



RATTLE UP My Boys

AN OCCASIONAL BROADSHEET FOR THOSE
WITH AN INTEREST IN LONGSWORD DANCE

Issue 4, Series 6 Summer 1997

GREEN GINGER MORRIS AND THE GOATHLAND STORY

Some time ago, in an article in Rattle Up My Boys, I made a passing comment about "bad blood" between Green Ginger Morris of Hull and the Goathland Plough Stots. I knew little about the background to the ill feeling or how it arose. However some months later (as long ago as September 1994) Clive Weston, a Rattle Up My Boys subscriber and dancer with the current Green Ginger team, kindly sent details of events which have almost passed into folklore, and since the death of Jack Scarth (who was for many years the Secretary and Organiser of Goathland Plough Stots) the facts have become increasingly hazy.

Clive (who was not a member of the Green Ginger Morris when the following events took place) asked some of the older members of the team for their recollections and from their information he writes:

"I can now give you more facts on the part played by Green Ginger Morris in the Goathland story.

As expected, the situation is more complex than I indicated in my earlier letter and is closely tied in with the history of Folk Union One in Hull, Green Ginger Morris and the Whitby Folk Festival.

Folk Union One has been a formal club since 1963 and was founded by the Watersons (Clive also enclosed a copy of a publicity hand-out for the folk club which was produced in 1973 which outlined the development of dance interest in the club which was initially a song club - JTS). Kathy Mitchell was involved in teaching the North Skelton Longsword dance to a team formed from Folk Union One Club members around 1966. She was, of course, also involved in the running of Whitby Folk Festival at this time and at the Festival she arranged a

Longsword dance workshop at which Jack Scarth met and taught the Goathland dance to members of the Folk Union One dance team.

Interest in the Goathland dance continued when this early sword team "metamorphosed" into Green Ginger Morris and took in some members of the Portobello Scout Troupe Morris Dancers (a group from Hull formed and taught by Kathy and John Mitchell who were active in the early 1960's - they included the Grenoside Longsword dance in their repertoire - JTS). Some of the members from the Scout team became keen investigators of dance traditions. Various visits to Goathland were made by members of the team including Colin Jewitt and Gordon Norman. I am in touch with Gordon Norman and he states that copies of photographs and information collected at that time were sent to Cecil Sharp House, but proved to be missing on a later visit. He is endeavouring to trace his personal copies of this package of information to see if any unknown material is among it. (I have since located these photographs in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library collection at Cecil Sharp House but, because of pressure on space, these are not on general display - JTS).

Green Ginger Morris practised the Goathland dance and performed it in front of Jack Scarth, who after certain changes, was satisfied with their interpretation. This included the springy "cat-like" step which Green Ginger still use but which has since been dropped by Goathland. Green Ginger also dance the "No-Mans-Jig" figure (the final, eight man figure which is occasionally performed by Goathland Plough Stots - JTS).

The Whaling Festival in Hull in 1969 was the occasion on which a Goathland Plough Stots team performed out for the first time after a break of several years. The team was made up of Jack Scarth and several older dancers. This attendance by Goathland was achieved by a certain amount of friendly "blackmail" (described in the publicity handout as "if you don't come and dance at the event Green Ginger will attend and dance their version of the Goathland dance" - JTS). Green Ginger have not performed the Goathland dance in Goathland!

**Last call for teams for the
1998 Sword Gathering**

Initial response is good - you must respond
NOW if your team has an interest in the
second Sword Gathering - details inside

NOTE MY NEW ADDRESS - The Old Vicarage, Downe Street, Driffield, East Yorkshire YO25 7DX



Goathland Plough Stots then went on to re-form with a younger team, which has been continuous to the present day. Green Ginger continued to perform their version of the dance, winning competitions at Whitby and Darlington in the early 1970's. Subsequently they went on to learn and perform the Ampleforth dance and, it is thought, the Nether Poppleton dance. (May be the Upper Poppleton dance. Green Ginger have not performed Longsword for some years - JTS).

I hope this information is of some use and may help to fill in details of a period of the history of the Goathland team which may be unclear, even to them. I also suggest that Tony Foxworthy, who was present at that revival performance at the Whaling Festival (at Bevan House in Hull) may have something to add."

Clive Weston - September 1994

On receipt of Clive's material I looked out a copy of a photograph (shown above) from Cecil Sharp House which featured Jack Scarth, an 8 sword lock and a group of people who were hitherto unknown to me - it occurred to me that it may be one of the photos referred to by Clive. A few days later I had a phone call from Gordon Norman, who still dances with Green Ginger. He was able to confirm that the photo was indeed taken at a workshop when Jack had taught the Goathland dance to members of Green Ginger at Norman's cottage in Grosmont near Whitby. Gordon was also able to identify many of the people shown in the photo and confirmed that Jack taught them the full Goathland Dance, including the 8 man "No man's Jig". All this is very well but, Gordon said, he and other members of Green Ginger who were around at the time know of no reason why there should be any animosity.

I contacted Tony Foxworthy who was unable to spread any light on the subject and so I decided to raise the issue with Mick Atkinson, the President of

Goathland Plough Stots and one of the few members of the current team who were around when the "action" took place. Mick is convinced (and is still irritated by the fact) that in the early 1970's Green Ginger laid claim to "reviving" the Goathland dance and, although he agrees that the then current Goathland team were not as enthusiastic as they are today, they were far from dead, nor were they in need of revival.

In 1987 I interviewed Jack Scarth who told me of a period (he didn't specify when) when his relationship with the Plough Stots was strained. Perhaps this had some bearing on the situation.

Hopefully this summary of the background information may help to clear up what seems to be a misunderstanding which could get worse over time!

Trevor Stone

Freemasonry and the Papa Stour Sword dance

Following the publication of the article "A Note on the Shetland Sword Dance" in which Gordon Ridgewell drew attention to the article by James E Spears in Southern Folklore Quarterly (Vol. 33, No 4) Chris Clarke writes:

"The Masonic rituals, as worked today, amount to a very considerable amount of text: 60 sides of A4, I would guess. These rituals use the tools and geometry of the mediaeval mason to symbolise moral truths; they compare the construction of holy places with God's construction of the earth; they refer on occasions to minor biblical characters; and they compare the smooth running of the lodge with the supposed smooth running of the universe. For this reason, many tools,

angles, shapes, heavenly bodies, religious figures, and officialdom are mentioned by the ritual. I have no figures, but I would guess the number of masonically significant words and phrases consequently runs to well over a hundred. Clearly, the chances are that virtually any text will contain such words. Indeed, I've just looked through the television page of today's Daily Express (which happened to be open on my desk) and found four. Is the editor of the Daily Express a freemason, intent on passing coded secrets to us via the telly page?

Gordon Ridgewell and Barclay Wilson are right to say that some of the items mentioned are masonically significant, but in my opinion, these things are not significant enough to demonstrate a link. However that does not mean that one does not exist. I should like to examine the text in detail, as they may have missed other phrases which are actually of more importance. But unless a group of words has been lifted wholesale from the ritual, it is unlikely that we shall prove a connection between the two, even if one existed. Possibly though, this might point to a new strand of investigation. Specifically, we need to know

1) Was the ritual worked in early 19th century Shetland significantly different to that worked in contemporary English lodges? As much of the language used in contemporary freemasonry is obviously Victorian, this seems likely. We would need to obtain the older workings. The librarian at Freemasons Hall, Great Queen Street, London, would be the best man to ask.

2) If members of the team were indeed freemasons, their membership might be recorded. Masons are meticulous in their records, and Great Queen Street may still hold records from that time.

3) Even better, there may be records of the officers of the lodges in Shetland being present at meetings held in Yorkshire. If, as has been posited, there is a link via the gentry between the Papa Stour and Yorkshire sword dances, this might have been the mechanism. I must add though that there are other more obvious mechanisms available: a vicar from Yorkshire might have been posted there for whatever reason. People are more willing to travel such distances for work rather than pleasure. For example, your correspondent on the subject (and my friend), the late Barclay Wilson, was taught the Flamborough sword dance as a boy, and went to Shetland as a priest in the Church of Scotland.

4) If there is a Masonic link, was it specific to Papa Stour, or were there Masonic links in Yorkshire also? I should be interested to know if the number of freemasons in Yorkshire sword teams exceeded the norm, or indeed whether there were even lodges close to the traditional teams.

As you see, I am sceptical of a conscious, deliberate link between freemasonry and sword dance. All the other possible ritual elements of sword dancing (hanging the Betty, animal skin caps, killing the Captain, etc.) seem to fall into the category of a single oddity (similar to throwing spilt salt over your shoulder, rhymes about the weather), as opposed to extended narrative (folk tales, Masonic ritual, etc.). So if there is a pagan element to the dance, I would expect it to survive only in the very thinnest of detail. Also, most of the items significant to the Papa Stour play are masonically insignificant: the Seven Champions of Christendom for example. Assuming that these things did not come from freemasonry, from whence did they come? What religious bodies used these figures during the early 19th century? If you can answer that, you may be able to trace the play back to a single author. To my mind, this is the most likely origin: a Yorkshire vicar who Christianised an existing Shetland tradition, or who brought the dance with him and Christianised it on the way"

Comment from the Shetlands

In the article in the last issue I undertook to raise the points made by Barclay Wilson and Gordon Ridgewell/James Spears with George Peterson, the current leader of the Shetland team and the last man to have learned the dance from dancers based on the island of Papa Stour. George, who is an enthusiastic local historian, tells me that he had not previously seen the Spears article and he was excited to read of the case put forward for possible links with freemasonry. George tells me that he has long been of the opinion that the sword dance travelled to Shetland from the north of England via Scotland and was taken by gentry or lairds. He points out that these VIP's did not travel alone - they travelled with numerous servants some of whom were entertainers and even musicians. George writes: "Such a one was John Scott of Giblestone in Fifeshire who married Grizel Mitchell of Girsta in Shetland. Their son John Scott (who died in 1765) was the first landed proprietor of Melby, Sandsness, just across from Papa Stour. It is not impossible that a couple of his servants settled in Papa and kept up the sword dance.

Just to complicate matters another John Scott (totally unrelated) and from Edinburgh, came to Shetland even earlier, was Commissioner of Supply for Shetland in 1704, married a Shetland girl Margaret Bruce of Munes in Uist in 1690. This John Scott actually bought the island of Papa in 1706 and sold it again ten years later to Arthur Nicholson. His father was Alexandra Scott of Edinburgh, a Goldsmith, and one can see a possible link with the society of freemasonry. Though I don't know if this John Scott ever lived in Papa, he did own it briefly and he would have had servants settled in it."

In an earlier letter George told me that the Shetland Papa Stour team (now based at Brae on Shetland) continue to dance, often performing for passengers on Norwegian cruise ships.

"The Pirate" is back in print

Another isolated reader, John Wells, (one time Bagman of the Morris Ring) who lives in Inverbervie in Angus, writes to tell me that Sir Walter Scott's novel "The Pirate" is back in print complete with the appendix which contains the details of the dance and the Epilogue and Prologue.

It has been reprinted from the 1971 Centenary edition which was published by Adam and Charles Black, Edinburgh. The 1996 volume is in paper back priced £8.99 and is published by The Shetland Times Ltd, Prince Alfred Street, Lerwick, Shetland ZE1 0PE (ISBN 1 898852 17 0).

John also points out that the details of the Double Triangle Lock referred to by Norman Peacock in his piece in the last issue concurs with the details given by Clive Turner & Ivor Allsop in a paper they produced for a Morris Ring Instructional on March 30th 1974.

A lock with three swords?

The articles about new and invented locks by Rhett Krause have generated a lot of comment and correspondence. The latest is a challenge from Chris Clarke who dances rapper with the recently reformed Royal Earsdon team. Chris tells me that one of the teams he has danced with (not Royal Earsdon) have developed a ~~three~~ sword lock. Chris invites readers to describe how it can be done using conventional swords in a lock that can be held up and displayed in the usual way.

Photos from the 1996 Sword Gathering

Three photographers (taking colour photos and video material) ensured that the 1996 Sword Spectacular was well recorded - over 9 hours of video and 400+ photos were taken. Here are a small selection of the photos. The scrap books (and videos) can be made available for display at special events, team evenings etc. Copies of the video of highlights are still available from me, price £14 including post and packing

The spin-off from the 1996 Sword Gathering continues

One of my objectives for the 1996 Sword Gathering at Scarborough was to enable teams to make contacts, both with their peers in this country and with dancers abroad. It is therefore gratifying that, as a direct result of the event, Coventry Mummers have already made contact with and visited the Belgian team Quevaucamps. I was delighted to be able to extend my annual trip to Antwerp to Lange Wapper's traditional Half Lent event and to visit Quevaucamps for their main outing held on Sunday March 16th.

Quevaucamps is a small village in the French speaking South West of Belgium, not far from the town of Tournai which was once controlled by the British.

The sword team was encouraged and taught by Renaat Van Craenenbroeck of Lange Wapper and this was their second years outing on what they hope will become their traditional day out.

We met up with team members and with the Coventry contingent in a small bar in the village which was run by "Olaf", a colourful character who was so named because of his Viking-like appearance. Olaf was a fantastic host and a keen follower of the Sword Dancers. He was determined to make everyone enjoy themselves and, in spite of speaking no English, he played a major part in our enjoyment even though the tape of British songs (Roll out the Barrel, Down at the Old Bull and Bush etc), bought to make us feel at home, was a little wearing after the 20th playing!

The Quevaucamps group (the sword dancers are part of a larger 'social dance' group called Pas d' La Yau) arranged visits and social events on the Saturday. The handful of Coventry men who were billeted with Olaf thought their wildest dreams had come true - to stay at a pub. Apparently Olaf needed little sleep and they emerged early on the Sunday morning looking very delicate and more than one of them gulped noticeably when Olaf brought out the pre-dance champagne. The dance tour travelled around local villages and after the first spot (understandably quiet at 8.30 am) their displays were attended by appreciative audiences. The highlight was a visit to Château de Beloeil when the teams performed for the Count and were invited into the Château for drinks.

The Mummers performed a version of the sword dance play and greatly enjoyed their visit, even the dancer who couldn't bear to be parted from his mobile phone who took a call as the team processed into the Grand Place for the last spot.

I also hear that one more team have been inspired to incorporate the Continental feature of hoisting a dancer on a platform of swords. Dick Shillaker tells me that Southport Swords occasionally lift someone as part of their version of North Skelton. They use the Figure 2 lock and lift their lightest member to chest height. Apparently they are still developing the move and working on how best to incorporate it in the dance. They acknowledge that the inspiration came from seeing the Continental teams at the sword event but they were also convinced to try it after seeing the youngsters from Ryburn Sword (Pete Coe's team) make the move seem so natural.



Top left: It is some time since I saw Redcar Sword. After the church service they present church-goers and overseas visitors with an arch of swords - a nice touch.

Top right: The Basque team from Markina in northern Spain dancing at the Castle. A dramatic setting but a poor audience.

Centre right: The Mayor kindly hosted a reception for team representatives - when he had welcomed all our guests he took a little time out to chat with local man Mick Atkinson of Goathland Plough Stots.

Bottom left: Just to prove that East Saxon Sword where at the event! - see page 6.

Bottom centre: Orion Sword from Boston USA looking as proud as Punch - and so they should - their own dance "North Shirley Volunteers" went down very well!

Bottom right: Two sword dance teams, together with a brass band, travelled from the former Czechoslovakia. This group is from the village of Bystrice pod Lopenikem.



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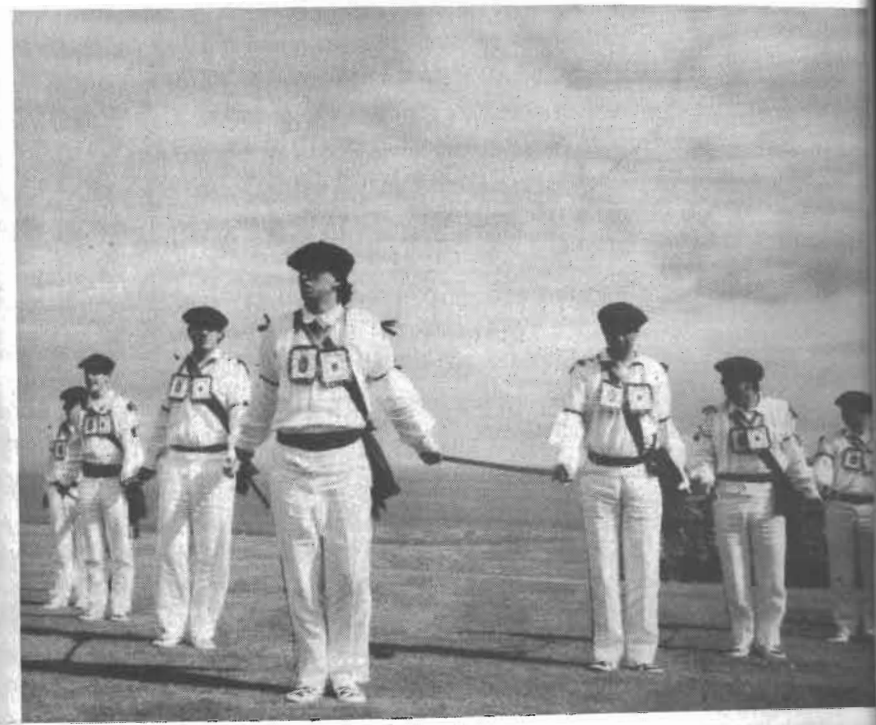
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Second Sword Spectacular

In the last issue Vince Rutland, secretary of the group planning the second Sword Gathering, outlined the plans for the event and invited teams to register their interest. Vince tells me that response from UK teams (especially rapper teams) has been very good and they plan to "close the books" very soon. If your team is interested get in touch with Vince as soon as possible. His address is 37 Church View, Brompton, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL6 2QX or if you prefer to phone 01609 780536.

I understand that over 20 UK teams have responded (including the revived Royal Earsdon Rapper team) and, although none are yet firm, around 5 overseas teams are expected. Vince emphasises that the scale of the event is planned to be smaller than in 1996 to give people chance to see all teams. Improvements are planned to make the event less hectic. However one problem has arisen - the Ocean Room in the Spa at Scarborough is already booked and the organisers are looking into alternatives - in the worst case they may have to change the date of the weekend. To convince you here is a reminder of what Vince wrote in the last issue of Rattle Up My Boys:

Much positive feedback has been received and a committee has been set-up to organise a second festival of sword dancing in Scarborough in late May, 1998 (watch out for news of a possible change of date). Sword Spectacular II will smooth the organisation and improve the presentation.

We want 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". Our aim is to present a large, friendly festival with sword dancing as its central theme. For 1998, fewer groups will be involved - but each will do more dancing and you'll be able to see more of them! Invitations have been sent to four or five overseas teams who perform their countries' own native dance traditions and a particular effort will be made to encourage those who could not attend in 1996.

Register your interest NOW - contact Vince Rutland!



25 Years of East Saxon Sword

Peter Kemp writes to say:

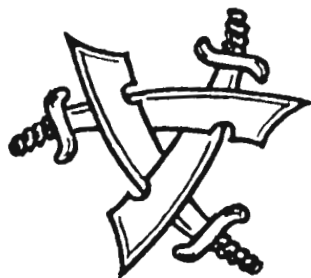
"East Saxon Sword (from the East London Essex border) has made it to its 25th Anniversary from 1972. Despite having two founder members still in today's team, recall of the early years is somewhat hazy! There are one or two key photographs which anchor events - the rest will be open for conjecture at our planned reunion this October.

Around 1970/71 a folk singing group was forming in the Newham area of East London. Some of the group fancied a dabble at Longsword dancing and there is a vague memory of experimenting in a front room and back garden!

John Pilfold (a long-standing EFDSS member) moved from Kent and somehow became aware of the folk singing group. John was keen to promote folk activities and offered to run barn dances at a Community Centre in Plaistow. The barn dances became monthly events with John leading the evenings and soon we discovered he had danced and taught Longsword - it was inevitable that he would, in a fairly informal manner, teach us a sword dance (we think it was Kirkby Malzeard). John's wife, Valerie, played the fiddle for us.

In 1972 Valerie died after a long illness. This was to be of major significance in the birth of the sword dance team. John spent time re-adjusting to life without Valerie and later the next year he organised a memorial concert in her name. John asked if we would do a sword dance in her honour at the concert - there was no question about it, yes we would!

This needed a costume. Orange and brown material was readily available and two end-of-roll bales were obtained. A name for the team took a little longer. We had links with the Earls of Essex Morris Men and we frequented the Earl of



Essex Pub in Manor Park on the East London/Essex border. 'Essex' was becoming a theme. Thoughts on old times in the Essex area took us back to Romans and Saxons. 'Saxons' seemed an ideal name to complement the 'Earls', but we needed a more formal name. With some ingenuity, 'East Saxon Sword' was born! An emblem was required for the back of our jackets. What could be better than the symbol of the seaxe (a scimitar-like

sword). The Earl of Essex Pub had a plaster relief of the Essex coat of arms (3 seaxes). A life-size tracing of one was a perfect fit. With the addition of white shirt and socks and brown shoes, our costume was complete.

During August of that year, extra dance practices were held to improve the dance ready for our inaugural display in September. By now a concertina player had joined us. The dance at the memorial concert was performed without any major disasters and generally well accepted. A photograph of the occasion shows the identifiable team members and also that the musician was not the concertina player, on this occasion, but the wife of one of the dancers (playing the accordion).

The team started to dance out via contacts with folk clubs and our links with the Earls strengthened, with several dancers in both teams. 1975 saw our first international event as part of a combined Earls Saxons and others coach party to Amsterdam for a week. We even developed a 'mixed' team to dance Flamborough! Around this time there was a strong interest in doing North West Morris and effort went into modifying our kit and arranging for clogs for everyone! We also began a long-standing friendship with Stevenage Sword and we learnt the Greatham Longsword Dance from Redcar Sword Dancers who had come down for the weekend. We were to meet Redcar Sword many years later at Whitchurch Festival and found our version of the dance still closely resembled theirs!

Through the 70's we became more established and with the arrival of the ex-Keele Rapper foreman we revamped our Rapper dance. By now, displays involving Longsword, Rapper and North West Morris were becoming difficult with the costume changes needed. Also the 3 dance forms were unsustainable to our intended standard on one 2 hour practice session a week. After much discussion and some sadness we abandoned the North West to return to our 'roots' and concentrate on sword.

Into the 80's and more outings on days of dance and even organising our usuals in Central London. In 1984 we were booked for our first folk festival (Iron Acton) followed by a booking to Chippenham Folk Festival the very next year. We have been going there ever since!

In 1986 we decided that our costume jackets needed replacing. But where you get orange wool material? To preserve the team colours (well known in the dancing world by now) we bought cloth specially dyed.

By this time the Rapper dance competition, widely known as DERT (Dancing England Rapper Tournament) was firmly established. We competed from 1987, with mixed success over the years. We knew we had 'made it' when we hosted the Rapper Tournament in 1995 in Leytonstone, East London.

1995 was an eventful year - we went to the Half Moon Sword Ale in New York in the February before hosting the DERT in April! We shall always remember the in-flight soft drinks courtesy of Kuwaiti Airlines on the flight to the US! To finish off the 'international year' we visited Eindhoven in September to see Motley Morris and do a Longsword workshop. Coming up-to-date we have been busy with various folk events and special functions (for example, at a memorial service for Susan Fleetwood at St. James' Church, Piccadilly, Central London - where it was definitely 'spot-the celebs' time!).

Plans are in hand for a 25th Anniversary Celebration on October 25th at The Denmark Arms pub in East Ham, East London. We are trying to contact all past members and inviting other friends and dancers. More details are available from the Anniversary Co-ordinator, Dave Law, on 0181 550 0032."

Peter Kemp May 1997

Peter left out reference to East Saxon Swords attendance at the 1996 Sword Gathering at Scarborough, a surprising omission especially as they were the only team at Scarborough who had also attended the Longsword weekend at Malton in 1981 - JTS.

OBITUARIES

Southport musician dies



I heard recently from a member of Southport Swords of the death of Peter Rowley on May 13th 1997 aged 54 years. For over 20 years Peter was the main musician for the team - I remember over 15 years ago getting a letter from the late John Smith (the teams' leader of the sword) which had an illustration at the letterhead and prominent in it was the unmistakable silhouette of Peter.

However I remember Peter best at one of the many musicians sessions he joined in the Birch Hall Inn, Beckhole either after the Stots Plough tour or mid-way through Whitby Festival. This is how I remember Peter best, not playing his melodeon for the sword dance but rather playing the Northumbrian Pipes with skill and feeling - that is the image of Peter that I will carry for many years.

A Celebration of his Life was held recently and representatives from many teams joined with musicians and others at Acomb Village Hall. He will be missed in many ways by his partner Mary, his family and friends.

Trevor Stone June 1997

Peter Clarke, Grenoside dancer

I first met Peter Clarke at a workshop I did at Sidmouth Festival more than 10 years ago. He was very keen on the sword dance and told me that he was to move house - was there any sword dancing where he was going - to Sheffield! Peter went on to join Grenoside Traditional Sword Dancers and became a regular and reliable dancer who was noted for his way of charming the money into the teams collecting tin, especially on their outings at Boxing Day.



Peter with fellow dancer at Grenoside, Boxing Day 1995 at The Old Harrow

Peter died on April 22nd 1997 after a short illness and, at a Memorial Celebration in Sheffield on June 6th, many of his friends from the folk world had the opportunity to hear of the high regard Peter was given by his colleagues from Sheffield University - and vice versa. However the thing that caused me a private memorial was to hear that Peter, before he died, had especially requested an ex-dancer who had "drifted away" from the team to take his (Peter's) place in the team next Boxing Day - watching that I will celebrate his friendship and enthusiasm.

I join many people who feel for his wife Sheila and her family on their loss.

The Grenoside men have asked me to reprint the poem written by Peter about his feelings for dancing the sword dance with the team - it follows.

Trevor Stone June 1997

Grenoside Sword Dance

Peter Clarke wrote the following poem which first appeared in *English Dance and Song* in Vol 43, No 3 1981.

Each year, outside the pub on Boxing Day,
We stand, Christ-gentled,

Civilised,
Giving witness to the dance -
Tidy faces, Petals on the Golden Bough,
The tarmac shows us how to stand,
Rectangular, squaring the natural ring.
The swords are blunt,
The dancers shod in clogs,
The pretty costumes quaint,
The captain lies a brief moment in the wet,
His fox masking a pith-helmet.

These men who weave the endless chain
Web-close within the crowd,
And knot their swords,
And slay their captain
Are linked
Sword tip and sword hilt,
Hand to hand and mouth to ear, with all who ever dug their fingers
In the earth
And smelt the scent of green things
Growing -
With all who ever killed to eat
And fought to live
And felt their spittle thick for love -
With man -
With me. I'm not the single grain of sand,
The drop of water falling on the rock of time:
I bear my share by standing silent,
The ritual must be done
And watched.

Last year the dancers
Wove the sun and mist into a rainbow
Arching across the village street.

The rough grain of the dance has been filled
With military polish:
Swords go with trumpets, soldiers
And the wounds of Cupid's darts,
Romantic bullshit.
The mystery has been
Coerced
Into what sense we make today
Of magic.

Why ask the meaning
Of rolling waves
As dancers arch and dive along the set -
Seasons, furrows, reaping, weaving?
Of clashing swords -
Fighting, threshing, sacrifice?
Of tinkling song,
Of endless chain,
Of god-king's death and resurrection -
Enough to sense

*The depth of magic.
Animal spirits
Working in the dark
Linking us to timelessness
And binding us
To the earth.*

Long awaited book

Early in June I attended a Members Evening organised by the Folklore Society. I was invited to speak at one of the evenings events - the long awaited launch of Steve Corrsin's book "*SWORD DANCING: A HISTORY*". The publishers, Hisarlik Press, tell me that it will be available by the time you read this and any advance orders (such as those taken at the Sword Gathering a year ago) will be fulfilled rapidly. The book is worth the wait! A full review will follow but it is a thorough and well researched volume, in a very readable style and well presented. The book costs £30/\$55 and orders should be sent to the distributors Bailey Distributors Ltd, Learoyd Road, Mountfield Road Industrial Estate, Kent TN28 8XU (or in USA from International Specialized Book Services Inc, 5804 NE Hassalo Street, Portland, OR 97213-3644, United States).

A reminder of two other 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.

If you read French - a new book has been published which examines the Baccu bert and other continental sword dance traditions "*LE BACCHU-BER ET LES DANSES D'ÉPEES LES ALPES OCCIDENTALES*".

Early painting of a sword dance

Gordon Ridgewell has written regarding early references to sword dancing (following my piece in the last Issue about the archive reference to sword dance in Belgium "Sword Dancing in 1389"). He drew my attention to an item in the Folk?Lor! column of 'English Dance & Song' Volume XXX, No 3, Autumn 1968, which reads:

"Brod Galleries in St James Street, SW1 have for sale a large oil painting by Pieter Balton (1525-1598) also known as Peter De Costa and Peter Baltasar, painted probably about 1565-1570. It shows Saint's Day Festivities in a village on the outskirts of Antwerp, with a great deal of detail of the numerous simultaneous activities. In the centre of the picture is a linked sword dance by eleven men, all dressed alike, and with bells at knee or ankle. The price asked is £9,500" (credited to the March 1968 newsletter of The Morris Ring). Gordon (and I) would be interested to know the present whereabouts of this painting and if it

can be located to find out if it was possible to reproduce the painting in a future issue of Rattle Up My Boys.

News from "over there"

George Fogg writes from Boston USA saying he was disappointed not to be able to get to the 1996 Sword Gathering but he plans to come for the 1998 event. He sent with his letter a brochure for Mainwoods Dance Camp (July and August 1997) at which he teaches English folk dance - amongst sessions of Polish, Greek, Israeli, Turkish, Japanese and many more national styles.

Tracing the Boosbeck Tulips

Gordon Ridgewell has sent me details of work he put into following up the team from Boosbeck I mentioned in a scrapbook belonging to Nibs Matthews which was brought to the Library Lecture given by Derek Schofield about the 1935 International Folk Dance Festival (Rattle Up My Boys, Issue 3, Series 5, Spring and Summer 1995).

Gordon checked the list of teams who appeared at the Festival (in the 1935 Journal) but found no mention of Boosbeck. He then contacted Nibs Matthews and asked whether the photo in question might not have been of Boosbeck Traditional Sword Dancers on the occasion of their appearance at the Royal Albert Hall on January 5th 1935. Nibs was unable to supply a date or source for his press cutting and a search of British Library Newspaper Library brought no photograph in July 1935.

He then went to the Vaughan Williams Library and consulted the books of press cuttings relating to both the International Festival and the Royal Albert Hall events. He found an identical press cutting amongst the International event material but it had no source or date given. However the photo had a caption which read "BOOS-BECK TULIPS is the name of this Yorkshire folk dancing team rehearsing for today's Folk Dance Festival at the Albert Hall" A further visit to the Newspaper Library brought to light the item in the New Chronicle of January 5th 1935, back page.

Gordon points out that this story underlines the importance of always giving press cuttings a source, date and page number - scrap book keepers take heed! Gordon closes his letter with a further searching query - "Where did I get the name 'Black Tulips' from?" I'm afraid I don't know!

Swords at Sidmouth

I was pleased to hear of the initiative to encourage more sword teams to attend and dance at the Sidmouth Folk Festival. I remember having many enjoyable sessions with both booked and workshop teams ('The Flower-power Swords' in 1978 were especially memorable). For more details see the address carrier. News of team outings is very thin on the ground - is it that teams are dancing out less or just that I live "out of the way"?

The next issue will carry reviews of the books (by Steve Corrsin and by Ivor Allsop. If any French speakers out there are prepared to do it then I would be pleased to print a summary and review of the French book. It will also carry the first of a number of articles on some of the treasures in the Vaughan Williams Library, especially photos, press cuttings and less well known material.

Contributions welcome....

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