



## Contents of Volume 24, Number 2

Welcome to a bumper *Morris Matters*—two major articles both with a long term basis—one being the long awaited description and announcement about Tony Barrand’s video archive. We have all had fun looking at the clips even if they are a bit small! Also an article written some time ago by Roy Dommett pulling together material he had written previously for *MM*—now all in one fell swoop. There is stuff in there even if you’re not a musician—see it from their viewpoint!

The Digital Video Research Archive (DVRA) of Anthony G. Barrand’s Collection of Morris, Sword and Clog Dancing	2
Pub Morris	9
Review of “Life and Times” by George Frampton	10
On Playing for the Cotswold Morris by Roy Dommett	13
Three Molly Dancers by George Frampton	27
“It’s Morris, Jim, But Not As We Know It” by Long Lankin	29
Notice Board	33
Hay ! Do the Morris! by Sid Kipper	36

*Morris Matters* is published twice a year by Beth Neill, with help from Jill Griffiths  
27 Nortoft Road, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks SL9 0LA  
phone 01494 871465

Subscriptions are £6 for two issues (in EU countries; £8 outside EU)  
published in January and July.

Please make cheques or postal orders payable to *Morris Matters*

## **The Digital Video Research Archive (DVRA) of Anthony G. Barrand's Collection of Morris, Sword and Clog Dancing\***

My collection of film and video of Morris, sword, and clog dancing has now all been digitized and most of it has been edited and compressed into Real Media format, uploaded to a streaming server at Boston University and, in collaboration with Dr. Frank Ricardo, has been made available for broadband lines at <http://www.bu.edu/uni/dvra/> with a "full-text" search capability. The original media have been donated to The American Folklife Center as the "Anthony Grant Barrand Collection of Morris, Sword, and Clog Dancing at the Library of Congress" and will be cataloged as AFC2003/5.

This article is intended to explain what's available now at the new Boston University digital archive, where it comes from, what remains to be edited, and what things other interested people could do to optimize this resource for research purposes.

### **How did the collection start?**

I became passionately interested in Morris dancing after seeing the nascent Greenwich Morris Men dance when John Roberts and I were on the staff at Folk Music week of the Country Dance and Song Society at Pinewoods Camp in 1974. We went to a Dance Week the next year to learn more about Cotswold Morris, took a class on the Papa Stour sword dance from Patrick Shuldham Shaw, and saw the newly-formed Ring o' Bells women's team. The earliest film in the collection is from my first wedding in Vermont in May 1975, when Ring o' Bells came and danced with the new Marlboro men's side. The collection began in earnest, however, in 1976, in three ways:

1. A friend filmed the Saturday show dancing of the first Marlboro Morris Ale using the then state-of-the-art Sony portable  $\frac{1}{2}$ " reel-to-reel video tape recorder that was part of the research equipment associated with my faculty position at Marlboro College in southern Vermont.
2. Then, that same summer, the Headington Quarry Morris Dancers performed on the Mall in Washington, DC for the U.S. Bicentennial celebration. The local Vermont team, by then women's and men's sides known together as Marlboro Morris and sword, was dancing the Headington Quarry repertoire and I wanted film to study and learn from the source. In addition to their stunningly smooth home repertoire (they seemed to glide through the hey) the Headington men also danced some Bledington and Adderbury dances and performed a six-man rapper sword dance. Checking out noisy bagpipes from a nearby stage, I discovered the "Portuguese Mainland Stick Dancers", 8-man sets dancing elaborate, puzzling, and exciting stick dances in skirts and shawls. These later were notated and taught at Pinewoods Camp.
3. I went to England in December, 1976, with a borrowed silent 8mm film camera to document two traditional Sheffield-based Longsword dances notated by Cecil Sharp: one at Grenoside and the other Handsworth Sword Dancers since our local women's team had chosen to use the Handsworth dance after Fred and Dinah Breunig had at-

tended a workshop given by Harry Pitts, Captain of Handsworth. From this point on, I filmed any and every Morris, clog, and mumming or sword event I could, both for study purposes (because my academic research had begun to focus on questions of aesthetics of Morris dance forms) and to create a resource for my own expanding role as a teacher of Morris and sword. Prior to this, teaching at Pinewoods camp, for example, had basically relied on what had been taught in previous years and on information gleaned from Sharp's *The Morris Book* (Part I of which is available online at <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/12926> ). I had learned, however, that what Sharp had notated and published and what others had later interpreted from his notations was often completely different from what I was seeing when I watched traditional dancers. With the technology being available to me, I thought that it was time to create a new resource so others could see how things were done and done well.

### What's in the collection?

There are seven main types of performance which comprise the collection, in both Morris and Sword dancing and Mummers plays and clog, step or percussive dancing:

#### Morris, Sword and Mumming in the collection

1. A complete record of "massed" displays at all of the gatherings of American, Canadian, and English Morris "teams" which in 1976 became known as the "Marlboro Morris Ale," held between 1976-present in Windham County, Vermont, USA. Originals made on 8mm film (1975), Sony  $\frac{1}{2}$ " reel-to-reel video (1976-1978), VHS video cassettes (1979-1997), 8mm videotape (1998-2000), and mini-dv digital tape (2001-Present). These include many performances by the **same** groups who danced at "Marlboro" over a number of years (some over the full almost 30-year period). This is an unusual record of change and non-change of dance movement and accompaniment style through aging and generational replacement of dancers. All currently available.
2. Performances by English Morris and sword dance teams filmed on location between 1976-1982 and 1996. These document selected Morris, sword, and clog dance teams and individuals being studied on location in England by Tony Barrand and his students/colleagues, Kari Smith and Rhett Krause. Originals on Sony  $\frac{1}{2}$ " reel-to-reel video, silent regular 8mm film or Super 8mm film with sound, or  $\frac{1}{2}$ " Beta video. All of this is currently available.
3. A continuous record (from 1977 to the present) of annual appearances by teams local to Windham County, Vermont in which Dr. Barrand was a founder or co-founder, dancer, teacher, or which were created as a result of his efforts to install Morris or sword dance events into the annual cycle of community life. These include the various men's and women's teams of Marlboro Morris and Sword, Marlboro Morris Men, Marlboro Classics, Green Mountain Mummers, and the July 4th Morris Dancers (a

North-West or Clog Morris team). This record is unique in its detail of change and non-change of dance movement and accompaniment style through aging and generational replacement of dancers over more than a quarter of a century beginning in 1975. Particularly noteworthy and unique is the complete record of the local mummery and Longsword teams from 1977 – present. The Green Mountain Mummerys have performed the same variant of the Ampleforth play with sword figures based on the Sleights dance. The women of Marlboro Morris and Sword have used the Handsworth dance and, after beginning with a ribbon costume plough play have gradually evolved their own Heroine-Combat play with female characters such as Mother Earth, St. Joan of Arc, Joan of Arc's Mother ("Mrs. Of Arc?") and the Registered Nurse (now finally a Doctor). Originals made on 8mm film (1975), Sony ½" reel-to-reel video (1976-1978), VHS video cassettes (1979-1997), 8 mm videotape (1998-2000) and mini-dv digital tape (2001-2202). All currently available.

4. Miscellaneous performances of various American or English Morris or sword dance teams, 1969-present. This includes copies of film/video taken by other collectors such as Howard Lasnik, Jocelyn Reynolds, Jan Elliot and Tim Radford, and Terry Tobias. All currently available.

### **Clog and other forms of step- or percussive-dancing in the collection (most are NOT YET available in the DVRA)**

5. A complete collection of videotaped meetings/lessons between Dr. Barrand and consultant clog dancer and piano player, Anna Mae Marley of Rockville, CT between January 1989 and September 1986. Miss Marley taught all of her clog and tap dances learned originally from her father, William P. Marley, in the 1890's or added by her and her brother, Jim Marley, when Anna and Jim danced for Major Bowes in 1936, or when Anna taught her dancing school between 1942 and 1986. Many of these sessions include Anna's niece, Eleanor Marley Lessig, Dr. Barrand's student and dancing partner, Kari Smith, Margaret Dale Barrand, and several notable English clog dancers who visited Miss Marley. These include: Pat Tracey, Peter Brown, Sam Sherry and Harry Cowgill, Alex Woodcock, Chris Brady, and members of the Padiham Panache clog dance team. Originals made on VHS video cassettes (1979-1996), 8 mm videotape (1996-1998). Later performances of the Marley repertoire by Tony's performance group, The New Dancing Marleys, in 1996, 1998, and 2000 were recorded on 8mm, video and mini-dv cassettes
6. Miscellaneous performances and classes taught by English clog dancers in the U. S. These include classes by Pat Tracey, Sam Sherry, Harry Cowgill, and Alex Woodcock.
7. Miscellaneous examples of performances by tap, step- and percussive dancers including:
  - a. Quebecois dancers, Ginette Dubois Roy, Claude Brochu, Claude Theberge (1977-78), and others such as Pierre Chartrand (1985-6). Some clips are available.

- b. Various instructor performances from the Reading Cloggies traditional Step dance weekends (1991-1996). Some clips are available.
- c. Clog dance performances and competitions at the Fylde Clog dance festival, Fylde, England
- d. Tap dancer (hooper) Sandman Simms, tap dancer/southern clogger Ira Bernstein, Quebecois dancer Benoit Bourque, and clog/morris dancer Tony Barrand at the "Step Dance Week" held by the Augusta Heritage Program at Davis and Elkins College, West Virginia, USA in 1986.

### **How to Use the Archive**

The images are available as Real Media files and you will need a high-speed connection to view them. Back in 2001 when the first tapes were digitized, I made the choice to display them at 240x180 pixels and use Real media rather than Quicktime. This was a hard decision for a devoted Mac user but I made it because the Real files are much smaller and produced a smoother motion image over the three- to twelve minutes (or longer) of a Morris or sword performance. Real Player at <http://www.real.com> is a free download. The images can, of course, be viewed at double- or full-screen size with appropriate loss of quality but the dance movement remains readily visible at larger sizes.

The web site was created by a former student and now colleague, Dr. Francisco Ricardo, who is interested in exploring and opening up the layers of multiple cross links which can be created from and within a rich text and image data base such as this. The current search engine is based on the full text search in the newest mySQL open source database server application. A link to the Digital Archive Search Operators is provided at each search box after "For Advanced Search Options click here". A simple entry of text will produce results for each word separately but entering the text in quotes will give results for only those combinations: e.g. "Windsor Morris" in quotes will generate only performances by Windsor Morris, but searching simply on Windsor Morris (without quotes) will produce all performances by and in Windsor and more than 2000 clips listed some way or other as a Morris of some sort. Results are sorted chronologically from the earliest to the most recent.

### **What can you do to enhance the archive?**

I would really appreciate each user to contribute any additional information, anecdote or comment they associate with any performance. Each clip is stored in a folder on the server with an identifying number such as MM19940528.2.22 which corresponds to the type of event (MM= Marlboro Morris Ale), the date in yyymmdd format (19940528), the generation of the digital copy (.2 = digital copy made from original), and number of tapes made that day (.22 = second tape made at the second event of the day). In each folder, each clip is given an

equivalent label with the numerical order of performance on the tape as in 19940528.2.22.0014, which indicates it was the 14<sup>th</sup> dance done at the second Ale show of the day. In the data associated with each clip, I have given as much information as I could about the following items:

1. Date of performance;
2. Name of person who took the film or video;
3. The location at which the film or video was taken;
4. What was the occasion for the performance (e.g. Marlboro Morris Ale);
5. Names of the performers (I have given name of team, composition (men's, women's, mixed, or children), and names of individual performers and their positions in the set)
6. Types of "extra" characters (e.g. Fool, Betty, or Hobby) and names of each dancer;
7. Genre of dance in 18 categories (e.g. Cotswold Morris, Border Morris, Garland dancing);
8. Name by which the dance is known to the performers and the wider dance community (e.g. "Island Mary" also known as "Highland Mary");
9. Name of the tune(s) and the musician(s) and the instrument(s) used.
10. Name of the source location commonly associated with the repertoire style (e.g. "Fieldtown". If it seems to be a "made up" dance or not from a "traditional" source or published collection such as the Lionel Bacon *Handbook of Morris Dances*, it is tagged "invented" with the identity of the choreographer if known. N.B. over the thirty years at the Marlboro Morris Ale, some teams, e.g. Bouwerie Boys almost exclusively do "traditional" dances; others, e.g. Marlboro Morris and Sword women almost exclusively do "invented" dances.)

In order to optimize the data, the results page from which each clip can be seen has a link box for "Add Comment or Question". Any corrections or additions to the data are automatically forwarded to me by email and I or an assistant will amend the data. All comments remain visible via the "Add Comment or Question" link at each clip.

I have begun adding commentary linking different clips and cross-references among various performances in the collection at the feature labeled "This is what I can tell you about". Anyone interested in adding their thoughtful and informed commentary or insights to the range of issues raised by the archive should submit them to or contact me at [csharp@bu.edu](mailto:csharp@bu.edu). The archive is of obvious use to those with interests in display dances and customs contained here but the unique chronological content showing the same people and teams over three decades will be of use to many with concerns outside of the immediate "folk" world. I have begun receiving enquiries from students and scholars, for example, in the broader dance community looking at development of style as performers age, in education fields looking at how one teacher influences a large group, and in American Studies areas examining the phenomena

of Americans in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century adopting an “English” dance custom and establishing an “invented tradition” in their own community. I am glad to make this collection available to any who wish to use it and I welcome any and all additions or corrections.

### **What remains to be added to the archive?**

Two sets of materials remain unavailable at this time. The first, small group consists of Morris or sword performances from tapes provided by other collectors such as Jan Elliott and Ivor Allsop. These are on the server and waiting for associated information to be added to the data base. These will be available shortly. Some of the clog dance materials, such as an individual or group dancing the “Marley Buck and Wing” or Pat Tracey’s “Old Lancs” in performance situations will be edited soon and made available in a similar format to the Morris and sword performances.

Then there’s the incredibly valuable and unique record of over seven-years worth of visits (on average every two weeks) on hundreds of hours of tape of “lessons” given by Anna Marley to Tony Barrant and Kari Smith and others. In these meetings, the history of the Marley family of Rockville, CT was discussed with Anna and her four sisters and a brother, now all dead. The conversations covered the family’s involvement in clog dancing since the 1890s. Anna taught and we learned as many as eleven routines such as the Walt Cog, the Softshoe, the Military Drum Roll, and the Staircase Dance. We’re in process of applying for funding to come up with a way to present this fascinating record: Anna learned to dance and play piano for clog dancing as a girl in a New England mill town at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. An experienced teacher of children who simply imitated her dancing, she gradually learns as an old woman -barely able to dance - how to verbalize and “break down” her movements; Kari Smith and I, book-wise and used to late 20<sup>th</sup> century teachers and dance notations, had to learn how to learn from Anna. There are many wonderful topics to study here in this and other aspects of the dancing in the archive. If anyone is looking for graduate or other academic projects, I will add that I have access to some funding for graduate fellowships.

### **Copyright and Permissions**

Finally, the matters of permissions and copyright need to be raised. I obtained general permission to film as each opportunity arose. It is complex and unclear what rules should apply here. Legal advice I have been given varies widely depending on the institution involved. The usual Library of Congress understanding is that written permission must be obtained from each individual depicted or their heirs. This is a daunting proposition for the archive is a novel collection involving thousands of people as dancers, musicians, and audience, both the living and the dead. The classic folklore paradigm is a one-on-one interview; it’s easy to get written per-

mission from one person or his or her heirs. The Library's first compromise position was a rule one might apply to a performing group someone might record in fieldwork, such as, for example, a church choir: the "Artistic Director" can give permission for the whole group. That's not much more helpful; try making that work with a Morris team "Squire" or "Foreman", especially for a team such as, say, Ring o' Bells in New York who have gone through four or five cycles of team membership and leaders in thirty years. The Boston University position, as I understand it, is to suggest that Morris performances are in the public domain. In the case of a non-commercial, academic research archive, individual permission is not needed from anyone voluntarily participating in a performance in a public place where it was known that the event would be filmed or where permission was explicitly given at the time. People, in other words, were implicitly giving permission by acknowledging that they would want to be seen.

An inventive suggestion was needed to work with both places. My current solution is that I will make every effort to inform people who might be on the films by spreading the word among the Morris dance community that all my tapes and films are available to be seen. If anyone identifiable or recognizable in any performance wishes to deny permission for me to include any clip in which they appear, I will remove it from the online archive. It gets a little more fussy when asking for names of individuals to be included in the data base, thereby increasing the possibilities for recognition. Under most circumstances, the Morris costume or kit makes it essentially an anonymous performance so, where possible, please notify any past or present team members if you're including names when you send those details. Anyone with questions about the use of clips in which they appear should contact me at my Boston University address via [csharp@bu.edu](mailto:csharp@bu.edu).

Enjoy the clips. Please let me know if you find any broken links or movies that are problematic. If you're interested in good quality copies of any performances please ask. At the archive we have the capability of making DVD or cassette copies at the cost of the materials, time and labor.

*Anthony G. Barrand, Ph.D.*  
*Boston University May 2005*

\* A version of this article was first published in the *American Morris Newsletter*, which is now on-line at <http://www.americanmorrisnews.org/> The information in this article is based on US practice and law; other countries copyright may differ from this approach.

# PUB. MORRIS!

Sure. We have a wide range....  
..choose your instrument.



Andy

## Review of “Life and Times”

*Life and Times* was a symposium on Folk Collectors open to all, and held on Saturday 19th February 2005 at Cecil Sharp House. The event was jointly organised by the Traditional Song Forum and the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library.

In Steve Roud’s introduction, he announced this was to be the first in a series of biennial events, that presented a chance to hear people who have made significant contributions to the documenting of traditional culture in Britain and Ireland talking about their life and work. The day itself was to have included contributions from Tony Engle, the long-time boss of Topic Records; Tom Munnely, veteran folklore collector from Dublin; Keith Chandler, researcher and writer on traditional music and dance; and Simon Evans, known for his interest in vernacular culture and in ways of recording and documenting them. As it was, Tom Munnely was unable to attend and Doc Rowe acted as a very able substitute.

Kicking off the day, Keith Chandler took the theme in its most literal sense, and spoke very intimately about what ‘turned him on to folk music’ and how he abandoned his unique collection of Marvel comics in achieving this end. Much of his story will be well-known to readers of this magazine, but he spoke at length about his educational background, before taking up jobs in the print trade in Reading, then in London. His involvement with Folk Music evolved via a singers’ club in Reading, and then in Morris dance in Devon, Reading, and Stafford. The postscript of all this was enrolling in a History degree at the University of Lancaster, then re-enrolling for a Liberal Studies degree in what turned out to be his M.A. in the Morris dance of the South Midlands. His ‘Tizer taste’ moment appeared to be meeting Freda Palmer of Witney at Sidmouth in a song session at the Beach Store, which resulted in following up her knowledge of the old morris dancers in Oxfordshire and a lifelong infatuation of the same. The forty-five minutes passed too quickly, and little was said about Chandler Publications, Keith’s enquiries into Scottish melodeon players, or even his own role as a performer in various guises. Keen EFDSS observers will notice that Keith is the new editor for the Folk Music Journal – and jolly good luck, mate!

Doc Rowe entertained us for a short half hour with anecdote after anecdote on how his interest matured after graduating in Art, in the manner of his *How I Stumbled Out One May Morning* talk delivered at the National Festival in 2004. The misbehaviour of audio-visual aids at the symposium did not faze him one jot, so it was straight onto Plan B. Coming from Devon, he told us how he had lost his accent as a result of army service, “although my sister can speak proper Debbon.” How he met various crusty characters who knew some of the old songs in the local district. How he became involved with the tight-knit Padstow community and photographed any archival material he could lay his hands on at the town museum. In this story, he was showing the proofs of these at one of the local pubs, only to find them all disappear from his own view, then reappear the next morning at breakfast after doing the rounds of all the other town’s pubs and clubs.

This ended with a queue of Padstonians insisting on meeting him to tell him the story behind each shot, saying who else was featured in the photo, and plying him with endless cups of tea!

At midday, there was an adjournment so that Peter Kennedy could receive his Gold Award from the EFDSS. The citation, read by Steve Rowley of Gloucester who was 'rumoured to be in character as Sir Charles Wheatstone' – inventor of the English concertina and Wheatstone Bridge, among other things. Peter was described as one of the most prominent folk collectors in the 1950s, a former artistic director of EFDSS, seconded to the BBC Folk Music, Custom and Dialect Recording Scheme, and now operating Folktrax.org at his Gloucester home. Peter in turn reminisced about Storrow, the room where the symposium was being held which was once used as a recording studio in the days of his direct involvement at Cecil Sharp House. A tribute was then paid to him by Jerry West, as chairman of the EFDSS National Council, in making the award.

Simon Evans led the afternoon session talking about his work in Social Services in Kent, and how he used it in talking to various elderly people such as Tom West about the Christmas custom of the Hooden Horse in St. Nicholas at Wade, and Herbie Smith of Shoreham near Sevenoaks about the play of the Seven Champions – from which the eponymous molly dance team took their name. He played several musical examples, including his grandfather from the East End of London singing into a dictaphone. The audio-visual aids did work this time, so we were treated to some video footage of family entertainment by travellers at a pub in Appledore, complete with step-dancing. Touched upon were his roles as a BBC radio broadcaster and various project work, such as that with Chris Wood who plays violin in the manner of tone poetry above interviews conducted by Simon with people along the River Medway.

There was a mid-afternoon break during which the relief sculpture commemorating the life of Fred Jordan was unveiled in the foyer at Cecil Sharp House. This came as a result of the *Remembering Fred* event in November 2003, which celebrated the life of the Shropshire singer, the proceeds and donations taken funding a fitting memorial designed by Forest of Dean sculptor John Wakefield. After the ceremony, attended by Fred's nieces Jean Birkett and Jan Davies and nephew Cecil Jordan, the gathering all sang 'To Be a Farmer's Boy.'

The final contribution of the afternoon was by Tony Engle, talking about his involvement with Topic Records as managing director in their transition from the Workers' Musical Association body initiated in 1939 to a champion of traditional music in the 1970's and beyond. He began by describing his formative years as a Portsmouth student prepared to shun rock 'n' roll in favour of his fascination with the singing of Harry Cox!

He then went on to talk about his recruitment and proactive steering of the company through the exciting years of the Folk Revival. In all this, he was being interviewed/prompted by long-time associate Reg Hall, climaxing in the project that was to turn into their twenty-volume *Voice of the People* compilations series featuring source singers and musicians described as having 'dirt under their finger nails.' In all this, Tony spoke about the necessary changes the company had to undergo to stay as an independent label: the preference for CD format over vinyl, cooperation with other independent companies in overcoming problems of global distribution such as Arhooli in America, and promoting key artists in the revival such as Martin Carthy, the Watsons, June Tabor, and many more.

The seven hours set aside passed all too quickly. The event was very well-attended, with many people in the audience having credentials themselves that may yet pass as targets for future *Life and Times* symposia. Who knows? Applause is owed to Steve Roud and Peta Webb for staging the event on behalf of the Traditional Song Forum and Vaughan Williams Memorial Library respectively.

*George Frampton,*  
*March 2005*

## On Playing for the Cotswold Morris

### Introduction

Many years ago Michael Gorman, a well known Irish fiddler based in London, was asked about how to play the fiddle. He demonstrated the finger positions for the notes. The problem here is the same, where to start and what to assume is already known. Thoughtful players have many insights, some of which can be difficult to communicate and other for lesser musicians difficult to understand. Unfortunately it is a golden rule that one can only learn what one almost knows. Most morris musicians have little formal tutoring so I shall assume that we can start discussing some of the simple basics. The morris musician has to develop a sympathy for the movements to which they are playing. Fitting the music to the dance requires some analysis of what the morris movements are about.

### Basic rhythms

Let us accept that tunes are divided into bars and have key signatures. Now let us consider what morris tunes are and separate them from what they are not. Morris tunes are usually either in 4/4 or 6/8. Detailed tune classifications usually depend on the playing speed and the number of notes in a bar, leading to such titles as, reels, rants, Polkas, Hornpipes, Step dances, cake Walks, Schottisches, measures, Marches or the Single, Double and triple Jigs. There is no universally agreed nomenclature system.

Probably the decline of the morris in the nineteenth century saved it from keeping up with social dance musical fashions. There are polkas used that can be thought of as improved hornpipes but very few waltzes outside of Adderbury where singing was a significant factor in defining the repertoire; thus there are no dance equivalents to the Mediterranean Jota or the Northern European Ländler or Oompah type. The morris has never lent itself to rhythmic complexities like some of the dances of the Basques or Eastern European countries and possibly the Midland Bedlam Morris. But it does have echoes of the distant past in particular dances, like the galliard (cf. God Save the Queen) and the 6/4 hornpipe in the various Sherborne Jigs or Shepherds Heel & Toe at Headington and the 9/8 (slip jig in Ireland) for Beaux of London City.

There is little in common with other English folk dance traditions such as a solo step and clog dancing, except in the use of elementary phrase endings or breaks, and the simplest of heel and toe stepping for a special version of one typical dance. It did not acquire complex choreography. However, I feel that it is a pity that English folk dance never caught onto rhythm types that the Old Time world reaped like the slow saunters or walking dances which could be very useful for providing contrasts in modern shows. Most morris tunes are in 4/4 (common) time and use a hornpipe rhythm. The bars are thought of as divided into 8's but are played broken (dotted).

Step dancers use hornpipes but differently – a bar of 4 crochets can be danced as 8 quavers (1 and 2 and 3 and 4) – duple time; triplets (1 and a 2 and a 3 and a 4) – triple time or semi quavers (1 an and a 2 an and a 3 an and a 4) for complex steps. Thus there is no allowance for body movement and a requirement for very even playing – not the morris idiom at all! But the concept of duplet and triplet division of bars is in fact the inherent difference between common and jig time tunes. If a morris tune is not in common time it is a jig in 6/8! It has an underlying asymmetric pulse.

A good musician allows one to dance comfortably, but energetically not slackly – to fit the natural rhythm of the movement rather than forcing it. Too rigid a four-square rhythm muzzles expression in the morris. The four beats in a bar are actually not evenly distributed, not only are the weak beats retarded towards a jiggy rhythm but the amount depends on the strength of the dancers' preceding movement. It is impractical to write down as it would be too complex to follow.

### *Dancers' Bounce*

The reality of natural movement is that it is not even and it has to be constrained to make it smooth. Whether in 4/4 or 6/8, the dancer recognizes 4 pulses in a bar regardless of the number of notes actually played. The morris step reflects that there are two stresses called strong beats (on beats) a bar and that the other two are weak or off beats. The remaining discussion assumes that dancers are skilled enough for the topic to matter.

Firstly there is the normal emphasis on the first beat of each bar. It is a strong beat for the dancer where the main effort of drive is made. But if the music over-emphasises it, it can drive the dancer into the floor producing noise rather than lift. The effect is then similar to having "on beat" drumming.

Secondly, the final beat of the bar and sometimes its step is deemphasized or even suppressed. The danger of that is that it might lose the body "lift" at that point. The second and fourth beats in a bar are the "weak" or "off beats" but they are significant because they are where important lift or elevation of the dancer occurs, particularly on the last beat of a morris double step.

Body movement is not even across a note or a bar because there is the continual starting and stopping from the reversals of vertical motion at the contacts with the ground. It takes longer to rise up off the ground than to fall back, unless special care is taken and the total time allowed depends on the emphasis being given to the particular step. Think of skip steps. This natural asymmetry partially explains why jigs are more exciting than reels for Country

Dancing because of their better fit to a natural bouncy movement. The degree of brokenness is related to the effort being put into the dancing or to the effort being demanded by the playing.

To understand something of the realities of movement, the musician should perform some basic exercises.

Start by considering the simplest basic movement; 2 springy jaunty dance-walk steps per bar with the weight on the balls of the feet and no heel touch. Judges of jug dancing competitions sometimes placed their hands under competitors' heels to be sure they were properly off the ground. Increasing the effort for height develops the movement into "capers", producing "plain capers" at 2 a bar. Alternatively accenting the off-beat with a body lift or inserting a hop produces the hop-step or single step.

Try dancing in a room in front of a window with cross pieces at eye level and observe the bar's apparent movement against a distant background as a measure of vertical movement of the head and hence one's body centre of gravity. It should be found difficult and unnatural to move so that the eyes remain steady. Comfortable dancing makes full use of flexing the instep.

Movement is determined by contacts with the ground and Newton's laws of motion apply. The higher one goes. The longer it takes. The converse should be that the slower one plays the higher one should go, not the longer one stays in contact with the floor. Normally dancers "cheat" by sinking, bending their knees, to extend the range of movement without necessarily increasing the time out of touch with the ground. The stopping of the downward motion, the reversal of direction and the acceleration up off the ground is done primarily by the spring in the foot and ankle. The energy absorbing motion at stopping can be done faster than the acceleration, where one has to produce a force and do work. The thigh and knee contribute more to the larger, longer capers when dancers bend at the knees.

There is a natural egocentric view which has movement spreading from the body, Although helpful for forming good images, the realities of the mechanics of movement have to be taken first. A larger than normal movement requires either more time or more effort to keep it within the normal time bounds. Either way the note is accented as a memory jogger. As a general rule, there should be a note for every step in the dance and probably for each hand movement. It is not true conversely that every note has a step. Carried to the extreme was the Abingdon "Maid of the Mill"; properly a jig with 6 notes to a bar, it was played for a while at half speed in 3/4 so that the "1 hop 2 3" went across the normal bars.

The twentieth century fashions in social dance emphasized the off beat, in the morris this occurs as the kick of the free foot on the hop. There is a strong element of this in the single stepping traditions that lasted into the twentieth – and even twenty-first - century. Their dances can be done to ragtime and later popular rhythms.

Because public performance is rehearsed and not a spontaneous interpretation of the music, the musician establishes manners of playing that act as mnemonics for the dancers. There are tricks to develop drive and excitement in the music. For example, Ravel's Bolero used by the former ice champions Torvill and Dean, builds up tension without accelerating. The adjustment is in how it is being played. It uses more broken rhythm, more staccato or "snap" and more volume – but not just as noise. One can wallow in the sound from a 40 piece brass band but be shattered by a rock group at the same decibel level.

Some village traditions have their own characteristic basic step, each needing its own rhythmic subtlety. The essential differences found in just the single steps (1hop 2hop) are:

Brackley, Hinton, Headington – stiffish legs

Bidford – foot drawn back & lifted on the hop to give "back-pedalling"

Bampton, Chipping Camden - raise free foot on the step & kick forward on hop, giving "bicycling"

All differ on the degree of hesitation on the weak beat and thus the brokenness needed in playing the tunes. It is difficult to comment on double steps as there is less traditional evidence. Cecil Sharp considered that there was a classical older version which he described but, from the little surviving knowledge of the manner of performance, there must have been small differences. The imposing of a standard interpretation of how to play morris tunes is a major cause of clubs failing to make the difference between traditions appear in their dancing.

### *Phrasing the Dance*

The dances are usually constructed of 4-bar phrases of movement which shape the dance and this basic unit of music has to be reflected in the playing. There is not the regularity in the playing of the tunes that might be expected. The music must "stretch" at jumps, changes of direction and driving off.

A few traditions consist of long sequences of a basic step perhaps ending with a break of 3 or 4 strong beats. The finishing action of a figure, here called a "break" after the term in step dancing, may be in the same speed and rhythm as the basic step, as at Brackley or Eynsham. If it is a simple jump or a very emphatic pause and jump as in some Abingdon or Chipping Camden dances, the movement takes

longer, and the musician has to allow the dancer “air”. The stretching out of particular notes to fit the movements ensures that it is not useful to practise following a metronome, because the musician should fall behind in discrete bits.

But nearly all figures consist of strings of different movements. The most common dance phrase is 2 double steps ( 1 bar each), 2 back steps ( step and hop; ½ bar each) a step and a jump to land with feet together i.e.

*l,r,l, hl/ r,l,r,hr/ l,hl,r,hr/ l, \_ ft tog \_//*

The rhythm of the double step is not quite that of the single steps. The single is in this case a back step, which normally contrasts in style, energy and hand movements to the normal basic step. Along with the jump in the fourth bar there must be small variations in pace throughout the phrase. A more complex set is:

*l,r,l, hl/ ft tog \_j.(r)/ l \_ hl hl/ ft tog \_j \_ //*

The springs \_ in bars 2 and 4 and the rhythm of the galley in bar 3 depend on the tradition. At Longborough and Fieldtown the movement of the galley goes through smoothly and the beats are very regular, even if the tune is written in 6/8. At Sherborne the galley is a step forward and then a turn on the hops so that there is a spring through the weak beat and the hops are emphatic. Note that there may be a de-emphasised step or hop on the final weak beat of a bar preparatory to the next movement, especially if it is a particularly strong one. As it is small, it needs to be delayed, i.e. be late, This shows in a series of spring capers – single capers, thus

*/l \_ r \_/ l \_ r \_/*

In practice they often include a preparatory hop (“half capers”) or a change step (“furies”)

*hr/ l \_ r, hr/ l \_ r or /l \_ r, l/ r \_ l, r/ l \_ r, l/ r \_ l \_/*

noting that the last of a series only has the preparatory hop or change step if there is something immediately following. The height and rhythm of the half caper depends on the tradition and its quality is related to the associated arm movements.

A tradition like Fieldtown makes a great deal of these preparatory movements throughout the dances. Others liked to be “clean” and unfussy. Extra bounces can be used keeping the vertical movements going rather than limiting them; it is essential the musician finds out the club preferences.

A caper is a high spring onto a foot, while the free foot does something; “r \_” can be written “R \_” to emphasise the effort. A subtlety with 4 plain capers at the end of a movement is whether they really are:

4: /l r l\_/ R\_ L\_ / R\_ L\_ //      or 3: l r l hl/ r\_ L/ R\_ L\_ //

and play it accordingly.

About the one thing that is certain is that the morris is never, never played quite as written!

A problem of the professional dance is that it aims for continuous variety and this encourages dancers to move gracefully from one pose to another, and there is little that the conductor can do working with an orchestra to follow the dancer. The contrast with the morris idiom needs more explanation. The revived Greek dance is worse in that the poses are derived from classical but static illustrations.

### Speed

The normal speed for a Morris used to be 96 strong beats a minute; 48 bars or a 4 bar phrase in 5 seconds, which is easy to follow on a clock or watch with a second hand. This speed has been found all round the Cotswolds by the older collectors, Slightly higher speeds have been observed e.g at Bampton, “Brighton Camp” seemed to be played faster. Some dances have been collected somewhat slower, down to 80 beats a minute of 4 bars in 6 seconds. This is more in line with modern practice where all the team have dance skills. The tradition thought itself lucky when it had 3 good dancers so its performance was conditioned by the numbers of inexperienced men. It is possible to dance as slow as 72 beats a minute given a “large” energetic step, usually a single step, as done, for example, by the Shropshire Bedlams. To dance slower requires control and it is desirable to practise to produce large emphatic movements and to develop a style, but the product is not necessarily the best for appealing to the public during its performance. While control is being developed, the optimum effect may be produced at higher speeds where the appearance of faults is minimised and the speed of the music itself is exciting.

Music is a physical thing. It has immediate effects on blood pressure and pulse rates, pumps up the adrenaline levels and makes breathing quicker and more irregular, without having to do anything. Tempo itself can be used to excite or tranquillise. For most people a tempo of 75 – 80 beats a minute is neutral. If faster than 80 it becomes stimulating; if slower than 75 it is saddening. This neutral tempo is obviously connected with a whole group of body clocks, all normally about 75 – 80 beats a minute, that control such activities as heartbeat. The body clocks of young people tick faster than those of adults and they will remem-

ber things as having been 'slower' when they were younger when actually they were not! An exciting speed is when the heartbeat and so on from the exertion match the speed of the music. Experience gives dancers both better control and less overall exertion. However beginners over-exert and hence react better to higher speeds. Excitement is a balance between effort and speed and rhythmic playing.

We all know that music is used in ordinary life to promote effects on us and to provide Pavlovian triggers to elicit tight movements and right attitudes. We also know that there are tricks with melodies to induce emotions. Thought should be given to why some tunes are so satisfying to dance to and also why there are not that many Morris Tunes. A good tune has to fit the morris step with a rhythm that provides both the stress and lift when it is needed, the antithesis of the modern off beat rhythms and it also needs good phrasing, the opposite of the rumbling along of most country dance tunes. It is a common experience that recalling the tune is an easy way to remember a lost dance's movements, although the opposite is more difficult. It must be conditioning because over various villages quite different movements are fitted to nominally similar tunes.

### Stick dances

There are two problems generated by the dancers which ought to be removed at practices but often are not.

#### *Firstly* – speeding up during the tapping

The dancers need to develop larger arm movements to fill up the music. If the musician follows the dancers, they will gallop away with the dance. Sometimes the dancers can not hear the music because of the clatter of the sticks, their concentration on the movements or because they are having fun. The musician must be prepared to say something, especially at the club practices but also to the foreman when out, if it is very bad, and to play to hold them back by emphasizing key beats and hesitating.

#### *Secondly* – Moving off

As the tapping sequence is usually done when either stationary or stepping on the spot, the dancers need time to accelerate into the next movement. Dancers should be encouraged to rise onto their toes in preparation for the move off and not to stay fixed with weight on their heels. It is necessary to hold off the music a little and it is best done off a last emphatic stick tap, To achieve this it requires consistency in playing to keep the team together. The time needed depends on the height of the jump and the distance that has to be reached, i.e. on the set spacing.

I think that the Bedlam Morris, whose territory overlapped with the northern extent of the Cotswold Morris, was a fantastically dressed tradition which relied on sticks and stepping to compensate for an absence of music other than drums.

*Tunes*

The persons who were the sources for the traditional tunes are very few and not many of those were actually musicians. The recordings available today are of a handful of players only. Kimber (Headington, concertina), Wells (Bampton; fiddle & melodeon), Clarke (Bampton: fiddle, but recording not very accessible), Bennett (Ilmington; fiddle) and Robins (Bidford, fiddle) in US Library of Congress collection.

The morris idiom is different from any other dance form and strictly we cannot read across from other English country dance players' styles without hard evidence that we should. The older recordings show very straightforward playing, quite unlike what we have come to think of recently as English country music. Elements of English country playing styles may date back to Bach's time when players were expected to improvise. There is a suspicion in my mind that this style for the morris is a creation of the twentieth century with a flowering since World War II.

The collected traditional" tunes did not necessarily come from musical people, or from a good memory, nor were recorded simultaneously with any dancing. This explains poor variants of the tunes, rather than the unusual ones, which experience suggests are likely to be authentic. Better variants can be used to improve the presentation of the morris but unusual versions can only be used with caution because of the false impression that can be given, especially if the tune is well known to the public, like "Brighton Camp". There is little evidence of multiple collection from the same source or from different sources in the same place. What there is suggests that individuals were usually consistent, but that different people from the same village could have significant variants.

The collected names of tunes are not consistent from village to village. Some teams used the same tune for more than one dance and other (e.g Fieldtown) have different tunes with the same name. Tunes are played to fit the dance movements, hence most have 4-bar units. Where the tune is intrinsically 8 bars long then, as at Fieldtown, the dance could be constructed using extended dance phrases to match. The collectors noticed the deviant tunes, the unusual lengths, e.g Black Joke, with its extra 2 bars on both the A and B parts – it was so popular that it spawned a whole set of Jokes of different colours of which the "White Joke" was used at Fieldtown for a heel and toe dance.

Most tunes have 2 parts of 4 or 8 bars length and a few, "Trunkles", "Step & Fetch Her" have 3. Only with Bidford "We won't go home till morning", Eynsham "Jockey to the Fair" and Withington "Princess Royal" is there a third part that is recognizably taken from another tune. Another mixed tune is Lichfield "Nuts of May". Changing tunes during a dance was not normal practice and used only as a joke.

Learning

The first step is getting to know the melody. One should avoid playing from written music for dancing except perhaps in the very early days of a side practising a new dance and even then poor playing can kill the side's enthusiasm for the particular dance by making it uninteresting or even difficult to perform. Knowing the melody means being able to whistle it or sing it without being committed to a final rhythmic interpretation and not being wedded to a bit of paper. Choose a key that is easy for the instrument. Most people play boxes in G, especially if it has limited basses. Most collected tunes are written in the manuscript in G regardless of how they were actually found. A few are commonly played in D, where it is necessary to keep within a restricted instrument range. Fiddlers find it easier to play in A and brass instruments in other keys.

Have separate music practices to learn the tunes. At team practices one should be observant and following the dancers, not struggling to reproduce a melody. However it is a common experience that once a few tunes have been learnt in the idiom, the others come quite quickly.

Reg Hall once commented on my playing that all the tunes of one class sounded the same and suggested that I aim to make each have an individual character. John Kirkpatrick and Alan Whear have taken several different ways in music workshops to show the need to - and value of - getting under the skin of a tune and make it your own.

What does this mean in real terms? First, avoiding the music sounding as if it was provided "by the yard". One finds which notes have flexibility in pitch, where grace notes and other musical embellishments can fit, what notes might be dropped on occasion and when accents can be used that are not essential for the dance.

Choosing new tunes is difficult. It has to be satisfying to play over and over ( and over) again at practices as well as outside and still come over as interesting. Somebody else's weird tune may not work for you! There are a few tunes in minor keys, "Princess Royal", "Cuckoos Nest" and "London Pride" , but even these exist in major versions which seem preferred today.

Instruments

Pipe and tabors were mentioned in history long before the morris appeared by that name. In the nineteenth century they were commonly called "whittle and dub". The "three hole pipe" is capable of a full scale when played with one hand, It seemed that the art of making pipes was largely lost in the western Cotswold morris areas in the nineteenth century and this was responsible for the disappearance of active players.

Bob Potter of Stanton Harcourt was a famous player who "could almost make un speak". Potter played for the morrises for many miles around. Robert Brooks had made a whittle and dub at Bampton before 1820 while living at the Dragon Inn. When he left, they remained in some drawers in the possession of Barber Brooks, who sold them to Potter.

Potter lost his dub at Stanton and it was believed that it went back to Bampton along with a pipe and another broken black one which had been Potter's. When he became too old to play he lived in Oxford, died about 1895 and was buried in Stanton. The broken black pipe, thought to be of early 17<sup>th</sup> century make, came to Jinky Wells who gave it to Mrs Helen Kennedy, the wife of Douglas. She had the mouthpiece repaired by Arnold Dolmetsch and it was used as a model by Louis & Co., instrument makers of Chelsea. Helen gave one to Joe Powell of Bucknell. He could not get on with it - "that damned woman from London" - and Francis Fryer borrowed it to try and change the tuning. The Basques have a similar instrument, but with a different tuning, which became commercially available as "galoubets" at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Joe Powell had one like these. Its basic scale was CDEF# rather than a natural F. For some years, 1923 - 1926, Powell made tabors for the EFDS from cheeseboxes.

Nelson of Steeple Aston was considered a magnificent player of the pipe and tabor at Bucknell. He had one failing; he was sometimes so drunk that he could not play at all. At Stoke Lyne they showed collectors the tree where they tied him up when he was too drunk to stand. Jim Timms of Bicester and Ned, his brother at Kirtlington, had also played. Ned was buried with his drum and fife, Powell obtained Jim's instruments and began to play because of Nelson's failings. He claimed to have learnt from old Tom Hall of Islip and old Joseph Woods of Deddington about 1860 but picked up some tunes from Nelson. The collectors found his tunes too uncertain to write down and "when up a tree" he always drifted into "Maid of the Mill".

Fiddles were also ancient instruments, but more difficult to play and expensive to own and not really readily available till cheap machine-made examples became available in the nineteenth century. The free metal reed instruments followed their invention by Wheatstone but the concertina, melodeon, accordion and mouth organ arrived too late to have had a significant influence on the nineteenth century morris although the melodeon in particular has become **the** instrument in the last 20 - 30 years.

Important in considering variants is the instrument originally used, such as a fiddle, as at Bampton or Fieldtown, a pipe and tabor as at Adderbury, Brackley or Bucknell, or a melodeon as at Abingdon. The succession at Abingdon was Thomas, Fryer, Bardwell, White and each insisted on the melodies being passed on correctly note for note, but they each played rhythmically quite differently. The instrument puts a character onto the tune which reflects its strengths and weaknesses. It affects the intervals and range within the melody rather than the rhythm, as that is dictated by the dance. Harry Thomas of Abingdon during the 1930's was an example of adaptation of tunes to suit a one row melodeon from the singing of older Abingdon dancers, who remembered *their* tunes as played on a fiddle by Gypsy Lewis. The old village sides were often short of musicians and good players did the rounds

of local sides and anyone who could play a few tunes was pressed into service. In a period when people prized individuality the old players expected to have and to play their own versions of the common tunes where ever they were and they sometimes, as at Stow, gave collectors the way other musicians “turned” their tunes.

One has to consider whether some dances are really wedded to their tunes, or if it was just easy to dance to them. As the known village dance styles are all different, obviously the tunes are adjusted to suit and this is the only justification for calling the collected tune for a dance the “correct” version. The aim however is to know why the tune is played that way as good playing needs an understanding of the particular dance. Each Cotswold side has a few, and only a few, tunes unique to itself. These often turn up as alternative tunes for the common dances. The character of a dance is somewhat dependent on the tune. The most extreme example of variation is the Heel-and-Toe dance around Stow on the Wold which was danced to “General Monk’s March” (hornpipe), “Oh Susannah” (polka) and “We won’t go home till morning” (jig). More common is the multiple tune for the “Handkerchief” or sidestep-and-half-hey-repeated dance as at Bampton, where variation in speed was used as well as in rhythm to provide contrast. Consciously dancing to the tune makes each a different experience. Old sides may well have had to make do with whatever the musician could play. In some villages, Bidford and possibly (Sam Bennet’s) Ilmington, there was no direct relationship between the stick tapping and the tune, the foreman varying it at whim to suit the rhythm offered and also to catch the side out!

Melody is not really the important factor – instruments are played for the rhythm. I find it difficult to extract the tune from a pipe and tabor sound. Traditionally the pipe provides the rhythm and the tabor or dub is “rolled” or “tattooed” to generate the excitement – compare this with the excitement of the drumming at Combe Martin and Padstow. To do this, players would use a short two-headed stick.

Attack or the sharp edgedness of notes is most easily provided with a fiddle by the nature of the action of the bow although some classical techniques may have to be unlearnt for the morris, A banjo can produce a similar effect. A box is played with the bellows. Accordionists like to play “interesting” runs on the basses, probably because they are otherwise embarrassed by the proliferation of buttons, It usually distracts. The melodeon with its very restricted basses is effective for morris and accordionists should be encouraged to emulate.

### Traditions

One has to recognize that the Cotswold morris was divided into two, that in and around Wychwood Forest (fiddle dominated at the end) and that North East of Oxford (always pipe and tabor). The purist avoids mixing elements from the two areas, To be able to “handle” the various traditions we have to stylize them, without regard to how the old dancers saw them. Each tradition has its own interpretations and therefore an influence on how the music for it should be played.

Some traditions allowed a sink down on the first strong beat of a bar till the heel almost touches the ground. The knee also bends a little but rotation of the knee or thigh joint by its nature does not produce much up and down movement. The drop allows a stronger lift. Fieldtown and Sherborne are often danced this way. Beginners used to be taught the fundamental morris step using an aid or support, which could be a pair of chair backs or hanging from a barn beam or standing between the rails of a sheep dip, to get the weight off the feet while learning the quick change. The technique used to teach the style expected at Ilmington and Longborough aimed at making the first steps of a double very similar and the drive on the first strong beat was indicated by concentrating the forward movement of the travel on this beat.

Single stepping essentially allows more lift than double stepping and the music tends to be slower and the halves of the bars played similarly. Old dancers around Stow were asked about the apparent differences between the old sides. They said that Bledington liked to dance low and Longborough high. This implies quite different playing styles because of the difference in lift (speed) and the phrasing (hesitation). A characteristic of the revived Ducklington is a 'snatch' arm movement between the double stepping and the spring capers; this movement needs a note in the playing of the melody to help the dancers at the right moment. Small differences in the playing for different steps, which help the dancer through, are not reflected in musical notations. For example, in the corner crossing in the various "Trunkles", the playing depends upon whether it is a morris step, sidestep or half capers. One stretches the tune at the jumps to allow time for the movement and body control.

### Team Practices

Does the team dance to the music or does it just happen at the same time?

A club, dancers and musicians, should practise as they intend to perform when dancing out. Getting people to dance "together" can be frustrated by having dancers of wildly different heights. Musicians should be encouraged to play during exits and entrances, the "ons and offs". If these are undisciplined it makes it difficult for the musician to contribute and it breaks down the continuity of a show. The volume should stop or drown conversation during the dances and hide the post mortems in the middle which seem to occur too often when outside.

A suggestion to help rhythmic movement is to sing or whistle, rather than play, in a very jaunty style while the team is walking through movements, so as not to obscure anything the foreman wants to say.

Ask the foremen to give warning of a tune that is not frequently used. Beware of having demands for odd tunes sprung on the musicians in public.

Novice players should be encouraged to play alone, perhaps for particular dances aimed at helping them play for the movement better rather than at a team practice of a dance.

Practices should give everyone, especially the musicians, a lift to make it worth while coming. That involves some commitment and interest rather than just providing a service!

### Capers

It is the jumps and capers that distinguish the Cotswold tradition from all others.

Each movement takes 2 bars worth of tune. The music is usually the normal tune played at roughly half speed. How much slowing down depends on the tradition and the steps of the caper. Each “caper” has a preparatory movement and a single high spring. As this spring is higher than others in the morris it needs longer. It is necessary to follow the individual dancers in this. It is not a problem as normally only one or two dancers are doing this together. When side does a dance like “The Rose “ from Fieldtown where they all do them together, it must be expected that they rehearse to actually be together to a standardized timing.

The “beats” played should fit to the peak efforts, so the rhythmic structure of each caper will vary and depend on the overall style of the tradition, which includes the arm movements which determine where the stress actually occurs.

### Jigs

It was common for particular jigs to be associated with individuals and no-one would dream of dancing someone’s party piece when they were around. Odd length tunes had an appeal and were easy to remember for collectors: “Princess Royal” (12 bar B), “Nutting Girl”(16 bar B) and “Jockey to the Fair” (typically 10 to 14 bars but as few as 8 and as many as 16 bars have been collected for the B music).

Jigs can be composed to interesting tunes such as the last movement of Mozart’s fourth Horn Concerto and Monks Gate – collected by Vaughan Williams near Horsham and published as a Sussex Mummings Carol.

Although jigs are essentially a display of the dancer’s skill, the musician has a key role. There needs to be an understanding before the jig starts on who is leading whom, because the musician and the dancer cannot both follow – this is an unstable situation! Normally the musician should expect the dancer to follow, except on the slow capers. Some people learn dances by rote, responding to the specific tune. They can have trouble following an unfamiliar musician. Many dancers like to cover a fair bit of ground in a jig and the music needs to be slower to allow this, otherwise it will degenerate into a run around.

### Bands

Tempo is not the only way of controlling excitement. Volume and quality of the sound is also effective. Playing for the morris is traditionally a solo activity in the Cotswolds but not in the Border Counties or the North West.

With percussion or a brass band the instruments provide different interlocking musical parts or rhythms and as long as the volumes are balanced there are few problems. Care is needed when more than one melody instrument is played together. Firstly, perceived volume is logarithmic in effect, so doubling the sound or energy increases the effect only by 40%. Balance is still important... A good player can be allowed to dominate but a poor one just annoys the dancers and irritates the audience. Secondly, the major problem that is often not recognized is the blurring effect of melody instruments playing together. This is a negation of playing to the dancing. Even with care, different musicians do not play exactly the same and to produce the same overall effect, each must play more staccato. As this normally allows one more punch on each note the volume level benefits as well.

Clarity is needed for the dancing, the music being an adjunct to the dance. In a group, the tunes will normally be played in simpler versions and the rhythmic subtleties already described will be submerged. Is it worth it? With "boxes", basses should be simpler as well.

Great care is needed in playing with someone from another side, especially when it is not your side dancing, as the nuances will be different, being those of another group of dancers, and one musician has to lead. Do not assume that another musician plays either the collected tune or your version for the dance. Always ask to join or wait to be asked to play together. Do not expect to play at a dance instructional as the arranged musician is probably fully occupied making the effort to provide exactly what the instructor is doing of demanding and is providing for the ease of the dancers all the fine detail of rhythm and emphasis which the person learning the tune has not started to be aware exists. An inexperienced or differently experienced musician just clogs up the air.

Comment:

I have played an accordion for many years but I only claim insights not definitive messages. From the above it should be obvious why we should think of club house styles rather than traditions. Can a team really support 2 or more distinct styles of dance? Or is it that any set of 6 dancers plus musician is unique and that this individuality is the object of the performance of the morris?

***Roy Dommett***

(first published in MM volume 1; with many additions and amendments up to 1990)

## Three Molly Dancers

Plough Monday 1991 is a day that would have to stay in my memory. One abiding memory is being driven around the Fens in Roger Martin's landrover before meeting up with various elderly gentlemen who would all be able to tell me about Molly dancing in Little Downham from between the Wars.

The first of these was Reggie Moore, whose mother used to run 'the Anchor' in the village, and whose uncle was George Green, the team's musician. Reggie was born in 1914 and took part in a boys' team in the early 1930's along with Cyril 'Spinney' Youngs, 'Dizzie' Fenton, Ron Gibson, and someone nicknamed 'Pony', with George Fenton playing the mouth organ. Not much is known about this team, and it was commented elsewhere that was 'all a bit of tomfoolery'. After leaving school, he went to work with his father and uncle on the land, before training as a civil engineer in his twenties. Upon his retirement, he spent time gardening for local people. Reg died on 29<sup>th</sup>. April 2004.

Another character I met during that afternoon was Len Yardy, the nephew of George 'Tripe' Prigg, who once took part as the Molly for the Downham team. Considerable interest was expressed a few years ago when the Ouse Washes molly dancers went out on the Saturday after Plough Monday with many of the local revival teams. Both Michael Czarnobaj of the Mepal Molly Men and Gordon 'Phil' Phillips of Ouse Washes both commented to me that they met Len, who told them about how he took part with the boys' molly dance team. That was more than Len told me – but then again, I never asked!

Len recalled the boys' team, stating that Jack Butcher played his mouth organ for them, playing tunes such as 'Keep the Home Fires Burning'. James 'Len' Yardy was also born in 1914 and died on 22<sup>nd</sup>. March 2004. Upon leaving school, he worked for J.H. Stevens at Manor Farm. In 1933, he started farming with his brother Bill, hiring land at Beald Grove to grow asparagus and other crops. He also worked as a rabbit breeder and driver for Herb Gillett, taking livestock to cattle markets. With hindsight, it never occurred to me fourteen years ago to ask either Reggie or Len their age, or it might have given me an insight as to the make-up of the boys' team. Both were in their late teens in the 1930's, and would have been considered 'men' but for the fact that the adult team who went out as Little Downham's terpsichorean representatives comprised the Shelton brothers who were that much older.

Brian Cookman was born on 22 November 1946 and was best known as a singer-songwriter, performer of Blues, Goodtime and Ragtime music, and compere at Cambridge and other festivals. At the time of the Blues boom of the late 1960's, he was fronting his band Bronx Cheer, before going solo. In 1976, he visited Little Downham and had discussions with Alf Shelton and others about the old dance team, which resulted in the formation of the Mepal Molly Men with their repertoire of two broom dances based on figures related to him, a four-handed reel, and a calling-on song which they wrote themselves. The team first went out on Plough Monday 1977, touring 23 Fenland villages in a crusade to jog peoples' memories and find out more of the tradition. My interest began from a conversation with Sue Swift at Whittlesey in 1984 when the Mepal men first appeared there. At that time, Brian was working in graphics and design in Farringdon, only ten minutes from where I worked in Holborn.

My own records show that I never picked up the courage to find out more until 1987, when Brian replied to a letter from me asking about the origins of the Mepal Men. In the mid-seventies, Brian moved to Whitstable, and brought the Mepal lads down for their May Festival masquerading as the Bogshole Mummers. By that time, I had already become good friends with Malcolm Bunting, Steve Bramble and Ray Dron of the Mepal men, the first of whom became good-naturedly suspicious of me when I was spotted notating the team's dances! As I recall it, Brian and myself had arranged to meet in May 1988 at a pub in Charing, but this never took place as he was canvassing for the Green Party in the forthcoming county council elections. More recently, Brian had moved back to Cambridgeshire, and went out singing with the Mepal lads at Stretham on Plough Monday this year. He died on 18<sup>th</sup>. February 2005 in Cambridge following a battle against secondary cancer which resulted in a brain tumour. His funeral took place at the green cemetery at Brinkley Wood near Newmarket. He is survived by son Leo, who played piano with Brian in his later days in a blues duo called Delta Flashback.

*George Frampton,  
March 2005*

*Brian Cookman  
photo: George Frampton*



## **“It’s Morris, Jim, But Not As We Know It”**

I hear that the Morris Federation is getting into a bit of a flap because “Carnival Morris” groups want to join. You may wonder what the problem is - here are a number of groups that dance Morris and the Federation is an association of groups that dance Morris, except that The Morris Federation isn’t and “Carnival Morris” groups don’t.

For those of you who are not familiar with “Carnival Morris” let me explain. “Carnival Morris” grew out of North West Morris and is still largely confined to that region. However, it has developed away from what those in the Federation consider to be Morris (and since it is mainly performed by girls aged from under 11yrs to over 16yrs is way beyond anything the Morris Ring would ever consider). Today it has much more in common with Drum Majorettes or the Juvenile Jazz Bands that you find in the North East, particularly Tyneside as I recall.

Today “Carnival Morris” is highly competitive and this has influenced its performance. Judges set specific rules through the judging criteria. Since groups must comply with these in order to win the competitions this has driven out regional differences and local interpretation of style. Furthermore, a key element of the performance (and the judges’ scorings) are the “figures”, which are actually static tableaux or shapes: the dance movements are used to move the performers out of and into figures. Music (most often recorded) is used to aid the performance and so the overall effect is somewhere between a marching band, a large group of cheerleaders and a floor exercise by a female gymnast.

A further difference, if one were needed, is that “Carnival Morris” groups do not maintain a tradition. In order to present something new to the judges, groups will change their routines each year. Even though Federation sides do innovate, there is a strong sense of maintaining a tradition - a body of dances that continue over the years.

The problem for the Morris Federation is that “Carnival Morris” groups cannot really be kept out just because they are not Morris dancing within the Federation’s understanding of the term. The Federation already includes Molly, Long Sword, Rapper, Clog Step and Appalachian Step groups - none of which can be classified as Morris. To make it worse the Federation also allows non-dancing groups to join. In my copy of the Directory there are four groups of Mummers and the Fezheads who defy classification.

There is also the complication that there is a “class” element to it all. The Morris Federation, like the groups that belong to it, is largely Middle Class, while the “Carnival Morris” movement, like the Juvenile Jazz Bands of the North East, is a mainly Working Class phenomenon. I am not suggesting that the Federation is class conscious but it does add an extra dimension to the problem.

The whole discussion has only arisen because “Carnival Morris” groups have found that they can get insurance cheaper through the Federation. I expect that they have their own association, but that the premiums are rising for them. It could just be a negotiating position but I have to ask myself why their premiums might be higher than for Morris sides (The Federation has the same insurance as the Morris Ring and Open Morris). There are two possible reasons.

- Firstly “Carnival Morris” groups consist of 20 plus children and young people from under 11yrs to over 16 yrs. It is likely that insurance companies will consider the risks greater than to a group of 14 or so fairly responsible adults.
- Secondly the 20+ children are involved in what are really gymnastic displays with some standing on others’ shoulders etc - it puts even a proper leapfrog or a backward tumble in Rapper in the shade but it must carry higher risk of injury.

This all may be a storm in a teacup. It is likely that the existing association for Carnival Morris groups will negotiate a better deal with their existing insurers and the problem will disappear.

However it does highlight a more serious problem for the Morris Federation: how and where do you draw the line between those groups that can join and those that cannot. More importantly how do you define it.

My own feeling is that “Carnival Morris” should not be allowed to join the Federation for three simple reasons which have nothing to do whether it is dance or gymnastics:

“Carnival Morris” is openly and primarily a competitive activity. While there are step dance and Morris jig competitions at various festivals and gatherings, this is not the main reason for performing. While there is some rivalry between Morris sides, there is also a strong sense of collaboration and sharing (e.g. through workshops).

- It does not use live music which must be a key element of any traditional performance. Even Mummers will sing and often be accompanied by instruments.
- It does not encourage local or regional variation - "Carnival Morris" sides are not free to develop their own individual style. This idea of innovation and variation seems central to the Federation membership.

Unfortunately I am not sure where all this is stated in the Morris Federation Constitution.

None of this by the way is to deride "Carnival Morris". As a leisure activity for young people it has as much validity as Morris dancing, junior football teams and gymnastic display teams. It is just that it belongs firmly with this last group. "Carnival Morris" is a cross-over: it has its origins in North West Morris but its present and in all probability its future, as a gymnastic activity.

If you want to find out more simply do a search for "Carnival Morris" on Google or whichever search engine you prefer. I found the [www.thelwallmorris.org.uk](http://www.thelwallmorris.org.uk) site particularly informative.

*Long Lankin*  
*May 2005*



### Whapweasel new CD released

So says the press release for **Pack of Jokers**, but it isn't being formally launched until 27 August at Towersey (a good reason to go!). The album does sound a little more elaborate/concert-style than the previous discs, which is the direction they are taking—but the tunes are still highly danceable. The now eight-strong band haven't won all their awards for nothing. It will be interesting this summer to hear the band with the new line up—fiddle for melodeon should be interesting. But the distinctive "toots" and percussive sound will still be there, I'm sure. As to the tunes, lots of great tunes but my two favourites are "Weasels of Ming" (great intro from drummer Bob Wilson, momentum sustained throughout the track) and "Destination Venus", (the band's 'Rosa' tune—a lovely slow waltzy number). Most of the tracks, particularly "Rocking Horse" sound just right for late night ceilidhs and mad dashes down the set.

If you don't find them at a festival near you then you can buy the album from good record shops. For more information join the band's mailing list on [info@whapweasel.com](mailto:info@whapweasel.com). Their regular newsletters are fun.

### 25 Glori(ou)s Years

On Saturday 27 November 2004 in a social club in Birmingham, Glorishears of Brum-magem celebrated 25 years of morris dancing. They began in 1979; a few women from the Birmingham Traditional Music Club, decided that they wanted to dance the morris; some of them also danced with other sides such as Holdens Goldens (based at Coseley near Wolverhampton – or Whitty Pear from Kidderminster. They have danced all over the Midlands and also at Scarborough and Sidmouth. They also hosted a Women's Morris Federation Day of Dance/AGM in Birmingham. They continue to go from strength to strength, having 3 women musicians and a large number of active members, some of whom came from an evening class taught by some of the side members. Kit was originally chocolate brown culottes and waistcoat; apricot shirt, arm ribbons, chocolate brown, beige and orange bell pads worn on feet. This kit was altered later to a chocolate brown pinafore dress, rosettes and ribbons on waistband with a white shirt. In 2004 the kit was changed again, to a blue pinafore with a contrasting underskirt, ribbons and white shirt, bells on feet – the kit really reflects their style of dancing. The band Hekety played for the ceilidh – old friends were meeting up and exchanging reminiscences and it was great to think that something we started 25 years ago was still going strong.

*Pauline Beighton, January 2005*

## On English Ground :The Power Of England's Hidden Heritage

The current revival in Morris Dance among the young and trendy pokes its vibrant head above the ground. In a feast for the eyes, ears and imagination, the rich music of the English Acoustic Collective sets the scene for the startling new choreography of Morris Offspring, recently returned from touring with Ashley Hutchings's Morris On. Blazing a trail of raw energy and refined grace, Morris Offspring's 15 dancers, plus their giants; a unicorn and a wild boar, skilfully redefine the power of Morris with carefree abandon, while the English Acoustic Collective detonate their tapestry of unique music and song to complete the magic.

The Morris is a cultural icon that, despite ridicule, has maintained a continually shifting significance throughout England's history. As each new generation encounters the ceremony, symbolism and physical challenge that surround the dance, so the art form has evolved. This project will set out the relevance of this most spectacular element of England's cultural inheritance for a contemporary audience and demonstrate that the Morris and the music that supports it are as compelling an art form as any other. On English Ground is a window into the world of enigmatic sounds and shapes of haunting elegance that is England's little known heritage. This rollercoaster ride through a kaleidoscope of colour and song promises to be an exhilarating show for Morris addicts and the completely unconverted alike.

On English Ground is a full-length performance for stage, including our two 10 minute works (originally commissioned by Sidmouth International Festival, funded by Arts Council England). It explores the bits of morris dance and its music that feed into these works, and highlights places we've taken our own dance and music since. Costumes such as masks, giant puppets and body paint contrast with simple white kit, plus there's the characteristic controversial lack of bells. The dances move from new ideas in traditional format: a rapid paced 9 person stick dance to solo jigs, while other parts tell stories through showy new morris and songs that inspired it and us.

The premiere of On English Ground is on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> November, 5.30pm at the Purcell Room, South Bank Centre, London. It is presented as part of Mrs Casey's 'Folk In The Fall Festival', complementing a variety of other excellent events; including a free concert by excellent young artists on the Saturday, plus a ceilidh and concert by June Tabor on the Sunday. Tickets from The Royal Festival Hall box office.

On English Ground will be touring UK arts centres in spring 2006. If anyone is interested in hosting initial runs of the performance in the weekend preceding this debut (4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Nov) please get in touch.

More details: Laurel Swift 07855 389360 [laurel@beam.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:laurel@beam.freeserve.co.uk)

**Hands on Music**

They're running again this year—some in the autumn. Information is sent out ahead of each weekend so that you are prepared for the event.—dates are

24 - 25 September 2005—Concertinas at Witney

12 - 13 November 2005—Melodeons at Witney

Tutors include Dave Townsend, Andy Turner, John Kirkpartick. Events include a public concert on Saturday so if you don't want to learn but just fancy listening to some good musicianship you can try that.

For more details contact:

Hands On Music Weekends  
Po Box 1162  
East Oxford  
D.O OX4 4WS

[www.handsonmusic.org.uk](http://www.handsonmusic.org.uk)

**Baring-Gould Study Break & Folk Festival**

This combined event has been running for some years and there are a few changes this year. The Festival is now the weekend of 21st to 23rd October, before the Study Break from 24th to 28th October 2005. The Festival venue is Okehampton, Devon. Guests planned for the Festival include Simon Care, Chris Coe, Northern Harmony, Phil Beer. The Study Break will be held in Bridestowe, led by Paul Wilson. For more details or to book, please contact the Wren Office on 01837 53753 or e-mail [paul@wrenmusic.co.uk](mailto:paul@wrenmusic.co.uk)

**Towersey 2005**

*Towersey Festival takes place from 25—29 August 2005—for tickets contact the box office on 01629 827016 or [www.towersefestival.com](http://www.towersefestival.com). Dance teams appearing include Great Western, Ouse Washes and Broken Ankles. Lots of good bands including Whapweasel ( see elsewhere in this issue!)*

## Magic Spring

Despairing of the fact that his English traditional roots seem non-existent, journalist Richard Lewis set off on a three-year discovery to unearth them. He begins by following a strange, bearded Morris man to the Whittlesey Straw Bear Festival, spends an unusual evening with the Coventry Mummers and ends up camping in Simon Pipe's garden for the Banbury Hobby Horse weekend. He does not shy away from involvement and, having suffered the embarrassment of singing Cliff Richard's "Living Doll" at a sing-a-round, he becomes a proficient melodeon player, takes lessons on the hurdy gurdy and joins Greensleeves Morris. He is very sympathetic to us Morris dancers with our odd ways and pokes fun in an endearing and respectful manner. His observations are accurate and witty, his writing reminiscent of Dave Gorman or Tony Hawks.

He does not limit himself to the Morris, but also Wassails in Somerset, "gurns" at Egremont Crab Fair, drinks with CAMRA, meets up with the Fire Societies of Lewes and with a magic circle of druids in the Forest of Dean. He has done his research well, familiarising himself with customs as they are now but also giving an informative picture of the history, and some of the myths, of origin.

We really rate this book and think that it gives credit to the Morris – and it's really fun recognising some familiar characters! It is written by a young outsider who has entered "our world" with an open mind. We think that this is something that the Morris world has been crying out for - it highlights that English traditions are still alive and removes the label of weirdness and mystique that we're frequently forced to wear.

Hardback edition published April 2005 available from Amazon for £10.49

Unabridged audio edition published July 2005 available from Soundings Ltd  
0191 2534155 or [www.isis-publishing.co.uk](http://www.isis-publishing.co.uk)

Large print edition to be published November 2005 available from Isis Publishing Ltd 0800 731 5637

*Emma Cumberland (Jabberwocky North West Morris)*

*Ben Higgs (Icknield Way Morris Men and numerous others!)*

May 2005

Hay ! Do the Morris

Here's a dance that's easy to do
And it'll make you fertile too
With breeches white and a hat from the florist
Now get ready to do the morris

Hay! Do the morris dance:
Hay! Let's process and prance;
Up and down and round and round,
Until you fall down on the ground.

Pick your bells and sticks up quick
'Cos now we're going to get rustic
Get some drunks to play a tune
And you'll be morris dancing soon

Tuck your trousers in your socks
Grow a beard and wear a smock
Drink till you can hardly stand
And now you are a morris man

Now a fool we will need too-
Any one of you will do.
Let him be nimble, let him be quick
Let him wave his bladder on a stick

First you take your hankie out
Put it in then shake it about
Hit each other with your sticks
And that is all there is to it

While you take part in this frolic
Remember that it's all symbolic
You'll bless the crops and speed the plough
And all by jumping up and down

From the singing of Sid Kipper
(as featured on the Sid Kipper Album "Boiled in the Bag LERCD 2118)

© Chris Sugden 1993

For more Sid Kipper et al, see the web site at www.sidkipper.co.uk