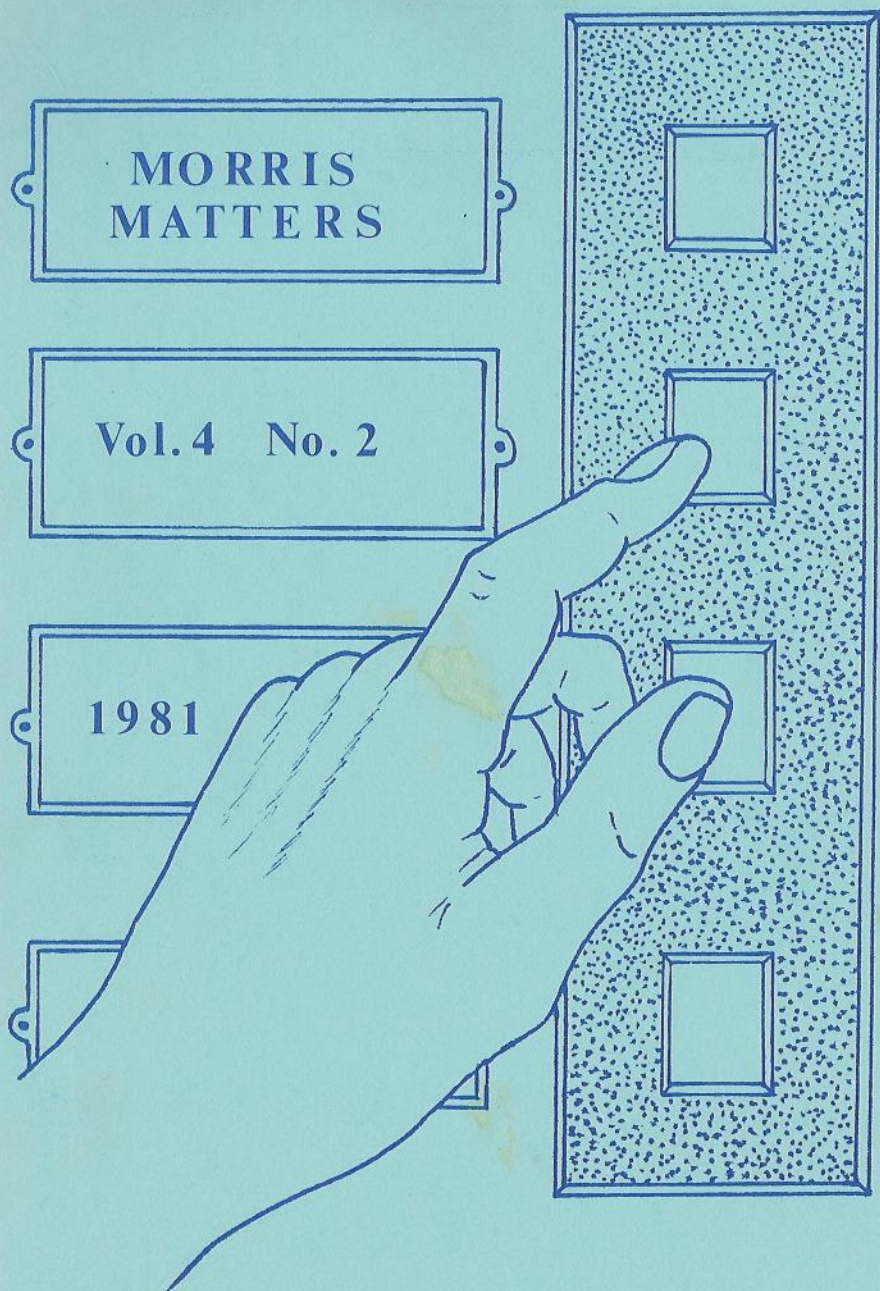


MORRIS
MATTERS

Vol. 4 No. 2

1981



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EDITORIAL

The last 10 or 15 years has seen the beginning of a revolution in the morris. We live and dance in a time of transition from a 'revival' morris to a 'revived' morris — from 'this is how it used to be done' to 'we are the morris of our own time'. New dances are being made all over the world, born out of this attitude of confidence and participation in the tradition, and once again we

have in this issue a contribution of a new dance.

Obviously it is you who are dancing today who create the shape of the morris which will be passed on to future dancers. Makes you think, doesn't it? — so may we encourage you to get out and see as many as you can of the sides that dance with the vigour and confidence of people who know that the tradition belongs to them

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This issue of Morris Matters was written and compiled by Jill Coleman, Mouse Dismore, Jenny Joyce, Beth Neill, Frankie Stringer and Alan Whear for Windsor Morris, 24 Alexandra Rd., Windsor, SL4 1HN.

The Tradition in the

Forest of Dean

by Roy Dommett

The following notes were mostly gathered by Cecil Sharp about 1910.

MAYHILL

Thomas Phelps, aged 73, of Mayhill was an old morris dancer. He gave it up about 30 years before, dancing for the last time at Guim's Mill. They had always danced a full week at Whitsuntide, from Monday to Saturday and at the Club feast. One year they went to Gloucester, then down the other side of the Severn to Newnham, crossed and spent the night and so back to Nottswood where they held the wake.

They wore a tall hat decorated with ribbons, around the band, the top and diagonally. The shirts were covered with ribbons of all colours, both back and front. Over the shirt went two sashes crossing diagonally and hanging down the sides of the dancer. They wore Ruggles on each leg, like Bampton, a mass of ribbons fastened onto strips of leather and tied to the leg, with yellow ribbons but without any bells. The trousers were black. He always bought new ribbons each year.

The Mayhill side had six dancers. They did not use sticks or handkerchiefs but did clap hands. They had several dances including Green-sleeves, which was used for both a clapping dance and for dancing over crossed pipes.

Mayhill always used a fiddle. Phelps remembered Williams playing. They had a fool and a ragman. The fool had a tail on the end of a stick about 3 or 4 feet long.

The dancers marched from place to place in pairs, the first two carrying the flag and a pair of swords. The flag was about 3 or 4 feet square on a pole about 4 or 5 feet long. The flag had the initials of the flagman "R"(ichard) "W"(illiams), Gonders Green embroidered on it and was striped red and white. The foreman of the Morris was always the flagman. The swordsman danced with the swords, Phelps said crossed on the ground but other informants said held in the hands as at Ruardean. Someone else described the flag as white, a yard square, with blue round the edge, "RW" in red and something white that they could not remember. "We didn't go for money, we went for sport".

CLIFFORD'S MESNE

George Baldwin, aged 88, a charcoal burner then living in the Alms House. Newant used to be the fiddler. The fool or bladderman, Thomas Philpotts and John Alpin and other dancers were all dead, it being 40 years since it had lapsed.

As at Mayhill they processed from place to place in column two by two led by the flagman, top left, and the swordsman, top right. The flag was peculiar to the village and was waved in time to the music. The swordsman had two swords which he whistled round his head with the lilt of the music. He also danced the sword dance

with the swords on the ground to the tune of Greensleeves.

Baldwin used to play at all the wakes. He gave Sharp three special tunes for the morris:- The Morris March for the procession, The Wild Morris to play them off the green (they went off as they came on but dancing instead of marching) and The Morris Call to call them together. Baldwin remembered going to the highest place in the village street at 6am on the Monday morning and there solemnly playing the call to summon the Morris Men. The purpose of the little snatch of dance melody was just to excite 'em" and "to entice 'em to dance".

Clifford's Mesne, Col by C. Sharp from G. Baldwin, 12.8.10

MORRIS CALL C# 2503

WILD MORRIS C# 2504

MORRIS MARCH - "DORSETSHIRE MARCH" C# 2502

RUARDEAN

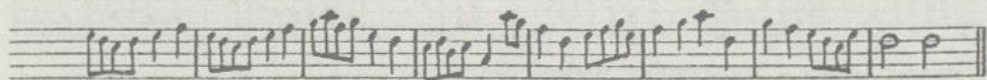
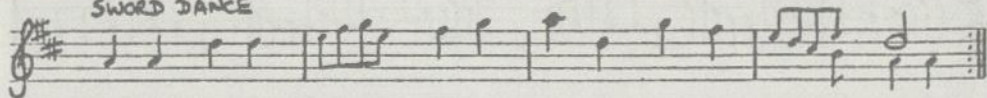
Mrs Anne Roberts, aged 85, said there were six dancers, a fool with the swords, a flagbearer and a fiddler. They danced a full week at Whitsuntide and at 3 other wakes in adjoining villages. She described a procession with flag and swordbearer as at Mayhill. It was a white cambric flag, about a yard square, trimmed with ribbons, with a large rosette in the centre and 4 smaller ones of different colours at each corner. The dancers wore high box hats trimmed with ribbons, white shirts tied with black ribbons about 2" broad at wrist and elbow and 4" ribbons pleated all over the shirt back and front. They wore velveteen breeches and white stockings. They danced with handkerchiefs and not sticks. Mrs Roberts directed her daughter and grand-daughter, Mrs Watkins, in making a Forest of Dean shirt that was given to Cecil Sharp. It was similar to that made by her mother when she used to dress 3 morris dancers every year, the flagman, G. Harris and one of the Penns. She told her grand-daughter that there was a fight at Pump Hill in which one of the morris dancers got killed and that there was no more morris dancing after that.

Henry Allen or Arthur, aged 90, of Stratford-on-Avon, said he played at Ruardean until 1871/2. The team had a fool or "merriman", a flagbearer and a swordbearer. The flagman "cut" the flag. The swordsman held the swords in his hands and manipulated them as he danced. It was very difficult and complicated. He played a tune called the Morris Dance which was also the March which was always the opening air "to call 'em together". This fiddler was the man from whom Sam Bennett of Ilmington got his very old fiddle.

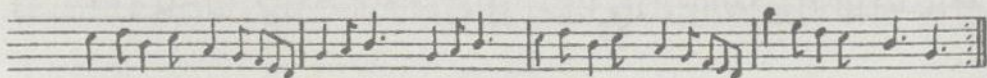
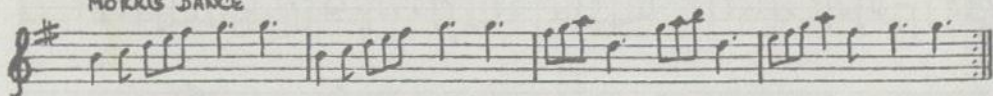
Russell Wortley met Martin Penn at Ruardean, August 1946 and April 1947, Peter Ward at Joy's Green in August 1946 and John Penn, one time fool, in Newport Men. in April 1947. They had a processional to the tune Speed the Plough and three dances. These were Haste to the Wedding, Green-sleeves and Soldier's Joy, a hand-clapping dance of which the hand-clapping was collected by Russell Wortley. They danced at Whitsun and went to such places as Ross-on-Wye and Mitcheldean. The side they belonged to only went out two or three seasons and last danced in 1884. Petre Ward remembered the swords being twisted in the air in front and above the head in the procession.

Ruardean, Col. by C. Sharp from Henry Allen, 27.8.09

SWORD DANCE



MORRIS DANCE



The Kirtlington Morris

The Past.

Not much information is available. There was a mention of 'dancing' as early as 1400; in 1679 T. Blount referred in his book to 'morisco dance of men' in the village and in 1732 Sir George Dashwood is recorded as having paid the sum of five pounds to "Kertling Morris".

Most of the references, even in later times, however, are contained in writings about the annual Kirtlington Lamb Ale feast, and unfortunately give little, if any, specific information about the dancing.

It is clear that there was a strong side up to 1880 and in 1920 a revival took place although there is doubt whether they performed any Kirtlington dances at this time.

At the turn of the century a number of people, including Cecil Sharp, made notes about the style of morris at Kirtlington, but only one complete dance is recorded, Trunkles and parts of another, Glorishears, plus various references to jigs they had seen performed in the village.

The Present.

Practice started for the existing side in November 1979 and the first public performance was at the Lamb Ale feast in June 1980.

There are currently 12 dancers and by chance rather than design virtu-

ally all of them either live in the village or have strong connections with Kirtlington.

Our current repertoire consists of 7 handkerchief dances, 2 jigs and one stick dance, most of which have been devised from what little we know of the tradition but all of them containing the distinctive elements of the Kirtlington style. It would be tedious to try to describe these as they have to be seen to be appreciated (or not, as the case may be).

The dress is fairly typical of the Cotswold sides i.e. white shirts and trousers, top hats, crossed baldricks, ribbons tied to the arms and leather bellpads. The whole costume was copied from an old one in the Oxford Museum including the unusual pink and light blue colours.

The Future.

Who knows? We certainly intend to continue the tradition and to strengthen the side with a few more dancers if possible. Our primary objective is to ensure that there is a village side to dance at the main event of the year (Lamb Ale) and to go to the neighbouring villages which, it is known, were visited by Kirtlington Morris from time to time.

Ian Harris.

A Reply...

The text of Steve Wass's handout published in Vol.3 No.4 is a superbly clear and lucid description of how the dances we have today came into existence. The analysis is unlikely to be altered by further research and every morris dancing diehard who goes round intoning "The morris is a male fertility ritual" should be forced to learn it by heart. But is it actually of interest to the general public? I doubt it very much.

The problem it seems, in taking away the mythology of the dances, is that one also takes away the excitement and audience appeal. It would seem probable that dance teams have always made a point of emphasising the depth of tradition behind them and the dance's magical origins. Anyone who has taken a hat around a crowd should have found that the donations are in direct proportion to the promises of good luck, fertility, sunshine, rainfall, whatever else might seem appropriate.

Producing publicity for the morris is no easy task we decided when our

handout finally emerged after a gestation period of a year. The requirements of course vary greatly depending on where the publicity is aimed. We wanted to advertise the activities of Kesteven Morris as widely as possible and saw the main criteria as:-

- (i) an immediate impact on the reader both from the artwork and the text,
- (ii) having got the initial interest, to provide information for both those who know nothing about the dance and those who know a lot,
- (iii) to create an overall impression of the style of the group.

We naturally think we have succeeded in these aims. It is interesting that although it was not intentional when we started we have emphasised the geographical origins of the dances much more than their historical basis. On the particular point of mythology, we have, as part of creating an initial impact in the text, more than hinted at the ancient ritual/fertility line:-

"Morris dancing is the most widespread form of a body of vital and exciting traditional English customs still extant.

"Despite the efforts of the early church to suppress pagan rituals; despite efforts by polite society to turn the dance into a skipping game; despite wars wiping out generations who performed it; this ancient part of our heritage continues.

"Its existence in South Lincolnshire is ensured by Kesteven Morris":

- alright, it's on the level of the tricks of the popular press - any-

thing to get readers. But once they are interested and come and ask, we can tell them the whole story and we would justify it on the interest we have created and are creating.

Publicity is a wide issue and we would be interested to hear other groups' views and experiences. Anyone who would like to see our handout - just send me an S.A.E.

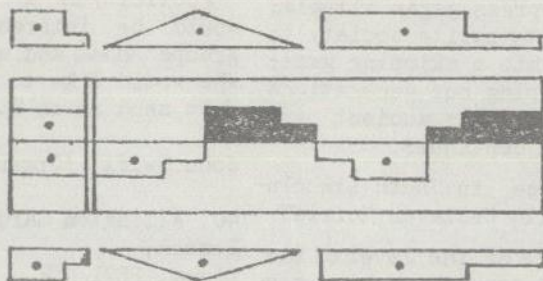
John Swift (Organiser for Kesteven Morris)

40, Allington Garden
Boston,
Lincs. PE21 9DW

Roomer

Roomer is an occasional newsletter for researchers into traditional drama. The editors hope that it will provide a forum for those working in this field and an opportunity for them to compare notes and air their views. Subscription rates are £2.50 per year (6 issues) U.K.; £3.50 for overseas subscribers. Enquiries to:

Steve Roud,
22 Adelaide Rd.,
ANDOVER,
Hants.



WMF

Notation Group ----- Barbara Butler

Notation Group 5 was held on 14th & 15th Feb., 1981 at Church Crookham, Hampshire. Present were Barbara Butler, Patricia Davies, Roy Dommett and Val Parker, who were joined on the Sunday by Jenny Joyce and Alan Whear. Apologies for absence were received from Tubby Reynolds and Jane Pyznink (Englands Glory).

Work started with the Glossary. Several omissions were discussed, and the problem of local terms for common figures was resolved. It was agreed to issue the Glossary with a table of local terms, to be drawn up by Patricia Davies. Great hilarity was caused by an attempt to find an adjective that described a galley. Such words as ostentatious, frivolous, flamboyant were suggested and discarded. The duller but more accurately descriptive term "showy movement" was eventually agreed upon.

The Group went on to look at a table of historical terms drawn up by Barbara Butler. In many cases earlier notators had not defined their terms and crossmatching names such as half capers, to the Glossary was not always straight forward. The word 'capers' was often used to cover not only plain capers but also sequences of movements involving a plain caper. Older works used stage directions to describe direction of movement; thus to move up (up stage) was to move towards what we now call the bottom of the set. Cecil Sharp and Mary Neal both used this nomenclature, though Sharp in later editions of his work changed to what we use today. Many of the now strange terms used by Neal were taken from Sharp's early nomenclature, e.g. 'chain' for what we now call 'hey'; They occur in her 'The

Esperance Morris Book' which appeared in two volumes and ran into several editions.

The Bucknell Workshop draft (37 pages), written by Patricia Davies, was the next item discussed, with much time being spent on the 'starting foot' and the problem of many disagreeing sources. Since several copies of the draft were available, with space for comment on each page, the members of the group agreed to study the work and note additions, corrections, etc. ready for the next meeting.

Saturday evening was spent watching films of the morris.

Sunday was devoted to the Brackley workshop. After rereading the notes the format was discussed. It became apparent that a different approach would be required from that of the Wheatley workshop (now nearing completion after some delays) because of the large number of alternative figures in the Brackley tradition. It was agreed that the format

should reflect an instructional and that one dance should be taught completely, using long figures, then a second with the short figures. Then each following dance would introduce the variable figure lengths and combinations, just as they would at a live instructional.

The meeting closed and a date was set for Notation Group 6 on 6th/7th June 1981. The venue is to be in the Wolverhampton area.

PROVISIONAL AGENDA

- 1) Bucknell Workshop - redraft
- 2) Glossary - review
- 3) Historical and local dance teams
- 4) Brackley Workshop - review
- 5) Stanton Harcourt - discussion

Enquiries to Barbara Butler
3, Stockwood Vale
Keynsham
Avon BS18 2AW

Transmission -----

Transmission is a quarterly newsletter for researchers in cultural traditions. It aims to provide up-to-the-minute news of forthcoming events, conferences, courses, lectures and exhibitions, as well as details of publications, records and films.

Anyone with information which they would like included in the next issue please contact:

Paul Smith,
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Bramley,
Rotherham,
Yorkshire.

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The Revival —

PUNCH, OR THE LONDON CHARIVARI.—November 13, 1907.



MERRIE ENGLAND ONCE MORE!

[In consequence of the great success of the Esperance Girls' Club in promoting the revival of English Folksongs and Morris Dances in country villages, a Conference is to be held, on November 14, at the Gospel Gallery for the purpose of furthering this admirable scheme. (See article on page 347.)]

73 years ago

From Punch, November 13, 1907.

Among many movements that have for their excellent object a return to the land and the cultivation of old simplicities, none wears a more inviting mein than that which originated with the Esperance Club for Working Girls some two or three years ago, and has by this time attained to such a stature that a public conference is to be held at the Goupil Gallery on Nov. 14th to consider the steps by which it might be, if not exactly nationalised, at any rate organised to the full. We refer to the revival of folksongs, Games and Morris Dances, which, under the direction of Miss NEAL and Mr. H.C. MacILWAINE. of the Esperance Club. and Mr. Cecil SHARP, the musician, has led to several charming performances at the Queen's Hall, where such enthusiasm was enkindled that, through the generosity of certain of the audience, in many villages

of England at this moment teachers are at work instructing the children in the steps of those delightful measures to which our ancestors danced when England was merrie, and training their young voices to sing the old, unsophisticated country songs, in which every note is as pure and clear as a drop of dew. In this way the Esperance Club, through the public spirit of a few individuals who love the past, has become a missionary centre to spread happiness and fun and melody east and west and north and south. But the Club is small and its exertions are limited, and hence this conference for the search of a practical way to increase the numbers of teachers and so give the songs and dances a wider and wider and wider recognition, until all England is dancing and singing once more, and once more is merrie. Mr Punch wishes the Conference success with all his heart.

WATCH OUT FOR
MORE NEWS OF
THE DUTCH ELM
MORRIS IN THE NEXT
ISSUE !



Academic Perceptions

of the Morris

KEITH CHANDLER

Part I: Scholarship to 1920.

Systematic collection of historical information on the morris did not begin until the last decade of the 19th century, when educated town-dwellers visited the Cotswolds and talked to surviving dancers and other villagers who could remember the morris at an earlier date. The chief hindrance to a full-scale study of the morris dance prior to this date is one common to many areas of historical research, namely a dearth of suitable source material. Violet Alford succinctly stated the problem in her study of the sword dance,

'Folklorists have to accept long intervals of time between authentic glimpses of the customs they are studying. This is easily understandable because a practice, once common property, done by everyone, was not considered worth writing about.' (1)

She appears to be harking back to a society wherein all classes shared a common stock of belief and custom, and this is a typical statement from the 'peasant' approach to folklore which has brought the discipline into disrepute among scholars. The gist of her contention is clear however, and largely correct.

There is a mass of contemporary source material for the existence of the morris during the 16th and 17th centuries: church account books, assize records, paintings and the like; although we can have no idea of the form that the dances took, nor specify their place of origin. These points are all very interesting from an antiquarian viewpoint, but I would suggest that they have very little to do with the dance as it was performed in the south midland counties over the past two centuries. These early references have been amply documented, both by Barbara Lowe in 1937

(2) and more recently by E.C.Cawte in his seminal study of the disguising of ritual performers (3) and they need delay us no longer.

Nor should we be sidetracked into the controversial debate over origins, for it matters only to the antiquarian whether the dance was performed during the pre-Christian era or not, or if it was brought to England from Morocco in the reign of Edward III (4), or even if it was, as Sharp appears to have believed, 'a development of a pan-European or even more widely held custom' (5). Francis Shergold, leader of one of the presentday traditional morris teams at Bampton has commented,

'I don't mind about whether it's pagan or whatever it is...I think people who study these things they can probably tell us more than what we know ourselves, because we're not concerned with the history. As long as we go out and do what's right...' (6)

Following the profusion of references throughout the 17th century there is a real dearth of documented material for over a hundred years. Barbara Lowe has written,

'Although as a rural men's dance it survived vigorously well into the 19th century, we hear comparatively little about it in the 17th and 18th centuries.' (7)

This she attributes, rather too simplistically, to "the growing divorce between gentle and simple in their real life tastes" (8). However, this problem of the absence of sources is far more complex, for it occurs at a time when England was developing as the prime industrial nation, with all the attendant trends towards intensification of production and increased population

migration from rural to urban areas. Even in the local newspapers items from the villages are played down in preference to national and international news.

The impression is one of an economically exciting period accompanied by expanding overseas trade and technological development during which the caperings of rural villagers seem to have been considered rather gauche. Despite the fact that we do not know what was happening to the morris in the villages it was almost certainly extant in some form, for, as E.C. Cawte has correctly pointed out,

'The absence of a record does not mean the absence of a custom...' (9).

Whenever the morris is noted during the 19th century it is because it has been observed or recorded by educated folk; more often than not in the towns, where it was considered so rare an occurrence that it deserved a mention. One correspondent to the Gentleman's Magazine in 1817, for example, reported seeing a team performing in St. James' St. London, and concluded with the observation,

'This ancient pastime may now be held a rare sight, as it is, with most others, now nearly forgotten, except with antiquaries.' (10)

While several years later, after another side was observed in Clerkenwell,

'To a Londoner, too, the novelty does not weary by its voluntary offering to their taste.' (11)

Quite clearly morris dancing was a seldom-seen diversion in many of the larger centres of the population; and only when the morris teams had occasion to travel - to cut the early hay, for example - was the dance seen by town-dwellers

Throughout the majority of the 19th century, however, traditional morris dancing as practised in the counties surrounding Oxfordshire was all but ignored. The antiquarian writers were, when they discussed the morris at all, primarily concerned to trace its development through 17th century literary references, and the received impression is one of distaste at even noting the existence of contemporary dancing in the localities and a widespread belief that the rural form was a very debased and corrupted descendant of the morris style which was prevalent during the Elizabethan period. Around the middle of the century a revised edition of 'Observations on the popular Antiquities of Great Britain' was published, with new material added by Sir Henry Ellis. (12). Amidst 23 pages of Morris Dancing under Elizabeth is the following paragraph:

'Morrice dancing, with bells on the legs, was common in Oxfordshire, and the adjacent counties, on May-day, Holy Thursday, and Whitsun Ales, attended by the fool, or as he was generally called, The Squire, and also a lord or lady; the latter, most probably, the Maid Marian mentioned in Mr. Tollet's note: nor was the hobby-horse forgot. The custom is by no means obsolete.'

(13)

The antiquarians were, then, aware of the existence of the traditional dance form then in performance, but chose largely to ignore it. In this they were merely following the path set by certain writers in the Cotswold villages. Five years earlier than this new edition of Brand's book, the Reverend W. Giles had dismissed the morris with the paragraph,

'Another season of festivity is Whitsuntide, when the morris dancers exhibit their saltatory powers for the amusement of the people, and to gather a few shillings for their own private entertainment. As these functionaries do nothing but dance, and thoroughly fatigue themselves before nightfall, they may be considered to have earned the hot suppers and mulled ale, which probably terminate the festival, but they have no farther claim to delay the progress of this history' (14).

Local historians were primarily interested in the lineage of the local gentry and the church, and seldom gave space to the social life of the villagers, except where it conflicted with the prevailing taboos emanating from the upper reaches of the social stratum.

Perhaps the problem with recording the history of the morris in the counties lay in the relative inaccessibility of the region and in the almost impossible task of securing informants willing to divulge their knowledge to an outsider. This task should have fallen to the local squire or clergyman, who were in a unique position to perform this service, but the vast majority remained nonchalant and aloof. The open hostility towards outsiders is well illustrated in the following anecdote, told of Shipton-under-Wychwood:

'The people of this parish are said to have been very rough and uncouth formerly, and very hostile to strangers. The latter were frequently stoned on sight, and it was quite usual for tramps to be pelted out of the village.' (15)

Only when the traditional morris was in decline and in danger of disappearing altogether, did the educated urban academics seriously

begin to take notice and start recording information about the dances and the participants in the village sides. The continuing erosion of village life enabled easier communication with the inhabitants; a potential seized upon by D'Arcy Ferrers in Bidford during the mid-1880's and by Percy Manning and his surrogate Tom Carter during the following decade. Carter was a self-taught mason who was no doubt better able to win the confidence of the working men and women who possessed the desired material than the Oxford Fellow Manning, and this was a shrewd move on the latter's part. The encouragement given by Manning to the side, long quiescent, at Headington Quarry, meant that Sharp was able to see the team dancing at Christmas, 1899; which eventually led to the revival of interest in the dance amongst both urban and rural audiences, and the recovery of the steps and tunes which form the basis for the current repertoire.

During the early days of this revival few scholars had grasped the scope and form of the subject, hence little analysis appeared in print. The first volume of 'The Morris Book' in 1907 contained a lengthy introduction on the historical precedents and analogues which despite some modification by Sharp for the second edition in 1912, remained the definitive statement for many years. The other early essay of historical importance was published in 1915, by which time the revival had been long active. Mary Neal's piece, which formed half of the book 'English Dance and Song' followed the Antiquaries of the 19th century by devoting considerable space to the supposed origin of the dance and the derivation of the word "morris". This is, however, much less interesting than the section entitled 'The morris dance today', which offered a concise summary of the material collected by herself and others since Manning's day.

Notes -

- 1 Sword Dance and Drama, 1962, Merlin Press, p.22.
- 2 'Early Records of the Morris in England', Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, vol. VIII, no.2, 1957.
- 3 Ritual Animal Disguise, 1978, D.S. Brewer.
- 4 Cecil Sharp, The Morris Book, I, first edition, 1907.
- 5 Ibid., second edition, 1912.
6. Melody Maker, 18/11/1972, p.53.
- 7 Lowe, 1957, op.cit., p.76.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Cawte, op. cit. p.10
- 10 Gentleman's Magazine, no. 87, 1, p.518.
- 11 William Hone, Everyday Book, vol II. 1827, p.397.
- 12 The book first appeared in 1813 in this form and was based on notes made by John Brand during the latter years of the 18th.
- 13 This edition was published in 1853, by Bohn of London, in three volumes. The section on the Morris occurs in vol.I, pp248-270 and the quote is on p.264.
- 14 History of the Parish and Town of Bampton, 1848.
- 15 Oxfordshire and District folklore Society Report, 1954. Article by A.M., p.13.

MORE NEW MORRIS

A new Lichfield-type Dance

from Kesteven Morris.

Concerning "The New Morris", we hope your readers will be interested in a new Lichfield-based dance (which the Kesteven Morris men's team are now performing) with a structure similar to Milley's bequest. The dance was dreamed up by group member David Fletcher as he lay in bed one night unable to sleep with a country dance tune running through his head (no wonder he

couldn't sleep). We tried it at our next practice and found it only needed minor alterations to make it a powerful and satisfying dance. Its name, given its origin, was fairly obvious. Details of the dance follow. We have used, we hope, the notation and abbreviations from "A Handbook of Morris Dances" - Lionel Bacon.

We danced it out, very successfully, for the first time in Lincoln on 13th December 1980 and trust that other teams will find it as we have done, a useful addition to the present Lichfield dances.

Tune: Argyle is my name (from Kerr's Melodies For The Violin).

The image shows four staves of musical notation for the tune 'Argyle is my name'. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 6/8. The first staff is marked with a capital letter 'A' above the first measure. The second staff is marked with a capital letter 'B' above the first measure. The third and fourth staves continue the melody. The notation consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and a repeat sign at the end of the fourth staff.

Fletcher's Dream - Stick Dance for Eight.

One stick held near butt end in right hand only and held by side throughout except in sticking.

CF Sequence - SL CO R4 DU

No OY - straight in after musician's once to yourself.

Clash tips with partners (from right to left) at the start of each CF, halfway through DU and at the start of each DF.

DF - Sticking.

(i) Opposites strike tips twice overhead, striking from right to left then from left to right (ie forehand then backhand).

(ii) In minor sets Nos.1 and 4 & 5 and 8 strike twice overhead, as in (i), Nos.2 and 3 & 6 and 7 strike low from right to left twice.

(iii) Still in minor sets neighbours strike twice as in (i).

(iv) Opposites strike twice as (i).

2 bars 4-step*, GO (rt).

Repeat stiking (i) to (iv).

2 bars 4-step*, GO (rt).

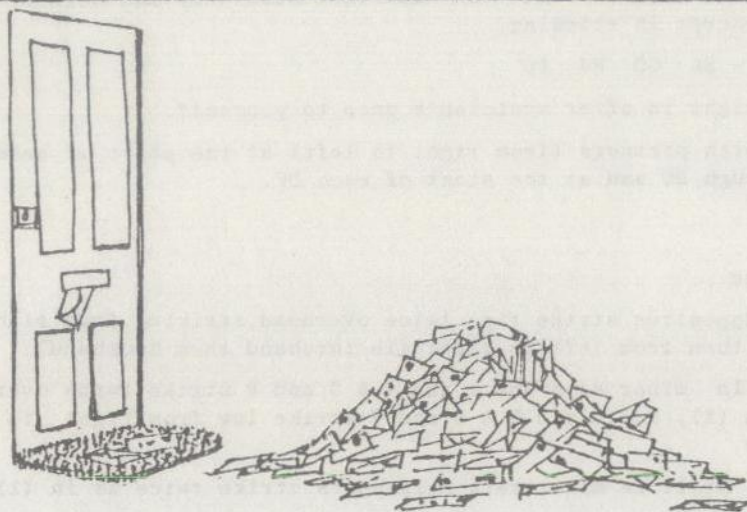
(*Note: Bacon gives Milley's Bequest as oss (rt), oss (lt) but we step on the spot in both these dances)

The free arm is held down at one's side throughout except when bringing the stick down after sticking when it should be pulled down with the stick.

Last DF GO (rt) to face up with sticks crossed.

Sticking should be vigorous with plenty of swing (but of course no follow-through).

MAILBAG....



International Section

We asked a correspondent in Rheindahlen Garrison to tell us more about his morris side.....
Extraordinary Rheindahlen Morris.

Extraordinary Rheindahlen Morris-- E.R.M. for short - was founded in 1978 by Major Derek Lance, previously a member of Yateley Morris Men and the only member having previous morris experience. About thirty people have danced or played for the side, which has made over fifty appearances at fetes, folk clubs and carnivals; travelling into Holland and as far as Wilhelmshaven, which

included a performance on the flight deck of HMS Ardent during the British Week at the port in 1979.

We are a mixed side, hence "Extraordinary"; our dances numbering around twenty have come from seven Cotswold traditions, though currently we are tending to specialise in three traditions: Bampton, Fieldtown and Adderbury.

Music is by fiddle and melodeon. We attempt to make our repertoire as varied as possible; the introduction of a previous clog morris dancer into the side recently has meant the appearance of the 'Cerk Hornpipe between 'Saturday night' (Bucknell) and 'Balance the Straw' (Fieldtown)

Our main problem is training sufficient dancers to keep pace with the high turnover due to postings and 'other' commitments that tend to befall the populace working in a military environment.

I took over as Squire of the side in 1980 when the founder member was posted to Cyprus, currently forming A.C.M.E.-Astonishing Cyprus Morris (Episcopi).

You may detect a reversal of cultural flow and migration here with Crusaders revitalising the Mediterranean and the staging posts en route with traditional living English folk dances (both fertilising and fighting) that may combine or even cross fertilise with the local customs where these remain.

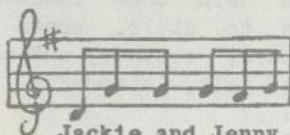
Paul Reece,
Rheindahlen Garrison
B.F.P.O. 40.

throw a little more light on its practice by qualifying and adding to the information from Sharp's mss...

1) Roy Dommett (MM vol3 no3) writes that Wm.Partlett danced "the ordinary and sidestep with a straight leg". However, in his mss, Sharp noted that "he (Wm.Partlett) danced to me and showed me sidestep and ordinary step with quite straight leg" i.e. it was only the ordinary step that he, quite conventionally, danced with straight legs.

2) As Mike Heaney points out (MMvol 3,no.4 p.13), "Old Taylor"(Trunkles) was a Ducklington dance and it was to that dance that Sharp's noted sequence "Foot up, side step, half capers, upright caper through slow time" refers, rather than to Wm. Partlett's Princess Royal jig, whose tune Sharp noted on the same day as, and immediately before, he collected the Ducklington dance.

3) Sharp's field notebooks give a snatch of song to the first bar of Fred Gardner's "Black Joke" as follows:



Jackie and Jenny....

Morris at North Leigh

Dear Editors,

Articles by Roy Dommett and Mike Heaney in the last two issues of Morris Matters having drawn attention to the hitherto overlooked material relating to the North Leigh Morris, I should like to

This is evidently the beginning of the song which the North Leigh dancers sang as Mike Heaney describes. I have not been able to identify it.

Philip H Coleman.

Video tapes

Dear Morris Matters,
We have just had an interesting evening in Chelmsford watching videotapes and films of mainly N.W. Clog Morris. The excellent quality of the video-tapes (most of them generously loaned by Clitheroe morris club) gave me an idea or two. At last we have an excellent and reasonably cheap method of recording dances, music and costumes. And one by which copies of such recordings can be easily made for other people.

It would be great if a library of video-tapes of various teams performing different traditional dances etc., could be established and copies made for interested teams or researchers. In particular I'm sure that there would be a great demand for such copies of dances from overseas teams who frequently have to interpret written instructions without ever having seen dances performed. Video tapes would help them immensely with regard to style, speed of dancing, music, costume, and most important of all, standards of performance.

Perhaps a register of people interested in helping with this idea could be compiled, or a list of available material could be frequently printed in 'Morris Matters'. Perhaps teams interested (especially those overseas) would like to comment on this idea so that an estimate could be made as to likely demand for video-tape

copies of performance of, say, N.W. Clog Morris, Cotswold Morris, Rapper and Longsword, Mummers Plays, Clog Dancing, Garland Dancing, May-pole dancing, etc.

Chris Brady,
5 the Curlews,
Shoreham by Sea,
Sussex.

Waste Of Space

Dear Morris Matters,
Two points for your perusal :

1). Wot, no copy? How about taking up less space in those silly headlines and put more words in. Even boring, crass and indifferent letters like this would be preferable to all that silly waste of space.

2). In your last issue I read Suzanne Barr's suggestion that a "Fool's Workshop" could be in the offing. (Didn't the Ring have one a little time ago?) How can you teach people to be funny? Answer, you can't. Either you feel funny on a morris gig or you don't. Set jokes don't guarantee laughs, set routines can fall flat, impromptu ha-ha's can cause hysteria or hostility. You can insult one audience and they'll lap it up, do the same ten minutes later and they'll beat you up.

.... MAILBAG

There aren't any fool's rules, that's what makes the morris fool's job so potentially exciting; the idea of a "fool-in" is surely counter-productive. How can you teach someone to take advantage of an audience and manipulate them; or know when to let an audience think they're manipulating you?

There are so many imponderable variables that exist during a dance performance, there's little time to think about them, you just simply respond. After a performance, you may intellectualise and criticise what the whole team (including the fool) has or hasn't done, and design a strategy to correct faults; but it doesn't necessarily help you much next time, because there's a whole new set of variables to deal with.

Just like dancing; you can often realise you've actually danced very badly and it's been a superb performance, so it is in fooling. There's absolutely no guarantee a fool will do a good job or a bad one. All I can say is a good fool knows when he's not funny, and just smiles.

If you don't know how to be funny Suzanne, then don't try. If you and your team genuinely enjoy what you are doing, the audience probably will too. If you try to be funny, you'll fall into the trap of many others who put on a smock, grab a bladder on a stick, chase the odd dog and think they are hysterical.

There are many manky morris teams; there are many facile fools, too.

Ray Worman,
(Fool)

We asked Suzanne for her reply:-

When I suggested the idea of having a Fools Workshop I did not intend it to be a forum for teaching anyone to be funny. I agree this is something that cannot be taught. (The thought of set jokes sounds awful.)

However we have probably all seen good and bad fools, and for exactly the reason mentioned in the penultimate paragraph of the letter, I thought it could be an interesting exercise to have a workshop in order to avoid the pitfalls of "putting on a smock, grabbing a bladder on a stick, chasing the odd dog and thinking it was hysterically funny."

Presumably, people who attend Music Workshops (I am not a musician) do not go along in order to find out IF they can play an instrument, but surely they go along to learn and benefit from new ideas, and even to improve their technique. This is not thought to be counter-productive, and I am sure they do not end up as carbon copies of each other - so why not a Fools' Workshop?

By the way, yes, the Ring did hold such a workshop some time ago (which I believe was very well attended and enjoyed by the participants) but what has that got to do with anything, apart from the fact that it showed that there was some interest in this field?

Suzanne Barr

