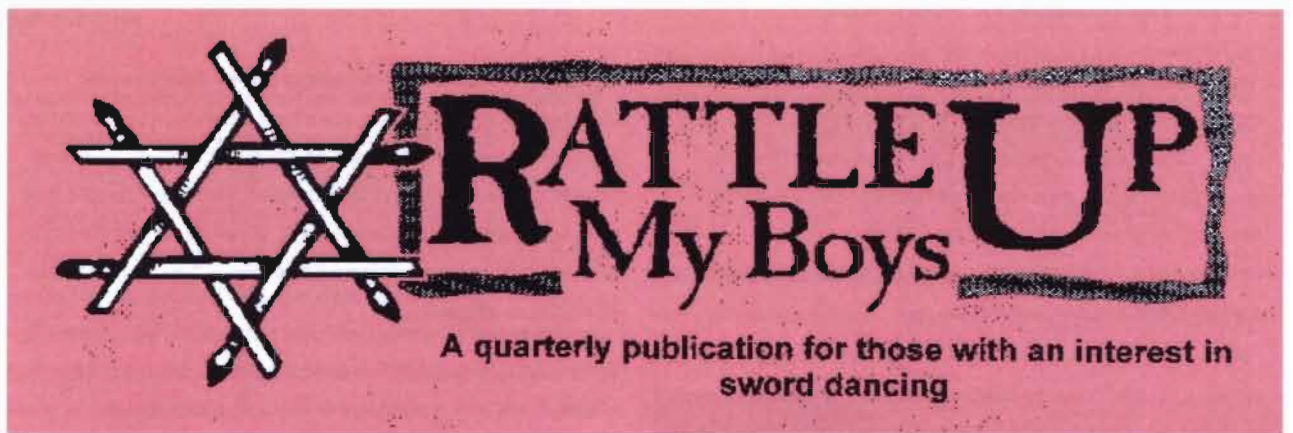


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Issue 4, Series 18, October, 2011.

Papa Stour comes to Aberdeen

Andrew Kennedy



The Papa Stour Sword Dancers with Gaorsach Rapper. Photograph: Andrew Kennedy

A once-in-a-generation opportunity to see the Papa Stour Sword Dancers in mainland Britain came when they visited the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention, in Aberdeen, from the 16th-18th July, 2010. They last came to Scotland in 1977, when they visited Edinburgh, since when they have been to Denmark (1985) and Norway (1992), so this truly was a special event.

I was fortunate to be able to have a number of conversations with George Peterson, the team's moving spirit for over fifty years. George is a Shetlander, having left Papa Stour for secondary school, university, and National Service before returning to Brae, on Mainland, in 1958 to work as a schoolteacher. Still resident in Brae, he continues to work a croft on Papa Stour.



George Peterson. Photograph: Andrew Kennedy

Many people are familiar with the story of the notation being collected by Sir Walter Scott and included in his novel 'The Pirate'. This was taken from a 'very old manuscript' which was given to him by William Henderson, from Papa Stour. George thinks that this might have originated in the period 1710-1720. He describes it as 'indecipherable' and 'vague' and notes that it does not tally with what is known of the dance from elsewhere: for example, it describes eight saints.

What he does note is that, contrary to much speculation, there is no evidence of any Scandinavian influence, such as a Norse saint among the Seven Champions of Christendom (St. Olaf might have been a fair bet). The leader of the dancers is in fact St. George of England, as found in both Scott's version

and the eye-witness account recorded by the Reverend George Low in 1774. One possible explanation is that in the eighteenth century there was an influx of gentry to Shetland from Aberdeen, Fife, and the Lothians, and they brought their own servants and entertainers with them. George's theory is that one of these entertainers knew about the sword dances of Northern England.

Between 1870 and 1880 around a hundred people left the island; there was a shortage of fuel and the laird was threatening to evict the whole population, but the settlement was saved by the arrival of coal around 1900. The dance had been in abeyance since mid-century and was revived in the 1890s, ceased during the First World War, and was revived again in 1922 by Alec Johnstone, the Postmaster. It was not danced during the Second World War, but continued afterwards, usually at Christmas concerts, and if any tourists came to the island then the Postmaster would send a note round and summon a team. He, his family, and four other families left the island in 1962, at which point it ceased to have a viable community.

It was at this time that George recruited some schoolboys from Brae Secondary School to learn the sword dance. In this he had the support of the Headmaster and the benchwork master. He is very firm that this is a dignified sword dance, not a jolly one in the way that he feels some of the English dances are. He and the team have seen various versions of the Papa Stour Dance on the internet, and tend towards a tolerant view that if other teams want to dance it briskly then all well and good; George describes such performances as 'high-speed' and 'impressive' and wishes them all good luck, but maintains that the Shetland team do it 'properly' and 'with dignity': 'we are genuine'. He is absolutely clear, by the way, that this is not a fisherman's dance.

From the outset George's teaching reflected this combination of tolerance with a very strong sense of just how far he was prepared to let things go. He accepted that, boys being boys, there would be giggling in the practices, but would not tolerate it in performance – even smiling detracts from the seriousness. He omitted some words from St. George's speech so as to make it easier for the young performers to learn. The original swords he used were straightened barrel-hoops, with no hilts, but he subsequently added hilts painted to match the different dancers' sashes. He also changed the way in which the swords were picked up so as to make the

performance slicker (he objected to the 'ring of backsides' presented in the earlier version).

The current team continues to train schoolboys and is strong in numbers – a party of ten came to Aberdeen. Family ties remain strong, too; George seldom plays for them now, having handed the job of Minstrel to Claire Balfour, a cousin, and the team includes his sons Matt and Peter, his son-in-law George Lawrenson, and his grandson Danny. There is no fixed time of year associated with the dance – they perform at weddings, Christmas parties, and care homes, as well as turning out for the tourists.

The performance begins with the team marching on to the Minstrel playing 'McPherson's Farewell'. George is aware that some performers use 'Da day dawns' but does not favour it, feeling that it is difficult to dance to. The sword dance tune itself exists in more than one version; a fiddler named Jimmy Coates played a plain version, whilst a more ornamented version originated with the Frasers of Kirkwall (relatives of

George's).

There are seven figures, two of which are identical; George thinks that there were other differences which have now been lost. The culmination of the dance is the star, which should be made speedily and held by just one point. The latest swords have been designed so as to enable a tidier star to be formed.

The team's visit to Aberdeen included both formal and informal performances. Following a concert of the Friday evening they danced in the streets of Aberdeen on Saturday, ably escorted by Gaorsach, the local rapper team. On Saturday evening they danced at a ceilidh in the nearby village of Garlogie. Finally, on Sunday morning they appeared at a meet-the-team conversation, hosted by Derek Schofield.

It just remains for me to thank George Peterson and all the Papa Stour Sword dancers for the friendly welcome with which they answered all my questions and for including me in their weekend excursions. I very much hope that we will not have to wait another generation for their next visit.

For more photographs of the Papa Stour Sword Dancers, see the back page.

SDU Day of Dance and Longsword Tournament, 2011

This is being organised by the Redcar Sword Dancers and will take place on **Saturday, 15th October, 2011** in Guisborough, Redcar and Cleveland (North Yorkshire by some reckoning). There will be dance displays around the town from 10.30-2.15 and it's been threatened that some rapper might also take place.

The dance competition will take place from **3.00-5.00pm** at **Prior Pursglove College, TS14 6BU**. Prizes will be awarded for the following categories:

Best traditional dance

Best own dance

Best youth dance

Best music/musician

Best overall performance

The competition will be followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Sword Dance Union, and on Sunday there will be dance displays at Kirkleatham Hall Museum from 10.30-12.00.

More information is available from:

Brian Pearce, Redcar Sword Dancers, 4 Normanby Road, Ormesby, Middlesborough, TS7 9NS.

01642 454371 brianpearce.rsd@gmail.com

The Orion Longsword Dance

Continuing the series of articles considering what Cecil Sharp would find if he were collecting today, **Kristine O'Brien and colleagues** give a view from North America and explain the origins of Orion Longsword Dancers and their distinctive repertoire.

Orion Longsword was formed in 1986 in the greater Boston, Massachusetts area by Rich Jackson. Rich Jackson had been to the first Half Moon Sword Ale in New York City earlier that year, and wanted to return the following year with a sword team of his own. All that can be said of Orion's initial performances at the second Half Moon Sword Ale is that our dances were very traditional, we were not very well dressed and our dancing was not quite up to snuff. The only departure from the expected was that Orion was, and remains, a mixed side.

Since 1992 we have been performing dances of our own composition. All of our dances seek to combine the essence of sword dancing - uniformity of movement and seamless repetition - with a style that is uniquely our own. Each dance has its own character, but all draw on traditional folk figures and tunes - both older English ones and newer American ones. This article gives a brief history of the team and uses Take Five as an example to describe our approach to writing dances.

Orion's metamorphosis has occurred on many fronts. Our band, which once consisted of a lone fiddle player, now often threatens to outnumber the dancers. It combines traditional reeds (concertina and accordion) with modern ones (saxophone) and a varying array of strings (guitar, banjo and mandolin). We travel with two sets of kit - a traditional military-style jacket and a modern flowing one, two sets of shoes - hard-soled and rubber-soled, and three sets of swords. The dances have also progressed from the reconstructed but traditional Salton danced to a tune from the 1700s, to Take Five and its eponymous music from 1959. Salton is danced as a linked ring and ends in a lock; Take Five both starts and ends with a lock - which perhaps makes up for one of our most recent dances, Mr. Hopkins', which has no lock at all.

For the first five years, Orion continued dancing well-known dances, including Escrick, Askham Richard and Flamborough. In 1992, we departed from known tradition after Trevor Stone led a workshop that encouraged groups to try to resurrect the Salton sword dance from very minimal notation. Orion's

version of the Salton dance is inseparable from the tune, chosen by chance for the purposes of our workshop participation. The desire for a driving version of the hornpipe step led to our choice of Masters in This Hall. Even in this early piece one can see two of the hallmarks of the dances choreographed by Judy Erickson for Orion - the tight connection between the music and the step, and the complete nature of the performance, which includes coming on and dancing off.

North Shirley Volunteers (1995) is also heavily steeped in traditional elements, and displays Orion's commitment to "stealing from the best". A Lancashire clog step became the repeated element in the team's second original composition. The driving force behind this dance was Judy Erickson's longstanding desire to be a Grenoside man. Orion's 1996 trip to England for the Sword Spectacular and associated side trips became a driving force of another kind for our next dance. Dual Pelican, No Bleeper (1997) takes its name from a traffic sign spotted in Yorkshire and its figures are derived from British and American traffic patterns. Take Five, which will be the subject of the remainder of this piece, was first performed in 2000 and represented a definite departure from the traditional. 2002 saw Orion's debut of Sandy Boys. The simple southern tune led to a very American piece combining the English tradition of sword dancing with Appalachian clogging. Many of the figures are familiar ones - only they are reminiscent of square dance figures, not longsword. In 2004 we wrote Mr. Hopkins' to thank Brian Hopkins, former foreman of Wype Doles Longsword, for his most generous gift of a set of ten mahogany-handled swords. As the swords were too long to be used in any of our other dances, a new dance, to John Renbourn's Estampie, was created. As of spring 2010, we are in the process of refining our newest composition, using fiddler Ryan McKasson's tune inspired by The Gates, Christo's abstract installation in Central Park in New York City in 2005.

Origins of Take Five

Orion maintains that the band and the music are as integral a part of our dances and their performance as anything else. In light of this, it is crucial that we have a happy and interested band. It was, in fact, a need to challenge the musicians that led Steve Roderick, one of Orion's dancers, to propose using Paul Desmond's Take Five as the basis for a sword dance. Steve was casting about for something more jazz-like than the standard repertoire. Dave Brubeck's album *Time Out* happened to be in his car and the tune Take Five had a lot of things going for it - repeated elements, drive, relatively simple tune, etc. There was, however, the issue of the time signature: 5/4.

Steve spent a lot of time circling through his kitchen trying to figure out possibilities for a basic step. For a dance in 5/4 there were a few options: 5 steps, 4 steps with 1 hop or 3 steps with 2 hops. The first option was too tedious; the second seemed to work well except for the fact that one leg always ended up very sore because one was always hopping on the same foot. There was an aha-moment of realizing that the step could be inverted, preventing the onset of boredom and cramp!

Steve initially pictured the dance as a "slow, sultry rapper dance" for five longsword dancers. He pitched the idea to Judy Erickson, Orion's foreman and primary choreographer, who said he should continue working on it and see where it led. While it was determined that such a dance could work in theory (and successfully, as demonstrated by Seven Champions' Molly dance to the tune), implementation of it hit a sticking point when it came to instrumentation; Take Five, it was felt, really needed to be played on a saxophone. Fortuitous circumstances led to the appearance of a saxophone player (the partner of one of the previous year's Orion recruits) and serious development of the dance began.

Judy and Steve presented the idea to the rest of the group. Initial reactions ranged from skepticism to excitement and all gave way to utter confusion as we tried to learn how to count to 5.

The Tune and the Band

Once the saxophone fell into place (and the accordion player chose not to try to play melody) the drums were replaced by a spaghetti pot or banjo head and the band took off. Judy as the choreographer had her assumptions about how the music

should be arranged. However, the band felt that a different arrangement was closer to the structure of the original. Since the music should be coherent in itself, not just arbitrarily arranged for the convenience of the dancers, the music was eventually arranged to follow the form A-B-A-improv(isational). The improvised section proved challenging for dancers and musicians alike - dancers kept railing against the non-predictable nature of the tune ("that's not how you played it last time!") and musicians found the length of 26 measures (the dancers had compromised enough already) disturbing. Likewise, syncopation is an exciting departure from the regularity of traditional sword music and provided all of us with an opportunity for growth!

The Stepping

Orion dances always start with the music; from there we get the basic step. As said, the basic (A tune) step became the inverted repeat of S(kip)-H(op)-S-S-S S-S-S-S-H. This pattern did not suit the B portion of the tune, and another basic step (S-H-S-H-S) was chosen for the relevant portions of the dance. After the improv sections the music returns to the A tune or "long" step.

The Figures

Following the tune (trying not to modify it more than necessary), the dance has multiple chorus-figure-chorus sandwiches. Surrounding each figure is a very simple chorus - the long step (S-H-S-S-S S-S-S-S-H) repeated four times in a ring. Initially it was all we could manage and provided the space to frantically prepare mentally for the next figure; now it functions as both mental and visual calm in between periods of great activity.

Unlike our other dances, Take Five starts with a pre-formed lock that is placed on the ground. Dancers walk out from the crowd (Look! An audience!) into a ring around the lock, clapping on the dominant beats (1 2 3 4 5), accompanied by guitar and percussion. With the saxophone and the melody, the dancers move in to pick up the lock and the first A-B-A sandwich, where the figure is a standard over-your-neighbor's-sword, over-your-own combination. As the figure starts, the stepping switches to the B-tune or "short" step. This grew out of one of the original figures proposed by Steve Roderick but arrived in final form when one of the dancers went about the step the wrong way and did something interesting. Judy was in charge of developing the dance at that point, and had the presence of

mind to figure out what it was that had happened, and to keep it.

The figure for the first improv section is also one of Steve's original suggestions – the rapper figure "coach and horses". Danced with the long step, one of the dancers goes under the arch made by the opposite sword, turning the ring inside out. The same arch then turns out of the circle to unwind the ring. The dance was initially envisioned for five dancers. This figure was deadly with longswords and five dancers; increasing the number of dancers to seven gave many more options for this figure and others. Because many of the figures are derived from rapper figures, an odd number of dancers was always preferred.

The return of the B-music and the short step brings more over-the-sword; but this time, across the set. "Jump the ring" has the general pattern of a linear advance and retire figure, while maintaining the drive and circular feel of a ring. From the chorus, opposite sides of the circle pull together to form a line (still rotating!), one line leaps over the swords of the other, and everyone unlinks and explodes through, back to a ring. The figure is repeated to recreate the original ring.

The next improv section takes the classic clashing opening and builds it into a fully fledged figure. In keeping with the exploration of circular movements, the figure takes the traditional basket and turns it into a radial starburst. Starting with alternating low and high baskets, the dancers turn through the last high clash to expand and contract the circle before eventually re-forming the ring.

"Wind the lock" uses the familiar successive individual wind-up (think Sleights or Loftus) to create a crossed-hands ring with the swords on the outside. As the last dancer turns, all the swords surge over the ring and reemerge as a lock seconds later. The ring continues around the final lock for half of an A, and the dancers dissipate into the crowd from whence they came as the lock acknowledges the band and then dances off.

We have been pleasantly surprised by the universally warm reception Take Five has received. Even elderly ladies on the streets of Whitby approved: "Very nice dear, I think the tradition should progress." The encouraging responses this dance has generated have led us to continue on a path of reinterpreting an array of traditions, combining new and old in new and exciting ways.

Contributed by Gillian Stewart, Al Murray and Kristine O'Brien

Boxing Day in Flamborough

Richard Traves

Tributes were paid at the traditional 2009 Boxing Day Longsword Dancing event before the final dance in Dog and Duck square to two stalwart supporters of the team; the late Trevor Stone and Eric Storey.

Trevor Stone gave tremendous support to the Flamborough team over many years; he was instrumental in arranging their visit to the Half Lent celebrations in Antwerp when they were the guests of Lang Wapper in 2000, and in the return tour in 2003. He was also co author of the booklet "The History of Flamborough Longsword Dance".

Eric Storey was an inspiration to all, accompanying the dancers on the accordion from the late seventies until he too passed away in 2009. We were glad to welcome his widow Sue who continues to play the penny whistle and also Steve Pearson who has taken on the demanding role of Accordionist. Eric once said that the secret of accompanying the Flamborough lads was "fitting the music in with them" something that Steve has quickly picked up.

Alongside the Sidewinders and other local musicians a good turnout witnessed a fine performance by both the Senior and Junior teams. This year's collection is going to Flamborough Pre School and Flamborough Junior School, it will also be used to help the Junior Team attend the Whitby folk festival in 2010.



Sword Dancers Remembered

Left: Eric Storey, Flamborough
(*Photo: Sue Storey*)

Below: Mike Steel of North
British (and many more) at
Saddleworth Rushcart, 1997
(*Photo: Mick McTiernan*)



World Champions?

Congratulations to **Thrales Rapper**, who travelled all the way across the Atlantic to win DART, the inaugural Dancing America Rapper Tournament, on the 22-24th October, 2010. It was, apparently, their Old Men's team, and we are assured that their reaction was in no way triumphalist. Three teams travelled from the UK, the others being Sallyport Sword Dancers and Mons Meg.

All credit is due to the organisers, and particularly to the tireless enthusiasm of Tom Kruskal.

Brian Tasker (Sallyport) reports:

The first Dancing America Rapper Tournament was held in Cambridge, Massachusetts over the weekend of 22/24 October 2010. It was organised by Tom Kruskal, the man behind the Great Meadows organisation which has sent teams to compete at the Dancing England Rapper Tournament in recent years.

Fourteen sides entered: ten from the USA, two from England, one from Scotland and one from Canada, making fourteen sides in all. The English sides were Sallyport and Thrales and the Scottish side was Mons Meg from Edinburgh. The competition was organised on similar lines to Dert with judged performances in four bars. Before the competition Sallyport said that they didn't mind if they won or not as long as they beat Thrales! Thrales said that they didn't mind if they won or not as long as they beat Sallyport! The winners were Thrales, with Candy Rapper second and Sallyport third. Sallyport claimed that it was the unicycle what won it for Thrales. Candy Rapper have entered Dert on a number of occasions and they won both the Centenary Class and best youth team in 2009.

The event continued on the Sunday morning with a series of instructional sessions and talks. The first instructional session was a five man version of the White Boys dance from the Isle of Man. It was a very well constructed dance and very different from the six man version danced by North British which in turn is very different from the version danced by the Perree Bane dance group in the Isle of Man. This was followed by Sallyport who taught the Swalwell dance. The last session was given by Orion Longsword who attempted to teach us some of their incredible "Take Five" dance. I can confirm that it is just as difficult as it looks, the transitions from

The results were:

1 st	Thrales Rapper
2 nd	Candyrapper
3 rd	Sallyport Sword Dancers
Joie de vivre	Thrales Rappèr
Best Kit	Sallyport Sword Dancers
Youngest Youths	Bubble Rapper
Oldest Fogeys	No Apologies Rapper
Best use of a pumpkin	Bubble Rapper & Toronto Women's Sword

one step to another during the dance being particularly tricky.

I attended Dart with Sallyport. We made a week of it by staying on for a few days and enjoyed three brilliant evenings with New England sides. Rhett Krause, the man who wrote the sword locks appendix in Ivor Allsop's book of longsword dances, made all the arrangements for us and kindly let us stay in his house in Amherst.

On the Tuesday night we went out with the Marlboro' Morris Men and a rapper side called "Flesh Wound". It was an amazingly warm evening and we danced at several spots around the town of Northampton. Sallyport wanted to dance the Poppleton longsword dance and as we had only six dancers I had to do it. I had had the benefit of a few practices including one at the roadside on the way to Amherst, but I was not confident. At one point in the dance I had to run round the set back to place and every time we performed the dance the others shouted out "Go Brian go!" Once I went round the set in the wrong direction but it didn't seem to make any difference.

On Wednesday we spent the day visiting Mount Holyoak, a local beauty spot. The warm weather meant that the fall was late and we were able to appreciate the colours of the leaves on the maple trees. In the evening we caught a bus out to a bar to join a folk session and were surprised to find that the bus was free. I wasn't completely happy about this because I think that free buses should be a privilege for the over 60s. That evening we were joined by Juggler Meadow, a Cotswold side, and another rapper side. The landlord so enjoyed our performances that he gave us all a shot of Jack Daniels

before we left. Later that evening we tried to get into the Amherst Brewing Company's pub but they were very fussy about ID. I showed them my bus pass but they refused to accept that this proved that I was over 21.

On our final day we travelled up to Brattleboro' in southern Vermont to meet up with Jack in the Green, a Cotswold side, and Marlboro' Morris and Sword which is the ladies' side which at one time were linked to the Marlboro' Morris Men. We finished the evening at Mc Neil's bar where the tables were cleared for us to dance. It was another great evening made even better by the beer produced in the micro brewery

being served using British handpumps.

We had a great week in New England. The local sides were so welcoming and we all felt that we are part of the same folk scene despite being thousands of miles apart.

Tom Kruskal was non committal when asked if he would organise another Dart next year. The local rapper sides were at first unsure about entering a tournament but were won round and most of them entered. Now that they have seen how it all works they will be able to decide whether they want to repeat it or not and if they do whether it will be an annual or less frequent event.

The White Boys' Dance – a living tradition

Andrew Kennedy

This article follows on from Brian's account (*above*). I first saw the Manx sword dance performed round about 1986 when a Manx dance group, Bock Yuan Fannee, came to England as guests of the Carlisle Sword and Morris Dancers. It was performed as part of the evening entertainment, rather than during the public displays, and remained in the back of my mind for the best part of two decades, until I decided I'd like to try it with the North British Sword Dancers. Colin Messer did some research, which was duly published in RUMB, and also gave a talk on the subject at the 2004 International Sword Spectacular Festival.

North British duly learned the dance and performed it on occasion, aware of the fact that it is really just the climax of a sword play. A few years went by, and NB decided that the thing to do was to dance the White Boys' Dance on the Isle of Man, and in May, 2010, that's exactly what we did.

I could give the travelogue, the descriptions of dances on the world's biggest water-wheel, and at the top of Snaefell, and Goodness knows where else, but what was of real interest was that the dance was *everywhere*.

Snaefell is the Island's highest point and fortunately has a cafe to protect travellers from the atrocious weather that can be found there. Naturally, we danced in the cafe, only for the driver of the mountain railway to tell us that he was familiar with the dance, having last seen it about ten years previously.

After a long evening's tour (should have been a rapper tour but turned into a longsword tour when Ken left the rappers on a train) we were having a pint or two and got talking to some locals, a mixed crowd in their twenties. They all know the dance, having performed the whole play, dance and all, when they were at school. They mentioned that the play is now less widely performed, owing to the presence of a character called Sambo.

We met similar reactions wherever we went, from people of all ages, but best of all was Saturday night in Douglas, the capital. We went into a pub to do the rapper and decided to target the hen party in the end room. They reacted as favourably as might be expected, and then came and told us that they did sword dancing. We had our doubts, but it turned out that we had stumbled across members of another dance group, Perree Bane, and the next thing was that we were all outside and putting together a mixed NB/PB set. It went as you might expect when you join two teams who have never danced together before, one of which is midway through a hen night, but the outcome was that the following evening we dropped in on the Perree Bane practice and we showed them ours and they showed us theirs, so to speak.

There were two striking aspects about our visit to the IoM: the familiarity and respect in which the dance is held by people of all ages, and the warmth which we were received. A living tradition indeed.



Maltby Phoenix Sword announce a distinguished patron

Maltby Phoenix Sword of **Maltby, Rotherham, South Yorkshire**, is honoured and delighted to announce that the **Earl of Scarborough** has generously agreed to be their patron. **Maltby Phoenix Sword** performs the two types of traditional English sword dancing: **rapper sword dance** and **longsword**.

The connections between **Lord Scarborough** and **Maltby Phoenix Sword** are compelling. First of all, both reside in Maltby; the Earl of Scarborough's home is **Sandbeck Park in the parish of Maltby**. Secondly, one of the dance styles that **Maltby Phoenix Sword** performs, the **longsword**, originated, as we know, in agricultural communities of Yorkshire. The history of the Sandbeck Estate is agricultural, and it is known that longsword dancing occurred around here in the 18th and 19th centuries. Thirdly, Lord Scarborough also owns the Lumley Estate in **County Durham** and his lineage can be traced back to William de Lumley who had property at Lumley on the Wear, County Durham, in the mid-1200s. The family seat is Lumley Castle at Chester-le-Street.

The coalfield of **Northumberland and Durham** is home to the **Rapper Sword Dance**, originating in the 19th century when pitmen would perform in pubs, passing the hat round, or in competition with neighbouring villages. The dance is performed with a 'rapper' - a short sword of spring steel having handles at both ends. There are generally five dancers and elaborate stepping is an important part of this fast and often gymnastic dance.

Coal mining under the **Earl of Scarborough's** estate in **County Durham** extends back into the 15th century. At one time the collieries beside the Wear at Lumley produced some of the most popular coal for the London trade.

Although the Lumley family were not directly involved in coal mining, we are certain that pitmen from several rapper dancing teams toiled under the fields of the Lumley Estate.

A spokesman for **Maltby Phoenix Sword** said "The team is thrilled to have such a distinguished patron – particularly one who's family has a history rooted in areas of coal mining, agriculture and our town of Maltby. We are looking forward to researching the archives further to identify precisely which rapper teams lived and danced on the Lumley Estate."

The Earl of Scarborough said, "I am delighted and honoured to be the patron of Maltby Phoenix Sword, and look forward to supporting them in the coming years. Their reputation is growing nationally, and I have no doubt that the team are, and will continue to be, exceptional ambassadors for Maltby as they travel the country and compete with such skill and success"

Background information on Maltby Phoenix Sword

Maltby Phoenix Sword was formed in 2002 to revive **longsword** and **rapper sword dancing** in the town. The dancers in this revival are mainly girls, unusual for this style of dancing. The team was represented in competition at Bath in Somerset in 2004 and did well but in 2005, to everyone's surprise they won the top prize at the **Dancing England Rapper Tournament (DERT)** in Preston in Lancashire and were featured on BBC 1.

Since then the team has grown and developed into a community sword dance club based in Maltby, Rotherham. Members are all young people from Maltby, from 7 to 17.

The team is currently two-times **Under-18 Schools Rapper Sword Champions** and they came second in the

Open Category at **DEFT 2009**. In October 2010 two of our teams came second and fourth in the youth competition at SDU2010. Our youngest team, the 'Nestlings', are 'wowing'

audiences all over the region. Practices are every Tuesday at **The Edward Dunn Memorial Hall in Maltby, Rotherham.**



Photograph:

The Earl of Scarbrough welcomes some of the team to Sandbeck House. With Lord Scarbrough are, from left to right (back row) Lucy, Megan, Jess, (front row) Laura, Katy and Sarah. Photography by John Davies.

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So where have we been?

Andrew Kennedy

In short, hesitating before sending out the subscription renewal form. It's been a long dither.

When I took over the editorship of RUMB from Trevor Stone I was aware that I had some big shoes to fill, and that I could not simply seek to copy Trevor's unique style, based as it was on an encyclopaedic knowledge of sword dancing and a lifetime spent building connections with sword dancers at home and abroad. On the other hand I was assured of, and have received, the support of a great many sword dancers and have made many good friends in the process.

My aim was to continue to publish any research findings which came my way, along with reports from the archives and news of current events. I was keen to be inclusive, hence the appearance of rapper, and reports from abroad, as well as traditions whose connection to sword dancing has been somewhat tenuous. It has been a particular pleasure to report on two International Sword Spectacular Festivals, and to have covered the beginnings of the Sword Dance Union and the now well-established annual longsword competition. Many people have provided all sorts of gems in the form of reports, news, and curiosities, but two names I must acknowledge in particular are Ron Shuttleworth and Gordon Ridgewell.

What I have found difficult as an editor is the question of obituaries. It's inevitable that old dancers pass and new ones join the scene, but I found myself increasingly having to choose which deaths to note, and whose obituaries to

solicit. It seemed to me that in order to do justice to certain prominent dancers, I should have some key information on file, and I started down this path before having second thoughts about the innate ghoulishness of the task. Despite the emergence of some tremendous young dance teams, the average age of sword dancers is, by and large, increasing, and I wish neither to fail to acknowledge the passing of any dancer I should have mentioned, nor to turn RUMB into an obituary sheet. In the end, I simply cannot decide, and in these circumstances it seemed wrong of me to ask for a fresh round of subscriptions.

I would be very happy if a successor were to be found to replace me as editor, and am open to all offers and suggestions. I've no doubt that there is a creative mind out there who will put matters into their proper proportion and get things moving again.

In the meantime I'd like to thank all those subscribers who have put up with the often erratic pattern of publication, who have supplied so much marvellous material, and who have encouraged me with their correspondence and emails.

I'd also like to thank Jeff Lawson for taking on the grim task of administering the subscriptions and bagging up and posting the individual issues. Just sparing me from the hatred of the local postmaster has been a boon.

I'll look forward to seeing you at future events.

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