

## THE LONGBOROUGH MORRIS - THE CONTEXT OF A RECOVERY

In 1964 I was the fool for the Farnborough Morris from Hampshire in a show near Stow-on-the-Wold outside Longborough's Post Office, dangerously equipped with a horse-whip lent to me by one of the villagers, when I heard it said that "Mr. Taylor wouldn't have had that!" Several of the crowd were remembering how the grand old generalissimo of the Longborough Morris used to stop visiting sides from Oxford and Cambridge in the 1920's because they were not jumping high enough. Afterwards I spoke to two men who had started to learn the local morris in the 1920's. This was followed up the next day by visiting Harry's youngest son Fred, then living at the top of the hill above the village's only pub, in the third council house from the bottom on the right. Later that year I came back with Ewart Russell, a friend and then Morris Ring Bagman, to meet the local fiddler George Joynes.

This account, first started in 1964, collates that information with material drawn with permission from Sharp's *Morris Books*, formal manuscripts and rough Field Notes, from discussions and access to that time to the papers of Clive Carey, R Kenworthy Schofield, Douglas Kennedy, to various Travelling Morrises Logs and interviews with several other participants. There was an early expansion of the first part following exchanges with Keith Chandler at the start of his research. It has now been cross-checked for accuracy against Keith Chandler's publications, particularly for the names, but essentially with his help it has been made more readable.

This article is an account of aspects of the interaction of the revival and the tradition. It has been necessary to cast the net widely to suggest the flavour of the times, otherwise there would be too many gaps to make an interesting story.

The Travelling Morrises is often mentioned. This is a part of the Cambridge Morris family providing two or more week-long tours each year away from the Cambridge local territory for current and ex-members. The usual contact has been John Jenner. The equivalent arrangement for the Oxford University Morris Men has been called the Ancient Men. Roy Judge has prepared a manuscript history of May Morning at Oxford and the early days of the OUMM.

### PART ONE - THE ANECDOTES

Henry, colloquially Harry and called thus through-out this paper, was born in 1843 at Longborough to Stephen and Elizabeth Taylor. His father was a morris dancer. As a young boy Harry used to risk a thrashing by playing truant to watch the morris. At that time the local sides were accustomed to meet at Stow-on-the-Wold to compete. Until 1852, the last in which morris dancing took place at Dover's Games, this included the right to dance "on the hill". Only one side was allowed there and they gained the privilege of selling the yellow Dover's favours, what we would call today rosettes. The last year a meeting was held the dancers came from Longborough, accompanied by one or two older Chipping Campden men, according to the manuscript history written by John Horne of Campden in 1898.

#### The Dancers

The team consisted of six dancers, a fool, a fiddler and a hand with the money box.

The Travelling Morrice were told that Harry Taylor and Mark Taylor, perhaps distant cousins, were widely known as dancers. Harry claimed he was foreman for many years, he called it "nearside top". There were obviously close ties between the dancers in Longborough and Lower Swell. Fred Taylor said that his father usually had a couple of the best dancers living in Lower Swell in his side, mostly Hathaways. At one time it could have been all Taylors and Hathaways, suggesting it was essentially yet another "family" side. Henry Hathaway, a roadman then living at Upper Slaughter and aged seventy four, told the Travelling Morrice in 1933 that when Harry came to dance with the Lower Swell men he used to lead the set. Russell Wortley was also told later that some of the Lower Swell men were taught by Harry's father. Local fiddlers spoke of playing for the Lower Swell side, so possibly there was only one side between the two places in the 1870's and 1880's. A newspaper advertisement for 19th June 1886 in *The Moreton Free Press* said,

Morris Dancers. The Longborough and Lower Swell Morris dancers will give an entertainment in the Swan Assembly Room, this evening, at seven o'clock.

One forms the impression that there were few rigid demarcations between sides in the area of Stow, teams being organised around personalities rather than from villages. Most dancers seemed to know the others, perhaps having danced with or against them, eg at the competitions. Several revival dancers have commented to me that those they met spoke about the competitions, presumably repeating what must have been heard when younger. Little appears to have been recorded of what was said about the participants, for example at the pre-WW II Stow Ring Meetings, and the Morris Ring Logs contain nothing significant. The comments passed about the judging inspired an early article on competitions in *Morris Matters*. The local papers to consult are *The Moreton Free Press*, *Campden Herald and Stow-on-the-Wold Advertiser* published weekly at Moreton from 1858, *The Campden Herald* from 1862, *The Shipston News* from 1878 and *The Stow-on-the-Wold News* from 1879.

Fred Taylor, born May 1885, was too young to remember his father dancing in a team, as he gave it up in his mid-forties. It was his father's only hobby, but everyone, including his sons, used to take it as a bit of a joke. His dad was very musical, but never played anything. In those days only fiddles were cheap and they were considered the most difficult instrument to pick up. Fred remembered his father step dancing to hornpipes. He had lots of fancy steps. He also used to dance morris jigs with friends at the pubs. Fred remembered in particular another Taylor who used to dance at Oddington, see next paragraph. They liked to do a dance for two together called *Princess Royal*, which was his father's favourite.

Charles "Minnie" Taylor, living in his old age in Church Icomb, the dancer from Oddington from whom that village's dances derive, knew the Longborough, Sherborne and Bledington styles as well. He was well known as a dancer at least as far away as Ilmington, to which he had been known to walk to dance for Sam Bennett. On the 23rd August 1912, Sam had stated in *The Stratford-on-Avon Herald*,

... I hope to be at Earls Court next week with the Morris Dancers and am taking an old man of seventy four to give the *Sherborne Jig*, which is a very hard dance.

And again on 6th September 1912,

The old dancer (seventy four) walked fourteen miles and then danced jigs and morris for three hours and declared he could go on all night ... The many friends who wrote to me have said that they wanted to see morris dancing done by villagers and they wished to see it done in the old style.

### Other Individual Dancers

Why did Sharp and the collectors who followed concentrate on Harry Taylor when there were other dancers around?

George Ackerman, born 1849 and living in the village when Sharp visited, but as he was thought not to be a first rate dancer, Sharp never followed him up.

John Collins, was also living in the village and met by Clive Carey in 1913. A man of this name was baptised in Stow-on-the-Wold in 1849, whose parents lived in nearby Maugersbury. He died in 1925 aged seventy five and was buried at Stow, and was local enough to have been this dancer.

Edward, also known as Edwin, "Ned" Hathaway, born in 1852. He danced No.2 or "offside foremost". He was living in the Alms Houses at Stow-on-the-Wold when the Travelling Morrice visited him in 1925 and he died about 1932. In 1875 he married Elizabeth Jeffries, the widowed step-daughter of the fool George Hathaway whose first wife was a Jeffries. Sharp visited her when she was living at Chipping Sodbury, but recorded nothing from her husband.

Alf Tuffley, living in the village when Sharp visited, was fifteen years younger than Harry. Sharp worked with dancers of this age elsewhere, so perhaps in this case it was because he had not danced for very long before he stopped.

Tom Tuffley, was the same age as Harry, but in 1910 he was living at Shottery near Stratford where, "he has a bit of land and gets his living off it".

Oliver Budd Webb was another local fiddler who knew his tunes by ear. His two sons (Robert) Frank (or Fred) and Joe(seph), born 1876 and 1878 respectively, danced with Longborough, but would have only been boys when Harry was active. About 1892 they moved to Bloxham, near Adderbury, where Frank was interviewed by the Misses D Daking, P Marshall and Janet Blunt in February 1914 and by Cecil Sharp on 15th September 1922. John Mason, the fiddler living in Stow in his old age, but earlier at Icomb and Bledington, married a Sarah Webb in 1851 at Stow.

Another dancer who knew the Longborough and Bledington dances was (John) William Spragg from Stow. He claimed that his father and grandfather had been noted morris dancers, and that he and his brother had been discovered by Cecil Sharp on 5th July 1906, because they were whistling morris tunes whilst mending the sewers outside Sharp's house at 183, Adelaide Road, Islington. Spragg was then living at 18, Cardian Street, Hammersmith. Accounts always appear to differ in detail, which makes the derivation of history from such material a little uncertain. In commenting on an early Esperance Club show, *The Manchester Daily Guardian* of 20th September 1906 said that two men found in Hammersmith were to bring their grandfather up from the West Country. *The Morning Post* for 14th January 1909 reported that two men working in a sewer in Hammersmith gave the Esperance girls

the benefit of dances and songs that had made their father famous in Gloucestershire.

Douglas Kennedy met Spragg at Stow during a tour by Sharp's mens team in 1912 when Spragg played his mouthorgan and danced Longborough and Bledington dances with the side. (Are there any newspaper references to this tour around?) After World War I, William lived at 38, Cecil Road, Hammersmith and used to come to the EFDS displays in Hyde Park with his grandchildren, where he always had a few words with Douglas Kennedy and his family. Born in 1878, he died in 1940. He would have been only nine if he had learnt his Longborough morris from any of the sides in which Harry Taylor danced. Is this suggestive of there having been a boy's side?

### The Costume

There is sketch of the Longborough costume inside the front cover of Sharp's Field Notebook 1910 II. The dancers wore caps or half-high hats, although high hats were the right thing. They tried to have pleated shirts and to wear two, the second to suck up the sweat. Mrs Edward Hathaway had helped to make the shirts, clothes making was a common chore for daughters at home, and they were broad pleated.

A straight pleat down the centre, little frills on each side, and all the shirt with small tucks, very narrow, as narrow as could be done, four or five on each side. Frill about an inch broad. Didn't all have them, but the best ones did. No sticks ...

or so she told Sharp. His written-up manuscript says a diagonal scarf, but the sketch shows a conventional crossed baldrick in blue braid and a band around the dancer's waist in red braid. The words "bow" and "rosette" are used almost interchangeably, but it seems that what was intended was,

- a rosettes on the shoulders, possibly red, as the other rosettes are red, and likely to be very high up because of,
- b ribbons on breasts (at heart level),
- c ribbons around upper arm, tied with a bow and having three short streamers, one red and two blue. All bows were blue and red.
- d red rosettes at the lowest ends of the baldrick. Both here and at the shoulder there were probably bows as well,
- e a bow at the tie point for the waist band.

Most of them wore trousers, but breeches and blue stockings were considered to be the right thing. The bell pads had three vertical rows of bells on each leg, tied with green and other coloured ribbons. Harry Taylor told Sharp,

Can't dance in heavy shoes. Can't get off the ground. I always used light shoes, well nailed. Must have nails when you dance at Stow, as stones so cruel.

They carried their handkerchiefs tied on the middle finger. They did not use sticks, at least not during Harry's time. Denis Hathaway's Campden side, though, had a dance called *The Longborough Stick Dance* and he had come from very near Longborough. The tune used was a version of *Young Collins*, a common tune

locally for both a stick and handclapping dance, thus it is not impossible that Longborough had at least one stick dance at some time, as a few were almost universal around Stow. Mason told Sharp that his *Highland Mary* was for handkerchiefs but sometimes it was used for a stick dance.

### The Philosophy

The side,

... used to go up to a lane with a fiddler and practice night after night about this time of year ...

that is, before Whitsun. They danced publicly only during Whit-week. Dover's Games was always on the Thursday and Friday. Fred Taylor said that they would go out for the week, starting each morning with clean shirts and rosettes, to walk to places like Shipston-on-Stour, Stow-on-the-Wold and Moreton-in-the-Marsh for the clubs, dancing at farms on the way for cider. The club days then were grand affairs with bands and entertainments, the clubs being the Friendly Societies. They would normally have their annual meeting associated with a club walk and feasting, as well as having an entertainment.

The side sometimes had a new fiddler who played fresh tunes and then he used to tell them the steps to be danced to them.

Harry seldom had a good set of dancers,

Put your best men on the near side, the duffers on the other.  
We never cared so long as we had three good 'uns.

He also suggested, "Put the tall 'uns in front, short 'uns behind."

During the seventh Travelling Morris tour Harry Taylor complained that their shirts did not get nearly as wet as those of a traditional team. In his day one dance left the team so exhausted they couldn't immediately perform another.

### The Merriman

The fool for Harry Taylor's set was usually George Hathaway from Lower Swell, who died in 1894 aged sixty eight. He was called "Squire" or "Master". It was he who used to announce, "One dancer and six fools!" George's widow and second wife Jane was Harry Taylor's sister, already a widow and also named Jeffries when they married in 1860. Aged seventy five in 1909, she said, "they always called me the Squire's wife", and thought, "it was a grand enjoyment it was", and, "he used to go and do Merriman for them, then we had a merry come up!" This was another local title, used for example at Guiting Power. George's brother Samuel was the fool at Lower Swell. George's step-daughter Elizabeth, who had married Edward Hathaway the dancer, had her father's bells when Sharp met her at Chipping Sodbury.

The morris fool always had a blackened face. Another of George's brothers, William "Snobby" Hathaway, the lame fiddler, said that the whistle player from Bourton-on-the-Water, Jack the Lad, used to black the fool's face. This must have been the widely known "Jim the Laddie" who died of excessive drink probably in 1856, and

whose real name was MacDonald, born in Edinburgh in 1811. He was an uncle to George and James Simpson at Sherborne where he lived from 1841 at least.

The fool always carried a stick with a bladder at one end and a cow's tail at the other. He wore a hairy thing on his head and had a red grid-iron marked on his seat. A blue linen smock that had been used by a Longborough fool was given to the Travelling Morrice by George Joynes about 1950 and they use a copy of this smock. Of about three-quarters length it was admitted by the CMM that this is not a very good example of a traditional smock.

The fool often danced the jigs, the most frequently mentioned were *Princess Royal* and *Jockey to the Fair*. Only the fool was remembered as doing the Baccapipes dance, to the tune of *Greensleeves*.

An oft repeated story about Hathaway as fool was how at one farm a dog went for him, so he dived into the dog's kennel, which was half a barrel, and barked and made faces at it.

"That mixed the Dog! ... Dog never good at housekeeping arter that!"

Soon after Sharp first visited Harry Taylor, Sharp was lecturing in the Lesser Queen's Hall, Langham Place, London on 31st May 1910. *The Morning Post* and *The Farnham Herald* for 1st June 1910 gave the story thus,

On one occasion the "Squire", on entering a farmstead was warned by the farmer that a ferocious chained dog would probably make demand for "fatted calf" if approached too closely. Having enticed the dog to the full length of his chain, the morris man, making a sudden dart, got into the kennel himself, and, kneeling with his head and hands just outside, growled in such an ominous fashion, that the dog, so far from being anxious for the man's calf, was thoroughly cowed and his master declared that he was "good for nowt ever afterwards".

In the same lecture Sharp told of the fool, who when asked "What's the time?", produced from his fob a large padlock and chain. Whacking his questioner on the head with it, he replied "just struck one!"

William Hathaway told Sharp, "the Squire of the morris, that's the tomfool, used to run round and sing"

"Greensleeves and yellow lace  
Boys and girls they work apace  
They earn some money to buy some lace  
To lace (sic) the lady's Greensleeves,"

You must not have a natural fool, but a man with his head screwed on, as I may say, for Squire.

It was this Hathaway who described Sherborne as a "desperate morris place!"

Another story told by Sharp after his visit to Longborough was in *The Times* of 1st June 1910. It was of the two enthusiasts who slept in a barn and could never get to sleep comfortably until each had danced *Jockey to the Fair* in his bare feet.

### The Fighting

Fighting was a more tolerated part of working men's culture in the past than it is today and pub sessions at weekends could often end with brawls. The morris often had an adverse image because of working class drinking and disturbances, whether justified or not.

Not all the contacts between morris sides was cordial. There was, for example, a lack of sympathy with the supposed "Gipsy Folk" settled in Wychwood Forest. Somewhen in the 1850's Longborough went over to Ascot-Under-Wychwood on the day of the club feast and ran into Leafield, "Fieldtown for short", in fighting mood, who considered this to be poaching on their territory. There were other similar stories. Henry Franklin the Fieldtown dancer told Sharp that the Finstock and Ramsden morris, "was like a nature with Leafield", but, "the young men from Leafield fell out with Finstock, had a row or two, but decided to have it out." It was a "jolly good battle" - there were two fights at the Whit Hunt, presumably during the celebrations that followed the capturing of the deer in the Chase Woods. George Steptoe, one time Fieldtown foreman, with a reputation for barefist prize-fighting, fought a man from Finstock and lost. It was a proper fight with a timekeeper.

Whilst going round with the box at Lower Slaughter on the Travelling Morrice tour of 1933, Walton Abson, next year to become the first bagman of the Morris Ring, spoke with an old man who remembered the morris at Lower Swell and Longborough. In addition he told of his wife's father who danced at Little Barrington. There was a great rivalry between the Little Barrington and Sherborne men and on one occasion when dancing was going on at Sherborne, the Little Barrington dancers got George Steptoe to come over from Leafield and act as fool for them. With him they went over and held a rival show, with the result that the two fools fell foul of each other and the dancing ceased in favour of a stand-up fight between Steptoe and Thomas Kench. The old man's father-in-law was in the Little Barrington team on this occasion and it was evidently one of his choicest memories.

In the book *R J E Tiddy, A Memoir* by D R Pye, published in Cambridge June 1923, it is mentioned that Tiddy bought the Priory Cottage at Ascot-under-Wychwood, built at his own expense a dancing and reading room in the village and started a local WEA branch. An old dancer, aged over ninety, invited to tea and asked what it was in the old morris days he liked best, said "The Fightin". Attitudes have changed. Boxing booths were once common and well supported at fairs.

### The End

Why the morris stopped is unclear. The last regular annual Whitsun performance at Stow was on Whit Monday 1885. The end must have been for a mixture of reasons.

One was distaste amongst the local gentry. In the Peacock collection there is an item from the wife of Captain Maynard, the Travelling Morrice fiddler known as "B.M.", who was the granddaughter of the Rev. Etches, sometime vicar of

Longborough. Etches was said to have suppressed the morris in Longborough somewhen about 1880 because the dancers used to hide under the women's skirts, when chased by the fool, and this was not thought quite "proper" by Mrs Etches. The reason was not, as William Palmer had once been led to believe, that the men were thought to be frequently very drunk and disorderly.

Harry Taylor told Sharp that the Longborough Morris was much like the Bledington Morris and that they often danced together, perhaps sharing dancers as seemed to be common in that area. The last time that Taylor danced with a side was at the Jubilee of 1887 when Charles Benfield of Bould, pronounced "Benfull from Bowull", the Bledington fiddler who was ever ready to make a bit of money, came over with three dancers for a day's tour. When asked by the Travelling Morrice how they managed, the answer was, "we danced on one side, they on the other."

But this was not the end. There was still dancing but probably not involving Harry Taylor. Miss Brown wrote to Maud Karpeles in 1971 that her grandfather had lived next door to Harry Taylor and remembered the side dancing when they visited Sezincote where he was a lad gardener, and it must have been in the 1890's, as he was born about 1881. In a second letter she said that the Longborough Morris used to dance mainly at Christmas, when they went from house to house with the mummers. They included a Walter Taylor, no relation to Harry, a Webb and a Tuffley. As Tiddy had the Longborough play text from Alfred Tuffley, a dancer, the available information is consistent.

Did the collectors ignore this late period because the dancers that they wanted to consult were not involved, through the desire to consult only the oldest sources, or had the dancing degenerated, and the Christmas season spoilt its authenticity?

Charles Benfield and John Hitchman, the Bledington fool, had raised the "Young Bledington" side after the local dancers at Bledington, Idbury and Fifield had retired, to provide morris at the local club days. Their last outing was about the turn of the century at Fifield Club. None of the young men were contacted by the pre-WW I collectors, although they became the source of dance information during the period of the contacts with the Travelling Morrice.

## PART TWO - THE RECOVERY

The recovery of the Longborough dances was in two phases,

- a the collectors before WW I, and,
- b the Travelling Morrice after it.

### The Non-Event

In the Autumn of 1885 D'Arcy Ferris, then living at Cheltenham, began the well known revival of the Bidford morris. In the 1880's Ferris was involved in organising "revels" up and down the country : in 1886 he was Master of the Pageant for the Ripon Millenary Pageant which brought the Kirkby Malzeard long sword team to fame, and also, Julian Pilling once claimed, included a Lancashire Morris although no documented reference has been found by Roy Judge. His first attempt in raising a morris was a troupe of boys for revels at Lord Wantage's in August 1884. From subsequent events it can be deduced that it was hardly a proper morris, probably



with no attention given at all to tradition. It is likely that this episode was well received, yet criticised for not being "morris", as he almost immediately set to the task of obtaining genuine dances. With the aid of Dr. Fosbrooke-Powers he found in the autumn of 1885 William Trotman, then aged forty five, who came from Idbury near Bledington and who had danced the morris in his youth.

Ferris was the first person to write down morris dance detail and tunes, with all the attendant difficulties of being a pioneer. Much of his manuscript is now in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. To help improve the dancing standard of the troupe of youths, Ferris contacted many morris men in Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire. The evidence from letters covers Bledington, Brackley, Bucknell, Idbury, Ilmington, Longborough, and Wheatley, and his address list included Blackwell, Brailes, Honington, Newbold Pacey, and Preston-on-Stour. It is impressive that in 1885 he could find a dozen places which had or recently had a morris. Harry Taylor had been,

... asked to dance for 'em at Jubilee time for a week, but squire wouldn't let him, he said it was all nonsense.

By 22nd January 1886 the youths from Bidford were ready to perform at the Bidford School Room with Ferris lecturing and dressed in his costume as "Lord of Misrule" from the Billesley Old English Fete of 1885, see *The Pictorial World* for the 4th of February 1886. They danced to an old tabor bought from Tim Howard a Brackley dancer and to Robbins on a fiddle. The episode was repeated at Alcester, Stratford-upon-Avon, Evesham and other near villages and later at Cheltenham, Bath, Clifton and London. The "circus" paid for itself and allowed a small wage for the dancers. Harry Taylor did not think much of the Bidford dancers : they were too clumsy and too heavy on the ground.

The Bidford men danced occasionally after 1886 - for certain in 1887 and 1896 - but in 1904 they were approached by the secretary of the Shakespearean Celebrations for that year, then a Mr Evans, a vet working in Stratford-upon-Avon. Evans also collected local songs and oral history using an early Edison phonograph. Evan's children insisted to me that it was the Bidford side who danced at Stratford in 1904, but records show that it was a local revival side which danced in the following years. This Bidford side was still comprised of some the men who had starting dancing in 1886-7 and was seen by Sharp and MacIlwaine when dancing at Redditch in 1906. That was the first time they tried to collect dances from active traditional dancers. Before then, the Headington dances had been taught directly to the young women of the Esperance Club and then notated from the dancing of the chief instructress Miss Florrie Warren.

Ferris has received a bad press from the early days of the Revival, yet without him realising the possibilities inherent in the growing antiquarian interest in folk lore there might not have been a Revival. He seems to have coincided with the start of the modern habit of reviving old customs and traditions for national celebrations, thereby making them respectable, as at Queen Victoria's Jubilees. The interest aroused was decisive in maintaining the Ilmington tradition. It is uncertain if it played any part in Percy Manning involvement and the Headington Quarry morris renewal in 1897 and hence its discovery of Cecil Sharp on Boxing Day 1899.

## Cecil Sharp

Sharp began his independent collecting of morris music and dance with John Mason at Stow on 29th March 1907, (see *English Dance and Song* for Spring 1967 p.23). From Mason Sharp obtained a *Constant Billy* and *Marriage Vow*, an alternative name for *Saturday Night*, and *The Maid of the Mill* which he later published in his collection of *Folk Dance Airs* in 1909 as from Lower Swell. From the same source Sharp learnt of William Hathaway, a lame shoemaker, then living at 8, Burton St., Cheltenham and a former Lower Swell fiddler. Sharp saw him on the 30th and 31st of March and the 4th April and again on 9th August 1909. From the ages given to Sharp, William must have been born between 5th April and 9th August 1840. Charles Hughes of Naunton had sold Hathaway his first fiddle in exchange for a pair of boots worth 3s 6d (17½p). William Spragg was a great friend of William Hathaway and had copied out for him at some time his tunes from Sharp's notebooks. Sharp often allowed this practice. Many years later Spragg gave his tunebook to Helen Kennedy. It included tunes, eg, *Jockey to the Fair*, presumably written out by Spragg, but with very poor barring.

Hathaway and Mason had both played for Taylor amongst others. Mason knew "Bill" Hathaway well enough to be able to give Sharp a version of the tune *Black Joke* as played by Hathaway. When asked about his *Princess Royal* Mason said, "I began persuading it about", but Hathaway claimed for his "this is absolutely correct". From Hathaway Sharp learnt of Alf Tuffley and Harry Taylor at Longborough and Albert Taylor of Lower Swell, but he did not follow them up until 1910. Clive Carey noted Albert Taylor as a Bledington dancer. A brother to Charles Taylor, he was born in Oddington and married a Bledington woman, living there briefly in the 1860's. Sharp met another fiddler, on the 1st August, James Hathaway, who also played for the morris near Stow.

Cecil Sharp was not immune to criticism. Frank Kidson attacked him in *The Musical Times* of 1st January 1908 over his remarks on *Country Gardens* and *Constant Billy*. Lucy Broadwood took him to task in the *The West Sussex Gazette* of 2nd January 1908, over misquotes on singer's repertoires. Sharp subscribed to a newspaper cuttings service that extracted relevant articles from national and local papers, and this collection survives at the VWML.

Sharp entered his prolific phase of collecting morris dances in 1910. He spent Christmas 1909 with Miss Ella Leather in Herefordshire where he saw traditional country dancing and the Brimfield Morris team at Orleton, (see *English Dance and Song* for Autumn 1969, p.98). He returned to London visiting Billy Wells of Bampton, the Howards and Stutsbury at Brackley, Cadd at Yardley Gobion, and seeing the older scratch side at Eynsham on the way. In March *The Morris Book vol.2* (first edition) and *The Country Dance Book vol.1* were published. For most of March 1910 he stayed near Oxford with Mrs May Hobbs, better known as Miss May Elliot, a noted concert pianist, at Kelmscott, the former William Morris place. He was visiting George Simpson at Upton near Didcot, cycling over from Didcot railway station, to learn the Sherborne Morris, eg on 5th, 24th and 31st at least. George had a young team of boys and one of girls aged 10-11 years old and a local young woman as fiddler, but Sharp ignored these, although they were filmed for a two reel rustic epic in 1908 (Wortley), or perhaps 1913 (Rollo Woods), unfortunately now lost! A photograph of Simpson in his Sherborne costume with the children appears in Keith Chandler's book. On 23rd April 1910 Sharp wrote to Mrs M L Stanton of Ladle Farm, Armscote, near Stratford, about two miles from Ilmington,

I had a great find in an old morris man whom I traced from Sherborne in Gloucestershire. This man is the sole survivor of the last side ... He is full of knowledge and full of dancing and I have been steadily emptying him ... I have learned more from him than anyone else so far. His dances are quite lovely and the tunes are very jolly. I have seen him four times already."

There is another photograph of George Simpson in *The Dancing Times* of April 1925. Born in 1850 he died of cancer in 1915. Fred Hamer was told that the Simpson brothers had been in the police for a while. James was enumerated as a Police Constable at Stonehouse, near Stroud, in 1881, when aged twenty four.

Sharp saw an Abingdon side dance in Ock St, Abingdon on 1st April with Mary Neal. He lectured in London on the 20th and at Retford, Nottingham on the 25th, and was staying with Mrs Stanton on the 27th. From here he wrote his first letter to the press to start the public dispute with Mary Neal, attacking in particular Sam Bennett's Ilmington side and the Abingdon dances in *The Daily News* of 29th April.

... in the process of revival, many of the most beautiful and essential parts of the dances were lost, as anyone, conversant with the attributes of the traditional morris, would see at a glance.

The cause, course and justice of Cecil Sharp's dispute has been treated elsewhere. Mrs Stanton was a frequent companion of Sharp's at this time. She took the local traditional country dancers, the "Armscote" dancers, who in fact came from Honington, to the Stratford-upon-Avon Festivals, (see *English Dance and Song* for Autumn 1966, p.100).

### Meeting Harry Taylor

Cecil Sharp and a friend set out on a tour on the 27th April 1910 through Blackwell (one mile), Ilmington (two more miles), Brailes (six more miles), and then on to see the boys team at Chipping Campden (seven more miles). (William) Denis Hathaway had trained a set of boys, because the men's side, who had performed in Chipping Campden in 1896, perhaps for the first time since the 1850's, would not dance for Sharp. The boys included Don Ellis who in later years became the side's leader and, like many a leader elsewhere, a local councillor for a while. Denis told Sharp that his dances were practically Longborough dances, but a certain amount came from his grandfather-in-law, Thomas Veale, probably an old Campden dancer. The connection looks tenuous when watching the traditions being danced, but there are certain stylistic features in common. The dance to the tune *Young Collins*, used for a stick dance at Campden, was then called *Longborough Morris*.

The cyclists went on to look for Harry Taylor at Longborough. They found him over the hill from Longborough at Condicote, Denis Hathaway's home village. Harry had gone over for a haystack thatching job according to Fred Taylor his son in 1964. In *Merrie England and the Morris Dancers* published in *The World's Work* in August 1912, Mrs Hobbs wrote,

Another dancer, whom Cecil Sharp discovered pulling mangels, was asked for particulars of a certain dance. The veteran took Cecil Sharp behind a haystack and the pair capered together, the old man singing

the tune at the pitch of his voice, until the data necessary for the perpetuation of the dancing were in the collector's notebook. In the middle of the dancing the farmer came on the scene at hedge-gap and sat down thunderstruck. At length he approached the dancers, spoke appreciatively of the entertainment he had been given unseen and reproached his servant, not for leaving his work, for he was on piece work, but for having been with him for so many years and never let on he could dance.

In Sharp's lecture on 31st May as reported in *The Morning Post* on 16th June, mentioned previously, he described his visit to Taylor on 2nd May. He told how one pouring wet day he bicycled six miles from a station to interview a former morris man, seventy years of age, who worked as a farmhand in one of the highest parts of the Cotswolds. There under the shelter of a haystack, using wisps of hay in lieu of the orthodox handkerchiefs, Mr Sharp and "Old Harry", as the man was called, danced a "Pas de Deux", the ancient one whistling the tunes, of which, along with the steps, notes were taken and afterwards pieced together. The first dance gone through was *Constant Billy*, because of its possible relationship to the Campden dance, then *Country Gardens*, Taylor's favourite tune for the sidestep dance, and onto *Hey Diddle Dis*, the processional.

"Hey Diddle Dis, my backside you may kiss,  
And away goes the Longborough Morris."

Fred Taylor had the same story of his dad having a dance with Sharp by a stack. The demonstration side at that lecture danced some then very recently collected dances, *Shooting* from Brackley, (note not claimed to be from Hinton-in-the-Hedges), *Constant Billy* with two sticks from Sherborne, and *Brighton Camp* from Eynsham.

Sharp was fifty years old and on the brink of public recognition for his work.

Sharp returned to London at the beginning of May and fired some more public letters to the press about Mary Neal on the 9th and 10th. On the latter day in *The Morning Post*, Sharp refers to the recent Queen's Hall show with a Northants *Beansetting* and an Ilmington *Maid of the Mill*

... Survivors of the old Ilmington side would have told Neal that the dances "had not been handed on in a correct form" and that the steps were as untraditional as they were uncouth; that the figures were incorrect and the tunes untrustworthy.

On the 25th May, the paper had another letter,

Cecil Sharp has all Sam Bennet's dances in his collection, but he would not dream of publishing them.

In fact he recorded them under "Stretton-on-Fosse" from the place of the flower show at which he saw them, rather than give them the dignity of being called Ilmington.

On 13th August 1912 Sharp's letter said,

The traditional morris of the Warwickshire village of Ilmington was difficult to get, since it had not been danced for a long time, and there were only to be found two old villagers and a railway worker at Birmingham who had taken part in it. The information extracted from them on repeated visits was ingeniously pieced together and the result is a beautiful dance of some historic importance.

His reconstruction was a perception of the Ilmington of about 1867, the last "proper" outing being a visit to the Tysoe Club, but which was itself a revival, and he largely ignored the subsequent dancing. Following Sharp's criticisms, Sam Bennett went back and established from the older men to his satisfaction an authentic form, which he was teaching at least in the 1940's, and which was inherited by Oxford City through R Kenworthy Schofield, after he had moved to Oxford from St Albans..

Cecil Sharp was back with Taylor on the 13th May 1910. Fred Taylor was eighteen at the time of Sharp's visits and recalled his dad teaching Sharp the steps. Sharp first wrote down the tune of a dance and then while whistling or singing it learnt the steps and figures by dancing opposite as No.2 and mimicing Taylor. This was Sharp's technique both at Sherborne and Fieldtown as well and as all three traditions were published very soon after being collected, it is not surprising that some of the "points" of the dances as published in his *Morris Books* do not appear in Sharp's papers. As he taught the dances immediately to the "demonstration" side, "points" of style have come down through the EFDSS teaching that also do not appear in the *Morris Books*.

The only other collector that Sharp appears to have trusted was George Butterworth. He and Tiddy visited Gibbs and Wright at Bledington and gathered the steps and dances that Sharp used in his revision in his *Morris Book*. The music is in the Butterworth collection in the VWML. Miss Sinclair, Ralph Honeybone and others confirmed that these two were the source of the material for the EFDSS. At Bucknell the collecting difficulties defeated Butterworth and he had to call on Sharp.

### Joynes the Fiddler

For some of the time at Longborough Sharp had the assistance of the local young fiddler George Joynes, then aged twenty three, who had had no connection with the morris but who could read music. Until then Joynes had had no idea that there had been a local morris, so well had it died since the early 1890's. Sharp visited Taylor on 13th April 1911, and noted to his great delight his version of *London Pride*. Douglas Kennedy met Taylor for the first time on Sharp's mens team's Cotswold tour in 1912. Clive Carey visited Taylor on 22nd March 1913 during a follow up visit to the Cotswold survivors on behalf of Mary Neal.

Mr. Joynes was fired with enthusiasm after Sharp's visits and wrote out some tunes played by Harry's eldest son Henry, also a fiddler. He intended to give them to Sharp when he next saw him but they never met again. Joynes lived at Longborough with his sister. A gardener most of his life and a clock and watch repairer in his spare time, he had also worked on farms, as a shepherd and in the Donnington Brewery just two miles away. He had assembled a collection of morris tunes from libraries and other places but they were stolen just before World War II by a woman visitor who had been stopping locally in a caravan.

## Rolf Gardiner

In 1923 Rolf Gardiner went on a walking tour across the Berkshire Downs and up through the Cotswolds with Christopher Scaife, then at Oxford and later to be a professor at the University of the Lebanon. They met several singers but only two morris dancers, Harry Taylor of Longborough and Charles Taylor at Church Icomb. Rolf remembered Charles doing a few steps for him. He could not be stopped, despite his daughter's efforts and he being partially blind and it being a rough stone floor and he knocking into furniture. The meeting with Harry was overlaid with memories of subsequent visits with the Travelling Morrice. What he learnt then was also regathered by the Travelling Morrice later.

There was a lot of dissatisfaction amongst the Cambridge undergraduate morris men just before this visit, which found expression in Rolf. He wrote in *Youth* Vol.2, 1923, p.52,

... if you plant them in artificial conditions where vulgarity is rife, all the more so if you spray them with the germ-killer of a spurious traditionalism ... the dance subjected to the anatomical treatment of text-book legislation too is a corpse ...

He continued by proposing a ten point programme for changing the character of the EFDS, from Classes to Festivals.

- 1 No public demonstrations,
- 2 Discourage women's morris,
- 3 Divide the work clearly between,  
a. proselytising, b. artistic,
- 4 Proselytising - five area groups with freedom of action, to tour villages, like the Travelling Morrice in character, perhaps with the morris restricted to public shows and boys and mens organisations,
- 5 Artistic - dramatic work instead of displays (Old King Cole)
- 6 Encourage experiment but be relentless in criticism,
- 7 Meet continental dancers in England,
- 8 Send English teams abroad,
- 9 Masques, processions, pageants in public, everywhere,
- 10 Rename as the English Festival Society.

For this view, which was fifty years too early, he was asked to drop out of the Festival team for the King's Theatre, Hammersmith, 2nd-7th July 1923. He then expressed his views on the EFDS and morris in *The Challenge* issues for 6th July 1923 and 17th July 1923,

Cecil Sharp got dances chiefly from old men, greybeards of sixty and eighty, men with stiffness in their bones and rheumatism in their joints. He saw the dance as it was performed by the men who had danced in the hotness of their youth and now remembered it like a half forgotten dream. Out of his notes and conjectures Cecil Sharp gave us back the English Dance ... One

wonders at the [judgement] "decadent" ... [applied] to *Rose Tree* from Bampton?

... the technique of the morris as performed by the members of the EFDS was derived from an application of theories conjectured by Cecil Sharp ... I did not think it necessary to explain further that when Cecil Sharp set out to collect the dances he knew next to nothing about dancing technique and that he has never been a proficient morris dancer himself; that certain movements, such as the galley, I have seen him demonstrate in a way diametrically opposite to that described in his books ...

Only a few weeks ago as a guest at the house of Mr. Taylor, once captain of the Longborough side, I learnt something of the method by which Cecil Sharp collected the dances of that particular village and was able not only to correct some minor mistakes but to collect some new dances from Mr. Taylor and another octogenarian of the same name who danced for the Oddington side. This experience proved to me the supreme difficulty of gauging movements accurately when demonstrated by limbs withered and lacking flexibility and when one man had to represent a dance intended for six.

Few of the Travelling Morrice went all the way with Rolf's views. Many were very orthodox and these continued with the Travelling Morrice for many years and exercised a decisive influence on the morris in the early days of the Morris Ring.

Rolf became friendly with Mary Neal. As reported in *The Globe* for 22nd April 1919, she had disbanded the Esperance Club during the war years, the male members joining the army, the girls going to war work and the children having to be kept at home because of the perceived risk from the air raids. She became a Secretary, a senior civil service grade, in the Ministry of Pensions. She said that some of the teachers were still active though and she was hopeful of starting again. However she resolved never again to fight publicly with the EFDS and encouraged her workers to associate with the EFDS branches springing up everywhere in default of the Esperance organisation. She gave Rolf some background newspaper cuttings, that she had thought valuable and kept, in order to help him in his debates with Sharp and his followers. In an interview at the Farmers Club on 27th October 1961 Gardiner expressed the belief that the Karpeles sisters were jealous of Mary Neal, and took Cecil Sharp away and fostered the bad feelings.

She and Rolf joined "Kibbokift", an apolitical movement concerned with open air camping, woodcraft and the love of all lores of nature. Miss Neal was "Keeper of the Open Hearth" at "The Cottage", Amberley, Sussex and Rolf was "The Ranger". Kibbokift was founded by John Hargreave on 18th August 1920 at a time when he was HQ commissioner for Woodcraft and Camping to the Boy Scouts. He later became political and turned a portion of the movement into "The Greenshirts" or New Social Credit Party.

Gardiner wrote in 1928 a brief account of the Travelling Morrice which was published in his own magazine *North Sea and Baltic* for High Summer 1938.

In the spring of 1924, two of the morris men [Gardiner and Heffer] conspired to give the side [Cambridge] a taste of the real thing. They poisoned the imagination of their fellows with the charmed names of Longborough, Bledington and Sherborne. It was like talking to the home stranded Crusader about Jerusalem and the Holy Land. In this mood the Travelling Morrice was born.

Arthur Heffer was probably the key motivator. They had first met at the Chelsea Polytechnic when Rolf was sixteen. Heffer had just finished at Oxford and was going to Cambridge to run the family book business. He had been educated at Perse School, a cadet at Sandhurst and commissioned in 1918 into the Royal West Surrey Regiment. He was severely wounded and invalided home. He then gained a second class degree in modern languages as an army student at Queen College, Oxford. Arthur died of pneumonia on the 1st November 1931, aged 32

### PART THREE - THE TRAVELLING MORRICE

Rolf Gardiner wrote further in 1928 that,

... each Travelling Morrice tour achieved its own peculiar flavour and romance: its own humour and dialect. Each was cast under the spell of some particular dance or tradition. Thus the first Cotswold tour was undoubtedly dominated by our discovery of the Longborough dances and the inspiration of that grand old generalissimo, Mr Harry Taylor, octogenarian captain of the Longborough side ... The tours were of two sorts : our pilgrimages to the holy land of the traditional villages and our adventures abroad ... The images recalled by memory of these Travelling Morrice tours are profuse ... dancing on the vicarage lawn at Longborough with the sun dappled meadows below the elms opposite wavering in the heat ... returning to Longborough one evening in early September, and dancing in the still, violet-tinted light just before dusk, with Harry Taylor leaning on his stick in a black suit with a white stock, shining upon us with undefinable joy. Old Charlie Benfield playing *Hop-Frog* to us, his fingers knotty with rheumatism, outside his cottage at Bould, Richard Beach singing the "Forester's Song" in the inn parlour at Bream, Old William Bond making us a speech on the lawn at Idbury.

#### The First Tour

A slightly edited version of the log of the first Travelling Morrice tour was published in the *EFDS News* for May 1925, written by A B Heffer. The original seen was Rolf's copy. Missing then but included here were the more personal remarks about Sam Bennett. The men on this tour were George Cooke, Peter Fox, Thomas Adkins, Anthony Pim, R Kenworthy Schofield, Jim La Touche as treasurer, Rolf Gardiner as cook, Arthur Heffer as logmaster and Alan Richard as fiddler. But he played from printed music. The following are extracts concerned with the contacts with the tradition. The full source text is well worth reading.

Wednesday 18th June 1924



**Burford** - During the show Captain Kettlewell, who acted as shepherd to the party, announced Mr. East, a Burford nonogenarian, who remembered perfectly seeing the traditional men dance in Burford. Apparently he did not dance himself and the information he vouchsafed was scanty. The one thing he criticized was the absence of Bill Lap'en (or Laugh'em), who was the Fool with his bladder and cow's tail. The dancing was "pretty" he said, "but why don't you have a pipe, it's so much more tuney than a fiddle."

**Fieldtown** - Two interesting people were met here [at The Potters Arms] Mr. Franklin, the brother of the dancer of that name and Mr. Pratley. Mr. Franklin liked the dancing, but affirmed that the steps were "too fussy", and that the hey was done quite wrong. To drive this home he did it himself, and to everybody's surprise, put in an extra turn which was most effective.

Thursday 19th June 1924

**Bledington** - One of them spied a promising looking old man with side whiskers and a keen appreciative eye looking on; he turned out to be Mr. John Hitchman, the dancer who used to play "squire" to the Bledington team. Mr. John Hitchman was extremely complimentary about the dancing ... Mr. Hitchman remembered all the dances perfectly - "We all likes *Hop Frog* and *William and Nancy* but for a good old fashioned dance give me, old *Trunkle*," he said. *Leap Frog* he called *Hop Frog* or *Glorishear*.

On the way to Idbury ... a call was paid on old Mr. Charles Benfield who lives by himself at Bould. He was delighted to see everybody, albeit a trifle nervous at the number of his visitors. *Leap Frog* was done to honour him, whilst he stood at his gate with beaming eye. Then a kindly neighbour fetched his fiddle, and, after much persuasion and many a shake of his knowing old head, he commenced tuning up. The business of tuning up was long for the instrument had not been used for many months, but Alan had a bright idea and loaned his own fiddle. Mr. Benfield played *Hop Frog*, *Saturday Night* and *Bonnets So Blue*, but unfortunately the unaccustomed instrument rendered his versions of the tunes somewhat difficult to follow.

**Idbury** - ... the fetching in honour of poor old Mr. Richard Bond, a one time morris man and musician - his eagerness to see the dancing was very touching ... The setting in Mr. Robertson Scott's garden was quite ideal and the audience most enthusiastic. Richard Bond was so overcome with emotion that he insisted on making a very complimentary speech afterwards. The dancing was "proper pretty" he said, and he had never seen *Trunkles* so well done, and "it takes a bit o'doing". He had hardly dared hope to see any more dancing before he died.

Friday 20th June 1924

Very early Kenworthy and Alan hurried off to catch Benfield, before he went to collect his pension in Bledington, and succeeded in noting down several new tunes, among others a version of *Saturday Night*.

**Sherborne** - ... at the invitation of Lady Sherborne, the Travelling Morrice walked up to Sherborne House and danced a few more dances on the lawn there ... Lady Sherborne generously provided tea, and during this sociable function a Mr. Albert Townsend made friends with the Morrice men. He was an old dancer, now unfortunately incapacitated from dancing with rheumatism, but he said that, "when he gets a drop of beer insides of him up gets he and does a jig."

Unfortunately no supplies of the sovereign panacea were handy, and the pleasure of seeing him dance was denied. However, he did sing a song, *Highland Mary*, the tune of which was rather reminiscent of "*Yankee Doodle*" with a dash of "*The Farmyard Song*"; the words were impossible to note. Townsend also mentioned a dance to this tune in which four took part, but he had obviously forgotten how it went.

Saturday 21st June 1924

**Longborough** - ... spirits rapidly rose to fever height to see Mr. Harry Taylor - the old Longborough foreman - doing galleys in the street to greet it ... Dancing took place in the street before lunch, with Mr. Taylor and Mr. Joynes, the fiddler, among the audience. [They danced *Hey Diddle Dis*, *Young Collins* and *London Pride*] "Just quite right," said Mr. Taylor as the party moved off, and hearts swelled with pride. Mr. Taylor is the dearest old man, very shrewd but kind to a fault ... Mr. Taylor asked to be pardoned for "larding in" and pardoned he indeed was. There was something of the generalissimo about him. An interesting discovery was made here, that during Whit week the tour done by the Morris men of the district very nearly coincided with the one of the Travelling Morrice ... Mr. Taylor, warmed with reminiscences of former "jangles", formed up the party on the lawn and proceeded to teach four new dances in the Longborough tradition - *Saturday Night*, *Cuckoo's Nest*, *Old Trunkles* and the *Old Woman tossed up in a Blanket* ... Mr. Joynes, careful man, had all the tunes neatly written out, and so it needed no great imagination to copy them out for the use of the Travelling Morrice. It appears that Mr. Joynes got his tunes from Mr. Henry Taylor.

In 1961, Rolf Gardiner said at the 38th annual feast of the Cambridge Morris Men,

... Old Harry, an octogenarian, with gleaming eye, met us, immaculately dressed but galleying in the village street. "Skuse me lardin in surr, but thic-yer be a skew-karnered dance" was his comment on one item of our repertoire.

[presumably *Swaggering Boney*].

Mr. Joynes died in February 1964 aged seventy seven and Harry's eldest son, a fiddler but not a dancer, died about 1953, aged in his eighties.

**Ilmington** - ... went off to see Mr. Sam Bennett, the local dance authority, and he was found to be an extremely clever man of middle age, but with a rather exaggerated view of his own importance. This quality did not prevent him from being a very good fiddler and apparently a dancer of no mean ability. ... the party filed on to Mr. Michael Johnson's house, and here it was rewarded, for he is the sweetest old man, who roared with delight on being told that the Morrice men wanted to dance in front of his house. Out he came, and jigged about during the dancing.

Rolf Gardiner remembered Sam Bennett as very aggressive and unpleasant. As this did not match with Mary Neal's experience, he put it down to Sharp's treatment of him. She had first met Bennett when judging the morris dance competition at Stratford-on-Avon in 1909 and invited him up to London, for example for the Queens Hall show on 5th May 1910. In a letter dated 26th June 1924 from Neal to Gardiner she said that her brother lived at Great Alne, seven miles from Stratford and Clive [Carey] and she travelled the Cotswolds from there.

I knew Bennett well - he played his fiddle on the box seat of our growler for many a mile as we searched for old dancers. I think a good deal of his manner is caused by the unkind way he was treated by Sharp. It is too long a story to write but he was badly hurt and it has made him aggressive I think. I used to like him very much and had him up in London to sing and dance.

Sam did become difficult. His persistence after the tunes at Abingdon made them want to shoot him. The speed of his playing at Bampton for the "Old 'Uns" certainly made them sweat. He gained recognition. He was invited to tour the USA by Henry Ford when Ford was doing much to restore the old US traditional social dancing. When interviewed by the BBC he had to be carried out of the studio because he was not going to stop playing!

Although a teetotaler it was said that Sam would show off by giving his rough fiddle a drink. Inside Sam Bennett's best fiddle is "Giovan Paola, Brescia 1640". It once was Henry Allan's of Stratford who played it for 73 years, from a teenager for morris in the Forest of Dean, and then sold it to Sam when he was ninety years old.

Cecil Sharp died on 23rd June 1924 while the tour was dancing its last stand at Adderbury, although only the onset of his illness was known to the party at the time. They learnt from Captain Kettlewell later and the timing coincidence had a profound emotional effect on all the men involved.

On the following Tuesday Kenworthy Schofield and Peter Fox again visited Charles Benfield, John Hitchman, Charlie Taylor of Oddington and Richard Bond. The tunes from Benfield were verified. Hitchman's criticism of the dancing was that too many steps were taken, and that it was too fussy. He said,

If you're a dancer, when you hears the tune playing, you knows

how to foot it.

When not playing "squire", Mr. Hitchman used to dance nearside hindmost, "so that he could see what the other fellows did".

From Mr. Hitchman the whereabouts of old Charlie Taylor, the Oddington dancer, was discovered. This is at Icomb not far away. Granddad Taylor and his daughter-in-law were discovered at dinner. He is in his eighty eighth year, is very deaf and has an injured eye, but is otherwise very sprightly and has a magnificent forehead. He mentioned how he had been to London with Sam Bennett under the auspices of Mary Neal - he was inclined to brag a bit about the number of tunes that he knew. His memory was clearest about jigs, and in spite of all attempts to stop him he did parts of two or three jigs, *Jockie to the Fair*, *Princess Royal* and *Highland Mary* to Mr. Townsend's tune. It was noticed that in the full capers he did the kick forward.

Kenworthy again visited Charles Benfield and Harry Taylor in September 1924.

### The Third Tour

The third Travelling Morrice tour returned to the Cotswolds. It was reported in *The Oxford Weekly News* for 2nd and the 9th September 1925. Captain W R W Kettlewell of Westhall Hill, Burford, said that the Travelling Morrice went,

... to test correctness of dances taught by the EFDS ... eight men from the Summer School of the EFDS at Cambridge ... with Elsie Avril playing ... visited Stow-on-the-Wold, Chipping Norton, Burford, Abingdon, Longborough, Oddington, Idbury, Leafield and Ascot-under-Wychwood ... everywhere old dancers turned out to see ... there can be no manner of doubt as to the accuracy of Cecil Sharp's research and teaching."

Rolf Gardiner invited Ralph Honeybone to join the tour. He grew up in Ascot-under-Wychwood, had been in one of Tiddy's boys teams, served as his batman, went to Oxford University after WW I, was one of the EFDS men's display team in the early 1920's, and finally settled in Evesham to teach, marrying one of Sharp's pianists.

On Tuesday, 25th August at Stow-on-the-Wold, they talked to Ned Hathaway.

The next day at Longborough they did two shows.

The aristocracy of the district awaited us on the vicarage lawn. Harry Taylor, of course, was there and overjoyed to see us and it was under his friendly but critical eye that the first show was given, which was almost entirely Longborough. His reception of these was not uniformly approving although he was so pleased to see the dancing that he hardly likes to criticise us ... There was a good deal of new information from Taylor ... We also pleased him by doing *Cuckoo's Nest* which he had taught us the last time. Schofield wrote in his papers that "he appeared quite satisfied and

expressed surprise that they had remembered it." ... "however when we tried *Maid of the Mill* with sidestep and caper through we were pulled up, "not absolutely wrong, but different from what he had done it", while *Swaggering Boney* was altogether wrong". He taught a revised version of the dance and *Jockey to the Fair*, a jig. "Beyond this we heard of *Saturday Night, Banks of the Dee* and a heel and toe to *We Wont Go Home Till Morning*, which he whistled like *Greensleeves*."

Kenworthy Schofield and Douglas Kennedy visited Taylor, Benfield and Alec Franklin in October 1925 to confirm what had been learnt and to obtain further information. Some of the information gleaned by Schofield was published in the *Journal of the EFDS* in 1928, on Fieldtown, and in 1930 on Longborough. Schofield's Bledington and Longborough notebook was been deposited in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library but the similar Fieldtown and Bucknell notebook was loaned to Arthur Peck when Recorder to the Morris Ring and has now disappeared.

### The Seventh Tour

On the seventh Travelling Morrice tour Harry attempted to remember a Longborough *Hop Frog* but failed. For the tours for which Arthur Peck was the logmaster before he was the Morris Ring Recorder, little of the collected dance details have been found.

On the 1929 tour Charles Taylor was met and George Hathaway who had been the number one of the young Bledington side.

Alec Franklin had been a successful potter but when he retired he used to sit outside the public houses in Leafield dressed in a long shepherd's smock, with a crook and a near empty beer mug, waiting for unwary passing motorists, a not uncommon trick between the wars. Reg Pratley of the Jubilee Inn at Bampton grew up in Leafield and remembers Franklin beating time with his crook as he followed or taught dances to visiting morris men.

Harry Taylor died in 1931 aged eighty seven years, see *Two Cotswold Morris Men* by Dr A L Peck, *Journal EFDSS*, 1932.

The local interest generated by the Travelling Morrice visits encouraged some local men to get together. They met in a local barn under Joynes and young Henry Taylor with the help of old Harry. They never rose to a public performance, but there were still men in 1964 who could dance the basic steps in the orthodox fashion with their hands raised up at the side of the head, but without any waving of the hands or handkerchiefs. When asked what they did with their hands, wondering about evidence for the shaking or twists, they answered "stick them up in the air, you fool" as should have obvious to me!

### Not All Went Well for Sharp

It must be evident from the quotes that not all went well for Cecil Sharp. He was very fondly remembered in many places, for example by the Ackermans who had kept the teetotal Highwayman Hotel in Burford where he had stayed a number of times while collecting songs and dances. But sometimes his insights and well

intended comments were not accepted and his policy of keeping the Revival and the sources well apart was not understood.

The Fieldtown dancer Henry Franklin wrote to *The Oxford Times* of 20th July 1912,

Morris dancing is all the go now, but not the proper dance. I taught Mr. Cecil Sharpe about 15 or 20 dances, the proper dance, but I am sorry to say Mr. Sharpe went for other dances before he came to me, therefore he cannot get out of the groove which he had from other Morris dancers. I gave Mr. Sharpe five lessons on Morris dances. I taught him the tunes and how to dance them, and then Mr. Sharpe had a Morris dance in the Corn Exchange, Oxford. I took my Morris bells with me, thinking to have a dance, but Mr. Sharpe said no, he thought I should hurt myself, but he did not say I should hurt myself when I danced in my home. Mr. Sharpe had a dance at Kelmscott last month [Thursday 20th June 1912]. I took my bells with me and went to Kelmscott, but again I was not allowed to dance. Mr. Sharpe came across the ring to ask if a dance was done properly. I said no. I got over the rope into the ring to show the proper way to dance it, but that would not do. So you can plainly see Mr. Sharpe does not want me to dance in public because he knows he does not dance the proper dance. I am, yours truly, H. Franklin, 6, Crown Street, Oxford.

Eye witnesses said that both brothers had walked over from near Oxford and were stopped from dancing only with the greatest of difficulty. Sharp wrote a personal reply to Franklin dated 22nd July.

Miss Taylor of 45 Woodstock Road, Oxford was interviewed on 22nd June 1962 at the suggestion of Professor Chaundy. She had been the secretary of the Oxford branch of the EFDS which had been formed in 1911 by Charlotte Sidgwick. Their teacher was Miss D C Daking who became better known as "Barney" after WW I. Her manuscript *The Log of the Fine Companions* records many anecdotes involving travelling in a gypsy style caravan, as well as a meeting with a drunken William Kimber. They had participated in a rehabilitation scheme which taught morris to shell-shocked troops in France during WW I. Miss Daking had also worked with Janet Blunt collecting from William Walton at Adderbury and no doubt was responsible for the University side dancing at a WI meeting at the Adderbury vicarage as early as 1922. Chaundy had started dancing in 1912 and the University Morris was active in 1913. He was the founder of the Oxford May Morning in 1923, and aged seventy four and living in a house named "Shepherd's Hey" in Headington when interviewed.

Henry Franklin was a tall and formidable man who had been a policeman for many years. There exists a newspaper photograph of him, dated 21st June 1914, from when he gave an exhibition of morris dancing at the Corpus Christi College on the preceding Saturday. Miss Taylor and Professor Chaundy both considered Franklin an awful nuisance. He used to turn up at Branch events and embarrass everyone by telling them how they should do it. The 1914 afternoon was arranged to keep him quiet. They never saw him again. Miss Taylor was one of the invitees at a party arranged the evening before the first day of the first Travelling Morrisc tour when the participants were assembling at Scaife's Oxford flat.

Sharp recorded historical information in good faith, but again it was not always correct. When Sharp published the Ilmington dances he included statements on the background which caused Sam Bennett to write to *The Stratford-on-Avon Herald* published on 23rd August 1912,

... Mr. Sharp, in his Morris Book, makes a few statements which need correcting. He says the Ilmington dancers were disbanded in 1867 owing to the death of Tom Arthurs, but as a matter of fact Tom Arthurs did a Morris dance here in 1887, with his son playing the tabor, and that although eighty five years of age, Tom danced a Morris jig. He died in April 1891. Then, again, Mr. Sharp states that soon after the revival in 1887 Joseph Johnson died, whereas, as a matter of fact, he danced with others (and by himself) at the Diamond Jubilee in 1897, for which I played, and he died on June 29th, 1901. Mr. Sharp is also wrong as to the decease of James Arthurs which did not occur till January, 1907 ...

Sharp paid William Wells to teach him the Bampton dances during a family holiday at Stow-on-the-Wold. This money was not shared with the team, so Jinky was accused of "selling the morris" and this was one of the steps towards the split in the tradition that occurred later.

#### PART FOUR - THE INTERPRETATIONS

The total of the information on the dances and the dancing style was collated and extracted for Lionel Bacon's *Handbook of Morris Dancing*. The style of this publication was defined in the early Advisory Council of the Morris Ring discussions as a Handbook of Living Traditions, to be an aid to learning from the living tradition, not a substitute for it. The following are snippets.

#### Cecil Sharp

For Longborough Sharp had that the order of figures was flexible, but normally Foot-Up, Half-Gip, Back-to-Back, Whole-Gip, Whole-Hey. Sometimes the final chorus was omitted and the dance ended with caper-out at the end of a whole-hey to the A music which then immediately followed whole-gip. Half-Rounds **only** occurred in skew-corner dances, where they were only danced after a corner movement had brought men to the wrong side and was immediately followed by the same corner movement repeated to places. Both Sharp and Carey had the dances end with a "galley and caper up".

Taylor told Sharp,

... hands out and waving and held well up all time but opening them out at Jump. In sidestep one hand up waving. In capering, true circles in vertical plane in front of the body, out then in (handks together) then out.

Douglas Kennedy met Harry Taylor on the 1912 tour and was left with the impression of wonderful galleys, but he had a difficulty in telling which direction Taylor twisted his handkerchiefs, he appeared more to shake his handkerchiefs from the wrist, not making any circling movements with the forearm, rather as the Chipping Campden side of that time danced. Taylor's performance of the galley

was the model that most influenced Sharp's teaching of the movement. The other evidence is that only at Fieldtown was the galley similar; elsewhere there were stylistic differences or just not enough evidence collected to be sure.

### Travelling Morrice and the 1920's and 1930's

Harry Taylor told Sharp that the Longborough morris was much like the Bledington morris except that the former did the jump every two bars and the latter every four bars. They often danced together. George Hathaway of the "Young Bledington" side, from whom the Travelling Morrice derived many of the more modern ideas of the Bledington tradition, said at the Ring Meeting Feast at Stow-on-the-Wold on the 14th September 1935, that there was a big difference between the two styles of dancing. At Bledington they were told to keep their feet near the ground, while Harry Taylor, at Longborough, stressed getting well off the ground. The dancers at Bledington and Oddington called the galley a "hook-leg", with one twist of the free foot, and made it near the ground in contrast to Harry Taylor who made it very high, with his thigh parallel to the ground, and with two twists of the free foot.

In 1925 Ned Hathaway told of *British Grenadiers*, a Longborough dance. It was to him a "sidestep and caper through" dance. Sharp had it as an ordinary sidestep and half hey dance. The ordinary formula movements he knew were "go and come back", "then go round keeping your face", and "go round keeping your backs". Schofield wrote in his notebook, "that in sidestep dances the formulae movements - Foot-Up (probably with jumps both halves), Half-Gyp, Whole-Gyp and Back-to-Back were often used." The jumps usually but not necessarily occurred in Foot-Up, Half-Heys and Half-Rounds.

There was new information from Taylor on that tour, "We did whole-gip footing in the half-gip and no shuffles in the once-to-yourself and he seemed to approve of this." Sharp had noted shuffles in the middle three figures, including the whole-gip, but for the Travelling Morrice Taylor repudiated using shuffles in set dances, preferring a slower and weaker form of backstep, and only a jump for once-to-yourself.

Taylor said to Schofield that when a dance included half-neys, the final whole-hey was usually omitted and the dance ended with caper-out on the second half-hey of a chorus. It was the practice to shorten dances rather than let them flag and sidestep dances in particular were performed "single", ie. with one B music only, such that alternate figures were danced with the set reversed. Carey thought it probable that the dances *London Pride* and *Girl I Left Behind Me* were normally danced this way, and that others, *Banks of the Dee* and *Country Gardens*, rarely so. *Greensleeves*, *Highland Mary* and *Old Woman Tossed Up* were also sidestep dances. Usually the chorus sequence was a sidestep to the left, a double step facing front, a sidestep to the right, a feet together jump; but sometimes, and in *Old Woman Tossed Up* usually, the feet together jump was replaced by another double step facing front. When describing *Country Gardens* to Rolf Gardiner, Taylor had insisted that the second bar was a double step and intimated that he had had difficulty with his own side on this point.

The choruses of *Maid of the Mill* and *Banks of the Dee* were taught as clap, plain capers across and half-hey on the other side. Of *Swaggering Boney*, or alternatively titled *Travel by Steam* as Harry told Sharp, Sharp only has the first two choruses in his notebooks. Harry told the Travelling Morrice that the first crossing was like



*Maid of the Mill*, with kicking and clapping, and that later choruses included the slow capers. Another major discrepancy between Sharp's manuscript and Schofield's notebooks was in some of the chorus movement steppings for *Trunkles*, particularly where there were shuffles or galleys.

## Jigs

*Princess Royal* : the jig can be extended by dancing half-capers, or furries, like Bampton, to a slow A music. Carey recorded that each part of the jig can end with either a galley, backsteps or plain capers.

*Jockey to the Fair* : like *Princess Royal* usually done by two dancers. The B music has an opening four bar sidestep sequence followed by a number of half-capers and single or plain capers with waves to end. Harry described it as a "hard dance", meaning tiring! The B music being so long, gives plenty of scope for variations, different dancers as well as different villages doing it as they pleased, no doubt.

## Fred Taylor and Trunkles, "the longest dance in the world"

Some account must be given of the slow capers.

They have been described in various ways and Harry Taylor recognised at least four forms.

|                           |     |            |           |           |
|---------------------------|-----|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Forecapers with capers :  | rtb | ft.J       | R         | L         |
| Forecapers with galleys : | rtb | ft.J       | hl<br>hkr | hl<br>hkr |
| Uprights :                | xh  | J or<br>xh | R         | L         |

the cross hops being done either forward, ie crossing in front of the supporting foot, or backward, bringing the foot behind the one bearing the weight.

Fred Taylor indicated that his father had special fancy versions of the slow capers which he would use in his jigs. Besides incorporating the leg movement of the galley into the forecapers, he described a 360 deg turn or "twizzle" instead of the plain capers in the uprights.

Some sides have chosen to use these versions in their corner dances, especially *Trunkles*. If all possible versions of the slow capers are used, particularly if the appropriate choruses are repeated to place before proceeding, it can be long dance, of thirteen to fifteen minutes or more. It is best kept for practices or Ales!

## Westminster Morris

Recognisable as the team with the mime-trained Unicorn, they have been one of the classic sides since WWII. Before 1964 L Saunders collated the material from the then-accessible sources. Their style, posture, stepping, galley, half-capers and flowing handkerchief movements have been passed on at Morris Ring Instructionals.

The Westminster Morris worked up the manuscript labelled "new" dances from the Butterworth mss : *Gallant Hussar*, *Staines Morris* and a handclapping *Country Gardens*. There are difficulties in accepting all of this set of Butterworth's dances which are not referenced elsewhere or fit comfortably into the known dance formats. It is not knowable now whether these were collected or composed by Butterworth. They are of course included in Bacon. Douglas Kennedy always stated that Butterworth was very careful and not given to invention.

They were the first modern team to invent rather than just to adapt dances across traditions and these included *The Golden Vanity*, a leapfrog dance, *Old Harry*, a half-through corner dance, and *Big John*, a two-by-two dance.

### Old Spot Morris

This side based in Cheltenham has sought authenticity by interpreting the collectors' stylistic remarks. They have danced high, with large jumps, and strong rapid shakings of the wrist. They created distinctive but fairly obvious dances such as *Leapfrog*, a *Belle Isle's March* heel and toe, and a two-by-two *Boys of the Bunch*. But they had also developed a Longborough *Sherborne Jig* and a *Black Joke* jig for four. More recently they have redeveloped the repertoire using the other tunes collected from the Stow-on-the-Wold morris musicians.

### Hammersmith Morris

Another team that has developed the vigorous style. Their development started with Hugh Rippon from the Schofield article in the EFDSS Journal, then John Kirkpatrick who consulted the Sharp MS, Martin Johnson and David Robinson. They imaginatively created *Lillibolero*, *Hammersmith Flyover*, *Black Jack*, *British Grenadiers*, *Lass of Richmond Hill*, and *Kew Bridge Gardens* to John Mason's *Cupid's Garden*, many of which have been copied by other teams.

### Frome Valley Morris

This club for a few years fitted my concept of what Longborough should look like, with power but no exaggerations.

### Missing from the Repertoire

Because the teams around Stow-on-the Wold had much in common it can be assumed that dance formats were shared more than is apparent from what has survived. Two-by-two dances like Longborough's *Cuckoo's Nest*, half-through dances like those at Bledington and more corner dances would have been expected. William Hathaway had *Belle Isle's March* and *Cuckoo's Nest* as corner dances. Perhaps these were really half-through as at Bledington. *Belle Isle's March* had been mentioned with *Oh Sussanah* and *We Wont Go Home Till Morning* as alternative tunes, which change the character of the dance when used.

I acknowledge the considerable interest and help of Keith Chandler during this paper's long gestation, for which I am entirely to blame.

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Proper adaptive control of a show really requires deliberate observation of the crowd and its reactions during the dancing, and not just between dances, so that judgements can be made on when to stop the show, whether to speed it up or to change the programme. The character must be responsive, not scripted. In many ways it is an equivalent to the technique of the stand up comic or pantomime principal in speaking to the audience at large, and dealing with overall impressions rather than individuals in the crowd.

Any announcement has to catch the attention of the listeners. Therefore the speaker has to have an "entrance", to step out of context. The speaker has to deal with crowd control, assisted but not supplanted by the fool.

One other task is the "collection" speech. This can be full of blarney, like a fairground barker, being economical with the truth. Issues can be the "Buying of the Luck of the Morris", "Improving the Weather" or even gaining "Fertility". By contrast one should never tell the tale to reporters because it reflects back on all the morris.

There are two subsidiary tasks.

#### **B. SOMEONE ACCESSIBLE BY THE AUDIENCE**

There is a task to answer questions, to chat on a one-on-one basis and to keep the inquisitive and troublesome out of the way of the show and team organisers. It is best performed by someone identifiably not a dancer. It continues all the time from first arrival at a dance spot till departure.

**The Activity is sited in the audience and is projected outward towards the audience.**

It can be combined with distributing lucky morris cake or handouts and with the collecting of money unobtrusively. Who the money is for should be made quite clear. Cake bearers were common in the Wychwood Forest area, but are infrequent with the morris in recent years. Traditionally this is a steady task that does not draw attention to itself. In passing out the cake, the bearer has a cake tin and a small knife and doles out very small pieces, and these are given not sold. The cake is usually a rich fruit one, but once they sold little cakes which were mincemeat enclosed in pastry or bread. One should not be free with prited handouts, they cost money, they litter the country side, and should be aimed at genuine enquiries and photographers who might send copies for the scrapbook. It is difficult to combine this task with that of ragman, mentioned below.

I was taken with a team who had a small child tow through the audience a pull along animal toy on wheels with a slot in the top for coins.

Collecting boxes have a long history and the money was a major factor for most of the known traditional sides. Making sure that monies could not be removed secretly was important and soldered lids or padlocks were not uncommon.

#### **C. SOMEONE TO LOOK AT - a "beautiful" as the Basques put it.**

The role is to be noticed and be admired. Traditional parts are King, Queen,