



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

## Access to Electronic Thesis

Author: Ruairidh Greig  
Thesis title: Seasonal House-Visiting in South Yorkshire  
Qualification: MPhil  
Date awarded: 10 November 1988

**This electronic thesis is protected by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. No reproduction is permitted without consent of the author. It is also protected by the Creative Commons Licence allowing Attributions-Non-commercial-No derivatives.**

SEASONAL HOUSE - VISITING  
IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE

R. Greig B.Ed.

Submitted for the Degree of  
Master of Philosophy

Centre for English Cultural  
Tradition and Language  
University of Sheffield

May 1988

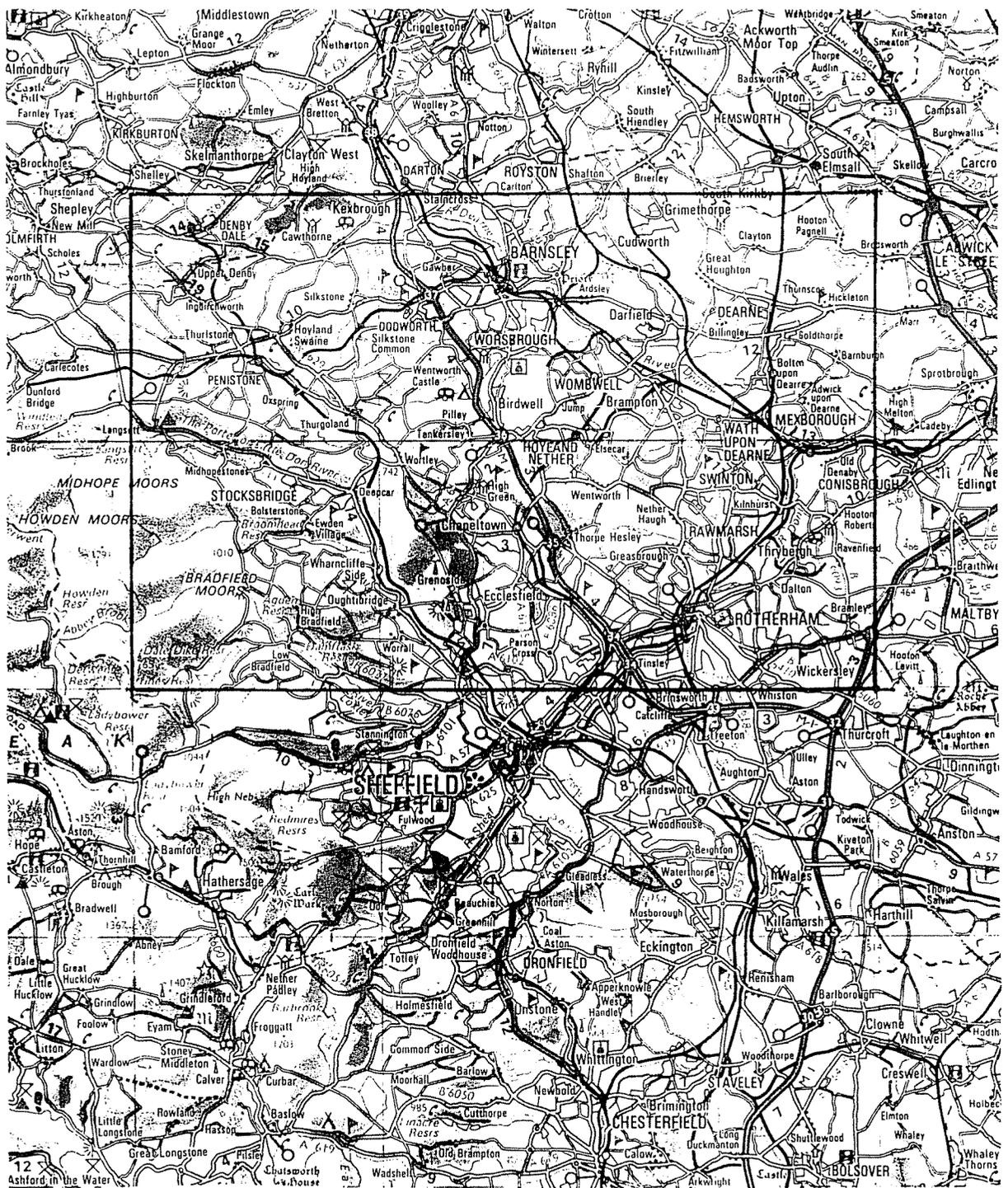
# C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page No.</u>
Acknowledgments . . . . .	(i)
Map showing the Study Area . . . . .	(ii)
Chapter One: Introduction . . . . .	1
Chapter Two: The Study Area . . . . .	19
Chapter Three: Methodology . . . . .	29
Chapter Four: The Simple Visit . . . . .	42
1. Letting in the New Year . . . . .	43
2. Plough Bullocks . . . . .	50
3. Collop Monday . . . . .	54
4. Whitsun . . . . .	55
5. Caking . . . . .	56
6. Penny for the Guy . . . . .	60
7. Jolly Minering . . . . .	61
8. Letting Christmas In . . . . .	66
9. Carol Singing . . . . .	68
10. Wassailing . . . . .	70
11. Mumming . . . . .	75
Simple Visit Texts: . . . . .	80
Chapter Five: The Complex Visit . . . . .	97
1. The Hero Combat Play . . . . .	100
2. The Old Tup . . . . .	117
3. The Old Horse . . . . .	151
4. The Sword Dance . . . . .	171
Complex Visit Texts: . . . . .	182
Chapter Six: Conclusion . . . . .	209
Appendix One: Fieldwork Questionnaires . . . . .	227
Appendix Two: Distribution Maps . . . . .	232
Appendix Three: Photographs . . . . .	238
Bibliography: . . . . .	246

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I should first of all like to thank the many people of South Yorkshire who provided the information upon which this study is based. I should like to thank them for showing me the open friendliness and generous hospitality for which the area is justly renowned. My thanks are also due to colleagues and friends; to Peter Hulse for information from Stocksbridge High School; to Paul Smith and Georgina Boyes for advice and details about their pioneering fieldwork in the region; to Professor Robert Thomson who provided many references to broadside and other materials in the initial stages of the research; to my wife, Alvina Greig for her long-suffering support and also assistance with the musical transcriptions and to Jacqui Foster who took on a lot more than she thought when she agreed to be my typist. I should also like to thank the Director of Libraries and Information Services, Sheffield City Libraries, Olive, Countess Fitzwilliam's Wentworth Settlement Trustees and the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (E.F.D.S.S.) for permission to use various manuscript references to house-visiting.

My main debt of gratitude is to Professor John Widdowson without whose assistance and advice this study would not have finally reached its conclusion. He has generously shared with me the findings of his own research, both in the Sheffield area and in Newfoundland where he worked with Professor Herbert Halpert on a pioneer study of house-visiting traditions. He has also helped me greatly by proofreading my original manuscript. Most of all I wish to thank him for his constant encouragement and inspirational enthusiasm, without which I would probably have abandoned this project long ago.



The Study Area

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This study examines the traditional custom of seasonal house-visiting in a defined geographical area which forms part of what were the Metropolitan Counties of South and West Yorkshire. It aims to investigate the incidence, survival and decline of these customs, as well as their distribution and functional significance within the community. Seasonal house-visiting is one of the many cultural traditions which relate to the house and home. In cultural terms, the home is a natural focus for a wide variety of beliefs and practices, many of which seek to control or modify the behaviour of visitors. In the Sheffield area for example, the threshold of the house is regarded as particularly significant. Should a stranger approach the front instead of the usual back door access, it is usually regarded as signifying the formal nature of the visit, or that the visitor is an outsider unfamiliar with local practices. It is also considered unlucky to leave a house by a different door from the one used for entry. Many other similar examples which confirm the cultural importance of house-visiting in the locality have been recorded during the fieldwork.

There are several features which distinguish the seasonal house-visit from any other. Firstly, the visitors offer some form of performance. This might be a song, rhyme, play, dance or at least some form of dramatic role - play in costume or disguise. Secondly, the performance takes place at a particular time of year with which the visit is associated. Thirdly, the performance concludes with requests for a reward of some kind. This could be money, food, drink or a combination of these.

My interest in these customs arose whilst I was a volunteer fieldworker for the Survey of Language and Folklore (now part of the Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language) at the University of Sheffield. It was during this period that I recorded surviving examples of the two animal disguise visits described later in this study, the "Old Tup" and the "Old Horse". I also learned through the weekly meetings of the Survey Team that the "Hero-Combat" mummers' play had been performed locally. These discoveries led me to make further enquiries and to examine available printed sources. I was surprised by the amount of available data, most of it from the southern outskirts of Sheffield and North Derbyshire.

I became interested in this concentration of house-visits on the south side of Sheffield and wondered whether it was the result of a more active local tradition there, or whether the area had attracted special attention from earlier writers and folklorists who were interested in such customs. Sidney Oldall Addy and Harold Armitage, for example, had strong associations with the village of Norton<sup>1</sup>. Edward Carpenter, the socialist writer who lived near Holmesfield, also on the south side of the City, was another who took an active interest in local house-visiting customs<sup>2</sup>. More recently, the study of the "Old Tup" visit by Ian Russell has again concentrated on this region<sup>3</sup>. I also felt that the interest shown by these writers might be self-perpetuating in two ways: firstly that it might revive local interest in the customs and thus improve the chances of their survival and, secondly, that their interest might have encouraged others to look for similar customs in the same area, make further discoveries and so continue the process, stimulating interest in

1. S. O. Addy, "Guising and Mummung in Derbyshire", Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, XXXIX (1907), 31-42; H. Armitage, Chantreyland, (London 1910).
2. Carpenter Collection, Archives Division, Sheffield City Libraries.
3. I. Russell, "A Survey of Traditional Drama in North East Derbyshire 1970-78", Folk Music Journal, volume 3 (1979), 399-478.

the tradition and adding to the records of its existence.

The same attention has not, however, been focussed on the area to the north of Sheffield and it was because of the lack of data that I chose to concentrate my efforts in that direction. It was hoped that, in this region where much less previous research had been done, it would be possible to find evidence of previously unrecorded seasonal house-visiting customs, to check the distribution of known forms of visit and certainly to find out more about their characteristics and functions within specific communities.

In the same way that I wished to redress what seemed to be an over-concentration on the southern fringes of the city, I also hoped to provide a more balanced view than previous scholarship, which concentrated largely on certain specific types of house-visit, notably the Hero-Combat play.

Ever since Ordish published, in 1891 and 1893, his analyses of "Folk Drama"<sup>4</sup>, writers have concentrated on the antiquarian or survivalist approach to the subject. They regarded the plays as essentially anachronisms in which evidence of the beliefs and religious practices of earlier communities could be discerned. Alex Helm, for example, stated:

"We still believe that the play is best considered as an action, that it has its origins in primitive religious beliefs, and that it is the most widespread men's ceremonial custom which survived into this century."<sup>5</sup>

This interest in discovering and identifying possible survivals of "primitive religio-magical revitalization ceremonies"<sup>6</sup> can also be found in published material concerning other house-visit ceremonies, although there has clearly been a greater concentration on the Hero-Combat play.

4. T.F. Ordish, "Folk Drama", Folk-Lore, vol. II (1891), 314-335 and "English Folk Drama", Folk-Lore, vol. IV (1893), 149-175.
5. A. Helm, "In Comes I St George", Folk-Lore, vol. 76 (1965), 118.
6. Helm, (1965), 135.

The animal disguise customs, for example, are described in survivalistic terms by Violet Alford:

"We cannot fail to perceive in all the animal guisers  
bringers in of fertility at the turn of the year."<sup>7</sup>

Even in more recent publications, the same approach is adopted. E.T. Kirby attacks the type of interpretation already described which was influenced by the "Cambridge School" of Classical Anthropology, but merely substitutes an alternative which is still essentially survivalistic. Instead of concentrating on the death and resurrection element of the Hero-Combat play, he suggests that the comic doctor is the most significant character featured and that he represents the shaman or witch-doctor figure:

"If we first examine the nature of the shaman and the type of rituals he performed, it will become apparent that the mummings' play developed from them and from no other type of ceremony."<sup>8</sup>

This view is still essentially that of Sir James Frazer and Sir Edward Tylor formulated in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as Dorson notes:

"According to the doctrine of survivals, the irrational beliefs and practices of the European peasantry, so at variance with the enlightened views of the educated classes, preserve the fragments of an ancient lower culture, the culture of primitive man."<sup>9</sup>

In an attempt to achieve "the reconstruction of the early history of man"<sup>10</sup>, students of folk drama have too often ignored the opportunity to draw meaningful conclusions as to its function in the society which fosters

7. V. Alford, "The Hobby Horse and Other Animal Masks", Folklore, vol. 79 (1968), 134.
8. E. T. Kirby, "The Origin of the Mummings' Play", Journal of Americal Folklore, vol. 84 (1971), 277.
9. R. M. Dorson, The British Folklorists, (London, 1968), 193.
10. Ibid.

it, concentrating instead on hypothesising about origins so obscure as to be virtually intangible.

It was perhaps Charlotte Burne amongst English folklorists who first pointed out the need to examine customs in the context of the host community:

"But to comprehend the real object, the true significance, of a given rite, whether public or particular, occasional or periodical, it is obviously necessary to study the ritual of the occasion as a whole, and to take it in connection with the occasion on which it is performed, in short to note the when as well as the what."<sup>11</sup>

This type of approach, which unfortunately found few adherents amongst English folklorists, had more in common with social anthropology, and, for example, the work of Ruth Benedict and Bronislaw Malinowski. The latter wrote concerning the "functional" approach to anthropology:

"From the point of view of method and theory of fieldwork the most important principle lies in the functional conception of culture. This declares that to study details detached from their setting must inevitably stultify theory, field work and practical handling alike."<sup>12</sup>

In 1935, Benedict expressed a similar view with regard to the study of human behaviour:

"The only way in which we can know the significance of the selected detail of behaviour is against the background of the motives and emotions and values that are institutionalized in that culture."<sup>13</sup>

It was not until over thirty years later that this type of approach was used in dealing with folk drama, when a series of essays by historians,

11. C.S. Burne, The Handbook of Folklore, (London, 1913), p. 247.

12. B. Malinowski, The Dynamics of Culture Change, (New York, 1945), p. 41.

13. R. Benedict, Patterns of Culture, (London, 1935), p. 35.

anthropologists and folklorists was published under the editorship of Halpert and Story, which examined the custom of mumming in Newfoundland.<sup>14</sup> In this important work, the authors attempted "to examine the whole mumming complex"<sup>15</sup> and, in doing so, they drew attention to a variety of fundamental issues, concentrating on the importance and relevance of these traditions in contemporary society, or within living memory. The essays:

".... examined Christmas mumming .... both functionally as a mechanism of social control, and as a key to an understanding of the ordering of experience."<sup>16</sup>

The example set by Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland has since been followed by two other writers: Abrahams, who applied similar ideas to his folk drama discoveries in the West Indies<sup>17</sup>, and Glassie, who has attempted an analysis of a particular mumming tradition in Northern Ireland<sup>18</sup>.

However, both of these writers have concentrated on dramatic house-visiting customs, rather than any other form, and, once again, on the Hero-Combat play in particular. Prior to the present study, it seems that no-one has attempted a systematic functional analysis of the "whole mumming complex"<sup>19</sup>, including all related seasonal house-visiting customs within a defined geographical area of England. This is the general aim of the present study; it is now necessary to examine in more detail those particular aspects of the visit and its host community which lie within the scope of this investigation.

14. H. Halpert and G.M. Story (eds), Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland, (Toronto, 1969).
15. Halpert and Story, p. 3.
16. Halpert and Story, p. 5.
17. R.D. Abrahams, "British West Indian Folk Drama and the 'Life Cycle' Problems", Folklore, vol. 81, (Winter 1970), 241-265.
18. H. Glassie, All Silver and No Brass, (Bloomington and London, 1975).
19. Halpert and Story, p. 35.

As far as I can discover, there have been no previous attempts, certainly for the English tradition, to classify seasonal house-visits as such, but they are included, with other related customs, in Halpert's typology which was used in the analysis of similar activities in Newfoundland<sup>20</sup>. He divides the mumming activities, as he terms them, into four main groups:

A.

1. The Informal Visit
2. The Visit with the Formal Performance

B.

3. The Informal Outdoor Behaviour
4. The Formal Outdoor Movement

The categories in Halpert's typology that are relevant to the present study are the first two, which refer to house-visiting. However, they proved inadequate for the classification of the present fieldwork data. The informal/formal dichotomy which forms an important part of the typology, is based mainly upon the composition of the visiting group, and whether a set performance was used. In the majority of visits recorded for the present study, a set performance is given. In those where there is no such performance, the actions of the visitors are still sufficiently patterned to be regarded as "formalised" and therefore could not be categorised as informal by Halpert's criteria. The composition of the visit-groups in the study-area also did not conform to Halpert's formal/informal categories. Most of them consisted of existing peer groups for whom seasonal house-visiting was just another aspect of normal social activities. Little variation in group composition, and no group-merging of the kind found in Newfoundland were noted in the fieldwork.

20. H.Halpert, "A Typology of Mumming", Halpert and Story, pp.35-61.

It could be argued that, even in the Newfoundland examples, this distinction between formal and informal behaviour is unclear, perhaps because of the relative lack of information from formal visit performers.

It was decided, for these reasons, to adapt Halpert's typology and to substitute for the formal/informal categories, others which would relate more closely to the form of the visit as found in the study area. These two proposed new categories, the Simple and Complex visit, do not constitute a true dichotomy but rather represent the two poles of a continuum along which the visits may be placed at various points according to their particular characteristics. These two categories may be defined as follows:

A. The Simple Visit

This involves very little preparation or planning. It can be performed by a group or an individual and requires little or no interaction between performers. It is of short duration and is therefore suitable for frequent repetition.

B. The Complex Visit

This is performed by a more or less fixed group. The performances require a considerable amount of interaction. They are of longer duration and thus are not suitable for performing more than a few times during an outing. They also need more preparation, rehearsal and organisation.

The general characteristics included in this classification are evident in most of the specific features of the visit. The use of costume and disguise for example clearly demonstrates the similarities and the differences between the various customs. Disguise is regarded by a number of folklorists as a most significant feature of house-visiting.

Helm, for instance, wrote of its use in the Hero-Combat play:

"The disguise of whatever type, effectively hides the nonsense of the text and imparts a dignity to the performers which their ordinary clothes would not. They become, for the duration of their act, the medicine men of the community, dispensing and collecting the fertility fundamentally associated with the ritual."<sup>21</sup>

The significance of disguise in folk drama is widely accepted as an aid in the temporary change of social status which is often described as occurring to individuals during performance, as Turner states:

"Masking endows them with the powers of feral, criminal autochthonous and supernatural beings."<sup>22</sup>

Sometimes however, there appears to have been a common assumption that disguise is an essential element, and that its absence, or even its incompleteness, can be regarded as a sign of lack of vitality in a performance, as Dean-Smith asserts about the Hero-Combat play:

"Dressing in character for the play is regarded by the folklorist as degenerate."<sup>23</sup>

In order to test the relevance of such views to the house-visit customs under study, it is the intention here to examine all the information about disguise recorded during the fieldwork. Other features of the visits which will be examined include variations in texts and tunes used by different individuals and groups, as well as character types and names occurring in complex visit performances.

21. Helm, (1965), 118.

22. V.W.Turner, The Ritual Process, (Harmondsworth, 1974), p.161.

23. M.Dean-Smith, "The Life-Cycle or Folk Play", Folklore, vol.69, (1958), 252.

Although, as might be expected, it was not possible to obtain detailed information about every visit from each informant, it is hoped that, where sufficient data is available, useful conclusions may be drawn concerning the significance of some of these characteristics. The influence of geographical factors on seasonal house-visiting will be discussed. In delimiting the study area, an important consideration was that it should be of sufficient size to allow for the examination of spatial distribution, so as to determine which visits were more localised, and which more widely spread. The influence of communications, patterns and history of settlement on house-visits were considered, as well as the significance of socio-economic factors. Housing is also a significant factor. Building patterns, the spatial distribution of houses and of the various social classes who live in them are all worthy of attention.

As pointed out in chapter two, the study area is a varied one, including country estates, mining and other industrial communities, and more recently settled suburban areas. There have been major changes in population and settlement patterns during the last hundred years and this study provides a unique opportunity to see what influence these changes have had on traditional house-visiting in the area.

The patterns of temporal distribution are another important feature of the house-visit which will be discussed. Visits take place at different times of day, and at various seasons of the year as implied in the title of this study. However, it is a common feature of all the customs that each is associated with a particular season or date in the year. The majority of the visits take place during the midwinter period. The preponderance of similar customs at this time of year has often been explained by folklorists as being the result of the influence of seasonal

patterns of agriculture. For example, Burne comments:

"To appreciate the importance of particular days and seasons, one must realize the position of a village community held in the iron grip of a system of common agriculture, under which everyone is obliged to do the same thing at the same time."<sup>24</sup>

This observation may be appropriate to rural, agricultural communities, but how far it applies to a semi-industrial area is open to question.

It was also hoped to discover what influence religious festivals and patterns of work and leisure, for example, had upon the timing of house-visiting during the year. The time of day at which visits took place, and how far this timing was the result of community influence, traditional practice or personal choice will also be examined.

Another aspect of temporal distribution worthy of consideration is whether a custom has been practised continuously over a number of years, has undergone interruption and revival, declined or even disappeared. An assumption seems to have been made by a number of folklorists<sup>25</sup> that the existence of a custom necessarily implies that it has pre-Christian origins in some misty Dark Age or even earlier period. Alford expresses such a view in her comments on the sword dances:

"If a dance 'comes out' on a certain day or during a certain period, it is generally the logical descendant of magico-religious acts symbolising at Midwinter the nadir of nature, the lowest position of an enfeebled sun and decay of vegetation."<sup>26</sup>

24. Burne, (1914), p. 39.

25. See for example R.J.E.Tiddy, The Mummers' Play, (Oxford, 1923), 70-72, Sir E.K.Chambers, The English Folk Play, (Oxford, 1933), 211-235 and E.C.Cawte, A.Helm and N.Peacock, English Ritual Drama, (London, 1967), 23-30.

26. V.Alford, Sword Dance and Drama, (London, 1962), p 201.

One of the aims of this study is to present new information about seasonal house-visiting customs, to discover if there is any contemporary evidence for such an assumption. With this in mind, specific questions were asked during the fieldwork about whether, to the performers' knowledge, the visit had always taken place in the locality and, if not, what was known about its development.

Furthermore, the influence of temporal factors upon seasonal house-visiting can be seen in their effect on the survival or decline of particular types of visit. Many historical events might possibly have influenced these fluctuations, for example the First and Second World Wars, the Depression of the years between the Wars and, in more recent years, the increasing influence of the mass media on everyday life. The fieldwork for this study afforded an excellent opportunity to discover which of these events, among others, had the greatest impact on house-visiting and with what results. I was interested to try to find out, for example, if there was an increase in activity in times of relative poverty, if house-visits were more or less popular in times of national emergency, or if some types of visit were more suited than others to a television orientated society.

Many reasons have been given for the decline in traditional customs. As long ago as 1901, Ditchfield was moved to comment:

"Moreover, the labourer himself has changed; he has lost his simplicity. His lot is far better than it was fifty years ago, and he no longer takes pleasure in the simple joys that delighted his ancestors in days of yore. Railways and cheap excursions have made him despise the old games and pastimes which once pleased his unenlightened soul."<sup>27</sup>

27. P.H.Ditchfield, Old English Customs, (London, 1901), p. 2.

Yet more than eighty years later, seasonal house-visiting still continues, and in some cases, is increasing<sup>28</sup>.

Research in Newfoundland has suggested that those mumming activities which have survived, have done so only when they perform a function useful to the community:

".... we can only assume that .... the mumming of this latter kind has continued to live because it serves various useful functions. For some reason, the mummies' play, perhaps because of its formal nature, did not take on a new functional significance and was allowed to die out."<sup>29</sup>

In the course of this research, I hoped to see how far these conclusions were relevant in another geographical region with a different community structure.

The function of a visit is not only important as a guide to the chances of its survival, but also as a clue to why it existed in the first place. How far, and in what ways, the house-visit fulfilled a function in the study area, seemed to be an important question. Glassie drew attention to the functional significance of these customs in a Northern Ireland community:

"When we look at mumming, we are examining the way a communal logic works. When we study its functions, we are exposing and explicating the virtues of collective action."<sup>30</sup>

It is my contention that it is through the study of 'communal logic' and 'the virtues of collective action' for example, rather than the search for ritual origins, that a true and meaningful understanding of seasonal house-visiting may be arrived at.

28. See Ch. 4, p.69

29. Halpert and Story, (1969), p. 61.

30. Glassie, (1975), p.139.

I intend to examine its functions in two main ways, firstly through the eyes of the performer/visitor, and secondly, through those of the audience, whose reaction is crucial to the success of the visit.

When performers' motives have been discussed by folklorists in the past, the performance was assumed to be a survival of an older, more 'primitive' culture, as Glassie notes:

"They could not ramble the countryside putting on a play to have a good time, they must have been striving to insure the growth of crops or the return of the sun. The survivalists made up the original mummers to look very much like themselves."<sup>31</sup>

It was this survivalist type of approach that I hoped to avoid in analysing the data collected for this study. The intention here is not to attempt to make information fit a particular theory, but to examine it objectively and, where possible, to draw meaningful conclusions as a result.

Apart from those relating to 'primitive ritual', other motives for participation have been suggested by Halpert<sup>32</sup>, Abrahams<sup>33</sup> and Glassie<sup>34</sup> which could be relevant to this area. Some of them may seem rather obvious and mundane but the fact that they have been largely ignored by the majority of folklorists makes it necessary to restate them. The enjoyment gained from performing, for example, cannot be underestimated, whether as a fulfilment of a natural dramatic urge, or through the opportunity for a temporary suspension of the rules of acceptable behaviour:

"Emotionally, nothing satisfies as much as extravagant or temporarily permitted illicit behaviour."<sup>35</sup>

31. Glassie, (1975), p. 58.

32. Halpert and Story, (1969), p. 60.

33. Abrahams, (1970), p. 242.

34. Glassie, (1975), p. 58.

35. Turner, (1974), p. 165.

Another motive often ignored or underestimated is the desire for extrinsic reward. Nearly all seasonal house-visits involve some form of collection and the desire to share in the proceeds would provide a strong incentive to a potential performer. Helm, who in other respects adheres closely to the survivalist approach, admits that:

".... there is no doubt that raising funds is the greatest single stimulus for performances this century, and probably earlier, at least."<sup>36</sup>

He implies, however, that there must have been an earlier motive above the level of simple monetary gain, yet produces no evidence of such a motive, or reasons why raising funds in this way should be regarded as a purely modern development.

Another possible motive for the performer is the formation of "dyadic contracts"<sup>37</sup>. It is likely that in the acts of giving and receiving rewards, a dyadic social relationship may be established, or if the participants in the contract were already known to each other, the relationship might well be confirmed or strengthened. This type of motivation could be particularly relevant when it involved interaction between the performers and employers, landowners and local figures of authority such as the doctor, schoolmaster and clergyman. In this case, the visit and reward would perhaps act as a reaffirmation of the superior/subordinate relationship.

36. Helm, (1965), p.132.

37. See G.M.Foster, "The Dyadic Contract: A Model for the Social Structure of a Mexican Peasant Village", American Anthropologist, vol.LXVIII, (1961), 1173-92.

Other possible motives worthy of consideration include the pleasure of entertaining others, the enjoyment of the rapport between the performers, particularly amongst the larger, more complex visit groups, and perhaps the feeling that through continuing a tradition of this type, an important feature of community life was being preserved. These motives will be examined wherever possible, bearing in mind that such information is not plentiful, mainly because performers interviewed rarely attempted to rationalise their participation in the house-visit.

Of equal interest to performer motivation is the attitude of the audience. Without the support of people prepared to receive and reward house-visits, these customs would not be able to survive. Even where the audience is apparently hostile, this reaction may act as an oblique form of encouragement for the performers. At the very least, it is a welcome diversion, certainly preferable to simply being ignored. Typical apparently negative responses include such verbal rebuffs as "you're too early" and even the giving of money which has been heated on the fire.

What then are the motives for the community's acceptance and encouragement of the house-visit? As with the performers' motives, survivalist explanations concentrate upon the need for the dispensation of ritual benefits:

"Ritual is performed for the benefit of the community, a benefit achieved through its postulated effect on unseen forces, not through its direct effect on the audience."<sup>39</sup>

According to this school of thought, benefits which the performers were thought to bring would include agricultural productivity, as Cawte argues in his work on animal disguise customs:

39. M. Gluckman and M. Gluckman, "On Drama, and Games and Athletic Contests", in S. F. Moore (ed.) Secular Ritual, (Amsterdam, 1977), p. 237.

"It seems beyond reasonable doubt that these animals were once intended to distribute fertility."<sup>40</sup>

Other possible benefits of this type might include good fortune or luck. Such evidence as there is for this type of motive will be examined.

There are a number of other perhaps more obvious motives, some of which are also pointed out by Cawte:

"They provided a small group with an excuse to be together, and doubtless relieved the boredom of a winter's night for the visited as well as the visitors."<sup>41</sup>

The audience provides the other half of the dyadic contract. Pleasure may be gained through the giving of money, food or drink, or indeed through the playing of tricks on visitors. Community attitudes may find expression through reaction to house-visits: opinions about male and female roles, both as performer and audience, the boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour amongst adults and children, for example. As with the performers, the audiences may also have some feeling of reaffirmation of community identity through regular support for such traditional pastimes.

These motives and reactions will be examined and discussed, not only in and for themselves, but also to see how far the Newfoundland attitudes described by Halpert might be replicated in another geographical area. By investigating the motivation of those involved and the functions which the seasonal house-visit fulfils, we can understand more about the reasons for the existence and maintenance of such traditions.

It is my hope that this study will make a positive contribution to the study of English cultural tradition in general, and to seasonal customs in

40. E. C. Cawte, Ritual Animal Disguise, (Cambridge, 1978), p. 225.

41. Cawte, (1978), p. 223.

particular. Benedict has written:

"The first essential, so it seems today, is to study the living culture, to know its habits of thought and the functions of its institutions."<sup>43</sup>

It seems to me unfortunate to say the least, that so much previous research in this field has largely ignored these aspects of our tradition. At the same time that such social anthropologists as Benedict, Malinowski and Evans-Pritchard were seeking to understand the underlying social structures in so-called 'primitive' cultures, folklorists were neglecting similar opportunities in their own countries, preferring instead to pursue untraceable origins and attempt to detect elusive relics of pre-Christian beliefs. It is a principal aim of this study to try to redress the balance, and by following the excellent examples of Halpert, Abrahams and Glassie, to improve the knowledge and understanding of such seasonal customs as house-visiting, and the communities which have fostered them in South and West Yorkshire.

Before giving an account of the methodology used in this study, it is necessary to define and describe the geographical area concerned. Following a description of its physical boundaries and a discussion of the reasons for their selection, an outline of the topographical features will be presented, together with relevant information about the area's historical background and socio-economic structure.

43. Benedict, (1935), p 35.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE STUDY AREA

Once it had been decided, for the reasons already mentioned<sup>1</sup>, to concentrate on the northern side of Sheffield in general, I was faced with the task of establishing more precisely the boundaries of the study area. One possibility was to use the existing political boundaries of the former South Yorkshire Metropolitan County, or some of its then constituent boroughs. This idea had to be rejected partly because it would entail the unavoidable inclusion of complete large urban centres which would be impossible to investigate thoroughly with the resources at my disposal, and partly because I felt that the fieldwork data might seem too strongly influenced by these boundaries. It was felt important to include some major political boundaries in order to determine whether there was evidence that any relationship exists between them and local cultural traditions.

A second alternative was to delimit a suitable fieldwork area by means of a selection of Ordnance Survey grid squares. This approach had previously been used in dialect research in West Yorkshire<sup>2</sup> and seemed to offer a useful basis for eliciting data objectively on a comparable basis. In addition to allowing the inclusion of political boundaries, the use of ten-kilometre grid squares might facilitate a more systematic coverage by making any undue concentration, especially with the more accessible data-rich areas, more easily apparent.

The six squares finally selected lie mostly within the boundaries of the now defunct Metropolitan County of South Yorkshire, but include a small area of what was formerly West Yorkshire, around the small town of Denby Dale<sup>3</sup>. Together the squares form a rectangle measuring thirty kilometres from east to west and twenty kilometres from north to south, representing a total of six hundred square kilometres.

1. Chapter One, p.3.
2. C.L.Houck, "Methodology of an Urban Speech Survey", Leeds Studies in English, new series, vol. II (1968), pp.115-128 .
3. See Map, p. ii.

In addition to the general reasons for their choice already mentioned, this area has the advantage of including not only great variation in physical characteristics, from the bleak moorlands to the west, to fertile farming country to the east, but also in socio-economic conditions, including agricultural, mining and industrial communities. Choosing these squares also meant that the daunting task of covering the whole of the city of Sheffield was avoided, whilst the urban centres of Rotherham and Barnsley were included, thus enabling some comparison to be made between the smaller more rural communities and larger centres of population. This choice of area proved justified in the light of difficulties later experienced in achieving adequate coverage of the one larger conurbation, Rotherham, which was selected for more detailed study as the fieldwork progressed.

A further important reason for the choice of area was that I was living and working locally at that time. Since data collection was confined to weekends, evenings and holidays from my full-time teaching duties, the area had to be easily accessible. Impressed with the notable achievements of resident collectors in the USA, Scotland and Ireland for example, including my namesake Gavin Greig in the North-East of Scotland<sup>4</sup>, I was eager to see what could be achieved in a region which had not been regarded by previous folklorists as potentially rich in traditional culture. My local knowledge and personal contacts certainly helped in my work, especially in the Thorpe Hesley district, where I lived for several years.

As a resident collector, I was very aware of the important influence of the community's characteristic features upon many aspects of daily life.

4. For examples, see V.Randolph Ozark Superstitions (New York and London, 1964), G.Greig Folk-Song in Buchan and Folk-Song of the North-East (Hatboro, Pennsylvania, 1963) and M.J.Murphy, Tyrone Folk Quest, (Belfast 1973).

The characteristics of the study area will now be examined in some detail since in my opinion they also have a strong influence on local cultural traditions as the following section indicates.

### 1. Geomorphology

The geomorphological structure of the study area is of considerable importance, particularly in the influence it has on the patterns of settlement and industrial development, and on the extent of communication between the various villages and towns. The western boundary is marked by the gritstone moorlands, rising to a height of well over a thousand feet on Midhope, Broomhead and Bradfield moors. There are a number of well-defined cuesta features, the ridges showing a clear scarp and dip pattern, and the plateau is sharply incised by the River Don and its tributaries including the Little Don or Porter, Ewden Beck and the River Loxley. Nowhere is the significance of geomorphological features more obvious than in the area of Wharncliffe Chase. This ridge which rises to a height of almost a thousand feet forms a clear barrier to east-west communication. Between Wadsley Bridge and Wortley, a distance of approximately eight miles, there is only one road, from Grenoside to Oughtibridge, which crosses it. The impact which this feature must have had on social contacts between communities, particularly in the days before the coming of the motor-car, must have been considerable.

To the east and north of Wharncliffe Chase lies the main fieldwork area. The region has a mostly sandstone terrain which forms a series of cuestas, with shale vales following a general north-west - south-east pattern, drained by the River Dearne and its tributaries, and other minor tributaries of the Don. It is well-wooded country and, where untouched by mining and industrial development, it has great natural beauty. In the broad, alluviated valley of the Dearne, the impact of industrial development is particularly evident.

The eastern boundary is marked by a magnesian limestone cuesta, which, although it only rises to a height of just over three hundred feet, forms a distinct topographical boundary, running from Hooton Pagnell in the north to Cadeby in the south, near the confluence of the Rivers Don and Dearne. It consists of bands of coal measure shales with a thin limestone capping. The south-eastern corner of the area includes part of the Don valley, in what is known as the Don monocline, a sharply faulted valley which is bounded by well-defined sandstone ridges, to the north of the river at Grimesthorpe, Wincobank and Kimberworth, and to the south from Rotherham eastwards.

## 2. Agriculture

Despite the rapid and widespread industrialisation which took place in the later nineteenth century, farming has remained an important sector of the local economy. The impact of industrialisation was perhaps dissipated by the long history of cottage industry, nailmaking, file-cutting and cutlery production which co-existed with agriculture as the main occupations, especially in the western part of the study area. Indeed many of the craftsmen were also farmers as Hey discovered in Ecclesfield:

"... it was usual for men ... to earn their living from both nailmaking and farming."<sup>5</sup>

This system of dual occupations would have made the transition from a mainly agricultural to a more industrialised community much less traumatic. Different types of farming are to be found within the area. In the west, the moorlands are used largely for sheep grazing, with farms in the valleys and on lower slopes based on this and other stock-rearing, together with a substantial amount of dairy farming, designed to meet the demands of a large local urban market.

5. D.Hey, The Village of Ecclesfield, (Huddersfield, 1968), p 57.

The importance of dairying increases in the central section of the fieldwork area. The farming units are fairly small, commonly of no more than twenty acres in size, but further away from urban centres they can include up to a hundred acres or more. The predominance of dairying on the coalfield is in proportion to the proximity of the customer. Further away from the large towns and villages there is a higher proportion of mixed farming, mainly arable, particularly to the east of Thurnscoe.

The 1921 Census included details of the employment of the local population. The numbers of people engaged in agriculture, including both the farmer and the farmworker, varied from under one percent in Swinton Urban District to over twenty percent in Hoylandswaine. However, these percentage figures are a little misleading, and it should be added that the Census recorded only one more farmworker in Hoylandswaine, a farming village, than in highly industrial Swinton. Agriculture seems to have maintained a significant position even in the heart of the coalfield.

### 3. Industry

South Yorkshire has been an important industrial region for many hundreds of years. Monks from Kirkstead Abbey in Lincolnshire were mining and smelting iron ore in the Thorpe Hesley area in the twelfth century. Kirkstead Abbey Grange on Thorpe Common incorporates part of their buildings<sup>6</sup>. The working of metals has developed over the centuries, from cottage-based, often part-time work to full-scale factory production. As early as 1506, there is a record of nailmaking in the parish of Ecclesfield<sup>7</sup>. Ecclesfield itself became an important centre for the nailmaking trade during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the production of the iron rods used in the craft increased under the influence of the Spencer Syndicate which operated the Ironworks at Wortley, amongst others<sup>8</sup>.

6. D. Hey (1968), p. 55.

7. D. Hey (1968), p. 5.

8. C.R. Andrews, The Story of Wortley Ironworks (Nottingham, 1950).

Nailmaking was rather a seasonal occupation, abandoned for example during harvest and ploughing times. As nailmaking declined in the face of overwhelming competition from more economical factory units, its place was taken by file-cutting, a trade which continued into the twentieth century until it too was overcome by competition from factories established in Sheffield<sup>9</sup>.

Many other allied trades have developed in South Yorkshire, perhaps in part because of the long tradition which exists in the working of metal. Cutlery, shears, scissors, garden tools, saws, files and rasps and other tools are all manufactured there, some of them being produced in large numbers only in this part of the country. In 1956, Sheffield produced ninety percent of the national output of hacksaws and garden shears, eighty percent of scythes, sickles and hooks, and seventy-five percent of files and rasps<sup>10</sup>. South Yorkshire has also been one of the major producers of heavy iron and steel, particularly in the large British Steel Corporation plants in Rotherham and Sheffield as well as in a number of other smaller firms, many of which have unfortunately not survived the present economic depression.

Apart from the traditions of metal working, there were other factors which assisted the development of the metal industry in South Yorkshire. Firstly, there was the abundant supply of water power. The Don and its tributaries, particularly the Sheaf, Porter, Rivelin and Loxley, supplied an abundance of power through water wheels. One of these is still in daily use, though for the making of snuff rather than ironworking<sup>11</sup>. Also available in the area were limestone, used as a flux on the iron-making process, and iron ore and gritstone for grinding wheels.

The discovery of fireclays and ganister in conjunction with coal measures to the west led to the production of silica bricks from ganister

9. Hey, 1968, pp.59-60.

10. D.Linton (ed.), Sheffield and its Region, (Sheffield, 1956), p.279.

11. Wilson and Co., 'Bottom Mill', Sharrow, Sheffield.

which were used for furnace lining in the Oughtibridge area from about 1858 and the production of fireclay crucibles used in crucible steel manufacture.

Another factor in the industrial development of the region was the easily available sources of energy. Large supplies of timber meant that there was a considerable amount of charcoal produced, which was used in the iron-making process before the introduction of coal-fired furnaces. Charcoal burning continued in the area until the late nineteenth century. For example, the landlord of the Bridge Inn at Charltonbrook, father of Lou Wroe<sup>12</sup>, who was a member of the Grenoside Sword Dance Team, combined the trade of publican with that of charcoal burner.

With the introduction of coal as a fuel for the metal industry, the demand was established which helped to encourage one of South Yorkshire's major industries, coal-mining, in which a considerable proportion of the adult male population still find employment. Early coal-workings were mostly small, with just a few men working at each of the many pits, mainly in the south and west of the region. With the opening of the canals in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the exploitation of richer, less accessible seams became practicable<sup>13</sup>. Throughout the nineteenth century, as demand increased, pits became deeper and larger. In the last quarter of that century and the first quarter of the twentieth century, there was a considerable expansion of the industry to the east, on the concealed coalfield. Between 1875 and 1925 over thirty new shafts were sunk<sup>14</sup>, many at new pits, and greatly increased production. This had a lasting impact on local communities, which will be examined in more detail later in this chapter.

12. Tape 8.

13. B.E.Coates, 'The Geography of the Industrialisation and Urbanisation of South Yorkshire, 18th Century to 20th Century', in S.Pollard and C.Holmes (eds.) Essays in the Economic and Social History of South Yorkshire (Sheffield, 1976), p.17.

14. Sections of Strata of the Coal Measures, compiled from records of borings and sinkings by a Committee of the Midland Institute of Mining Engineers, (Sheffield, 1927).

In 1921, the Census showed that there were between sixty and seventy thousand men occupied in the mining industry in the study area<sup>15</sup>. Its position as the major source of employment was surpassed only by the metal industry, which in all its branches employed in excess of eighty thousand men<sup>16</sup>.

#### 4. Population

The growth and movement of population are of obvious significance for this study. House-visiting customs depend for their survival on the goodwill and inherited attitudes of the community in which they take place. Radical alterations in the patterns of settlement, such as high rates of migration, will obviously influence, often drastically, the nature of the local community, perhaps turning a previously popular custom into an unwelcome disturbance.

The expansion of the coalfield led to major increases in population where new pits were sunk. This period of rapid growth also included the First World War which had a considerable impact on local communities. Between 1901 and 1931, the populations of Darfield, Dodworth, Hoyland Nether, Rawmarsh, Stocksbridge and Wombwell increased by between twenty and forty percent. In comparison, over the same period, the population of Wortley Rural District fell by nearly two percent. Large though these increases were, the most significant rates of growth were in Rotherham Rural District and Cudworth which grew by 128% and 175% respectively, Bolton on Dearne which increased its population by 272% and Thurnscoe, which more than trebled in size in thirty years - a massive increase of nearly 350%.

No such increase took place in the thirty years following 1931. The greatest growth took place in Wortley Rural District which increased by seventy-two percent, perhaps due to the large council and, to a lesser extent, private suburban developments on the north side of Sheffield.

15. Census 1921.

16. Census 1921.

Other significant increases over the period were in Rotherham Rural District (sixty-three percent), Darfield (thirty-one percent), Swinton (twenty-two percent) and Stocksbridge (twenty percent).

The connection between the increases in population and the industrial development on the coalfield is confirmed by the figures for occupations of males collected in the 1921 census. Over sixty percent of working men in Bolton on Dearne, Cudworth, Darfield, Dodworth, Hoyland Nether, Thurnscoe, Wombwell and Worsborough were employed in the mining industry. The highest percentage of men employed in any other industry was in Sheffield where thirty-eight percent were working in the metal industry. Only in Wortley Rural District was there some measure of equality between miners and metal workers. Just over twenty-five percent of local working men were employed in each industry.

The population today is concentrated in the valleys of the Rivers Don and Dearne and around the three major urban centres of Sheffield, Rotherham and Barnsley. Population is at its sparsest in the western uplands, but even here there are areas of urban development emanating from valley centres, particularly around Stocksbridge and Penistone.

There are also other places where urban development seems to have encroached less, notably in those which were or are under the influence of the large estates of local gentry, including those at Wortley, Cawthorne, Wentworth, Stainborough, Hickleton and Hooton Pagnell. The influence of the families which owned these estates, for example, the Fitzwilliams of Wentworth Woodhouse, the Wortleys of Wortley, the Ward-Aldhams of Frickley, was most important and affected almost every facet of local community life. This is immediately apparent to any casual visitor to estate villages like Wentworth, Hooton Pagnell, Hooton Roberts, Wortley and Hickleton, where most of the dwellings are still the property of the estate, and the amount of new building has been strictly limited.

One excellent example of this influence is the absence of public houses in Hooton Pagnell, Clayton and the surrounding district. Mrs. Ward-Norbury, the present Lady of the Manor of Hooton Pagnell, described how when the pits were sunk in the area, the local landowners, worried about the influx of miners from other areas, were able to close down the licensed premises in their villages. This they did, and later reopened them as village clubs, with membership and entrance indirectly under their control. These clubs are still the only licensed houses in these villages.

## 5. Summary

The general picture which emerges from this brief description of the study area is one of a basically agricultural region, with a number of large private estates, which experienced industrial development, at first gradually, with part-time crafts like nailmaking and then more rapidly in the nineteenth century when the expansion of industry on the concealed coalfield had a considerable impact on the life of local communities. This change was not so significant in areas where the local prosperous families exercised their influence against it, or in the extreme west where the nature of the terrain was unsuitable for industrial development, and easily obtainable large supplies of coal were not to be found.

The area is one of considerable contrasts, in which one can pass in thirty miles from industrial, mining communities through older villages built in local sandstone, through large and busy towns like Rotherham and Barnsley, past fine examples of stately homes like Wentworth Woodhouse, across low-lying wetlands around the confluence of the Don and Dearne, and up onto heather-clad moors where grouse are shot almost within sight of the mines and factories from which many of the sportsmen derive their wealth.

### CHAPTER THREE : METHODOLOGY

When the fieldwork for this study was being planned, it was decided that a variety of collecting techniques should be used. Rather than merely comparing the relative merits of the different approaches adopted, my hope was that, in combination, they would reach the greatest possible number of potential informants. Whilst the effectiveness of making personal contacts was clear from my own experience, I knew that in order to cover a sizeable geographical area, less time-consuming techniques must be utilised. General appeals through the mass-media, for example, might succeed in contacting people with valuable information who had moved away from their original community, and who might otherwise be impossible to trace. This proved to be true in a number of cases where informants had moved away from home as young adults yet could supply detailed information concerning childhood experiences from more than fifty years ago.

Each of the methods used produced data that would otherwise probably not have been discovered. Although some techniques proved much more useful than others, each of them made some contribution and all were certainly worth trying. The detailed description of the methodology which follows is arranged in a broadly chronological manner, although many of the techniques were in fact used concurrently.

In preparing to collect the data for this study, my previous interest in local house-visiting customs was both an advantage and a disadvantage. Although my existing knowledge of both published and unpublished sources was useful, there was a risk of being over-influenced by preconceptions arising from that earlier experience. Any conclusions which might be based on such preconceptions could well prove invalid in a study area which included communities of which I had no previous knowledge. It was necessary for example to avoid preconceptions regarding the geographical distribution of the various types of house-visit.

The fact that the data collected seems to be weighted towards the communities close to where I lived at Thorpe Hesley and Chapeltown does not result from my giving them greater attention than less accessible locations. My local knowledge and personal contacts may well have made fieldwork near my home more effective, but other evidence from previously collected material, for example, suggests that my residence in a district rich in data was probably coincidental.

The first priority in fieldwork preparation was to gather as much as possible of the existing information on house-visiting customs in the area, from all available sources, notably the following:

- a) The Archives of the Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language at the University of Sheffield. A thorough examination was made of data available in the Archives and the names and addresses of individuals who had contributed information were noted in case they might be able to offer further help at a later stage;
- b) Local Newspapers. Cuttings files in the Local History Collection of the Sheffield City Libraries were systematically scanned, and a detailed study of The Rotherham and Masbrough Advertiser in its early years was also made<sup>1</sup>;
- c) Printed Sources and Manuscripts. Relevant material was noted from printed sources based on the list of known performance localities in the geographical indexes of Cawte, Helm and Peacock<sup>2</sup> and the earlier work of Joseph Needham<sup>3</sup>, as well as other printed sources discovered during visits to the libraries of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, the Folklore Society and various local history libraries in the region. Manuscript material in these libraries was also consulted, as well as diaries, account books and other personal memoranda in the Department of Local History and Archives of Sheffield City Libraries, notably those of the Fitzwilliam family of Wentworth Woodhouse.

1. 1858 - 1878.

2. Cawte, Helm and Peacock, (1967).

3. J. Needham, "The Geographical Distribution of English Ceremonial Dance Traditions", Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, vol. III, no. 1, (Dec 1936), 1 - 39.

Another aspect of the pre-fieldwork preparation was the devising of two questionnaires<sup>4</sup>. The first was intended for use in postal surveys, in schools and in interview situations where the informant's knowledge was limited. The second was designed for tape-recorded interviews, not only as a check on topics covered in the interview, but also to note down the necessary biographical information.

The first questionnaire, entitled "Survey of Visiting Customs", was intended to be as succinct and simple as possible. Difficulties experienced by schoolchildren in completing the questionnaire have, however, led me to believe that field trials with a number of alternative designs would have been advisable, perhaps resulting in a better response. The first question was designed to obtain information about both extant and obsolete customs; visits to community meeting places (i.e. public houses and clubs) as well as private houses; all relevant types of house-visit from the simplest to the most formal and complex were covered; negative information was welcomed as potentially useful in identifying patterns of distribution.

The second question was designed to elicit sufficient basic information for a general impression to be obtained of the customs in that location, without requiring detailed accounts of each house visit.

Questions three and four were meant to give informants the opportunity to contribute further details of customs and to help by giving the names and addresses of other potential informants. Basic biographical details were requested, allowing individual profiles to be built up regarding age, location and occupation of respondents. A letter was written to accompany the first questionnaire. It was again as brief as possible, avoiding terminology likely to be unknown to the recipient. It was hoped that the letter would encourage people to reply by establishing some level of rapport.

4. See Appendix 1, p. 227.

The second questionnaire<sup>5</sup> was not intended for completion by the informant but rather as a guide for the interviewer to ensure that the subject areas were covered consistently as far as possible and that some degree of form and direction could be given to the interview. The initial section recorded biographical details, the data being noted in the course of the interview from general conversation rather than direct questioning. In practice, most of the information was gathered in this way, except that concerning the respondent's religion which was usually only discovered by direct questioning. The second section covered the organisation of the house-visit, and was intended to record, in as much detail as possible, the preparation for the performers' visiting activities. The third section focussed on the visit itself, again in detail. The final section dealt with attitudes, both of the participants and the audience, to the performance.

The questions were not meant to be put directly to the informant. Interviews were intentionally open-ended, aiming for the establishment of good rapport, rather than a more formal direct-questioning approach. Occasionally it was found that those interviewed expected this latter approach but even where this was the case, questions were not put in a formal manner. Wherever possible, people were encouraged to talk freely so that conversation led on naturally to the next most suitable question, rather than the interviewer insisting on a set sequence of responses.

Some of the questions proved to be unsuitable in direct questioning. For example, one question asks:

"Did the performers attach any social or cultural significance to the visit?"

5. The preparation of this questionnaire was greatly assisted by G. Smith, P. S. Smith and J. D. A. Widdowson, Traditional Drama SLF Research Guide No. 1 (Sheffield, 1972).

The fieldwork evidence supported the impression that neither performer nor audience attempted to rationalise their participation in the custom. Questions like this, posed in a direct way, would firstly not be understood and secondly would meet with a poor response because of the difficulty many informants would have had in discussing the more abstract aspects of the tradition, such as participant attitudes and motivation.

The first "Survey of Visiting Customs" questionnaire was distributed in two ways: by post to a sample of public houses throughout the area, and through colleagues in other schools who agreed to distribute them to their classes. These were either completed at school, or taken home for relatives, friends and neighbours. The postal survey involved a sample of ninety-one public houses, each in a separate village, or in a particular community within the larger urban centres of Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield. The questionnaire was accompanied by an explanatory letter and a stamped addressed envelope to facilitate its return. The response was very disappointing. Only seven replies were received, mainly from parts of the study area in which I had already collected data. Of those seven, only four gave any positive information.

The poor results of this survey, with ever-increasing postal charges in mind, led me to abandon similar surveys planned for Working Men's Clubs, local newspaper correspondents and branches of groups like the Women's Institute, the Townswomen's Guild and the Workers' Educational Association. With hindsight, some of these groups would probably have produced more positive results than the publicans, but since the other collecting techniques were proving much more successful, it was felt that further experiments with this method were not justified.

The schools survey was much more encouraging. With the assistance of colleagues in the teaching profession, it was possible to reach quite a large number of children of school age who gave important information on the contemporary survival and distribution of house-visiting customs. With the co-operation of headteachers and local education authorities, and if I had had the time and opportunity to visit schools to administer the questionnaire in person, much more data could have been gathered using this technique.

Appeals through local newspapers for information on folklore are a well-established technique. The works of Randolph<sup>6</sup> and Korson<sup>7</sup> in the USA and Greig<sup>8</sup> in Scotland, illustrate the effectiveness of this method of data collection. A local precedent exists in Arnold Freeman of the Sheffield Young Men's Christian Association. He appealed for information on mumming customs through the Sheffield Daily Telegraph in January 1920.<sup>9</sup> The replies, now in the Archives Division of Sheffield City Libraries,<sup>10</sup> contain much valuable information.

My own first appeal for information was in December 1972, before the start of the present study and was very limited in extent. In December 1974, all the offices of the newspapers published in the area were contacted,<sup>11</sup> and in December 1975, the appeal was repeated in these and several other publications.<sup>12</sup> After the first appeal, eleven letters were received, and after the second appeal, a further seven. Some of the replies were also printed in the newspapers.

6. Randolph, (1964).
7. G.Korson, Minstrels of the Mine Patch, (Hatboro, Pennsylvania, 1964).
8. Greig, (1963).
9. Op.cit, (9.1.20), p.6g.
10. The Carpenter Collection, MS.273 (1-25).
11. The Star, Morning Telegraph, Barnsley Chronicle, Barnsley Independent, South Yorkshire and Rotherham Advertiser, South Yorkshire Times, Doncaster Evening Post.
12. As above, plus Yorkshire Post, Dalesman and Yorkshire Life.

Not all the letters contained relevant information, and some referred to customs observed in other parts of the country. Letters were either acknowledged, further information was requested, or an interview arranged. The appeal for information inspired one man to drive some distance to my home, only to find that I was not there. Fortunately, I later interviewed him and he made a valuable contribution to the study.

One problem highlighted by the results of press appeals concerned the treatment of material gathered from outside the designated area. It was decided that no specific attempts be made to collect such data but, if useful information was received, it seemed best to take note of it. This pre-fieldwork preparation continued even after the fieldwork proper began. The part-time nature of this study had unfortunately never allowed the opportunity for complete concentration on any one of its many aspects. For example, the sheer volume of local history material which could yield relevant information would require many years' full-time study and it was necessary to decide whether such research was of greater importance than the collection of first-hand information direct from oral sources. The latter course seemed to be the obvious choice and so at the earliest opportunity the main fieldwork was begun.

Fieldwork data was recorded in notebooks, or wherever possible, on tape. Tape-recordings were made using a portable reel-to-reel recorder at a speed of 3.75 ips. Occasional problems were experienced with battery failure during interviews which unfortunately resulted in speed fluctuation. However, the aim was not so much to produce high quality recordings, but rather to achieve a satisfactory basic standard, adequate for subsequent transcription.

Notebooks were used mainly during initial contact visits. These collecting trips were intended to make as many personal contacts as possible

in the study area, to elicit brief details of local house-visiting customs, and to identify those people who could offer more detailed information. Interviews were arranged with anyone able and willing to offer assistance. Such assistance was almost invariably given by the many people approached.

These time-consuming initial contact visits were limited necessarily to school holidays, weekends and occasional evenings. The longer field-trips were planned in advance, selecting suitable routes which included a number of locations not previously explored. Shorter visits were made in any available spare time. It has unfortunately not proved possible to investigate all the communities in the fieldwork area, but over fifty percent of them were visited, as shown in the table below.

Date	Locations Visited During Fieldwork
22.7.74	Hemingfield, Elsecar, Hoyland, Hoyland Common
15.8.74	Wortley, Thurgoland, Deepcar, Bolsterstone
17.8.74	Thurlstone, Ingbirchworth, Cawthorne
11.4.75	Wentworth
26.5.75	Ecclesfield
18.8.75	Great Houghton, Cudworth, Grimethorpe
21.8.75	Wombwell, Hooton Pagnell, Clayton, Harley
22.8.75	Worrall
14.10.75	Wickersley, Whiston
20.10.75	Upper Denby, Lower Cumberworth
22.10.75	Adwick-on-Deerne, Kilnhurst, Hooton Roberts
23.10.75	Kexbrough, Darton, Barnsley
16.11.75	Harley, Wentworth
7.1.76	Wadsley
14.2.76	Oughtibridge
16.2.76	Rawmarsh, Swinton, Wath-on-Deerne, Hemingfield
20.4.76	Oughtibridge, High Bradfield, Wadsley, Grenoside
4.4.77	Wortley, Hoylandswaine
13.4.77	Thrybergh, Ravenfield, Barnburgh
21.10.77	Worsborough

It is significant that very few complete texts or songs were collected during the course of initial contact visits. However, in many cases, the only available information on the customs of a community was gathered in this way.

The virtue of the personal visit is that response is far less dependent on the co-operation of the informant. It takes much less effort to talk, or answer questions orally, in a pub bar, on a park bench, or at home, than it does to reply to a letter in a newspaper, or to fill in and return a questionnaire received through the post.

The disadvantages of personal visits include the relatively long time involved, often with no tangible results, and the occasional lack of co-operation from potential informants. At times the unavailability through illness or absence of suggested informants created problems, for instance when a return visit without some possibility of success was not always feasible. It was also more difficult to initiate personal contacts when public houses, shops and post offices, which proved to be the most fruitful sources of contacts, were not open for business. When they were closed, contacts were sometimes made through the local vicar or minister or simply through asking people met casually in the community, particularly the elderly men who habitually sit together on public benches. Other retired men and women who lived in old people's homes and flats were contacted when they gathered together in communal lounges and day-centres.

On arriving in a community I made contact with any available individual who was asked firstly for any relevant information on house-visits in the area, and secondly for the names of any possible sources of such information. Then, those people, whose names were put forward, were contacted if possible. If the person asked seemed able to offer sufficient details to merit more than brief questioning, an interview was suggested, usually within the following two weeks, which allowed time for the recalling of as much information as possible. On a few occasions the individual was interviewed straight away either at his/her suggestion, or because of the need to avoid making unnecessary journeys to the more distant locations.

The most detailed information gathered was that obtained during the course of the twenty-nine tape-recorded interviews. These took place with the informants' permission - recordings being made only with full knowledge and consent. Several otherwise helpful informants refused to be tape-recorded, and gave a variety of reasons for their refusal, most of them implying that being tape-recorded made them self-conscious and uneasy. One sixty year old lady in Upper Denby, with a fine accent characteristic of her area, resisted all my entreaties, maintaining that her accent was too "broad" to be recorded. Her wishes were, with regret, respected.

Contact was made with potential interviewees by one of three methods. By far the most important of these were the initial contact visits, as a result of which seventy percent of the interviews took place. Twenty percent of the interviews were arranged following appeals for information through the press. In some cases, the informants themselves suggested meetings, but on most occasions, interviews took place at my request. The majority of correspondents were interviewed, the exceptions being those who lived too far away, or who had little information to offer, or who were, as in two cases, impossible to locate.

Some contacts were made through colleagues and neighbours, forming about ten percent of the total. If the area chosen for study had been smaller, and closer to Sheffield and Rotherham, where I lived and worked during the fieldwork phase of the study, this proportion would naturally have been greater.

Although it was intended that interviews should take place in all parts of the area, with a variety of age groups and both sexes, this did not prove to be practicable. In some districts where little information was noted during initial contact visits, return visits and interviews did not seem justifiable. The decline in traditional house-visiting customs made it inevitable that most of the informants were elderly.

It was also inevitable that the majority of those interviewed were men since male performers predominate in these customs. They are in general the chief tradition-bearers of this type of lore, and their generation was far more active in house-visiting than younger men or women. When the names of potential informants were suggested, they were usually those of elderly men in the community. Even so, every opportunity was taken to interview women since they not only possessed valuable information about such house-visits as wassailing in which they participated, but also provided valuable insights into male-dominated customs from a female viewpoint.

After the interviews were completed, the resulting twenty-one tapes were played through, and selected extracts from the conversations were transcribed onto index cards. Despite the fact that many of the interviews were rich in dialect forms, it was decided that a full phonetic transcription was unnecessary for the purposes of this study. However, where dialect pronunciation is particularly strong this is shown by a transcription of the sounds using normal orthography. Thus, for example, the word "my" is often pronounced, and is here transcribed, as "mi", the vowel being short as in Standard English "pit". Information recorded in notebooks and on questionnaires was also transferred onto cards for analysis. Over 350 large index cards were used to record the fieldwork data. This includes more than seventy rhymes, songs and dramatic dialogue used in house-visiting.

The method used for transcribing the tunes recorded was based upon Abrahams and Foss<sup>13</sup>, and Nettl<sup>14</sup>. All tunes were transposed so that their final tones fall on *g*, in order to facilitate comparison, and to avoid the use of excessive ledger lines.

13. R.D. Abrahams and G. Foss, Anglo-American Folksong Style (New Jersey, 1968), pp. 206-209.
14. B. Nettl, Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology, (London, 1964) pp. 98-130.

The tempo is indicated by the metronome marking at the beginning, and the original pitch and range are shown at the end. Where the tune adheres to a metrical pattern, metre signatures are used. Where there are slight variations, the basic metre is given in parentheses. The complete collection of texts and tunes recorded during the fieldwork is included in this study. They have been grouped according to the simple/complex categorisation and placed at the end of the relevant chapter.

In addition to the forms of data already referred to, some photographic evidence was also obtained.<sup>15</sup> Copies were discovered of remarkable photographs, taken before the Second World War, of the Old Horse party from Elsecar, one of which shows the group during street collections, and the other the impressive full group taken on the occasion of a special performance at Barnsley Workhouse. During the fieldwork, photographs were taken of the Old Horse costume which was located at the Prospect Tavern in Hoyland, and which is now looked after by a County Councillor and his wife in Elsecar. Other photographs were taken of Caking performers in Stocksbridge, of two Barnburgh Old Tup costumes, and of the horse's skull recovered in the early years of the century from Hooton Pagnell village pond.

In summary the fieldwork methodology used in this study was devised with the intention of eliciting data in a thorough, systematic manner, making use of a wide variety of collecting techniques. It has been interesting to discover their relative merits and disadvantages, particularly the confirmation of the importance of personal contact through social networks.

15. See photographs nos. 1 - 9, pp. 239 - 245.

Even the problems and failures experienced have proved to be valuable and worthwhile learning experiences, revealing potential pitfalls both for myself and any others who might attempt a similar investigation.

The fieldwork data which follows, presents and examines each type of house-visit separately. The visits are grouped according to the classification described in the introduction. Firstly the simple visits will be discussed, followed by the complex, along with the characteristic features of each. Influences upon their development will be examined, and their functions within study area communities will also be discussed.

## CHAPTER FOUR : THE SIMPLE VISIT

The features of the simple visit which distinguish it from the complex type have already been outlined in the introduction. The essential difference is that in the simple visit there is little or no interaction between performers. Thus no specific number of people is required and the organisation and preparation involved are minimal. It is probably this adaptability and informality which have been the greatest single factor in ensuring the survival of such visits as those described in this chapter.

The majority of seasonal house-visits, as noted earlier<sup>1</sup>, take place in the winter months, with by far the largest concentration occurring during the period between Christmas and New Year. I have chosen to discuss the individual visits in their seasonal chronological order, but this is not meant to suggest that the time of year of the performance is dominated by the agricultural calendar, nor that there is any demonstrable connection between house-visits and ritual practices of a pre-Christian nature which might be thought to indicate a community's close links with the soil. The seasonal distribution of the visits seems to be affected by a number of factors, by a series of different "seasonal cycles" of which the agricultural cycle is only one. These include the Church's festivals, public holidays, and special dates like New Year which are of particular significance in the calendar.

The amount of information which can be given about each type of visit varies considerably. Some customs, like "Letting in the New Year" and "Wassailing" have been very common throughout the area, and thus much more information about them is available than about those with more limited popularity and geographical spread.

1. Chapter 1, p.10.

The amount of available data varies, not least because some customs continue to be practised, or were until recently, whereas others died out many years ago. Further, it is usually the case that the complex visits are remembered by local people in more detail and regarded as more significant than the simple ones. Carol singing, for example, is still very widely performed throughout the area, yet few detailed descriptions of what takes place have been recorded.

In the following discussion, firstly the nature of the performance and the variations between performances will be discussed. Secondly, the organisation of the performers, their attitudes and those of their audiences towards the visit will be examined. Thirdly some account will be given of the history and distribution of the custom in the area.

#### 1. Letting in the New Year

"Letting in the New Year" and associated customs are for many people strongly linked with the Scottish traditions of Hogmanay, which reputedly are of more significance to the community in Scotland than is the Christmas festival. However, the tradition of "Letting in the New Year" was formerly widespread throughout southern Yorkshire, and is still frequently performed. The form which the visit took varied considerably, the essential features being that children, usually boys, went to houses in the community after midnight on New Years Eve, crossing the threshold of the house and saying the local variant of the rhyme associated with the custom. The most extensive version of this rhyme which I have collected comes from the Pitsmoor/Grimesthorpe area of Sheffield:

Happy New Year, Happy New Year,  
 Plenty of money and nothing to fear  
 Horse and a gig and a good fat pig,  
 To serve you all next year.  
 An apple, a pear, a plum or a cherry  
 A sup of good ale to make a man merry.  
 God bless the master of this house,  
 Likewise the mistress too  
 And all the little children  
 That round the table go  
 Hole in mi stocking, hole in mi shoe  
 Please can you spare me a copper or two?  
 If you haven't got a penny a ha'penny will do  
 If you haven't a ha'penny, God bless you!<sup>2</sup>

In this version, sections from songs associated with other house-visiting customs can be recognised.<sup>3</sup>

A more common version of this rhyme comes from Kimberworth:

Happy New Year!  
 Happy New Year!  
 A pocket full of money  
 And a cellar full of beer,  
 A horse and a gig  
 And a good fat pig  
 To last you all next year.<sup>4</sup>

This was the rhyme which was remembered by older informants. Clearly in more recent years some of the things wished for in the rhyme have become increasingly anachronistic. The influence of changing social conditions on the house-visit is well illustrated by the decline in the use of this particular version.

Another version from Wadsley shows the influence of the Temperance movements, the "Little White Ribboners", and "The Band of Hope":

Happy New Year, Happy New Year,  
 I'm teetotal, I don't like beer.  
 A bit of spice loaf, a bit of bread and cheese,  
 A glass of cold water and give what you please.<sup>5</sup>

2. Text SV 4, Tape 18.      3. Eg. L.E. Broadwood and J.A. Fuller Maitland, English County Songs (London nd.), "The Wassail Bough", (p.14) and "The Souling Song", (p.30).
4. Text SV 2, Letter 11.      5. Text SVD 9, Notebook 2, 7/1/76, p.82b.

Children in the villages and towns of the Dearne Valley area, Wombwell, Thurnscoe, Bolton and Mexborough used to sing the song "The Miner's Dream of Home" at house doors.

In Rawmarsh, one informant gave this simple speech:

"Old Year out, New Year in. Please will you give me a New Year's gift."<sup>6</sup>

At the "Ring O'Bells" in Swinton, the landlord reported being visited by children using the rhyme:

"Old Year out, New Year in, Please will you let the Dicky Bird in."<sup>7</sup>

This term "Dicky Bird", used for the New Year visitor is reminiscent of the name "Lucky Bird" which Addy refers to in connection with "letting in" Christmas as well as New Year in the East Riding of Yorkshire:

"At the dawn of Christmas Day the head of the family let in a boy called the "lucky bird", who brought a sprig of evergreens ..... On New Year's Day the "lucky bird" came again and received the usual present."<sup>8</sup>

Addy goes on to record that the New Year visitor should have black hair. This belief is still widely remembered throughout the area, for example, in Rawmarsh:

"Now for the New Year they used to say, 'I want somebody that's dark.' If you'd got dark hair and dark brown eyes, or black hair, then you were very popular and more people'd ask you to come."<sup>9</sup>

The same belief was expressed by an informant from Hemingfield:

"..... you had to have black hair. Everybody with black hair they were preferable to them with light hair."<sup>10</sup>

6. Text SVA 3, Notebook 2, 16/2/76, p.91.
7. Text SVA 5, Tape 14.
8. S.O.Addy, Household Tales and Traditional Remains, (London and Sheffield, 1895) pp.105-106.
9. Tape 14.
10. Tape 17.

The only exception to this specification was recorded from a man from the Pitsmoor area of Sheffield:

"Dark hair, red hair; red hair was best."<sup>11</sup>

Addy mentions red hair as being specifically undesirable and unlucky<sup>12</sup>, as did one person from Lower Cumberworth:

"There were people who didn't accept them that were ginger and I was right ginger so I couldn't go. They always used to say 'Who is it?' and then 'Oh, no, we don't want you', if I went."<sup>13</sup>

This preference is an example of the association of blackness with good luck, as is also the case with cats and chimney sweeps. Further, it may perhaps have led to the commonly reported custom of blacking faces, with soot or burnt cork before going to let the New Year in. Of the thirty-nine reports of this type of visit, only four do not specifically mention black faces, and sixteen mention that this was a particular feature. A retired teacher from Rawmarsh ventured the opinion that blacking faces was an alternative for having black hair.<sup>14</sup>

In many communities in the area the visitor would carry a piece of coal, or in some cases coal and firewood, as described in a letter received from Kimberworth:

"The mummers came in - very politely doffed their caps, stepped out of their clogs and ..... dropped a piece of coal from the little bag they had carried onto our fire to make sure ..... that we had enough coal to last us the bleak winter."<sup>15</sup>

This is a clear indication of the superstition that is attached to New Year visiting, and, as Mr. Tonks from Rawmarsh pointed out, there was no more obvious substance, especially in this area, to associate with good luck, than coal:

11. Tape 18.
12. Addy, (1895), p 106.
13. Tape 13.
14. Tape 14.
15. Letter 11.

"Sometimes they used to like you to have a piece of coal and put it on the fire or they'd have one ready for you to put on the fire. I expect this was symbolic that while ever there was a ..... because a fire's a great thing isn't it? Because remember we not only used to get warmth from it, we got light and nearly all the water was boiled on the fire and all the cooking was done on the Yorkshire range and you made toast etc."16

In most cases where the carrying of coal is mentioned, the visitor would put the coal on the fire, and sometimes poke the fire as well, which would cause it to flare up. This might be taken as a reinforcement of the idea of ensuring warmth through the winter. The visitor would then be rewarded with money. The amount would obviously vary according to the generosity and the financial circumstances of the householder, but usually it would only be one or two pennies as at Kimberworth:

"We rewarded them with one or two bright new pennies."17

The same amount was mentioned in Sheffield:

"You'd get your pennies, tuppences and sixpences if you were lucky."18

Some people would be more generous, and this led to a certain amount of competition amongst children, as Les Hartley of Ecclesfield remembered:

"If I knew a place where I could get a shilling I'd be there first and waiting and if anyone else came up we'd been there for half an hour before twelve o'clock ready for clock to strike twelve. When one sets off at that strike we used to hear 'em some'd be out and about thirty or forty yards away ..... all setting off at once and all racing to beat somebody else to t'next best house where tha could get a bob or two more ..... you didn't get a second chance i'them days. If tha wa'n't there first tha'd had it."19

A number of informants mentioned rewards that were not so welcome, as in Greasborough:

"And you'd got to watch for sometimes if there were a bit of space, like below the door and they'd throw, shove a red hot penny out. So we used to have a cap ready and put the warm coppers into the hat."20

- 16. Tape 14.
- 17. Letter 11.
- 18. Tape 16.
- 19. Tape 10.
- 20. Tape 1.

Perhaps the householders who attempted this trick did not welcome these visits, but the frequent occurrence of this particular ruse in the collected data suggests that it may have been an element of the tradition in itself. Occasionally visitors would also be rewarded with food, usually mince pies or fruit cake.

Addy mentions that the person letting in the New Year "usually walks in at the front door and goes out at the back door"<sup>21</sup>. Only one reference to this aspect of the custom has been collected in the course of this study, from Kimberworth:

"They rushed through the house to the back door to bring good luck to the next house."<sup>22</sup>

Most people in the study area would make regular use of only one door in the house, usually the back door, and indeed many front doors are impossible to open through lack of use. It could be that the unusual behaviour of the luck-bringers in using both doors - considered unlucky by many people at any other time of year - was meant to emphasise the difference between this and normal social visiting, and hence to give more significance to the "luck-visit".

Because of the simple nature of the visit, it would require little or no prior organisation or rehearsal, and no formal team would be necessary, apart from the normal gangs into which children form themselves at the age when they would go visiting, that is from about nine to twelve years of age. The signal for the visits to begin would usually be the sound of the church bells or chimes at midnight, or the siren or buzzer at the local pit, which in some villages would be also sounded to herald the New Year. All the

21. Addy, (1895), p.107.

22. Letter 11.

visits would take place by one a.m. at the latest and by that time many would-be visitors would be met with the usual cry of "too late!"

The incidence of New Year visiting is widespread throughout the area, even in places where no other custom has been recorded in this survey except the ubiquitous carol-singing. There may however be a trend away from visiting other people's houses in favour of each family letting in its own New Year, perhaps because of the increasing fragmentation of communities in redevelopment schemes and into large anonymous housing estates. Even so the tradition of the man of the house wearing some form of disguise, however minimal, letting in the New Year and temporarily assuming the role of the stranger-visitor is a well established tradition in this as in other parts of the North. Although this is an increasingly rare occurrence, on New Year's Eve 1976 at my own home in Burncross, Chapeltown, we received a visit from two young girls, aged about eight and ten years who simply wished us a "Happy New Year" and stood waiting for a reward.

Such children are the more recent custodians of a tradition difficult to date. The New Year house-visit was certainly known in the area almost a century ago,<sup>23</sup> and, some thirty years previously, Harland and Wilkinson published an account of a very similar custom on the other side of the Pennines<sup>24</sup>. It seems probable that the custom is much older, but there are few printed references to what must have seemed to early folklorists and antiquarians an event of much less significance than more spectacular and unusual house-visits. It certainly attracted much less attention than the next house-visit in the calendar which took place in parts of the study area on Plough Monday.

23. Addy (1895), p.107.

24. J.Harland and T.T.Wilkinson, Lancashire Folklore, (London, 1867), pp.214-215.

## 2. Plough Bullocks

Unlike customs such as Letting in the New Year which have been very common throughout the area, the visit of the "Plough Bullocks" is not widely remembered, and did not survive after the largely agricultural nature of the community became more and more influenced by the various industries which flourished during the nineteenth century. The Plough Bullocks were usually young farm workers, aged eighteen or nineteen years, apprentice ploughmen who on Plough Monday would take a plough and drag it from house to house through the village, asking for money. If a reward was not forthcoming, then the ploughmen sometimes felt it their right to show their displeasure by ploughing up part of the garden. This was the case with groups that used to go around Barnburgh and Harlington in the years up to, and even after, the Second World War. However, these groups when they "stuck plough in"<sup>25</sup> would not do a lot of permanent damage:

"We didn't go as far as putting it through anybody's bloody rose bushes, but down t'side o' a path."<sup>26</sup>

When asked whether a whole furrow would be turned over, Mr Bullock answered:

"Well, a bit, just cut a bit on t'edge, just to show them we'd been."<sup>27</sup>

This last comment is an interesting one, expressing as it does the feeling of power which these young men felt they had, discovering as they were in their everyday ploughing work the importance of the ploughman to a farming-based community.

Several nineteenth century descriptions of similar customs from other parts of the country<sup>28</sup> mention that the ploughmen would shout "Largess" when they received their reward. The Barnburgh groups

25. Tape 21.

26. Tape 21.

27. Tape 21.

28. See, for example, J. Brand, Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain, (London, 1853), p.506.

did not do this, but they had a shout of their own when refused money, of "lunger", perhaps appealing to the better nature of the householder to consider their plight, or perhaps as a threat of what might result from the hostility of the Plough Bullocks.

The team would make their visits on the evening of Plough Monday, which according to Mr Bullock was the nearest Monday to January 12th, but more usually expressed as the first Monday after Twelfth Night, January 6th. They would get an old plough from the cartshed, "..... some that the mould board had worn bad, or the slipe."<sup>29</sup> and drag the plough around the village, knocking on doors, saying, "Can you remember the plough? Plough Monday."<sup>30</sup> He described how he was recruited with other young boys to drag the plough, while the young ploughmen collected the money. This was only a penny, or twopence at most, all that could be expected in the period just after Christmas. He described how they were rewarded for their efforts with the plough:

"Buy us three bloody oranges for pulling t'plough. Then they'd share up. But we got wise to it."<sup>31</sup>

The younger boys then started to use their initiative:

"Used to run off to t'house before them, 'cause it were dark, ..... and somebody'd follow up then 'Ah, they've just been'. Too late then."<sup>32</sup>

Apart from causing damage with the plough, the young men would sometimes show their disapproval in other ways, for example, at the house of a local school-mistress:

"There was a big old tub ..... and it stood up on a flag and he pushed the bugger clean over, and down into t'house it went."<sup>33</sup>

Needless to say, those involved who were still at school, whether or not personally responsible, suffered punishment for the deed.

29. Tape 21.

30. Tape 21.

31. Tape 21.

32. Tape 21.

33. Tape 21.

A team of Plough Bullocks (pronounced locally as "Ploo Bullocks") were part of the Ecclesfield Hospital Parade, which took place in June, in aid of the local hospital. They toured most of the large parish, and parts of Sheffield, calling at public houses on the way, and collecting as they went:

"They used to have a man to drive them with a balloon on a stick, see. Used to just keep dropping it on, and they used to be pulling a plough all the way. They used to go round Sheffield with it, you know!"<sup>34</sup>

According to Bob Hartley of Ecclesfield, they used to carry a new pail with them which the landlord of each pub would fill with beer for them. Its consumption must have rather hampered their progress on the return journey. Like many other groups, the Ecclesfield Plough Bullocks had their headquarters at a local public house, in this case the Ball Inn.

Another team of Plough Bullocks was mentioned by Albert Macmillan of Greasborough:

"Young ploughmen, the apprentices you know, they used to get this old plough and drag it from pub to pub and get some beer at each pub. Then they used to take it to Rawmarsh, take it up the old sough<sup>35</sup>." <sup>36</sup>

As with the Ecclesfield team, no mention was made of threats or damage in connection with the Plough Monday visit:

"All friendly, it were a friendly night. Colliers, it were mixed with colliers. The colliers would perhaps give them a hand to pull the plough ..... for a drink."<sup>37</sup>

None of the three teams decorated the plough, contrary to some early accounts, for example, one by Tomlin which describes a team from Carlton which used to visit Barnsley between 1844 and 1854<sup>38</sup>. Nor was any special costume worn at Greasborough or Barnburgh. The Ecclesfield team were thought to have worn farming smocks. This rather anachronistic type of costume and the unusual season of the performance suggests that this might have been a modern revival of a lapsed tradition.

34. Tape 10.

35. Drainage Channel.

36. Tape 1.

37. Tape 1.

38. A.R. Tomlin, Local Folklore, (Barnsley n.d.), p.9.

The Plough Bullocks' visit, however, is well attested historically in the area. The fascinating, detailed Household Accounts<sup>39</sup> of Wentworth Woodhouse record the following payments made to local teams over two hundred years ago:

Jan 7th 1766 Plow Bullocks 5-0  
Dec 31st 1771 Wentworth Plough Bullocks 1-1-0 Scholes Plough Bullocks 5-0  
Jan 1st 1780 Sundry Plow Bullocks, a Donation by order of Lord Rockingham  
£3-13-6  
Jan 7th 1783 Gave the Wentworth Plow Bullocks ..... 10/6

Two interesting facts emerge from this data. Firstly the dates recorded were not restricted to Plough Monday, and secondly Lord Rockingham gave a guinea to the Wentworth team, giving his home village people considerably more than those from nearby Scholes who only received five shillings. Early records also exist of payments made by the Osborne family of Ravenfield<sup>40</sup> to the following teams:

Jan 7th 1777 gave 6 boys which came from Hooton with a Plow 1-0  
" " gave Plow Bullocks from Greasbrough 2-0  
" gave Ravenfield Plow Bullocks 2-6

Here again we see a larger donation given to the local team.

Addy also refers to Plough (or Plew) Bullocks, one of whom, as in the Ecclesfield team "..... has a bladder fastened to the end of a whip."<sup>41</sup> In addition this "driver" was "very gaudily dressed in women's clothes."<sup>42</sup>

It is remarkable that this type of house-visit, which, it has been suggested, originated in a collection for the maintenance of "ploughmen's lights", which were burned in village churches<sup>43</sup>, survived in at least one community, Barnburgh, well into the present century.

The advent of mechanisation, tractor ploughing and major reductions in the size of agricultural workforce all contributed to its eventual demise.

39. Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments A 3, 5, 20, 22, Archives Division, Sheffield City Libraries.

40. Osborne Records, O R 12, Archives Division, Sheffield City Libraries.

41. S.O. Addy, A Glossary of Words used in the Neighbourhood of Sheffield, (London, 1888), p.177.

42. Ibid. 43. Ditchfield, (1901), p.48.

It ceased to exist because it lost its relevance to the contemporary situation, in the same way as the next house-visit in the year, Collop Monday, vanished with the days when country people still commonly kept a pig at the bottom of the garden.

### 3. Collop Monday

On Collop Monday, the day before Shrove Tuesday, children would go round the houses in rural communities, particularly farmhouses and, as Mr Booth, an elderly resident from Lower Cumberworth recalled:

"Knock at the door and say 'Pray, dame a collop' and they'd give you a rasher of bacon. They used to have a flich of bacon hanging up and they cut it off that."<sup>44</sup>

The custom, as far as can be discovered, has not taken place for at least fifty years and very few informants remembered it, and those only in the extreme North-West of the area around Denby Dale.

This district is more closely linked with the Huddersfield area than Sheffield and it could be that the Collop Monday visit was more prevalent in that area. Jagger gives a brief description of the custom from Honley, near Huddersfield.<sup>45</sup> It was also known in Derbyshire. Addy writes that:

"On Collop Monday, which is the day before Shrove Tuesday, poor people in Derbyshire used to go to their richer neighbours to beg a collop of bacon to make fat for frying pancakes on the following day."<sup>46</sup>

Little further information from the area is available concerning this particular house-visit. It seems to have declined, not only because of the decrease in pig-keeping and in the supply of relatively cheap meat that resulted, but also through the dwindling influence of the religious observance of Lent on the community. Another such period, which also had its associated visiting custom is Whitsun, which was formerly a most important date in the year.

44. Tape 13.

45. M.A. Jagger, The History of Honley, (Honley, 1914), p.129.

46. Addy, (1895), p.114.

#### 4. Whitsun

Fifty years ago in this area, Whitsun was a great occasion, especially for the considerable portion of the community who at that time were active members of local churches and chapels. It was a time of processions, and of massed "Whit Sings" in which many churches or chapels congregated, often in local parks, to sing together. It was also the traditional occasion when children in particular were given a complete set of new clothes. Many of those interviewed have commented that however poor the family might be, it was a matter of personal pride that a new set of clothes would be bought for the children. Usually these new clothes would be worn on Sundays and special occasions, and last year's clothes would then become second-best and so on, until completely worn out. It was customary to put a halfpenny or a penny in the pocket of the new outfit, as was also done when a gift was made of a purse or wallet, with the wish that the recipient should never be without money. In Sheffield and Rotherham this aspect of the tradition developed into a house-visiting custom. Children would visit neighbours, relatives and friends for the clothes to be admired and to ask for a penny or a halfpenny to put in the pocket of the new clothes.

Whitsuntide house-visiting has been the subject of a study by Georgina Smith<sup>47</sup>. Her discoveries are confirmed by the information gathered during my own fieldwork. One aspect of this custom on which she comments is that, more than in any others described, visits were strictly limited, not only to a specific geographical area but also to relatives, and friends and neighbours. With the possible exception of the very poorest children the visitors would only go to houses where they would be known. Outside this immediate social circle, they would be unlikely to receive any money from householders.

Apart from this Whitsuntide example, the fieldwork revealed no other traditional house-visit which took place during the Summer months.

47. G. Smith, "Whitsuntide House Visitation", Lore and Language, [vol 1] no. 3, (Aug 1970), p.15.

It therefore seems reasonably certain that, as is the case elsewhere in the country, no further visiting customs took place before the end of October, when children in communities on the fringes of the moorland to the west took part in 'caking', a tradition which still continues to a certain extent.

## 5. Caking

The first house-visit to take place after the summer and the harvest was, and in parts of the area still is, the custom of Caking, or Kay-Kaying as it is currently known in Stocksbridge. On Halloween, the 31st October, or more commonly November 1st, and for the next two or three nights, children go from door to door, usually in disguise, saying or singing a verse and asking for money, ostensibly to be spent on fireworks for Bonfire Night. The words of the verse sometimes show strong similarities with verses used at Christmas and New Year<sup>48</sup>, as in this example from Stocksbridge:

"Kay Kay Kay, Kay Kay Kay  
Hole in my stocking, hole in my shoe,  
Please can you spare me a copper or two?  
If you haven't got a penny a ha'penny will do,  
If you haven't got a ha'penny, God bless you."<sup>49</sup>

However, the collected material includes several other verses which seem to be quite localised, and were used only at this time of year. In Bradfield, the rhyme used was far from being supplicatory:

"A cake, a cake or coil for bonfire oil  
If you don't give us either coil or tin,  
We shall get a stick and break your door in."<sup>50</sup>

The rhyme once used in the Dore area on the south-west side of Sheffield is interesting in that it makes more direct reference to the cake-making aspect of the custom from which it appears to originate:

48. See, for example Texts SVA4, SVD2, SVD7.

49. Text SVB5, Tape 20.

50. Text SVB4, Tape 19.

"Cakey cakey cake,  
Mi muther's forgot to bake,  
Mi father's purrin' currants in  
To keep t'owd lass agate."<sup>51</sup>

Disguise has been a most important element in this particular house-visit. If householders were able to recognise their visitors, then they did not have to give them any money<sup>52</sup>. In some cases this "rule" was not strictly adhered to and in communities where this custom still takes place, the tendency seems to be towards less and less disguising, as in Bradfield:

"Children still do it, but only the young ones now. I pretend not to know who they are, but I know."<sup>53</sup>

The same informant recalled what disguises were formerly employed:

"We used to get dressed up in all sorts o' things, looked like scare-crows, black our faces ..... them as hadn't got any face covering ..... you could buy face masks in them days here ..... you'd to get your Dad's old trousers or somebody else's old skirts, dress up."<sup>54</sup>

One of the commonest forms of disguise was to adopt the clothing of the opposite sex:

"Some o' t'lads'd dress up in ladies' clothes and we should put some trousers on and an old coat."<sup>55</sup>

Two boys were interviewed in Stocksbridge on the 1st November 1976, immediately after they had made visits to several houses in the area. Their "disguises" were limited to lipstick markings on the face; the younger of the two had blue eye-shadow all round his eyes, an exaggerated mouth-shape with red lipstick and red blotches on each cheek and on the end of the nose; the elder one had a pale red blotch on his nose and a clown-like mouth outline with the mouth corners turned up.<sup>56</sup> When asked whether other children also performed this custom, they commented:

51. Text SVB3, Letter 15.

52. Cp. Newfoundland examples in Halpert and Story, (1969), pp.37 - 38 .

53. Tape 19.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Photograph 1, p.239 .

"Yes, but they don't get dressed up usually. You can put an old uniform on, silly clothes like sometimes, soldiers' uniforms, dressed up as ghosts, people with masks on especially."<sup>57</sup>

Caking visits also include elements of the Halloween celebrations which take place at the same time of year. Ghosts have already been mentioned as a possible form of disguise; witches are also another source of inspiration in the choice of costume. Visitors also sometimes carry "turnip lanterns" which are commonly associated with Halloween in this area. One person recalled the annual "epidemic" of stomach upsets and diarrhoea which resulted from eating the flesh of the hollowed-out turnips<sup>58</sup>.

The custom of disguising at this time of year has continued in the form of competitions in public houses, and is very popular in some districts. A local paper recently reported that, at a "Kakin" night at a local pub:

"About 20 took part including a St Trinian's girl, Robin Hood, a Mrs Mopp and a Mandarin."<sup>59</sup>

The reporter was unable to discover the origin of "Kakin".

In addition to money for fireworks, food sometimes used to be given to performers as Mrs. Chapman of Bradfield recalled:

"They'd always give us some money and perhaps give us some parkin ....."<sup>60</sup>

or at Grenoside:

"We were given either a scone or a biscuit or money to be used to buy fireworks for November 5th."<sup>61</sup>

This gift of food appears to be the original purpose of the visit.

57. Tape 20.

58. Mr. P. Ashton (Worrall), Notebook 2, p.67.

59. The Star, (Nov. 4th 1976), 12 c.

60. Tape 19.

61. Questionnaire 13.

Addy records that:

"On Caking Day, which in Bradfield is the first day of November, boys and young men dress themselves like mummers and go to farm houses collecting money to buy tharf-cake with."<sup>62</sup>

"Tharf cake" is defined as "a circular cake made from oatmeal, butter and treacle".<sup>63</sup> It is interesting in relation to Mrs. Chapman's reference to a gift of "parkin" that Addy also comments:

"As a rule I find that people are ashamed of 'tharf-cake'. They call it 'parkin' instead of using the old word."<sup>63</sup>

Addy also includes in his glossary "Somas Cake" which is explained as "soul-mass-cake, a sweet cake made on the second of November, All Souls' Day and always in a triangular form."<sup>64</sup>

The custom of begging for soul-cakes is well documented to the west of the Pennines, in Cheshire and parts of Staffordshire and Shropshire,<sup>65</sup> sometimes in conjunction with a mummers' play. In the study area, however, it has only existed, as far as can be discovered, in the south-west, as is clearly shown on the distribution map.<sup>66</sup> It is also a custom of considerable antiquity.

Hunter refers to:

"a deposition of the year 1574 ..... wherein the party deposes that his mother knew a certain castle of the Earl of Warren's, having, when a child, according to the custom of that country, gathered soul-cakes there on All Souls' Day."<sup>67</sup>

Hole suggests that the gathering of soul-cakes:

"was not originally intended for the singers but for the souls in Purgatory who needed human help because they could no longer help themselves."<sup>68</sup>

62. Addy, (1888), p.254.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

65. Brand, (1853), pp.392 - 393.

66. Map 3, p. 234.

67. Rev. J. Hunter, The Hallamshire Glossary, (London, 1829), p.83.

68. C. Hole, English Custom and Usage, (New York and London, 1942), p.11.

In the custom of caking we have an excellent example of how a house-visit can adapt itself to a changing social situation, and even though the original purpose of the visit is forgotten, because of the existing "cultural momentum", it acquires a new function and thus survives where other similar visits of a quasi-religious character, like Collop Monday, have not. In parts of the area, where children once begged for "tharf-cakes", this visit proved a suitable occasion to beg for money to buy fireworks for November 5th, whereas in other districts other customs evolved to fulfil this purpose.

#### 6. Penny for the Guy

The tradition of celebrating the deliverance of the King and Parliament from the fate planned for them by Guy Fawkes and his fellow conspirators continues to flourish in South Yorkshire maintaining a much older tradition of autumnal bonfires also found throughout much of Europe.<sup>69</sup> There appears to be a general trend towards more organised, less dangerous firework displays and communal bonfires, with children taking a more passive role. The tradition of collecting money for fireworks also appears to be in a stage of transition. The almost universal practice continues of sitting with an "effigy", supposedly of Guy Fawkes, but rarely with any attempt at characterisation of the dummy, in strategic places where money can be collected, outside public houses, in shopping precincts, near clubs, fish and chip shops, and other busy locations. In addition to this, several reports have been recorded of children turning the custom into a house-visit. One man from Swallownest, when talking about this visit, was definite in his opinion that this was never done when he was a child fifty years ago. However, in Barnburgh during the period 1930 - 40, house-visits were made:

"Used to get two stakes, nail 'em together you know, like a cross and hang a jacket on and a pair o'britches and stuff 'em wi' straw and ger a turnip and at top and cut like eyes out and a mouth and a cap on, and away 'Penny for t'guy. Can you remember t'guy?"<sup>70</sup>

69. See for examples Sir J.G. Frazer, The Golden Bough, abridged edn (London, 1933), pp. 609 - 658.

70. Tape 21.

This is the only detailed account from the area of this type of visit. It is probable that it is more widespread than my information suggests. More data might have been gathered had it been realised before the start of the study that this custom could include house-visiting.

### 7. Jolly Minering

Of all the house-visit customs recorded in the course of this study, none is more localised than the custom of "Jolly Minering". The area in which it took place is quite well defined in the area between Ecclesfield and Hoyland as indicated on the distribution map<sup>71</sup> and with one notable exception, there is little variation between recorded examples of the song associated with this particular custom.

Jolly Minering involved the mimicking of the actions of picking and riddling coal whilst singing a song, "Six Jolly Miners". It was generally performed by groups of boys, aged between eight and twelve. Mr L.Wroe from Charltonbrook describes what took place:

"There'd be four or five of us, about ten or twelve years old. We used to get together. We used to get a pair of old trousers, tore the britches seat out. If we could get some old knee pads ..... used to get some, what do y'call them? - Tallies, used to put on corves, numbers when they weighed 'em and they used to have a riddle and a shovel, pick and a bit o'coal. When they'd allow us in Tap Room, black us faces, used to go singing:

$\text{♩} = 190$

Six jolly miners, we're not worth a pin, but when we get a bit o' coal we make the kettle

sing, And we'll riddle and will fiddle and we make the earth go round. If you don't mind your troubles, you will

have a motty down. If you don't mind your troubles you will have a motty down.

71. Map 4, p. 235.

"Six jolly miners  
We're not worth a pin  
But when we get a bit o' coal  
We make the kettle sing.

We'll riddle and we'll fiddle  
And we make the earth go round  
If you don't mind your troubles  
You will have a motty down.

Two came from Derby  
And two from Derby Town  
The others came from Oughtibridge  
They all came firing down."<sup>72</sup>

The group would be dressed up to look like miners, with faces blackened, with soot, boot polish or burnt cork and carrying such items of a miner's equipment as they could easily obtain at home, or from relatives and friends. A group in Grenoside, I was informed by letter, took as their "miner's equipment":  
"1 box for collecting, 1 riddle, 1 pick, 1 shovel, 1 crowbar, 1 broom."<sup>73</sup>

In Hemingfield, another man remembered other props:

"They used to have a snap tin on a belt, and carry, borrow a lamp, anybody that had any pit lamps."<sup>74</sup>

The main intention of the costume appears not to have been to disguise the performer, but to amuse the audience:

"Well we knew how to go on, so long as we got a laugh when we went into t'pub."<sup>75</sup> (Charltonbrook)

Although it was mostly boys between the ages of ten or twelve who went Jolly Minering, girls were also known to take part, and Mrs. Carnelly who did so in Thorpe Hesley before the First World War remembered that her intention was also to provide amusement:

"I used to get my brother's old trousers and jacket and coat. They were always too big for us. We looked really funny ..... they laughed at that. They used to like us to do that."<sup>76</sup>

- 72. Tape 8.
- 73. Letter 5.
- 74. Tape 17.
- 75. Tape 8.
- 76. Tape 5.

The visit took place at Christmas time. In Thorpe Hesley, the period of performance was:

"Christmas Eve and right up to New Year's Day ..... each evening."<sup>77</sup>

In the Charltonbrook area, the visits were not so frequent:

"Christmas Eve ....., about seven o'clock, eight, more eight. Only Boxing Day, after Boxing day we didn't go no more. We might go at New Year."<sup>78</sup>

The visits at Grenoside were also in the evening, unlike Ecclesfield, the neighbouring township, where the performance took place during the day:

"I used to do 'Jolly Miners', and all. 'Jolly Miners' were a daytime job though. It were a door to door thing."<sup>79</sup>

The size of the group varied, from as few as two, to what appears to have been the optimum number, six, which is the number mentioned in the first verse of the song in five of the nine examples recorded. The second verse of the song specifies that there should be at least six, yet in Chapeltown, it was sung as "We are four Jolly Miners", and in Thorpe Hesley, "Three Jolly Miners" were "not worth a pin". In these cases the second verse was not remembered and probably not sung. The version from Hemingfield also refers to three miners, in the only example I discovered of a completely different "Jolly Miners" song.

The image shows two staves of handwritten musical notation. The first staff is in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time, with a tempo marking of quarter note = 174. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics under the first staff are: "We're miners just miners, three jolly black miners as busy as busy can be. We". The second staff continues the melody with lyrics: "work under-ground when hardships are found. No workmen more happy than we." The piece ends with a double bar line and a final chord.

- 77. Tape 5.
- 78. Tape 8.
- 79. Tape 10.

"We're miners, just miners,  
Three jolly black miners,  
As busy as busy can be,  
We work underground  
Where hardships are found  
No workmen more happy than we."<sup>80</sup>

The brevity of both versions of the song, the relative simplicity of the action, and hence the limited amount of preparation required, meant that group organisation was largely unnecessary, and groups of friends would visit together. It also meant that a large number of visits could be made, as many as twenty or thirty in an evening. The words of the song would be readily learned from other children, as in Charltonbrook:

"I learned it off other lads,"<sup>81</sup>

The group would assemble in their normal way and limit their visits to the immediate area in which they lived. Only rarely would a group venture further afield. When they did, they would usually be looking for houses where a visit would prove more financially rewarding, as did a group from Ecclesfield:

"What we went to, we went to big posh houses y'see, all that were wi' Newton Chambers and them; and pubs of course at dinnertime on us route. We used to set off in Ecclesfield, walk up Grenoside, straight down Halifax Rd ..... call at big houses down there, come off at, down by t'White Horse'..... used to cut right across Southey, Southey Green into the 'Pheasant' Sheffield Lane Top and then come back down."<sup>82</sup>

This journey of nearly six miles was exceptional and, perhaps significantly, took place during the period 1930-40, more recently than many of the other examples recorded:

"No-one else used to go round ..... no opposition. You were welcome to choose where you went."<sup>83</sup>

The importance of the financial rewards of Jolly Minering is confirmed by Lou Wroe:

"We always went to people where we thought we might get a penny."<sup>84</sup>

80. Tape 17.

81. Tape 8.

82. Tape 10.

83. Ibid.

84. Tape 8.

Naturally, as in most visiting customs, the larger houses in this area too were the special focus of attention for house-visitors:

"We used to go to Barnes Hall at Christmas. There was a new penny for every child that went. Some of them used to go two or three times."<sup>85</sup>

The "Jolly Miners" were certainly not always welcome visitors, and tricks were sometimes played on them:

"They'd put a hot penny, put it in t'fire wi' tongs and heat it. That were done. Same when you went carolling. We were wise to it. Used to get it and put it in summat."<sup>86</sup>

From Ecclesfield, there is evidence that at least some people regarded this particular visit as lucky:

"With it being coal it represented a bit of luck y'see."<sup>87</sup>

This connection between luck and coal is also referred to in some parts of the area in which Christmas and/or New Year were "let in". Perhaps the importance of coal as a source of employment, warmth and power was a sufficient reason for its being regarded as lucky, particularly in areas like this, with strong mining connections.

No references outside South Yorkshire to Jolly Minering as a visiting custom have been discovered and, indeed, it has only been found in the small area shown on the map.<sup>88</sup> It has been performed locally at least since before the First World War, when Mr Wroe was a boy. According to one source from Thorpe Hesley, it has recently been performed in that village, after 1970, although I have been unable to substantiate the report. Most informants referred to the Second World War as the time when performances ceased.

There appear to be very few printed references to the custom. A newspaper cutting of 1908 mentions children in Ecclesfield "dressed as colliers, with safety lamps singing a song about the dangers of the mine"<sup>89</sup>

85. Tape 8.

86. Tape 8. Cp. Letting New Year In, p. 47.

87. Tape 10.

88. See Map 4, p. 235.

89. Newspaper Cuttings Relating to Sheffield, vol. 9, p. 321, Local History Library, Sheffield City Libraries.

which probably refers to the same custom. The song most commonly associated with the custom has been collected, with additional verses, in Scotland,<sup>90</sup> Hampshire<sup>91</sup> and Pennsylvania<sup>92</sup>. Swindells of Manchester printed a broadside entitled "Lancashire Miners"<sup>93</sup> which includes the verses sung in the Ecclesfield area. However, in none of these examples is there any mention of a related visiting custom.

It must remain a matter for conjecture whether the song is the origin of the visit, in a natural process of dramatisation, or whether the song was used because it was applicable to an existing tradition. It is certainly an interesting example of a comparatively localised custom. Districts in which it was performed, however, did not differ significantly in other house-visiting traditions. The general pattern emerges from the data that certain visits would be common to most areas, as is true, for example, of Letting Christmas in, discussed in the following section, whilst some would be more limited geographically but co-exist with, rather than replace, the more widespread traditions.

#### 8. Letting Christmas In

On the 1st January 1859, The Rotherham and Masbrough Advertiser in its review of the seasonal celebration noted:

"Especially the boys have kept up the old custom of going round on Christmas morning and wishing 'A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year' and asking for Christmas boxes."<sup>94</sup>

This custom of Letting Christmas in was once fairly widespread in the region, and differed very little from Letting the New Year in. Boys, and occasionally girls between the ages of eight and fourteen years (at which age they started work) would go from door to door, as here described by Mr. Tonks from Rawmarsh:

90. A.L.Lloyd, Come All Ye Bold Miners, (London, 1952), p.47.

91. J.Reeves, The Everlasting Circle, (London, 1960), p.30.

92. Korson, (1964), p.282.

93. Manchester Central Library MB 102A.

94. Op.cit. p.4c.

"So at twelve o'clock all the lively lads turned out and you went to a door and you knocked on the door, and you got said, 'Who's there?', 'I've come to let your Christmas in.' 'Okay' and then sometimes they opened the door and let you in and sometimes you said it there, at the door and generally you said:

'I wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year,  
Pocket full of money and a cellar full of beer,  
Horse and a gig and a good fat pig,  
To last you all next year.'

Then you used to say:

'Hole in mi stocking, hole in mi shoe,  
Please will you give me a copper or two,  
If you haven't a penny, a ha'penny will do,  
If you haven't a ha'penny, God bless you.'"95

In Rawmarsh, the children would generally be in bed, and be allowed to get up again to go out Letting Christmas in when they heard the pit sirens or buzzers sounding or sometimes the church bells ringing. The rewards were small in most cases:

"You might get a penny, you might get tuppence. If you were very, very lucky you'd get a silver threepenny bit."96

Each child, or group of children would make ten or twelve visits before returning home with their money:

"We might obtain as much as half a crown, three shillings, you see, and this was a fantastic amount of money and from this it was the only opportunity to buy Mother a present, you see."97

Visits were generally limited to the immediate neighbourhood, with the exception of relatives or friends of the family who might request a visit:

"You didn't travel very far because the other boys were doing it in the other streets."98

Sometimes the children might also be given other rewards, an apple or an orange sweets or a piece of cake.

In some villages, Christmas was "let in" on Christmas morning, soon after daylight, as in Barnburgh:

"We used to go Christmas morning ..... first thing i't'morning, let Christmas in."99

95. Tape 14, (Text SVD7).

96. Tape 14.

97. Tape 14.

98. Tape 14.

99. Tape 21.

In this village the visit was not usually repeated at New Year. This was also the case in Hoylandswaine, where the local cobbler, renowned for his parsimony, chose this as the one occasion where generosity could be exercised. The first child, and only the first, to call at the house after midnight on Christmas Eve, brought in a piece of coal left outside for the purpose, put it on the fire and received sixpence or even a shilling for doing so.<sup>100</sup> In Barnburgh as well, some householders would be most generous:

"I just used to have my few customers that knew me, you know, well and there were two places I recollect now I used to get a shilling off them."<sup>101</sup>

As at New Year no special dress was worn and the same requirements were mentioned with regard to hair colour, the carrying of coal etc, and again, as at New Year, it was widely considered unlucky not to be visited. The trick with the heated coins was again mentioned as an occupational hazard during these visits,<sup>102</sup> confirming the popularity of this aspect of the tradition, where the audience could play a more positive role.

The custom of "letting in Christmas" was often performed in association with what must be the commonest form of house-visit still practised in the area, carol singing.

## 9. Carol Singing

The practice of visiting houses, singing carols, in the days before Christmas was the most widespread and common form of house-visit custom reported during the fieldwork.<sup>103</sup> The sheer quantity of information available was indeed a problem. If as much time had been spent recording this data as was devoted to other visits, then many of the more unusual and interesting customs would have remained undiscovered and unrecorded. Carol singing takes place in every community visited in the area, and almost certainly in those not visited as well.

100. Tape 20 .

101. Tape 21 .

102. Notebook 2, p.82b .

103. Its predominance has since been threatened by the rise of Halloween visiting. For a recent study see: E.Beck, "Children's Halloween Customs in Sheffield", Lore and Language, vol.3, no.9 (July 1983), 70 - 88 .

There have, however, been significant changes in these visits. The period during which carol singing takes place has gradually extended over the past fifty years. In some villages before this time, performances were limited to Christmas Eve and Christmas Morning, and elsewhere rarely took place on more than the two or three days preceding. Carol singers can now be expected to call at any time from early December, and in some cases, often to the annoyance of many adults, even earlier than that. Traditional rebuffs such as "Too early!" and "Too late!" are still apparently resorted to. The carols sung by the boys and girls between the ages of about six and fourteen who go round from house to house are generally the most well-known and popular ones, notably "Away in a Manger" (the most commonly used), "Once in Royal David's City" and "Oh Come, all ye Faithful". Gifts are usually small: one, two or five pence, but during an evening children will often collect fifty pence or more.

No organisation or rehearsal is apparent, and no special costume worn. Occasionally boys will black their faces, as a man from Mexborough recalled<sup>104</sup> and as seen in Chapeltown at Christmas as recently as 1976.<sup>105</sup> Mrs. Chapman of Bradfield recalled:

"Oh yes, the men used to always go, and they set off at Christmas Eve and I tell you it used to be all night. Before they got back, it'd be breakfast and they all used to stop up wherever they went and there were always plenty of beer, I suppose, mince pies and all that mularkey for them to have."<sup>106</sup>

Carol parties came from a number of villages, including a well-known group nicknamed "The Big Set" from Worrall, as well as groups from Bradfield and Lower Cumberworth. They continued to make their visits until the Second World War in some cases. The carols they performed were not always the well-known "traditional" ones, but included locally composed and locally popular items like "Good News", "Jacob's Well" and "Christmas Bells". Some sets of words are fitted to a variety of tunes, notably "While Shepherds watched their Flocks by Night" which boasts at least twelve alternatives.<sup>107</sup>

104. Notebook 2, p.76, 22.10.75.

105. Personal reminiscence.

106. Tape 20.

107. I. Russell, "Carol Singing in the Sheffield Area", Lore and Language, [vol 1], no. 3, (Aug. 1970), 12-15 and "A Survey of a Christmas Singing Tradition in South Yorkshire - 1970", Lore and Language, [vol 1], no. 8 (Jan. 1973), 13-25.

These carols are fortunately still performed and, if anything, are increasing in popularity, particularly because of the sessions which take place in many local public houses, usually on Saturday nights and Sunday lunchtimes when people gather from miles around to join in. These sessions themselves appear to originate from the rehearsals held by the carol parties for about eight weeks before Christmas. Some of the older local people refer to this singing as "practising". The current popularity of these carols is such that several commercial recordings have been made and issued for sale.<sup>108</sup>

Occasionally, other songs associated with house-visits may be heard amongst these carols. At Ecclesfield, the Jolly Minering song is sung, and sometimes "Here We Come a Wassailing", which was associated with another house-visit, once very widespread, which apparently no longer takes place.

#### 10. Wassailing

Wassailing is a term which, like mumming or mummering, has been used in association with a number of different house-visits. In the Walkley area of Sheffield, for example, the word was used to describe performances of the "Old Tup" play. However, it has been most generally used to describe a house-visit which was performed by young girls during the Christmas season. These visits were of one of two main types: one in which the girls carried a doll in a decorated box, and another in which they carried a decorated branch, known as a "Wassail Bough" (pronounced [ˈwɔːsəl buː]).

Each of these types of visit was performed in a specific area, there being also a few places on the borders of the respective areas in which both were performed. In most of the communities in the centre and to the east of the area, girls carried dolls in boxes, whilst in the west, from Wadsley in the south up to Upper Denby in the north, they would be more likely to carry

108. See for example "A People's Carol", Leader Records LEE 4065.  
"Ye Olde Christmas Carols", Deroy Studios DEROY 618 .

decorated branches. In Worrall, Deepcar and Thurgoland both types of custom were reported.

A typical visit with a doll in a box was described by Mrs. Carnelly from Thorpe Hesley who went round when she was five or six years old, just before the First World War. She would go with a friend, in the early evening on Christmas Eve, and then again perhaps on Christmas and Boxing Day. They went to the door of the chosen house and sang:

$\text{♩} = 88$

Here we come a - wassailing a - mong the leaves so green, And here we come a - wandering so  
fairy to be seen. Love and joy come to you, and to have a wassail too, And God  
send you a happy New Year a New Year, And God send you a happy New Year

"Here we come a wassailing among the leaves so green,  
Here we come a wandering so fairy (sic) to be seen,  
CHORUS:

Love and joy come to you and to have a wassail too  
And God send you a happy New Year, a New Year,  
And God send you a happy New Year.

We are not daily beggars that beg from door to door  
We are your neighbours' children that you have seen before,  
CHORUS

We've got a little purse made of stretching leather skin  
We want a little of your money to line it well within."<sup>109</sup>  
CHORUS

She went on to describe what happened next:

"And then we used to say our names after ..... then knock on the door and some of them'd say 'Come in.' They'd have Christmas cake on the table and cheese and mince pies. They'd say 'Would you like a mince pie?' and 'Would you like .....' and then give us perhaps threepence, a threepenny bit, one of those tiny silver threepenny bits or pennies or whatever."<sup>110</sup>

109. SVF3 (Tape 5).

110. Tape 5.

Only a few of these visits were made in an evening, usually to people who were known to the children, and generally to those who were not so poor as the majority of the village population. Several people commented on the fact that it was important that the doll should be looked at. Mrs. Carnelly described how it would be presented:

"Oh you put some fancy paper, or a fancy lace cover. I tell you what we used to have, an old lace curtain, and get a boot box and put it in ..... You put the lace curtain in to make it fancy round and an apple and an orange in at the side of it."<sup>111</sup>

Many girls would have a suitable doll which could be used in this way, and it was considered something of a disgrace if a proper doll was not used, as on an occasion recalled by Mr. Hague of Thorpe Hesley:

"Them who were well off could have a proper doll. My sister and her friend used to go out, but when it came to looking at the doll, they used to fly."<sup>112</sup>

The day or days on which girls went wassailing varied from place to place. In Thorpe Hesley, visits started on Christmas Eve and continued for two or three days. In the Hoyland Common and Tankersley areas, wassailing was particularly a Christmas Day morning visit. In West Melton and Hemingfield, Boxing Day was the normal time, whilst in Rawmarsh the girls went out on New Year's Day. The girls there, Mr. Tonks recalled, considered the local arrangement of house doors rather convenient:

"Very often they got quite a few coppers. They'd go round the streets and they could sing outside two doors together, you see, because there were two doors close together. Two doors then a space, then doors and if there was no action they'd move on you see."<sup>113</sup>

The other type of wassailing, carrying a decorated branch, was only performed in the villages in the west of the area.

111. Tape 5.

112. Tape 7.

113. Tape 14.

In many details there were strong similarities with the doll-carrying custom. The exact time of year at which the visit should take place also varied; in Bradfield girls went out at Christmas, and also to "let in" the New Year, in Worrall they went Wassailing on Boxing Day and in Upper Denby they went on Christmas Eve. The "Wassail Bough" itself could be made in several ways. A lady in Worrall recalled:

"They used to be mainly made of holly, big spray of holly and we used to trim them up like you do a Christmas tree."<sup>114</sup>

In Bradfield, a small fir tree<sup>115</sup> was used:

"It was like a Christmas tree, you know, only you could carry it and we used to put all sorts on it just the same as they do on Christmas trees ..... we always had a fir tree, but a smaller one you see."<sup>116</sup>

In Upper Denby both these types of "Wassail Bough" were remembered, and were both regarded as suitable<sup>117</sup>. Possibly the holly branch type represents an older form, and the fir tree type is a result of the increasing popularity of the Christmas tree, following its use by the Royal Family from 1841.<sup>118</sup>

As with the carol parties in the same area, house-visits with the Wassail Bough around Bradfield involved a considerable amount of walking, especially if the visits were to be financially rewarding:

"We used to go a long way with a wassail tree you know, all to farms for far enough and we used to see who could get to these places first where they give you the most money."<sup>119</sup>

When they reached the house they sang a similar version of the song recorded in Thorpe Hesley.<sup>120</sup> This was followed by the rhyme commonly used to let New Year in. The girls then continued in the same way as those in Thorpe Hesley:

114. Tape 12.

116. Tape 19.

117. Notebook 2, p.72, 20.10.75.

119. Tape 19.

120. Tape 19.

115. Cp. Hunting the Wren described in A. Gailey, Irish Folk Drama, (Cork, 1969), p. 8

118. T. G. Crippen, Christmas and Christmas Lore, (London and Glasgow, 1923), p. 153.

"And then we used to knock on t'door and they used to give us something and give us some mince pies or cake. We used to go to all the doors and then they'd say, some of them you know at the very outlying, they'd ask us to sing a little Christmas song or something as well. We were always welcomed wherever we went. We used to have mince pies or some cake and always some money."<sup>121</sup>

A most unusual belief recalled by Mrs. Chapman of High Bradfield was that it was considered unlucky for men or boys to let New Year in in that district:

"The girls had to go wassailing for the New Year, that was the idea of that."<sup>122</sup>

By the time they had been round all the farms, their wassailing would have occupied most of the day.

The tunes used in the wassailing visit show only slight variation amongst the seven versions recorded in the course of this study, the greatest variation appearing in the one tune recorded from the "Wassail Bough" district, from Bradfield.<sup>123</sup>

It is interesting to note the differences in the pronunciation of the terms "wassail", and "wassailing". The former term is either pronounced [ˈwɔsəlɪn] or [ˈwɛsəlɪn]. These appear to be virtually interchangeable, several informants making use of both forms, and no apparent localisation of this variation can be observed. [ˈwɔsəl] appears to be the term in most common local usage, yet the [ˈwɛsəl] form can be found throughout the area, including Hoyland, Rotherham, Upper Denby and Bradfield. Addy<sup>124</sup> gives the form "wessel", perhaps suggesting that this is the older local pronunciation.

The custom of wassailing in the area is hard to date exactly. Addy refers to it as being performed in 1888. Ten years previously, in 1878, the editor of The Rotherham and Masborough Advertiser was observing:

121. Tape 19.

122. Text SVF 10 (Tape 19).

123. Text SVF 10 (Tape 19).

124. Addy (1888), p.278.

"Singers, mummers, children wanting to know if you required 'the wassail' these and others of the same ilk came literally in crowds ..... It is time something was done to check the growth of this sort of thing."<sup>125</sup>

Eventually his wish for action was to become unnecessary. Whilst there were a number of examples reported between 1920 and 1940, very few wassailing visits appear to have taken place since 1945, although two unsubstantiated questionnaire reports refer to New Year performances at Stocksbridge in 1974 and 1975. One factor mentioned, responsible for the decline in this particular custom, was parental fear for the safety of young girls making such visits after dark. This fear, however, does not seem to have affected the popularity of carol singing. Of the carol singers who called at my own house at Burncross between 1974 and 1979, the majority were young girls between the ages of seven and thirteen years, in groups of two to four. Forty or fifty years ago such groups would probably have come wassailing, in the same way that others who now go carolling or simply do not involve themselves in any such house-visiting, might once have taken part in the last of the simple visits to be discussed here.

## 11. Mumming

The custom of "mumming" is much less easily defined than most of the other house-visits described in this study. Several of the visits in this category include elements of other customs. For example, a mumming visit might involve carol-singing, letting in Christmas or New Year, or even one of the forms of complex visit described in the following chapter. The element of mumming visits which brings them into one category is disguise.

The local terms for this type of house-visit include "mummering" and "mumming" as well as, in one case "mummying". The continuing use of these terms is interesting, since their suggested etymology is from words meaning to mask, or disguise.<sup>126</sup> The form which disguises have taken in the area are

125. Op.cit., 28.12.1878, 5c.

126. C.T.Onions, ed. The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, (Oxford, 1966).

fairly consistent and show remarkable similarities to those used in mumming in Newfoundland.<sup>127</sup> Masks were commonly worn, as at West Melton:

"You bought them. They were a pinky colour with a mask painted on; a penny apiece with a bit o'elastic round the back."<sup>128</sup>

In the absence of masks, faces were also disguised by being blackened with soot or burnt cork, or as in Lower Cumberworth, an improvised veil might serve the purpose:

"A lot of people'd have an old curtain over their face."<sup>129</sup>

Most mummers would wear old clothes, with the general idea of producing a "comic" effect. One commonly assumed method of disguise, for example at Thurgoland, High Green, Hemingfield, Silkstone and Lower Cumberworth, was to assume the appearance of a member of the opposite sex as Mr. Evans from Hemingfield described:

"They used to suit theirselves how they dressed up. Now men, they used to dress as women and they'd have a bust and all that clobber and women'd sometimes dress as they'd put a 'tache on and so look like men do y'see."<sup>130</sup>

In most cases, mummers did not have any particular objects to carry with them, but the group who went round from the Wesleyan Chapel in Thorpe Hesley, for example, carried musical instruments with them, and children from Clayton would carry turnip lanterns.

In the Hemingfield, Wentworth and West Melton districts, mumming visits began on Christmas Eve. Children, both boys and girls, but more particularly boys, went round in disguise, singing carols or "shouting" the local version

127. J.D.A.Widdowson and H.Halpert, "The Disguises of Newfoundland Mummers", in Halpert and Story, (1969), pp.145 - 164 .

128. Tape 15 .

129. Tape 13 .

130. Tape 17 .

of the Christmas begging rhyme.<sup>131</sup> In these cases, the visits are almost indistinguishable from carol-singing or letting in Christmas, except from the central element of disguise.

At Hemingfield, mumming also took place throughout the Christmas period, for a week until New Year, as it also did, for example, at Lower Cumberworth, Upper Denby and Thurgoland. These visits were by no means the exclusive preserve of children, groups of adults often visiting houses as at Lower Cumberworth:

"You wouldn't go on your own. There'd be four or five of you and when you went into a house, they'd to guess who it was."<sup>132</sup>

These adult mummers would not come asking for money, but would usually receive some seasonal hospitality in the form of food and drink, mince pies or fruit cake, beer or wine. In some places, for example Hemingfield, mumming visits were occasions for communal entertainment:

"Now Dick's mother and my mother they had pianos ..... and there weren't many pianos and they used to come and have a singsong. They'd bring beer up with them ..... and when beer went, they went."<sup>133</sup>

One important element of the visit also referred to in Newfoundland examples<sup>134</sup> was the process of guessing the identity of the visitor. Sometimes this would be done by the householder asking questions which would give an opportunity, through the character of the voice or the nature of the answers, to determine the identity of the visitor. Mummers would not remain disguised once their identity was guessed, or once their hosts admitted defeat. Sometimes other means would be used to discover the identity of the mummer, as an informant from Lower Cumberworth recalled:

131. See for example Text SVD 10.

132. Tape 13.

133. Tape 17.

134. Cp. Halpert and Story, (1969), p. 95.

"They tried all sorts of schemes to find out, you know. If you went dressed as a woman, they'd get hold of the frock ..... of course it was all fun."<sup>135</sup>

Feet were also sometimes regarded as a feature hard to disguise, and thus became a means of guessing identity.

Mumming by groups of adults was not always favourably received. Although these visits were often regarded as a temporary licence for a certain amount of friendly horseplay, practical jokes and general extra-conviviality, some people, particularly children, were frightened by apparent "strangers" who in some cases would walk in without knocking or seeking permission to enter. Mummers were also sometimes unwelcome, as a man in Hooton Roberts recalled, because of the amount of the Christmas beer supply they consumed<sup>136</sup>.

Most reports of mumming visits, particularly those by adults, have come from the western half of the area as the distribution map shows<sup>137</sup>. Visits by children, often singing carols, are still sometimes referred to as "mumming" or "mumming", but most of the disguised visits ceased to take place approximately forty or fifty years ago according to most informants, and as long ago as seventy years at Hooton Roberts.

The custom of house-visiting in disguise has been the subject of detailed investigation where it has existed in North America<sup>138</sup>, and this has led to the formation of a number of interesting theories relating to its social significance. One of these in particular seems relevant to the adult mumming groups described in this chapter. It can be postulated as Szwed suggests, that mumming had an important function in the community:

135. Tape 13.

136. Notebook 2, p.76, 22.10.75 .

137. Map 6 , p. 236.

138. R.H.Cline, "Belsnickles and Shanghais", Journal of American Folklore, vol.LXXI (1958), 164 - 165, R.Baumann, "Belsnickling in a Nova Scotia Island Community", Western Folklore, vol.XXXI, (1972), 229 - 243, Halpert and Story, (Toronto, 1969 pp.145 - 164 .

"the cathartic expression of repressed motives on this one occasion of the year, one in which the deviant events themselves mark the importance of the occasion: the direct gratification of forbidden hostilities through ritual means and the subsequent recreation and renewal of the social order."<sup>139</sup>

In other words, the opportunity to act in an uninhibited manner with the tacit approval of the community acted as an important release for repressed feelings. Unfortunately, insufficient data has been collected to confirm the validity of the theory in the study area, but parallels with North American mumming customs can certainly be drawn.

Mumming in one form or another has a long history in the locality. A lady, staying probably at Aldwarke in the early eighteenth century, made payments to mummers as her memorandum book attests:

"Jan : the 3rd 1712/3:  
gave some mummers 0 0 6"<sup>140</sup>

Later in the same century, the Osborne family at Ravenfield made payments of 6d or 1/- to mummers from Mexborough and Adwick, Conisbrough, Bramley, Haugh, Brampton and Tickhill on the 26th December 1776.<sup>141</sup> It can be assumed that these, and the many other references in household account books<sup>142</sup> refer to some form of mumming visit, not necessarily with what has come to be known as "the mummers' play" which will be discussed in the next chapter, which follows the simple visit texts.

139. J.F.Szwed in Halpert and Story, (1969), p.117.

140. "Memorandum Book of a Yorkshire Lady", Transactions of the East Riding Archaeological Association, vol. IX, (1901), p.14.

141. Osborne Records OR12, Archives Division, Sheffield City Libraries.

142. See also K.Chandler, "Morris Dancing in the Eighteenth Century: a Newly-discovered Source", Lore and Language, vol.3, no.8, (January, 1983), 31 - 38.

Examples of Texts used in Simple Visits

SVA Letting New Year in

SVB Caking

SVC Jolly Minering

SVD Letting Christmas and New Year in

SVE Carrolling

SVF Wassailing

SVA Letting New Year in

SVA1 HARLEY

Mrs. Hague Tape 7 17.1.75

Happy New Year, happy New Year.  
Please will you give us a copper or two.  
If you haven't a ha'penny, a penny will do.  
If you haven't got a ha'penny, God bless you.

SVA2 KIMBERWORTH

Mary B. Robinson Letter 11 28.1.75

Happy New Year,  
Happy New Year,  
A pocket full of money,  
And a cellarfull of beer.  
A horse and a gig,  
And a good fat pig,  
To last you all next year.

SVA3 SWINTON

John Millwood Notebook 2 p.91 16.2.76

Old Year out, New Year in.  
Please will you let the Dicky Bird in?

SVA4 SHEFFIELD

G. Broomhead Tape 18 15.3.76

Happy New Year, Happy New Year,  
Plenty of money and nothing to fear,  
Horse and a gig and a good fat pig,  
To serve you all next year.  
An apple, a pear, a plum or a cherry,  
A sup of good ale to make a man merry.  
God bless the master of this house,  
Likewise the mistress too  
And all the little children,  
That round the table go,  
Hole in my stocking, hole in my shoe,  
Please can you spare me a copper or two?  
If you haven't a penny, a ha'penny will do,  
If you haven't a ha'penny, God bless you.

SVA5 RAWMARSH

Thomas Tonks Tape 14 24.11.76

Old Year out, New Year in!  
Please will you give me a New Year's gift?

SVA6 MASBROUGH (ROTHERHAM)

Mrs. Tinsdale Notebook 3 p.36 n.d.

Old Year out, New Year in,  
Hole in my stocking,  
Hole in my shoe,  
Please will you give me  
A copper or two?

SVA7 SHEFFIELD

S.Gregory Questionnaire 10 n.d.

Happy new year  
happy new year  
Lots of good cheer  
A cellar full of beer  
And a big fat pig  
To last you all year.

SVB Caking

SVB1 DEEPCAR

Mr H.Hudson and Mr H.Hoyle Notebook 2 p.49 15.8.74 .

Cake, cake, cake.  
If you haven't a cake a loaf will do,  
If you haven't a loaf a penny will do,  
If you haven't a penny, a ha'penny will do,  
If you haven't a ha'penny, God bless you.  
Hole in your stocking, hole in your shoe.

SVB2 BOLSTERSTONES

Mr Shaw Notebook 2 p.50 15.8.74

Pray dame a cake,  
If you haven't a cake, a loaf will do,  
If you haven't a loaf a penny will do,  
If you haven't a penny, a ha'penny will do,  
If you haven't a ha'penny, God bless you.

SVB3 DORE

Mrs F.Hartley Letter 15 29.12.75

Cakey cakey cake,  
Mi muthers forgot to bake,  
Mi fathers purrin' currants in,  
To keep t'owd lass agate.

SVB4 HIGH BRADFIELD

Mrs Nellie Chapman Tape 19 23.4.76

A cake, a cake or coil (coal) for bonfire oil,  
If you don't give us either coil or tin,  
We shall get a stick and break your door in.

SVB5 STOCKSBRIDGE

Paul Gough and Steven Sloane Tape 20 1.11.76

$\text{♩} = 152$

Kay kay kay, Kay kay kay. Hole in my stocking, hole in my shoe, Please can you spare me a penny or two? If you

haven't got a penny a ha'penny will do, If you haven't got a ha'penny, God bless you.

Kay, kay, kay, kay kay kay,  
 Hole in my stocking, hole in my shoe,  
 Please can you spare me a penny or two?  
 If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do,  
 If you haven't got a ha'penny, God bless you.

SVB6 GRENOSIDE

P. Richard Questionnaire 13 n.d.

A hole in my sock, a hole in my shoe,  
 Please will you give me a penny or two?  
 If you haven't a penny, a halfpenny will do,  
 If you haven't a halfpenny, God bless you.

SVB7 BOLSTERSTONE

P. Hardustry Questionnaire 12 n.d.

Kaa kaa kaa, Kaa kaa kaa  
 Hole in my stocking, hole in my shoe,  
 Please can you spare me a penny or two.  
 If you ain't got a penny, a halfpenny will do,  
 If you ain't got a halfpenny, God bless you.

SVB8 STOCKSBRIDGE

Ange and Lynn (pupils at Stocksbridge High School) Questionnaire 4 nd.

Kay Kay Kay  
Kay Kay Kay  
Hole in mi stockin  
Hole in mi shoe,  
please can yer spare  
me a penni or  
two  
if yer ant got a peni  
a hapenny will do if yer  
ant got a hapenny  
God bless you.

SVB9 WQRRAL

P. Ashton Notebook 2 p.67 Aug. 1975

I have a little box under my arm,  
A penny or tuppence will do it no harm,  
Threepence or fourpence will do it some good,  
It's my little money box made of wood.

Hole in my pocket, hole in my shoe,  
Hole in my hat where my hair shows through.

SVC Jolly Minering

SVC1 GRENOSIDE

Mr. E. Crookes Letter 5 19.2.74

Six Jolly Miners we're not worth a pin,  
So we've only come a minering to get your coal in,  
So we riddle and we fiddle and make the earth go round,  
if you mind our trouble we will have a knock around.

Two came from Derby and Two came from Derby Town,  
The other came from Outibridge and we all came tumbling down.

SVC2 THORPE HESLEY

Margaret Carnelly Tape 5 30.4.75

$\text{♩} = 80$

Three jolly miners we are not worth a pin, But when we get a bit of coal we make the kettle  
sing, And we riddle and we fiddle and we make the earth go round. If you don't mind your troubles you will  
have a smuttly town. If you don't mind your troubles you will have a smuttly down.

Three jolly miners,  
 We are not worth a pin,  
 But when we get a bit of coal  
 We make the kettle sing,  
 And we riddle and we fiddle,  
 And we make the earth go round,  
 If you don't mind your troubles  
 You will have a smutty down,  
 If you don't mind your troubles,  
 You will have a smutty down.

SVC3 CHARLTONBROOK

Louis Wroe Tape 8 29.5.75

$\text{♩} = 190$

Six jolly miners, we're not worth a pin, But when we get a bit o' coal we make the kettle  
 sing, And we'll riddle and we'll fiddle and we make the earth go round. If you don't mind your troubles, you will  
 have a motty down. If you don't mind your troubles you will have a motty down..

1 Six jolly miners, we're not worth a pin,  
 But when we get a bit o' coal<sup>1</sup>  
 We make the kettle sing.

Chorus:

We'll riddle and we'll fiddle,  
 And we make the earth go round,  
 If you don't mind your troubles  
 You will have a motty<sup>2</sup> down,  
 If you don't mind your troubles  
 You will have a motty down.

2 Two came from Derby,  
 And two from Derby town,  
 The others came from Oughtibridge,  
 They all came firing down.

(Chorus)

1. Coal.
2. Coal-tub token.

SVC4 ECCLESFIELD

Bob Hartley Tape 10 4.6.75

1 Six jolly miners, we're not worth a pin,  
If you gi' me a bit o'coil, we'll make the kettle sing.  
(Chorus)

We'll riddle and we'll fiddle and we make the earth go round  
If you don't mind your troubles, you will have a motty down,  
If you don't mind your troubles, you will have a motty down.

2 Two came from Derby, two from Derby town,  
The others came from Oughtibridge, and they all come rolling down.  
(Chorus)

SVC5 ECCLESFIELD

Les Hartley Tape 10 4.6.75  
(continuing Bob Hartley version)

Come on you jolly colliers, put your jackets on,  
We work for Newton Chambers, he's a gentleman.  
Chambers in his chariot, Dukes on a pig,  
Bells on a donkey's back and Fishers on a gig.

SVC6 CHAPELTOWN

Percy Beard Letter 18 30.12.75

We are 4 Jolly Miners we not worth a pin  
but when we get of of (coil) coal we'll make the kettle sing  
For we'll riddle and we'll riddle and make the world go round,  
If you don't give us summat we'll chuck our motties down.  
(and then repeat)

SVC7 THORPE HESLEY

Mrs. Lomas Tape 11 - 1975

Six jolly miners, we're not worth a pin,  
But when we get a piece of coal  
We'll make the kettle sing,  
We'll riddle and we'll fiddle and we make the earth go round,  
If you don't mind your troubles, you will get a motty down.

SVC8 HEMINGFIELD

Dick Tomlinson Tape 17 17.2.76

The musical notation consists of two staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The tempo is marked as  $\text{♩} = 174$ . The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics: "We're miners just miners, three jolly black miners as busy as busy can be. We". The second staff continues the melody for the second line: "work under-ground where hardships are found. No workmen more happy than we." The notation includes various note values, rests, and a key signature change to F major at the end of the second staff.

We're miners, just miners,  
Three jolly black miners,  
As busy as busy can be,  
We work underground,  
Where hardships are found,  
No workmen more happy than we.

SVD Letting Christmas and New Year in

SVD1 WENTWORTH AND STREET

Sidney Tuxford Tape 5 20.5.75

Wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year,  
A pocket full of money, a barrel full of beer,  
A good fat pig to last you all year.  
Please will you give us a Christmas box?  
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do,  
If you haven't got a ha'penny, God bless you.

Second version WENTWORTH Miss Bartlett Tape 13 16.11.75

Wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year,  
A pocket full of money, a barrel full of beer,  
If you haven't got a penny, a ha'penny will do,  
If you haven't got a ha'penny, God bless you.

SVD2 ECCLESFIELD

Bob Hartley Tape 10 4.6.75

Wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year,  
Pocket full of money and a cellar full of beer,  
Horse and a gig and a good fat pig to last you all next year.  
Please will you give me a New Year's gift?  
Hoil<sup>1</sup> in my stocking, hoil in my shoe,  
Please will you give me a copper or two?  
If you haven't a penny, a ha'penny will do,  
If you haven't a ha'penny, God bless you.

SVD3 KILNHURST

Mrs Moxon Notebook 2 p.75 22.10.75

Hole in my stocking, hole in my shoe.  
If you haven't got a penny a ha'penny will do,  
If you haven't got a ha'penny, God bless you.

SVD4 HOOTON ROBERTS

Albert Ward Notebook 2 p.76 22.10.75

Wish you a merry Christmas, happy New Year.  
Pocket full of money, barrel full of beer  
Horse and a gig and a good fat pig  
To serve you all next year.  
Please will you give me a Christmas box?

1. Hole.

SVD5 KEXBROUGH

F. Lambert Notebook 2 p.78 23.10.75

We wish you a merry Christmas,  
And a happy New Year,  
A pocket full of money,  
And a barrel full of beer.

SVD6 KEXBROUGH

John Slack Notebook 2 p.78 23.10.75

Hole in my stocking, hole in my clog,  
If you don't give me a penny, I'll punch your dog.

SVD7 RAWMARSH

Thomas Tonks Tape 14 24.11.75

I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year,  
Pocket full of money and a cellar full of beer,  
Horse and a gig and a good fat pig  
To last you all next year.

Hole in my stocking, hole in my shoe,  
Please will you give me a copper or two,  
If you haven't a penny, a ha'penny will do,  
If you haven't a ha'penny, God bless you.

SVDS8 UPPER DENBY

Lena Nicholson, Annie Heath Notebook 2 p.72 20.10.75

I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year,  
A purse full of gold, and a barrel full of beer,  
A good fat pig to kill every year.  
Please will you let me in?

Hole in my stocking, hole in my shoe .....  
If you haven't got a halfpenny .....

SVD9 WADSLEY

G. Horsfield Notebook 2 p.83 7.1.76

Happy New Year, happy New Year.  
I'm teetotal, I don't like beer.  
A bit of spice loaf, a bit of bread and cheese,  
A glass of cold water and give what you please.

SVD10 HEMINGFIELD

Laurence Evans Tape 17 17.2.76

Hole in my stocking, hole in my shoe,  
Please will you give me a copper or two,  
If you haven't a penny a ha'penny will do,  
If you haven't a ha'penny, God bless you.  
Please can I let your Christmas in?  
I wish you a merry Christmas, and a happy New Year  
A purse full of gold, and a barrel full of beer,  
Horse and a gig, and a good fat pig  
Will serve you all next year.  
Please can I let your Christmas in this year?  
Pull out your purse and think it no worse,  
And give poor lad a penny.  
If you haven't a penny, a ha'penny will do,  
If you haven't a ha'penny, God bless you.

SVD11 BRADFIELD

Mrs. N. Chapman Tape 19 23.4.77

We wish you a merry Christmas, and a happy New Year,  
A pocket full of money and a cellar full of beer,  
A horse and a gig and a good fat pig,  
To last you all next year.  
Please will you give me a copper or two?  
If you haven't a copper, a ha'penny will do,  
If you haven't a ha'penny, God bless you.

SVD12 HOLMES (ROTHERHAM)

Mr. J. Bullivant Notebook 3 p.9

I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year,  
Plenty of money and a cellar full of beer,  
Horse and a jig and a good fat pig to kill next year.  
If you haven't any silver, copper will do,  
If you haven't any copper, God bless you.

SVD13 GREASBOROUGH

Mrs. J.M. Stubbs Questionnaire 17

We wish you a merry Christmas  
And a happy new year  
Pocketful of money  
Cellarful of beer  
Horse and a gig  
And a good fat pig  
To last you all next year.

SVE Carolling

SVE1 KIMBERWORTH (ROTHERHAM)

Mary B. Robinson Letter 11 28.1.75

Hole in my pocket,  
Hole in my shoe,  
Please can you spare me  
A copper or two.  
If you haven't a copper  
A halfpenny will do,  
If you haven't a halfpenny,  
God bless you.

SVF Wassailing

SVF1 SHEFFIELD

Mrs. L. Bradbury Letter 3 30.12.74

(Sung)

Here we come a-wassailing amongst the leaves so green,  
And here we come a-wassailing the fairest to be seen,  
Love and joy come to you, and to you a wassail too,  
May God bless you, and send you a happy New Year.

(repeat from 'to')

(Spoken)

We wish you a merry Xmas  
And a happy New Year  
A pocket full of money  
And a barrel full of beer,  
A horse and a gig, and a good  
fat pig, to last you all next year.

SVF2 THORPE HESLEY

Robert Hague Tape 7 17.1.75

$\text{♩} = 80$

Here we come a wassailing a-mong the leaves so green. Here we come a wandering a fairy to be  
seen. Love and joy come to you and to our wassail too and God send you a happy New Year, Happy New  
Year, And God send you a happy New Year

Here we come a-wassailing among the leaves so green,  
Here we come a-wandering a fairy to be seen,  
Love and joy come to you, and to our wassail too,  
And God send you a happy New Year, happy New Year  
And God send you a happy New Year.

SVF3 THORPE HESLEY

Margaret Carnelly Tape 5 30.4.75

$\text{♩} = 88$

Here we come a - wassailing a - mong the leaves so green . And here we come a - wandering so  
fairy to be seen. Love and joy come to you , and to have a wassail too , And God  
send you a happy New Year a New Year, And God send you a happy New Year

(Sung)

1 Here we come a-wassailing among the leaves so green,  
Here we come a-wandering so fairy to be seen.

(Chorus) - Love and joy come to you, and to have a wassail too,  
And God send you a happy New Year, a New Year  
And God send you a happy New Year.

2 We are not daily beggars, that beg from door to door,  
We are your neighbours' children that you have seen before.

(Chorus)

3 We've got a little purse made of stretching leather skin,  
We want a little of your money to line it well within.

(Chorus)

SVF4 WEST MELTON

Mrs. Walker Tape 5 20.5.75

$\text{♩} = 60$

Here we come a wassailing a - mong the leaves so green, And here we come a wandering so  
fairer to be seen. Love and joy come to you and to you your wassail too, And God bless you and  
send you a happy New Year, And God bless you and send you a happy New Year.

- 1 Here we come a-wassailing among the leaves so green,  
And here we come a-wandering so fairer to be seen,  
(Chorus) - Love and joy come to you, and to your wassail too,  
And God bless you, and send you a happy New Year,  
And God bless you, and send you a happy New Year.
- 2 We are not daily beggars that beg from door to door,  
But we are neighbours' children that you have seen before.  
(Chorus)

SVF5 WENTWORTH

Miss C. Bartlett Tape 13 16.11.75

Here we come a-wassailing among the trees so green,  
Here we come a-wandering so fairly to be seen,  
Love and joy come to you, and to our wassail too,  
And God send you a happy New Year.

SVF6 RAWMARSH

Thomas Tonks Tape 14 24.11.75

$\text{♩} = 84$

Here we come a-wassailing a-mong the leaves so green, And here we come a wassailing so  
 lovely to be seen. Love and joy come to you and to our wassail too. May God send you a happy New  
 Year a New Year. May God send you a happy New Year.

Here we come a-wassailing among the leaves so green,  
 And here we come a-wassailing so lovely to be seen,  
 Love and joy come to you, and to our wassail too,  
 May God send you a happy New Year, a New Year  
 May God send you a happy New Year.

SVF7 WHISTON

Mrs. Eames Notebook 3 p.34 n.d.

Here we come a-wassailing among the leaves so green,  
 Here we come a-wassailing so fairly to be seen .....

SVF8 THORPE HESLEY

"Old Thorpe-wite" Letter 16 n.d.(1975)

(New Year, the wassailing carol followed by)

Happy New Year, Happy New Year  
 Old Year out, New Year in,  
 Please get up and let me in.

(Louder) - Happy New Year, please will you give me a New Year's gift?  
 Hole in stocking, hole in my shoe,  
 If you haven't a penny, a ha'penny will do,  
 If you haven't a halfpence, God bless you.

SVF9 SWALLOWNEST

Horace Shaw Tape 15 4.1.76

*d = 96*

Here we come a wassailing a-mong the leaves so green Here we come a singing the  
 fairest to be seen. Love and joy come to you and to you a wassail too. May God  
 send you a happy New Year, a New Year. May God bless you and send you a  
 happy New Year

Here we come a-wassailing, among the leaves so green,  
 Here we come a-singing, the fairest to be seen.  
 Love and joy come to you, and to you a wassail too,  
 May God send you a happy New Year, a New Year,  
 May God send you a happy New Year.

Good master and good mistress as you sit by the fire,  
 Pray think of us poor children, a-running in the mire.  
 Love and joy come to you, and to you a wassail too,  
 May God send you a happy New Year, a New Year,  
 May God bless you a happy New Year.

Old Year out, New Year in,  
 Please will you give me a New Years gift?  
 If you haven't got a penny,  
 A halfpenny will do,  
 If you haven't got a halfpenny,  
 God bless you.

SVF10 BRADFIELD

Nellie Chapman Tape 19 23.4.76

Sung - Here we come a-wassailing, among the leaves so green,  
 And now we go a-wandering, so fairly to be seen.  
 We're a jolly wessel, you're a jolly wessel  
 Joy come to you, and to our wessel boo,  
 Pray God send you a happy New Year,  
 Pray God send you a happy New Year. \*

Spoken - Hole in my stocking, hole in my shoe,  
 Please will you give us a copper or two?  
 If you haven't got a penny, a halfpenny will do,  
 If you haven't got a halfpenny, God bless you.

Alternative at New Year

Happy New Year, Happy New Year,  
 Pocket full of money, and a cellar full of beer.  
 If you haven't got a penny, a halfpenny will do,  
 If you haven't got a halfpenny, God bless you.

SVF11 SILKSTONE

Mrs Evelyn Bashforth Tape 20 4.4.77

*♩ = 102*

Here we come a wassailing a- mong the leaves so green, And here we come a- wandering so  
 fair to be seen. Love and joy come to you, and to your wassail too . May God send you a happy New  
 Year, a New Year, And God send you a happy New Year.

Here we come a-wassailing among the leaves so green,  
 And here we come a-wandering so fair to be seen,  
 Love and joy come to you, and to your wassail too,  
 May God send you a happy New Year, a New Year,  
 And God send you a happy New Year.

\* For tune see p. 96.

SVF12 THORPE HESLEY

Mrs Sylvester Notebook 3 p.11

Here we come a-wassailing among the leaves so green,  
Here we come a-wandering so fairy to be seen,  
Love and joy come to you, and to our wassail too  
And God send you a happy New Year.

SVF10 BRADFIELD

Musical Transcription

$\text{♩} = 98$

Here we come a wassailing a- mong the leaves so green, And now we go a wandering so  
fairy to be seen. Our jolly wessel , your jolly wessel . Love and  
joy come to you, And to our wessel boor , Pray God send you a happy New Year a New  
Year, Pray God send you a happy New Year.

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE COMPLEX VISIT

The essential distinction made in this study between the complex and the simple visit is that in the former a greater degree of interaction between participants is necessary. The complex visit is essentially a group activity, requiring dramatic characterisation, co-ordinated actions, dialogue and song. Although an individual might use some of these elements in a house-visit, the customs described in this chapter are distinguished from those already discussed by the need for a more formal group of performers.

The necessity of group co-operation and team-work has a number of consequences for this type of visit. Because of the greater length and complexity of the performances involved, much more organisation and preparation are required. It is not usually possible for such visits to be made without preparation. Words and tunes need some form of rehearsal; new members of teams have to be instructed in the appropriate actions for the character they are to play. Costumes and props have to be improvised or made, or stored from year to year. More attention also has to be given to the choice of house to be visited. A larger group with a longer performance requires a proportionately higher reward than an individual making a greater number of simple visits. Such teams would often concentrate on the larger houses in the locality, or perform to groups of several houses at once. This was the case for instance in those parts of Sheffield where working-class housing was often constructed around central "courts" onto which the doors of a number of houses would open. Another possible method of increasing the financial rewards from the visit was either to speed up or abridge the performance, so that a greater number of collections could be made within the time available.

The complex character of these visits also influenced the number of teams which could exist in any one community. A householder might welcome a number of simple visits because the donations expected would be small, but few people would enjoy either watching several "Old Tup" teams for example, or having to make the larger contributions expected by such groups more than once.

Perhaps because of this there was in some cases territorial rivalry between teams. This was a suitable occasion for the expression of the inter-gang rivalry which existed amongst childhood and adolescent peer groups, each claiming their own particular "spheres of influence". The competition for the greatest potential sources of reward, the largest houses in the community, would obviously heighten this rivalry.

Because there were fewer teams making complex visits, there are obviously fewer people who can give detailed information about the performances, as demonstrated in the collected data. However, even though there are inevitably fewer potential sources of information, people who took part in this type of visit seem in general to remember the performance in greater detail than many who made simple visits. This greater detail could be the result of two factors: firstly as these visits were complicated, there is a greater amount of detail which could be recalled; secondly people might remember more about them because they were more unusual and thus more significance would be attached to them.

We have seen that the majority of simple visits were made during the midwinter period, including Christmas and New Year. This concentration on the main annual period of celebration and festivity is even more marked in the complex visit. Apart from an unsubstantiated possibility that the Grenoside Sword team at one time visited at another time of year, all the complex visits are concentrated into this short period. Some folklorists are of the opinion that this concentration is ultimately due to what Alford terms the "magico-religious"<sup>1</sup> significance of the midwinter period, "the nadir of nature, the lowest position of an enfeebled Sun and decay of vegetation."<sup>2</sup> This might indeed once have been the cause for this concentration, but the state of the vegetation, and the importance of the sun's position have held little "magico-religious" significance for the South Yorkshire steelworker and coalminer for many decades, if not centuries.

1. Alford, (1962), p.201.

2. Ibid.

The significance of this time of year and the reason for the number of house-visits then, will surely be in the fact that it is a time of general holiday and celebration, as Firestone puts it, "A period when the community celebrates its identity."<sup>3</sup>

The linking of complex visits to "magico-religious" beliefs and practices is a recurrent theme in folklore scholarship. These theories will be one of the aspects discussed in the following sections, and their validity will be examined in relation to the fieldwork data. The two animal-disguise customs have been grouped together; the more widespread Old Tup performance is examined first, followed by that of the Old Horse. The final section deals with the only example of a sword-dance team which made house-visits in the study area. The discussion begins with an account of the visit which in the past has attracted more interest than any other, namely the Hero-Combat play.

3. Melvin M. Firestone, "Mummers and Strangers in Northern Newfoundland", in Halpert and Story (1969), p. 201.

## 1. The Hero-Combat Play

No house-visit custom has been the subject of more consistent scholarly attention than the "mummers' play" of which the Hero-Combat type is the most widespread form<sup>4</sup>. Much of the interest has centred on the origins of these plays, almost to the exclusion of any other aspect. In the following discussion, whilst examining the major theories put forward, greater attention will be given to what I regard as a more interesting and significant area for study, namely the relationship between the visit and its host community.

Most recent British folklorists have expressed the opinion that the play, as Helm writes, "..... is best considered as an action, that it has its origins in primitive religious beliefs, and that it is the most widespread men's ceremonial which survived into this century."<sup>5</sup>

Many parallels have been drawn with analogous customs in the Balkan Region, which Dean-Smith regards as

"A comparatively complete view of a drama that, in England, is as fragmented, and consequently meaningless as the disjunct pieces of a jig-saw puzzle."<sup>6</sup>

This theory of origin for the mummers' play is based on the idea that the performers are enacting a representation of the cycle of birth, life and death which is a vestigial part of rituals once practised in order to ensure the continuing fertility of the earth. The supporters of the theory regard the texts of the plays as of secondary importance, as Dean-Smith states:

"The Play, and any significance it may have resides in the action: the text is a local accretion, often both superfluous and irrelevant. The Play can exist in action alone, without a word spoken."<sup>7</sup>

4. A. Brody, The English Mummers and their Plays, (Philadelphia, 1969);  
Cawte, Helm and Peacock, (1967);  
Chambers, (1933);  
Gailey, (Cork, 1969);  
Glassie, (1975);  
Tiddy, (1923).
5. Helm, (1965), 118.
6. M. Dean-Smith, "An Un-Romantic View of the Mummers' Play", Theatre Research, (1966), vol. 8, Part 2, p. 91.
7. Dean-Smith, (1958), p. 244.

However, as long ago as 1933, Chambers, whilst quoting the famous comment made to Dr. Marett by an Oxfordshire mummer, "Oh, you wouldn't have women in that; it's more like being in church,"<sup>8</sup> which perhaps supports a quasi-religious interpretation of the play, sounded a note of caution concerning such theories about the Hero-Combat:

"It would be logical to think of the Antagonist as the New Year, slaying his father the Old Year ..... But one must be chary of attributing too much symbolism to primitive man."<sup>9</sup>

It would seem equally incautious to "attribute symbolism" to modern house-visit performers.

Other theories have been put forward, including the idea that the play's most important element is the cure of the defeated combatant by the Doctor. As noted earlier, the American scholar Kirby regards this as a relic of shamanistic beliefs.<sup>10</sup> But the most plausible interpretation of the play in recent years has been that of other Americans, notably Halpert and Abrahams. The latter condemns the life-cycle interpretation on the following grounds:

"To regard 'the original life-cycle play' as a total statement of the cycle is to place folk religious practice into the sophisticated and abstract frame of reference of philosophical religion."<sup>11</sup>

In other words, the "life-cycle" theory assumes a level of philosophical consciousness surely absent in most of the communities in which the custom has existed. Abrahams and Halpert<sup>12</sup> believe that the play should be viewed as a part of a complete cultural context, and that to examine it in isolation from either the rest of the mumming complex or from the social environment in which it exists, is to ignore a great deal of significant information. By observing how the play fits in with other house-visiting customs, how it is regarded by performers and audience and by generally asking the sort of questions posed in the fieldwork for this study, it is possible to try to understand the real contemporary function of the Hero-Combat.

8. Chambers, (1933), p.5.

9. Ibid, p.226.

10. Kirby; (1971), 275 - 288, see Chapter One, p.4 .

11. Abrahams, (1970), 242.

12. Halpert and Story, (1969), p.3.

Merely to add to the already numerous suppositions about prehistoric fertility rites seems futile.

The earliest reference to a recognisable mummers' play in the study area, as opposed to a mumming visit without a play, was made in 1822 by Hunter.<sup>13</sup> According to Helm, he noted that the mummers were:

"Fantastically dressed and nine or ten in number, included St George, the King of Egypt's son, an apothecary, Slasher and a Fool."<sup>14</sup>

In his "Hallamshire Glossary" published in 1823, Hunter defines "mummers" in this way:

"This is the name of parties of youths who go about at Christmas fantastically dressed, performing a short dramatic piece of which St George is the hero. The other characters are the King of Egypt; his son; Slasher; an apothecary; and a fool."<sup>15</sup>

Helm also mentions another early reference, from the papers of Ordish, to a performance at Kimberworth, which is now a suburb of Rotherham, from about 1820:

"Mummers who wore very fine ribbons, hats covered with bows and streamers and who fought with wooden swords."<sup>16</sup>

Throughout the last century there were reports of performances in the study area. Juliana Ewing, the daughter of Alfred Gatty, who was himself for more than sixty years vicar of Ecclesfield, noted in her diary that, in the evening on Christmas day 1863:

"The St George Mummers came."<sup>17</sup>

She also recorded the visits of mummers at Christmas 1861 and 1864.

13. Rev. J. Hunter, Popular Traditions, Proverbs, Forms of Expression, Words and other Antiquities of the Common People, (MS., 1822).
14. A. Helm, "The Dramatic Action in the Vicinity of Sheffield," Lore and Language, [Vol. 1], no. 2, (1970).
15. Hunter, (1823), p. 67.
16. Helm, (1970), 2.
17. Hunter Archaeological Society MS. Collection, 40, 41.

Juliana Ewing followed in her mother's<sup>18</sup> footsteps and became a children's writer. In later years, she published a story entitled "The Peace Egg"<sup>19</sup>, centred on a children's performance of a mumming play. To this story she appended her own edited version of the play in which she took care to:

"Cut out everything that could possibly offend."<sup>20</sup>

Ivor Gatty, in an article on 'Juliana's sister Mrs H.K.F. Eden's collection of mumming plays, recounts an interesting story from his family about this edited version:

"This had an unfortunate result, according to an old gentleman in the parish who can well remember the mummers coming round with the traditional version, since his uncle, thinking that this literary text must be the best, had copies printed and circulated among the children - and killed the mumming stone-dead."<sup>21</sup>

As we shall see in the section on the "Old Tup", this story was not altogether accurate. However, this circulation of a printed version of the play was by no means unique. A number of printers produced chapbooks, usually entitled "The Peace Egg" which were sold at local newsagents in the weeks before Christmas.<sup>22</sup> Chapbooks were produced by printers in Leeds, Bradford, and notably by William Walker and Sons of Otley who, according to Preston, Smith and Smith were still printing the play after the First World War. Manchester printers, as well as their Yorkshire colleagues, sold their versions in Sheffield. In a letter to Mr Arnold Freeman of the YMCA, who appealed via the Sheffield Daily Telegraph<sup>23</sup> for information about the mummers' play, Mr A.B.Mettam of Broomhill, Sheffield recalls buying a chapbook printed by Abel Heywood of Manchester in about 1860.<sup>24</sup> J. Charles Cox, who edited the 1903 edition of Strutt's The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, mentions buying chapbooks of the play "..... in Sheffield market place in 1869 and again in 1878."<sup>25</sup>

18. Margaret Gatty .

19. J.H.Ewing, The Peace Egg, (London and Brighton, n.d.) .

20. Ewing, p.41 .

21. Gatty, "The Eden Collection of Mumming Plays", Folk-Lore, vol.59 (1948), p.16 .

22. M.J.Preston, M.G.Smith and P.S.Smith, An Interim Checklist of Chapbooks containing Traditional Play Texts, (Newcastle, 1976) .

23. Op.cit., 9.1.1920, 6g .

24. Letter dated 9.1.21, Carpenter Collection, MSS.273 (13), Archives Division, Sheffield City Libraries .

25. Op.cit., p 274 .

However, the circulation of chapbooks was not the only source from which words were learned. The two ex-performers recorded for this study recalled learning the words from other members of the team. This could have been the more common method of learning parts. Chapbooks were perhaps more often used for establishing new teams. Existing groups certainly used to teach new participants as they assumed their roles, starting with the simplest and shortest parts, like "Little Devil Doubt" and in subsequent years progressing to major parts like St George or the Doctor.

The Hero-Combat or St George play, as far as can be ascertained, although surviving in other parts of the region<sup>26</sup>, was not performed in the study area after the First World War. It is by no means certain why this type of complex visit did not survive as long as the animal disguise customs described in the following sections. However, it seems reasonable to suggest that the changing social structure, and more particularly the declining importance and local involvement of the aristocracy and landed gentry, tended to encourage the survival of the simpler sorts of visit. The latter did not involve the learning of lengthy speeches, did not need large groups of rehearsed performers, and could be performed quickly, in a relatively small area. In this way financial success could be more effectively assured.

One obvious result of this relatively early decline is the scarcity of information about the play and its performance. It was difficult to find people of a sufficient age to have taken part who remembered the house-visit in detail so that more than the most basic record of performance could be made. I was quite fortunate, apart from recording a number of people who had heard of the play in their area, to record two gentlemen, both over eighty years of age, who actually took part in it. One of them knew by heart large, if somewhat unconnected sections of the play, whilst the other recalled, in a fair degree of detail, the background to their annual performance.

26. See for example, Worksop, Notts in Cawte, Helm and Peacock, (1967), p.55.

The first man, Mr. Cyrus Casey of Hemingfield, was 88 when interviewed. He performed the play for a few years after he left school, in about 1899. He then lived in the nearby mining community of Jump. He learned the text from the other performers and did not remember ever seeing the words in print. The group, as he recalled, used to practise in a pigsty:

"We used to go in t'pig 'oil rehearsing ..... ee, them were t'days in t'pig 'oil."<sup>27</sup>

The words which he knew, whilst not being identical, show a great deal of similarity with the chapbook versions already mentioned. The characters he recalled were also standard chapbook ones: St George, whom he himself played, Slasher, Beelzebub, Doctor, Hector, Prince of Paradise, and Little Devil Doubt. He did not remember either the Fool, or the King of Egypt, who complete the chapbook cast. This size of cast corresponded roughly with the number of names of fellow performers remembered. He recalled four other actors, and the names of seven characters. Unfortunately, there was little more that he could remember about the performance. The verses he knew had apparently stayed in his otherwise fading memory because they had become something of a "party piece" which he would recite when called upon to do so in his local pub. He did however remember something of the "glory" of his former exploits:

"I were St George. I killed 'em all."<sup>28</sup>

The other ex-performer, Mr Sidney Tuxford, was interviewed at his home in Wentworth. He was a member of a team formed in the nearby hamlet of Street. He was eighty-one when recorded, and performed the play when he was between ten and twelve years of age, in the first few years of this century. His was the normal age for taking part in the visit. As he describes, leaving school was the signal to put aside such "childish" practices:

"No, some would drop out, leave school and start work. Then it were beneath your dignity, then you'd to train somebody else. There were always plenty willing to come on, to learn it."<sup>29</sup>

- 27. Tape 2.
- 28. Tape 2.
- 29. Tape 6.

He remembered quite a few details of the background to the performance, but unfortunately, little of the play itself. He recalled that the team was organised by an adult, the father of some of the boys taking part:

"This chap that used to be ..... sort of conductor, Jack Wadsworth. I don't know where he got it from but ..... of course in them days these things were rife all up and down."<sup>30</sup>

Again the words were not learned from print directly, although it is of course possible that the "conductor" had a copy of a chapbook. The characters he remembered were the Jester (the part he took himself), St George, Devil Doubt and Slasher. The play was rehearsed for a number of weeks before Christmas, not as the Jump team did, in a pigsty, but in a chicken-shed with certain inevitable consequences:

"There used to be a little outbuilding outside of it, used to keep poultry in it and there used to be nine or ten or a dozen and we used to crowd in this place and when we come (home) we had to strip all off, for fleas."<sup>31</sup>

His Jester's costume was reminiscent of the illustration used in a number of chapbooks<sup>32</sup> showing a Punch-like figure with stick, and pointed hat with bell on:

"Used to come down wi' a funny hat on, you know - curled top ..... (costume) It were just a light bit o'fabric all patched up. Bells on t'hat and I had a bit of a stick with some fancy thing on the end."<sup>33</sup>

The play was performed, not just on one evening, but throughout the period between Christmas and New Year. As with the other complex performances, in comparison with the simple visits, fewer audiences could be performed to, and perhaps more significantly, could be collected from, in an evening, as the former Jester recalled:

"Well, it was such a long play you couldn't get very far ..... Hooper House, that would take an evening. Wentworth House, you'd be there all evening."<sup>34</sup>

30. Tape 5.

31. Tape 5(b).

32. Eg. The Peace Egg published by J. Johnson, Leeds. Listed in Preston, Smith and Smith (1976), p.20.

33. Tape 5.

34. Tape 6.

Performances were restricted to evenings, periods of comparative leisure, and also the time when social gatherings took place at which the team would be welcome:

"It were always in the evenings, 'cause we had schooling to do and whatnot."<sup>35</sup>

The group would have agreed meeting places before an evening's visit, depending on where they were going:

"If we were coming, say to Street, we'd all meet at Street Lane End."<sup>36</sup>

They had no means of transport, and so walked everywhere. Consequently the area in which they made visits was limited for physical reasons, but there were also social and communal boundaries which were recognised and respected. They never, for example, performed in Wentworth itself, because it was the most prestigious community in Lord Fitzwilliam's estate:

"No, they wouldn't allow us. My God, it were sacred ground here. We couldn't come down here. Carr's Lodge, that were our boundary."<sup>37</sup>

The houses selected for visiting would include most of the households in the hamlets of Street, Hooper and Coaley Lane, but some would have to be excluded for reasons of size:

"Aye, but they all wouldn't just have us in y'know. You'd to chance your luck when you went. Course, they hadn't room y'know. There were too many of you for a little cottage. You couldn't do it properly either wi'knocking chairs over, tables or whatnot."<sup>38</sup>

Sometimes householders with young children would also not let them in:

"If you went to a house and they'd got kiddies in bed, by Jove you got 'get out on it!'"<sup>39</sup>

Naturally, the houses where the potential rewards were greatest received the most attention. Mr. Tuxford remembered two examples in particular.

- 35. Tape 6.
- 36. Tape 6.
- 37. Tape 6.
- 38. Tape 6.
- 39. Tape 6.

Hooper House, which belonged to, and was periodically occupied by, members of the Fitzwilliam family took up one complete evening's visiting, as would the main family residence, the largest private house in England, Wentworth Woodhouse:

"Wentworth House you'd be there all evening. It was Boxing night we used to go to Wentworth House. That was always an understood thing that that was party time at Wentworth House. The family was always at Wentworth for Christmas."<sup>40</sup>

There is no doubt that complex visits in particular depended upon the patronage of families like the Fitzwilliams, who could afford to adequately reward a large group of performers. However the money was not collected from the audience, as would normally be the case, despite at least one attempt recollected by Mr Tuxford:

"..... This lad who used to go round wi't'tin, Lyles Golden Syrup tin we had, you know, with a little slit in t'top. Course if he got that full he'd done well ..... and of course he went round all t'guests in the house, you see. They were all crowded round in t'Pillared Hall. We didn't get a bloomin' ..... not a ha'penny. Course they didn't carry money about wi'them, you know."<sup>41</sup>

Fortunately for the boys, despite their lack of knowledge about such social events, they still got their reward:

"When we'd finished, old Garton, (he were t'Steward then) said 'His Lordship says you're all to go in t'servants' hall and have your supper' ..... and he sent us in two golden sovereigns, his Lordship. So we didn't do so bad after that."<sup>42</sup>

This last comment is rather an understatement, the more usual donation in more humble surroundings being a penny or twopence.

At the end of their visiting for the year, the performers would share out the proceeds:

40. Tape 6.

41. Tape 5.

42. Tape 5.

"We used to share out when we finished. It used to be counted out, and entered in a little pocket-book, and when we'd finished for the season, that were it. It were all shared out, equally."<sup>43</sup>

The props and costumes would be discarded or returned to normal usage. Only if an item was particularly good, perhaps a wooden sword, would it be kept for use another year.

Of the performance itself, Mr Tuxford unfortunately remembered little after they arrived at the door:

"When you'd come to the door you'd just say 'Do you want the Mummers, Mrs So and So?'"<sup>44</sup>

He did recall, though, some of the attitudes of the community towards the visit. For example, when asked why visits were made, he was quite clear:

"To get a bit o'entertainment and to get a bob or two, for sweets and cigarettes."<sup>45</sup>

He also thought the main reason they were usually well received was that they provided welcome entertainment during the Christmas holiday. The bringing of luck, or any other superstition or quasi-religious belief connected with the play was completely unknown to him, unlike the Oxfordshire Mummer who thought "..... this here mumming to be more like Parson's work"<sup>46</sup>, an opinion which neatly fitted in with the "life-cycle" interpretation of the play.

In conclusion, Mr. Tuxford also remembered that the quality of the acting was not always of the highest standard, particularly when performances were given in the more important houses:

43. Tape 6.

44. Tape 6.

45. Tape 6.

46. R.R.Marrett, "Survival and Revival", Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, vol 1, no.2, (Dec 1933), 75.

"A lot of them were no good. They used to get stage-fright, you know. They'd be brave till they go into t'house and they'd forget a line and someone'd have to prompt them, 'Go on, so and so' you know. Someone'd prompt you and if they were close, they'd give you a kick on t'ankles 'So and so, you silly bugger'."47

Such descriptions hardly seem compatible with the view that the play is a re-enactment of an ancient mystic ritual. It was quite evident from the attitudes of both the men who as children actually performed in the play that its purpose was entertainment, and that their motives were amusement and the collection of rewards, particularly money, as Mr Tuxford commented:

"We always went for hard cash."48

It is difficult to draw any definite conclusions with regard to the pattern of distribution of the Hero-Combat Play in the study area for a number of reasons. Firstly, the data is of insufficient quantity for conclusions to be valid; at best only suppositions can be made. No printed record has been found in the area of performances since the First World War and for this reason alone information to corroborate fieldwork data is hard to come by, as has already been pointed out<sup>49</sup>. Secondly, existing documentary records cannot be relied upon to give an accurate representation of where the play was performed. The interest of a particular person can produce a great deal of information at a particular moment, when previously only passing references had been made to the play. Such an interest was shown by Freeman when he appealed for information through the pages of the Sheffield Daily Telegraph<sup>50</sup>. Thomas Ratcliffe gathered material in a similar fashion in the Sheffield Daily Independent more than forty years earlier<sup>51</sup>. The same means of collecting data has also been used in the course of this study. It seems obvious that for every person who makes the effort to contact the enquirer, there must be many who do not get round to it, and even more who either miss the appeal, or do not read a newspaper at all.

47. Tape 6.

48. Tape 6.

49. NB. p. 104

50. 9th Jan, 1920, 6g.

51. 23rd Dec., 1875.

Others who know of the enquiries may not wish to reply for reasons of their own. The production of really significant distribution statistics would require a considerable expenditure of time and resources by a team of researchers rather than one individual.

However, it still seems worthwhile to attempt to draw certain tentative conclusions. Cawte, Helm and Peacock<sup>52</sup> list nine records of the performance of Hero-Combat plays in the study area. My own collection now includes twenty-one such references, more than double the previous total. Of these twenty-one, eight of the reports are from my own fieldwork, the remainder are from various printed and manuscript sources. Thus it can at least be concluded that the play was once much more commonly performed than previous evidence suggests. One may also conclude that it was neither an exclusively rural nor an urban phenomenon and was acted in the courtyards of Sheffield as well as in estate villages like Hooton Pagnell. The absence of data from the towns in the Dearne valley probably results from the major social upheavals which took place as a consequence of the massive population growth following the rapid expansion of the coal-mining industry in the early years of this century. The absence of reports from the western villages perhaps is due to the relative smallness of those communities and the resultant difficulties both in forming and maintaining teams as well as finding sufficiently numerous, or sufficiently wealthy, audiences to make the performances worthwhile.

The difficulties which hinder the analysis of the distribution of the play also hamper the study of variation between performances. The only lengthy extract from the play recorded in the course of the study was from Jump. It was rather confused, and the correct sequence of actors' speeches could not be exactly ascertained.

52. Cawte, Helm and Peacock, (1967), pp.63-65.

Only three other texts have been noted in the study area, from Penistone,<sup>53</sup> Whiston<sup>54</sup> and Hooton Pagnell<sup>55</sup>, all published in the first quarter of this century. They all follow closely, if not exactly, the chapbook text already referred to.<sup>56</sup> The Fool introduces the play and the next character, St George, who fights and defeats Slasher, who is then cured by the Doctor. St George is then challenged by and defeats the Prince of Paradine who is mourned by his father, the King of Egypt, who is the next character to appear. He calls upon Hector to defeat St George, but the saint is triumphant yet again. A short argument between St George and the Fool is followed by the entrance of two characters extraneous to the "plot", first Beelzebub, and then Devil Doubt. This latter character whilst taking no great part in the play performs the highly essential job of initiating the collection. It is perhaps his importance in this context which has led to the relatively large number of fragments of plays which include his speech, which is also found in some versions of "the Old Tup" play:

"In comes I, little Devil Doubt,  
If you don't give me money I'll sweep you all out.  
Money I want, money I crave  
If you don't give me money  
I'll sweep you all to the grave."<sup>57</sup>

One major variation occurs in the Hooton Pagnell version; Devil Doubt is replaced by Johnny Jack, a character who does not appear in the standard chapbook version but is found in mummers' plays in other parts of the country. Tiddy includes a play from Burghclere in Hampshire, for example, in which Johnny Jack appears<sup>58</sup>. This variation could be due to a chapbook version I have been unable to discover, or perhaps it is the result of the arrival in the village of people from another part of the country where Johnny Jack was a favourite character.

53. J.N.Dransfield, A History of the Parish of Penistone, (Penistone, 1906), pp.133-134  
 54. H.Armitage, Sorrelysykes, (London, 1913), pp.25-41.  
 55. C.E.Whiting, "A Plough Monday Play", Durham University Journal, vol.XXIV, no.1. (Dec.1923), 39-43  
 56. NB, p.(15):  
 57. Text CVA3, Tape 5.  
 58. Tiddy, (1923), pp.185-191.

The addition or substitution of characters from other traditions is more commonly observed in the Old Tup, but amongst the Hero-Combat plays, Hooton Pagnell is not unique in this aspect. A most unusual Hero-Combat play was sent to me, unfortunately anonymously, from Sheffield. It is apparently an amalgam of several plays, and considerably shortened, presumably to increase the collection by enabling the team to make more performances. In this version the play is introduced by a chorus line formed by three of the actors:

"3 joined hands in a line skipped on the spot swinging legs in turn  
(like chorus girls - front and sideways) chanting  
'Here come 3 merry, merry black boys  
As black as black can be  
We've just arrived from India  
Our parents for to see  
We are the boys that dress so neat  
India-rubber legs and bread and butter feet  
We all know how to use them  
As you can plainly see.'"<sup>59</sup>

A Knight threatens Slasher. They fight, Slasher falls, a Doctor is called for, and comes and cures him. Then "Me and Our Old Lass", characters found in the Old Tup play, introduce themselves and sing part of the "Derby Ram" song, a central feature of the play in which they are more usually found. Devil Doubt then introduces himself and asks for money. The performance concludes with the group chanting the rhyme associated with letting in the New Year as described in the previous chapter.<sup>60</sup>

This brief play is interesting for a number of reasons. Some of the dialogue is similar to the chapbook texts, for example the argument between the Knight and Slasher. The Doctor's speech, however, short though it is, is quite different in that it gives him a name:

"Here am I - Doctor Brown  
The best doctor in the town ....."<sup>61</sup>

59. Text CVA2 .

60. See above, p.44 .

61. Text CVA2, Letter 1 .

The Doctor is not named in the chapbook version but a similar speech occurs in a play once performed in Kirk Hallam, a mining village near Ilkeston in Derbyshire. In this play the Doctor enters with the words:

"My name is Doctor M.D.Brown,  
The finest doctor in the town."<sup>62</sup>

Brown and town, of course represent a fairly obvious rhyme pattern, but for these two versions to have developed independently seems unlikely. What seems more probable is that this play is a product of the social upheaval caused by migration into the urban areas of South Yorkshire. The play presumably developed as a result of the amalgamation of several traditions: the chapbook type play, the apparently less print-influenced versions from other areas including Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, and the Old Tup play. Everyone would be aware of the function of mumming, audiences would be expecting such visits, and thus the text was probably put together to satisfy demands, for a continuity of tradition, for entertainment, and for financial reward.

Although an analysis of play variation within the area is almost impossible because of the lack of textual material, some comparison can be made by listing the characters recalled by some informants. An examination of the following table formed from these listings shows quite clearly three main features: firstly the limited number of characters used, secondly their similarity to the chapbook cast lists, and thirdly the relative significance of certain of these characters.

62. R.Meynell, "Come Brave Bow Slash and his men", Derbyshire Countryside, vol. XXIII, no. 1, 23.

Characters from Study Area Hero-Combat Performances

	F	S G	S	D	K	P	H	B	DD	M	OL	JJ
Chapbook	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Chapelton +	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Deepcar +									X			
Ecclesfield +		X										
Hemingfield +			X									
Hillsborough +	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Hooton Pagnell T	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X
Jump *	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X			
Malin Bridge +		X		X		X						
Penistone T	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			
Platts Common*				X								
Sheffield T		?	X	X					X	X	X	
Street*	X	X	X					X	X			
Thorpe Hesley*	X	X							X			
Whiston(?)T	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Wickersley*								X	X			
Worsborough+	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X			
TOTALS	9	12	10	10	6	8	6	8	11	1	1	1

Key: + = Cast list only  
 F = Fool  
 D = Doctor  
 H = Hector  
 M = Me

T = Full Text  
 SG = St George  
 K = King  
 B = Beelzebub  
 OL = Old Lass

\* = Fragments only  
 S = Slasher  
 P = Prince  
 DD = Devil Doubt  
 JJ = Johnny Jack

Only two plays, from Hooton Pagnell and Sheffield, include actors' parts not found in the chapbook. Of the characters recalled by informants, St George, Slasher and the Doctor are among the most remembered, presumably because the first combat with St George and the subsequent cure by the Doctor had more of an impact on performer and audience alike and also their speeches are among the longest. Another character, who seems particularly well-remembered is Devil Doubt. His popularity might seem unusual, since his part is one of the smallest, often performed by the youngest member of the group. However, his role in finishing off the play, and perhaps more importantly, in initiating the collection, as noted above, appears to have caused his name to live on in people's minds when others have been forgotten.

Perhaps because of the relatively high degree of attention the mummers' play has received, it is all too easy to spend a great deal of time analysing the available data in the light of previous scholarship. Much more time could indeed have been given to searching for more information on this particular house-visit and following up all possible lines of enquiry. For example, an interesting fragment of Slasher's speech, quite unlike the standard chapbook version referred to, was recorded from a man brought up in Swallownest, just to the south of the study area:

"In comes Bold Slasher as you may suppose  
I can beat many nations with my copper nose  
The Serbs, the Croats and the Turks,  
I can beat old Bonaparte, make his heart smart."<sup>63</sup>

But, interesting as such fragments certainly are, as is the custom as a whole, the St George play is only one of many house-visits which have existed locally. It is unfortunate that more information was not discovered to substantiate the interesting findings that were made.

63. Text CVA6, Tape 16, cp. Oliver Cromwell speech in Gailey, (1969), p. 54 and Halpert and Story, (1969), p. 206.

In conclusion, it is worth reiterating that there is no evidence from the study area that this particular house-visit has been anything more than a form of traditional entertainment, performed by older children for fun and for money. There is also no evidence that the visit helped to ensure crop-fertility or even that it was regarded as "lucky". What the performance did achieve was to establish dyadic relationships between householders, who enjoyed feeling generous towards the mummers at the special time of year, and the performers who through the play and similar activities were, at an age of transition between dependent child and wage-earner, beginning to become more independent, indeed to act for themselves.

## 2. The Old Tup

Unlike the Hero-Combat play, the Old Tup has attracted comparatively little scholarly attention. The visit involves the singing of a song, the "Derby Ram", with suitable accompanying gestures, and sometimes dialogue, which help to describe as the verses do, firstly the enormous size of the creature, secondly its death at the hands of a butcher, and thirdly the division of its carcass amongst the people of the city which gave it its name.

There are several possible reasons for the relative neglect of the Old Tup by folklorists. The custom is limited in its geographical spread, unlike the Hero-Combat play, and it has apparently not been traditionally performed in the more rural areas of England where the majority of folklorists have concentrated their attention. The Old Tup is also a considerably shorter performance, usually with fewer characters and much less extensive dialogue than the Hero-Combat play. The interesting combination of song and dialogue in a form similar to "cante-fable"<sup>64</sup> has aroused surprisingly little comment. The earliest records of its performance (c.1845) are not as old as references to the Hero-Combat<sup>65</sup>, and having rarely been performed by adults, the Old Tup might less easily be accorded the same degree of "ritual significance" as other customs in which adult members of the community took an active part.

64. See J. Jacobs, English Fairy Tales, (London, 1892), pp.241-243.

65. Cawte, (Cambridge and Totowa, 1978), p.117 and M.P.(eacock), "Christmas-Tup", Notes and Queries 9th Series, vol.II, (Oct.29th, 1898), 348.

Those writers who have discussed the Old Tup have however also concentrated their attention on hypothetical origins, rather than on the more fruitful areas of transmission, distribution and function. Nettel, for example, puts forward the view that:

"Beneath the innocent customs lies an old belief that the community is suffering from the unconfessed crimes of its members. The community must be purified, the air cleansed; sacrifice is needed - someone must be chosen as a scape-goat, to expiate the sins of all. In Derbyshire and south-west Yorkshire the scapegoat is the Derby Ram."<sup>66</sup>

Lloyd regards the Old Tup as:

"..... a relic not merely of times when the food animal was worshipped as a god, but of even remoter days when Stone Age hunters first put on animal hides as a camouflage when stalking their quarry."<sup>67</sup>

Even Addy, a local writer with personal experience of the custom, succumbed to the temptation, perhaps inevitable in his day, of seeing in the Old Tup a relic of pre-Christian beliefs, and of ancient tribal ritual. He believed the origin of the custom to be a Norse creation myth in which the frost giant, Ymir, is slain by the sons of Bor. His body is divided up, and the world created from its various parts. Although this aspect of the myth is similar to the description of the distribution of parts of the Old Tup amongst the people of Derby, this does not seem to be sufficient cause for Addy's assertion that:

"The Old Tup was the giant Ymir, and the mummers of my childhood were acting the drama of the Creation."<sup>68</sup>

This apparent urge to discover in the Old Tup the relics of pagan custom and belief, is undoubtedly motivated by the ideas of early anthropologists and folklorists like E.B.Tylor who thought, as Dorson notes, that:

"In the folklore of peasants, the observer could witness on the edge of his own enlightened culture the relics of barbaric rites."<sup>69</sup>

66. R.Nettel, Sing a Song of England, A Social History of Traditional Song, (London, 1954), p.32 .

67. A.L.Lloyd, Folk Song in England, (London, 1967), p.97.

68. Addy, (1895), p.XXI .

69. Dorson, (1968), p.195 .

Materials collected during the period in which Addy was actively involved in the study of folklore, were frequently treated like rare archaeological discoveries, which might provide insights into vanished lifestyles. Although this approach resulted in many interesting publications, it also inhibited other approaches to the study of such customs. Survivalist theories like those put forward by Nettel, Lloyd and Addy use customs such as the Old Tup as rather tenuous evidence of the supposed survival of relics of totemism, ritual sacrifice and creation myths. They ignore the considerable significance of such house-visiting customs in the study of communal behaviour and beliefs.

The more recent studies of folk drama have been less convinced of the Tup's quasi-religious significance. Whilst maintaining that the Hero-Combat play is indeed a ritual dramatisation of the life-cycle, Cawte, Helm and Peacock regard the Old Tup as:

"merely a dramatisation of the song."<sup>70</sup>

To thus attach so much less significance to the Tup seems somewhat contradictory. I hope that in this study, an overview of the whole complex of house-visiting in a particular area can be presented in the belief that to isolate any particular element of the complex, to the exclusion of others, is to present a distorted and incomplete picture. It is surely not insignificant that Abrahams, a folklorist who has helped to pioneer a more balanced approach to house-visiting and folk drama in general, should discover examples in the West Indies of other folk plays apart from Hero-Combats, including one about a bull which he compares with the Old Tup.<sup>71</sup>

It is my contention that the concentration of folk drama scholars on the Hero-Combat play has led to the false concept that this play is of greater significance to the community than any other.

70. Cawte, Helm and Peacock (1967), p. 15.

71. Abrahams, (1970), 241.

The fieldwork data collected about the Old Tup for this study is more extensive than that concerning the Hero-Combat, and it clearly shows that the two visits fulfilled similar roles in the community, and that in both visits the attitudes of both actors and audience to the performance were similar. There is admittedly some difference in the scale of the visit; the cast is generally larger in the Hero-Combat plays for example, but if the functions of the visits are shown to have been similar in the study area, then in the absence of contrary evidence, it is possible to suggest that this was also true in other areas and in former times. It could be argued, as the survivalists claim, that the Old Tup and Hero-Combat are vestigial remains of pre-Christian fertility rites. However, more significantly it is beyond doubt, as many local people confirm, that they are important examples of seasonal popular entertainment. The visit provided, among other things, entertainment for the audience, the pleasure of giving, and for the performer intrinsic fun and extrinsic interest in the pleasure of receiving.

It is reasonably certain that the Old Tup has been performed as a popular entertainment in the district for at least a hundred and twenty years. There is a definite report of a visit by a Tup team in the diary of Juliana Ewing. On December 25th 1863 she wrote that, in the evening:

"The St George Mummers came. Then the 'Old Tup'. Then the waits."<sup>72</sup>

It is not apparent from this comment that the "St George Mummers" were of greater significance than the other visitors. Addy recalled seeing the Old Tup in his native Norton, now a southern suburb of Sheffield, in the previous decade:

"Both 'the old tup' and 'the old horse' were performed at Norton and Dronfield when I was a boy, about 1855."<sup>73</sup>

72. Hunter Archaeological Society Collection, Archives Division, Sheffield City Libraries.

73. Addy, (1907), p.35.

Since neither of these records of performance suggests that the Old Tup was an innovation, it seems reasonable to assume that the performance dates back at least to the first half of the nineteenth century, and possibly earlier. It should be remembered that the earliest recognisable versions of the Hero-Combat play were only published in 1770.<sup>74</sup>

Versions of the song "the Derby Ram" associated with the visit, were printed in a collection of Scottish songs in 1827,<sup>75</sup> and in "Gimcrackiana" by Geoffrey Gimcrack (J. S. Gregson) of Manchester in 1833.<sup>76</sup> These early versions could be regarded as evidence of a longer history for the custom, but the song itself has been widely collected in the British Isles, North America and Australia,<sup>77</sup> on its own, without any associated performance or house-visit. The link of the visit and the song into a complete house-visiting custom seems to be found only in the counties of Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, and on the fringes of Lincolnshire.

This link between the house-visit and the song is interesting in itself. It is possible either that the song was adapted to suit an existing performance, or that the performance was developed from the song. The fact that there is no record of any Tup performance without the song suggests that the latter alternative is more probable. If this is the case, then the performance would not pre-date the composition of the song, which does not for example appear in the catalogues of early broadside printers, who were responsible for much of the dissemination of such material.<sup>78</sup> It is only from a careful examination of the available data that it is possible to draw valid conclusions as to the origin and function of these visits.

74. A. Brice, The Mobyad; or, Battle of the Voice, Exeter, 1770).

75. G. R. Kinloch, The Ballad Book, (London and Edinburgh, 1827), pp. 80-81.

76. Gimcrack, G., (J. S. Gregson), Gimcrackiana, (Manchester, 1833).

77. P. O'Shaughnessy, More Folk Songs from Lincolnshire, (London, 1971), p. 39.

78. See for example, H. E. Rollins, An Analytical Index to the Ballad Entries (1557-1709), (Hatboro, Pennsylvania, 1967).

Since no comparable collection of information on the range of house-visits in a particular geographical area has previously been made, the conclusions drawn in this study will hopefully make a new and positive contribution to our knowledge of English cultural traditions.

Whereas only two actual performers of the Hero-Combat play were interviewed during the fieldwork, seven informants were discovered who had taken part in the Old Tup visits. One recording was also made of a group of boys who were still performing the play annually at Christmas time in a district to the south of the study area, around Eckington and Clowne. Further information was also obtained from interviewing people who recalled seeing performances in their communities.

The most essential element in the performance, and one common to all the variations of the visit, is the Old Tup figure itself. In the song, this beast is specifically referred to as a ram, and most of the people interviewed regarded it as such. However, in two or three instances it was thought to be a male goat, for example, by an old resident of Swallownest, whose own version included the corroboratory verse:

"The whiskers that grew on his chin, sir,  
They grew so mighty long,  
They swept the streets of Derby  
As we went marching along."<sup>79</sup>

Several of the texts for this study also include, in the dialogue which takes place between the Old Man and the Butcher, the comment:

"It's more like a nanny-goat than a tup!"<sup>80</sup>

This could obviously be interpreted as an insulting remark about a male sheep, but it could also be a disparaging remark about a male goat's strength and size.

The identification of the creature is further complicated by other reports, from Thorpe Hesley and the Firvale area of Sheffield, that it was regarded as a calf or cow:

79. Text CVB10, Tape 16 .

80. Text CVB10, Tape 16(a) (Swallownest) .

"We always thought of it as a cow or a beast going to slaughter."<sup>81</sup>

One letter was received which even suggested that the Tup was a horse:

"Incidentally there were two men in a sack covering with the horse head."<sup>82</sup>

However, since this was a reminiscence from the childhood of a man who left the area many years ago, it is possible that this is a confusion with the "Old Horse" visit described in the following section, which is known to have taken place in the same area of Hoyland. An old resident of Hooton Roberts, a small community in the Fitzwilliam family estates, remembered the visits of "the Derby Ram" which he identified as a sheep but which he said was known locally as "Old Boar".<sup>83</sup>

This confusion as to which animal the Tup actually represents is not dispelled by an examination of the various costumes used for it. One of the most popular forms of Tup disguise consisted of a pole about one metre in height with a head fixed on the top<sup>84</sup> with a cloth fastened at the back of the head which was used to conceal the individual taking the Tup's part. The heads placed on the poles were either real skulls, normally sheep's, or imitations carved from wood. Real skulls were especially prized, if, as at Ecclesfield, they had horns on:

"What we used to carry at that time were a big Tup's head fastened to a little stick, used to hold it, kind of, at front of him do y<sup>a</sup> see ..... It had horns on. We got it off old Johnny Bennett down here ..... the butcher."<sup>85</sup>

The fact that a sheep's skull rather than any other type was used might be taken as evidence that the Old Tup is meant to be a ram, but the comparative rarity of goats' skulls for example, would preclude them from use in most communities.

81. Tape 16(b).

83. Notebook 2, p. 76.

85. Tape 10.

82. Letter 13, (31.12.75).

84. See photographs nos. 2 and 3.

Apart from the character of the Tup itself, a few other characters are common to most versions. Two of these, a man and woman, usually start off the performance with a speech similar to the following from the Pitsmoor area of Sheffield:

"Here come me and our old lass  
Short o'money and short o'brass  
Pay for a pint and let's sup  
And then we'll act our Derby Tup."<sup>86</sup>

A lady who remembered the play being performed in Swinton recalled that the "man" was dressed as a farmer:

"..... with smock probably made from an old shirt of his father's, old felt hat and a hefty walking stick."<sup>87</sup>

Most of the versions do not specify any particular costume or character beyond the title "me" or "the man" and general old clothes, and in some cases faces blackened with soot. The "Our Old Lass" character was generally a boy dressed in women's clothes. In the version collected in Ecclesfield, "her" costume was as follows:

"Bonny Old Lass used to get dressed up like a woman, long skirt, long boots, pinny and a hat with a pin in it, scarf on."<sup>88</sup>

The man who remembered taking part in the performance at Pitsmoor recalled that some boys were chosen for this part because of their appearance:

"If you'd got somebody who looked a better girl than the others, he'd become 'Our Old Lass' because he'd look better dressed than a big pudgy-faced lad."<sup>89</sup>

Apart from the Tup, the Man and "Our Old Lass", the other character common to most versions is the Butcher who is responsible for the killing of the Tup. He would in most cases be dressed in character to some degree. At Ecclesfield, his costume was as follows:

"The Butcher, of course, was dressed like a butcher, smock on, steel hung down, pair of wellingtons on like ..... He'd a steel and a carving knife and daggers stuck all round him."<sup>90</sup>

86. Text CVB13, Tape 18.

87. Letter 17 (20.12.75).

88. Tape 10.

89. Tape 18.

90. Tape 10.

In the version from Barnburgh, the Butcher is the only identifiable character apart from the Tup:

"I used to have an apron with a steel on it and a knife on it."<sup>91</sup>

At Swinton, I was told, the Butcher wore:

"..... striped apron, old straw hat, knife and steel hung from a belt."<sup>92</sup>

Apart from these basic four characters, the composition of the team appears to have been fairly flexible. If the peer-group performing the play was a large one, extra characters could be included. If the group was small then only the basic characters would be portrayed. The extra characters were often transferred from other visit-performances, particularly from the Hero-Combat play. The most popular "borrowed" character was certainly Little Devil Doubt, who appears in many chapbooks of the Hero-Combat play, as well as in local versions in the fieldwork data.<sup>93</sup> He appeared in the Tup at Ecclesfield, Grimesthorpe and Firvale, and in two versions from Pitsmoor.

Devil Doubt's popularity may well be because of his role as money-collector:

"In comes little Devil Doubt  
With his pockets turned inside out  
Money I want, money I pray,  
If you don't give me any money  
I'll sweep you all away."<sup>94</sup>

With this request, Devil Doubt would have been a useful addition to any group, and he would also not complicate the performance by altering the basic dramatic action. In the Hero-Combat, the character appears in the same way, at the end of the play when the action has been completed, in order to ask for money.

Another character who appears briefly at the end of the Hero-Combat is Beelzebub, who also appears in the Ecclesfield and Pitsmoor versions of the Old Tup.

91. Tape 21.

92. Letter 17 (20.12.75).

93. Eg. Street near Wentworth, Tape 5.

94. Text CVB11, Tape 16.

In the Pitsmoor version, his speech is as follows:

"Here come I Beelzebub  
Over my shoulder I carry a club  
In my hand a dripping pan  
I think myself a jolly old man.  
A jolly old man I ought to be,  
I've got ten kids as big as me  
Some are large and some are small,  
But I'm the champion of them all."<sup>95</sup>

The first four lines of this speech are fairly standard, appearing in many chapbook versions<sup>96</sup>, but the second four are not to be found anywhere in the chapbook versions of "the Peace Egg" which were sold in the area. One version of the Hero-Combat which does include very similar lines, was that performed by children at Gainford, Co. Durham until about 1894, where Beelzebub says:

"In comes I old Beelzebub  
Over my shoulder I carry my club  
In my hand a dripping pan,  
I think myself a jolly old man.  
A jolly old man I ought to be,  
I have two sons as big as three  
One tall, the other small  
I think myself above you all."<sup>97</sup>

It seems unlikely that the Pitsmoor speech is a direct borrowing from a County Durham play, even though there was considerable migration from that area to South Yorkshire during the twenties and thirties with the expansion of the coalfield. However the fact that the Gainford text is not closely based on the standard chapbook text already referred to, is further evidence that there were traditional, orally-transmitted versions of the Hero-Combat circulating in the area as suggested in the previous section.<sup>98</sup>

A similar Beelzebub speech is found in the interesting Ecclesfield play, which combines elements of both the Old Tup and the Hero Combat. Similar lines are also part of the Firvale version, in which Beelzebub becomes Dapper Dan (perhaps a merging of his Devil Doubt's part):

95. Text CVB13 Tape 18.

96. E.g. The Peace Egg, Pub. William Walker & Sons, London and Otley, n.d., p.8 and others listed in Preston, Smith & Smith, (1976), pp.17-28.

97. Cawte, Helm and Peacock, (1967), p.87. 98. NB. Chapter Five, p.114.

"Here come little Dapper Dan  
In my hand a dripping pan,  
I think myself a jolly old man."<sup>99</sup>

The Ecclesfield version of the Tup is unusually interesting as already noted. Not only does it include characters from Hero-Combat plays, but the action itself is altered. After it has been "killed" by the Butcher, the Tup is revived by a comic Doctor, whose speeches are very similar to those of the Doctor who appears in the Hero-Combat:

"In my pocket I have crutches for lame ducks,  
Spectacles for blind beetles,  
Panasocks and panikins for broken-hearted mice,  
Why if a man had ninety-nine devils in his skull,  
I could cast two hundred of them out."<sup>100</sup>

If this is compared with a similar passage from Walker's "The Peace Egg"<sup>101</sup> it can be seen that this speech could be derived from such a chapbook:

"If a man has nineteen devils in his skull, I'll cast twenty of them out.  
I have in my pockets crutches for lame ducks, spectacles for blind  
humble bees, packsaddles and panniers for grasshoppers, and plaisters  
for broken-backed mice."<sup>102</sup>

However the link between print and performance is not a direct one. The other characters who appear in the Ecclesfield version confirm this opinion. In addition to the Bonny Old Lass, Tup and Butcher (here known as "Butchery-guts") which can be found in most versions of the Old Tup, there are the Doctor and Beelzebub as has already been noted, as well as Little Devilty Doubt and two other characters who are not to be found in the Hero-Combat chapbook. The first of these was called by the informant "I's ne'er beyn it" [ʔaɪsnɛəbɛnɪt] and his only speech is as follows:

"In comes in I's ne'er beyn it  
My great head and little wit  
My head is great my wits are small  
I've something behind me to please you all."<sup>103</sup>

99. Text CVB11, Tape 16.

101. The Peace Egg, Pub.W.Walker & Sons,  
(Newcastle, 1976), pp. 22-23.

103. Text CVB5, Tape 10.

100. Text CVB5, Tape 10.

London & Otley, nd, Preston, Smith and Smith,

102. The Peace Egg, p.5.

The "something behind" is in fact a rabbit's tail, which is fastened to his trousers at the back. At this point he turns round and shakes the tail at the audience.

Mr. Les Hartley, a middle-aged member of an old Ecclesfield family, who took part in the play during the 1930's, did not know who or what "I's ne'er beyn it" was supposed to be. Similar speeches are found in many mumming plays. Tiddy includes more than a dozen examples given by various characters, including Tom Fool<sup>104</sup>, Cleverlegs<sup>105</sup>, Father Scrump<sup>106</sup> and Hump-backed Jack<sup>107</sup>.

In the version Tiddy gives from Waterstock in Oxfordshire, Jack Finney, a comic character who appears in many versions of the Hero-Combat, has the speech:

"In comes I as ant been it with my great head and little wit, my head so big, my wit so small I'll do my duty to please you all."<sup>108</sup>

From the first part of this speech, the meaning of "I's ne'er beyn it" becomes clearer. The first line of the speech might originally have been; "In comes I as ne'er been it (or yet)". This is a good illustration of one of the effects of oral transmission on traditional performances. A number of writers have commented on apparently nonsensical elements in texts, which can be the result of mishearings, or of non-comprehension of the sound heard, as in the example of "I's ne'er beyn it". This phenomenon has been noted, for example, in the singing of travelling people in England and Scotland<sup>109</sup>. MacColl and Seeger make the important point that elements are nonsensical only to the collector, being accepted by the performers and often rationalised by them as integral parts of the text.

Two versions of the Ecclesfield text have previously been recorded. The first of these, recorded in 1959 by Kennedy, was incomplete, but also included a Doctor and the revival of the Tup, but no specific recollection of "I's ne'er beyn it."

104. Tiddy, (1923), p.162.

105. Ibid, p.168.

106. Ibid, p.172.

107. Ibid, p.183.

108. Ibid, p.208.

109. E.MacColl and P.Seeger, Travellers' Songs From England and Scotland, (London and Henley, 1977), p.23.

The second and more complete version was recorded about ten years later by Paul and Georgina Smith.<sup>110</sup> In this the character is included but is called "In Comes In". The Smiths' version was last performed in 1893, about forty years before Mr. Hartley performed the play.

The other character in the Ecclesfield play which is not to be found in "the Peace Egg" is "Rolling Tolling Tumbling Tom" who speaks the following lines:

"In comes in Rolling Tolling Tumbling Tom,  
I've seen the death of many a one.  
I've seen the death of many a score,  
I hope to see the death of many more.  
I went to the cupboard to get a crust,  
My big belly were fit to bust.  
I went down garden to get a bean.  
My big belly went empty agean."<sup>111</sup>

In the Smiths' version, the second four lines of this speech are spoken by Beelzebub. Apart from these two Ecclesfield versions, I have been unable to find any other reference to this character. He is possibly derived from the Fool, known in many plays as Tom Fool. George Hoyland, who described the Old Tup to Kennedy in 1959 mentions the Fool as one of the characters, possibly referring to "Rolling Tolling Tumbling Tom".<sup>112</sup>

Mr Hartley supplied further details about the characters in the Ecclesfield play, their costumes and props:

"Little Devilty Doubt ..... he used to have a sweeping brush and a money box. I's ne'er beyn it - tramp style, faces black, weskit and clogs y'know, knee pads representing miners. Rolling Tolling Tumbling Tom, he were a drunkard, him ..... Doctor wore a bowler ..... if we could get him a pair of tails, he wore tails, black tails, white shirt front, dicky bow and looked summat like old type doctor used to look. Little doctor's bag in his hand."<sup>113</sup>

110. Archives of the Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language .

111. Text CVB5, Tape 10.

112. Folk Tracks Cassette, FSC-60-213 B.

113. Tape 10.

Of particular interest in this description is the recurrence of black faces, which are common to many forms of house visit in the area. Knee pads, and the assumption of the miner disguise is reminiscent of Jolly Minering<sup>114</sup>.

In Newfoundland house-visiting, Firestone noted that:

"There are two disguises used frequently by mummers of all ages and sexes 'the fisherman' and 'the woman'."<sup>115</sup>

The fisherman was a natural disguise in a fishing-based community, just as the miner is an obvious disguise in a village strongly associated with mining.

It is also significant that considerable care was given to the Doctor's costume. I suggest this is because of the contrasting importance of this and the Butcher's part in the play and other single-speech parts like "Little Devilty Doubt". Other people have commented on the relative importance of particular characters. Just as the complex house-visits were regarded as having more prestige, and also greater rewards, some parts in the plays were thought to be more important and prestigious than others. Mr. Broomhead who took part in a Tup visit in Pitsmoor recalled that there was a definite "line of promotion":

"This was the way up through the Tup: the Butcher, Devil Doubt, Beelzebub, Me and Our Old Lass."<sup>116</sup>

In his version, the Tup and the Butcher were non-speaking parts which would be acted by younger and perhaps more reticent children in the group.

This attitude towards particular roles was also noticeable in the group which I accompanied whilst they were performing the play in Clowne, a large village south of the study area on Christmas Eve 1974.

The youngest of the four youths, who was also by far the quietest, took the part of the Tup. The most dominant and talkative of the group took the part of "Me". The Butcher and Our Old Lass seemed to be of more or less equal prestige among the performers.

114. NB. Chapter 4, section 7.

115. Halpert and Story, (1969), p.75.

116. Tape 18.

The part of the Tup was often given to the least able member of the group. At Barnburgh, where the singing of the song was by far the most important part of the performance, they would: "take it in turns, them that were t'weakest singers."<sup>117</sup>

This would be an obvious advantage to the group, but it is interesting that the Tup itself was not more highly regarded. The leader of the Barnburgh group, whose family owned the Tup's head<sup>118</sup>, a well-made wooden one with a moveable jaw - chose not to take the part himself, preferring to lead the singing.

As we have seen, some of the characters who appear in the Tup plays can be traced to the printed chapbooks of the Peace Egg which were readily available in local shops, even in the early years of this century. However these characters do not appear in most versions in the fieldwork data, and those characters which do, Me, Our Old Lass, the Butcher and the Tup, have not been discovered in any printed version of "the Derby Ram" song. It must therefore be assumed that the Old Tup play is a product of oral tradition.

This view is further confirmed by an examination of the variation between versions. The tunes, as one might expect in an orally transmitted performance, are closely related. They are also quite different from versions of the song itself, collected outside the study area<sup>119</sup>. This version from Barnburgh<sup>120</sup> is quite typical:

*d* = 72

As I was going to Derby up on a market day, I met the finest tup, sir, That  
 ever was fed on hay bay lee bay lee, Ready for bay lee lay.

117. Tape 21.

118. Photographs nos. 2 and 3, p. 240.

119. See, for example, Broadwood and Fuller Maitland, (n.d.), pp. 44 - 46.

120. Text CVB14, Tape 21.

The last four bars of this tune form a refrain, repeated at the end of each verse of the song. In all of the eight tape-recorded versions, this refrain is sung with a very similar rhythm, usually in ten nonsense syllables. In the above version, these syllables are as follows:

[beɪ li: beɪ li: rɛdi fə leɪ li leɪ]<sup>121</sup>

If this refrain is compared with the others, a clear pattern is visible, yet there is also obvious variation:

[feɪ leɪ feɪ leɪ feɪ leɪ nɔni gə leɪ] Cloune<sup>122</sup>  
 [eɪ leɪ beɪ leɪ eɪ li ɹli fə leɪ] Aughton<sup>123</sup>  
 [feɪ leɪ lɔɪ fə leɪ lə leɪ] Ecclesfield<sup>124</sup>  
 [feɪ ə leɪ feɪ ə leɪ feɪ ə leɪ] Rawmarsh<sup>125</sup>  
 [feɪ leɪ feɪ leɪ feɪ leɪ lɔdi fə leɪ] Swallownest<sup>126</sup>  
 [feɪ li: feɪ li: fɪlə fə leɪ li eɪ] Firvale<sup>127</sup>  
 [feɪ li: feɪ li: fidl fə leɪ di eɪ] Pitsmoor<sup>128</sup>

It is interesting to see the marked similarity between the versions from Firvale and Pitsmoor, which are also close to each other geographically. This again suggests oral transmission.

An examination of the rest of these performances, and others collected in the study area, reveals other common elements, yet with such wide variation that the possibility of an original printed version of the play is almost certainly precluded. The most consistent part of the performance is the song. As we have seen in versions collected during fieldwork, the refrain shows only minor differences. The form commonly found in other parts of the country is quite different:

"And indeed, Sir, tis true, sir, I never was given to lie  
 And if you'd been to Derby, Sir, you'd have seen him as well as I."<sup>129</sup>

- 121. Text CVB14, Tape 21.
- 122. Text CVB4, Tape 4.
- 123. Text CVB9, Tape 10.
- 126. Text CVB10, Tape 16.
- 128. Text CVB13, Tape 18.

- 123. Text CVB9, Tape 4.
- 125. Text CVB6, Tape 14.
- 127. Text CVB11, Tape 16.
- 129. Northumbrian version in  
 Broadwood and Fuller Maitland  
 (n.d.), pp. 45 - 46.

The verses in the fieldwork data versions also show some common elements. All of them include one verse which describes meeting the Tup, like this example from Swallownest:

"As we were going to Derby  
Upon a market day,  
We met the finest Tup, Sir,  
That ever was fed on hay."<sup>130</sup>

All of them include the concluding verse of the song as well, which usually involves a request for reward, as in this example from Clowne:

"And now our song is ended,  
We have no more to say,  
So please give us a Christmas Box,  
And we'll be on our way."<sup>131</sup>

These two verses seem to be regarded as the most important; the former as an introduction, and the latter a conclusion with the important lead into the collection.

Amongst the other verses sung, it is possible to detect two main groups, one in which the Tup's enormous size is related, and the second in which the events after the Tup's death are described.

Of these two groups of verses, the former are less commonly found. Five versions<sup>132</sup> include a description of the horns, as in this example from Ecclesfield:

"The horns that grew on this Tupsy  
They grew so mighty high  
That everytime it went uphill,  
They rattled against the sky."<sup>133</sup>

Three versions include descriptions of the wool on the Tup. The lengthy Barnburgh version<sup>134</sup> also describes its general size and even its tooth.

130. Text CVB10, Tape 16.

132. Texts CVB5, CVB8, CVB9, CVB10, CVB14.

134. Text CVB14, Tape 21.

131. Text CVB4, Tape 4.

133. Text CVB5, Tape 10.

These are not essential to the performance, in the way that, for example, the concluding verse is. For this reason, they could easily be omitted in order to shorten the performance, and so increase the rewards by making possible a greater number of visits. The Ecclesfield team for example did not take the chance of learning more verses:

"My Dad, at that time he could add verses to that song, what he knew.  
I said, 'Dad we've got four or five verses, we don't want eight or nine. That'd delay us too much'."135

The second group of verses, which describe the killing of the animal and the division of the carcass, are more commonly found amongst the texts I recorded. The two most common verses in this group describe firstly the threat to the Butcher from the Tup's blood, and secondly the part of the animal given to the women of Derby. The following typical examples are from the Aughton text:

"The Butcher's killed the Tup, Sir,  
In danger of his life,  
He's up to the knees in blood, Sir  
For want of a longer knife."

"All the women in Derby  
Came begging for its ears  
To make them leather aprons  
To last them forty years."136

Similar verses are found in eight of the ten collected versions. Other verses describe the parts the boys, men and girls of Derby came begging for, and to what use they put them. The Barnburgh version also includes amongst its thirteen verses an unusual description of the flow of blood:

"The blood that ran from this Tup, Sir,  
It ran down Derby Moor  
And turned the biggest watermill,  
That's ever been turned before."137

This verse is quite a rare one. Addy collected a version from Handsworth which included it<sup>138</sup>, and similar verses can be found in only a few variants of the song<sup>139</sup>.

135. Tape 10.

137. Text CVB14, Tape 21.

139. See, for example, R. Ford, Vagabond Songs and Ballads of Scotland, (Paisley, 1904) p.124, and Greig (Hatboro, 1963), no. XIV, 1.

136. Text CVB9, Tape 4 .

138. Addy, (1907), p.5 .

Perhaps it was considered superfluous in the same way that the verses in the first group seem at times to have been.

The Barnburgh version is interesting, because of the length of the song, with several unusual verses, and also because there was no dialogue or other speeches involved. All the action was mimed. The other recorded texts all include some form of discussion between the characters about arrangements for the killing of the Tup by the Butcher.

These spoken sections also show wide variation between versions. In some examples as few words as possible were spoken, as in this Rawmarsh example:

Speaker A "Shall we kill this Tup"  
Speaker B "Ah, Let's"  
Tup screams.<sup>140</sup>

Other versions were considerably longer for example in discussing the size of the Tup as well as its feed, where on its body it should be stabbed, and bargaining over a fee or reward for the Butcher.

The spoken sections were often the occasion for making the audience laugh. In the Swallownest version for instance the Butcher claims:

"I can get four pound of beef, all bone, off a leg o' mutton."<sup>141</sup>

This is language reminiscent of the Doctor's speech in the Hero-Combat play<sup>142</sup>, and of comical nonsense language found in Tudor drama<sup>143</sup>. Tiddy noted similarities between these speeches in mummers' plays and others in Morality Plays and Interludes of that period.<sup>144</sup>

The performers would also try to make their audiences laugh in this part of the performance with basic clowning behaviour. In the Aughton version, for example, the Butcher tells one of the others to cover the Tup's eyes before the killing. The assistant covers up the wrong end of the animal, until corrected

140. Notebook 2, p. 93.

141. Text CVB10, Tape 16.

142. See, for example, Whiting, (1923), 41. 143. For examples, see Tiddy, (1923), . . .

144. Tiddy, (1923), p. 115.

pp. 115 - 118.

by the Butcher:

"I said its eyes not its arse."<sup>145</sup>

This type of comic vulgarity was an important element in some of the performances.

As with the other parts of the play, the length of the spoken sections appears to have varied according to the performance situation. More complicated, longer performances were given in places where the potential rewards were large. Shorter, simpler acts conversely were given in places where more visits would have to be made for the same financial return.

It is interesting that this variation between plays is not the only type. The performances given by a single team can also vary from place to place as they move around. Some teams would perhaps repeat the act word for word, with obvious advantages, as Mr Broomhead from Pitsmoor noted:

"It was a set routine. You did the same thing wherever you went. I think this was a very wise thing for by the end of the morning, no matter how shakily you started, you knew your words."<sup>146</sup>

However, the boys from Renishaw whom I recorded three times in one evening in Clowne, certainly did vary their performances. Differences are clearly visible. The performance is not identical on each occasion; to a certain extent the performers are prepared to improvise. In the spoken section, the Old Man character and the Butcher argue, through the Old Lass as intermediary, about the reward for killing the Tup. In the first performance the Old Man says:

"He's alright. What does he think I am, a bloody millionaire? I'm an old man tha knows, not a little kid. Tell him I'll give him another half and no more."<sup>147</sup>

In the second performance this speech is shortened and becomes:

"Who's he think I am? Well tell him another half and no more."<sup>148</sup>

145. Text CVB9, Tape 4.

146. Tape 18.

147. Text CVB4, Tape 4.

148. Ibid.

The third performance produced yet another variation:

"He what? What's he think I am? Well tell him I'll gi'e him another half and no more."<sup>149</sup>

The first, longer speech might be the result of the collector's influence, but if my presence could have this effect, obviously the performers are capable of both extending and contracting the performance to a certain extent, as the situation demands. For example, if the prospects for a good collection were there, then the play would probably be longer to induce more generous donations. If the prospects were not so good, then the act could be shortened to enable the team to move on more quickly.

This team first learned their version from other children at school and did not feel any need to rehearse, except, for example, for a brief run-through at the bus stop before setting off. Mr Naylor who remembered being one of the performers, known locally as "Faylay boys" in the Firvale area of Sheffield, recalled learning the words from older boys at Owler Lane School, and also described how he later typed out the words for some younger boys when he had left school.<sup>150</sup> The Ecclesfield team, who performed a longer play, learned the words from one of their friends and also had some rehearsals:

"Well, we knew it off by heart. Then about a week before Christmas, we'd have a couple of rehearsals, in our home, of course. All rehearsals; brass band rehearsals, mouth-organ rehearsals, all the rehearsals were in our house."<sup>151</sup>

Another group who performed in Aughton did not rehearse, and also learned the play from other children as Mr Winder, a retired miner, remembered:

"It were when I were young when a party came in t'old yard where we lived ..... and sung it in James Square where I used to live. There were some they came from out of Derbyshire to t'best of my recollection and I'd always a retentive memory. I heard it a time or two and then we started doing it when we saw we could make a bob or two."<sup>152</sup>

149. Ibid.

151. Tape 10.

150. Tape 16.

152. Tape 4 .

At Pitsmoor the team did have some rehearsals:

"Yes you'd have a run through. As I'm pretty sure happened every year because you would have somebody new every year. If you hadn't anybody new, there was no trouble about it, everybody knew the words. But even then, as I say, Devil Doubt might be Beelzebub the next year and you'd got to get it off for that year, what you had to do."<sup>153</sup>

This team, the informant recalled, also learned the play directly from, and by watching, older boys during the Christmas performances.

Generally it seems to have been the case, as one would expect, that the longer and more complex the performance, the more preparation and rehearsal would be necessary. As suggested in the introduction the need for rehearsal might well have been a factor militating against the survival of a particular type of house-visit.

Another factor which might have contributed to the decline of the Tup in the study area is the competition from simple visits made at the same time of year, which required little or no preparation, and could cover a larger area in a given amount of time. The Tup was performed only during this Christmas - New Year period, when several other house-visits competed for the available rewards. The particular nights chosen for performance often coincided with the major festival occasions when parties would be held in many homes and larger than usual crowds would be in the local pubs. The Barnburgh group, for example, had two major outings:

"Christmas night and Boxing Night were t'main nights. Christmas night round t'village, Boxing night down Green Lane and Harlington ..... 'cause they used to have a lot o'parties at Boxing Night in Green Lane and there were nobody used to turn us away; they used to expect us."<sup>154</sup>

A similar pattern of performance existed in the Ecclesfield area:

"I don't think we got going before Christmas. It were Christmas Eve, I think. What we couldn't cover at Christmas Eve we went to Christmas Day or Boxing Day. We covered New Year wi' it as well."<sup>155</sup>

153. Tape 18.

154. Tape 21.

155. Tape 10.

Most of the other informants also said that the four nights, Christmas Eve, Christmas Night, Boxing Night and New Year's Eve were the usual ones on which visits were made. Mr Winder said that they chose these nights because

"We thought it were t'best bet."<sup>156</sup>

However, in one part of the area these evening visits were not the usual practice. In northern Sheffield, around Firvale and nearby Pitsmoor, the teams went round in the mornings. The Firvale team went out only on New Year's Day and gave eight or nine performances in their immediate area. Mr Broomhead, whose family lived in Pitsmoor, recalled performances there taking place only on Boxing Day and New Year's Day, beginning at about nine o'clock in the morning and carrying on until lunchtime:

"They were the only times it was done. People were expecting you on those days, so that's why you went. You knew people would be in on those days. I think that's the point."<sup>157</sup>

This is an interesting variation from the normal pattern, for which there could be several reasons. Firstly the Firvale and Pitsmoor areas are closer to the centre of Sheffield than the other areas where the Tup was performed. It could be that in a semi-urban community it was not acceptable for young children to go round to strangers' houses, and pubs, nor for people to admit them as they might in a village. What is more the police in the City areas would probably be less tolerant of children entering licensed premises, and of them begging for money, than their counterparts in rural areas, particularly as in many villages the policeman would be a local man who might have taken part in the same house-visits in his own childhood.

Another interesting possibility is that the area was physically more suitable for morning performances. Mr Broomhead described where his team performed:

156. Tape 4 .

157. Tape 18 .

"I think it's important you realise that in the area I was and in most of the area around Pitsmoor, Grimesthorpe, Brightside were yards so you were performing to an audience of four or five houses at least. In fact you went to the yards with four or five houses. You didn't go to the others where there were only two because it wasn't worth your while. You wanted to get round as many houses as you could."<sup>158</sup>

This description gives a clear picture of the situation. If the teams were to perform to people in groups of four or five houses in yards, or courts as they were also known, it would be better to visit in daylight, avoiding dark winter evenings when people would be unlikely to come out of their houses, and when they would not be able to see properly. So Boxing Day, when the busy Christmas Day was past, and New Year's Day, for long an unofficial public holiday, were ideal for the local "Faylay Boys" to make their visits.

The influence of this pattern of building on the house-visit, however, cannot be proved beyond doubt. Other village areas also had houses built in yards. In Aughton, as we have already seen<sup>159</sup>, there were yards, one of which included the home of a member of the local Tup team. However, the combination of local social attitudes and building patterns probably contributed significantly to the practice of day-time visits in Firvale, Pitsmoor and surrounding areas of Sheffield.

The choice of house and area for a visit has proved to be consistently important to all house-visit performers, and the Tup teams are no exception. The selection, when possible, of the districts and houses where richer and more prestigious families lived, seems to have been common practice. The Barnburgh team visited Green Lane because the local pit officials lived there:

"You could always guarantee getting a shilling at any house and up to half a crown up to five bob depending on how many were at parties."<sup>160</sup>

The Aughton group also used to select houses where they saw or knew that a party was being held:

"We'd go to houses where there were parties on, or in t'public."<sup>161</sup>

158. Tape 18.

159. p. 137.

160. Tape 21.

161. Tape 4.

The Ecclesfield team concentrated on the local pubs and clubs; this was probably because of the size of the team. Whereas at Barnburgh and Aughton, four or five boys would make up the group, the Ecclesfield group was eight strong and consequently their longer performances had to be more profitable; as Mr Hartley put it:

"If we thought we'd get a quid we'd take 'em."162

They even distinguished between public houses:

"Well we used to get us heads together and say 'Right, we can get money here; there'll be no money in that boozer, they're all paupers down there.'163

The team did visit two private houses, where they could expect an adequate reward. These were Whitley Hall and Barnes Hall, homes of the richest and most important families in the immediate neighbourhood. These houses were also visited by the Grenoside Sword Dance team.

The pattern of visiting followed by the Ecclesfield Tup team closely resembles that of the team recorded in Clowne. The members of that group all live in Renishaw, a mining village about four miles from the small town of Clowne. They only visit pubs and clubs, including no large houses in their rounds. Most of the teams recalled by informants limited their performances to their immediate locality, to a particular village, or as in Pitsmoor, to a few streets:

"My area was Carwood Road, Canada Street, Jamaica Street, Kingston Street, Sedan Street on the top and Petre Street on the bottom."164

The Ecclesfield team, however, were prepared to go further afield, for example, to Chapeltown, a distance of some two miles. This excursion created problems for the team, particularly since licensing hours were shorter at that time:

162. Tape 10.

163. Tape 10.

164. Tape 18.

"I mean in them times, if you set out around seven o'clock, you wouldn't have many in at seven o'clock, would you. So you'd got to do your poor boozers first ..... and don't forget there was no transport. It were all walk. Then we used to finish up at the boozers where we knew we could get a bob or two, same as Ecclesfield Club ..... We've run from Chapeltown to get to Ecclesfield Club for ten minutes to ten."165

The Renishaw team, with the aid of public transport, were able to travel round quite a large area, within a radius of about five miles from their home. They also distinguished between public houses as did the Ecclesfield team, attempting to assess which districts and which pubs were potentially the most generous.

As we have seen, the size of the collection was a major consideration, and a major motivating factor in performing the Tup, as with so many of the house-visit customs mentioned in this study. The proceeds of the collections made by the Renishaw team appear to have been considerable:

"Over a hundred quid, between us like ..... For tonight we should earn about twenty odd pound between us."166

It is obvious that the financial incentive to continue house-visiting with the Tup in the Renishaw/Clowne area is great. Other children are more likely to adopt and continue the tradition if they know how profitable it can be.

It is interesting then to conjecture why the monetary gain motive was not sufficiently strong to ensure the survival of the visit within the study area. Certainly if the comments of ex-performers are examined, acting the Tup play has always been a fairly lucrative activity. In about 1933, when my informant in Barnburgh led a group, they would collect up to three pounds each over the Christmas period. Although an apparently paltry amount in comparison with the 1974 Renishaw team's collection, as Mr Bullock pointed out:

"Fifty shillings to three pounds was a week's wages in pit."167

Miners in 1974 were certainly earning a great deal more than the twenty pounds a week mentioned by the Renishaw team, which suggests that in real terms the

165. Tape 10.  
167. Tape 21.

166. Tape 4.

collection in Barnburgh was the more valuable. Individual contributions would vary, usually according to the means of the giver:

"We used to go to Barnburgh Hall here ..... We'd go through t'main entrance and down t'main drive and knock on t'door and they'd invite us in. Two shilling we used to get there, or half a crown."168

The normal contribution, however, was somewhat smaller:

"Tidy few used to give little threepenny piece, silver. We used to get a lot o' them and an apple or an orange and a few nuts."169

These contributions in Barnburgh are fairly typical of performances recorded in the study area. Mr Naylor of Firvale, a man in his seventies, was recalling performances of an earlier date than most, and he remembered one shilling as a good reward for his New Year's Day visit, and twopence as a generous individual contribution.170

There appears to be no real evidence that the lack of sufficient reward adversely affected the survival of the Tup. It seems more probable that succeeding generations of schoolboys found it financially unnecessary to make such house visits during the Christmas season. Several comments were recorded which stressed that the Old Tup visit was one way in which a family, often a large family at that time, could supplement its income:

- a) "My Mother used to buy me clothes. I used to tip lot to her. I wouldn't keep it. Bugger me, there were no keeping money i' them days." (Barnburgh)171
- b) "It were the only way to get spending money, weren't it. You'd get a pair of new boots out of it. They were hard times weren't they, let's face it." (Ecclesfield)172
- c) "It were t'money we were interested in. It were a scarce commodity in them days." (Aughton)173

It is interesting to note that according to a) and b), those particular boys did not keep the money themselves, but handed it, as their fathers might with a pay packet, to their mother. For these boys then, it was not the thought of their own immediate financial gain which motivated them.

168. Tape 21.

170. Tape 16.

172. Tape 10.

169. Ibid.

171. Tape 21.

173. Tape 4.

Most informants also pointed out that the collection was shared equally amongst the performers, whatever the part they played:

"Share it, if we hadn't a done there'd be some fists flying."<sup>174</sup>

The Tup, often the part played by the newest recruit, would receive the same share as the main actors, the Butcher and "Me", the Old Man, or the Doctor, in the Ecclesfield play. The collection would be made at the end of the performance. Any character might make the collection. If a Devil Doubt was in the cast, as at Ecclesfield, he would often be the collector:

"Little Devilty Doubt used to collect, and Walt did, t'Owd Tup; and while they were collecting we used to do 'em a song, 'A Song For The Time When the Sweet Bells Chime' or summat like that."<sup>175</sup>

At Pitsmoor it was the Old Man who took the job:

"He was generally the senior anyway."<sup>176</sup>

The money would be collected in a wooden money box in some places, or in a hat or cap, a cocoa tin with a slit in the lid, or some such improvised container. Precautions were taken, according to two sources, to prevent any tampering with the money:

- a) "The box was a little money box. We left key at home and we'd count it out and share it each evening when we got home." (Barnburgh)<sup>177</sup>
- b) "We had a cigar box with a hole in top. My Father used to nail t'box up." (Ecclesfield)<sup>178</sup>

No mention was made of whether these precautions were ever necessary. The Renishaw group whom I accompanied collected in their hats, those belonging to the Old Man, the Old Lass and the Butcher, and they kept the proceeds in a large handbag carried by the boy who took the woman's part.

174. Tape 4 (Aughton).

176. Tape 18.

178. Tape 10.

175. Tape 10.

177. Tape 21.

Mr Bullock of Barnburgh made an interesting comment about the fact that the collection would move even the least generous to respond:

"Mind you, the worst of them felt a bit, giving to un at Christmas."179

Wherever they went, people enjoyed the act of giving at that time of year. He neatly summarises the dyadic relationship between performer and audience. Through the action of giving and receiving a clear relationship between the parties is established. The giver, apart from wishing to be kind and generous at a time of year when such feelings are encouraged, has the pleasure of feeling a little bit important, being able to give for once, in however small a degree, rather than looking always to receive. The giver either reinforces, in the case of the large houses, or establishes, for perhaps only a moment, a degree of social superiority.

If the money was the major incentive to perform the house-visit, it was not the only motive. The performers themselves often commented on the play as being enjoyable to take part in. At Barnburgh, they would often be given alcoholic drinks:

"A tot o' this and a tot o' that."180

This was also a common practice at Aughton:

"They'd gi' you a glass o' wine, lot of home-made wine at that time, and beer, and we'd finish up about drunk."181

This is one example of the way in which the Tup, performed as it was almost exclusively by boys between ten and fourteen years old, acted almost as an initiation ceremony, introducing the boys into adult ways, and also giving them the opportunity to visit adults in their own right, rather than accompanying a parent, for example.

179. Tape 21.

181. Tape 4.

180. Tape 21.

This transition from the child to the adult role in the community is analogous to that experienced during initiation rites studied by van Gennep:

"In North America as in Australia, the sacra are unveiled to the novices; they are revealed respectively as masks and bull roarers. The exposing of these bogymen of their childhood is the central event of the ritual."<sup>182</sup>

Although the Tup visit differs in its lack of magico-religious importance for the participants, it still has the same function, transforming the once frightened child from the audience into the powerful frightening force itself when that child himself becomes a performer. Mr Bullock of Barnburgh remembered the impact of his team's performance on his future wife when she was still a child:

"Used to go to wife's grandparents' farm, used to go when they were visiting. She remembers being frightened to death of this bloody tup."<sup>183</sup>

Two ladies interviewed at Upper Denby knew of the Tup by reputation even though they had never seen a performance in their seventy years in the village. They were told about it as children by their mother, who was perhaps using it as a frightening figure for the purpose of social control in the same way that Newfoundland parents used their local animal-disguise traditions.<sup>184</sup> They certainly recalled being scared of meeting "t'Owd Tup" when they were girls.<sup>185</sup>

The Tup then has certainly been regarded as a frightening figure, although it must be added that many people when asked did not recall this characteristic of the visit. In acting out the Old Tup the performers were able to experience the transition from childhood with its unreasoning fears of strange creatures, to the adult world where such fears can not only be dismissed, but exploited at the expense of others.

Although the visit was sometimes not welcomed by nervous children, the normal adult reception was a friendly one:

"There were nobody who used to turn us away, they used to expect us."  
(Barnburgh)<sup>186</sup>

182. A. van Gennep, The Rites of Passage, (London, 1960), p.115.

183. Tape 21.

185. Notebook 2, p.71.

186. Tape 21.

184. See J. D. A. Widdowson, If You Don't be Good: Verbal Social Control in Newfoundland, (St. Johns, 1977), p. 237.

At Barnburgh the group announced their arrival with a similar expression to that used on the Plough Monday visits:

"We'd knock on t'door and say 'Can you remember the Tup'. 'Come in'. They used to know us you know. As a rule he'd be under t'Tup, stood up under the sheet, bag we had on it then and he'd walk in ..... then we'd get spaced out, make room for ourselves."187

Most of the teams proceeded in a similar way, knocking on the door, obtaining permission to perform, entering in a line, then forming a semicircle with the Tup in the middle. An interesting exception is the performance recalled by Mrs Dent which took place at Swinton in the early 1900's:

"They stood in a ring with one boy who represented the 'Tup' standing in the middle and began to chant the first verse, singing the following ones, walking round the boy in the middle."188

This mode of performance is intrinsically interesting but is even more so because it directly contradicts a published theory concerning Hero-Combat plays. Brody puts forward the idea that performance in a circle is a characteristic unique to the Hero-Combat play, and has magical properties:

"It is the first element to set it apart from other seasonal ceremonies such as the May Procession, the Derby Tup, the Hunting of the Wren, and specific hobby horse processions."189

Not only does ring performance occur in the Tup at Swinton, it is also found in the Old Horse performances described in the following section. This is one example, certainly not unique in works on folk drama and house-visiting, where a theory has been put forward without a sufficiently thorough examination of the evidence. Perhaps all the published available data on the Old Tup was examined, but the limited amount of detailed description of the custom was not a sufficient basis on which to form a theory.

If any overall pattern can be discerned in the performances of the Old Tup, it must be in the ability of the performers to adapt to their surroundings.

187. Tape 21.

188. Letter 23, (16.2.76).

189. Brody, (1969), p.17.

If performance in a ring seemed more suitable, then this mode would be adopted. If, as in Pitsmoor, a performance was given to people from several houses at once, then the team adapted accordingly:

"Walk in behind each other; Me and Our Old Lass arm in arm leading the way and then the Butcher and the Tup, then Beelzebub and Devil Doubt. Then you'd line up facing the houses, or half-facing a circle of houses in that order ..... you'd have the houses in front of you and the dividing walls and middens behind you, so all the houses got the same sort of view."<sup>190</sup>

The main aim of the participants in choosing where to perform in a particular place was the basic and obvious one of being easily seen and heard.

Most of the ex-performers were of the opinion that their audience was keen to see and hear them, although the appeal of the visit was not always obvious. The bringing of luck, for example, was not recalled as a motive. At Ecclesfield, the team was intentionally comic, and was welcomed as entertainment:

"I think that Christmas time were one of the most popular holidays in Britain, especially in a mining community as this was. If a collier didn't want to go to work at Christmas he wouldn't go and that were it. Any function at that time, they hadn't seen for twelve months; it were kind of novelty for them and they liked it ..... We used to put it on to make 'em laugh do y'see. They'd laugh at words in any case. It were dead broad y'see."<sup>191</sup>

The Pitsmoor group, according to one of their number, were not really aware of the comic nature of the visit:

"It were intended to be funny but I think we were, we didn't think about it really, you just did it this way. This was how it had always been done and you were continuing the tradition. You didn't think of it in those terms but you were doing what everyone had done for years and you were just joining in, doing the performance instead of the watching."<sup>192</sup>

The motives of the team from neighbouring Firvale, as described by Mr Naylor, were clearer than most:

"Partly a farce, partly mercenary."<sup>193</sup>

190. Tape 18 .

192. Tape 18 .

191. Tape 10 .

193. Tape 16 .

The mercenary aspect of the visit was generally acceptable to the audience when the performers were boys between the ages of about eight and thirteen, but after the boy left school it was not considered a suitable activity for a wage-earner, as Mr Tonks, a retired teacher from Rawmarsh, commented:

"The custom was that you did this until you started working and in those days (c.1925) you started working when you were fourteen, and seeing that it was a source of money and nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen had no money, it was like a code of honour. Nobody said 'Don't do it', but people would have looked aghast if you walked in 'Why, you're working!'"<sup>194</sup>

The attitudes of the performers and their audience were a part of the local tradition and, as with the other complex visits in the study area, the Tup did not survive the disruptions which the local communities experienced. The large-scale movements of population, the development of new industries, the replacing of small, older collieries with large modern mines, and greater affluence, together with the ever increasing influence of mass-entertainment combined to destroy the conditions in which the tradition had flourished. Population movement seems to have been particularly important. Mr Winder of Aughton commented on this:

"Them what's come in, they've not really heard it all or seen it, have they? It's a thing you've got to be brought up on."<sup>195</sup>

Unless a visit is expected and welcomed by an audience to whom it is an integral part of the seasonal festivities, it is unlikely to survive. This is particularly true of the complex visits, where a certain amount of planning is involved, and where the number of performers and the length of their act make it essential that rewards from each household are relatively high, compared with those received during the simple visits.

The importance of audience support is vital, and it has exerted a considerable influence upon the distribution of both the Old Tup and Hero-Combat play during this century. The collected data demonstrates that they were performed in

194. Tape 14.

195. Tape 4.

roughly the same parts of the study area, as the maps<sup>196</sup> show, in urban areas like northern Sheffield, in the older established mining communities around Ecclesfield, and in agricultural villages like Hooton Pagnell and Wentworth. However, judging from my own fieldwork they were not performed in the colliery towns of the Dearne Valley like Bolton and Thurnscoe which had experienced major population changes in the first quarter of the century, or in the small isolated communities of the north-western part of the study area. Some communities fulfilled the necessary requirements for their survival which others did not.

However, as far as can be discovered, neither of these two complex house-visits are still performed in the study area. The Barnburgh Tup team visited various pubs in the Mexborough area as late as 1946, and the head which they used is still in existence. Mr Bullock who led this team occasionally gives performances at a local men's club to which he belongs, with a real ram's head, fully preserved, which he has recently acquired.<sup>197</sup> No other performance since 1945 has been traced. Most of the Hero-Combat plays seem to have died out at the time of the First World War. The Second World War marked the disappearance of the Tup in the study area. It could well be that the traumatic experience of these wars and the community upheaval which accompanied them were important factors in bringing about the demise of both of these house-visiting customs.

It is also possible that the Tup partially replaced the Hero-Combat, being a shorter and more easily organised performance. Certainly there were many Tup teams in existence between the Wars, perhaps more than had existed during the previous century when there are few references to the custom. In the same way, the Old Tup now appears to have been abandoned by local children in favour of the even simpler carol-singing visit.

The Tup is still a living tradition, however, in parts of North Derbyshire, as Russell's research indicates.<sup>198</sup> Although outside the geographical scope

196. Maps 7 and 8, pp. 236 - 237.

197. Photograph no.4, p. 241.

198. Russell, (1979).

of this study, it would obviously be most interesting to compare those Derbyshire communities in which the play survives with those inside the study area where it died out around the time of the Second World War and is now a rapidly fading memory. To some extent this is also true of the custom examined in the following section, the Old Horse which survived in North Derbyshire until recent years.<sup>199</sup>

### 3. The Old Horse

The Old Horse house-visit shows some similarity to the Old Tup. In both, for example, animal disguise is involved, for as its name implies the Old Horse visit features a performer disguised as a horse, and in both the animal dies during the course of the performance. However, whereas the Tup is performed in a limited geographical area, horse disguise is comparatively widespread and has a long history in the British Isles. Cawte discusses a number of references from as early as the fourteenth century to "hobby-horses", often in association with morris dancing, which may or may not have involved house visiting.<sup>200</sup>

In more recent times, a variety of customs have been recorded throughout England and Wales, involving house-visits by horse-figures. In the South-West of England, the horses of Padstow and Minehead are particularly well known.<sup>201</sup> In the South-East, in Kent, "the Hooden Horse" is the subject of an interesting study by Maylam.<sup>202</sup> In Cheshire and in Lincolnshire, hero-combat and wooing plays have been accompanied by horse figures. In the former county the horse is accompanied by a "driver"; Dicky Tatton is usually its name.<sup>203</sup> In Lancashire, Harland and Wilkinson refer to the Easter and Christmas custom of playing "Old Ball": "A huge and rude representation of a horse's head."<sup>204</sup>, in the first half of the nineteenth century. Wales has the "Mari Lwyd"<sup>205</sup> horse visit during the Christmas - New Year period, and in Ireland there is the "Lair Bhan."<sup>206</sup>

199. R.Greig, "We have a Poor Old Horse", Lore and Language, (vol.1), no.9  
200. Cawte, (1978), Chapters II - V. (July 1974), 7 - 10 .  
201. Alford, (1968), 126 - 128 .  
202. P.Maylam, The Hooden Horse, (Canterbury 1909) .  
203. A.Helm, Cheshire Folk Drama, (Ibstock, n.d) p.9 .  
204. Harland and Wilkinson, (1867), pp.234 and 254 .  
205. T.M.Owen, Welsh Folk Customs, (Cardiff, 1968), pp.49 - 55 .  
206. Gailey, (1969), p.89 .

Horse disguises are also used in other parts of the English-speaking world. In Newfoundland, for example, recent research has uncovered very similar horse-disguise visits:

"There was until recently a 'hobby horse' or 'horsey-hops' in Sandy Cove, the next settlement northeast of Savage Cove. This is a frightening mask in the shape of a horse's head with a moveable jaw controlled by a string."<sup>207</sup>

The number and variety of horse-disguise customs are probably a reflection of the importance of the animal to the community. Some folklorists have regarded the horse as an object of totemism and, as Evans puts it:

"The animal became identified with one of the gods; and often the theriomorphic ancestor was believed to have been born of the god who was also an animal."<sup>208</sup>

The horse, as well as having a special status in the community, in that its flesh should not be eaten, was also used in a sacrificial role. Evans goes on to describe how horses were sacrificed in Ireland in the twelfth century, and somewhat more recently in Wales.<sup>209</sup>

The horse has also been regarded as an embodiment of the corn-spirit, as for example described by Frazer in his account of harvest customs in the Lille area of North-East France:

"In the neighbourhood of Lille the idea of the corn-spirit in horse form is clearly preserved. When a harvester grows weary at his work, it is said, 'He has the fatigue of the horse'. The first sheaf called the 'Cross of the Horse' is placed on a cross of boxwood in the barn, and the youngest horse on the farm must tread on it. The reapers dance round the last blades of corn crying, 'See the remains of the Horse!'"<sup>210</sup>

The horse certainly seems to have had some importance in the quasi-religious sense. That it continued to be regarded with respect is not surprising when its role in the economic life of the community is considered.

207. Halpert and Story, (1969), p.66.

208. G.E.Evans, The Pattern Under the Plough, (London, 1966), p.190.

209. Ibid, p.191.

210. Frazer, (1933), p.461.

Prior to the invention of steam-engines and subsequently internal combustion engines, the horse was a vital source of power. Evans describes in detail the body of knowledge, of oral traditions connected with the care and use of horses, and the various societies of horsemen which were often fairly clandestine in their activities.<sup>211</sup>

It is perhaps not surprising, since the horse occupies such a special place in English life, that of all domesticated animals, its form was one of the most popular disguises adopted by performers in seasonal house-visiting customs. The various horse-disguise customs even within the British Isles show considerable differences. One feature common to the versions recorded in Yorkshire and the adjacent northern areas of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, which is not found elsewhere, is the link between the visit and a song, as in the Old Tup visit. In the case of the Old Horse, the song is "Poor Old Horse", which describes the state of decline and impending death of an old horse. Topliff printed it in his book in about 1815.<sup>212</sup> It was also printed by broadside printers like Bebbington and Swindells of Manchester.<sup>213</sup> The song itself, without an associated house visit, has been collected many times. Sharp recorded at least ten versions in Somerset, Warwickshire and Oxfordshire.<sup>214</sup> Thomas Bewick was possibly inspired by it to engrave "Waiting for death" which depicts a horse in that state.<sup>215</sup>

The first mention of the song in connection with a house visit performance is from North Yorkshire, in Bell's Ballads and Songs of the Peasantry of England, first published in 1857. The text is given:

"As sung by the Mummers in the Neighbourhood of Richmond, Yorkshire,  
at the merrie time of Christmas."<sup>216</sup>

211. Evans, (1966), p.168.

212. R Topliff, A Selection of the most popular Melodies of the Tyne and the Wear, (London, n. d.).

213. Manchester Central Reference Library Collection.

214. M.Karpeles, ed., Cecil Sharp's Collection of English Folk Songs, (London, 1974), vol.2, p.540.

215. C.Hindley, The Life and Times of James Catnach, (London, 1878), p.27.

216. R.Bell, Early Ballads also Ballads and Songs of the Peasantry of England, (London, 1877), p.404.

The writer goes on to describe how:

"The rustic actor who sings the following song is dressed as an old horse and at the end of every verse the jaws are snapped in chorus."<sup>217</sup>

The earliest reference to a performance in or around the study area, is to a visit by a team to Norton, south of Sheffield in 1855.<sup>218</sup> Addy also recalled seeing performances of the Old Horse in the area around Norton, Dronfield and Eckington, and published a text and tune.<sup>219</sup> A version of the song as used in the house-visit was collected in Wickersley near Rotherham by Gatty and Vaughan Williams in September 1907.<sup>220</sup>

Unfortunately, such references are not at all common. There are only three references to performances at specific places within the study area. In addition to the Wickersley version, a passing reference is made in a local newspaper<sup>221</sup> and a brief mention occurs in a local history of Penistone.<sup>222</sup> In the course of the fieldwork for this study, it has been possible to more than double this total, and of the five newly discovered performance locations, two have yielded considerable information. Members of teams from both these villages are still living and have provided much useful data, as well as a most interesting and unusual text.

One possible reason for the relatively small number of Old Horse groups is that these visits were almost exclusively adult performances. One ex-performer in the Hoyland and Elsecar team, Mr Horace "Tupty" Cooper, recalled taking part as a youth in the early thirties:

"I went to Wentworth Woodhouse with 'em when I was thirteen first time."<sup>223</sup>

However, he would probably have left school at that age, and the group he went with was organised by and consisted mainly of adult men.

217. Bell, (1877), p.404.

218. H.Armitage, Chantreyland, p.331.

219. Addy, (1907), 37.

220. R.A.Gatty collection, Birmingham City Reference Library, R.Vaughan-Williams Collection, R.Vaughan-Williams Memorial Library .

221. The Rotherham and Masborough Advertiser, 21.12.1878, 5b .

222. Dransfield, (1906), p.133.

223. Tape 3.

Mr Arthur Lomas, another former member of the team also started as a youth, but, like several other younger members, did not continue:

"Well, when you're courting, there's other attractions i'n't there."<sup>224</sup>

Because the group was made up of adults, the organisation tended to be more formal, their potential range of travel was much greater, and the financial and other incentives would also need to be better. These factors would work against the establishment of other rival teams.

The Hoyland and Elsecar team was particularly well organised, having an official secretary for example, as well as having typed copies of the play script for performers to learn from. Parts were also written out by one of the Hemingfield teams:-

"We each had us parts and we each went and practised. Just written, hand written not typed ..... just on ordinary writing paper and we each learned us parts."<sup>225</sup>

There is more evidence of the amount of preparation and organisation involved in the Old Horse teams. Regular rehearsals were held at Hoyland:

"We'd practise regular and we used to go every Saturday."<sup>226</sup>

"Well, when I went to t'practices we used to go to Wally Walker's house and he lived down by t'Catholic Church at Hoyland here ..... he maybe hold one night happen for five or six weeks while everybody, you know, knew what they were, knew their part."<sup>227</sup>

They also wore theatrical make-up and had a musician playing the concertina for the performance:

"Aye, they used to make them up with make-up paint and when everybody were ready they'd go and line up in this passage ..... and then he'd walk in with concertina playing a little bit of a tune."<sup>228</sup>

224. Tape 11.

225. Tape 17.

226. Tape 11.

227. Tape 3 .

228. Tape 3 .

Costumes were also well prepared, and were in some cases kept from year to year. Mr Cooper, whose father played the Jockey, remembered that character's costume:

"Smock, Jockey smock, trousers, all the lot. Leather leggings at t'bottom of trousers y'know like they used to wear in olden days."<sup>229</sup>

A photograph taken of the team at Barnsley in 1936<sup>230</sup> shows a group of thirteen men, twelve of whom had definite parts to play. The Secretary/musician and the farrier wear evening dress including top hats, the blacksmith has a leather apron and bag of tools, two clown figures have brightly coloured and patched costumes with conical hats and painted faces, and other characters' clothes also show a degree of preparation not usually found in the other house-visits described in this study. One common feature in house-visit disguise is found on this photograph: at least one of the characters, the Farrier, has a blackened face.

The horse figure itself was the object of particular attention, not only in the Hoyland and Elsecar team. Mr Evans of Hemingfield describes the horse used by his team:

"This one it were just a wooden head and a mane and eyes. You could move t'eyes and jaw, bottom used to [makes snapping noise] make a noise when they clapped it and it just sounded like a real horse."<sup>231</sup>

A wooden head was also used by the team seen by Addy in the Norton area:

"The body of the man who represented the horse was covered with cloth or tarpaulin, and the horse's head was made of wood, the mouth being opened by strings in the inside."<sup>232</sup>

Horses' skulls were also used, for example, by a team I recorded at Dore, to the south-west of Sheffield, in 1970 and 1971:

229. Ibid.

230. Photograph No. 9, p. 245.

231. Tape 17.

232. Addy, (1907), 37.

"It consists of a pony's skull about eighteen inches long, painted a shiny black, with convex glass bottle ends for eyes, painted white with red centres. The skull is mounted on a pole by means of a U-shaped iron bracket. A black cloth of heavy cotton is fastened to the back of the skull and covers both the operator and the wooden handle which raises and lowers the hinged upper jaw. The handle is connected to an iron rod in the skull and when it is pulled downwards the upper jaw is raised. The top of the skull is decorated with small multi-coloured woollen balls and plaits, and has two ears consisting of stuffed cone-shapes made from white cotton."<sup>233</sup>

A skull was also used by a group in the Hooton Pagnell district, in the north-east of the area. It is still in existence, in the possession of Mrs Ward-Norbury who explained its history to me in a letter:

"My Grandmother used to tell me as a child about the band of mummers who used to come through the village performing each year. The story tells that the band broke up and their final performance was in this village and that before they left they threw the horse's head into the pond - from whence it was retrieved (sometime later, I think) by my family."<sup>234</sup>

The skull, missing its lower jaw, has a handle fixed on in a similar way to the Dore skull, and also has eyes made from bottle-bottoms. It is significantly similar to the "Queen's Pony", an Old Horse team from nearby North Elmsall described by Henry Carr to John Wilson, a local postman and amateur historian, and later published by him.<sup>235</sup> This team at North Elmsall, or their descendants, could have been the one which dumped its Old Horse in Hooton Pagnell pond. Possible reasons for their actions will be discussed later in this section.

These two types of Old Horse, the wooden and the real skull, are also found in the Hooden Horse custom of Kent. Maylam was of the opinion that these two types of skull represented two separate traditions:

"(1) The Hobby Horse type proper being those customs in which an artificial horse head forms the distinguishing feature and (2) The Skull type being those in which the real skull of a horse ..... is used ..... one is inclined to think that these two classes have different origins."<sup>236</sup>

Although he offers no comments in support of his theory, this is certainly not the case in the Sheffield area where in the same district around Norton, for example, according to Addy, both types of skull were used.<sup>237</sup>

233. Greig, (1973), 8.

235. J. Wilson, Verses and Notes (Chorley 1903), p.182

236. Maylam, (1909), p 61.

234. Letter 26, (25.4.76).

237. Addy, (1907), 37.

A member of the Old Horse team recorded at Dore told me that when the team performed at Norton in the 1950's, they used a wooden skull before replacing it with a real one in more recent years.

The Hoyland and Elsecar team did not use either of these types of horse head, but according to Mr Cooper had a real horse's skin provided for them by Lady Fitzwilliam of Wentworth Woodhouse:

"Aye, she'd a hunting horse that broke a leg and she had it cured for 'em, skin and they put that head back on. She had that un put on for 'em and all. They'd had that head like, that head before, but she had that put on to that skin for 'em. Aye it's a proper horse's skin."<sup>238</sup>

This skin is still in existence and still makes occasional appearances at local galas and processions.<sup>239</sup> It is unusual in that it is a two-man horse, more like the animals which appear in pantomimes. The only other local team to have a two-man horse was at nearby Hemingfield, where the head, as previously described, was made of wood. Why these two teams should have this unusual characteristic in common is not certain; although geographical proximity might explain why it was common to both teams, it does not explain why it developed in the first place. There certainly seems to be no obvious reason or pattern for the selection of the type of horse disguise, whether head or skin, other than the basic reasons of availability. Perhaps Lady Fitzwilliam's gift of the skin gave the idea to the Hoyland and Elsecar team, and was copied by Hemingfield. This might seem a reasonable conjecture, but can be no more than that.

Perhaps the small number of two-men horses was the result of the low prestige value of taking the part of the back end. This role certainly had disadvantages as Mr Evans of Hemingfield recalled:

"They used to kick Harold Poxon. He couldn't take any part in t'play like because he stuttered so he'd to go back end o't'horse. Ralph he were t'head and what he did, Harold used to cop for it 'cause they could only kick back end o't'horse and he'd come out and he'd start wi't'cloth throwing it o'er and 'I-I-I-I'll b-bloody kill you!'"<sup>240</sup>

238. Tape 3.  
240. Tape 17.

239. South Yorkshire Times, 17.5.75, 50d.

In this case the part of "back-end" was not only of low prestige value, like the Tup's part in that house-visit, but was also a positive liability to the luckless performer.

The "back-end" performers in particular and the horse operators in general also needed to be reasonably strong. In the Hoyland and Hemingfield teams he was required to bear the weight of the jockey, and in other examples of this visit, the head used, particularly if a real skull, would be fairly heavy.<sup>241</sup>

The weight and bulk of the horse disguise were no doubt a contributory factor in determining the team's modes of transport, together with the wider geographical areas they needed to cover in order to ensure worthwhile rewards for their large group. The Hoyland team in particular travelled all over South Yorkshire in a coal lorry:

"They used to take t'old coil lorry then you know wi' t'hood o'er if it rained ..... We used to go as far as Maltby and all o'er you know."<sup>242</sup>

The main reason that this team covered such a wide area was that they did not restrict their collecting activities to any particular time of year. Although they did not perform the play, except when requested, they went around in procession collecting for the annual outing which the team organised:

"It were taking people, children, crippled and paralysed children, to Cleethorpes once a twelvemonth, wi' what they collected with street collections."<sup>243</sup>

These collecting trips would take place fairly regularly throughout the year:

"..... we used to go every Saturday. We didn't do the play but we used to collect every Saturday. We used to go to Goldthorpe, all round as far as Moorends, all round there. Moorends, Stainforth, Stocksbridge."<sup>244</sup>

They were not the only group performing the Old Horse visit who collected for charity. The team from Dronfield, although they usually collected for themselves, obtained a special licence during the Second World War to collect for war charities.<sup>245</sup> These exceptions to the general rule of financial motivation are

241. About 10 - 15 kgs.

242. Tape 3.

243. Ibid.

244. Tape 11.

245. Mentioned in unrecorded conversation with the writer by Mr C. Ralphs, a team member.

interesting. Particularly in the Hoyland case, the major motivation for their performance must either have been the desire to help others, or the intrinsic pleasure of public performance, or perhaps a combination of the two.

The Hoyland group did give special performances, when asked, as they were on one occasion at Maltby:

"In fact there's a public house at Maltby, I think they call it 'Queens' or something like that. They once asked us to put t'act on for them and we did do."<sup>246</sup>

They also acted the play at Barnsley Workhouse in 1936, when the photograph of the team already mentioned was taken.<sup>247</sup> It is interesting that such performances took place, since this suggests that there was no objection to performing at other times of year than the usual Christmas one. This being the case, it would further support the suggestion that the choice of the Christmas/New Year period for so much house-visiting in the area was based on pragmatic considerations, in particular that this was the time when the largest collections could be made. Those for the Old Horse parties were certainly relatively large. In 1928, when the Hemingfield team toured the Wombwell, West Melton, Wath-on-Dearne area, for example, Mr Evans considered himself quite fortunate:

"I always remember how much we collected. We collected and we got twenty-eight bob<sup>248</sup> apiece and it were a lot of money."<sup>249</sup>

This was indeed a substantial amount at a time when three pounds a week was considered a good week's wage.

The Fitzwilliams of Wentworth Woodhouse were even more generous to the Hoyland team. For their one visit on Christmas Eve, each performer received more than the Hemingfield team got in a week:

"It might run up to like thirty bob apiece or summat like that. That were money then weren't it!"<sup>250</sup>

246. Tape 3.

247. Photograph no. 9, p. 245.

248. ie. £1.40.

249. Tape 17.

250. Tape 3.

The scale of contributions again confirms the general pattern that the greater the complexity of the visit, the higher the rewards would be.

The performances at Wentworth Woodhouse must certainly have been memorable, for the members of the teams interviewed who went there on Christmas Eve remember the experience in some detail. Mr Cooper of Hoyland, whose father had been a member of the group before him, recalled the preparations:

"We'd go like, and open this door, entrance and someone would come then. Of course, they're expecting us and he'd go and let Lord Fitzwilliam and Lady Fitzwilliam know we'd come and then after a while he'd come back. He'd say 'Right', and then we used to go through down into a room as we used to get changed and that in there and old Wally'd put us this here face-paint on you know, and he were good at it and all. He were artistic. And then when everybody were ready and they'd come to let us know they were ready, we'd go and we'd line up against this doorway into this, it's a grand place. There's all pillars up you know ..... and they had like a little stage where t'Lady and Lord and them were all situated and maids used to stand at one side."<sup>251</sup>

It is interesting to note the formality of the occasion. A group of men equally capable of presenting a knock-about performance in a public house, or through the streets were here very much involved in a quite formal event, and adapted to the requirements of their aristocratic patrons.<sup>252</sup>

When everyone was ready, "Old Wally", the secretary/organiser of the group, would lead in playing the concertina, with the others singing the opening verses of the song. When they entered they walked round in a circle, as Mr Lomas of Harley remembered:

"We were singing and then we'd be walking in a circle and horse'd be walking and 'Whoa, Whoa, my horse is lame' ..... Well they'd all stand then. Then all t'words'd come out."<sup>253</sup>

And so the performance began. The significance given to circle performances in connection with the Hero-Combat play has already been discussed in the previous section.<sup>254</sup> This is another example of the use of a circular mode of

251. Tape 3.

252. Cp. Performances by the Bampton Mummers in private houses described in B.J. Ward, A Functional Approach to English Folk Drama, PhD. Thesis, Ohio State University, (1972).

253. Tape 11.

254. Chapter 5, section 2, p.147.

performance which serves to further refute the idea that this is a feature exclusively found in one type of play.

According to Mr Cooper and Mr Lomas, the performance opened with the singing of a song which lists the characters in the play.<sup>255</sup> However, the fragmentary manuscript version lent to me by "Old Wally's" widow, Mrs Walker of Elsecar, begins with the following clown's speech:

"Hear's (sic) I thats been before  
And with my old horse I mean to goer  
Here's beauty behind and beauty before  
So ladies and Gentlemen make room for more."<sup>256</sup>

The calling-on song then follows. It shows a distinct similarity to the calling-on songs often associated with the sword-dances of Northern England. Each verse opens with the introduction of a new character:

"The next I shall call on a gardener's son ....."<sup>257</sup>

Many sword dances follow a similar pattern in their introductory songs, as in this version from Earsdon:

"The next that I'll call on is Jack upon the deck."<sup>258</sup>

The tune used by the Hoyland team<sup>259</sup> is also similar to those of some of these sword dance songs:

Hoyland Calling-on Song



255. As in Text CVC3.

257. Text CVC2.

259. From the concertina playing of George Palmer, Tape 2.

256. Text CVC2.

258. C. J. Sharp, The Sword Dances of Northern England Songs and Dance Airs, (London, n.d.), Book 1, p.15.



In these two four-phrase tunes, the phrase endings in particular show a high degree of similarity. This link between the sword-dance and the Old Horse custom is an interesting one, and could have several causes. Possibly the tune was borrowed from a local version of the dance, which is not unknown in the area, as the following section shows. There is also a possibility that this long and complex play performed by the Hoyland team is to some extent a product of some local antiquarian's interest, and that this tune was borrowed from a published version of the sword dance. However, whilst it is possible that this version has been elaborated at some stage, it is not a unique example. No other complete text has been recovered, but apart from the nearby village of Hemingfield where it was also performed, other references exist which suggest that the play was performed elsewhere.

The simple plot of the Hoyland version opens with the appearance of the horse, which has lost a shoe. A blacksmith is called for who comes and fits a new one. The horse then goes lame as a result of the smith's work, and a farrier is sent for, who diagnoses the problem. The horse then "goes down", apparently dead, until the farrier gives him a "steaming ball" which revives the animal.

Addy, describing a performance in the Norton area, to the south of Sheffield describes how, after the song "Poor Old Horse" is completed:

260. Sharp, (n.d.), p.2 (Transposed for easier comparison).

"Then follows a prose conversation amongst the mummers, which is not worth preserving, because it has been so modernised as to have lost all its interest. The end of it is that the horse gets a new lease of life and attempts to worry a blacksmith who is called upon to shoe him."<sup>261</sup>

He later regretted not noting down the prose conversation, which might have been similar to the Hoyland text. Addy certainly implies that here also the horse apparently dies and is later revived. The character of the Blacksmith and his attempt to shoe the horse are also common to the Hoyland and Norton versions.

The performance at North Elmsall described by Wilson also includes a Blacksmith, as well as a "Lady's Groom" and a Farrier. Here too the smith attempts to shoe the horse, or "Queen's Pony" as it is called locally:

"The 'shoeing' was merely the giving of three or four taps with the hammer on each boot after which the smith clapped 'the Horse' in the approved manner. And now the 'Horse' began to hobble and otherwise behave as if he were ailing; the smith was supposed to have pricked a foot with a nail. The Farrier was sent for, and the man taking that character, who had slipped out of the room whilst the smith was at work came in, examined the 'Horse', said it was very ill and must have a 'Ball'. A 'ball' was administered to the suffering steed, three of the Mummers holding open the jaws until the 'ball' was swallowed at which the steed quickly recovered."<sup>262</sup>

This is clearly a very similar performance to that given by the Hoyland team, and further suggests that the text recovered from this location is an exceptionally full example of a fairly widespread tradition, rather than a local accretion.

The version I recorded at Dore in 1970 and 1971, whilst not including any specific characters, did include a "death". As the performers sang the verse of the song which ends "Poor Old Horse, he must die," the horse lowers its head to the ground, the operator crouching down on one knee under his black cloth, until the leader pats him, saying "Get up Bob" (Bob being the horse's not the operator's name). This is perhaps a vestigial feature of the type of performance described by Addy and Wilson, and still performed at Hoyland until the Second World War.<sup>263</sup>

261. Addy, (1907), 39.

262. Wilson, (1903), p. 182.

263. According to Mr Cooper (Tape 3) the last performance was in 1939.

As with the "Old Tup", I would suggest that the words used in the horse visits were partly improvised. Certain formulaic expressions are common to both, for example the phrase:

"Is ther a blacksmith in this town?", or "Is ther a Farrier in this town?"<sup>264</sup>

Similar questions are asked in many versios of the Tup play.<sup>265</sup> Also common to both is the nonsense language, as for example when the Blacksmith asks which of the horse's feet need shoeing, to which the Jockey replies:

"Far-far-near-fore-hinder foot", and when asked how long the horse has been without a shoe, he answers:

"Iver since he lost it."<sup>266</sup>

Mr Evans of Hemingfield told me how the team which preceded his own in the village used to improvise, adding for example their own mild vulgarities:

"He can't fart for pissing."

for example, as I was told, but not permitted to record:

"They were older than we were, them that did it and they used to put some o' that in it. They were all oldern' us and we daren't put swear words in. We used to do it strictly to t'book but they could all put their own parts in, which they did."<sup>267</sup>

The manuscript version of the play<sup>268</sup> was probably typed and duplicated in order to facilitate the preparation of new performers, and to ensure that the prestigious performance at Wentworth Woodhouse went well, without the stumblings which a perhaps nervous team might experience if trying to improvise. The Hemingfield team in which Mr Evans took part also learned their parts from written scripts, as has already been mentioned.<sup>269</sup>

264. Text CVC3.

266. Text CVC3.

268. Text CVC3.

265. Eg. Text CVB4, CVB7.

267. Tape 11.

269. See above p.155.

An interesting feature of the script is the attempt at writing phonetically. This use of dialect again suggests that the play was originally an orally transmitted, partly improvised performance. Had it been printed for circulation as were the chapbook mummers' plays, then the local Hoyland dialect would not be readily understood elsewhere, and would thus be unsuitable in such a publication. One example can be given which also gives further evidence of improvisation in its reference to two local landmarks, Hooper Stand and Scholes coppice. When the smith has fitted the shoe, the clown complains:

"Thers one one way an thers one t'other way ..... one pointing toward Huber Stand an one toward Scholes coppice! I'll niver have a big awkward thing like that on a horse a mine."<sup>270</sup>

The presentation and punctuation of the manuscript as well as the consistency of the phonetic spelling suggest that some considerable effort was put into producing an accurate rendition, and that the "mistakes" in spelling are very much intentional.

One reason for this care in preserving the dialect used in the play was probably that this was an integral feature of the comic appeal of the performance. This comic nature of the visit was a vivid memory for Mr Wroe who lived at Charltonbrook:

"They were at Charltonbrook one Saturday afternoon. They were gathering summat for charity. I've never laughed so much in my life."<sup>271</sup>

Mr Walker from Wentworth also remembered the amusement afforded by a visit from the Old Horse:

"There were two came, from Elsecar and Jump. Jump were t'best. They were colliers and they were more comical ..... especially when they'd had a drink of beer. They used to act daft."<sup>272</sup>

The Hoyland and Elsecar team were even auditioned by the BBC, in December 1934, but not recorded because the humour was thought too visual:

270. Text CVC3.  
272. Tape 5 .

271. Tape 9 .

"O yes, we had audition for BBC ..... It wanted to be seen, see ..... and there was no telly then."<sup>273</sup>

One element of comedy, particularly of the more visual, "slapstick" type, is fear. We laugh at the fears of others, particularly when they are seen to be without foundation. The circus clown will sometimes threaten to soak his audience with a bucket which turns out to contain only scraps of paper. Punch and Judy shows traditionally include an element of violence which is clearly intended to be comical. This "humour of violence" is a definite feature of the Old Horse visit. The servant maids at Wentworth Woodhouse were a favourite target according to Mr Cooper:

"Oh, maids always were ready you know. Two blokes under t'horse, they set off. They used to scream their heads off, aye they did ..... you know, scream like, run away ..... they used to enjoy it. Aye it were a big laugh."<sup>274</sup>

Mr Lomas remembered chasing women and girls with the horse, and scaring the local dog population as well:

"Dogs, they used to come up and bark and as soon as you turned round they'd be off like lightning. You reckoned to run after 'em and all the women ..... You know these old sofas, they used to have 'em at 'side o' t'doorway. You used to run 'em in and they hadn't time to go round t'sofa. They used to go climbing over to get out o' t' way."<sup>275</sup>

Addy also noted the link between the Horse and the "frightening" of women:

"Young women pretend to be frightened at the way in which the horse opens his wide jaws, and the awful manner in which he clashes them together."<sup>276</sup>

The fear, however, was not all pretended. Several people commented on the all too real feelings which the Horse's visit inspired in them as children.<sup>277</sup>

One lady remembered a team in Harley, a small village near Wentworth:

"But I remember the Old Horse very well. I was terrified of it. When I knew they were coming in the yard, I was under the table out of the way."<sup>278</sup>

273. Tape 11.

274. Tape 3.

275. Tape 11.

276. Addy, (1888), p.164.

277. Cp. Newfoundland examples in Widdowson, (1977), pp.237-238.

278. Tape 7.

Mr Evans of Hemingfield, who later took part in the play himself, remembered its effect on him as a child:

"When we were kids we used to run away from it. We were frightened of it, and that'd be above sixty years since."<sup>279</sup>

This impact on women and children has also been noted in Camarthenshire, Wales, where the Mari Lwyd made its visit:

"The great purpose of it all seemed to be to run after, threaten to bite, and frighten the maids and children."<sup>280</sup>

However, in the case of the Hoyland and Elsecar team, the violence was by no means uncontrolled or irresponsible. Both of the members of the team who were interviewed at length commented on the necessity of not chasing or frightening pregnant women, presumably in case a miscarriage resulted:

"But you had to be very careful, because if you saw a woman that were, you know ..... pregnant, you could upset things couldn't you? You had to be very careful of that."<sup>281</sup>

"And all the women, you'd to watch for y'know same as being pregnant, anything like that you see ..... you'd to avoid all them ..... run after the others."<sup>282</sup>

One obvious reason for this care with regard to pregnant women was that the proceeds of the collection would not be as good if the visit was thought to have caused harm to anyone, but also the performers would be behaving in a considerate manner because they themselves made a clear distinction between acceptable and unacceptable "rough" behaviour - to chase, even frighten, but not harm or injure anyone.

It was particularly important to the Hoyland team to have a good reputation because of their degree of organisation. Any irresponsible or dangerous behaviour would have to be accounted for. It would not be possible to avoid detection and retribution. Also as a charitable organisation collecting money

279. Tape 17.

281. Tape 3.

282. Tape 11.

280. F. Haggan, "Notes on Welsh Folk-Lore", Folk-Lore, vol. IV, (1893), 122.

for a handicapped children's outing, the team felt themselves to be a sensible, responsible group, whose behaviour should be moderated accordingly.

This respectability was probably further encouraged by the patronage of the Fitzwilliam family. As already mentioned, the horse-skin was provided by them,<sup>283</sup> and according to Mr Lomas, they also gave their name:

"It was called Earl Fitzwilliam's Old Horse Party."<sup>284</sup>

The annual Christmas Eve visit was a great occasion, when the team were received with generous hospitality and after the performance were given food and drink, as well as money:

"After we came out they'd ..... both Lord and Lady Fitzwilliam have a word wi' you, shake hands and all this ..... then you'd go back in this room get washed and these tables that you have at weddings and that ..... all placed out full o' food and plenty o' beer to drink out of these big jug affairs ..... Venison, beetroot, all the lot you know, much as you wanted."<sup>285</sup>

They were given a sample of the "Audit Ale" brewed at the birth of Earl Fitzwilliam's heir, Lord Milton, to be drunk at his coming of age:

"We was one of the first to try his twenty-first beer. It were put down when he were christened ..... It were just like Port wine. We all had a glass each and we drank to Peter's health and they drank back to our health."<sup>286</sup>

This interest shown in the team by the family, and the generosity with which they were welcomed must have been a contributory factor in the survival of the team until 1939. With the coming of the Second World War, and the withdrawal of the family from direct involvement in the local community following the accidental death of Peter Fitzwilliam, Lord Milton, in 1948, this patronage was no longer extended, and "Earl Fitzwilliam's Old Horse Party" no longer made their annual visit to Wentworth Woodhouse, most of which became the Lady Mabel Teacher-Training College in 1950, now part of Sheffield City Polytechnic.

283. See above, p. 158.

284. Tape 11.

285. Tape 3.

286. Tape 11.

Not everyone would have regretted the death of this custom. Miss Bartlett of Wentworth recalled that one of her relatives who joined the local Old Horse group, was for that reason refused confirmation in the village church:

"Because he'd been in the play "the Old Horse". Now that belonged to Wentworth and apparently the vicar, who became Bishop Pymm didn't approve of it. Uncle Arthur was in this play and when he presented himself for confirmation, Bishop Pymm said 'Oh no!' and he would not allow him to be confirmed that year."<sup>287</sup>

The church's disapproval was not the only factor in hastening the decline of the Old Horse visits. For a large team, consisting of adult performers, and requiring a fair degree of organisation, the rewards would need to be considerable. As with the other complex visits, the impact of the mass media, higher living standards and changing fashions forced the Old Horse teams to adapt or give up. The Hoyland and Elsecar team continued with the patronage of the Fitzwilliams, and the charitable function of collecting for handicapped and underprivileged children, until the decline of the influence of the gentry and rise of the welfare state made their revival after the Second World War seem unnecessary. The group from Dronfield who visited Dore annually survived until 1971, but with only three performers and no play.

One of the most poignant sights must have been the group of mummers who finally gave up their Christmas visits and in Hooton Pagnell, perhaps sadly, perhaps disappointed with poor receptions and meagre rewards, threw their Horse's head into the village pond, a gesture of finality. In contrast with the sword dance, which is the subject of the following and final section of this chapter, there was no-one left in the area who was willing to preserve a tradition which had ceased to fulfill its function in the community.

#### 4. The Sword Dance

In the vicinity of Sheffield the tradition of the English Longsword Dance has survived in two communities: at Handsworth which lies to the south-east, and at Grenoside which, being on the northern fringes of the city, is within the study area. As a house-visiting custom the Grenoside Sword Dance is exceptional in a number of ways. Firstly, although including dramatic elements, it is essentially a dance tradition rather than a play. Secondly it requires more preparation and rehearsal than any other local house-visit. Thirdly, despite being the most complex of the customs in this study it is still performed annually in the village. Unlike all the other complex visits performed in the study area, it has been able to flourish in the last half of the twentieth century.

Paradoxically, the complexity which became a handicap for the Hero-Combat and Animal Disguise visits was a major reason for the dance's survival. It was of sufficient intrinsic interest to attract the attention of those involved in the revival of English folk dancing in the early years of the century. The detailed description by Sharp, the pioneer of the folk dance revival, first published in 1911<sup>288</sup>, and the later involvement of the English Folk Dance and Song Society both as patrons and as a source of new recruits when dancers retired without local replacements, have been important influences on the team's survival.

However, although the dance itself has survived, or has been preserved, the nature of the custom of which it formed a part has altered completely. It can no longer be described as merely a seasonal house-visit. The annual Boxing Day performance outside the Old Harrow public house in Grenoside is supplemented by appearances throughout the year at folk festivals and folk dance gatherings of various kinds throughout the country. For this reason this section concentrates on the data which relates to the dance when it was still a house-visit, rather than on the activities of the contemporary team. Before any further discussion, it is necessary however, to describe the form of the dance itself.

288. C. J. Sharp, Sword Dances of Northern England, (London, 1951).

The Morris Dance, as it is locally called, is performed by six men wearing clogs, accompanied by another called the Captain who wears a rabbit skin cap. Each carries a steel sword measuring approximately one metre in length. The performance begins with the Captain singing a "calling-on" song as he walks between two rows of three dancers:

"O ladies and gentlemen I'd have you make room,  
Contented awhile for to be,  
It is I and myself that has brought us along  
And my trade you will quickly see."<sup>289</sup>

This and the subsequent four verses introduce the team using a tune very similar to that in the Old Horse "calling-on" song. The dance itself then begins, during which ten different circular figures are performed, with another verse of the song and a chorus "Tantiro" in which all the dancers join, during a pause in the dance, after figure eight. These ten are described in detail as well as being written in dance notation by Sharp. Figure two, for example, is a standard English Longsword Dance figure, "the Lock":

"All turn outwards to the left, face in the opposite direction, and shouldering the swords as before, march round, counter-clockwise (eight bars).<sup>4</sup> They again face centre and stand still in this position linked together, but not 'stepping'. Whereupon the Captain moves into the middle of the ring and kneels down, the nearest pair of dancers raising the sword between them to admit him; while the dancers form the Lock, in the way described in the previous dance, and place it round his neck (eight bars)."<sup>290</sup>

This Sharp regarded as part of a mock decapitation;

"So realistic is the scene in actual performance, that when I saw it I should not have been surprised if the Captain's head had toppled from his shoulders and rolled to the floor."<sup>291</sup>

Although this action is still performed, it could not now be called realistic, being at most a very stylised decapitation.

289. Sharp, (1952), p. 57.

290. Sharp, (1952), p. 58.

291. Ibid, p. 28.

His interpretation of this "decapitation" has much in common with the survivalist views of writers who have discussed the Hero-Combat and Animal Disguise visits:

"In Morris, sword-dance, and play we seem to intercept three stages of development, arrested and turned to its own uses by the civilized and social idea of entertainment: in the Oxford Morris-customs the earliest sacramental rite; in the sword-dance the later human sacrifice; in the mumming play the still half magical presentment of nature's annual death and renewal."<sup>292</sup>

Sharp recorded the dance between 1909 and 1911 when the first edition of Sword Dances of Northern England was published. It had previously been described some fifteen years earlier in an article in the Pall Mall Gazette<sup>293</sup>, which was the earliest printed record of the team's existence. According to the Sheffield Daily Telegraph, the dance is much older than this:

"The centuries-old swords that have been in use by the Grenoside Sword Dancers for many generations past will be presented to the Museum of the English Folk Dance Society at Cecil Sharp House, London."<sup>294</sup>

They unfortunately provide no evidence for this supposed long history.

The English Longsword Dance can be traced back to the early years of the nineteenth century in the North and East of England. The unique Mummers' play from Revesby in Lincolnshire, written down in 1779 includes a sword-dance, danced by six men<sup>295</sup>, and Brand refers to a sword-dance performed in the North Riding of Yorkshire in 1811<sup>296</sup>. The Pall Mall Gazette article stated in 1895:

"The oldest dancer's grandfather danced all his life."

If accurate, this would mean that the Grenoside team were in existence at about this period. However, there is also evidence that the Grenoside dance is not as old as this. It is possible that the dance was started by the local vicar's wife, Mrs Gatty, in the middle of the nineteenth century.

292. Ibid, p. 32.

294. Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 31.5.1934.

296. Brand, (1853), p. 513.

293. Op.Cit., 1.8.1895, p.1, c.3, p.2, c.1, 2.

295. Chambers, (1933), p.104.

In an interview with Peter Kennedy, George Hoyland, for many years a dancer and player with the team, stated:

"Doctor Gatty's wife she got this act written and handed over to Grenoside men, especially the men that worked in the quarries and in the mines that were on short time at a Christmas and it helped them to get a little bit of money and that to make Christmas which they wouldn't have had if it weren't for summat like that."<sup>297</sup>

Doctor Alfred Gatty<sup>298</sup> was in fact married twice. His first wife, whom he married in 1839, the year he arrived in Ecclesfield, was Margaret Scott, a well known Victorian writer for children, editor of Aunt Judy's Magazine. She died in 1873 after some years of ill health. His second marriage, to Mary Helen Newman of Barnsley, took place in 1884. Which of the two Mr Hoyland was referring to is not certain, but the former seems more likely to have been responsible. As a writer she, like her daughters Mrs J. H. Ewing and Mrs H. K. Eden, was interested in mumming, noting their visits in her diary.<sup>299</sup> In addition, prior to their marriage, her husband was curate at Bellerby in North Yorkshire, where a sword dance also took place.<sup>300</sup> It is not inconceivable that Mrs Gatty might have brought the dance from Bellerby, but she could have been reviving a local tradition which was no longer being performed.

Obviously the link between the Gatty family and the sword dance offers scope for further investigation. The picture is further obscured by a single reference to another team of local sword dancers made by Mrs H. K. Eden in 1904:

"I can recollect that more than forty years ago a set of Morris Dancers used to come in the springtime to Ecclesfield Vicarage near Sheffield, and perform intricate Sword dances on the lawn. They were dressed quite differently from the Morris dancers who came at Christmas. They wore dark green suits, with ribbons of the same colour hanging in short streamers, and they were called Sherwood Foresters. I believe their jacket and short trousers were made of velveteen or corduroy."<sup>301</sup>

297. Folktracks Cassette FSC-60-213, side A.

298. G. Smith, The Dictionary of National Biography, eds. L. Stephen and S. Lee, (London, 1973), vol. VII, pp. 946-948.

299. Hunter Archaeological Society Collection, Archives Division, Sheffield City Libraries

300. Cawte, Helm and Peacock, (1967), p. 62.

301. H. K. Eden, "Morris Dancers' Plantation", Notes and Queries, 10th Series, vol. II, (Oct. 8th, 1904), 287.

This team would then, if the reference is accurate, have been dancing in about 1860, when Mrs Eden implies the Christmas Morris Dancers team was also in existence.

This complicated and rather confused history is still further entangled by the information supplied to me by the late Lou Wroe, who played and danced with the team. He was also interviewed by Peter Kennedy and subsequently by several members of the Survey of Language and Folklore (now the Centre for English Cultural Traditional and Language) at the University of Sheffield.<sup>302</sup> Mr Wroe was of the opinion that the dance came to Grenoside from Ecclesfield, and that it was originally a springtime performance:

"They came from Ecclefield. Albert Dransfield he says to me 'Were there ever any sword dancers at Ecclesfield, Lou?', he said, 'My Grandfather used to play for 'em at Ecclesfield. They always used to dance it at first of May.'<sup>303</sup>

Mr Wroe also said that the dancers, for a time, before they went to Grenoside were based at a public house at Lane End near Chapeltown called the Bridge Inn.

Some of the problems to be encountered in the search for the origins of traditional customs are here typified. Fortunately however, the data concerning the team's house-visiting activities is less confused, and as I hope to show, follows the general pattern of house-visiting in the area. Most of this data relates to the team which Lou Wroe joined soon after the First World War.

As a complex performance, the dance required a considerable amount of practice. Sharp noted that:

"During the six or seven weeks immediately preceding Christmas, regular rehearsals used to be held two or three evenings a week, at which the younger and inexperienced dancers were instructed by the older men, a privilege for which they paid a few pence a week."<sup>304</sup>

302. Including J.D.A.Widdowson, J.Bowden and V.Shepherd.

303. Tape 8.

304. Sharp, (1951), p. 54.

Lou Wroe had been told of the team from Ecclesfield that:

"They practised all year round."<sup>305</sup>

Certainly a performance of this type would require a lot of rehearsal, there being not much chance for improvisation or adaptation. The dance with its complicated series of movements or figures would have to be well practised in order to be performed successfully. The amount of work and time that went into the preparation of the performance was reflected in the costumes and equipment of the team. The metal sword which each dancer carried had a flat, blunt, round ended blade and wooden handle. The performers had jackets of flowered cotton trimmed with ribbon, and there was a certain amount of rivalry as to who had the best trimmed jacket. In 1943, Lou Wroe wrote out some details of the history of the team for the English Folk Dance and Song Society in which he noted that:

"It has been the custom of the men to see who could have the best decorated coat and lavishly trimmed coat with rosettes and ribbons, also he owned his own sword usually made by local blacksmith."<sup>306</sup>

Of the long white trousers, Lou Wroe added:

"That when a dancer puts on his trousers he automatically becomes a member of the King's army."<sup>307</sup>

The modern team of dancers wear black peaked caps, but the photographs in the Sheffield Independent taken on the occasion of the presentation by the EFDSS of a new set of swords in 1934 show no such headgear.<sup>308</sup> The only hat is that worn by the Captain of the team, which, like the hat worn by the contemporary one, is made of fur.

Sharp described the team he saw as having caps:

"The small, tightly fitting peaked caps are made of black velvet with thin yellow stripes down the gores and a yellow button on the crown."<sup>309</sup>

305. Tape 8.

306. L. Wroe, Customs and Traditions of Grenoside Morris Sword Dances, p. 1.

307. Ibid, p. 3.

308. The Sheffield Independent, 1.6.1934.

309. Sharp, (1951), p. 55.

He describes the Captain's hat as:

"..... a cloth helmet, covered with a rabbit's skin, with the head of the animal set in front, surrounded with four bunches of coloured ribbon."<sup>310</sup>

Once again, with a survivalist's interpretation, he adds:

"Moreover, the semi-animalization of the Captain by the wearing of an animal's skin and head upon his helmet is so unmistakably a trait of primitive religion, that we need have no hesitation in seeing here not so much a mock execution as a mock sacrifice, reproducing in mimicry the slaughter of a victim in an old nature-rite."<sup>311</sup>

Lou Wroe in his Customs and Traditions is a little contradictory on this point.

First he states that:

"..... knocking the captain's hat off represents the cutting off of the bullock's head and the dance then performed round the bullock as it is roasting round the feasting."<sup>312</sup>

He then goes on to say that:

"The captain having been killed in action is brought to life again and the dance is one of joy and jubilation."<sup>313</sup>

Perhaps these ideas were influenced by some of the EFDSS members with whom the team had contact. One feature of the dance connected with the Captain's hat however, sounds more functional and in keeping with other house-visits in the study-area:

"Anyone who wished to put the hat on just for curiosity had to pay a forfeit of half a gallon of beer which was brought in by the landlord and served round and many times has the hat been tried on."<sup>314</sup>

It is interesting that Mr Wroe attributes different meanings to different parts of the dance. It is perhaps only scholars who would be likely to look for a unified idea of meaning, a more consistent symbolism in it.

310. Sharp, 1951, p. 55.

312. Wroe, (1943), p. 3.

314. Ibid, p 1

311. Ibid, pp. 28-29.

313. Ibid.

The variety of possible conflicting interpretations of the sword dance suggests that, as with the other house-visits, it is only by looking at the functions of the custom and its role in the community that valuable and meaningful conclusions can begin to be drawn.

The fact that the dance was performed by adults who devoted much time and energy to it, in practising, preparing and performing, meant that this visit, perhaps more than any other had to be well rewarded. It is not surprising then that on their Christmas Eve and Boxing Day visits, the team Lou Wroe was with went to the houses of the local gentry:

"It was generally Christmas Eve and Boxing Day. They used to go to Barnes Hall, Boxing Day and take their wives. Whitley Hall, Grange Hall, Birley Hall; we couldn't get 'em all in on one night."<sup>315</sup>

Once again, as with the other complex visits, the patronage of the wealthy played an important part in the survival of the sword dance as a house-visiting custom. Earlier teams had travelled even further, to the homes of the Earl of Wharncliffe, where they were seen by Lady Sarah Tweedsmuir<sup>316</sup>, and the Earl of Wentworth. Lou Wroe remarked:

"Well, we didn't travel like the old men used to ..... They used to go to Wortley Hall, I've heard them say, and I've never been to Wentworth. They have. I missed that do."<sup>317</sup>

Other people I spoke to remembered seeing the dancers as far west as Worrall, and as far east as Hemingfield, journeys of up to ten miles which would have probably been made on foot.<sup>318</sup>

They were unusual, reflecting again the greater status of their type of visit, in specifying a set minimum fee for a performance:

315. Tape 8.

317. Tape 8.

318. Notebook 2, p. 35 and Tape 12.

316. S. Tweedsmuir, Lilac and the Rose,  
(London, 1952), p.137.

"The minimum figure in those days for an engagement, was 3 £ in golden sovereigns which their host used to put into the hat. They were also provided with beer in plenty and refreshments."<sup>319</sup>

Whilst the "engagements" at the local big houses were important, they were not the only visits. The team would also go to pubs and working-men's clubs if it was considered worthwhile:

"Might get in 'Acorn' for a start. Used to go to High Green Club. Used to go to Chapeltown Club, Boxing day they'd go to Chapeltown Club. Used to leave here at quarter to nine in the morning: call at Bracken Hill for Cavill. I don't think we ever got in before half-past one next morning ..... I'll tell you what they used to do, the Captain said 'Go and see if there's enough, see if it's worth doing a tippie.' If there weren't many in, he wouldn't bother."<sup>320</sup>

Mr Wroe wrote that it was a tradition

"That priority of an engagement be given to Mr Smith of Barnes Hall which for a great number of years was at half-past six pm on Boxing Day or if stated otherwise."<sup>321</sup>

The Sheffield Daily Telegraph confirms this particularly close link with the Smiths of Barnes Hall in its reports of the previously mentioned sword presentation ceremony:

"The presentation will be made by Colonel Mackenzie Smith, of Barnes Hall, who will be accompanied by Lady Mabel Smith and who has traditional family associations with this sword dancing organisation."<sup>322</sup>

This link with the local gentry probably ensured the survival of the dance, if not the house visit at Grenoside. It was probably at Birley Hall, the home of a Mr Dixon, that the team first came into contact with the English Folk Dance and Song Society in the shape of Commander Nicholson and Miss Mawson of the Sheffield Branch.<sup>323</sup> This introduction led to the team's continuous involvement with the society at local and national level.

319. Wroe, (1943), p. 1.

321. Wroe, (1943), p. 1.

323. Tape 8.

320. Tape 8.

322. Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Thursday  
31.5.1934, p. 3.

Whether the dance is originally from Grenoside, or was imported from Ecclesfield is not really a matter of great significance. It is yet another inevitably fruitless search, which usually ends in "the mists of antiquity" or other similarly ill-defined origin. That a tradition can survive in contemporary society, especially such a complex and skilled form of folk art, by adapting and changing from being a local house-visiting group to become a nationally known and admired folk dance is surely remarkable enough itself and worthy of scholarly attention.

The house-visiting activities of the Grenoside team conform to the pattern observed in other complex visits. The elements of complexity of performance, amount of preparation and rehearsal, use of special costumes and equipment, the size of the group and the age of its members all show a clear direct relationship with the supporting community, the social status of the audience and the ability and willingness adequately to reward the teams for their work. The Grenoside team have a technically complicated performance, which is well-rehearsed and uses elaborate costumes and equipment. It is a large group requiring the services of a competent musician, and the performers are all adult males. Consequently the patronage of the wealthier and more important families in the area was most important to their survival as a traditional house-visiting group. With the increasing decline of the country estates, the trend towards absentee landlords and commercial farming enterprises, together with the nationalisation of the coal industry and the increasing dominance of nationalised and multi-national companies in local industry, the influence and even the presence of the families who would once have supported complex house-visit teams such as this has been removed.

Of all the complex house-visit performances once seen in the study area, only the Grenoside dance is still regularly performed in its local community.

In order to survive it has ceased to be a house-visit performance, which is further confirmation of the pattern of house-visit decline discussed in previous sections, and which will be further considered in the conclusion to this study which follows the complex visit texts.

Examples of Texts used in Complex Visits

CVA Hero-Combat

CVB Old Tup

CVC Old Horse

CVA 1 JUMP

Cyrus Casey Tape 2 25.7.74

Room, room brave gallants, give us room to sport,  
For in this room we wish to resort.  
Resort and repeat our merry time.  
We've come to act, it is our Christmas time.

I am St George, from Old England sprung,  
My name throughout the world hath rung.  
Many bloody deeds have I done,  
But Lor' one day a Giant almost struck me dead,  
But by my sword I cut off his head.  
I've searched the world all round and round  
But a man like me yet I've never yet found  
Stand back, Slasher and let no more be said,  
For if I draw my sword, I'm sure to break thy head.

How can'st thou break my head?  
My head is made of iron,  
My body's made of steel  
My hands and feet are knuckle bone,  
I challenge thee to field.

A doctor, a doctor, ten pounds for a doctor  
Are you a doctor?

Yes, so you may see my activities

What can t'cure

The itch, the pitch and the palsy  
And if a man gets nineteen devils in his skull  
I'll cast twenty of them out.  
Here Jack, take a little out of my bottle,  
And let it run down the throttle.  
If th'are not quite slain  
Rise Jack and fight again.

Hold on Hector, do not be so hot,  
For here thou knows who thou hast got.  
For I can attain of thy pride  
Laid thy anger too aside  
Inch thee and cut thee, small as flies  
And send you o'er the sea to make mince pies.  
Mince pies hot, mince pies cold,  
I'll send thee to Black Sam before th'are three days old.

Black Prince of Paradise  
Born of high renown  
Soon will I fetch thy courage down.

Here comes I, little Devil Doubt,  
If you don't give me some money,  
I'll sweep you all out  
I'll sweep you all to your grave.

Anonymous Letter 1 n.d. (postmark 18.12.74)

Here come 3 merry merry black boys  
As black as black can be  
We've just arrived from India  
Our parents for to see  
We are the boys that dress so neat  
India-rubber legs and bread and butter feet  
We all know how to use them  
As you can plainly see.

Knight:

Stand back Slasher,  
And let no more be said  
For if I draw my rusty sword  
I'm bound to break my head.

Slasher:

How cans't thou break my head?  
My head is made of iron,  
My body's made of steel  
My arms and legs of the finest knuckle bone  
I challenge thee to fight.

Bystander:

Doctor, doctor  
Ten pounds for a doctor.

Doctor:

Here am I - Doctor Brown  
The best doctor in the town  
Take a drink out of my bottle  
Let it run down thy throttle  
AND ARISE AGAIN.

Me and Our Old Lass:

Here comes me and our old lass,  
Short of money and short of brass  
Pay for a pint and let us sup,  
Then we'll win the Derby Tup.

(Chant)

As I was going to Derby  
Upon a Derby Day  
That ever 1 (laid away  
                  2 (fed on hay  
Singing lairum, lairum, tiddley itey ay.

Devil Doubt:

Here comes Little Devil Doubt  
With his shirt hanging out  
Money we want and money we'll have  
If you don't give us money we'll sweep you all out.

Together:

Happy New Year, Happy New Year  
Plenty of money 1 (and nothing to fear  
2 (and a cellarful of beer  
A horse and a gig and a good fat pig  
To kill next year  
Hole in me stocking  
Hole in me shoe  
Please can you spare me a copper or two.  
If you haven't any copper,  
Silver will do,  
If you haven't any silver,  
GOD BLESS YOU.

CVA 3 STREET, Nr WENTWORTH

Sidney Tuxford Tape 5 20.5.75

In comes I little Devil Doubt,  
If you don't give me money,  
I'll sweep you all out,  
Money I want, money I crave,  
If you don't give me money  
I'll sweep you all to the grave.

Stand back, Slasher,  
Let no more be said,  
For with my broadsword  
I shall break thy head.

CVA 4 STREET, Nr WENTWORTH

Harry Walker Tape 5 20.5.75

In comes I Beelzebugger  
I can cure the itch, the pitch, the palsy and the gout,  
If a man has nineteen devils in his skull I can cast thirty-one out.

CVA 5 WENTWORTH

Harry Burgin Tape 13 16.11.75

Room, room, brave gentlemen  
Give me room to sport  
For in this room I wish for to resort,  
For to resort my Christmas time  
The time to put up goose pies will soon appear.

With sword and muscle, I hope to win the game.

In comes I little Devil Doubt  
With my pockets turned inside out,  
Money I want, money I crave.  
If you don't give me money,  
I'll sweep you all to the grave.

CVA 6 SWALLOWNEST

Horace Shaw Tape 16 4.1.76

In comes Bold Slasher  
As you may suppose  
I can beat many nations  
With my copper nose  
The Serbs, the Croats, the Turks.  
I can beat old Bonaparte  
Make his heart smart.

CVB 1 JUMP

Cyrus Casey Tape 2 25.7.74

And all the folks in Derby,  
Came begging for his ears,  
To go out in the street sir,  
Hawking apples and pears  
Ay lin ay lin fol lol diddle aye day.

CVB 2 CLOWNE

Tom Goddard Letter 8 18.12.74

Here comes me and our old lass,  
Short of money and short of brass,  
Pay for a pint and let us sup,  
Then we'll act with our old tup.

Sung:

- 1 As I was going to Derby,  
Upon a market day,  
I met the finest tup, sir  
who ever fed on hay  
Fay lay laddy go lay.
- 2 The hair upon his back sir  
it grew so mighty high  
The eagles built their nests in it  
You could hear their young ones cry.

CVB 3 SHEFFIELD (PITSMOOR)

Archie Hewitt Letter 7 28.12.74

Here comes me and our old lass,  
Short o'money and short o'brass,  
Money I need; and money I'll have  
If you don't give me money,  
I'll sweep you all away.

CVB 4 CLOWNE

Tup team Tape 4 24.12.74

Here comes me and our old lass,  
Short of money and short of brass,  
Pay for a pint and then we'll sup  
Then we'll act our jolly old tup.

The musical notation is written on two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a time signature of 6/8. A tempo marking of quarter note = 96 is present. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. The lyrics are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody and ends with a double bar line and a final chord consisting of a treble clef, a sharp sign, and a whole note on the bottom line (F#).

As we were going to Derby up- on a market day , We met the finest tup, Sir that ever was fed on  
hay. Singing fay lay fay lay , fay lay nanny go lay.

As we were going to Derby  
Upon a market day,  
We met the finest tup, sir  
That ever was fed on hay,  
Singing fay lay, fay lay, fay lay nanny go lay.

- 1 Is there a butcher in this town?
- 2 Our Bill's a blacksmith.
- 1 I don't want a blacksmith you blockhead, I want a butcher.
- 2 Our Sam's a butcher
- 1 Fetch him.
- 2 Sam th'are wanted.
- 3 What's tha want?
- 2 He wants a turkey chopped, I mean a tup chopped.
- 3 Tell him I'm busy sorting turkeys out.
- 2 He's busy sorting turkeys out.
- 1 Tell him there's a pint if he comes.
- 2 There's a pint if tha comes.
- 3 Tell him I want more than that.
- 1 He's alright. What does he think I am, a bloody millionaire? I'm an old man tha knows, not a little kid. Tell him I'll give him another half and no more.
- 2 He give thee a half.

3 Tell I'm coming then. What's tha' want killing my old ducks?

1 This 'ere old tup killing.

3 He looks a bit lively. What's tha feed him on?

1 A few broken bottles and a kick in t'rocks.

3 Thinks tha's a good un.

Tup Baa

(Sung) And now we've killed this tup, sir,  
We're up to our knees in blood.  
So please give us a Christmas box,  
And we'll be away in a flood.  
Singing fay lay, fay lay, fay lay nanny go lay.

And all the men in Derby,  
Came begging for its eyes,  
To make a pair of footballs,  
For they were just the size.  
Singing fay lay, fay lay, fay lay nanny go lay.

And all the women in Derby  
Came begging for its ears,  
To make a pair of aprons,  
To last them forty years,  
Singing fay lay, fay lay, fay lay nanny go lay.

And all the men in Derby  
Came begging for its tail,  
To ring St George's Chapel bell  
That hangs in Derby jail.  
Singing fay lay, fay lay, fay lay nanny go lay.

The hair that grew on this tup's back,  
It grew so mighty high  
That every time the wind blew,  
It rattled round the sky.  
Singing fay lay, fay lay, fay lay nanny go lay.

And now our song is ended,  
We have no more to say,  
So please give us a Christmas box,  
And we'll be on our way,  
Singing fay lay, fay lay, fay lay nanny go lay.

Les Hartley Tape 10 4.6.75

Bay

In comes in Bonny Old Lass,  
Never come if we were short o'brass.  
Pay for a pint and let's all sup,  
If you'll all be agreeable we'll act t'Owd Tup.

In comes in t'owd Beelzebub,  
O'er my shoulder I carry my club,  
In my hand a dripping pan,  
I think misen a jolly old man.  
A jolly old man I mean to be,  
I've got three sons as big as me,  
And to these few words I've got to say,  
Step in little Devilty Doubt  
And sweep them all away.

In comes in Little Devilty Doubt  
With my pockets inside out,  
Money I want, money I pray,  
If you don't give me any money,  
I'll sweep you all away.  
I've got a little box under my arm  
A copper or two will do it no harm,  
A shilling or two will do it some good,  
Please will you spare a copper.

In comes I's ne'er beyn it  
My great head and little wit  
My head is great, my wits are small,  
I've something behind me to please you all.

In comes in Rolling Tolling Tumbling Tom,  
I've seen the death of many a one,  
I've seen the death of many a score,  
I hope to see the death of many more.  
I went to t'cupboard to get a crust,  
My big belly were fit to bust.  
I went down garden to get a bean  
My big belly went empty again.

In comes in t'owd Butchery Guts  
Stuck!  
Stuck a fat heifer that never drew blood  
Stucked him and plucked and left him to die  
And came in the morning and found him alive.  
Here he is and here he lies  
And all he calls for is doctor, doctor.

Here am I.

How hast thou become a doctor?

By my heart and activity.

By thee 'art on thee cap on thee knee.

No, no thou foolish blockhead, by my heart and activity.

What can'st thou cure?

All sorts.

What's all sorts?

Itch, the pitch, the pains and the gout,  
And the palls within and the pains without,  
The pains that fly all round about.

How far hast thou travelled?

Italy, Sicily, Ireland and Spain  
And now returning to old England again  
Upstairs in bed I have stole and ate many a lump of cheese and bread.  
In my pocket I have crutches for lame ducks, spectacles for blind beetles,  
panasocks and panikins for broken-hearted mice. Why if a man had ninety-  
nine devils in his skull, I could cast two hundred of them out.

Pooh, pooh! Thou art the devil of a doctor. This tup has been dead for  
ninety-nine years and thou cannot cure him.

Here tup, take a sup out of my bottle  
And let it run slowly down thy throttle  
If thou be alive, rise up and 'bay'.

Bay

*d = 96*

As I was going to Derby, Up - on a market day, I met the finest topsy That was  
ever fed up on hay. Fay lay, lie for lay lu lay.

1 As I was going to Derby  
Upon a market day,  
I met the finest topsy  
That was ever fed up upon hay.

(Chorus) Fay lay lie for lay lullay.

2 The horns that grew on this topsy,  
They grew so mighty high,  
That every time it went uphill  
They rattled against the sky.

(Chorus)

3 The blood that ran from this topsy  
Ran down on Derby moor,  
Turned four and twenty water wheels  
That'd never been turned before.

(Chorus)

4 All the women in Derby  
Came begging for its skin,  
To make some leather aprons  
And rub it well within.

(Chorus)

5 All the lads in Derby,  
Came begging for his hide,  
To make a pair of footballs,  
For they were just the size.

(Chorus)

6 And now this song is ended  
I hope it has pleased you well,  
If you give us another sixpence  
We'll sing you plenty more.

(Chorus)

CVB 6 RAWMARSH

Thomas Tonks Tape 14 24.11.75



As I was going to Derby up- on a market day, I there met the finest 'tup that e'er lay in



hay. Fay a lay, fay a lay, fay a lay.

As I was going to Derby,  
Upon a Derby day,  
I there met the finest tup,  
That e'er lay in hay  
Fay a lay fay a lay fay a lay.

Who's going to kill this tup?

CVB 7 SWINTON

Mrs J. Dent Letter 17 20.12.75

Here comes me and my owd lass,  
Short o'money and short o'brass.  
Pay for a pint and let's all sup,  
And then we'll act our owd tup.

Song 1 As I were going to Darby,  
Upon a market day  
I met the finest tup sir  
That ever was fed upon 'ay  
Fay ley, fay lay,  
Follo ley la ley lay.

2 All the women in Derby,  
Came begging for 'is skin  
To make a woollen apron  
To wrap their babies in.  
Fay ley etc.

3 And all the kids in Derby  
Came begging for 'is eyes  
To make a leather football  
To last them all their lives.  
Fay ley etc.

Spoken Is there a butcher in this town?  
Yes, I am a butcher, and with my knife and steel  
I'll make this poor owd tup feel.

(Pretends to knife him and the tup falls down. They all march round him,  
singing the last verse)

4 And now my song is ended  
I've got no more to say  
So please will you give me a Christmas Box  
And let me gang away.

CVB 8 UPPER HOYLAND

Colin Wood Letter 13 31.12.75

As I was going to Derby,  
Upon a market day,  
I met the finest tup, sir,  
That ever was filled with hay,  
Fa lay Fa Lay folly de rol de ray.

The horns that grew on this tup, sir,  
that every time it shuck its head  
it rattled against the sky.

CVB 9 AUGHTON

Horace Winder Tape 15 4.1.76

Here comes me and our old lass,  
Short of money and short of brass,  
Pay for a pint and let's all sup,  
And then we'll kill our jolly old tup.

As we were going to Derby  
Upon a market day  
We met the finest tup, sir,  
That ever fed on hay.



(Sung) Ay lay bay lay  
Ay lee ally for lay.

2 The horns that grew upon its head  
They grew so mighty high  
That every time it shook its head,  
They rattled agen the sky.

(Chorus)

3 The wool that grew on its back, sir,  
That grew so mighty high  
The eagles built their nests in it  
We heard the young ones cry.

(Chorus)

4 The wool that grew on his belly,  
It grew so mighty long,  
It swept the streets of Derby  
As we did march along.

(Chorus)

Is there a butcher in this town?

My Uncle Bob's a blacksmith.

We don't wan' a blacksmith, we wan' a butcher.

My Uncle Jack's a butcher  
Uncle Jack there's a twopence-halfpenny job wants doing.

What is it?

Killing t'owd tup.

Looks more like a bloody nanny goat than a tup.  
Put thee hands o'er its eyes.

I said its eyes not its arse.

Where shall I stick it?

Neck sir, rump sir, anywhere you like sir.

- 5 The Butcher's killed the tup, sir,  
In danger of his life,  
He's up to the knees in blood, sir,  
For want of a longer knife.

(Chorus)

- 6 All the women in Derby,  
Came begging for its ears,  
To make them leather aprons  
To last them forty years.

(Chorus)

- 7 And all the kids in Derby,  
Came begging for its eyes  
To kick them up and down the streets,  
For they were football size.

(Chorus)

- 8 And all the men in Derby,  
Came begging for its tail,  
To ring St George's passing bell,  
At t'top of Derby Dale.

(Chorus)

- 9 And now the song is ended,  
We have no more to say,  
So please will you give us a Christmas box,  
So we can go away.

(Chorus)

CVB 10 SWALLOWNEST

Horace Shaw Tape 15 4.1.76

Here comes me and our Old Lass,  
Short of money and short of brass,  
Pay for a pint and let's all sup,  
And then we'll act our jolly Old tup.

$\text{♩} = 100$

As we were going to Derby' up - on a market day, we met the finest tup, sir that

ever was fed on hay, singing fay lay, fay lay fay lay laddy for lay

Song 1 As we were going to Derby  
Upon a market day,  
We met the finest tup, sir,  
That ever was fed on hay.

(Chorus) Singing fay lay, fay lay,  
Fay lay laddy for lay.

2 The horns that grew on his head, sir,  
They grew so mighty high,  
That every time he shook his head,  
They rattled against the sky.

(Chorus)

3 The wool that grew on his back, sir,  
It grew so mighty tall,  
The eagles built their nests in it,  
And we heard the young ones call.

(Chorus)

4 The whiskers that grew on his chin, sir,  
They grew so mighty long,  
They swept the streets of Derby,  
As we went marching along.

(Chorus)

Man: Is there a butcher in this town?

Boy: My Uncle Bob's a blacksmith.

Man: No, you fathead, we don't want a blacksmith, we want a butcher.

Boy: My Uncle Dick's a butcher.

Man: Fetch him here.

Boy: Uncle Dick, there's a twopence ha'penny job wants doing here.

Butcher: What's that?

Boy: Stick this tup.

Butcher: It's more like a nanny goat than a tup. Where shall I stick him?

Boy: What, been a butcher all these years and don't know where to stick a tup!

Butcher: I can get four pound of beef, all bone, off a leg o'mutton.

Put thee hands o'er its eyes.

(Boy puts hands on tup's rump)

Them's not his eyes, you blockhead, put your hands o'er his eyes.

(Butcher sharpens knife, pretends to stick the tup, which falls down)

(Sung) 5 The butcher that killed this tup, sir,  
In danger of his life.  
He's up to the knees in blood sir,  
For the want of a longer knife.

(Chorus)

5 All the women in Derby  
Came begging for his ears,  
To make them leather aprons,  
To last them forty years.

(Chorus)

7 All the boys in Derby,  
Came begging for his eyes  
To kick about the Derby streets  
For football exercise.

(Chorus)

8 All the men in Derby,  
Came begging for his tail,  
To ring St George's passing bell,  
At top of Derby Dale.

(Chorus)

9 And now my song is ended,  
I have no more to say,  
Please will you give me a Christmas box,  
And let me go away.

(Chorus)

CVB 11 SHEFFIELD (FIRVALE)

Arthur Naylor Tape 16 26.1.76

Here comes me and our old lass,  
Short o'money and short o'brass,  
Pay for a pint and let us sup,  
And then we'll sing our Derby tup.

(Sung) Faily, faily, fill a la lay lee ay.

Here comes little Devil Doubt,  
With his pockets turned inside out,  
Money I want, money I pray,  
If you don't give me any money,  
I'll sweep you all away.

(Sung) Faily faily, fill a la lay lee ay.

Here come little Dapper Dan,  
In my hand a dripping pan,  
-----  
I think myself a jolly old man.

(Sung) Faily, faily fill a la lay lee ay.

♩ = 76

As I was going to Derby up-on a market day. I met the finest tups, sir, That  
ever was fed on hay. Fay lee fay lee, Fillafa lay lee ay.

(Sung) 1 As I was going to Derby,  
Upon a market day  
I met the finest tupsy,  
That ever was fed on hay  
Faily faily, fill a la lay lee ay.

2 The butcher that killed the tupsy,  
Was up to the knees in blood,  
It washed the houses for miles away,  
For there was such a flood.

(Chorus)

3 Now all the lads in Derby,  
Came begging for his eyes,  
To make themselves a football,  
For they were such a size.

(Chorus)

4 Now our song is ended,  
We've got no more to say,  
So please will you give us a New Year's gift,  
And then we'll go away?

(Chorus)

CVB 12 RAWMARSH

Anonymous man Notebook 2, p.93 16.2.76

Here comes me and our old lass,  
Short o'money and short o'brass,  
Pay for a pint and let us sup,  
And then we'll start our Derby tup.

As I was going to Derby

-----

I met the finest tup  
That ever went astray  
Fair alay, Fair alay a nanny ka lay.

Shall we kill this tup?

Ah let's

(Tup screams as it is stabbed)

All the women ..... hide  
To make a pair of leather laces  
To last them all their lives.

Now the song is ended,  
We have no more to say,  
Please will you give us a copper or two,  
And let us go away.

CVB 13 SHEFFIELD (PITSMOOR)

George Broomhead Tape 18 15.3.76

Here come me and our old lass,  
Short o' money and short o' brass  
Pay for a pint and let's sup  
And then we'll act our Derby tup.

(Sung) Fay lee fay lee, fiddle fa lay dee ay.

As I was going to Derby, up on a market day, I met the finest tup, sir, That  
ever went that way. Fay lee, fay lee, Fiddle fa lay dee ay.

1 As I was going to Derby  
Upon a market day  
I met the finest tup, sir,  
That ever went that way.  
Fay lee fay lee, fiddle fa lay dee ay.

2 The butcher that killed the tup, sir,  
Was up to the knees in blood,  
The fellow who held the basin,  
Was swept away by the flood.

(Chorus)

Here come I Beelzebub,  
Over my shoulder I carry a club,  
In my hand a dripping pan,  
I think myself a jolly old man.  
A jolly old man I ought to be,  
I've got ten kids as big as me.  
Some are large, some are small,  
But I'm the champion of them all.

(Sung) Fay lee, fay lee, fiddle fa lay dee ay.

Here comes Little Devil Doubt,  
With my pockets turned inside out,  
Money I want, money I crave,  
If you don't give me money,  
I'll sweep you to your grave.

(Chorus)

3 And now our song is ended  
We have no more to say,  
So please will you give us a Christmas box,  
And send us on our way.

(Chorus)

Howard Bullock Tape 21 14.4.77

$\text{♩} = 72$

As I was going to Derby up on a market day, I met the finest tup, sir, That  
 ever was fed on hay bay lee bay lee, Reddy for lay lee lay.

1 As I was going to Derby,  
 Upon a market day,  
 I met the finest tup, sir,  
 That ever was fed on hay.

(Chorus) Bay lee, bay lee,  
 Reddy for lay lee lay

2 This tup was fat behind, sir,  
 This tup was fat before,  
 This tup stood eleven yards high sir,  
 And I think he stood no more.

(Chorus)

3 The horns that grew on his head sir,  
 They grew so mighty high,  
 That every time he nodded his head,  
 He nodded against the sky.

(Chorus)

4 The very first tooth he had in his head  
 Would make a good huntsman's horn,  
 The very next tooth to that sir,  
 Would hold a good bushel of corn.

(Chorus)

5 The wool that grew on his back sir,  
 It grew so mighty high,  
 That eagles built their nests sir,  
 And I heard the young ones cry.

(Chorus)

6 The wool that grew on his belly sir,  
 It drabbled along the ground,  
 That every foot that he put down,  
 It covered an acre of ground.

(Chorus)

7 The wool that grew on his tail sir,  
It grew so long and soft,  
They sent it down to Derby,  
And it made six yards of cloth.

(Chorus)

8 The Butcher that killed this tup sir,  
In danger of his life,  
He called unto his servant,  
To reach him a longer knife.

(Chorus)

9 The blood that run from this tup sir,  
It ran down Derby moor,  
And turned the biggest watermill,  
That's ever been turned before.

(Chorus)

10 And all the young lads in Derby,  
Came begging for his eyes,  
To kick up and down old Derby streets,  
For they were of football size.

(Chorus)

11 And all the young lasses in Derby,  
Came begging for his ears  
To make a pair of panniers,  
To hawk apples and pears.

(Chorus)

12 And all the old women in Derby,  
Came begging for his bones,  
To suck the marrow out of them,  
To nourish their old bones.

(Chorus)

13 And now my song is ended,  
And I cannot sing no more,  
So please will you give me a Christmas box,  
And let me on my way.

(Chorus)

CVB 15 BEIGHTON

Arthur Banks Letter 9 n.d.

Here comes me, and ar owd lass short a'money, & short a brass, pay for  
a pint & let's all sup, & then we'll act our Derby Tup. As I were going  
to Derby upon a market day I met the finest tup sir that ever layed on hay  
singing fay ly didle la-l de hay

- - - - -

And now my song is ended and we can't sing no more so please give us a  
Christmas box and let us leave you door Singing fay ly fayly didle li-l  
de hay

CVB 16 WADSLEY

Norman Ewens Manuscript 1

Here comes me and our old lass,  
Short of money and short of brass,  
Buy us a pint, then we'll sup  
Then we'll have the Derby tup  
As I was going to Derby (Refrain)  
Apon a market day  
I met the finest tupsy  
That ever fed on hay.  
Hey fal lay  
Titty fal lay. Baaaaa

Is there a butcher in this town  
Yes I am the butcher  
Can't you tell by my knife and steel  
That I am the butcher  
Shall I stick him there  
No you blockhead. There.  
Hey fal lay.  
Titty fal lay. Baaaaa

The butcher that killed the tupsy  
Was up to the knees in blood.  
The man who held the basin  
Was washed away by the flood.  
Hey fal lay  
Titty fal lay. Baaaaa

Whole the women in Derby  
Came running for his skin.  
To make themselves some purses  
To put there money in.  
Hey fal lay.  
Titty fal lay. Baaaaa

Whole the men in Derby  
Came running for his ears.  
To make them a leather apron  
To last them forty years.  
Hey fal lay.  
Titty fal lay. Baaaaa

And now our song has ended  
I hope it brings good cheer.  
So please give us a Christmas box  
To last us to next year.  
Hey fal lay.  
Titty fal lay. Baaaaa

CVC 1 HEMINGFIELD

Laurence Evans Tape 17 17.2.76

Me horse has lost its shoe. I want thee to shoe it for me.

The horse has lost its shoe? I should think it has an' all. If tha'd  
have gone much farther, tha'd have nought to clinch a nail to.

CVC 2 ELSECAR

Mrs Walker MS 2

The Old Horse

Clown Hear's I thats been before  
And with my old horse I mean to goer  
There's beauty behing and beauty before  
So ladies and Gentlemen make room for more.

1st Verse:

The first I shall call on is the smiling young man  
He smiles all over his face

Twice- If any fair lady should die for his love  
Wouldn't that be a pitifull case.

2nd Verse:

The next I shall call on is the gardeners son  
The gardeners son is he  
He spends all his hour's among the gay flowers

Twice- Or els he his kissing fair Maids.

3rd Verse:

The next I shall call on  
Is the blacksmith & man  
For they are a jolly nice pair  
If anyone here thinks they carn't shoe a horse  
Well that is a foolish Idier.

4th Verse:

The next I shall call on  
His the farrier & groom  
The horse & jockey likewise  
Now all great sportsmen just enter the room  
And see our great works of surprice.

This is my Poor old horse  
He has carried me many a mile  
Over hedges over dithers  
Over footsteps over stiles  
Poor old hors, Poor old horse.

CVC 3 ELSECAR

Horace "Tupty" Cooper MS 3

The Old Horse

Now first I shall call on the smiling young man,  
He smiles all over his face,  
If any young lady should die for his love,  
Well that is a pitiful case. (Repeat last line)

The next I shall call on a gardener's son,  
A gardener's son is he;  
He spends all his hours amongst the gay flowers,  
Or else he is kissing fair maids. (Repeat last line)

The next I shall call on the Blacksmith and Man,  
And they do look a nice pair;  
But if you should think they can't shoe a horse,  
Well that is a foolish idea. (Repeat last line)

For this is my poor old horse, he has carried me many a mile;  
Over hedges, over ditches, or footsteps over stile.  
Poor old horse! Poor old horse!

Jockey: Whey! Whey! Whey!

Clown: What are tha wheying for, lad?

Jockey: Me horse has lost a shoe.

Clown: Well, look sharp an' find it then.

Jockey: Here it is.

Clown: Aye, an a fine shoe it is. So we shall have ta ha somebody to him.  
Who does ta think we'd better have?

Jockey: A farrier.

Clown: What! A farrier ta shoe a horse! What are ta talking abaht?

Jockey: Well, a blacksmith then.

Clown: Aye lad, that's it, a blacksmith. Is ther a blacksmith in this town?

Smith: Aye lad, I'm a blacksmith. What's ta want me for?

Clown: I want thee ta shoe a horse.

Smith: That's not a long job. Which foot is it, lad?

Jockey: Far-far-near-fore-hinder foot.

Smith: Aye, an a funny foot an all it is. How long hes thy horse been without a shoe, lad?

Jockey: Iver since he lost it.

Smith: Hah long's that since, lad?

Jockey: Three weeks below old church.

Smith: I think so an all. If tha'd travelled thi horse much farther ther wodn't ha been a bit o hoof left ta clinch a nail to. But before I'll be bet I'll clinch it topside of its tail. What sort of shoe will ta have ..... a light shoe or a heavy shoe, or a shoe easy for travelling?

Clown: I'll have a east shoe for travelling.

Smith: Is this owt in thi line?

Clown: Is this owt in mi line? Why! Thers one one way an thers one t'other way ..... one pointing toward Huber Stand an one toward Scholes coppice! I'll niver have a big awkward thing like that on a horse a mine.

Smith: I thowt it'd just be a reight un for thee. It'll keep thee out on t'hedge bottoms these cold an frosty mornings.

Clown: We don't reckon ta get i't'hedge bottoms.

Smith: Well, hah will this suit thee then?

Clown: Naw, that looks more like it, but that's rayther wide.

Smith: I'll soon alter thi that. Bring that box up here, lad, an knock this shoe in a bit ..... I've telled him to knock this shoe in a bit and look what he's done. He's been wi me two years and one winter an doesn't know how ta knock a bit of a shoe in yet.

Clown: He says he's been wi him two years an one winter an doesn't know how ta knock a shoe in yet, I just think he does. If he'd ha knocked it much farther he'd ha knocked it inta middle a next week. How would ta ha gotten it aht again?

Smith: Oh, I'd a gotten it out again. Well, will ta have it set on like this?

Clown: Well get it set on some road nah, we don't want ta be here all t'neet.

Smith: Gie us a nail here, lad.

Jockey: Owd on! Owd on! What ta going ta do wi a nail like this?

Clown: Whatever at ta going ta do wi a damned great bradnail like this? Tha going ta send it inta grizzel of his heel an jaw-lock him for life.

Smith: I telled thi tha'd travelled thi horse while the worn't a bit a hoof ta clinch a nail to, but before I'd be bet I'd clinch it topside of his tail.

Clown: Tha'll clinch this nowhere.

Smith: Gie us another nail here, lad. Gie us t'hammer. I've asked him for t'hammer an he's gen me t'pinçers an now he's gen me t'knife. Here, damn it, shoe t'horse thysen.

Smith's Man: Yo mun tak no notice a my boss, for he's allus either drunk or drinking. He come in t'shop this morning an fell fast asleep in a nail box. Hod up, lad! Nah whey wi thee! ..... Ah think tha'll find that alreight.

End of Act 1

Act 2

(Song) His clothing it was once of linzy, woolly fine,  
It's mane and tail of Lenza and its body it did shine.  
Poor old horse! Poor old horse!

He has been used to living on the best of corn and hay,  
That ever grew in fields or in meadows fresh and gay.  
Poor old horse! Poor old horse!

Jockey: Whey! Whey! Whey!

Clown: Now what ta wheying for?

Jockey: Me horse is lame.

Clown: Thi horse is lame! Whatever does ta say? Trot him on a bit.  
..... Aye, an he is lame an all. Well, we shall have ta have somebody to him. Is ther a farrier in this town?

Farrier: Aye lad, I'm a farrier. What's ta want me for, lad?

Clown: I want thee ta look at this horse. He's lame.

Farrier: Nah just get hod on his head, lad an walk him on a bit. Hod up, lad! Aye, and he only been new shod bi t'look on him. Why its Blacksmith ats pricked him!

Clown: Where's that blacksmith?

Smith: I'm here. What's ta want me for again?

Clown: Why, that farrier says tha's pricked this horse.

Smith: He says I've pricked this horse? Here, I've been a blacksmith five an forty years an ne'er pricked a horse i mi life before. Bring that box here, lad, don't stand there picking thi nose an eating it. We'll ha t'nail aht an a hole burnt up i hafe a jiffy. Giv us a bit of a pull here, lad. .... Nah then, trot him on an see hah she goes.

End of Act 2

Act 3

(Song) He has been used to laying in stable warm,  
To keep his tender body from every care and harm.  
Poor old horse! Poor old horse!

His hoofs they are all hollow they are so sharp and hard,  
It is that roguish blacksmith that done this just reward.  
Poor old horse! Let him die!

Jockey: Oh dear! Oh dear! Me horse is down! What shall I do if I have ta go home without him!

Clown: Nay, tha munt start roaring abaht t'horse; wist have ta have him up tha knows. Thers aboon one way a getting a horse up. Come on, lets have him up.

Jockey: Doesn't tha think we've plenty to lift without lifting thee?

Clown: Come on mun, shape thysen. Lets have him up. Nah, are ta ready? Come on ..... up!

Jockey: Wait while I spit on mi hands.

Clown: Nah then, both together!

Jockey: Howd on, howd on! I've got t'heaviest end ..... swap me!

Clown: Nah then, come, lets be shaping. Both together ..... up!

Jockey: Tha doesn't lift when I (lift)

Clown: No, an I'm not bahn ta l(ift) .....  
Wheer is that farrier?

Farrier: Nah, what's ta want me for .....

Clown: I want ta know what's up (with mi horse)

Farrier: What's up wi this horse! .....

Clown: I could ha telled thi tha .....  
ta know what's a matter w .....

Farrier: Nah why didn't tha say th .....  
for it, that's takking a .....

Clown: Sooner an better if tha .....

Farrier: Oh, it'll do him a world (of good) .....

Clown: Whativer are ta going ta (do with) .....  
this? Why, tha going ta (choke him) .....

Farrier: Why! What do I care if I (choke him) .....  
as I get paid for it .....  
I've a little un here s(ee) .....  
home ..... Give this a bit on a rap. I didn't tell the ta give me a  
bit on a rap, give this a bit on a rap and don't look so cross-eyed.  
There, that's a colour for thee ..... colour a pickled cabbage when  
thers none i' t' jar. Nah lad, get thi horse up an I'll see what I can  
do for thee.

Clown: Is ther a groom in this town?

Groom: Aye, I'm a groom. What's ta want me for?

Clown: Just groom this horse dahn.

Groom: Nah then, it shines like a pair a lathe doors on a frosty morning.

Farrier: Nah I shall ha ta give him a steaming ball.

Clown: A stealing ball! Does ta want ta mak my horse inta as big a thief as thysen?

Farrier: I said a steaming ball ..... not a stealing, a steaming ball. Just ta cause a passage through him. Is this horse quiet lad?

Jockey: He is wi me. I don't know what he is wi strangers.

Farrier: Give him this steaming ball.

Clown: I think what tha knows abaht giving a horse a stea( ) ball is very little. Sithe (I'll giv)e him st( )aming ball, just tak a pattern offen this. Tak him off, tak him off. I'm noan going ta pay a man to give my horse a steaming ball then give it him mysen.

Farrier: Nah get hod on his head, lad an just watch me. Nah lad, trot thi horse on an if he ails owt ony more call at my surgery in t'morning.

(Song) He's been a good old horse and that we all do know,  
He hasn't been fit to ride on nor in a team to draw.  
Poor old horse! Poor old horse!

He's old and bold and lazy, he is both dull and slow,  
So hang him, whip him, strip him and a hunting let him go.  
Poor old horse! Poor old horse!

## CHAPTER SIX : CONCLUSION

The research for this study began with the intention of redressing an academic imbalance in the study of seasonal house-visiting customs. With inspiration from research in Newfoundland by Herbert Halpert<sup>1</sup> and his associates, and fired by existing discoveries made by myself and other members of the Survey of Language and Folklore in the Sheffield area, I hoped, apparently for the first time in this country, to examine in detail the full range of house-visiting customs in a defined geographical area. Previous scholarship seemed to have concentrated on identifying in such customs relics of pre-Christian beliefs and rituals with scant reference to their social context or to the modern communities in which they have been performed. My main interest and aim has therefore been to discover how and why these customs have survived into the last half of the twentieth century, particularly when their decline and imminent demise have been confidently predicted by many major folklorists, since they first attracted attention more than a century ago.

The assumption made by the majority of folklore scholars appears to be that at one time there was a mass of traditional customs which have been gradually vanishing over the years, under the influence of changes in modern society. It seemed strange to me that, despite this continual decline, much still survived. This study proposes an alternative theory that, like so much else in our society, customs come into and go out of fashion, and are replaced where necessary by new ones. This theory has been supported by my own recent experience since completing the fieldwork. The incidence and importance of, for example, house-visiting at Halloween appear to be increasing in some areas, partly under the influence of North American "trick or treat" visits, but not completely so. Many of the Halloween visitors to my home in the past few years have been children who made no mention of "trick or treat" (where, as the name suggests a "trick" is threatened, if a "treat" is not forthcoming).

1. Halpert and Story, (1969).

The motives for their visit seemed to be the enjoyment of dressing-up and disguising, and the collection of money for fireworks in preparation for Guy Fawkes, more commonly referred to in North Lincolnshire where I now live as Bonfire Night.

In the study area itself, there is clear evidence that the Old Tup visit, in living memory, spread to, or perhaps re-established itself in some villages.<sup>2</sup> The fashion for a particular visit might extend over several generations, making its origin obscure and difficult to trace, but this obscurity is not, I argue, evidence of great antiquity, particularly when there is such a dearth of references to seasonal house-visiting before 1800.

This theory of "fashions" in seasonal house-visiting is one example of the type of approach which I hoped to make in this study. The general aim has been to examine the visit in all its aspects and variations within the specified geographical area, to locate, record and analyse as many examples as possible, and then to draw conclusions with regard to the factors which have influenced its development, distribution, survival and decline, as well as the functions which it fulfilled in the various host communities.

Before setting out the main conclusions of the study, however, some mention should be made of the problems experienced. These centred on the choice of area and the methodology. The sheer size of the study area became an increasingly obvious problem as it became apparent that the bulk of data collection would have to be made through personal contact during fieldwork. The difficulties experienced with questionnaire distribution and the poor response were unexpected setbacks. Although appeals for information through the press were moderately successful, field trips were by far the most important sources of data.

2. NB, p.137.

With the benefit of hindsight it is possible to say that if a smaller area had been selected, its coverage during fieldwork would have been more detailed and expeditious. However, it should be recalled that when the area was chosen, there was little evidence to suggest that a smaller one would yield sufficient data for the purposes of the research. It was in fact not at all certain at the outset that the area was large enough, or would offer sufficient local opportunities for the study of house-visiting customs. Naturally, with greater resources and more time at my disposal, coverage of the area would have been more detailed and consistent. However, even with the limited resources available, the important discoveries made during fieldwork in this apparently unpromising study area are remarkable.

It now remains to set out the main conclusions of this research. These conclusions are certainly not, in a study first embarked upon more than ten years ago, the result of a hurried investigation, but have had the benefit of long consideration. I believe that much of what follows has not been expressed previously and will also be of some significance for future studies. Firstly, this review will briefly discuss the characteristics of the visit, secondly the factors that have influenced their development and thirdly their functions in the local community.

On examining the characteristics of house-visiting customs, the differences between the simple and complex forms are clear. Even though, as pointed out earlier,<sup>3</sup> the classification devised for this study could be regarded as a continuum from the simplest to the most complex along which the various visits may be placed, it has nevertheless proved possible in the vast majority of cases to classify a given visit as either simple or complex by detailed examination of its specific characteristics. A typical feature of the simple visit for example, is that the performers are nearly always children. There is also a general tendency for peer groups to be involved in simple visits, whereas some form of less obvious recruitment usually exists in the complex type.

3. See Chapter One, p.8.

Special skills or aptitudes might be looked for in an individual taking part in, for example, a complex visit such as the Grenoside Sword Dance. No such special attributes would be required for membership of a group going Jolly Minering, which is classified here as a simple visit.

Other features of the simple visit reflect its spontaneity. The complex visit on the other hand requires much more planning and preparation. Rehearsal, for example, is a common feature in the latter type, particularly where visits are to be made to the houses of local employers and other people regarded as important by the visitors. The expectations of the audience, and the esteem in which their hosts are held by the performers is significant of course and this aspect will be discussed more fully later. However the nature of complex visits themselves creates the need for at least some degree of rehearsal. The group of boys who were recorded performing the Old Tup at Clowne, in local pubs and clubs, showed no great respect for their audience, yet the dialogue in the play necessitated some amount of practice.

This need for preparation before the appropriate performance time also gives the opportunity to prepare the costume, disguise and equipment. Such preparations are much rarer and less necessary for the simple visits, which are rarely if ever rehearsed. Jolly Minering, Wassailing and Penny for the Guy are perhaps exceptional, but the specialised equipment involved, though simple in construction is in these house-visits essential to the performance. In complex visits, on the other hand, the costumes and equipment are usually kept from year to year. The jackets of the Grenoside dancers, the horse skin of the Elsecar Old Horse party, and the carved wooden Old Tup at Barnburgh are just three examples which clearly attest to this feature of the complex visit.

In neither type of visit is there much evidence that costume, of whatever kind, is intended as purposeful disguise. The masking of the performer's identity is evidently not regarded as important, except in the case of mumming where it is often an essential element of the visit. Costume and disguise,

where used, seem to have been employed mainly with the intention of enhancing the separation between the performer and the audience. This attitude towards disguising contradicts the widely accepted views of most British folklorists who regard disguise as strong evidence of the ritual origins of such customs. In this as well as other aspects of the house-visit, the study area has yielded little or no evidence that might support such hypotheses.

Not only do costume and rehearsal create extra demands on the performers of the complex visit, but also the fact that their performance is usually longer than the simple type, means that the financial rewards which are a major factor in performer motivation could not easily be increased by more frequent visits. Few homes could provide a suitable setting, hospitality or sufficient payment for their services. Thus complex visit groups generally travel over a wider area than that covered by others. Virtually all seasonal house-visits whatever the distances were made on foot. An interesting exception was the Old Horse party from Elsecar, who hired or borrowed a lorry to make occasional special visits. This further supports the proposition that the most complex visits require and develop higher levels of organisation than any other form.

All the various characteristics of the complex visit so far described make it far more likely that an individual organiser or leader is necessary. This was certainly the case in most visits of this type. The simple visit, on the other hand, requires very little organisation, and can be performed on any doorstep. This facility of performance seems at times to have encouraged both abbreviation and acceleration, in order to increase the number of visits and consequently the group's profits. The fact that the rewards could be substantial no doubt encouraged a certain amount of animosity between rival groups. The establishment of set territories was certainly a feature of Old Tup performances when that visit was at its most popular. However the fact that the performers in this case were most typically groups of adolescent boys would suggest that rivalry of this sort was simply an extension of normal peer group activity. There has been little evidence of such behaviour in

recent times, perhaps because of the general decrease in house-visiting which means that performers now do not need to compete for audiences. Certainly there appears to have been little rivalry between adult complex groups, perhaps because of a similar freedom from competition.

The age of the performers may also be important. It is clear, for example, that many visits would not receive local support if performed by adolescents who had left school and had become wage-earners. All visits were subject to this type of community influence and performers adhered to expected patterns of behaviour. Aggressive behaviour by adults in public might be much less acceptable, and more serious in its consequences, than that of adolescents.

Another characteristic of visits which is strongly linked to communal attitudes, is that of frightening the audience. This was a feature only in the animal-disguise visits and took two different forms. The frightening of children was not encouraged, although fear was accepted as a natural reaction on the part of children when it did occur. A number of performers mentioned that children were frightened by such disguised house-visitors but neither claimed nor suggested that this was deliberate policy.

On the other hand, the deliberate frightening of women, particularly young women, was regarded as an integral part of the performance by some adult groups. Similar behaviour by adolescent Old Tup groups seems to have been less common. Although the chasing of servant girls with the horse's head was regarded as acceptable fun for all, strong exceptions were made in the case of any females who were ill or pregnant. Here again the limits of behaviour were clear, precise and strictly observed.

House-visiting customs in the area can therefore be seen to reflect in their characteristics many of the features of their host communities. Even the social status of the participants is evident. The more complex the performance, the higher the skill-level of those taking part and the greater their status within the community

Conversely, the simpler the performance, the less skill required and status gained. Visits like Letting the New Year in and Caking for example could be performed by even the poorest and least able children.

Further features worthy of note include the overwhelming prevalence of monetary rather than any other extrinsic reward. Only in Collop Monday visiting, where bacon was given, and in Disguise Mumming where food and drink were given, was no money offered. Some groups, like the Elsecar Old Horse party at Wentworth Woodhouse would receive both money and refreshments after their performance.

The transmission of texts and tunes associated with particular visits should also be mentioned. No evidence was discovered for any other than oral transmission in the memory of those interviewed. The wide variation exhibited by the texts recorded is further evidence of the predominance of this form of transmission. This is not, of course, to say that versions of these texts and tunes had not previously appeared in printed form, but that in living memory the method of learning was by word of mouth, within families, peer groups and other local contacts. The effectiveness of oral transmission was an important influence upon the development, spread and survival of seasonal house-visiting customs in the study area.

Turning now to other influences which have had a bearing on the development, distribution and survival of these customs, the research reveals the importance of various aspects of the local area and community. It is indisputable that house-visiting, far from being a relic of pre-Christian religion as many folklorists still contend is very much a product of the community which fosters it. This conclusion is amply supported by evidence from the fieldwork data.

Community settlement patterns are an important influence. Where the population is relatively dense, and any changes that have occurred have been gradual, the data indicates that house-visits are more likely to exist and to survive.

It follows that those areas which have been stable longest are likely to maintain older forms of visit, if there is a community of sufficient size to support them. Population stability is important because of its enhancement of a sense of communal feeling and identity. Thus in such stable areas there is a greater likelihood that the audience will at least know of, tolerate and at best actively support the performance. In parts of the study area which experienced a trebling of population within twenty years, these community bonds would be much weaker, and local traditions would be less acceptable to the new audience. House-visiting, like other local traditions, has continued longer in the west of the study area. Here the work-force has been mainly employed in agriculture, coal-mining and iron and steel-related occupations, including cutlery. These would often be closely related. Cutlery work and file-making, for example, were often seasonal work for farming families. In the east, where more recent and larger mines exist, the population is mainly dependent on the coal industry. Where house-visits have survived there, it has been in village communities like Barnburgh which retain strong agricultural links. Where the agrarian base has survived, there is a much less close relationship with the industrial communities than exists in the western part of the study area.

Population density is also significant, if perhaps secondary to stability. Seasonal house-visiting has survived longest in the medium-sized or larger communities rather than simply all places with a stable population. In the north-west for example, around Hoylandswaine, Ingbirchworth and Upper Denby, where the population is relatively sparse, few visits have been recorded. This might, of course, be due to other factors as well, but it is an obvious feature that differentiates this district from others much richer in visit traditions, such as Stocksbridge, Hoyland and Ecclesfield just a few miles away to the south and east. It also seems reasonable to assume that since financial reward has been a major motivating factor in the maintenance of these house-visits a more densely populated area would offer greater opportunities and incentives to potential performers.

Communications, which are closely linked with population density, also appear to have affected the distribution of visits. Physical links between communities particularly in the western half of the study area are strongly influenced by the local terrain. Similarities in house-visiting traditions seem to exist within river valleys, for example the Don north of Sheffield, and further along its course between Rotherham and Swinton. On the other hand areas of high ground seem to form barriers between separate cultural traditions. Wharnccliffe Chase between the Ecclesfield area and Stocksbridge, and Langsett Common and Snowden Hill which in turn separate Stocksbridge from Penistone are notable examples. These physical links and barriers seem to have had a significant influence on local traditions, particularly where, as in these examples, the barriers are of sufficient height to act as major natural obstacles to communication. Even where geographical boundaries cannot be easily defined, seasonal house-visits, as might be expected, seem to reflect normal community groupings. Villages with a common identity, or which form the hinterland of a larger community, often have similar house-visiting traditions.

Perhaps a more unexpected influence which the man-made environment has had on these seasonal customs is derived from the prevailing building patterns. In Sheffield, much of the population in such areas as Pitsmoor and Brightside was in the early years of the century housed in "courts" - rows of terraced houses built around a central shared courtyard. This provided a natural stage for performers, who could act their play for, and collect rewards from, several households at a time. The greater potential reward in these venues was, I believe, a significant factor in the relatively high proportion of complex visits performed in the city. Where the courts did not exist, sufficiently large or generous audiences would only be found in the houses of the local gentry.

Another effect that the courts had on house-visiting was that, in contrast with those in other venues, visits were made during the day when the performers would be more visible to the households around the court. The more general pattern in other types of housing was for evening visits when the day's work was finished. The family visited would be more likely to be at home, and entertainment or diversion more welcome.

Although exceptional in the time of day when visits were made, the courts otherwise followed the normal pattern with regard to the time of year when the performances took place. Apart from those on Collop Monday and at Whitsuntide, all the seasonal house-visits were concentrated in the months of November, December and January. Of course, the social significance of the Christmas festival cannot be ignored when reasons for this concentration are sought. Of all the annual festivals, Christmas has the strongest association with acts of generosity and hospitality, and with the desire for entertainment. These have made Christmas the natural focus of house-visiting activities, and at least within living memory it appears to have been the time of year when most have occurred. However, the particular character of the festival does not fully explain the concentration of visits in these months. It is possible that the reason might be not only that holidays and festive occasions suitable for house-visiting occur during this period, but also that although evenings would be dark and families would be at home, the weather would rarely be as cold and unpleasant as it would be for performances during January and February.

Before concluding this section on the temporal distribution of the visiting customs, having mentioned time of day, and time of year, reference should also be made to the influence of a particular era. Seasonal customs of this kind reflect many facets of community life. Important national and local events during various periods have certainly affected both them and their host communities. The two World Wars, particularly the First, caused considerable social upheaval which adversely affected local traditions. Many potential

performers were killed, incapacitated or moved temporarily or sometimes permanently to other areas, and, even in a region less liable than many to lose men to conscription because of the importance of coal, iron and steel to the war economy, the culture-shock experienced had a strong negative influence on house-visiting.

Nationalisation of these major industries was also a significant development. It radically altered the social structure in the region by removing the local owner/employer figure who was often a principal supporter of the most complex visits. The removal of this often paternalistic figure from the community took away one of its natural focal points.

The gradual raising of the school leaving age could have been a negative influence on the customs, clouding as it did the clear distinction that once existed between child and adolescent. Visits which had been regarded as unsuitable for those in employment were still considered too "childish" for adolescents, yet they were not now likely to be included in adult complex visits whose groups would often be recruited within a particular local work-force. The rite of passage between childhood and adolescence embodied in seasonal house-visiting was no longer clearly defined.

Of the other influences on the community which have also affected seasonal house-visiting, the impact of the mass media is particularly obvious. The ever increasing availability of mass-produced entertainment in various forms has lessened the demand for more "homespun" varieties. Both performer and audience in recent years have many more alternative entertainments. It is probable that the influence of the national and even regional ideas and attitudes purveyed by these media has diminished the impact of more local cultural traditions, including house-visiting.

One influence that proved less important than expected was that of the church. Evidence was sought for the attitudes of the clergy towards this type of custom, but only one instance of hostility was recorded when, according to one informant, a performer was refused Confirmation during a particular year after taking part in an Old Horse visit. Although perhaps an isolated case, this is a remarkable example of a relatively modern association of a house-visit custom with practices regarded as un-Christian. Perhaps house-visiting was rarely of sufficient significance to attract clerical attention, but perhaps also such traditions were regarded by local clergy as integral features of local communal life that should not be disrupted without cause. Certainly Alfred Gatty who was Vicar of Ecclesfield for many years in the middle of the nineteenth century, as well as his family, were interested in and enjoyed the visits made to their home.

It is perhaps this enjoyment, and the pleasure derived from receiving and giving performances that have had the greatest influence on the changing patterns of seasonal house-visiting. A custom is unlikely to survive when it ceases to have a reason for existence, and a function to perform in the community which supports it. Giving enjoyment and entertainment are certainly important functions of house-visits, and it is these and other functions that are now to be considered.

It has been a major aim of this study to discover reasons for the existence of house-visiting customs. It is my contention that they are not, as has often been thought, in a state of continual decline but develop, spread, contract, die out and are in turn replaced by new developments or revivals of older customs. Some of the influences on this dynamic process have already been mentioned but it remains to examine the motives of those involved whether as performers or audience.

A major reason given by informants for their performances was to earn money. This straightforward mercenary motive should not be overlooked. However, important though it was, these financial considerations were complemented by an obvious sense of enjoyment on the part of the performers. Many people, of course, derive pleasure from giving dramatic performances, and those involved in making house-visits were certainly not exceptional in this. There is also the feeling of importance, the acquisition of status and prestige conferred on the performer by the audience and sometimes by the community as a whole. This is especially true of those who perform in the complex visits. Thus for a member of an Old Horse team or a Hero-Combat Mumming group performing at Wentworth Woodhouse, or for one of the Grenoside Sword Dancers at Barnes Hall, or even for someone Jolly Minering at a big house in the next street, there would be the temporary but pleasurable opportunity to assume an enhanced social status.

There is also pleasure for the performer in the formation of a bond, however brief, with the audience - the dyadic contract where, in the giving and receiving of favours, a bond is created between the participants. This contract would be even more significant to both parties in the context of an existing relationship, be it between landlord and tenant, employer and employee or even minister of religion and parishioner.

These intrinsic rewards for the performers, I would suggest, in combination with the extrinsic ones already referred to, are the true motives for performance. It seems increasingly incredible to me, having interviewed many of those who have participated in house-visits, that they could have in any way been consciously intent on fulfilling the prescriptions of some ancient religion, however vestigial, when there were obvious and genuine contemporary motives for their actions.

The performer, however, represents only one side of the house-visit. The fact that in this country prior to this study the audience for such events has

attracted little or no scholarly attention constitutes a serious omission in existing work on the subject. The attitudes and opinions of the audience, the community which gives reward and support to the performers, are vitally important to the very existence of seasonal house-visiting. Without the giving of money, and other less tangible rewards, these customs would certainly no longer flourish and develop or even survive. What then are the motives of the audience in giving this support, and what for them is the function that the visit performs?

Firstly the visit provides entertainment. Before the advent of radio and television, this function was clearly of greater significance, yet still today a different value is placed upon "live" performance, of whatever standard of professionalism. This might partly be due to a special quality of direct interpersonal communication that cannot be reproduced in a disembodied voice or on an impersonal screen. There is also however the feeling of affirmation of community identity that accompanies participation in a house-visit. Customs such as these are regarded by their audiences as part of the local cultural tradition and are given support upon that basis.

The conferment of prestige or status is equally important to the audience and to the performer. The house-visit gives the householder, particularly when guests are being entertained, an opportunity to be seen to be generous, and to be regarded as worth visiting. This is the other side of the dyadic contract. The performer gives entertainment and affords status to the audience; the audience gives tangible rewards and also prestige to the performer.

Of the two parties to the contract, the role of the audience I consider to be the more important. There must have been many house-visits attempted which, meeting a chilly reception, were never repeated. Only if the response of the audience was sufficiently positive would the visit survive to be repeated another year.

This patronage by the community is the final and perhaps most significant feature of house-visiting to be covered in this study. The degree of patronage varies according to the type of visit; the more complex the custom, the higher the status of the individual, family or group supporting it. The Fitzwilliams at Wentworth Woodhouse, and the gentleman farmers and coal-owners in the Ecclesfield district, were the audiences for house-visits of the most complex type performed in the study-area. The only viable alternative venues for large performing groups have been pubs and working men's clubs where they have not always been welcome.

In the study area, complex visits have proved unable to survive the decline in their audience, and the breakdown of the longstanding relationships between social classes in the area. Unless the potential exists for substantial reward and the accompanying sense of status or kudos in performance, there is insufficient incentive for the rehearsal, preparation and organisation necessary for house-visits by the larger groups. The one complex performance which still continues, the Grenoside Sword Dance, has only survived by abandoning house-visiting in favour of more formal appearances to larger audiences in concerts, folk-festivals and local fetes and galas. Simple visits have also declined in the study-area but unlike the complex visits they have not reached the point of extinction. The strong social pressures already described have severely affected local traditions of all kinds. However, given population stability, with the immediate prospect of continuing economic stagnation or decline, the conditions will be suitable for the survival of existing house-visiting customs, and perhaps even the introduction of new ones.

Having presented the main conclusions which deal with the characteristics, development and functions of house-visiting in the area, it only now remains to comment briefly on the contribution made by the study itself to the knowledge and understanding of this interesting cultural tradition. One of its

original aims was to explore districts to the north of Sheffield which had previously received little or scholarly attention, in order to see if the relative dearth of references to house-visiting customs was the result of an absence of data, or rather the absence of fieldwork by folklorists. As the distribution maps clearly show, previous references gave neither a full nor an accurate picture of local house-visiting traditions. References to Old Tup performances, for example, have been more than trebled as a result of this new fieldwork<sup>4</sup>. In customs like Wassailing which have received even less attention than such complex visits as the Old Tup in previous accounts, the contrast is even more striking. The five existing references have been augmented by a further thirty-three recorded from oral tradition during the course of the present research.

The implications of these discoveries for similar folklore studies in this country in the future are clear. The evidence of existing printed references is obviously quite inadequate for any definitive conclusions to be drawn concerning the geographical distribution of seasonal house-visiting and other traditional customs. In the absence of similar fieldwork in other parts of the country, the available evidence regarding the national distribution of such customs is not only deficient but also distorted because of the inconsistent coverage achieved during the little fieldwork that has taken place.

Perhaps the most important claim that can be made for this study is that it has revealed a hitherto unsuspected wealth of seasonal house-visiting customs in an area previously regarded as having few such traditions. In addition to the quantity of data collected, some of the examples recorded are of particular interest for the folklorist. The reminiscences of those who performed as plough-bullocks in Barnburgh with their evocative cry of "Unger", and the equally evocative Collop Monday request of "Pray dame a collop" which although sounding as if more suited to eighteenth century England, in fact lingered on into twentieth century West Yorkshire, are just two instances of the richness and depth of the collected material. The Old Horse play from Hoyland

4. Cp. Cawte, (1978), p.111.

and Elsecar is perhaps the most remarkable single discovery made during the fieldwork. This is possibly the most interesting folk drama text discovered in this country during this century, and its significance for the folklorist could even be compared with the famous Plough Play performed at Revesby, Lincolnshire in 1779.<sup>5</sup> Each is the only text of its kind, yet with obvious traditional elements, and both are closely associated with the local gentry; the Old Horse with the Fitzwilliams of Wentworth Woodhouse, the Plough Play with the Banks family of Revesby Abbey. Perhaps both of them owe their survival, if not existence, to the interest and patronage of these families. The Old Horse text is particularly intriguing because although it contains a great deal of local dialect and even local place names, it follows closely the descriptions of the action in Old Horse performances in other parts of the region.<sup>6</sup> It remains to be discovered whether it is a local elaboration, or the survival of a complete example of the previously unrecorded Old Horse dramatic dialogue referred to by Addy.<sup>7</sup>

Fascinating though this particular text is, more important still is the previously unrecorded and often unique information about the preparation, organisation and functions of the performance gathered during the many interviews with people who actually participated in seasonal house-visiting. This information enables the researcher to understand these customs and their social context in some depth rather than merely to observe them or present them simply as texts.

This study aimed to redress an academic balance. In pursuit of this aim it has added considerably to the records of house-visiting in the study area; it has focussed attention on the complete spectrum of seasonal house-visiting rather than concentrating on the rarer complex forms and has attempted to examine the often neglected communal functions of these customs rather than adhering to the still widely-accepted survivalistic interpretations.

5. See Chambers, (1933), pp.104-123, M.J.Preston, "The Revesby Sword Play", Journal of American Folklore, vol.85, no.335 (Jan-March, 1972), 51-57, and M.J.Preston, M.G.Smith and P.S.Smith, Morrice Dancers at Revesby, (Sheffield, 1976).
6. Addy, (1907), 37-41 Wilson, (1903), p.182.
7. Addy, (1907), 39.

Finally, two images of seasonal house-visiting recur. Firstly I think about the discarded horse's skull, dredged from the duck pond at Hooton Pagnell, which now stands on display in the Hall, a vivid reminder of a group which perhaps had had its day, and no longer enjoyed the patronage of the local community. Secondly I think about the children who come to my door in increasing numbers each year at Halloween, arrayed in witch and zombie costumes, singing songs and asking for money, carrying on a tradition they know little or nothing about, yet understand far more, I would contend, than many folklorists have ever done about the true nature and purpose of seasonal house-visiting.

## A P P E N D I X   O N E

Questionnaires used in this study:

1. Letter which introduced the postal survey.
2. Survey of Visiting Customs questionnaire used in the postal and schools surveys.
3. House-Visit Questionnaire used in personal interviews.

Phone Ecclesfield 2207

Holy Trinity House,  
Thorpe Street,  
Thorpe Hesley,  
Rotherham S61 2RP,  
South Yorkshire.

Dear Sir,

I am carrying out a survey of customs in South Yorkshire as part of a post-graduate study at Sheffield University, and I would be most grateful for any assistance you might be able to give me.

The customs in which I am particularly interested are those which involve or involved going round the area with plays, songs or rhymes, at special times of the year like Christmas, Hallowe'en and New Year. These customs include Mumming, Caking, Guising and Wassailing, and the plays include "The Derby Tup", "St. George" and "The Old Horse".

If you could complete the enclosed form in as much detail as possible, or pass on the form to someone else who could, I would be very grateful. You would also be helping to make a record, before it is too late, of local traditions, which seem to be vanishing year by year.

Although the form refers to your locality, my area includes most of South Yorkshire and any information about the customs of other parts of the area would be gratefully received.

Yours sincerely,

(R. GREIG)

SURVEY OF VISITING CUSTOMS

1) Have there ever been any customs where you live which involve, at a special time of year, going round houses, pubs or clubs, with some sort of disguise or performance of a play, song, or rhyme?

YES  NO  DON'T KNOW  (Please tick as appropriate)

2) If so, please give the name of the custom and the date or dates on which they took place, and the year in which the last performance took place to your knowledge

	NAME OF CUSTOM	DATE OR TIME OF YEAR	LAST PERFORMED
(a)	_____	_____	_____
(b)	_____	_____	_____
(c)	_____	_____	_____
(d)	_____	_____	_____
(e)	_____	_____	_____
(f)	_____	_____	_____

3) If you can give any further details of words, costumes and disguises, reactions to the custom, or if you could write a detailed description, please do so on the back of this sheet.

4) If you know of anyone who might be able to give further information on this subject, please give their names and addresses if possible on the back of this sheet.

YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR AGE: -20  20-29  30-39  40-49  50-59  60-69  70+

(Please tick appropriate box)

HOUSE-VISIT QUESTIONNAIRE1) General.

- (a) Date of interview \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Informant's name \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) Address \_\_\_\_\_
- (e) Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_
- (f) Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
- (g) Religion \_\_\_\_\_
- (h) Education \_\_\_\_\_
- (i) Period of residence in present community \_\_\_\_\_
- (j) Birthplace of parents \_\_\_\_\_
- (k) Marital status, name, age etc. of wife \_\_\_\_\_

2) Organisation of Visit.

- (a) Who took part in the custom? (names and addresses if possible)
- (b) Did these people perform every year, or was a new group formed each time?
- (c) What were the characters (if any) the performers portrayed?
- (d) How were the performers dressed? (costumes, props, type of dress, disguise, blackened faces)
- (e) How and from where were the words (if any) of the custom learnt?
- (f) Were the words and/or the performance rehearsed?
- (g) If rehearsed, where, how often and for how long?
- (h) When was the custom performed? (date, time and year)
- (i) Was the time and date of the performance fixed?
- (j) How many visits would the group make at any one time?
- (k) When and where did the group assemble?
- (l) Where and how did they travel, to and from the visit?
- (m) Who chose the visiting places or territory and why?
- (n) What type of houses were chosen, why and when?
- (o) How were the proceeds (if any) divided?
- (p) Who stored costumes and props (if any)?
- (q) Who made costumes and props (if any)?

- (r) Were "special" performances given for any reason; if so, when and where?
- (s) By what name were the performers known?

3) The Performance/Visit.

- (a) How did the performers make their presence known?
- (b) Were they admitted and if so, by whom?
- (c) How did the performers enter, and what preceded the performance?
- (d) Give full details of the performance including words spoken, actions, gestures and tunes, including everything performed in the course of the visit.
- (e) Did the performances vary; if so, how and why?
- (f) Describe the manner of the performance, whether humorous or serious, and the type of voice and gesture used by each performer.
- (g) Where did the performers stand in relation to each other and in relation to their audience?
- (h) Did the performance involve asking for reward, and if so, what?
- (i) Who collected the rewards, how, with what, and when in relation to the performance?
- (j) What was said during the collection, if anything?
- (k) What were the proceeds of the collection?
- (l) What was the average contribution?
- (m) Did the audience applaud, comment or join in, or participate in any way?

4) Attitudes.

- (a) What reasons did the performers give for their actions?
- (b) Did the performers attach any social or cultural significance to the visit?
- (c) What did the performers think of each other?
- (d) What did the performers think of the performance?
- (e) What did the performers think of their audiences?
- (f) What was the audience's attitude towards the performance?
- (g) What was the audience's attitude towards the performers?
- (h) What did members of the audience think of each other in relation to the performance?
- (i) Was there any element of frightening involved, for example, of children?
- (j) What was the attitude of the group to rival groups, if any?
- (k) Is there any evidence that the visit was considered to be "lucky" by performers or audience?

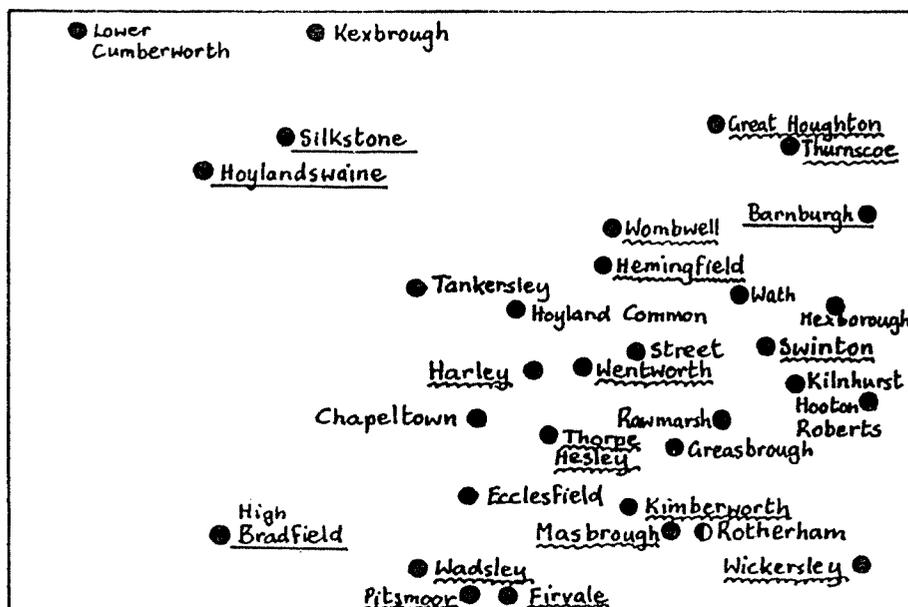
A P P E N D I X T W O

Maps showing the distribution of seasonal house-visiting in the study area.

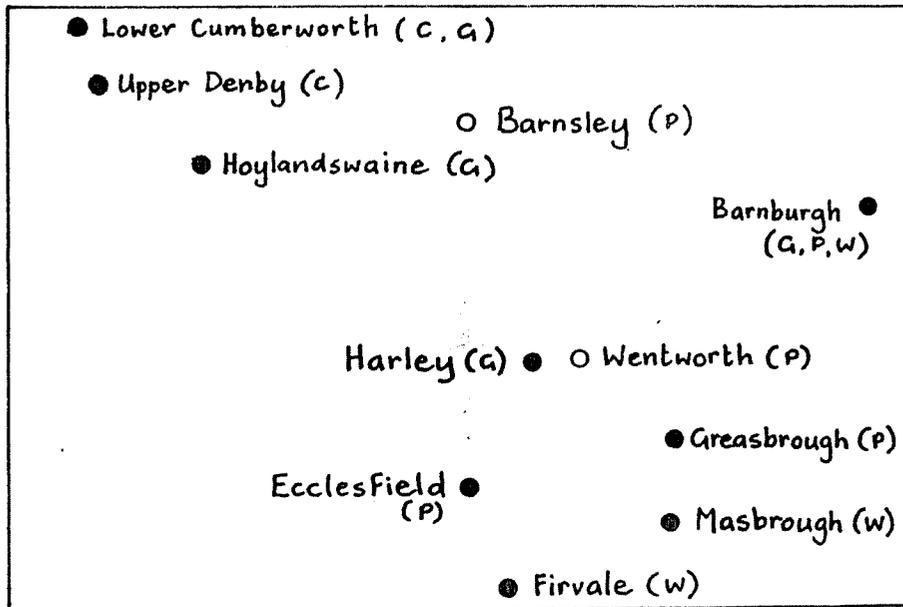
1. Letting New Year and Christmas in.
2. Miscellaneous Seasonal House-visits.
3. Caking.
4. Jolly Minering .
5. Wassailing .
6. Munning .
7. Hero-Combat.
8. Old Tup.
9. Old Horse .

K E Y

- House-visit location noted in fieldwork.
- House-visit location from earlier references.
- ⊙ House-visit location from earlier references, confirmed by fieldwork.

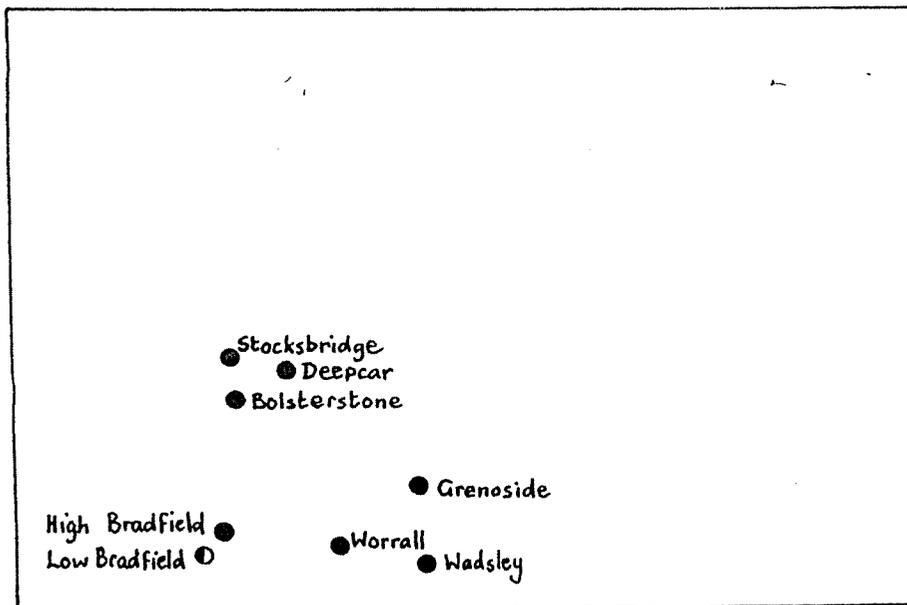


Map 1. Letting New Year and Christmas in.

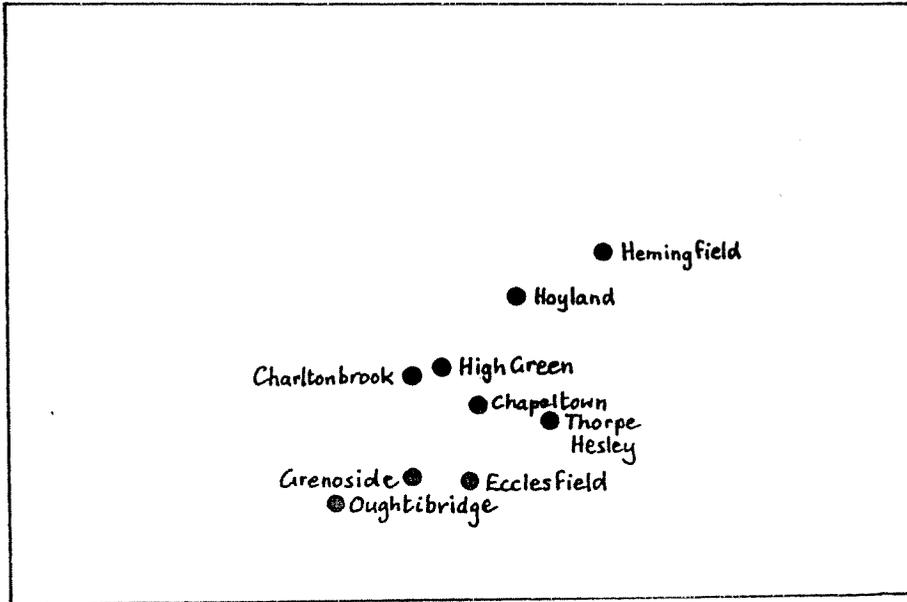


(C) Collop Monday      (G) Penny for the Guy  
 (P) Plough Bullocks      (W) Whitsun Visiting

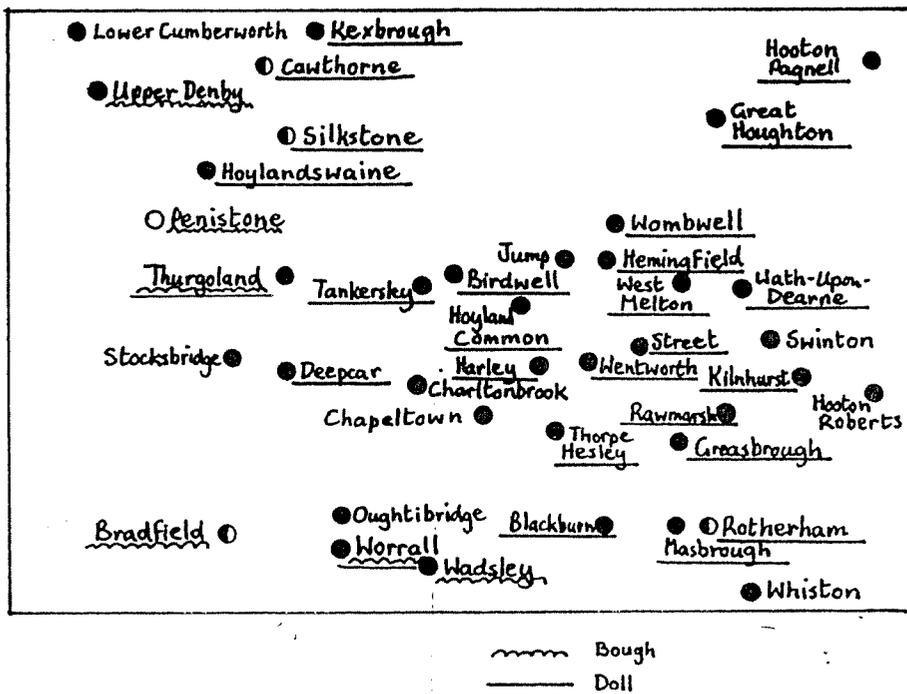
Map 2. Miscellaneous House-Visits.



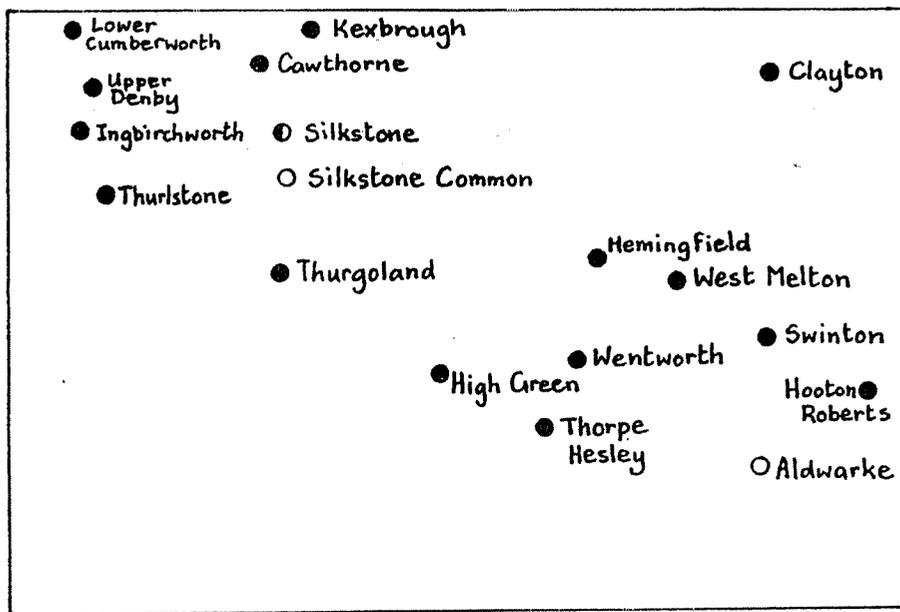
Map 3. Caking



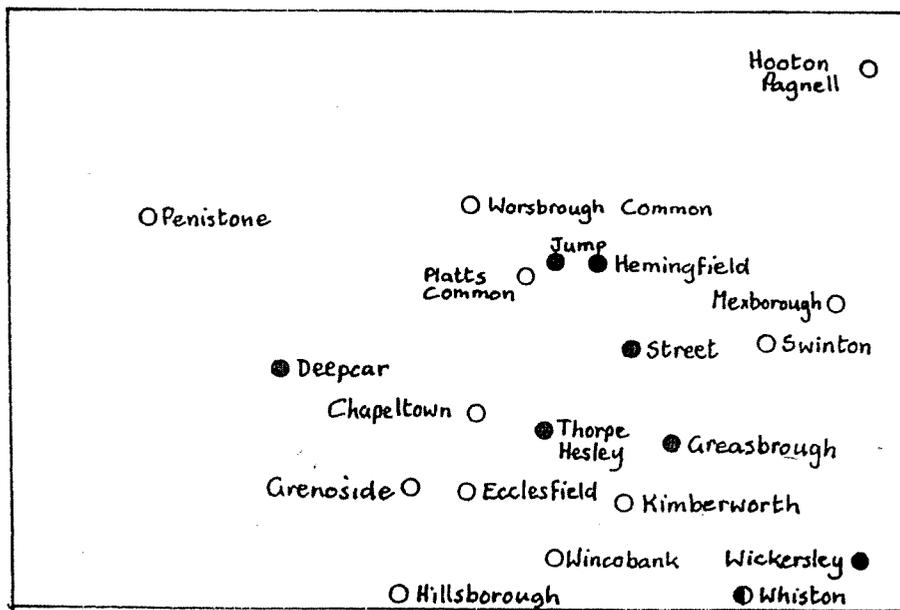
Map 4. Jolly Minering.



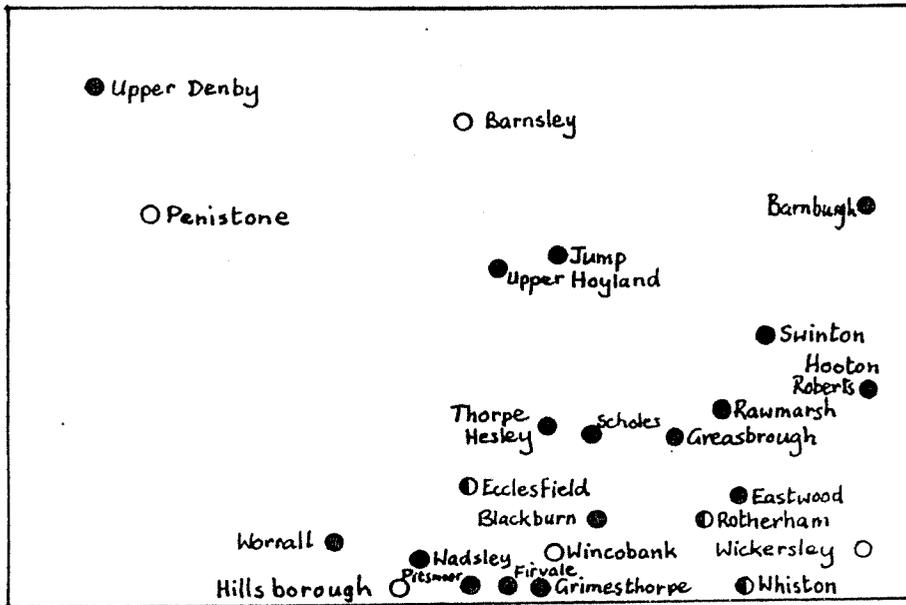
Map 5. Wassailing.



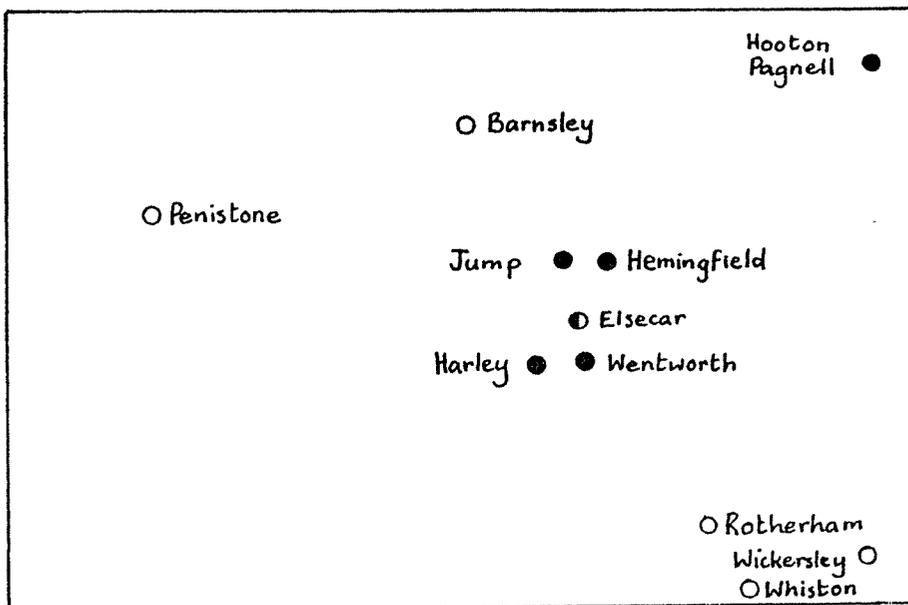
Map 6. Mumming.



Map 7. Hero-Combat.



Map 8. Old Tup.



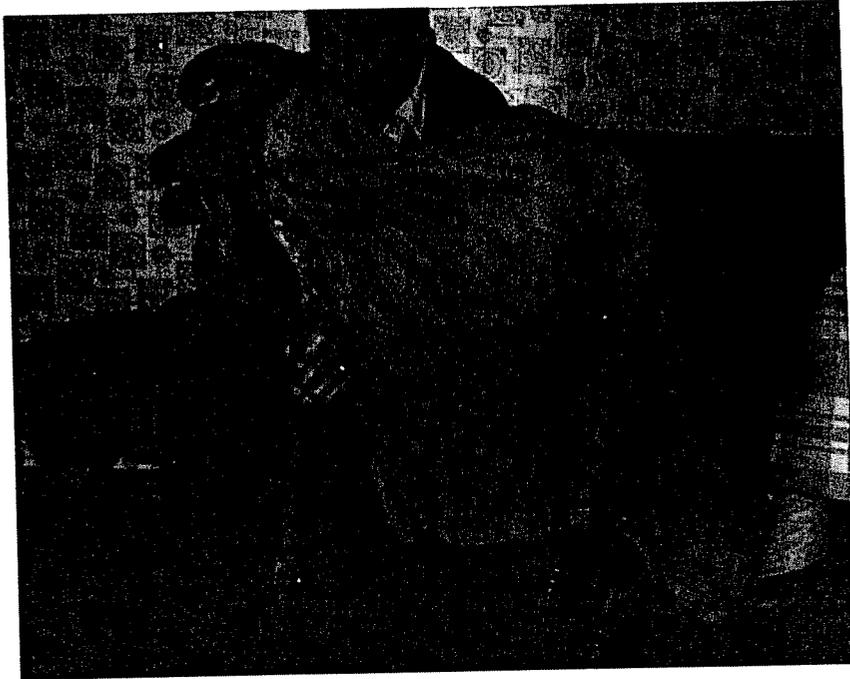
Map 9. Old Horse.

A P P E N D I X   T H R E E

Photographic evidence of house-visiting in South Yorkshire.



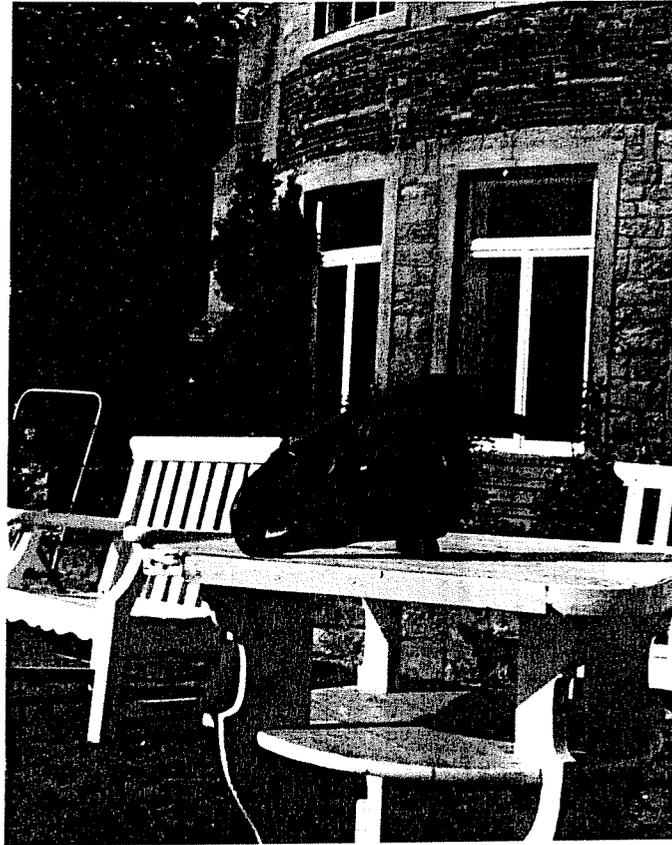
1. Caking at Stocksbridge - 1st November 1976.



2.and 3. Old Tup disguise from Barnburgh.



4. Ram's head used in recent performances at Barnburgh.



5. and 6. Old Horse Head at Hooton Pagnell Hall.



7. Horse skin used by Hoyland and Elsecar Old Horse Party.



8. Hoyland and Elsecar Old Horse Party during street collecting - c. 1935.



9. Hoyland and Elsecar Old Horse Party  
at Barnsley Workhouse - c. 1935.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

- Abrahams, R.D., "British West Indian Folk Drama and the 'Life Cycle' Problem", Folklore, Vol.81, (Winter 1970), 241-265.
- Abrahams, R.D., "'Pull Out Your Purse and Pay': A St George Mummung from the British West Indies", Folklore, vol.79, (1968), 176-201.
- Abrahams, R.D. and G.Foss, Anglo-American Folksong Style, New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1968.
- Addy, S.O., A Glossary of Words Used in the Neighbourhood of Sheffield, London, Trübner and Co, for the English Dialect Society, 1888.
- Addy, S.O., Household Tales and Traditional Remains, London and Sheffield, David Nutt and Pawson and Brailsford, 1895.
- Addy, S.O., "Guising and Mummung in Derbyshire", Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, vol.XXIX (Jan.1907), 31-42.
- Alford, V., Sword Dance and Drama, London, Merlin Press, 1962.
- Alford, V., Introduction to English Folklore, London, G.Bell, 1952.
- Alford, V., "The Hobby Horse and Other Animal Masks", Folklore, Vol.79, (Summer 1968), 122-234.
- Andrews, C.R., The Story of Wortley Ironworks, Nottingham, Milward and Sons, 1956.
- Armitage, H., Chantreyland, London, Sampson Low Marston, 1910.
- Armitage, H., Sorrelysykes, London, Wheeler & Co, 1913.
- Baskervill, C.R., "Mummers' Wooing Plays in England", Modern Philology, vol.XXI (1924), 225-272.
- Baumann, R., "Belsnickling in a Nova Scotia Island Community", Western Folklore, vol.XXXI (1972), 229-243.
- Beck, E., "Children's Halloween Customs in Sheffield", Lore and Language, vol.3, no.9 (July 1983), 70-88.
- Bell, R., Early Ballads also Ballads and Songs of the Peasantry of England, London, George Bell, 1877.
- Benedict, R., Patterns of Culture, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1935.
- Brand, J., Observations on the Popular Antiquities of Great Britain, arranged, revised and greatly enlarged by Sir Henry Ellis, London, Henry G.Bohn, 1853.
- Brice, A., The Mobjiad; or, Battle of the Voice, Exeter, Brice and Thorn, 1770.
- Broadwood, L.E. and J.A.Fuller-Maitland, English County Songs, London, Cramer, (1891).
- Brody, A., The English Mummers and their Plays, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969.
- Buckland, T., "Wakes and Rushbearing c.1780 - c.1830: A Functional Analysis", Lore and Language vol.3, no.6 part A, (Jan.1982), 29-44.
- Burne, C.S., The Handbook of Folklore, new edn. revised and enlarged, London, Sidgwick and Jackson for the Folklore Society, 1914.

- Carpenter, E., Manuscript Collection, Department of Local History and Archives, Sheffield City Libraries, MS.273 (1-25).
- Cawte, E.C., Ritual Animal Disguise, Cambridge and Totowa N.J., D.S. Brewer and Rowman and Littlefield for the Folklore Society, 1978.
- Cawte, E.C., A.Helm, R.J.Marriott and N.Peacock. "A Geographical Index of the Ceremonial Dance in Great Britain", Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, vol.IX, no.1, 1960, ii-42.
- Cawte, E.C., A.Helm and N.Peacock, English Ritual Drama, London, The Folklore Society, 1967.
- Chambers, Sir E.K., The English Folk Play, Oxford University Press, Oxford and London, 1933.
- Chambers, Sir E.K., The Mediaeval Stage, Oxford and London, Oxford University Press, 1903.
- Chandler, K., "Morris Dancing in the Eighteenth Century: a Newly-discovered Source", Lore and Language, vol.3, no.8 (Jan.1983), 31-38.
- Cline, R.H., "Belsnickles and Shanghais", Journal of American Folklore, vol.LXXI (1958), 164-165.
- Crippen, T.G., Christmas and Christmas Lore, London and Glasgow, Blackie, 1923.
- (Cust, H). "Twelfth Night on the Moors: Morris Dancers in Yorkshire", Pall Mall Gazette, 8th Jan 1895, p.1, c.3; p.2, c.1, 2.
- Dean-Smith, M., "Disguise in English Folk-Drama", Folk Life, vol.1 (1963), 97-101.
- Dean-Smith, M., "An Unromantic View of the Mummers Play", Theatre Research, 1966, vol.8, no.2, 89-99.
- Dean-Smith, M., "The Life-Cycle or Folk Play: Some Conclusions Following the Examination of the Ordish Papers and Other Sources", Folklore, vol.69, (1958), 237-253.
- Ditchfield, P.H., Old English Customs, London, Methuen, 1901.
- Dorson, R.M., The British Folklorists, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968.
- Dransfield, J.N., A History of the Parish of Penistone, Penistone, James H.Wood, 1906.
- Dundes, A., The Study of Folklore, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1965.
- Eden, H.K.F., "Morris Dancers' Plantation", Notes and Queries, 10th series, vol.II, (Oct.8th 1904), 287.
- Evans, G.E., The Pattern Under the Plough, London, Faber, 1966.
- Ewing, J.H., The Peace Egg, London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, n.d.
- Ewing, J.H., Diaries 1856-67, 1869-73, 1875-83, Item 41, Hunter Archaeological Society, Archives Division, Sheffield City Libraries.

- Finnegan, R., Oral Poetry, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- Ford, R., Vagabond Songs and Ballads of Scotland, new and improved edn., Paisley, Gardner, 1904.
- Foster, G.M., "The Dyadic Contract: A Model for the Social Structure of a Mexican Peasant Village", American Anthropologist, vol. LXVIII (1961), 1173-92.
- Frazer, Sir J.G., The Golden Bough, abridged edn., London, Macmillan, 1933.
- Gailey, A., Irish Folk Drama, Cork, Mercier Press, 1969.
- Gatty, I., "The Old Tup and its Ritual", Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, vol. V, no. 1 (1946), p. 23-30.
- Gatty, I., "The Eden Collection of Mumming Plays", Folklore, vol. 59 (1948), 16-34.
- Gatty, R.A., MS. Collection, Birmingham Public Reference Library, Local History Collection, MS. no. 661164.
- Gennep, A. van, The Rites of Passage, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960.
- Gimcrack, G. (J.S. Gregson), Gimcrackiana, Manchester, (Printed by Jones), 1833.
- Glassie, H., All Silver and No Brass, Bloomington and London, Indiana University Press, 1975.
- Goldstein, K.S., A Guide for Fieldworkers in Folklore, Hatboro, Pennsylvania and London, Folklore Associates and Jenkins, 1964.
- Greig, G., Folk-Song in Buchan and Folk-Song of the North-East, Hatboro, Pennsylvania, Folklore Associates, 1963.
- Greig, R., "We Have a Poor Old Horse", Lore and Language [vol. 1], no. 9 (July 1973), p. 7-10.
- Gummer, Ald. G., Reminiscences of Rotherham, Rotherham, H. Garnett, 1927.
- Haggan, F., "Notes on Welsh Folklore", Folklore, vol. IV, 1893, 122.
- Halpert, H. and G.M. Story, eds., Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland: Essays in Anthropology, Folklore and History, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1969.
- Harland, J. and T.T. Wilkinson, Lancashire Folklore, London, Warne, 1867.
- Helm, A., Cheshire Folk Drama, Istock, The Guizer Press, n.d.
- Helm, A., "The Dramatic Action in the Vicinity of Sheffield", Lore and Language, [vol. 1], no. 2 (Jan 1970), 1-3.
- Helm, A., "In Comes I, St George", Folklore, vol. 76 (1965), 118-136.
- Hey, D., The Village of Ecclesfield, Huddersfield, The Advertiser Press, 1968.
- Hindley, C., The Life and Times of James Catnach, London, Reeves and Turner, 1878.
- Hole, C., English Custom and Usage, New York and London, Charles Scribner's Sons and B.T. Batsford, 1942.

- Houck, C.L., "Methodology of an Urban Speech Survey", Leeds Studies in English, new series, vol.II (1968), 115-128.
- Hunter, Rev. J., The Hallamshire Glossary, London, William Pickering, 1829.
- Hunter, Rev. J., Popular Traditions, Proverbs, Forms of Expression, Words and Other Antiquities of the Common People, Unpublished Manuscript, 1822 in British Library, Department of Manuscripts, Add.MS.24542, F.13R (p.25), F.25R (p.49) - 27R (p.53).
- Jacobs, J., English Fairy Tales, 2nd edn., London, David Nutt, 1892.
- Jagger, M.A., The History of Honley, Honley (the author), 1914.
- Karpeles, M, ed., Cecil Sharp's Collection of English Folk Songs, London, Oxford University Press, 1974.
- Kennedy, D., England's Dances, Folk-Dancing Today and Yesterday, London, G.Bell, 1949.
- Kennedy, P. and B.Kennedy, Two Jolly Miners, Folktracks Cassette, FSC-60-213.
- Kinloch, G.R., The Ballad Book, London and Edinburgh, privately printed, 1827.
- Kirby, E.T., "The Origin of the Mummers' Play", Journal of American Folklore, vol.84 (1971), 275-288.
- Korson, G., Minstrels of the Mine Patch, Hatboro, Pennsylvania, Folklore Associates, 1964.
- Linton, D.L.ed., Sheffield and Its Region, Sheffield, British Association, 1956.
- Lloyd, A.L., Come All ye Bold Miners: Ballads and Songs of the Coalfields, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1952.
- Lloyd, A.L., Folk Song in England, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1967.
- Lyon, L., "Hobby-Horse Ceremonies in New Mexico and Great Britain", Folk Music Journal, vol.4, no.2, (1981), 117-145.
- MacColl, E. and P. Seeger, Travellers' Songs from England and Scotland, London and Henley, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977.
- Malinowski, B., The Dynamics of Culture Change, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1945.
- Mann, P.H., Methods of Sociological Enquiry, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1968.
- Marrett, R.R., "Survival and Revival", Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, vol.1, no.2, (Dec.1933), 73-78.
- Maylam, P., The Hooden Horse, Canterbury, (the author), 1909.
- "Memorandum Book of a Yorkshire Lady", Transactions of the East Riding Archaeological Association, vol.IX, (1901), 14.
- Meynell, R. "Come, Brave Bow Slash and his men", Derbyshire Countryside, vol. XXIII, no.1, (Dec.1957/Jan 1958), 22-23, 35.

- Moore, S.F. (ed.), Secular Ritual, Amsterdam, Myerhoff, 1977.
- Morning Telegraph, 28.12.1974, 7a.
- Murphy, M.J., Tyrone Folk Quest, Belfast, Blackstaff Press, 1973.
- Murray, J.A.H., H. Bradley, W.A. Craigie, C.T. Onions, (eds.). The Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford, the Clarendon Press, 1978.
- Needham, J., "The Geographical Distribution of English Ceremonial Dance Traditions", Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, vol. III, no. 1, (Dec. 1936), 1-45.
- Nettel, R., Sing a Song of England, London, Phoenix House, 1954.
- Nettl, B., Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology, London, The Free Press of Glencoe and Collier - Macmillan, 1964.
- Northall, G.F., English Folk-Rhymes, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1892.
- Notes and Queries, 10th series, vol. II, 8.10.1904, 287.
- Onions, C.T., ed., The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology, Oxford, the Clarendon Press, 1966.
- Opie, I. and P. Opie. The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1951.
- Opie, I. and P. Opie. The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren, Oxford, the Clarendon Press, 1959.
- O'Shaughnessy, P., More Folk Songs from Lincolnshire, London, Oxford University Press, 1971.
- Ó'Súilleabháin, S., Irish Wake Amusements, Cork, Mercier Press, 1967.
- Ordish, T.F., "Folk Drama", Folk-Lore, vol. II, (1891), 314-335.
- Ordish, T.F., "English Folk Drama", Folk-Lore, vol. IV, (1893), 149-175.
- Ottley, M., "The Old Horse that Died", Dalesman, vol. 39, no. 9, (Dec. 1977), 697-9.
- Owen, T.M., Welsh Folk Customs, Cardiff, National Museum of Wales, Welsh Folk Museum, 1968.
- Pattison, S., "The Antrobus Soulcaiking Play: An Alternative approach to the Mummers' Play", Folk Life, Vol. 15, (1977), 5-11.
- P(eacock), M., "Christmas Tup", Notes and Queries, 9th series, vol. II, Oct. 29th 1898, p. 348.
- Pegg, B., Rites and Riots, Poole, Blandford Press, 1981.
- Pollard, S. and C. Holmes, (eds.), Essays in the Economic and Social History of South Yorkshire, Sheffield, South Yorkshire County Council, 1976.

- Preston, M.J., "The Revesby Sword Play", Journal of American Folklore, vol. 85, no. 335 (Jan-March, 1972), 51-57.
- Preston, M.J., M.G. Smith and P.S. Smith, An Interim Checklist of Chapbooks containing Traditional Play Texts, Newcastle, History of the Book Trade in the North, 1976.
- Preston, M.J., M.G. Smith and P.S. Smith, Morrice Dancers at Revesby, C.E.C.T.A.L. Facsimiles no. 1, Sheffield, C.E.C.T.A.L., 1976.
- Raglan, Lord, The Hero, London, Watts, 1949.
- Randolph, V., Ozark Superstitions, New York and London, Dover and Constable, 1964.
- Reeves, J., The Everlasting Circle, London, Heinemann, 1960.
- Rhys, J. and T.W.E. Higgens, "'First Foot' in the British Isles", Folk-Lore, vol. 3, (June 1892), 253-264.
- Robertson, M., "The Symbolism of Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland", Folk-Lore, vol. 93, no. II, (1982), 176-180.
- Rollins, H.H., An Analytical Index to the Ballad Entries (1557-1709), Hatboro, Pennsylvania, Tradition Press, 1967.
- The Rotherham and Masbrough Advertiser. 1.1.1859, 4c, 21.12.1878, 5b, 2.1.1858, supplement, 31.3.1962, 23, 28.12.1878, 5c, 24.1.1975, 15c.
- Russell, I., "Carol Singing in the Sheffield Area", Lore and Language, [vol. I], no. 3 (Aug 1970), 12-15.
- Russell, I., "A Survey of a Christmas Singing Tradition in South Yorkshire - 1970", Lore and Language, [vol. I], no 8, (Jan 1973), 13-25.
- Russell, I., "A Survey of Traditional Drama in North-East Derbyshire 1970-78", Folk Music Journal, vol. 3 (1979), 399-478.
- ( ) Sections of the Strata of the Coal Measures, compiled from records of borings and sinkings by a Committee of the Midland Institute of Mining Engineers, (n.p.) Sheffield, 1927.
- Sharp, C.J., The Sword Dances of Northern England, 2nd edn, London, Novello, 1951.
- Sharp, C.J., The Sword Dances of Northern England: Songs and Dance Airs, London, Novello, (n.d.).
- The Sheffield Daily Independent, 29.12.1920, 1.6.1934, 29.5.1934.
- Sheffield Daily Telegraph, 31.5.1934, 29.5.1934, 9.1.1920, 12.1.1920.
- Smith, G., The Dictionary of National Biography, eds. L. Stephen and S. Lee, London, Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Smith, G., "Chapbooks and Traditional Plays: Communication and Performance", Folklore, vol. 92, no. II, (1981), 208-218.
- Smith, G., "Whitsuntide House Visitation", Lore and Language, [vol. I], no. 3 (1970), 15

- Smith, G., P. S. Smith and J. D. A. Widdowson, Traditional Drama SLF Research Guide 1, Sheffield, The Survey of Language and Folklore and the Archives of Cultural Tradition, 1972.
- Smith, P. S., "Collecting Mummers' Plays Today", Lore and Language, [vol. 1], no. 1 (July 1969), 5 - 8.
- Smith, P. S., An Examination of the Problems Involved in the Spatial Presentation and Analysis of Traditional Drama, unpublished manuscript, 1976.
- Smith, P. and G. Smith, "T'owd Tup", Folk Music Ballads and Songs, no 2 (New series), n.d., 8 - 13.
- Smith, P. S., D. A. E. Spalding and F. Sutton, Cum All Yo Cutlin' Heroes, Sheffield, Sheffield City Museum, 1967.
- Sokolov, Y. M., Russian Folklore, Hatboro, Pennsylvania, Folklore Associates, 1966.
- South Yorkshire Times, 17.5.1975, 50 d.
- Stirling, A. M. W., Life's Little Day, London, Thornton Butterworth, 1924. (p. 112 ref. to Wassailing).
- Strutt, J., The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, J. C. Cox, London, Methuen, 1903.
- Summer, W. G., Folkways, New York, Mentor, 1960.
- Tiddy, R. J. E., The Mummers' Play, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1923.
- Tomlin, A. R., Local Folklore, Barnsley, Barnsley Independent, n.d.
- Topliff, R., A Selection of the Most Popular Melodies of the Tyne and the Wear, London, R. Topliff, n.d.
- Toyne, P. and P. T. Newby, Techniques in Human Geography, London and Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1971.
- Turner, V. W., The Ritual Process, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974.
- Tweedsmuir, S., Lilac and the Rose, London, Duckworth, 1952.
- "Twelfth Night on the Moors: Morris Dancers in Yorkshire", Pall Mall Gazette, 8th January 1895, p. 1, c. 3; p. 2, c. 1, 2.
- Vaughan-Williams, R., Manuscript collection of folk-songs, Vaughan-Williams Memorial Library, Cecil Sharp House, London.
- Ward, B. J., A Functional Approach to English Folk-Drama, (Ph.D. Thesis) Ohio State University, 1972...
- Warner, L., "The Russian Folk Play 'Tsar Maximillian': An Examination of Some Possible Origins and Sources", Folklore, Vol. 82, (1971), 185 - 206.
- Welsford, E., The Fool, London, Faber, 1935.
- Whiting, C. E., "A Plough Monday Play", Durham University Journal, XXIV (Dec. 1923), 39 - 43.

- Widdowson, J. D. A., If You Don't Be Good: Verbal Social Control in Newfoundland, St John's, Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1977.
- Widdowson, J. D. A., "Traditions of the House and Home", Lore and Language, [vol. 1], no 6, (Jan. 1972), 5 - 9.
- Wilson, J., Verses and Notes, Chorley, A. Hill, 1903.  
(p 182 The Ancient Christmas Gambol of "the Horse Head".)
- Woodall, B., A Peak District Calendar of Events, Sheffield, privately printed, 1976.
- Wright, A. R., British Calendar Customs: England, ed. T. E. Lones, London, William Glaiser for The Folklore Society, 1936 - 40, 3 vols.
- Wright, E. M., Rustic Speech and Folklore, London, Oxford University Press, 1914.
- Wright, J., The English Dialect Dictionary, London, Frowde, 1905.
- Wroe, L., Customs and Traditions of Grenoside Morris Sword Dancers, Unpublished manuscript in Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Cecil Sharp House, London.
- The Yorkshire Evening Post, 20.1.1923, 4 g.