



RATTLE UP My Boys

AN OCCASIONAL BROADSHEET FOR THOSE
WITH AN INTEREST IN LONGSWORD DANCE

Issue 5, Series 6 Winter 1997

Some months ago in a letter to me Gordon Ridgewell commented on the work Norman Peacock did in sorting and presenting the responses Cecil Sharp received in reply to a circular letter he sent out to gather leads on the existence of sword dances. Gordon suggested that Norman may be prepared to allow the full report to be published (the 1957 Journal carried an abbreviated report).

Norman replied promptly, in spite of numerous commitments including his long standing outing with the Travelling Morrice.

To his original report, completed in December 1955, Norman has added a new preface:

The "Sharp Cards"

by Norman Peacock

In Fox-Strangways' biography of Cecil Sharp it is recorded that: *"During the next two years (1911-13) Sharp gave much time to the collection of the sword dances of Yorkshire, Northumberland and Durham; and as a preliminary he sent a reply post-card to the incumbent of every parish in these counties."*(1)

I read this in October 1955 soon after the Leeds Morris Men had shown the Greatham Dance at the English Folk Dance and Song Society National Gathering. This was a Dance which had not previously been recorded by Sharp or by the Society and I was keen to know if there were any similar ones, so I wrote to Douglas Kennedy (with very little hope) asking if these post-cards still existed. He suggested that I ask Maud Karpeles and, after a short delay, I received the cards via Sara Jackson, the Librarian.

It turned out that the cards covered only the Bishopric of York (the then East Riding and that part of the North Riding east of the Great North Road) and not the wider area indicated by Fox-Strangways, but even so, the amount of information they contained was impressive. I analysed the replies and other letters, and made a report which is reproduced here. The Editorial Board of the

Journal felt the subject was too narrow for the full Report to be published but I was able to put a note in the Journal for 1957 (2). Copies of the Report have always been available on request (I have had only one such request in the past 40 years).

Apart from the new information which the correspondence produced, perhaps the most important aspect is the illustration of Sharp's method of collecting (and of the promptness of the post in 1912 even at Christmas time). When he sent out the cards at the beginning of December, Sharp knew nothing of the Handsworth Dance; on 4th and 10th December he had letters from Rev. C. V. Collier of Langton; by 28th he was hearing from Matthias Parkin of Woodhouse, who arranged for him to see the Handsworth dancers on 14th January; by mid 1913 he had published the Dance in *Sword Dances of Northern England* vol. 3 (3). It should also be noted that Sharp had already visited Skelton-in-Cleveland by New Year's Day.

References:

(1) A. H. Fox-Strangways and Maud Karpeles, *'Cecil Sharp'*, 102, Oxford University Press, 1933 (2nd edn. 1955)

(2) N. Peacock, *'Sword Dance Information sent to Cecil Sharp'*, *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, vol. VIII, no. 2, 113 (1957)

(3) Cecil J. Sharp, *'The Sword Dances of Northern England'*, Part III, 57-4-9, Novello, London (1913).

CONTENTS OF A PARCEL MARKED "SWORD DANCE INFORMATION SENT TO C#"

1. Origin.

Before he went to North East England seeking information for the Third Part of his *"Sword Dances of Northern England"* at Christmas/ New Year, 1912/1913, Cecil Sharp sent a circular letter to the Vicar of almost every parish in the Diocese of York (vide infra), asking whether a sword dance was, or had been, danced there at Christmas or at any other time of the year. This parcel contains the replies he received.

**1998 Sword Gathering
moves to Whitby**

Problems with pre-booked facilities has resulted in the 1998 Sword Spectacular being moved along the coast to Whitby. The date remains unchanged - May Bank Holiday - and there has been an encouraging response from teams - see back page

Sharps' circular letter read:

Dragonfield
Uxbridge

Dear Sir

I shall be very much obliged to you if you will kindly inform me -

(a) Whether the Sword Dance is still annually performed in your Parish at Christmas or at any other time of the year.

(b) And, if not, whether it has been so performed within the memory of anyone now living.

I shall shortly be publishing the Third Part of "The Sword Dances of Northern England", and I wish to make it as complete as possible.

I enclose a post-card for your reply,

With apologies for troubling you,

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

CECIL J. SHARP

Hon. Director of The English Folk Dance Society
and of
The Stratford-on-Avon School of Folk Song and
Dance.

Wording of the letter sent by Cecil Sharp in order to gather information on the Sword dance for possible inclusion in Part Three of 'Sword Dances of Northern England'

I. Contents.

- a) 164 cards, of which 162 were in one way or another, replies to his appeal;
- b) 1 letter from Rev. Stromberg of Wheldrake (East Riding), written on the back of
- c) a copy of Sharp's circular letter;
- d) 2 letters from Rev. C. V. Collier of Langton (East Riding), dated 4.12.12 and 10.12.12;
- e) 2 letters from Matthias Parkin of Woodhouse, Sheffield dated 28.12.12 and 9.1.13;
- f) 1 letter from Sharp to ? Cholmeley, presumably Hugh Fairfax-Cholmeley, whose help Sharp acknowledges in "Sword Dances of Northern England" Part 3;
- g) a summary by Sharp of useful information gained from the appeal;
- h) 1 letter from J Henry Denman of Retford dated 14.3.14.

III. Present arrangement

The cards are in bundles as follows:

- (a) No sword dance at any time (100 cards). See section 1 below
- (b) No sword dance at any time, but other information given (16 cards). See section 2
- (c) No sword dance at any time but "Plough Boys" etc. came round (5 cards). See sections 3 and 4
- (d) No sword dance at any time but Dancers came from other parishes (13 cards). See sections 5 and 6
- (e) Sword dance had at one time been performed by men from that parish (17 cards). See section 7
- (f) Sword dance still performed by men from that parish (11 cards). See section 8

(g) Irrelevant (2 cards).

The letters are in a separate bundle.

IV. Summary.

Judging by the replies, the appeal was sent to every vicar in the Diocese of York, which covers all the East Riding, and the North Riding east of the Great North Road, except those in large towns and places where Sharp already knew of dances. Answers were received from 157 parishes, about half the possible number. Some showed an obvious lack of interest, and for one or two places from which negative replies came, other people gave definite information.

In 138 parishes no sword dance was, or had been, danced, according to the writer, but in 7 of these "Plough Boys" came round and to another 13 dancers came, or had come, from elsewhere.

The Dance had been performed at one time by the inhabitants of 33 parishes, and in 9 more the Dance was still performed; not all these were in the Diocese of York since some vicars wrote of dances they knew of elsewhere.

Some of these places were already known to Sharp e.g. Sleights and Flamborough, but it was through these replies that he learned of the following Dances which are recorded in his books or his notes: Ampleforth, Escrick, Handsworth (and Woodhouse), Haxby, Helmsley, North Skelton, and Sowerby (near Thirsk).

There is fairly definite evidence for Dances at: Barton-le-Street, Bramham, Cawood, Great Ayton and Redcar and Sharp obviously intended to investigate these, although there is no account of them in his Notes.

Although Sharp did not ask about Plays, some are mentioned, but he did not record them.

The replies show that the Sword Dance must have been widely spread in both the East and North Ridings of Yorkshire at one time, but that it died out earlier in the former than in the latter. In the southern and central parts of the East Riding, Holderness, the Humber plain and the Wolds, it was at best only a vague memory, even in 1912; farther north, on the border of the North Riding it had survived longer, but it flourished only near the North Yorkshire coast and particularly at Skelton-in-Cleveland which was more or less industrial.

V. Further investigations.

Some of the reports of Dances and Plays would repay investigation and I shall do this to best of my ability.

1. Places from which no sword dance was reported.

Beeford	East Riding
Bewhome	East Riding
Birdsall (oldest inhabitant)	East Riding
Birkby (50 years)	North Riding
Bishop Burton (25 years)	East Riding
Boynton	East Riding
Brandesburton	East Riding
Brantingham	East Riding
Bridlington	East Riding
Broomfleet	East Riding
Bugthorpe	East Riding
Burstwick	East Riding
Burton Pidsea	East Riding
Butterwick	East Riding
Carnaby	East Riding
Cherry Burton	East Riding
Cloughton	North Riding
(9)Cottingham	East Riding

Dalton Holme	East Riding
Dunnington	East Riding
Easington (near Hull)	East Riding
East Heslerton	East Riding
(10)East Harlsey	North Riding
(1)Ebberston	North Riding
Etton	East Riding
Foston-on-the-Wolds	East Riding
Foxholes	East Riding
Full Sutton	East Riding
Ganton	East Riding
Garton	East Riding
Glaisdale	North Riding
(2)Guisborough	North Riding
Halsham	East Riding
Hawnby	North Riding
Hemingbrough	East Riding
Holme-on-Spalding-Moor	East Riding
Hornsea	East Riding
Howden	East Riding
(11)Hunmanby	East Riding
(3)Hutton Bonville	North Riding
(4)Hutton Cranswick	East Riding
Kirkby Knowle	North Riding
Kirkby Misperton	North Riding
Kirkby Undervale	East Riding
Kirk Ella	East Riding
Knapton	East Riding
Lastingham	North Riding
Laxton	East Riding
Leven (near Hull)	East Riding
Levishan (18 years)	North Riding
(5)Lockton (18 years)	North Riding
Lockington	East Riding
(6)Loftus	North Riding
Long Riston (oldest)	East Riding
Lund	East Riding
Mapleton	East Riding
Market Weighton	East Riding
Marske (near Redcar)	North Riding
Middleton (near Pickering)	North Riding
Moor Monkton	North Riding
Millington (17 years)	East Riding
(11)Naburn	East Riding
Normanby (near Pickering)	North Riding
North Cave	East Riding
North Ferriby	East Riding
North Frodingham	East Riding
North Grimston	East Riding
North Newbald	East Riding
(7)Nunburnholme	East Riding
Old Malton	North Riding
Ormesby	North Riding
Over Silton	North Riding
Patrington	East Riding

Rosedale	North Riding
(8)Raskelf	North Riding
Routh	East Riding
Sancton	East Riding
Scawton	North Riding
Scrayningham	East Riding
Sulcoates	East Riding
Settrington	East Riding
Sherburn	East Riding
Siggleshorne	East Riding
Skerne	East Riding
Skipsea	East Riding
Skirlaugh	East Riding
Skirpenbeck	East Riding
Sledmere	East Riding
South Cave	East Riding
South Otterington	North Riding
Swine (37 years)	East Riding
Sunk Island	East Riding
Thornaby	North Riding
Topcliffe	North Riding
Walkington	East Riding
Warter	East Riding
Welbury	North Riding
(9)Welton	East Riding
West Heslerton	North Riding
Wetwang	East Riding
Whorlton	North Riding
Winestead (40 years)	East Riding
Withernsea	East Riding
Wressle	East Riding

(1). for Mummers' Play see Hudlestone, *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 7, 180, (1953)

(2). but see J. F. Blakeborough, *Notes & Queries*, 12S, 12, 37 (1923)

(3). but see section 7 below

(4). for Play see Barley, *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 7, 68, (1953)

(5). for Tar-Barrel Play see F. W. Dowson, *Transactions of the Yorkshire Dialect Society*, 6, pt 38, (1937)

(6). the present team is of more recent foundation.

(7). but see M. C. F. Morris, "Yorkshire Reminiscence", (1922)

(8). for Play see Rev. A. Radford Ms.

(9). but see Gutch, *Folk Lore of the East Riding, County Folk Lore*, 6, 188 (1912)

(10). but see section 4 below

(11). but see section 7 below

Times, where given, are those covered by the particular reports. "Oldest" means the lifetime of the oldest inhabitant.

2. Places from which no sword dance was reported but which gave other information.

Bainton (East Riding) (Rev. Woods) The Parish Clerk came from near Buckingham and remembered a dance performed over crossed pipes. Miss Woods helped Sharp; she and her father ran a folk-dance group.

Bilton (East Riding) Mentions the Bainton group.

Bishop Wilton (East Riding) Reply gives the addresses of Rev. Morris of Nunburnholme and J. Elsworth of The Common, Cranswick.

Cowlam (East Riding) Report of a sword dance performed at Deane (near Bolton in the diocese of Manchester) about 50 years previously.

Crambe (West Riding) Mentions the Bainton group.

Eastrington (East Riding) "Only a maypole dance".

Ellerburn (North Riding) "It has been in vogue in Thornton Dale."

Fridaythorpe (East Riding) As a boy saw 2 or 3 men dancing over crossed swords at Middleton near Pickering.

Helporthorpe (East Riding) Addresses given of R. Blakeborough from Stockton-on-Tees and J. Malham from Dembleby, Starr Hill, Eccleshill, Bradford.

Lowthorpe (East Riding) Mentions Bainton group.

Langton (East Riding) (Rev. C. V. Collier) Gives accounts of Great Ayton dance, Argreave, Treeton and Woodhouse dances, and of "King John and King George" Play at East Harlsey

North Otterington (North Riding) Dances at Fewston and Kirkby Malzeard in the West Riding 50 years ago and may still linger there.

Rudstone (East Riding) Reported a dance at Flamborough.

Stainton-in-Cleveland (North Riding) Referred to a sword dance performed by solo dancers sometimes.

Thwing (East Riding) Reported a dance at Flamborough.

Withernwick (East Riding) A dance with poker and tongs crossed.

Weaverthorpe (East Riding) Reported a dance at Flamborough.

3. Places from which no sword dance was reported but where "Plough Boys" etc formerly came around (with a Play).

Goodmanham (East Riding) (R. S. Leighton) "Plew Lads" used to come round; Besom Bet and Bladder Dick were characters but there was no regular dance. "Plough Stotts" at Cliffe near Selby probably danced with wooden swords. The 'w' was pronounced in 'sword' ref. M. C. F. Morris "Yorkshire Folk Talk", A Brown & Son, Hull, 1911.

Kirk Levington (North Riding) (Rev. J. D. Brock) Mummers used to perform a sort of play in which St. George and the Dragon used to figure. Sword dance seen at Whitton-le-Wear, Co. Durham by an old lady in 1870.

4. Places where no sword dance was reported but "Plough Boys" etc. still came round.

Anlaby (East Riding) (From the Vicar of Wheldrake who had only recently come from Anlaby) "Plough Boys" still went round each December.

Catwick (East Riding) (Rev. W. Smith) "Plough Boys Dance", but no Sword dance. See "Brazzock" p.20 by Rev. Smith, price 3/6 from A. Brown & Sons, Savile Street, Hull.

Driffield (East Riding) "At Christmas time I see mummers and dancers about".

East Harlsey (North Riding) Vicar reported no dance at any time but Rev. C. V. Collier of Langton (dated 10.12.12) reported 5 lads used to come round at Christmas and perform "King John and King George". The first time he heard it he wrote it down - the lads got it by tradition. Thereafter the words got altered and fewer each year. The lads blacked their faces and dressed up.

Sproatley (East Riding) "Plough Lads" dancing and mumming at Christmas time still survived rather feebly but there was no sword dance.

5. Places from which no sword dance was reported but to which dancers formerly came from elsewhere.

Carlton Minniot (North Riding) Plough Stotts from Pickering and Sleights came till 40 years previously.

Dishforth (North Riding) Dancers used to come from Kirkby Malzeard but not recently; they still danced at Kirkby Malzeard.

Myton (Helporby) (North Riding) Dancers used to come from other parishes.

Saxton (West Riding) (Rev. C. Ash) First card from W.D.W.R. - dancers at Christmas used to make a Lock and throw it in the air and catch it in a wonderful manner. Second card from Vicar - no dancers from Saxton itself but an old man remembered some from Cawood and Bramham 20 years previously. Suggested writing to Rev. S. Webb, The Rectory, Newton Kyme, the former Vicar.

Thirkleby (North Riding) Dancers came regularly till 30 years previously.

Thornton-le-Dale (North Riding) Dancers from Pickering and beyond (westwards) till 30 - 40 years previously.

6. Places from which no sword dance was reported but to which dancers still came from elsewhere.

Bempton (East Riding) Fishermen from Flamborough intended dancing there that Christmas.

Brotton (North Riding) Dancers in the parish from time to time in the last 17 years.

Danby (North Riding) Dancers came occasionally from Skelton and Sleights.

Goathland (North Riding) Dancers still came from elsewhere; there used to be some in the village.

Kirkbymoorside (North Riding) Some dancers come from Pickering at Christmas time. (see section 7)

Kildale (North Riding) Some 6 or 8 miners from Skelton came during the Spring of 1912.

Nafferton (East Riding) Dancers from Flamborough were expected.

7. Places where sword dances had existed formerly.

Ampleforth (North Riding) (Rev. A. G. Austin) One year there was a party of sword dancers but they did not keep it up. He saw dancing at Whitby 20 years previously.

Argreave (near Sheffield, West Riding) Rev. C. V. Collier of Langton remembered seeing dancers there 30 years previously. (see also Handsworth, Treeton & Woodhouse)

Bramham (West Riding) Dancers from Bramham were seen at Saxton 20 years previously. They made a Lock and threw it up in the air.

Brompton (near Northallerton, North Riding) (Rev. G. T. Winch) There used to be dancers at Christmas.

Burton Fleming (near Bridlington, East Riding) Dance was formerly performed annually.

Cawood (West Riding) Dancers seen at Saxton - see Bramham.

Cliffe (East Riding) R. S. Leighton of Goodmanham reported that there used to be "Plough Stotts" at Cliffe who probably danced with wooden swords.

Clifton (near Workington, Cumb.) Denman of Retford (dated 29.3.14) reported that he had met a young man who had seen a Play and Dance at Clifton when he was a boy.

Deane (Manchester Diocese near Bolton) Rev. Oliver of Cowlam reported a dance at Deane 50 years previously.

Easington (Loftus, North Riding) (Rev. J. Jenkins) None of the old dancers alive in the parish then. Dance seen 2 or 3 times in the past 19 years.

Escrick (near York, East Riding) Rev. Grimston of Stillingfleet reported that an old man had seen the dance performed at Escrick in the last 20 years.

Fewston (West Riding) Vicar of North Otterington remembered dancers there 50 years previously.

Goathland (North Riding) (Rev. E. B. Hale) There used to be dancers at Goathland. Dancers still came round from other places.

Great Ayton (North Riding) Rev. Collier of Langton (dated 4.12.12) said dance was performed regularly at Great Ayton until 1899 at least. Some description of the figures and final Lock, which was made by letting go of the points and making a thrust towards the middle of the circle. Gives a diagram of the usual hexagon Lock at the 3rd attempt. (dated 10.12.12) There might have been a song sung by the "Master".

Hackness (near Scarborough, North Riding) (Rev. C. Johnstone) "Morris Dancers" used to go about at Christmas: not known whether they did a sword dance.

Haxby (near York, North Riding) (Rev. G. Rees) Danced regularly until 25 years previously; at least one man who took part was still alive. Sharp's summary says Mr. Place was getting up a team to dance for him.

Hunmanby (near Filey, East Riding) Letter from Sharp to Cholmeley says "The Hunmanby clue might be worth following up."

Hutton Buscel (North Riding) (Rev. G. Little) "Mummers" generally farm lads, used to come round and do a very mild form of sword dance, but not frequently in recent years.

Kirkbymoorside (North Riding) In his letter to Cholmeley Sharp says "Mr. Hobbs and Miss Ellis have been investigating Kirkbymoorside, where there is evidently a dance which can be restored with a little more enquiry."

Leake (near Northallerton, North Riding) (Rev. D. Reakes) Discontinued a long time previously. A lady had seen a dance at Redcar 8 years previously.

Middleton-on-the-Wolds (East Riding) Miss Woods of Bainton said there used to be a sword dance there.

Naburn (near York, East Riding) A man at Wheldrake saw dancers at Naburn 21 years previously. Vicar reported none.

Pickering (North Riding) (Mr. T. Spink) Sword dance was performed every year up to 20 years previously by men from Goathland and imitated in an inferior way by local youths. Vicar had known Pickering for 40 years.

Preston (near Hull, East Riding) (Rev. W. Dale) A few saw it 50 - 60 years previously.

Scalby (near Scarborough, North Riding) (Rev. W. C. Robinson) Boys with blackened faces used to perform a sword dance with sticks.

Skelton (near York, North Riding) Sharp's summary refers to Mr. Place - see Haxby. (Not to be confused with Skelton-in-Cleveland or Skelton near Ripon)

South Kilvington (Thirsk, North Riding) (Rev. W. Kingsley) Sword dance done about 40 years previously in New Year week. Danced in Thirsk within the last 20 years. A well known dancer is still alive in Sowerby. As is Miss Jopling, The Green, Thirsk. Sharp wrote to the vicar.

Sowerby (Thirsk, North Riding) (Rev. C. O. Stewart) See South Kilvington.

Stainburn (Cumb.) As Clifton.

Stillingfleet (near York, East Riding) (Rev. Grimston) Man said sword dance was done there over 50 years previously and at Escrick within the last 20 years. Mentions a letter in "Yorkshire Post" dated 5.12.12 from the Vicar of Bainton.

Treeton (near Sheffield, West Riding) Rev. C. V. Collier of Langton saw dance at Treeton when a boy. See also Argreave.

Wheldrake (East Riding) (Rev. W. W. Stromberg) An old man of 90 went out with the Sword dancers 70 years previously. A party of 30, including 8 dancers and the rest "beggars". They were headed by the village band and went from village to village and through the City of York where the dance was performed in several principal streets. Another man of 60 remembered going out with the dancers in later years and he used to be the "Queen"; he last saw dancing at

Naburn 21 years ago. Vicar saw "Plough Boys" go round Anlaby every December.

Witton-le-Wear (Co. Durham) Reported from Kirk Levington that an old lady had seen a dance at Witton-le-Wear about 1870.

Woodhouse (near Sheffield, West Riding) Rev. C. V. Collier of Langton saw dancers at Woodhouse when he was a boy. See also Argreave and Treeton probably the same team in the three places.

8. Places where the sword dance was still performed.

Barton-le-Street (near Malton, North Riding) (Rev. H. E. Ketchley) First card 18.12.12. Dancers came round on Plough Monday and before Christmas also. They had a "doggerel Song" which H. E. K. said he would note for Sharp. Second card (no date) but later than the above. Dancers had been that day. He had seen some in Whitby on Plough Monday, the "proper day" in earlier years.

Burton Agnes (near Bridlington, East Riding) (Rev. C. Hutton Coates) A rather debased form of sword dance was performed by farm lads at Christmas from house to house. The Flamborough men sometimes danced in Burton Agnes also.

Flamborough (East Riding) Fishermen danced at Bempton and Burton Agnes and are also mentioned in cards from Nafferton, Rudstone, Thwing and Weaverthorpe.

Handsworth (near Sheffield, West Riding) Rev. C. V. Collier gave an account of the Woodhouse dance and from this Sharp apparently got in touch with Matthias Parkin of Woodhouse. Letter from Matthias Parkin dated 28.12.12. No dancing at Woodhouse for 25 years but the Handsworth men were going round then. An old dancer (Alfred Wheeler) said there were 13 figures in the Woodhouse dance but the Handsworth men only did 11. Second letter dated 9.1.13: Wheeler was getting a team of 8 men together but was having difficulty because they were on different shifts. Two later cards give the final arrangements for Sharp to see the dancers perform on 13th January 1913.

Helmsley (North Riding) (Rev. C. N. Gray) The sword dance was still practised but not in such great style as it had been a few years previously. It used to be universal throughout Cleveland. Second card dated 18.12.12 the local people were not very good: they probably did it better "on the Moors". Mummers, sword dancers and carol singers all came round but not so much as they used to do.

Kirkby Malzeard (West Riding) (Mr. T. Parkinson) Dancers from Kirkby Malzeard used to come to Dishforth. Vicar of North Otterington thought there were still dancers at Kirkby Malzeard.

Redcar (North Riding) (Rev. A. Mayhew) Rev. D. Reakes of Leake reported that a lady there had seen dancers in Redcar 8 years previously. First card from Mayhew dated 2.1.13. Fishermen had danced in The Street on 1st Jan. Second card dated 16.1.13. The fishermen were local men.

Skelton-in-Cleveland (North Riding) (Rev. H. M. Drake) First card dated 6.12.12. Danced annually. A party of miners came to the Rectory and "danced with the precision of men used to it" the previous Christmas. Second card dated 1.1.13 after Sharp's visit. A party had come a few nights previously and danced with great precision. Men from Skelton danced at Kildale and Danby

Sleights (North Riding) Plough Stots danced in Carlton Minniott 40 years previously. Sometimes seen in Danby.

Norman Peacock, September 1997

Norman tells me that he did manage to follow up some of the leads arising from this information "with varying results". He writes:

"Barton-le-Street: I got a play but no dance.

I will skim over the details of the eventful trip as I understand that one of the team plans to submit an article for Rattle Up My Boys but for me the ideal climax to the trip was an invitation from the Mayor of Wigan to attend a reception at the Town Hall where we were astonished to find that the Mayor had danced both Longsword and Rapper in his youth. He decided against "standing in" but he thoroughly enjoyed the display of dancing given by the team.

Congratulations to the proud winners

Many readers may be a little weary of the way I regularly sing the praises of the Whitby Competitive Dance Festival. In addition to keeping up the tradition of competitive events the weekend is also an ideal opportunity to socialise. For more than 15 years the "regulars" at the event have been Goathland Plough Stots, Spen Valley (from Cleckheaton in the West Riding) and Sullivan's Sword (from Nottingham).

Until this year (the event was held in March) Sullivan's had often come second but had never won first prize (and the Worthington Cup) outright.



Sullivan's Sword, resplendent in new uniforms, show off the long awaited cup at the Whitby Competitive Dance Festival in March 1997.

Update on the 1998 Sword Spectacular

Vince Rutland, Secretary of the group who are arranging the next sword event in WHITBY, tells me that things are going well. After a slow start a number of overseas teams have confirmed including the French team who perform the Baccubert dance, Strani from the Czech Republic, Bagnasco from Italy, Nele, Boerke Naas and De Wouwe Meerbeke all from Belgium, the team from Burgos in Spain and Jack the Rapper from Norway. In addition over 25 UK teams are expected, including a number who did not attend the last event.

Tickets are cheaper if ordered before February 1st 1998 - full weekend tickets are £22 (£13.50 without camping); day tickets are £6.75; contact Vince for details of concessions. More information in the next issue or for further details (which will include events before the Bank Holiday weekend - May 23rd, 24th and 25th 1998) contact Vince Rutland 37 Church View, Brompton, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL6 2QX (phone 01609 780 536).

Don't forget to renew your subscription for the seventh series!

renewal form enclosed - new subscriptions are welcome

The next issue will feature an article by Andrew Kennedy on the Elgin sword dance, his determination to resurrect it, and the background information he has accumulated in doing so. I also plan to print the manuscript of a presentation by the late Peter Clarke. Sheila, his widow, is keen that others have a chance to read of Peter's thoughts and impressions as a member of the Grenoside team.

LONGSWORD DANCE EVENTS

Be sure to confirm details before travelling

Saturday December 20th

Lord Conyers Morris

2.00 pm - Angel Inn, Killamarsh (may not be dancing sword!)

Dusk - The Trysting Tree, Todwick dancing the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance - phone Mike George (01226) 765 024 to confirm.

BOXING DAY December 26th

Claro Sword (Harrogate area)

Tour of Hotels and pubs in Harrogate including The Harrogate Arms at 12.30 pm 'ish - phone Barry Slaymaker (01423) 880 526 to confirm

Flamborough Longsword

Likely to dance at 12.00 noon 'ish at the Rose & Crown followed by visits to other local venues ending at 2.30 pm 'ish at Dog & Duck Square, Flamborough, - phone Richard Traves (01262) 851 311 to confirm.

Handsworth Longsword

11.15 am - The Crossed Daggers, Woodhouse; 12.00 noon - Parish Church, Handsworth. Phone John Pitts (0114) 287 4761 to confirm.

Highside Longsword (Kirkby Malzeard)

1.00 pm - Grantly Arms; 1.30 pm - Queens Head, Kirkby Malzeard followed by a tour of the village - phone Ted Dodsworth (01765) 620 374 to confirm.

Spen Valley Longsword (Cleckheaton area)

Likely to start at 12.00 noon at the New Packhorse, Hartshead Moor; followed by tour of Cleckheaton and Gomersal areas - phone Dave Webster (01924) 402 897 for more details.

Grenoside Longsword

11.00 am - The Old Harrow. Grenoside dance followed by local guest teams and a song session. Phone Ray Ellison (0114) 245 3361 to confirm

Other teams - other times

SATURDAY December 27th

Lordsmere Longsword (Saddleworth area)

A tour of the Saddleworth area from "pub opening time" - phone Eddie Beswick, 01706 523 938 to confirm.

SUNDAY, December 28th

Barnsley Longsword

12.15 pm 'ish - The Shaw, Barnsley; 1.00 pm 'ish - Spencers Arms, Cawthorne; 1.45 pm - Cawthorne Village Club - phone Roger Thompson (01226) 281 248 to confirm.

NEW YEARS DAY

Kirkburton Rapier Dancers

Tour of the Kirkburton area starting at 12.00 noon at The Carlton Club and ending at The Smiths Arms around 3.00 pm - phone Ken Clarkson (01484) 65 15 10 to confirm.

Monkseaton Morris

I understand that Monkseaton perform the Ampleforth play and dance on New Years Day - phone Peter Brown (0191) 252 3022 to confirm

SATURDAY, January 3rd

Boars Head Morris Mens' tour

10.00 am to 3.00 pm 'ish - tour of Bradford centre (usually with two or more sword teams) - phone Andy Fieldhouse (01274) 585 595 to confirm.

Grenoside Longsword village tour

A tour of the village. Check details with Joe Dunn (0114) 246 0463

SUNDAY, January 11th

Claro Sword

Plough Blessing service starts at 10.30 am at St John's Church Knaresborough - dancing afterwards outside the Church followed by a procession to the Market Square - phone Barry Slaymaker (01423) 880 526 to confirm.

York Gentlemen Longsword

Plough Sunday service starts at 10.00 am at Bolton Percy Church - dancing afterwards outside the Church.

SATURDAY, January 17th

Goathland Plough Stots

10.00 am to 3.00 pm 'ish - tour of Goathland and Darnholm ending up at Beckhole. The Goathland Plough Blessing Service is held on the previous Sunday - phone Keith Thompson (01947) 896 311 to confirm.

SUNDAY, January 18th

Highside Longsword (Kirkby Malzeard)

Plough Blessing Services in Kirkby Malzeard Church at 10.30 am and at Masham Church at 6.00 pm, both on Sunday January 18th (includes sword dancing in the churches) - phone Ted Dodsworth (01765) 620 374 to confirm.

Contributions welcome....

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