in an instant into two triangles. (*A description of the Coventry dance follows: T.S.*)

For my earlier work in both *Rattle Up My Boys* and Ivor's book, I included only one method for tying each lock. At the time I thought this was best, but my experience at the workshop on locks suggests that some of the methods I left out of the articles were quite popular and might be more "user friendly" to dancers than the ones that were printed. Here are a few examples:

### The New 6/4 Lock

Start in a clockwise facing ring with Odds clashing in a high basket and Evens clashing in a low basket (Evens: make this a "reverse basket", with your strikes directed toward the rear rather than toward the front). Evens: Raise the point of your sword toward the belt buckle of the Even to your left until the sword is horizontal. You will find another sword point directed at your belt buckle. Reach

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under your own sword with your left hand and grasp this point. Evens have now formed a triangle with an Even at each corner, holding their swords, right over left. Odds: You will now build the outer triangle, forming it at 180 degrees relative to the inner triangle. To do this, first identify the space between the hands of the Even to your left. Plunge the point of your sword down into this space. Now bring your sword down to horizontal. Cross your hilt under the point of the sword of the Odd to your right.

### The New 8/4 Lock

Follow the directions for the New 6/4 Lock with the following modifications: Substitute "square" for "triangle". Note that the outer square is laid down at 45 degrees to the inner square.

### The Kirkby Malzeard/Double Triange/Ornetti Lock

(for rapper or longsword). Starting in an inward facing linked ring, follow my directions previously printed in RUMB for the New 6/4 lock up to the point where the inner triangle has been made and the outer triangle is about to be laid upon it. Remember that the Kirkby Malzeard Lock and the New 6/4 Lock are both made of a small inner triangle within a larger triangle. The only difference between them is the degree of rotation of one triangle relative to the other. For the Kirkby Malzeard Lock, you will want to lay down the outer triangle so that each sword within it is parallel to the nearest sword in the inner triangle. To do this, you will need to move both of your hands to your left (clockwise). It should now be obvious how to make the final crosses.

### The 4 x 4 Portcullis Lock

Follow the directions for the Kirkby Malzeard lock above, substituting "square" for "triangle".

In practice, I have found that the Kirkby Malzeard (or Ornetti Lock, as we call it), is less attractive in rapper than in longsword, since it must be tied so tightly with rappers that the triangles become too small. On my team, I solve this the following way. After it is tied and I am about to hold it up, I take an extra few seconds to make two more crosses to give the following lock (see below). With a little practice, one person can do this quickly. I believe that this makes it a more attractive lock for rapper.

I was embarrassed to find one major mistake in my lock article. I dismissed the 7/6 "Papa Stour" Lock as "impossible" for rappers. Clearly this is not the case, and rapper teams with seven dancers can and do make this. This was just a careless error on my part which I regret. I would not be surprised if some sharp eyed sword dancer has already written to you to correct me on this.

I am well aware that there are many British and Continental teams that I have never seen. I would be grateful to hear of other teams' experience with "non-traditional" locks, including any success that they have had with the locks I have described.

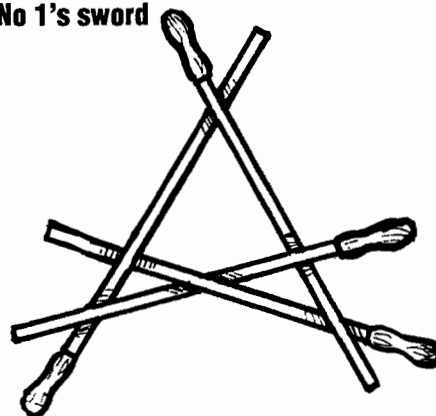
Rhett Krause, July 1996

## A problem spotted - and solved?

Ian Davies, a member of Goathland Plough Stots and one of the hard working volunteers at the Sword Spectacular was one of those who saw little of the event as he spent most of the time in the office. However when he had the time to relax he wrote to me about Rhett's piece on locks in the last issue:

"This isn't meant as nit-picking rather I hope it will be useful or of interest to others. Having spent some time poring over Rhett's article on locks in *Rattle Up My Boys* issue 1, series 6 I came up against a sticking point on the New 4/3 lock. I just couldn't see how it could end up like the illustration. So, using model swords I tried it in practice - obviously the best way! I discovered that the directions given produce the lock shown following ...

No 1's sword

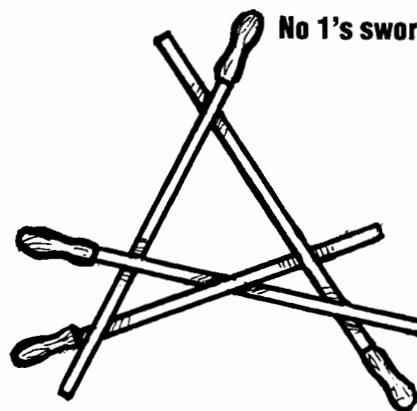


when raised by No 1 it would display in a "V" shape. Note that the handles of Nos 2 and 3 swords end-up on the same side of the "V". Alternatively, if No 1 were to do the crossing (with Nos 4 and 2), the lock could be raised in the "A" shape shown. An alternative method of making the lock - and one perhaps more familiar to most dancers - is as follows:

Begin from a hilt and point ring (actually a square). Cross hands right over left. Reach out and take the point of the sword to your left. Nos 2 and 3 cross hands left over right. Nos 1 and 3 assist 2 and 3 in moving the swords to the correct angle (the ends furthest from you must cross).

This produces the lock shown below which is a mirror image of the first.

No 1's sword



Again this is displayed as a "V". If Nos 1 and 2 make the second crossing of swords No 1 can reach forward to grasp the centre of the lock to show the "A" shape."

Ian Davies, October 1996

*(When Rhett supplied the text for his article in issue 1 of Series 6 he supplied basic "stick" diagrams. I decided to tidy up the diagrams and add handles. It was at this stage that the problem spotted by Ian and others crept in - the error was mine and not Rhett's: T.S.)*

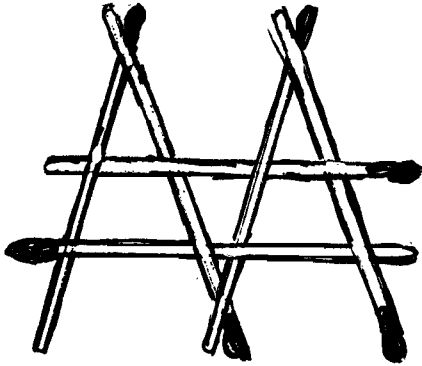
## More Sword lock thoughts

Ken Anderson, who describes himself as "Foreman and fully paid-up idiot of Bishop Gundulf's" wrote an enthusiastic and generous letter about the Sword Gathering - he said:

*"We all enjoyed ourselves immensely and we learned a few things too.... A large amount of beer was consumed, and many friendships formed. Future contacts were made and further meetings arranged - this alone was worth the price of admission."* Ken was one of the people at Rhett's workshop at

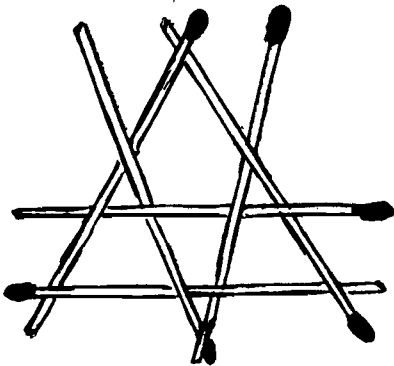
the Sword event and, obviously inspired (or something) he writes:

"While inventing a Mumming Play with sword dance, (Sword Dance with mumming?) I stumbled across a new lock. It is similar to the lock described on page 341/342 of Mr Allsop's "New Bible". I shall relate to you the sequence of events leading to my "discovery". I was looking for something different to do with two lines of three men, thus -



If, instead of pairing up across the set in the usual manner, Nos 3 & 4 passed swords and Nos 5 & 6 do likewise, then Nos 1 & 2 can insert their swords to form a portcullis of sorts. This portcullis is only the starting position, and will not form a lock. If Nos 3, 4, 5 & 6 raise handles and lower points Nos 1 & 2 can easily insert swords across.

Nos 4 & 5 cross Hilt under Point. No 6 crosses his Hilt under Point. Not displeasing, but slightly unstable. The name (h)emlock springs to mind, for obvious reasons. Two of the swords only achieve 3 crossings, so it's a 6/4:3? or 4/4+2/3? Let Rhett worry!!!



Now, suppose Nos 5 & 4 were to cross again, Hilt over Point. No 6 holds up the now stabilised lock. 6/4, no worries about classification now! Names suggested by shape may be The "A" lock, Three "A"s, or whatever. ("Haylock"?) The dance itself will be named after the first place at which we do it. I do hope it's not "St Bernadette's Home For Fallen Women" annual fete!

I have tentatively called this lock Gundulf's Lock, as the large pentagon, top centre, resembles a bishop's mitre in shape. We shall be using this lock in regular performance, and although it is not symmetrical, it is different, and to us at least, quite pleasing.

LONGSWORD DANCERS DO IT OVER YOUR NEIGHBOURS!!!!

Ken Anderson, July 1996

## The Diminishing Sword Dance

One of the teams I have heard of many times earlier but not seen until they attended the Sword Spectacular event was Coventry Mummers. A number of Mummers teams incorporate a sword dance in their performance but this team put more

emphasis on the sword dance than most and have developed a dance which attracted attention from many people at the weekend. Ron Shuttleworth, one of the founders of the team, supplied details.

"the title of this piece shall be

## THE COVENTRY MUMMERS' DIMINISHING SWORD-DANCE.

Any reprint or performance must be so designated. Devised by Bernard Oakley and Jim Brannigan.

The figures of the dance were based on the Escrick tradition but there is no reason why they should be. However, whichever figures are chosen, care is needed otherwise complications can occur. The first two figures are performed by six men, and a variety of figures are suitable (a selection from North Skelton for instance).

The Clown enters and sings a calling-on song based on the well-known one from Earsdon. Each of six dancers is introduced with a specially written and libellous verse. (throughout the next few figures, the Clown keeps up a humorous running commentary).

Fig 1. 2-4-6 entry, Rolls, ring and Fore-lock.

Fig 2. Another figure (Arches), ring. Up and Under lock with number four turning the wrong way. This enables the six point lock to be made with the upper horizontal sword missing, which is retained by its owner who fakes an injured leg and is helped out and off stage by the Clown.

Fig 3. The five dancers do another figure (Fourth Man Under - with five dancers, it is third man under), ring and Back-lock to put up a standard five point 'rapper' lock.

Fig 4. Pousettes. This excludes the fifth man who leaves. V-lock ('New 3/4 lock') with four swords. Circle once, when No. 1 pulls point of the "V" apart and the lock collapses 'hurting' him and he leaves. Clown collects fallen swords to give back to the dancers

At this point, the first dancer to have gone off returns with his leg 'in plaster' (a Wellington boot covered in bandages) This distracts the audiences attention from the fact that two of the swords handed back by the Clown have been switched for trick ones.

The two men with these swords now do a paired-off Rolls figure, which excludes the third man who leaves. The remaining two go into a close circle. The 'swords' are opened into two triangles, placed one on the other, to form a six point 'lock'. Either, one man holds up the 'lock' two handed and leads the other man round and off, or both men hold the 'lock' at opposite points, and after circling once go off in opposite directions, each holding up their triangle of 'swords'.

Each trick sword is made from three strips of 14 gauge light alloy. The two outer strips are loose-riveted at the 'crossing point' to opposite ends of the middle strip. Each man can open out his sword and, holding the free ends crossed, form a triangle. The lock displayed is rotated through thirty degrees to that usually held up by one man.

Copyright Coventry Mummers, 1984. Details of this play may be reproduced, or it may be acted before an informed audience, provided that it is always properly acknowledged. As it is a parody it should never be performed before the general public."

## One thing is missing!

In various articles over recent issues comment has been made on the length of swords. Norman Peacock wrote to me to point out that perhaps the most important element of sword design had been overlooked - the thickness and therefore the flexibility of the blade. Norman also supplied notes about the double

triangle lock as used by the Kirkby Malzeard team. In addition to the following article Norman also supplied a note prepared by the late Keith Constable, Captain of Sword for Leeds Morris Men which were prepared between 1954 and 1957 and was based on the team's version of the dance.

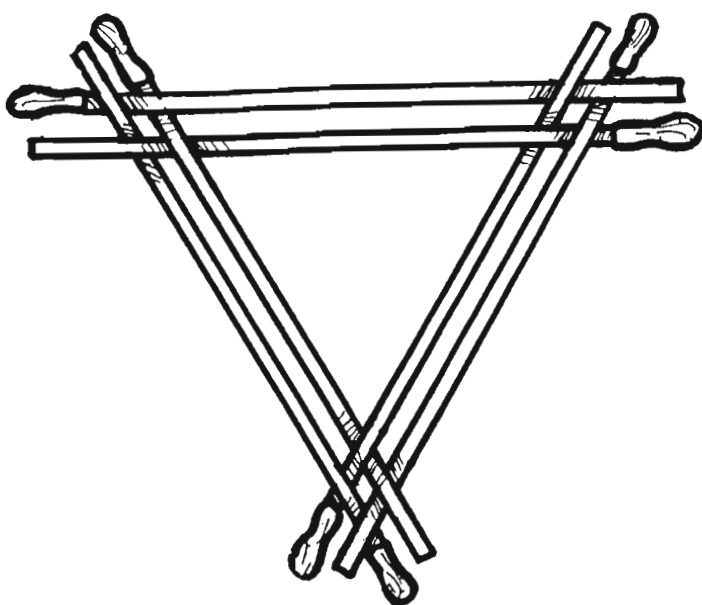
## The Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dance

by Norman Peacock



From the earliest days of the Leeds Morris Men in 1950, Ted Purver, our Squire, insisted that we should take up a "local" Sword Dance, and to this end he wrote to Douglas Kennedy who had recently published an article on "Fresh Light on the Kirkby Malzeard Dance" in the *EFSS Journal* (1). This article was based on Douglas's observation of the (revived) Dance in the 1920s and subsequent

correspondence with Ralph Wood who led that revival. We wrote to Ralph Wood, but received a reply from his son, Norman, who was a master at Richmond Grammar School, to say that his father had died the previous December. Ted and I visited Norman Wood, as Ted recorded in a letter to *English Dance & Song* in September 1950 (2), and I had a useful, if sporadic correspondence with Norman Wood over the next 8 years. He had been "reserve" for his father's team in the mid-1920s but had subsequently left to go to Liverpool University and had never returned to Kirkby permanently. Although he had taught the Dance to schoolboys from time to time, he did not then have a team and said his recollection of the Dance was becoming hazy. He did, however, confirm that the Lock was a double triangle and that his father had observed personally that when the "old" team performed for Keighley Snowden (3) in 1906 they made a "standard" hexagonal Lock because they did not wish to betray the secret of the double triangle. (Incidentally there could be some confusion in nomenclature here since Sharp in *The Sword Dances of Northern England Part I* (4) refers to the hexagonal Lock as "a double triangle or six pointed star").



On our visit to Norman Wood we did not learn how to make the double-triangle Lock and all we had to go on was the rather vague description in Douglas Kennedy's short note in the *EFSS Journal* for 1948 (5), which said there was a slight adjustment from the making of the hexagonal Lock. In Leeds we therefore

practised the Dance using the hexagonal Lock. At the end of 1951 I had further correspondence with Norman Wood, who gave me the following description of the making of the Lock.

1, 3 & 5 make the Lock.

1 has his own hilt in his right hand and takes the point of 4's sword in his left hand. 6's goes over 4's and under 1's, and his point is taken by 3 and placed by 3 over 5's and under 2's, while 1 is placing 3's point over his own sword, and under 4's. While this is happening 5 is putting 1's point over his own sword and under 2's, and putting 2's point over 1's sword and under 4's.

Note: Norman Wood numbered the dancers clockwise but I have amended this to the normal anticlockwise numbering.

This we found a bit confusing and we finally devised the following method to get the same result.

After the Clash, instead of forming a 6 man ring, 1, 3 and 5 formed a clockwise triangular Lock putting point over hilt, making this as tight as possible to form the inner triangle. 2, 4 and 6, holding their swords in an anti-clockwise direction, intertwined them with those of 1, 3 and 5. and, with some help from 1, 3 and 5 formed the outer triangle.

It should be noted that either of these methods resulted in an anti-parallel array, i.e. the two swords on any side of the triangle pointed in opposite directions.

The following summer (1952), on Mr. Wood's suggestion, Clifford Barstow and I visited Mr. Harry Holmes, the schoolmaster at Kirkby who had been a member of Ralph Wood's team. He had recently trained a team of women who had performed the Dance at the celebration of the Centenary of the local Mechanics' Institute on 21st June 1952. Among other things, Mr. Holmes taught us how to make the Lock as follows, from the Ring. 6 & 1, 2 & 3, 4 & 5 come together, the even numbers giving the hilts of their swords to the odd numbers (the odd numbers allow these swords to slide through their left hands to do this). At the same time the evens take the additional sword points which comes to them from the left, in their right hands. Thus the odds hold two hilts and the evens hold two points. These they intertwine, odds beginning with left in front of right and evens with right in front of left so that each puts his left under the other's right. It should be noted that this produces a parallel array, in which all swords point in the same direction round the ring.

At this time we also got a copy of the postcard showing "Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dancers about year 1900" which George Duffield had found in his Post Office.

From this time the Leeds Men always used the latter form of the double-triangle Lock in their frequent performances of the Kirkby Dance and even incorporated it in their crest, surrounding the white rose of Yorkshire. We found we were able to put this Lock on the Captain's head, as described by Sharp in *Sword Dances of Northern England* (4), rather than over his head and on to his shoulders as in the Grenoside Dance, for the hexagonal Lock.

The Lock continued to intrigue me, however, and I noted that

(a) Cecil Sharp in his *Ms. Folk Dance Notebook* (6) says of the Lock "... method of accomplishing this was rather different from that adopted by the Grenoside men. but it amounted to the same thing." In *Sword Dances of Northern England* (4), however, he simplifies the instructions by referring back from the account of Grenoside to that of Kirkby, thus implying that the methods were the same.

(b) Sharp states in both the *Ms. notebook* and *Sword Dances of Northern England* that the Lock was placed on the Captain's head.

(c) In the photographs accompanying Snowden's article (3) the Lock is misshapen, being nearly pentagonal with three swords intersecting at one point. I experimented with a set of swords and found that very probably they had been trying to make a hexagonal Lock but one man had put point over hilt (left over right) first, and, in order to stabilise the resulting Lock, the leader, presumably, had jammed all the swords at that corner together.

Thus it was quite clear that the dancers did know how to make a hexagonal Lock even if it was not their normal practice.

Incidentally on the other point of contention raised by Douglas Kennedy (1), the performance of Over Double Sword, I noted that Cecil Sharp, who only saw this figure on his second visit to Kirkby in 1910, shows obvious confusion in his Ms Notebook (6) over the order in which 4, 5 and 6 went over in this figure.

In 1955 I got in touch with Mr. A. Grimsdale, the Secretary of the Mechanics' Institute, who gave me a copy of the account of the Dance entered in the Institute Log in 1892 by John Croft, metalworker, aged 76. This account is quoted at length in Sharp's Ms. notebook (6) but not in *Sword Dances of Northern England* (4) although the words of the songs given in the latter are identical with those given in the Log. The Log is also quoted at length in H. M. Bower's Ms. 'Notes on old-time dress of Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dancers' (7) but neither of these gives much detail of the Dance, except that the Log says the Lock was "a kind of square lattice work". This sounds more like a hexagon than a triangle.

Mr. Grimsdale told me that George Duffield, the postmaster, could only think of three surviving members of the 1920's team in the village: Herbert Waite, Don Waite (musician) and Don Gill, but on a visit, I met Mr. Baynton who had also been a member in the 1920's and 30's. He gave me his green corduroy breeches and a yellow stocking, which I still have, but, more important, he told me that Tom Moore, one of the 1886 team was still alive in Grewelthorpe. Tom, then 89, had started dancing in 1883 and stopped before Tom Wood died in 1912. He identified all the dancers on the 1900 postcard, including himself and his brother James. When it came to the Dance and the Lock he was very hazy, although, when shown them, he preferred the hexagon to the double triangle. What he did say was that they put the Lock over the Clown's head on to his shoulders and this, I think, would be most difficult with the double triangle. Incidentally Tom was one of four Moores in the team at the 1886 Ripon Millenary Festival and I often wonder whether the remark made by Tom Wood to H. M. Bower (7) and reported by Fuller-Maitland and Broadwood (8), that ".... he will have nothing to do with the present Christmas sword Dancers or 'Moowers' ...." should be taken at its (blackened-) face value or was it a punning reference to the composition of the team? Anyway it seems a very odd remark since every account says that Tom Wood always led the team and he certainly appeared at the Ripon Festival in 1896 and in Keighley Snowden's photographs.

The culmination of this activity was a tour by the Leeds Men on 23rd June 1956 which finished up with shows in Kirkby and Grewelthorpe with a special performance of the Dance outside Tom Moore's house. At Kirkby the whole village turned out and we got a public oration from George Duffield. At Grewelthorpe, despite the Sunday School outing, there was another enthusiastic crowd and Tom Moore was very pleased. The only complaint from him and others, was that we took the Dance too slowly: it is said that the traditional teams got through the whole Dance, with Single Under between each figure, in 10 minutes!

There was an instructive sequel to this tour when I was speaking to some friends at Grantley Hall (3 miles from Kirkby) the following New Year. They said, "They had a team doing the Sword Dance at Kirkby last summer." I pricked up my ears - and then flattened them again when I realised I was about to "collect" myself!

I did have correspondence with Norman Wood again and, amongst other things he lent me a photograph which, according to a note I have, shows the 1920s team at Grantley Hall displaying the double-triangle Lock. If I had a copy of this photograph it would presumably tell me whether the swords ran parallel or anti-parallel. Does anyone have a copy?

#### References

- (1) Douglas Kennedy, "Fresh Light on the Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dance", *JEFDSS, Vol.V, no.2 (1947) 69-71. (Also as Journal Reprint No.1 (1947).*
- (2) A. E. Purver, *Letter to English Dance & Song, xv, no.2 Sept. 1950, 50.*
- (3) Keighley Snowden, "A Christmas Sword Dance", *The London Magazine, xvii (1906) 385 - 391.*
- (4) Cecil J. Sharp, *The Sword Dances of Northern England, Part 1. 2nd Edn., (1951) 37 - 53.*
- (5) Douglas Kennedy, *JEFDSS, Vol.V, no.3 (1948) 156.*

(6) Cecil J. Sharp, *Ms Folk Dance, vol.1, pp 227-86 (Sept. 1911) (original in Clare College Library, Cambridge) microfilm in Vaughan Williams Library of EFDSS, Reel 7 frames 493-7*

(7) H. M. Bower Ms notes on 'Old-time Dress of Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dancers', in *Vaughan Williams Library (1926)*

(8) L. E. Broadwood & J. A. F. Fuller-Maitland, *English County Songs (1893) 16-17.* Norman Peacock, Summer 1996

(Readers may be interested to know that descendants of Norman's informants regularly appear with the Highside (Kirkby Malzeard) team. See the letter from Jim Coulson in *Rattle Up My Boys, issue 1, series 2, Autumn 1989: T.S.*)

## Sharp got it wrong

John Ledbury may be getting rather weary of errors being spotted (mainly by eagle-eyed Gordon Ridgewell) in his thesis printed in three issues of series 4 of *Rattle Up My Boys*. The latest comment related to a date in the John's article "The Historical Evidence for Sword Dancing in Britain" in *Rattle Up My Boys* issue 3, series 4.

John pointed out that in Sharp's *Sword Dances of Northern England* (part 1, page 54) Sharp refers to an article on Grenoside "Twelfth Night on the Moors - Morris Dancers in Yorkshire" in the *Pall Mall Gazette* appearing on January 8th 1885 whereas it actually appeared in the newspaper dated January 8th 1895. In my summary of the letter from Gordon I didn't make it clear that Sharp (or his publisher) got the date wrong not John.

John continued in his letter to bemoan the fact that previous commitments prevented him from attending the Sword weekend but that his team (Lord Conyers Morris) had adopted the method described by Rhett to tie the triangular lock more smoothly than before. John, one of the few readers who regularly send me details of team outings, also gives advance notice of Lord Conyers winter performance to be held at the Angel at Killamarsh at 2.30pm on Saturday December 20th 1997.

## Sword Spectacular

When I saw Kirkburton Rapier Dancers out on the Boar's Head Morris New Year tour in Bradford they took me to task for leaving them out of the list of teams who attended the Scarborough event. They were unable to commit in advance and therefore didn't appear on the 'official' list of teams however they turned up and danced around Scarborough. As a safety check I had checked the teams attending with the video of the procession however the Kirkburton men missed out on the procession. There is some confusion as to whether they chose to stay in the pub or whether they were prevented from joining the procession by an over zealous member of the organising group. If it's the latter then I apologise sincerely - but I suspect that the former reason rings true!

## Second Sword Spectacular

Vince Rutland has supplied details of the second International sword event now being planned by a committee headed by Keith Thompson. Vince, the Secretary of the event, writes:

"In May, an event took place that will go down in history as the single most important gathering of sword dancers ever. Performances by no less than 43 sword dance teams representing 10 countries made the work all worthwhile.

The 1996 event was intended to be a "one-off". However, so much positive feedback has been received from far and wide that a new committee has now taken the first steps to organise a second festival of sword dancing in Scarborough over the Spring Bank Holiday Weekend in late May, 1998.

Sword Spectacular II would not seek to imitate the original. With the benefit of hindsight and with time on our side, we can smooth the organisation, improve the presentation and achieve a higher profile.

We are considering how to give performers the opportunity to see much more of each others' dances, particularly overseas groups. We may open with a limited number of events a day or two earlier, possibly involving the overseas groups and a small number of UK teams. This would give much more of a "festival" feel to the event, rather than a "weekend of dance".

We will be pleased to consider constructive criticisms of the 1996 event and will examine all the options over the coming months.

Our principal aim is to present a large, friendly festival with sword dancing as its central theme. In 1996, with performance opportunities limited by the time available, so many teams to fit in and a limited number of suitable venues, this brought many problems. It was impossible to see everything and everyone!

*(Remember the old Music Hall adage "Leave them wanting more!"? T.S.)*

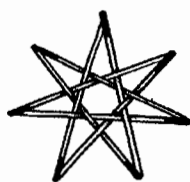
Whilst it was fantastic to host so many exponents of sword traditions, it was also an organisational nightmare! For 1998, fewer groups will be involved - but each will do more dancing and you'll be able to see more of them! Invitations will be sent to four or five overseas teams who perform their countries' own native dance traditions. A particular effort will be made to encourage those who could not, for various reasons, attend in 1996.

You are invited to register your interest NOW! In order to achieve a fair spread, we will adopt the following system:-

- i) Interested teams should register immediately by writing to me (telephone for more information but, please, confirm your interest in writing);
- ii) Application forms will be issued early in 1997 with a definite closing date
- iii) Invitations will be issued to 25 longsword and rapper teams on the basis of first come first served, a number of places to be reserved for those who could not be at the 1996 event and a number of places to be reserved for overseas longsword and rapper teams
- iv) A reserve list will be maintained to allow substitution of any teams which drop out.

Whether the Sword Spectacular becomes a regular (perhaps biannual) feature of the festival calendar remains to be seen. However, there is a wonderful opportunity to raise the profile of sword dancing - and the organisers look forward to seeing you there."

Vince Rutland, November 1996



## FURTHER COMMENTS ON THE PAPA STOUR SWORD DANCE

### More interest in the Papa Stour dance

I often receive queries from interested members of the general public, or folk dancers, about various aspects of sword dancing. Sometimes these queries develop into correspondence which supplies new information or puts a new angle on a subject. One such query came some months ago from Barclay Wilson\* who asked for some information on the Papa Stour sword dance for an article he was preparing for a local magazine.

As a result of his research he supplied the following thoughts:

"I have found what I believe to be further evidences of a possible mediaeval origin to the Papa Stour Sword Dance.

The first is associated with the name given to the seven pointed star.

In 1819 and 1822, Hibbert and Scott both referred to what they call 'the Shield'.

They describe how each dancer in turn holds the shield above their heads.

The six pointed star which is now seen in synagogues and on Jewish tombs, is called 'the Shield of David'. However it is only since the 17th Century that this emblem has been associated with Jewry. Before that time, and certainly in the mediaeval age, the six pointed star (and the five pointed version) were regarded as talismans; they were said to be 'shields against evils'.

If five or six pointed stars were regarded as magic talismans is it not possible that the seven pointed star might have been regarded in the same way? This supposition is further strengthened by the fact that it is called 'the Shield'.

Alex Johnson of Papa Stour called the seven pointed star a 'clew' This reminds us of the ball of thread given to Theseus; as a result he was able to face the terrors of the Creton labyrinth, and prevail, and find his way out.

Both shield and clew seem to be beneficial symbols; it was believed that those who held them were destined to succeed in the midst of adverse circumstances.

The other detail is found in the words of the Prologue to the dance:

*'St. George of England, brave indeed, who to the Jews brought muckle tinte' (tinte means 'loss')*

In early years, the first Crusade (and possibly others) caused appalling massacre of Jews (they were regarded as responsible for the death of Christ.) Survivors were confined to ghettos; they were forbidden to own land or to practice a trade; many of them could only earn a living by lending money but this practice further alienated them from Christians who, in mediaeval times, were forbidden to do so. Pogroms (persecutions) were common."

Barclay Wilson, September 1996

*\* Before this article went to press Chris Clarke told me that Barclay died on January 10th 1997 after a short illness. He was in his 80's but still active as a musician with Ewell St Mary's Morris and with Chris's rapper team Stainstreet. Some years ago he was a Vicar in the Shetland Isles hence his interest in the Papa Stour dance and when in his youth he was a member of a youth team who danced the Flamborough dance in front of Cecil Sharp.*

*Chris Clarke visited Barclay in hospital and assures me that Barclay was very pleased to hear that his thoughts would appear in print.*

## "A Note on the Shetland Sword Dance"

Regular correspondent Gordon Ridgewell wrote to me on the subject of the Papa Stour dance. He drew my attention to an article (in "Southern Folklore Quarterly" Vol. 33, No 4, published in December 1969) which considers a link between this dance and the institution of Freemasonry. The article by James E Spears follows:

The singular characteristics and the enigmatic genesis of the Shetland Sword Dance have not been sufficiently explained. Sir Walter Scott was familiar with it and curious about it. He had the opportunity in Scalloway of copying a manuscript of the play, dated about 1788, which he later published in *The Pirate* 1821). E. K. Chambers has reprinted the play, along with other information from Scott's diary in *Mediaeval Stage* (11, p.270 ff.) J. Q. Adams in his anthology of *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramas* follows Chambers. None of the three attempts fully explain the lineage of the play. Adams, after Chambers, suggests that the dramatist personae of the play are those representing the "famous Seven Champions of Christendom." Chambers conjectures (in *Mediaeval Stage*) that the "Seven Champions . . . usurped the place of more primitive heroes"; that "the *Shetland Sword Dance* is far more literary and less of a folk affair"; and that "the grotesques are absent altogether" in it in contrast to other folk dances. In his later work, *English Folk Plays*, he remarks that "these [sword dances] survive mainly in Yorkshire...."

These remarks are interesting indeed, for they point up that another, or rather sounder, explanation on the origin of the dance may be offered. The

imagery and language, substance and/or symbolic action, and the survival of the play in Yorkshire could suggest that the Shetland Sword Dance is linked with the institution of Freemasonry.

At least three images used, one repeatedly, in the dance are reminiscent of the rites of Freemasonry and are germane to its vocabulary: *tried*, *right hand*, and *raised*. The Master (Free and Accepted Masonic lodges are also presided over by a master) has been "tried in many a land" (1. 11); *tried* also appears in lines 13 and 45. By the same token, a Freemason may be tried in many a land if he travels and seeks visitation in another lodge not his own; Freemasonry is therefore universal in scope. A Knight Templar may well know the phrase "tried with that good sword of steel." Later the Master says, "And over champions I was king," (1. 20). He was king over champions just as a master of a lodge of freemasons rules that body, some of whom may outrank him socially outside the confines of the lodge. "By the strength of this right hand" is a most significant phrase, perhaps connoting the hand of brotherhood. The right hand also figures importantly in various Masonic functions, such as initiation into the order. *Raised* (1. 31) is another noteworthy reference in view of the fact that initiation ceremonies of freemasonry culminate in *raising* the member to "the sublime degree of master mason." Other words such as *prove* (1. 8), *truth* (1. 12), and *brethren* (1. 33) are meaningful for every mason. "Present thyself" (11. 67, 75) is a most significant phrase for masons who present themselves for work or degrees. All these words and phrases seem less than accidental in the play.

In addition to the language, the sword seems to be significant. As it does in the *Shetland Sword Dance*, the sword figures prominently in the Knights Commandery, often referred to as the York Rite, and is symbolic for the members of that body of freemasons who are addressed as sir knights. The emblem of the order is crossed swords and a cross on which are inscribed the words *In Hoc Signo Vincas* and which functions as a shield, and a cross and crown rest on it. In the Figuir (sic) of the Sword Dance, the dancers position themselves at one point, "with their arms across the breast," presumably forming a cross, of course.

It is pertinent and worthy of note that the Knights Commandery is Christian in concept, and when in the Sword dance, Saint James says "Saint George of England, brave indeed/who to the Jews wrought muckle tinte," (11. 55-56) the allusion may be one of the negation of Jews in affiliating with their order, though Jews may be members of the Blue Lodge. (Jews, incidentally, do not normally elect the York Rite but affiliate with the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite or 32°.) Here too the sword figures prominently in the symbolism: the two-headed eagle perches on a sword from which hangs a draped motto of *Spes Mea in Deo Est*. Members of the Scottish Rite therefore owe allegiance to God.

Just as the other personae are charged by the Master to "Come, let us fight" (1. 60), so are the Yorkist Rite symbolically charged to fight in the world for the glory of Christ, i.e., become "champions of Christendom."

Chambers' observation that the sword dance survives in the Yorkshire area (a center of Masonic activity in England beginning c. 1717) may be possibly explained by the founding of speculative freemasonry in that same geographic region. The Shetland Sword Dance with which Scott was familiar may have been carried to Zetland via Scotland (also an important center of Masonic activity, in the early eighteenth Century), or the sea, in view of the easy proximity of the two locations. Further, Chambers' observation that the Shetland Dance is "more literary and less a folk affair" may be due to the fact that its origin was in the ritual of a formal ceremony, not a folk group. Indeed, the dance may have been a Masonic play held in lodge open to the public, it was performed in a "boor" (1. 1).

If the Shetland Sword Dance were not a Masonic ritual for the laity - as are some public ceremonies of Masonic bodies today - the history of which may have become clouded or obscured there are, it seems to me, enough

oblique allusions in it at least to establish its author, if not its genesis, as being linked with the institution of Freemasonry.

James E Spears, The University of Tennessee at Martin, USA

Gordon goes on to ask if anyone has done any further work on this subject. I remember seeing a "small ad" in a copy of *English Dance & Song* circa 1960 in which Pat Shaw (who had a great interest in the Papa Stour dance and visited the Shetlands to see it performed) ask for folk enthusiasts who were also Freemasons to contact him - does anyone know any more about this?

I shall send a copy of these items to George Peterson to see if he has anything to add. George, the last man to learn and perform the dance with the Papa Stour team, continues to take an active interest in the Shetland Dance since his retirement from teaching a couple of years ago.

I understand that Sir Walter Scott, who played such an important role in recording the tradition, was a Mason.

## SNIPPETS

### Samuel Hibbert's last resting place

In advance of a visit to England in 1995 Steve Corrsin followed up a lead on the location of the grave of Samuel Hibbert Ware (who recorded details of the Papa Stour dance) which was in a Cemetery in Ardwick, Manchester (very close to where I worked) but that the graveyard had been cleared and grassed over to make a Playing Field and the gravestones used to pave the forecourt of a converted Church which is now the base for a local authority unit which gives assistance and help to charities in the town. The inscription reads:

Here are also interred the remains of SAMUEL HIBBERT WARE M.D.; F.R.S. Formerly Vice President of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland, and author of *The History of the Foundations of the College and Collegiate Church of Manchester*, *The History of the Shetland Islands*, *The Philosophy of Apparitions* and various other works.

He was born in Saint Anne Square on the 24th of April 1782, and died at his residence Hale Barns, Cheshire on the 30th of December 1848.

A reminder of books dealing with Sword Dance, one by Ivor Allsop (edited by Tony Barrand) "*LONGSWORD DANCES FROM TRADITIONAL AND MANUSCRIPT SOURCES*" on sale at the price, including postage, of £18.80 - orders should be sent to Ivor Allsop, 36 Green Spring Avenue, Birdwell, Near Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 5RY.

"*SWORD DANCING: A HISTORY*" by Steve Corrsin has been further delayed and the publishers, Hisarlik Press, expect it to be available "in a few weeks time". It is worth waiting for!

Renaat Van Craenebroeck gave me details of a new book (in French) which examines the Baccu bert and other continental sword dance traditions. The book is called "*LE BACCHU-BER ET LES DANSES D'ÉPÉES LES ALPES OCCIDENTALES*".

### EFDSS Gold badge for long-time sword enthusiast

At the Carol Concert at Cecil Sharp House in December 1996 the Society's Gold Badge was presented to Tony Foxworthy who has been a keen supporter of sword teams for many years, and was the Society's Area Officer when the Whitby Folk Festival was founded more than 25 years ago. The citation was given by his long time friend from the North East Tom Chambers and High Spen Blue Diamond Rapper Dancers danced at the event.

I was unable to attend the event but, together with the many people who have benefited from Tony's enthusiastic support, I would like to pass on my sincere congratulations and wish him a speedy recovery from his recent illness.

Trevor Stone

## Plough Sunday 1997



Plough Sunday is the first Sunday after Epiphany, (6th of January), but in 1997 it was a Moveable Feast, depending upon where you were and when. The first one was on Sunday 12th January and was celebrated at Bolton Percy, near Tadcaster, by the new annual dance-out of the York Gentlemen. After the church service, the team danced in front of the lych-gate of the church, flanked by, on one side, a traditional plough, and on the other, a tractor hauling a multi-furrow plough. As befitted the occasion, there were a number of sightseers, including quite a few sword dance enthusiasts. The York Gentlemen have been dancing at Bolton Percy for the past twelve years, ever since the vicar invited them to dance there. After the Gentlemen, there was another dance from a visiting team from the Keighley area, the West Riding Longsword Dancers, two of whose members also dance with the Gentlemen. After these two dances, most of us not in the know thought that that would be the end of the event, but no! Just round the corner was the pub and that was where we all went, especially as we were told that there would be more dancing in a while.

Sure enough, after a little liquid refreshment, the two sides took up their swords again and gave us a selection from their repertoire. The Gentlemen danced North Skelton and Kirkby Malzeard and the West Riding men danced "Ram Tan" (most of their dances are named after Timothy Taylors Beers) and a new composition "Slaydon Bridge" (they have made up all their dances). That was a good end to the event, but no! All the men there who were in some way connected with sword dancing were given a sword and were told to be ready. After the team had done a figure or two we all joined in and did a couple of figures, over and under your own sword and the final figure was an attempt to make an 18 man lock. I think it did get made but it collapsed before it could be lifted up and there was no second take! A fitting end to the event, but no!

Opposite the church is the village hall and we were invited to join everyone there where the two teams had laid on food for their families and friends. We were told to help ourselves but we hesitated as we were doubtful if there would be enough but it turned out there was sufficient to go round with quite a bit left over. A fitting end to the day, but no!

One of their traditions is to invite everybody to dance out in the street and so we all went outside where those who could found themselves partners and two dances were done, the Sir Roger de Coverley and Strip the Willow. Unfortunately, ladies were in rather short supply so not everybody was able to dance.

However, that was a fitting end to the day, but no!

We went back inside the hall where we were all handed copies of the Vicar of Bray all its verses, some of which had probably never seen the light of day for many a year which we sang with much delight and great gusto. It was a fitting end to the day!

I should like to thank the York Gentlemen for making us so welcome and the vicar for the New Year highlights.

Mind you, as I said, Plough Sunday was a Moveable Feast this year, as it turned out the following weekend, 19th January, the day after the Goathland Plough Stots finished their village tour, in Masham, near Ripon. This time it was the turn of Highside Stots to dance. They had already danced at Kirkby Malzeard that morning and were ended the day by taking part in the evening service in Masham Parish Church, where there was a goodly congregation. After the blessing of the plough, which was then moved to the front of the chancel steps to enable the team to dance, the Highside Men in their waistcoats, formed up and did the Kirkby Malzeard sword dance, complete with its impressive calling-on song. Although the space was a little bit cramped, the men did well and the dance was well received by the congregation. Talking to them at the end of the service, I gather that this is one of the few times during the year to see them unless you happen to coincide with the Sheep Show, when they are, apparently, the exhibits! The other occasion to see them is on Boxing Day.

I wonder if 1998 will see as many Plough Sundays!

Pat Malham, M

## Sword dancing in 1389

As is now usual I went to Belgium for the Half Lent event of Lange Wapper in Brabant. This year I stayed on to the following weekend and also saw Quevaucamps (from the town of Tournai).

In Antwerp we were joined by Steve Corrsin from USA and Renaat Van Craenenbrouck who kindly took us on a tour of sword dance sites in northern Belgium, the climax of which was a visit to the City Archive at Brugge where we saw the original document which mentioned sword dancing in the town in 1389.

With a little persuasion Renaat agreed to prepare an item on early references to sword dance and Steve agreed to pass on the early illustrations he collected in the course of preparing his book. *Renaat and Steve examine the reference to sword dance in 1389.*



## Contributions welcome....

Copyright of all photographs, articles and material used in the Broadsheet is the property of the author, or in some cases with the team or performers involved. Permission must be obtained before submitting material to the Broadsheet. Views in the Broadsheet do not necessarily represent the views of the editor.

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

*The next issue will carry letters, comments and a photo round-up of the 1996 Sword Spectacular plus other dance events from other dance events in 1997. In addition I will include information from Clive Weston of Green Ginger Morris relating to their involvement with the Goathland dance. Gordon Ridgewell has also found further material on the sword dance which readers will find interesting*

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