

**Continuity, Conflict and Change:
A Contextual and Comparative Study
of Three South Yorkshire
Longsword Dance Teams**

(Two Volumes)

by

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Volume One

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Department of English Language and Linguistics
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SUMMARY

This thesis is the result of an historical and anthropological investigation of the three longsword dance teams of South Yorkshire: the Grenoside Sword Dancers, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers and Barnsley Longsword. Longsword dancing is a form of traditional dance found throughout Europe and, with few exceptions, is historically specific in Britain to Yorkshire and the peripheral areas of adjoining counties.

The approach is both diachronic and synchronic. Established anthropological research techniques (participant-observation combined with questionnaires and interviewing) were used during twenty-eight months of intensive fieldwork. Considerable library and archive research was also conducted.

This study examines continuity and change in the dance, the dancers and their communities and draws attention to the role of conflict -- opposition between ideas and interests -- in the process of tradition. It presents detailed descriptions of the dances and traces changes in costume, style and structure. The nature of the dancers and their communities are explored from the 1880s up to the present, and the dance is considered as a dynamic product of group behaviour.

Having previously received no serious academic attention, this study represents the first interdisciplinary exploration of the tradition of longsword dancing in the United Kingdom. It adds to the growing body of knowledge surrounding the history, development and current practice of traditional dance in England and provides the groundwork for future research in the field.

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this thesis to past, present and future members of each of the teams with which I worked, and especially to the late Mr Reg Ward of Grenoside, whose friendship helped to make Sheffield my home.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the Grenoside Sword Dancers, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers and Barnsley Longsword for agreeing to participate in this study, and in particular, Ray Ellison, John Pitts and Ivor Allsop for the depth and enthusiasm of their interest. I extend my appreciation to Trevor Stone and the late Kathleen Mitchell for sharing their collections of longsword dancing material with me, to Ivor and Joyce Allsop for taking me under their wing, and to Peter Clarke and Patrick Malham for regular rides to the practices at Grenoside and Handsworth, respectively.

I thank my supervisor, Prof John Widdowson, for his continued encouragement and support and Dr Anthony G Barrand of Boston University, for introducing me to longsword dancing in 1982. My sincere thanks also go to the support staff at the Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language -- Beryl Moore and Donie Donnelly -- and to my colleague and friend Dr Julia Bishop. Finally, I thank my husband, Dr Toby Clark, for his practical assistance, unfailing support and tolerance of my habit of taking too much on board.

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Explanatory Notes for Fieldwork References

- CA** Condensed Accounts - referenced with volume and page number, for example CA2-063 refers to Condensed Accounts volume 2, page 63.
- EA** Expanded Accounts - referenced with page number, for example EA-124 refers to Expanded Accounts, page 124.
- FWJ** Fieldwork Journal

Audio recordings are referenced with my initials and include the item number of the recording and a location reference. For example CMS-02/A-10.45 refers to tape number 2, side A, 10 minutes and 45 seconds into the recording.

Chapter One

Introduction

Dance, which can be defined as "rhythmic movement done for some purpose transcending utility",¹ has largely been neglected as a subject of study by social scientists in the United Kingdom due, at least in part, to a misunderstanding of the nature of dance itself.² Dance is seen as a cultural product, "culture" being the learned portions of human behaviour, a people's ideas, values, beliefs, way of living. Dance is also viewed as one way in which to see the reflection of social structure and situations. However, dance does not simply "reflect" culture or society; to use such a term undermines the fact that dance is a socio-cultural *system* in its own right.³ While dance certainly can reflect, or reveal, social structure to the observer, dance is, more importantly, a means of creating, or at least reinforcing, social and cultural realities. It is through the dance event, for example, that power relations and political strategies might be formulated. A dance may encompass a validation of leadership, a competition for power, an exercise of social control, or a means of coping with subordination or its threat.⁴ Dance is an active *system*, and it is only for analytic purposes that we separate it conceptually from the rest of culture.⁵ On the premise that dance is more than a peripheral aspect of culture and society, scholars should be able to use dance as a way into, or starting point for, understanding a particular group of people, thereby resolving the predominating neglect of dance as a viable and worthwhile subject of research.

¹ Anya Peterson Royce, *The Anthropology of Dance* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), p. 3.

² Two notable exceptions are John Blacking and Theresa Buckland.

³ Joann Wheeler Kealiinohomoku, "Dance Culture as a Microcosm of Holistic Culture", *Dance Research Annual*, 6 (1974), 99-106.

⁴ Judith Lynne Hanna, "Toward Semantic Analysis of Movement Behaviour: Concepts and Problems", *Semiotica*, 25: 1-2 (1979), 77-110 (p. 100).

⁵ Alan P. Merriam, "Anthropology and the Dance", *Dance Research Annual*, 6 (1974), 9-27, and Suzanne Youngerman, "Method and Theory in Dance Research: An Anthropological Approach", *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council*, 7 (1975), 116-133.

This study is the result of an historical and anthropological investigation of the three longsword dance teams of South Yorkshire: the Grenoside Sword Dancers, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers and Barnsley Longsword.⁶ Longsword dancing is a form of traditional dance found throughout Europe,⁷ and is historically specific in Britain to Yorkshire and the peripheral areas of adjoining counties.⁸ Longsword is related to the rapper sword dances of Durham and Northumberland,⁹ and some longsword dances are associated with mumming plays.¹⁰

The dance consists of six to eight performers, each carrying a rigid metal or wooden bar, roughly the size and shape of a yardstick, which links them, often in an unbroken circle, for much of the dance. The performance may commence with a song or a play, and the dance usually involves the rhythmic clashing of swords, a series of intricate figures and a "Lock" or star shape made of interwoven swords, which is held aloft. The Lock may be lowered around the neck of an additional performer (the "captain" or "fool"), and as each dancer pulls his sword out of the Lock, the supernumery may fall or kneel down; in some dances a play (or some form of dramatic activity) may take place, or continue, at this point, followed by more dancing. Or instead, the leader of the dance may simply carry the Lock out of the performance area, followed by the rest of the performers. Some longsword dances (e.g.

⁶ See Maps 1 and 2.

⁷ Longsword dancing is found throughout continental Europe, including the south-western Alps, Provence, the Iberian Peninsula, on islands in the Adriatic and the Mediterranean Seas, in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania and Scandinavia, and most widely in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Austria. For a basic overview, see Violet Alford, *Sword Dance and Drama* (London: Merlin Press, 1962), and for more recent accounts, see the longsword dance broadsheet *Rattle Up My Boys*, issues 1:1 (1987), 1:5 (1988), 2:2 (1988/89), 2:4 (1989) and 3:2 (1991).

⁸ There are two recorded exceptions to the geographical rule in Britain: one is the sword dance of Papa Stour in the Shetland Islands off the north-east coast of Scotland, although given its form and the Islands' historical connections, it might more properly be considered part of the body of Scandinavian sword dances; the other is a dance recorded on the Isle of Man in 1832 (see Appendix I).

⁹ Rapper sword dancing is distinguished by short flexible swords, its fast pace and use of stepping (single and/or double "shuffles"). See Cecil J. Sharp, *The Sword Dances of Northern England*, Parts I - III (London: Novello, 1911-13).

¹⁰ Full plays accompany the longsword dances of Ampleforth, Bellerby, Greatham and Revesby. See Sharp (1911-13), Alan Brody, *The English Mummers and Their Plays* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969) and Michael J. Preston, "The Revesby Sword Play", *Journal of American Folklore*, 85:335 (1972), 51-57. Possible fragments of plays, short dialogues, dramatic action and songs occur in a number of other longsword dances (see Appendix I).

Handsworth,¹¹ Haxby, Kirkby Malzeard) are continuous, in that once the dance begins, the movement continues, without pausing, to the end of the performance. Other dances (e.g. Ampleforth, Grenoside, Sleights) have breaks in between figures or sections; these breaks may allow for a song, a play (or part thereof) or a change of tunes.

This study focuses on the longsword dancing teams of South Yorkshire and looks in particular at continuity and change in the dance, the dancers and their communities, and the role of conflict in the process of tradition. *Continuity* and *change* are well-established concepts in the study of folklore and are generally regarded as fundamental aspects of all traditions.¹² What has not been addressed, however, is *conflict*¹³ -- opposition between ideas and interests -- even though it is a common element in effecting continuity and change.¹⁴ Conflict often precipitates change, but it can also be resolved to maintain continuity; in any case, it is a dynamic force which operates within social groups, and it must be addressed.

In line with established anthropological methodology, my approach is both *contextual* and *comparative*.¹⁵ The comparative approach involves the exploration of similarities and differences

¹¹ At one time, the Handsworth dance included an additional figure, the Roll, which was performed at the end of the dance after a short pause. See Chapter 4.

¹² Ian Russell, "Stability and Change in a Sheffield Singing Tradition", *Folk Music Journal*, 5:3 (1987), 317-358, Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin, "Tradition, Genuine or Spurious", *Journal of American Folklore*, 97 (1984), 273-290, Barre Toelken, *The Dynamics of Folklore* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), p. 35, and Richard M. Dorson, *The British Folklorists: A History* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968).

¹³ Conflict has been addressed with regard to traditional dance in a historical context by Gordon Ashman in "Custom in Conflict: The Morris Dance in the Shrewsbury and Ironbridge Area of Shropshire", *Traditional Dance*, 5/6 (1988), 135-158, and has been implied by Roy Dommett in *Roy Dommett's Morris Notes*, ed. A.G. Barrand, Vol I (New York: Country Dance and Song Society of America, 1986), p. 76.

¹⁴ Robert Bogdan and Steven J. Taylor, *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: a phenomenological approach to the social sciences* (New York: Wiley, 1975), pp. 50-52.

¹⁵ See, for example, W.G. Hoskins, *Local History in England* (London & New York: Longman, 1959), E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon, 1963), J.K. Walton and J. Walvin, eds., *Leisure in Britain, 1780-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), R.B. Edgerton and L.L. Langness, *Methods and Styles in the Study of Culture* (San Francisco: Chandler & Sharp, 1974), K.S. Goldstein, *A Guide for Fieldworkers in Folklore* (Hatboro, Pennsylvania: Folklore Associates, 1964), Bruce Jackson, *Fieldwork* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), and Youngerman (1975).

between groups, in this case on a relatively local scale, which both facilitates understanding and substantiates conclusions. A contextual approach is considerably more complex, as it involves attending to a multiplicity of factors in the social, cultural, historical and even physical environments in which the dance occurs. A contextual approach includes assessing the social base (or supporting community), the individual context (who precisely is involved), and the situational context (the practice and performance environments). Since these approaches are integral to the data, contextual elements will be considered and comparisons will be made throughout this study.

The neglect of dance as a worthwhile subject of study is one of the reasons I chose to focus on dance as the subject of my research. I also chose a form of dance, and an area in which it occurs, that had not been given any substantial academic attention. As Colin Quigley observed of the documentation of dance traditions in North America: "Conspicuous by their absence... are studies which unite detailed dance description with movement and contextual analysis in a more complete view of dance behaviour within a delimited community."¹⁶ This study will provide valuable documentation, as well as a methodological and theoretical contribution to the study of traditional dance in the United Kingdom.

This study consists of eight chapters and eight appendices. Chapter Two addresses methodology and includes a description of the course of research and the process of gathering and analysing the data. Chapter Three presents some necessary background information with a discussion of the history and development of academic and popular interest in traditional dance. Chapter Four focuses on the dances themselves, describing each in terms of form, style, costume and noting for further explanation changes which have occurred in each of these spheres.

Chapter Five deals with the dancers, their communities, and the mutual interaction between the dance and the various levels of community from the 1880s through to the Second World War. Following on from this, Chapter Six discusses how the dancers and their communities have developed since the late 1940s, considering such things as how the dance has become the *raison d'être* of the

¹⁶ Colin Quigley, *Close to the Floor: Folk Dance in Newfoundland* (St John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Publications, 1985), p. 1.

social group, and the meaning, or importance, of place.

Chapter Seven focuses on the dance as the physical, social and conceptual product of the group, and Chapter Eight summarises this study, touching on some of the broader implications of the work and suggesting possible directions for future research. Following on from the Bibliography, there are a number of appendices, including the contents of the historical references database, the format for the longsword dance team survey, copies of questionnaire forms and interview schedules, and music transcriptions.

Chapter Two

Methodology

This chapter will describe how I went about my research from the early stages of inquiry and collection through to the analysis of the data amassed during two and a half years of intensive fieldwork. It will explain how the focus emerged from the initial investigations, evaluate the techniques employed, describe some of my fieldwork experiences, and discuss my approach to the analysis of the data.

2.1 The Course of Research based on Original Aims

When the research began in October of 1985 I had two primary foci in mind: 1) to investigate the social history of longsword dancing in England from the earliest reliably documented date to the present,¹ and 2) to assess on the basis of anthropological fieldwork the current state of the art, looking in particular at continuity and change in the form and function of the dance, vis-à-vis this historical background as well as the contemporary socio-cultural context. Since longsword dancing had received relatively little attention in recent years, either from enthusiasts or academics,² it was difficult to gauge the quantity, let alone quality, of materials which in-depth research would uncover. The research had three main components:

1. A search of the literature;
2. A survey of extant teams;
3. Fieldwork with three South Yorkshire longsword dance teams.

¹ This deliberately bypasses the question of origins, the inquiry into which, while popular, has been largely speculative simply due to the lack of evidence. See Violet Alford, *Sword Dance and Drama* (London: Merlin Press, 1962), and Lucile Armstrong, *A Window on Folk Dance*, ed. Diki Gleeson (Huddersfield, West Yorkshire: Springfield Books, Ltd., 1985). For an excellent discussion, supported by sound documentary evidence, of the origins of morris dancing, see Michael Heaney, "A New Theory of Morris Origins: A Review Article", *Folklore* 96 (1985), 29-37.

² Notable exceptions are Ivor Allsop, former Archivist of the Morris Ring, founder member of Barnsley Longsword, and author of "The Sword Dance of Papa Stour - Shetland", *Folk Music Journal*, 3:4 (1978), 324-342, and Trevor Stone, founder member of Spen Valley Longsword, author of *Rattle Up, My Boys: the story of Longsword dancing - a Yorkshire tradition* (Sale, Cheshire: the author, 1980).

2.1.1 Literature Search

I began the historical investigation with a search of the literature pertaining to longsword dancing building on the foundation provided by Cawte et al in "A Geographical Index of the Ceremonial Dance in Great Britain."³ This work furnishes references to longsword dances found in one hundred and sixteen locations from sixty five sources, but while it is an important document in terms of referencing and classification, it provides the reader with no indication of the content of each reference except the time of appearance (e.g. Boxing Day) and the date extant where such information is available. In order to ascertain the feasibility of writing a social history of longsword dancing England, I decided to create a computerised database of the content of these historical references,⁴ which would facilitate the manipulation and analysis of large amounts of information.⁵ In the course of searching the library and archive resources at the Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language, the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, and the Morris Ring Archives, I was able to add a further eight locations with supporting evidence of an additional twenty four sources. On the basis of a content analysis the following fields were established for the database:⁶

1. Place (including grid reference number)
2. Date extant
3. Time of year
4. Sufficient information to reconstruct a dance performance (Y/N)
5. Dramatic elements:

³ E. C. Cawte, Alex 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*, 9:1 (1960), 1-41, and Cawte et al., "A Geographical Index of the Ceremonial Dance in Great Britain: Addenda and Corrigenda", *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 9: 2 (1960), 93-95.

⁴ See Appendix I.

⁵ Due to their obscurity, locating some of the references proved to be a more difficult task than I had anticipated. I wish to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Ivor Allsop in providing me with much of the reference material. I also extend my thanks to Dr. E.C. Cawte for making his collection available to me.

⁶ See Appendix I.

CO - calling-on song
PL - play
SP - speaking
EX - execution (mock death) without full play..

6. Instrumentation

7. Performers (number and character, e.g. "Fool")

8. Comments (such as details of costumes, props, expressed attitudes of observer)

2.1.2 Survey of Extant Teams

While I was gathering these historical references, I also began compiling an address list, drawing primarily from the *Folk Directory*⁷ and the register of the Morris Ring, of dance teams which currently include longsword in their repertoire. As the one hundred and eight entries ranged from as far north as the Shetland Islands to as far south as Plymouth in Devon, it became clear that a postal survey would be the most efficient means of gathering preliminary data on existing teams. The fieldwork could then be aimed at complementing and augmenting the survey results.

While compiling this list and considering how to approach the survey, I had the opportunity of meeting Trevor Stone, who is well known in both performing and research circles for his efforts to document and popularise longsword dancing. I learned that he had conducted a survey of longsword dance teams in 1979/80. He suggested that we might collaborate on a survey to follow up on his earlier efforts, as well as to expand into some of the areas that I was particularly interested in. We each drafted a series of questions which were then combined and adapted into a one-sheet, double-sided questionnaire with accompanying cover letter.⁸ One was to be sent to the secretary, or "bagman" (secretary/treasurer), of each team. My interest in changes in the form and function of the dance shaped the questions I contributed. The questionnaire reveals a focus on the overall approach to the dance in terms of practice frequency, the place of longsword dancing in the team's repertoire, and conscious changes in the performance of the dance. It further asked for details of individual members lives, such as age, number of years with the team, occupation, and proximity to the practice venue, which provides

⁷ *Folk Directory* (London: The English Folk Dance and Song Society, 1985).

⁸ See Appendix II.

a socio-economic basis for comparison with the sorts of people involved in longsword dancing in the past. The survey was issued early in March 1986 with a 38% return when the last few completed forms were received the following July.⁹

2.2 Fieldwork

2.2.1 Choice of teams

While the historical reference search and the survey preparations were under way, I moved into the first stages of fieldwork with the three longsword teams located in the vicinity of Sheffield: the Grenoside (Traditional) Sword Dancers, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers, and Barnsley Longsword. From a practical standpoint it made sense to begin work with these teams simply because they were most easily accessible on public transport. Also, I had been given personal contacts in each of the teams from my former professor at Boston University, Dr. Anthony G. Barrand, and from my thesis supervisor, Prof. John D. A. Widdowson. The three teams also exhibit formal and stylistic diversity in their dancing, the Grenoside and Handsworth dances being two of the most unusual longsword dances in Britain. This sample also provided an historical dimension, Grenoside extending beyond record, Handsworth celebrating its centenary in 1987, and Barnsley born of the folk revival in 1968.¹⁰ The contacts proved fruitful and the teams' initial reception to my research was favourable.

2.2.2 Research benefits of fieldwork on team dynamics

During the course of the fieldwork, which will be described below, the potential of concentrating on the dynamics of these three teams became clear. Rather than constituting the primary data as originally planned, the historical references and current team survey databases were relegated to supplementary status. Due to this shift in emphasis, the databases were not explored to the extent which they might

⁹ This is considered to be a very reasonable rate of return for a postal survey. See C.A. Moser and G. Kalton, *Survey Methods in Social Investigation*, 2nd edition (London: Heinemann, 1979).

¹⁰ For more information on the folk revival see Chapter Three.

otherwise have been. For instance, the historical reference database does not present notations of actual dance movements, even though the sources of twenty-four locations provide detailed accounts of how the dance is performed. With the aid of a notation system suitable for computerised coding of longsword dance movements there is clearly scope for comparative choreography.

There are also shortcomings in the survey, the most obvious being that the questionnaire was designed for completion by one member of each team. This renders the answers to the question of motivation reliable only insofar as they reflect the conscious feelings of the individual respondent, which may or may not be indicative of group sentiment. However, such difficulties can be overcome, or at least mitigated, by revising the questionnaire format and possibly issuing several forms to deal with different types of data. Nevertheless, bearing these qualifications in mind, the databases, especially of the survey material, provide a foundation for a degree of contextualisation for the fieldwork conducted with the South Yorkshire teams.

2.2.3 Fieldwork Techniques

Fieldwork is the "act of inquiring into the nature of phenomena by studying them at first hand in the environments in which they naturally exist or occur."¹¹ But because anthropological fieldwork involves people studying other people, it necessarily entails a degree of subjectivity not present in the "pure" sciences.¹² However, as Edgerton and Langness (1974), Pelto and Pelto (1978), Georges and Jones (1980), and others have argued,¹³ this subjectivity does not render fieldwork as a method

¹¹ Robert A. Georges and Michael O. Jones, *People Studying People: the human element in fieldwork* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1980), p.1.

¹² Some social scientists have questioned the usefulness of the concept of "objectivity" in any science. See, for example, A. N. J. den Hollander, "Social Description: the problem of reliability and validity," in *Anthropologists in the Field*, ed. D. G. Jongmans and P. C. W. Gutkind (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1967), pp. 75-88.

¹³ See for example, Edgerton and Langness (1974); Goldstein (1964); Jackson (1987); Robert Lawless, V. H. Sutlive, and M. D. Zamora, *Fieldwork: The Human Experience* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1983); P. J. Pelto and G. H. Pelto, *Anthropological Research: The Structure of Inquiry*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); William Foote Whyte with the collaboration of Kathleen King Whyte, *Learning from the Field: A Guide from Experience* (Beverly Hills, California: Sage, 1984).

obsolete, but does require that "*disciplined* subjectivity should be the goal" (my emphasis).¹⁴ Successful fieldwork, which yields relevant and detailed data, depends therefore not only on the systematic collecting, coding, and analysis of information, but also sensitivity to the human factors which influence the social reality of researcher and subjects alike. Each element of this fieldwork dynamic will now be discussed in turn. These are: 1) the practicalities of collecting information (the various techniques and tools employed and how they shaped the course of the fieldwork) and 2) the far more elusive aspect of human relationships.

Fieldwork commonly consists of a "multi-instrument" ¹⁵ approach so one can effectively deal with the variety of data open to exploration. Some techniques will be more suited to gathering certain sorts of information than others, and it is important that the data sought should inform the choice of methods. I decided to focus on three areas of dance culture, each of which entails a different combination of data collection techniques:

- 1) the material, or product, i.e. the dance;
- 2) the behaviours, or processes, by which the dance is produced;
- 3) the attitudes and feelings of the individuals and groups involved.

On consideration of these foci, it was decided that the best approach would be to combine participant observation with questionnaires and interviewing.

Participant observation is a technique by which the researcher

gathers data by participating in the daily life of the group or organization that he studies. He watches the people he is studying to see what situations they ordinarily meet and how they behave in them. He talks with other participants and discusses their interpretations of the events he has observed. ¹⁶

The degree to which the researcher participates in any particular event will vary with circumstance and the individuals involved. Spradley (1980: 58-61) describes four levels of participation:

- 1) passive participation, when the researcher does not interact with the observed, such as

¹⁴ Lawless et al, p. xiii.

¹⁵ Pelto and Pelto, p. 67.

¹⁶ Howard S. Becker and Blanche Geer, "Participant Observation: The Analysis of Qualitative Field Data," in *Human Organization Research: Field Relations and Techniques*, ed. Richard N. Adams and Jack J. Preiss (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1960), p. 269.

watching a sword team perform their dance in public;

2) moderate participation, when the researcher has some direct involvement in the situation, such as attending a dance team practice session;

3) active participation, when the researcher does what the others are doing, such as joining in the dance set at practice;

4) complete participation, when the researcher becomes one of the group he/she is studying. Due to a particular factor beyond my control (see section 2.6), I was unable to engage in this highest level of participation, nor, as Spradley is quick to point out, is it necessary to become a complete participant in order to conduct successful ethnographic research. Participant observation was the primary research method, extending throughout the entire period of intensive fieldwork and providing the context within which to issue questionnaires and conduct interviews.

Questionnaires, when the respondent writes answers on a form provided by the researcher, were used in a preliminary, ground-clearing capacity. While the major drawback of this method of inquiry is the necessary rigidity of the questions, it can be effectively used to compile condensed personal histories and, combined with information acquired through participant observation, provide a foundation upon which to build an interview framework.

Interviews can be either formal or informal. Informal interviews are unanticipated on the part of the subject and usually take place in the context of something else, such as a practice session or performance event, in this case. General conversation will often generate a topic which the researcher can then pursue. Formal interviews, on the other hand, are planned occasions where both researcher and subject are intentionally engaging in appropriate communicational roles. The interview format can be either directive or nondirective.¹⁷ In a nondirective interview the informant discusses whatever he/she wishes while the researcher listens. However, in a directive interview, the researcher poses specific questions to the informant. Both types of interviewing have their merits, and I found a combination of the two styles to be the most successful. This was achieved by posing specific

¹⁷ For a full discussion of the technique of interviewing, see Whyte (1984), chapter six, "Interviewing Strategy and Tactics."

questions¹⁸ as well as establishing broad themes for discussion which allowed informants to raise particular topics which I had not anticipated.¹⁹

The combined use of participant observation, questionnaires and formal and informal interviewing proved to be an effective means of gathering data on the dance and the dancers' behaviours, ideas, attitudes, and feelings. As Whyte writes, "Observation guides us to some of the important questions we want to ask the respondent and interviewing helps us to interpret the significance of what we are observing."²⁰

However, utilisation of these techniques would have been impossible without some very fundamental research tools. On Spradley's recommendation,²¹ I decided to keep several types of fieldnotes. From the beginning of the research in October of 1985 I kept a journal in which I recorded my daily activities, as well as the personal side of the fieldwork experience, my reactions to and feelings about people and events. I also kept a "Condensed Accounts" volume in which notes and observations were recorded during (or immediately after) an event or interview. I would then elaborate upon each account, filling in details and assessing the situations and discussions, in a notebook of "Expanded Accounts." However, I found myself providing sufficient description in each condensed account to render the expanded versions increasingly redundant, so after six months the expanded accounts were discontinued.

2.2.4 Dance Notation System

For written recording of the dances, which would constitute a significant part of my fieldnotes, I considered the use of several movement notation systems. Dance notation is commonly used for recording dances for reproduction as well as posterity, but, as a research instrument, notation is used

¹⁸ Questions can be descriptive, where the informant is asked to describe an event or situation, evaluative, where the informant is asked about his/her feelings about events, people, and organisations, or nonspecific, which can be answered in either a descriptive or evaluative manner (Whyte, p. 98).

¹⁹ See section 2.6.

²⁰ Whyte (1984), p. 6.

²¹ James P. Spradley, *Participant Observation* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1980), pp. 69-72.

to describe movement for analysis. There have been some eighty five systems of movement notation used and developed which fall broadly into three categories: abbreviational, representational, and formal.²²

Abbreviations of the names of steps and movements were first incorporated into a symbol (letter) substitution system by the French dancing master, Thoinot Arbeau in 1588.²³ This type of notation presupposes a knowledge of the steps and is used primarily as an *aide memoire*. It is, therefore, not suitable for my purposes.

The two predominant representational dance notation systems are track drawing and stick figures. Track drawing, where the notator traces the path of the dancer on the floor, was developed by Raoul Feuillet²⁴ at the beginning of the eighteenth century and has been used extensively throughout the world for recording all forms of dance.²⁵ Stick figures, which illustrate body position, were first used by Arthur Saint Leon²⁶ in 1852 and, then, largely developed by Albert Zorn²⁷ at the end of the nineteenth century. Stick figures cannot cope with the third dimension of perspective and do not show floor pattern. Track drawing, on the other hand, neglects what the body is actually doing while travelling a course on the floor. Both systems, therefore, require a certain amount of accompanying verbal description. The drawback of verbal description, however, is the range of interpretation to which the chosen words may possibly be open.

There are three major formal notation systems: Labanotation, Benesh, and Eshkol-Wachman. Because they focus on the structure of the form, these systems can be applied to the notation of any human movement, not just dance. Labanotation, which captures the direction of movement in relation

²² Ann Hutchinson Guest, *Dance Notation - the process of recording movement on paper* (London: Dance Books, Ltd., 1984), p. xi.

²³ Thoinot Arbeau, *Orchesographie* (Paris, 1588). A similar system is used by Lionel Bacon in *Handbook of Morris Dances* (England: The Morris Ring, 1974).

²⁴ Raoul Feuillet, *Choreographie, ou l'art de decrire la danse* (Paris, 1700).

²⁵ Cecil Sharp uses track drawing in his notations of sword, morris, and country dances. See, for example, Sharp (1911-13).

²⁶ Arthur Saint Leon, *Stenochoreographie* (Paris, 1852).

²⁷ Albert Zorn, *Grammatik der Tanzkunst* (Leipzig, 1897).

to the centre of the body, was developed by Rudolf von Laban in 1928.²⁸ It is the most widely used notation system, as well as the most finely detailed.²⁹ Benesh notation was developed by Joan and Rudolph Benesh in 1956.³⁰ They looked at movement in terms of lines drawn in space by the extremities of the limbs and body. Finally, Eshkol-Wachman movement notation, which first appeared in 1958,³¹ is a mathematical system based on the planar movement of limbs around axes.

The major drawback to these three notation systems is their complexity; Labanotation, for instance, requires at least two years of full time study and practice to be able to produce detailed work,³² which I know from my own efforts to learn the system. Utilising such a system would therefore render this aspect of the research inaccessible to the vast majority of potential consultants. Also, as Royce explains, while Labanotation "is theoretically applicable to all types of dance... many kinds of ethnic dance require additional notes and symbols outside the regular staff. It is also perhaps too fine an analytical tool to be practical."³³ I decided, therefore, to use a combination of diagrams, track drawings, and verbal description.

In addition to written methods, I also had at my disposal several mechanical means of data collection, the primary device being a portable audio cassette recorder for use in recording interviews, practice sessions, and performances. I also had a camera for taking still photographs of people and events, and access to a video camera and recorder.

²⁸ Labanotation has been further developed over the course of this century. See Rudolf von Laban, *Principles of Dance and Movement Notation*, 2nd ed. (London: Macdonald and Evans, 1975); Ann Hutchinson, *Labanotation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Ann Hutchinson Guest, *Your Move: A New Approach to the Study of Movement and Dance* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1983); Guest 1984.

²⁹ Laban also developed Effort-Shape notation for looking at the qualitative aspects, or dynamics, of movement. See Rudolf von Laban and F.C. Lawrence, *Effort* (London: Macdonald & Evans, 1947). Labanotation and Effort-Shape together constitute Labananalysis.

³⁰ Joan Benesh and Rudolph Benesh, *Introduction to Benesh Movement Notation* (London: Max Parrish, 1967).

³¹ Noa Eshkol and Abraham Wachman, *Movement Notation* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1958).

³² Seymour Kleinman, "Movement Notation Systems: An Introduction," *Quest*, 23 (1975), p. 49.

³³ Royce (1978), p. 71.

2.3 Engaging in Fieldwork

The fieldwork began in November 1985 by establishing links with the contacts I had been given. I first approached Ivor Allsop, founder member and Foreman of Barnsley Longsword, in his capacity as Archivist of the Morris Ring when I was compiling the historical record database. After several lengthy conversations, and as the research began to focus on South Yorkshire, Ivor invited me along to a sword team practice one Tuesday evening. I next made contact with the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers through Dr. Geoff Lester, a lecturer in the Department of English Language at the University of Sheffield. He had been with the team for eleven years, and after having several conversations with me about my aims and objectives, he apparently raised the prospect at practice one Wednesday evening in November; I was invited to attend the following week. My first formal contact with the Grenoside Sword Dancers came via Mr. Peter Clarke, a lecturer in Clinical Psychology at the University of Sheffield, who had been with the team for two years. Prior to that meeting, however, I had been in touch with Reg "Wardy" Ward, a man of seventy-eight years of age who had danced with the team until the mid-1960s. Ivor Allsop had mentioned "Wardy" several times in conversation and suggested that he might be a good person to talk to. I made the first of many visits to Reg's home on 14th November, 1985.³⁴ Through Reg I met Fred Myers, who first danced with the team in 1936 and continued to do so occasionally when the side was short. In the meantime, Peter Clarke arranged to have me come round for an evening meal and invited Ray Ellison, the team's musician and secretary, to come and meet me and "have a chat" about my research. Due to illness, Ray was unable to make it at the last minute but, having heard that I had been to see Reg and Fred, invited me to come along to their next practice.

During November and December I attended the practices and performances of each team. I was getting to know the team members and the dances and letting the teams get to know me and what I aimed to do. My role as a student engaged in academic research was accepted with little question, although there was a certain degree of amusement and disbelief that one could earn a university degree by studying longsword dancing!

³⁴ See Appendix III.

By January 1986 I was feeling reasonably well acquainted with the teams and was assessing potential lines of inquiry. I was encouraged by the interest expressed in my research and the overall willingness of the three teams to be involved. At this point, then, I was able to establish a method for proceeding with my investigation.

I devised a questionnaire, in order to obtain some background data on individuals as well as an indication of possible interview topics, which was issued to all active members of each team, and an appropriately adapted version was sent to former (or inactive) members.³⁵ I continued to attend team practices on a regular basis (see Figure 2.01) which, for several reasons, became the core context of my research. Initially, I attended the practice sessions in order to learn the dance, and since it is the only regular meeting of the whole group, it was clearly the best way to get to know the members of each of the teams. In the practice context, I was also able to observe the behaviours of the group: how the individuals within the team relate to each other, how the group functions, how the dance is taught, and so on. In addition to noting the mechanics of the dance, I also recorded how the movements were described and what aesthetic comments emerged in the course of teaching. I recorded such things as who said what to whom, in the presence of whom, who supported, modified, and opposed proposals concerning such things as details of costume, the presentation of the dance, the suitability of venues, and so on, and what the outcome of the interaction was.

On the basis of my observations, the questionnaire responses, and informal conversations with team members before, during and after the practice sessions, I began to formulate an outline of topics to be explored during formal interviewing. I devised a schedule of both descriptive and evaluative questions on three broad themes: 1) personal background, such as involvement in dance and the folk scene in general, attitudes, and motivations, 2) the dance event, such as how the dance is approached and how it has noticeably changed, and 3) the team, in terms of how it works, both formally and informally. I then began a systematic series of interviews (see Figure 2.02) beginning with active and inactive longstanding members and those that held official positions in the team, such as captain, foreman, and secretary.

³⁵ See Appendix IV. There are two "editions" of the active member questionnaire. Slight alterations to the wording of a few of the questions were made in response to informants' comments and suggestions.

Through conversations and informal interviews with team members I was referred to several other individuals not directly involved in the dance or the team but in some way associated with the group. I contacted the relatives of deceased dancers, as well as older members of the community with knowledge of past dancers and recollections of the dance being performed.

On the basis of these few contacts who were able to furnish details of the Grenoside and Handsworth teams in the first half of this century, I decided in March 1986 to make a media appeal for other individuals with recollections to come forward. I wrote a short article about the research which appeared in *Grenoside News*, the Handsworth Parish Church magazine, *Orbit*, and *The Sheffield Star*. I received only one response, from a woman in Woodhouse, the next village to Handsworth, whose father had danced with the Handsworth team in the 1920s. She knew nothing further but referred me to her father's sister's husband who was able to help with a few details.

Besides attempting to tap the local communities for information on the history of the teams, I also searched the various records kept by the teams themselves and made use of the resources in the Local History Archives at Sheffield City Library. Team records included scrapbooks kept by each team,³⁶ the Grenoside minute book with entries ranging from 1970 to 1982, the Barnsley log book with entries dating from inception in 1968 until 1980,³⁷ as well as various personal papers, diaries, and correspondences. In the case of Grenoside, there are two written notations of the dance, one taken down by Kathy Mitchell in 1950 at the request of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, and one produced by Christopher Walker, an American with an active interest in English traditional dance, in the summer of 1985. The Local History Archives house a few newspaper cuttings of the Grenoside and Handsworth teams, but my primary interest was in searching the available census returns and parish records in order to find out more about some of the dancers from about the turn of the century whose names are known but little else.

³⁶ The Handsworth scrapbooks are particularly detailed, and I wish to acknowledge the work of Geoff Lester and John Pitts in organising this collection which made my research much easier. I extend my thanks in particular to John Pitts with whom I collaborated in the historical investigation for our mutual benefit.

³⁷ I understand that records of performances should have been kept since 1980 by each captain, but, during the period of research, these records had not been amalgamated and formally entered into the log book.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1986 I continued to attend practices and performances and to conduct informal and formal interviews (see Figures 2.01-2.03). In the autumn of 1986, still trying to gain access to the knowledge of the local communities, I submitted an article appealing for help to *The Leader*, a community newspaper distributed in the area to the south east of Sheffield City Centre, *The Sheffield Journal*, and *Woodpecker*, the Woodhouse Community Newsletter. Again I received only one response, which came via the spring 1987 edition of *Woodpecker*, from a woman whose maternal grandmother's uncles, George and Clem Wells, danced with the first Handsworth team. Also at this time I sent letters to six pensioner associations and elderly lunch clubs in the Grenoside and Handsworth areas offering to present a slide show about the sword dancers, hoping that this might provide access to a previously untapped section of the community. Unfortunately, I received no replies.

From December 1986 to March 1987 I made the final push with interviewing, and in April, except for two occasions for the purpose of double-checking data, I stopped attending practice sessions. I continued to attend the performances of each team throughout the summer but was diminishing my involvement with the teams in the role of fieldworker. Yet, at the Grenoside Sword Dancers' Festival in July 1987, I met George Hoyland of Birdwell, near Barnsley, who had played for the Grenoside team for ten years between 1926 and 1936. He was quite eager to talk, and I conducted a number of interviews with him over the following seven months.

A final line of inquiry was pursued in early 1989. On Boxing Day in Grenoside in 1988, I was asked several questions about my research for an article for *Grenoside News*. Following its publication in January 1989, I was contacted by Mr Roy Briscoe, who was able to provide me with vital information about the Grenoside Swords Dancers from the 1920s through the 1940s. Mr Briscoe had apparently seen my earlier appeal for information (*Grenoside News* March 1986) but did not think that he could add anything of significance to my research.

2.4 Fieldwork Data Statistics and Summary

2.4.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were issued to each team member I met or for whom I located an address. A total of 93 questionnaires were distributed as follows:

Table 2.01: Initial Sample

	<u>Inactive</u>	<u>Active</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Barnsley	13	16	29
Grenoside	14	14	28
Handsworth	15	21	36
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTALS	42	51	93

However, after three postal appeals to inactive team members over a period of six months, I still received no response from 16 individuals. As I was unable to ascertain whether or not the inquiries ever reached their addressees, those figures should be deducted as appropriate from the original sample of 93 to produce a positive sample of 77 people. A total of 55 completed questionnaires were received, or 71.4 % of those that were successfully issued, as detailed below:

Table 2.02: Revised sample and return

	<u>Inactive</u>		<u>Active</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Sent</u>	<u>Rec'd</u>	<u>Sent</u>	<u>Rec'd</u>	<u>Sent</u>	<u>Rec'd</u>
Barnsley	8	8	16	11	24	19
Grenoside	10	6	14	11	24	17
Handsworth	8	8	21	11	29	19
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTALS	26	22	51	33	77	55

2.4.2 Interviews

A total of 44 team members, 15 inactive and 29 active, were interviewed, distributed among the three teams in the following way:

Table 2.03: Team Member Interviews

	Inactive	Active	Total	Percent
Barnsley	5	8	13 of 24	54.2%
Grenoside	7	9	16 of 24	66.7%
Handsworth	3	12	15 of 29	51.7%

Eight active members of the Barnsley team were not interviewed. Four did not return questionnaires, and as three were not key persons, they were put on the end of the interview list. While the fourth did eventually agree to be interviewed, he did not turn up at the arranged time and place and seemed unwilling to commit himself again thereafter. Of the four who returned questionnaires, one was unwilling to be formally interviewed, two were attending practices less regularly due to work and family commitments, and the last, who was a new member of the team, I spoke with informally on several occasions which seemed to be sufficient. Three of the inactive members were not interviewed: one was living in Canada, one was not willing to be interviewed, and the third insisted that there was nothing further he could tell me.

Although I had originally hoped to formally interview all those who were willing, two factors prevented me: 1) pressure of time, and 2) the law of diminishing returns, which is "when addition of informants has little effect on the general structure of a complex pattern of data."³⁸ I decided at that point that my time and energy could be more productively focussed on other aspects of the research.

A combined (active and inactive) total of eight of the Grenoside team members were not interviewed: two ceased to attend practices for personal reasons, three were unwilling to be

³⁸ Pelto and Pelto, p. 139.

interviewed,³⁹ and three were neglected because of the factors of time and quality of return.

Finally, a combined total of fourteen of the Handsworth men were not interviewed essentially for the same predominant reasons previously stated: willingness, time, and diminishing returns. Despite such a figure, the number of individuals who were formally interviewed in relation to the size of the sample, 51.7 %, is quite reasonable.

To summarise, of a sample of 77 individuals, 55 questionnaires were received and 44 persons were formally interviewed. However, 11 of those interviewed did not return questionnaires, so I actually obtained formal data of some sort from 66 individuals out of a possible 77, or 85.7 % (see Figure 2.04). Also, of the 44 persons interviewed, 11 were interviewed on more than one occasion, ranging from twice to thirty five times.

Fifteen individuals not directly involved in the dance traditions were also formally interviewed, three associated with Handsworth and twelve associated with Grenoside. Of those twelve, seven were relatives of former dancers, one was an amateur local historian, and the last, Kathy Mitchell, was a certified teacher of folk dance and an authority on longsword dancing.⁴⁰ Two of the three people associated with Handsworth are relatives of deceased dancers and one, a man in his eighties who was a barber in Handsworth and later Woodhouse, had a wealth of knowledge about the local community.

I am somewhat disappointed in the relatively small number of such peripheral people with whom I successfully made contact, despite media appeals and attempts to access various pensioner groups. However, in the light of the interests and co-operation shown by the members of the three teams and the depth and quality of the data obtained, it is perhaps just as well that I did not spread my efforts too thinly.

2.4.3 Summary of data

During twenty-eight months of continuous fieldwork, I attended a total of 78 practice sessions and 67 performances, received 55 completed questionnaires of 77 successfully issued, conducted formal

³⁹ I suspect that the word "interview" put the one active member off, because I have since had many informal conversations with him about the same topics I was dealing with in the interview context.

⁴⁰ Certified to teach by the English Folk Dance and Song Society.

interviews with 59 individuals on 138 occasions. This resulted in over 1,220 pages of notes, over 120 hours of audio tape, and over 400 photographic prints and transparencies. I also have five hours of video taped performances dating from c. 1925 to 1988.⁴¹

2.5 Fieldwork Evaluation

In retrospect I can see several shortcomings in my approach to the collection of data, the most obvious concerning the questionnaire issued to team members. While it succeeded in its objective to amass background details on which to base subsequent interviews, it was devised with the somewhat naive intention that it would be possible to interview everybody involved. Had I anticipated otherwise, I would perhaps have included a few more questions aimed at bringing out personal motivations and attitudes, identity within the group, and ideas about the meaning of the "tradition."

I also did not anticipate the extent to which I would hear, "I don't know what I can tell you that you won't have already got from so-and-so," and although I invariably persevered, I have subsequently concluded that there may still be information of some significance which has escaped my efforts. Most people, when encouraged, did have information, ideas, and perceptions which they were prepared to share.

There were also those few individuals who had a wealth of knowledge, but knowledge which the formal interview context was not conducive to drawing out. In *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*, Charles Briggs describes the difficulty he had in trying to evoke interpretation of Mexicano wood carving in the interview context:

Some messages can only be transmitted nonverbally whereas others may combine a minimally essential nonverbal component with verbal elaboration. In either of these cases, repeated attempts to delve into these areas through speech alone will fail repeatedly.... my initial attempts to elicit exegesis on the local carvers and on the carving process were almost complete failures. The problem only resolved itself once

⁴¹ My most sincere thanks to Ivor Allsop who compiled most of the video material from which I have drawn. For several reasons I did not make extensive use of video recording. Equipment was not always available or functioning properly, but also, when working alone one tends to be completely involved in the mechanics of recording to the detriment of actually observing the dance event, which includes audience behaviours, what activities those team members not performing are engaged in, and so on.

I began carving... thus receiving comments on my work and on the wood-carving art as a whole.... given the proper circumstances, they were quite able to explicate their work. The problem is rather that such artistic metacommunication was encompassed by a more comprehensive semiotic. Certain technical and stylistic features were elucidated primarily through visual signs --- demonstration by the master on the student's carving.⁴²

I found this to be the case with several informants, for example, the teacher of one of the teams. When I asked him during a formal interview, "what makes the dance look good?" and "what qualities make a good dancer?" he offered, respectively, "it has to be polished," and "you're either a dancer or you're not; there's no halfway really."⁴³ My attempts to get him to elaborate on these responses were fruitless. This was not, as I later realised, because he lacked the knowledge, but rather because I was trying to elicit information which is not only normally conveyed in a different context but also via different modes of communication. It became obvious in the practice sessions that this man had very clear and distinct aesthetic ideas and attitudes which he was able to put across both verbally and nonverbally while teaching the dance. He offered unsolicited evaluations to me about how the dance has changed and how it should and should not be done. This raises the question of the suitability of the formal interview for dealing with certain kinds of data and provides a clear case for the necessity of combining interviewing with participant observation.

Although participant observation and interviewing are the two primary field techniques, "the fieldworker is the principal research instrument, and the various methods of investigation are alternative techniques for objectifying and standardizing the fieldworker's perceptions."⁴⁴ What the fieldworker perceives, or chooses to perceive as meaningful, is clearly somewhat dependent on training, but also to a large extent on personal interest and experience. I am concerned here with two kinds of experience: 1) general life experiences which shape the fieldworker's attitudes and perspectives, which will in turn influence the relationships between fieldworker and informants,⁴⁵ and 2) dance experience.

⁴² Charles Briggs, *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 44.

⁴³ CMS-23/A 20.00.

⁴⁴ Pelto and Pelto, p. 67.

⁴⁵ I have mixed feelings about using the term "informant" to describe the people who shared part of their lives with me; it sounds clinical at best. However, it is the most widely used term and avoids confusions that words like "subject" and "respondent" seem to evoke.

The importance of my own experience in dance, longsword in particular, became clear to me during the course of my fieldwork. Not only did my familiarity with the genre facilitate observation and notation, but my experience also enabled me to relate to my informants' descriptions of the demands and rewards of the performance context. This proved to be especially significant in what I call the Zen experience in performance,⁴⁶ which will be taken up in Chapter Seven.

In addition to this personal element, another factor which contributed positively to my fieldwork, both in terms of the quantity and quality of the data yield and in terms of the nature of the overall fieldwork experience, was the length of time I was able to spend "in the field." Not only did I have the opportunity to view regular and annual events several times with a greater knowledge of the dance, the performers, and the audience, I also had the time to get to know my informants well and for them to get to know me, my approach, and my intentions. Simply because I had the time to ease into things, to take the beginning slowly, my informants and I were able to gradually come to terms with our doubts and inhibitions. It is unfortunate that fieldworkers in folklore, primarily due to financial reasons, do not often have the opportunity to spend such an extended period engaged in fieldwork. This element of time, and the continuity in human relationships it affords, had a profound effect on the quality of the fieldwork experience.

2.6 The Fieldwork Experience: Some Human Factors

Although the researcher must be adept with the tools and techniques of data collection, fieldwork

entails more than merely knowing what to observe and how to record, process, and present it. The fieldworker must explain his or her presence and purpose to others, gain their confidence and cooperation, and develop mutually acceptable relationships. These requirements create dilemmas, produce confrontations, demand clarifications and compromises, and evoke reflection and introspection that one can neither fully anticipate nor prepare for in advance.⁴⁷

Indeed, the success of fieldwork is largely dependent upon the nature of the relationship between researcher and informants, a relationship which involves certain ethical responsibilities. It is not

⁴⁶ I borrow the term "Zen" in this usage from Anthony G. Barrand, "Zen in the Art of Morris Group Maintenance: Aesthetics and the Web of Team Politics", *Lore and Language*, 6:2 (July 1987), 11-31.

⁴⁷ Georges and Jones, p.2.

surprising, then, that discussions of rapport appear somewhere between pre-fieldwork and data collection in most field guides.⁴⁸ But although it is a necessary starting point for engaging in fieldwork, rapport should not be seen as a state of affairs towards which the researcher aspires, but rather as a dynamic process which extends throughout and beyond the fieldwork experience. Since the researcher most often enters the field with the intention of learning about other people from those other people, interaction between fieldworker and informant may begin as a professional working relationship. But, rapport is continually developing, requiring constant re-negotiation of roles and behaviours; how each relationship then develops will depend largely on personality and circumstance.

The fieldworker may, for instance, have the opportunity to interact with some individuals more than with others. In general, I got to know the active members of each team better than those members who appeared at practice only occasionally, or had retired from dancing. Establishing rapport with these peripheral persons was that bit more difficult, as the initial contact was usually via letter. Without the advantage of the immediate feedback of face-to-face interactions, the tone in written exchanges is necessarily more formal. In addition to opportunities for personal contact, the potential depth of a relationship between the fieldworker and any individual will depend on personalities. Naturally, the fieldworker will relate to different people in different ways, some relationships remaining superficial, others growing into lasting friendships, and most landing somewhere in between.

Yet, while rapport is established between individuals, it is important to consider the nature of these relationships in the context of the group, which was the principal fieldwork environment. The group has a dynamic, a series of interrelationships, a way of interacting which is often coloured by strong personalities and influential characters. Although I was unaware of this factor at the time, the nature of my relationships with the contact in each team, as well as the position of that person in the team's hierarchy, affected the way in which I was initially received by the group as a whole.

The strongest contact I had in this sense was Ivor Allsop, who is undoubtedly one of the most influential individuals in Barnsley Longsword. Having understood and appreciated the nature of the research, Ivor apparently vouched for me, and as one man expressed in an interview some eight months later, "Ivor just said this American lass would be coming along, and if Ivor says you're okay, that's

⁴⁸ See, for example, Goldstein (1964), Jackson (1987), and Whyte (1984).

good enough for me." ⁴⁹ Peter Clarke, my formal contact with the Grenoside team, was in a much less influential position, as he had only been dancing with the team for two years. However, as mentioned earlier, the additional relationships I established with two of the oldest dancers and villagers figured substantially in the team's initial reception of me. The situation was different again with Handsworth where my contact, who had been with the team for over ten years, not only introduced me into the group, but on a few occasions early in the fieldwork openly supported my efforts.⁵⁰

Having made an entry, I was then faced with the task of negotiating my role within the group, a process which was necessarily affected by the fact that I am a woman. The sword team practice is seen by the members as a "night out with the lads," and although any outsider will influence the situation, a woman entering this context alters the dynamic in a different way. Certain things should not be said or done "in the presence of a lady," a phrase I heard frequently when I began my fieldwork. I was also aware of an attitude that a woman needs to be looked after and protected, such as being provided with drinks at the pub, as well as a safe way of getting home.

There was also a level on which a young single woman socialising with a group of predominantly middle-aged, married men could be perceived as threatening to the stability of their personal lives. However, as I was involved in a serious personal relationship at that time, I made a conscious effort to refer to my boyfriend frequently in passing and to bring him along to performances and informal gatherings. I also took advantage of various opportunities to get to know my informants' wives, such as helping out in the kitchen with the Saturday evening feast during Barnsley Longsword's annual weekend of dance.⁵¹

Apart from the question of my presence as a woman in a male social grouping, my gender also proved problematic in terms of researching the dance. Longsword is considered to be "traditionally" a man's dance (see Chapter Three). There are strong feelings, both within these teams and the wider

⁴⁹ CMS-37/B-27.30.

⁵⁰ For example, when concern was expressed on the part of one or two members over the archival depositing of my field recordings, Geoff Lester reiterated my assurances that materials could be placed under restriction if they so wished.

⁵¹ For a discussion of the issue of gender in dance ethnology fieldwork, see J. W. Kealiinohomoku, "Variables that Affect Gender Actions and Reactions in Dance Ethnology Fieldwork: A Praxis", *ULCA Journal of Dance Ethnology*, 13 (1989), 48-53.

folk scene that it should remain so.⁵² It was generally assumed that I knew very little about longsword dancing, and although the occasionally patronising atmosphere was frustrating, there was clearly an advantage to having the characteristics of the dance explained in minute detail where they might otherwise have been glossed over. However, as learning the dance from the inside was fundamental to my approach, I wondered, as the weeks passed, if I would ever be given the opportunity to do so. I suspect that a man would have been put into the set to "have a go at the dance", if not on the first occasion, then soon thereafter.⁵³ As it happened, I had been attending practices for three months before being invited to join in.

When I was finally invited to dance, it marked a significant turning point in my relationship with each of the teams. The gesture was important on one level as an indication that I was beginning to be accepted, as least by certain influential members, but also because it provided me with an opportunity to demonstrate my skill as an observer and, despite my gender, as a dancer.

My first opportunity arose at Handsworth one evening in February 1986 when the captain handed me a sword saying, "You've been watching long enough. I want you to know what it feels like."⁵⁴

We started from the beginning, taking a figure at a time, walking through it, dancing it, discussing it, and then adding on the next one, until on that occasion we got through nearly half of the dance. The men were noticeably impressed with my ability, and for the first time, I was invited along to the pub after the practice session. Over a pint, we talked about the issue of women dancing, and several of the men were interested to hear about my previous experience dancing longsword. While discussing that evening's activity, one man said, "Well, you won't do that again -- you were too good!"⁵⁵ I did dance again, however, on a number of occasions.

Barnsley and Grenoside in turn invited me to dance during the following few weeks with similar effects in attitudes of acceptance. My interest and ability, as well as the depth of the questions

⁵² See Chapter Three.

⁵³ For evidence of this, see Anthony G. Barrand, personal communication, July 5th, 1988. In July of 1979 Barrand and his wife, dancers of equal experience, attended a Barnsley Longsword practice. While he was invited to join in three dances, she was not.

⁵⁴ EA-134.

⁵⁵ EA-138.

I asked in the course of learning the dances, seemed to solidify in their minds my seriousness of purpose. As one man explained:

I agreed to go through the dance with you because I knew that you knew it, and you weren't just playing around, and you weren't a hard-and-fast "folkie".⁵⁶

Although my gender complicated the negotiation of roles with regard to learning the dances, this was overcome by the perceived seriousness with which I approached the subject. Another man's comments capture several of the important elements in the dynamic process of establishing and maintaining rapport:

No one really understands what you're doing, but you seem to come along, and you don't cause much of a fuss It doesn't seem to interfere with us, and you just carried on, and people have accepted you, accepted you for that. And now they know you so well that... the conversation just goes on regardless of the fact you're there or not... The first couple of weeks I think people were a bit, ah, suspicious, but, ah, I mean you kept coming along, and I think you're just part of the, I'm not saying you're part of the furniture, but you're just accepted for what you are and that's it.⁵⁷

Acceptance by each team, then, depended on the roles I negotiated and played in the group context, as well as the nature of the relationship I developed with each individual. As mentioned earlier, the development of these relationships were influenced by personality and circumstance. Each was consciously initiated for the sake of the research, thus investing me with certain ethical obligations and responsibilities. Some of these relationships, however, have grown into friendships which, while adding significantly to the quality of the fieldwork experience, entail an even greater responsibility in dealing with the data.

Shortly after I had finished my fieldwork, I was having a drink one evening in the Old Red Lion at Grenoside with the team's musician, Ray Ellison. We were discussing my research when he said:

"You know, the team is really looking forward to reading what you have to write. Is there any chance of us buying a copy of your thesis when it's finished?"

"I was planning on giving you a copy, in fact. You're not going to pay for it."

"But these things are expensive."

⁵⁶ CMS-47/B-28.00.

⁵⁷ CMS-37/A-42.25.

"Listen, it's the least I can do for the help everyone has given me. I have to give something back."

"You've already given a lot back. Your approach has been spot on. I mean, we've had students come to us in the past, but what you're doing is something special. Not just because of how you've done it, but because of who you are." ⁵⁸

This statement made quite an impact on me, for it crystallises the fact that, whatever else it aims to accomplish, fieldwork fundamentally entails people touching each other's lives. This human underpinning will, therefore, qualitatively influence the analysis of the data and emerge in the course of presentation.

2.7 Data Analysis

2.7.1 Classification

It is important to bear in mind that the analysis of data does not begin after all the data has been gathered; rather, it is a fundamental part of the collection process. Analysis on this level can be considered a research technique involving the conscious structuring of knowledge as it is acquired in the course of fieldwork.

Since I am dealing with a form of dance which had previously received no serious academic attention, it was impossible to determine which particular aspects of longsword dance culture might prove fruitful under investigation before engaging in fieldwork. However, it was possible to delineate three broad areas of focus: 1) the dance, that is, the physical phenomenon, 2) the dance team, as the group of individuals who produce this phenomenon, and 3) the dancers, as people with needs and motivations. As fieldwork progressed, certain themes within and between these foci emerged which provided avenues for further inquiry.

The emergent themes which increasingly directed the course of fieldwork also constituted the basis for the overall analysis mounted after data collection ended. I began by reading through all of the fieldnotes and listening to and indexing each audio recording. This complete immersion in the data,

⁵⁸ FWJ-354.

however, clarified previously discerned themes and drew out others, for a total of twenty interrelated themes, as follows:

Personal History - autobiographical details and motivations of the individual informant.

Team History - dealing, in general, with questions of who, what, where, and when.

Performance description - including figure by figure descriptions of how to do the dance, how the performance has changed, the development of repertoire, and so on.

Aesthetic Comments - including judgments on how the dance is, or should be, performed, factors which contribute to or detract from the dance, evaluations of style.

Teaching Methods - including evaluations of effectiveness of techniques based on the learning experience, effects of practice time and venue, etc.

Team Organisation - or functioning, in terms of formal and informal structure.

Economics - including the role of incentives, descriptions of team finances, costs of maintaining the team (such as payment for practice venue and purchasing of uniforms).

Uniforms - descriptions of uniforms and accoutrements, such as clogs and swords.

Interpersonal Relations - or team dynamics.

Group Identity - as formulated in opinions and descriptions of members of the group vis-à-vis others, as well as others' opinions and descriptions of the group or its members.

Tradition - conceptions of "tradition", and feelings and attitudes concerning tradition.

Origins - discussions of the origins of the dance, including ideas about iconic symbolism in the dance (e.g. beheading explained as death of the old year and birth of the new).

Symbolic Meaning - use of such terms as "magic" and "ritual" to describe what participants experience in performance.

Performance Opportunities - descriptions of events and occasions where the team performs.

Audience - descriptions of who they are and the effect or influence of the audience on the performance.

Local Customs - descriptions of local customs other than longsword dancing.

Local History

Folk History - descriptions and evaluations of the development of interest in the performing folk arts.

Morris Ring - including descriptions of its history and activities.

Longsword History - descriptions of the history of longsword dancing in general (as distinct from that of the South Yorkshire teams).

Each of these twenty themes was then abbreviated, colour coded and applied to fieldnotes and tape indexes for easy identification and location of thematic data. I began transcribing the tape-recorded material, creating a data file for each of the three teams. As I further reflected upon the data in the course of transcription, several of the previously delineated themes seemed to merge on the basis of the context of their discussion by informants. Economics, for example, though a distinct topic in itself, was invariably discussed alongside team organisation, and since it is within that structure that economic matters are handled, it made sense to include economics within the larger theme of team organisation. Similar mergings occurred between performance description and uniforms (the description of the latter being one aspect of the overall performance), and audience and performance opportunities; the performance venue will define the audience, as the availability of an audience will determine an opportunity for performance.

2.7.2 The Model

The next stage in the analysis of the data is finding an angle, or an approach, for the presentation which not only enables the delineation of individual themes for discussion in the light of others. It should also present culture as an organic whole, a complex of elements inextricably bound together in an interactive way.

As mentioned above, the research concentrated on three broad foci within and across which the themes emerged: the dancers, the dance team, and the dance as the product of group behaviour. These foci, then, being the foundation for investigation will also necessarily constitute the bases for a model. My first attempts at constructing an interactive model, however, inevitably failed as I tried to incorporate all of the themes on an equal basis. These failures were the first clear indication not only of the breadth and complexity of the data, but also that certain themes seem to form an active core, while others are more noticeably peripheral.

Five marginal themes can be identified: "folk history", the "Morris Ring", "longsword history", "local custom", and "local history". Together, they constitute a body of past experience and provide a context within which the group functions. The themes of "audience" and "performance opportunities" are more directly associated with the activities of the team. They are external influences forming

another part of the overall context within which the group exists.

With these marginal themes pared off, a model more clearly emerges with the dance team firmly constituting the core (see Figure 2.05). The group consists of two interrelated aspects: the *behavioural*, that is, the activities of the group, and the *cognitive*, or those individual experiences and concepts, which together contribute to group identity. The team, as a behavioural and cognitive unit is nevertheless made up of individuals with personal histories, ideas, and attitudes, as well as certain physical, social, and psychological needs. The individuals within the team will therefore influence the activities and identity of the group, just as the activities and identity of the group will affect the ideas, attitudes, and needs of the individual. There is also a feedback relationship between the behaviours and conceptualisations of the group, on the one hand, and the team history, on the other. The team's history will necessarily colour current behaviours and attitudes, but it is not so much the *reality* of past experience as the *perception of the past* which informs the present, thereby validating not only their activities but their very existence.

The behavioural aspect of the team draws together several of the themes which emerged from the data: "interpersonal relations", "team organisation", and "teaching methods", this last category further embodying "aesthetic comments" and "performance description". These elements form a behavioural system of mutually affecting feedback relationships (as illustrated in Figure 2.05). For example, the way in which the individuals within the group relate to each other influences, and occasionally alters, both the team organisation and teaching methods, thereby affecting the aesthetic interpretation and structural form of the dance itself. When the team displays the dance in public, this behavioural sphere enters into a medium which engages a further feedback relationship with the various limitations and affordances of the audience and the performance opportunity.⁵⁹ This public performance also serves to distinguish the group as a social entity, thus contributing to its sense of identity. Furthermore, the public display will affect the individual performers, adding to their personal histories, influencing ideas and attitudes, and, depending on the circumstances surrounding the performance, exacerbate or satisfy to varying degrees certain physical, social, and psychological needs.

⁵⁹ The term "affordance" is borrowed from James Gibson and refers to what an object, event, or situation furnishes or provides. See James J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966).

As can be seen in Figure 2.05, this system of behavioural and cognitive activity which constitutes dance culture exists within a wider socio-cultural context, a context including those marginal themes (folk history, longsword history, local custom, and so on) discussed earlier. The dynamic interactions of the elements within the dance culture and between this microcosm and the wider holistic context influences the nature of, and subsequent perpetuation of, the tradition. While not claiming to be comprehensive, this working model nonetheless provides a framework for exploring some of the interrelated elements of dance culture, and it is on the basis of this model that the following chapters are built.

As many researchers have written,⁶⁰ presentation of the human data collected in anthropological fieldwork is not easy. One is constantly attempting to strike a balance between meeting the demands of the discipline, one's own goals and aspirations, and the expectations of the human beings involved in the research. In the course of abstracting and analysing, I have tried to ensure that the flavour of the dance form, the dynamic nature of the teams, and the complex of individuals which constitute the groups are not lost. It is the aim throughout this study, then, to facilitate the visibility of individual informants by letting them speak for themselves wherever possible.

Before presenting these people, however, it is necessary to set the context of their dance culture by discussing the history and development of interest in traditional dance, the subject of Chapter Three.

⁶⁰ See, for example, Georges and Jones, pp. 135-152; Pelto and Pelto, pp. 249-250; Edgerton and Langness, p. 59.

Chapter Three

History and Development of Interest in

Traditional Dance

In order to discuss continuity, conflict, and change in longsword dancing in South Yorkshire, it is necessary to understand some of the external factors involved in shaping the course of both the performance and the study of traditional dancing in England. This chapter lays some of this groundwork, which will be referred to later while exploring such things as the dance form, the nature of the participants, and various socio-cultural and historical contexts. Certain important trends will be described which have influenced the perpetuation of traditional dancing and subsequent scholarship.

Much of eighteenth and nineteenth century customary activity in England embodied an appeal to the past and was therefore of interest to scholarly antiquarians.¹ The quest for Antiquities, that is, customs and beliefs extending beyond living memory, emerged with Elizabethan nationalism,² but did not begin to produce the documentary resources from which social historians, like Robert Malcolmson (1973)³ and Bob Bushaway (1982), draw until around the turn of the eighteenth century. Descriptive accounts of customs and festivities appear in personal diaries and church records,⁴ as well as local and regional histories, which become a popular forum for recording antiquities in the last half of the

¹ See Bob Bushaway, *By Rite: Custom, Ceremony, and Community in England, 1700-1880* (London: Junction Books, 1982), esp. Chapter One: The Context of Custom.

² Dorson (1968), p. 2.

³ Robert W. Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society, 1700-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

⁴ See, for example, Nicholas Blundell, *Blundell's Diary and Letter Book, 1702-1728*, ed. Margaret Blundell (Liverpool: n.p., 1952); Ralph Thoresby, *Diary, 1709*, as quoted in William Andrews, "Notes on an old Yorkshire Custom: Rushbearing", in *Yorkshire Magazine*, ii (1872-74), 32-34; Celia Fiennes, *The Journeys of Celia Fiennes*, ed. Christopher Morris (London: n.p., 1947); *Chapelwardens' Accounts* (Didsbury, Lancs.: n.p., 1733-1780); William Cole, *Journals kept by Mr Cole, 1765-70*, MSS., British Museum, Add. MS 5835.

eighteenth century and throughout the Victorian period.⁵ There are also several comprehensive collections of popular British customs dating from this period of which John Brand's *Observations on Popular Antiquities* (1777) and Joseph Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (1801) are two of the better known examples.⁶

In the preface to volume one, Brand writes:

The common people, confined by daily labour, seem to require these proper intervals of relaxation; perhaps it is of the highest political utility to encourage innocent sports and games among them. The revival of many of these would, I think, be highly pertinent at this particular juncture, when the general spread of luxury and dissipation threatens more than at any preceding period to extinguish the character of our boasted national bravery.⁷

This excerpt not only captures the paternalistic nature of much antiquarian interest in customary activity, but also reveals the impetus for encouraging such behaviour amongst the working classes.

Despite widespread interest in popular custom throughout the eighteenth century, it was not until the mid nineteenth century that the study of such aspects of culture began to move toward gaining status as an academic discipline. A watershed indicative of this trend occurred in 1846 when a letter from William John Thoms appeared in *Athenaeum* on the 22nd of August suggesting that the term "folk-lore" replace "popular antiquities" to denote a serious cultural inquiry into the customs and beliefs of the folk. Thoms also convinced the editor to establish a column for the purpose of reporting and preserving folklore. This feature became immensely popular, especially among middle-class readers, and was the inspiration for *Notes and Queries*, Thoms' own paper.⁸

⁵ See, for example, John Wallis, *The Natural History and Antiquities of Northumberland* (London: n.p., 1769); J. Aiken, *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester* (London: n.p., 1795); C. Clarkson, *History of Richmond in the County of Yorkshire* (Richmond, Yorks.: n.p., 1814); Washington Irving, *Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey* (London: n.p., 1835); W.D. Longstaffe, *History and Antiquities of the Parish of Darlington* (Darlington, Durham: n.p., 1854); Pishey Thompson, *History and Antiquities of Boston* (Boston, Lincs.: n.p., 1856); W. Grainge, *Nidderdale, or an Historical, Topographical and Descriptive Sketch on the Valley of the Nidd* (Pateley Bridge, Yorks.: n.p., 1863).

⁶ John Brand, *Observations on Popular Antiquities*, 3 vols., 3rd ed. (London: H.C. Bohn, 1848); Joseph Strutt, *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England* (London: J. White, 1801).

⁷ Brand, p. xii.

⁸ Information presented in this section is drawn from R.M. Dorson, *Peasant Customs and Savage Myths*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), volume I, part I: The Antiquarians.

The reception and subsequent popularity of Thoms' initiative were certainly due in large part to the reform movements of the Victorian middle class. Intervention in customary activities was seen as a means of reforming working-class behaviour to more closely model middle-class values. As Robert Storch explains,

the reform of working-class leisure and the transformation of popular culture opened a promising and indeed exhaustible field for the operation of middle-class benevolence and for a wide range of organisations and movements devoted to that purpose.⁹

With the rise of "rational recreation"¹⁰ came the provision of public parks and gardens as well as organised sport and self-improvement classes, such as sewing, drawing, and singing. Indeed, music was seen by middle-class reformers as fundamental to moral ideals and social living. For example,

music was viewed, amongst other things, as a method of promoting Christianity, temperance, patriotism, even Socialism, as well as being a way of strengthening family ties and developing the character.¹¹

By the middle of the nineteenth century, then, middle-class reform movements were making substantial progress in attempts to improve the conditions and behaviours of the labouring poor necessarily affecting customary activities.¹² While various social forces influenced traditional culture, where working-class practices could not be controlled and reformed, occasions were actively and successfully suppressed,¹³ by such means as withdrawing social and economic patronage and support and denying access to traditional venues. Nevertheless, tradition is remarkably resilient, and so long as there is

⁹ Robert D. Storch, "The Problem of Working-Class Leisure. Some Roots of Middle-Class Moral Reform in the Industrial North: 1825-50", in *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain*, ed. A.P. Donajgradzki (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 138-162 (p.138).

¹⁰ For more information on the concept and practice of "rational recreation" see Storch, pp. 138-162; Bushaway, pp. 238-279; and Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: rational recreation and the contest for control, 1830-1885* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

¹¹ Dave Russell, "Popular musical culture and popular politics in the Yorkshire textile districts, 1880-1914", in *Leisure in Britain, 1780-1939*, ed. John K. Walton and James Walvin (Manchester, Cheshire: Manchester University Press, 1983), 99-116 (p. 100).

¹² See Chapter 5.

¹³ Bushaway, Chapter 7 "The Control of Custom," pp. 238-279; Malcolmson, pp. 89-157; Bailey.

occasion for customary activities, then such activities will persist.¹⁴ Local revivals of morris and sword dancing traditions occurred, for instance, when the national celebrations of Victoria's Golden and Diamond Jubilees in 1887 and 1897, respectively, provided the opportunities for such customary festive activities.¹⁵

In addition to the effects of Victorian middle-class benevolence and reform movements, a prominent intellectual trend emerged in late nineteenth century Britain which would profoundly influence attitudes to folk custom and ultimately provide the foundation and direction of traditional dance scholarship well into the twentieth century. This trend was based on the theory of evolution presented by Charles Darwin in *The Origin of the Species by means of Natural Selection* which appeared in 1859. Among others, Darwin's ideas greatly influenced Edward B. Tylor, anthropologist and folklorist, in his development of the theory of "cultural evolution."¹⁶ Briefly, this theory maintains that human cultures develop progressively from the lowest stage of primitive savagery, then to barbarism, and finally to the highest stage, civilization, achieved in Western European (especially industrial Victorian) society. Since, according to this theory, all societies progress through the same stages, it made sense to Tylor that similarities existed between, for instance, the customs and beliefs of nineteenth century European peasants and so-called primitive societies. Although integral and, indeed, vital to primitive life, customs which persisted in civilized societies, having lost their original meanings in the course of evolution, were described by Tylor as "survivals".

The doctrine of survivals, which maintains that similar cultural forms have the same origins, along with unilinear cultural evolution, was popularised by another anthropologist-folklorist, Sir James G. Frazer in *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, first published in 1890. It was clear by this time that evolutionary theory was bringing the study of folklore to new heights of respectability

¹⁴ See Anthony G. Barrand, "ABCD Morris? LMNO Morris!" in *English Dance and Song*, 42:3 (1980), 11-13. Dr. Barrand also points out that when certain annual occasions stop, the associated dancing also stops.

¹⁵ Roy Dommett, "The Cotswold Morris in the Twentieth Century", *Traditional Dance* 1 (1982), 59-92.

¹⁶ Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art and Custom*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1871).

as an academic pursuit. Indeed,

what antiquarians had regarded as quaint anachronisms became, under the new theory of folklore, vital evidence of prehistoric beliefs and institutions. The pleasantly eccentric dilettante pursuit of popular antiquities, therefore, suddenly acquired considerable status as a science.¹⁷

By the turn of the century, the popularity of "cultural survivals" resulted in articles aimed at the general public appearing in magazines such as the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *London Magazine*.¹⁸ This type of reporting, despite the rhetoric, provides scholars today with valuable documentation of working-class customary behaviours which might otherwise have been neglected.

To recapitulate, then, there were several forces at work shaping the practice and the study of various cultural traditions in England in the late-Victorian period. Nationalistic interest in antiquities, stemming from as far back as Elizabethan times, continued to motivate the collection, perpetuation, and revival of British traditions. This was especially vital during the high tide of the Empire and its accompanying international conflicts. In addition to providing a cultural base for British national identity, Victorian reformers saw customary activities as an area in which to promote certain social values. Middle-class intervention in and control of popular customs became common. Finally, developments in evolutionary theory contributed substantially to maintaining interest in cultural behaviours and to establishing folklore as an academic discipline.

It was in this social environment, then, that in 1905 Cecil Sharp began to record men's traditional dances. In the introduction to the first edition of *The Morris Book* (1907), Sharp and his co-author, Herbert C. MacIlwaine, explain their motivations.

We have been drawn to the publication of tunes and description of the old English Morris, not primarily for the information of the archaeologist and scholar, but to help those who may be disposed to restore a vigorous and native custom to its lapsed pre-eminence.¹⁹

¹⁷ Georgina Smith, "Winster Morris Dance: The Sources of an Oikotype", *Traditional Dance*, 1 (1982), pp. 93-94.

¹⁸ See for example, Keighley Snowden, "A Christmas Sword Dance", *London Magazine*, xvii (1906), 385-391; "Twelfth Night on the Moors", *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 Jan. 1895.

¹⁹ Cecil J. Sharp and Herbert C. MacIlwaine, *The Morris Book* (London: Novello and Co., 1907), p. 7.

Although Sharp and MacIlwaine collected in a spirit of revivalism, this passage reveals that they were not unaware of academic interest in such customs. However, they continue,

we are chiefly concerned with the Morris as a lapsed yet living art, calling, as we hold, for revival.²⁰

It was, indeed, a common belief that traditions such as morris dancing were facing immanent extinction in a rapidly modernising society. Certainly, the occurrence of such customs was on the decline at the turn of the century, though it remains a matter of speculation as to the nature and, indeed, existence of a revival were it not for the interest of individuals like Sharp. As *The Morris Book* is intended to foster an interest in people for actually doing this form of dancing, this volume and subsequent publications aim to describe the dances in sufficient detail so as to enable someone who has never seen the dances to be able to perform them.²¹ However, while not claiming to be exhaustive, they do present a brief but well-researched history of morris dancing drawing primarily on the work of Francis Douce (1807),²² Joseph Strutt (1801), and John Brand (1777).²³ What is clearly missing, though, is the influence of Frazer's doctrine of survivals, as Sharp and MacIlwaine subscribe to the importation theory set forth by Douce to explain the origins of the English Morris. However, by the second edition of *The Morris Book* (1912), Sharp has been introduced to cultural evolution and re-writes the introduction incorporating survival theory as applied to traditional dance by Sir E.K. Chambers in *The Mediaeval Stage* in 1903.²⁴

In her biography of Cecil Sharp, Maud Karpeles explains that

the theory he propounded was that the dances had grown out of primitive religious ceremonies which were associated in some occult way with the fertilization of all living things.²⁵

²⁰ Sharp and MacIlwaine, p. 13.

²¹ Whether or not this is possible remains a matter for debate among scholars and dancers alike.

²² Francis Douce, "A Dissertation on the Ancient Morris Dance", in *Illustrations of Shakespeare and of ancient manners*, 2 vols. (London: n.p., 1807).

²³ For a complete list of their historical sources, see Sharp and MacIlwaine (1907), pp. 23-24.

²⁴ E.K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903).

²⁵ Maud Karpeles, *Cecil Sharp: His Life and Work* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 92.

Sharp further applies the doctrine of survivals in his belief that morris dancing, sword dancing, and mumming plays are all "survivals of different aspects of the same rite."²⁶ Following on from the belief that these forms are firmly rooted in pagan fertility rituals, Sharp maintains therefore that the purest examples would involve only male performers, indicative of the ancient priesthood. Indeed, this belief appeared to be supported by the fact that most of the dance- and drama-based customs that Sharp encountered were performed by men only. However, as Barrant (1980) argues,

women did not partake in the English morris very much because they had very little leisure time with children and households to maintain and because morris was a boisterous form of begging and carousing in the streets in which women would not partake.²⁷

Adherence to survival theory, then, informed Sharp's classification and collection of traditional dances, necessarily excluding those forms which involved women and children. Some of the implications of the extension of this theory into the revival will be discussed further below. However, it is important to note that, with few exceptions, Sharp's classifications still influence the forms with which dance researchers choose to work.²⁸

Although Sharp concentrated his collecting efforts on male-only performance traditions, he rather ironically found that his appeal for the revival of the performance of traditional dance was most enthusiastically responded to by community groups and organisations largely composed of women and children. In fact, were it not for the activities of the Esperance Working Girls' Club under the leadership of Miss Mary Neal, Sharp may not have been so passionately motivated towards the collection and publication of English traditional dances. Although Sharp had first seen morris dancing in 1899, his interest did not become active until 1905 when Mary Neal approached him seeking to learn some English folk songs and dances to teach to the club.²⁹ Sharp and Neal developed a cordial

²⁶ Karpeles, p. 93. Sharp (1911-13), Part I, pp. 9-36.

²⁷ Barrant, p. 13.

²⁸ See Theresa Buckland, "English Folk Dance Scholarship: A Review" *Traditional Dance* 1 (1982), pp. 10-11; Barrant, p. 12.

²⁹ For more information on the relationship between Sharp and Neal, see Derek Schofield, "'Revival of the Folk Dance: An Artistic Movement': The Background to the Founding of the English Folk Dance Society", *Folk Music Journal*, 5:2 (1986), 215-219, and Roy Judge, "Mary Neal and the Esperance Morris", *Folk Music Journal* 5:5 (1989), 545-591.

working relationship, and Sharp expressed his gratitude for the efforts of the Esperance Club in the dedication of the first edition of *The Morris Book*. However, in the years following this publication, Sharp and Neal came increasingly into conflict regarding, among other things, stylistic issues surrounding the teaching and performance of the dances.³⁰ Although both continued to work for the revival of English traditional dance, after 1908 they did so independently of each other.

By 1909 the Board of Education had incorporated Morris dancing into the Physical Education syllabus, and in order to maintain strict control of the standard of dancing, Cecil Sharp established a School of Morris Dancing in the Department of Physical Training at South-Western Polytechnic Institute (later Chelsea Physical Training College) with himself as director. By 1910 Chelsea had an active folk dance club, the members of which then formed the core of the English Folk Dance Society,³¹ established on the 6th of December, 1911. *The Morning Post*, the pages of which had in previous years served as an arena for the disputes between Sharp and Neal, carried this report of the formation of the Society the following day:

Mr Cecil Sharp moved the following resolution: 'That a Society, to be called "The English Folk Dance Society," be established... with the object of preserving and promoting the practice of English folk-dances in their traditional forms.' They must realise, he said, that the folk-dance movement was primarily an artistic movement.... A movement of that kind was subject to the ravages of the Philistines on every side, and that was what they wanted to guard against. He had always felt the deepest responsibility in going to the folk and taking their art from them, noting it, and then disseminating it. He thought there was a very great danger that the art would suffer in the process of transferring it from the folk to another class, many of whom had an entirely different point of view. It was for those reasons that they wanted to gather people together into a society which viewed folk-dancing from a purely artistic standpoint. Their aim would be then to bind these people together to keep that particular artistic movement on its right lines and prevent it from becoming vulgarised and popularised, although they aimed to popularise it in the best sense of the word.³²

This desire to maintain tight artistic control over the revival of traditional dance in the public sector, as well as the teaching of folk dance to schoolchildren, led to the development of a formal

³⁰ See Schofield (1986); Judge (1989); Karpeles (1967); Douglas Kennedy and Helen Kennedy, *Folk Dance and Song, 1911-1961* (London: The English Folk Dance and Song Society, 1961).

³¹ In 1932 the English Folk Dance Society amalgamated with the Folk Song Society and became the English Folk Dance and Song Society, as it is known today.

³² "Revival of the Folk Dance: An Artistic Movement", *Morning Post*, 7 Dec. 1911, as quoted in Schofield, p. 215.

system of graded courses and certificates organised and administered by the English Folk Dance Society, and the accompanying establishment of local branches throughout the country in order to effect widespread control over the movement. While artistic concerns were central to the ideology and activities of the English Folk Dance Society in the years following its formation, so too was the belief that the revival of folk dance was beneficial not only to the quality of life of the working classes but to the whole of society. This belief provided the largely middle class ranks of the Society with a benevolent mission. Thus, the following statement appeared in the *Sheffield Independent* upon the formation of the Sheffield Branch of the English Folk Dance Society in 1921:

It is our desire to revive the old English dances so that they may return to their proper place in the life of the people... Not only is folk-dancing an extremely pleasant and health-giving form of amusement, and not only... was it the universal popularity of folk-dancing among all ranks and classes of society which gained for this country its ancient and joyous title "Merrie England", but it is only by a return to the measures and to the spirit of the folk dance that we can hope to make our dancing once more an expression of our national consciousness.³³

By the 1920s folk dancing was not only being taught in schools, but was being practised by Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, Women's Institutes, and so on. Indeed, the number of branches of the Society more than doubled between 1918 and 1926,³⁴ and regular displays, competitions and holiday schools were organised.³⁵ Folk dancing was clearly becoming primarily a middle-class leisure activity. As Roy Dommert observes:

The people interested in the morris between the wars were not the same class from whom the dancers were drawn in the villages. It was going to take the national celebrations in 1935 and 1937 to interest the local communities in their own traditions... The "revival" was in classes and clubs.³⁶

³³ P. Hugh M. Nicholson, letter to the editor, *Sheffield Independent*. Reprinted in *EFDS News*, 2 (Aug 1921), 52-53.

³⁴ W.D. Croft, "Fifteen Years' Progress", *Journal of the English Folk Dance Society*, 2nd series: 1 (1927), p. 16.

³⁵ From February to June 1925 over thirty English Folk Dance Society demonstrations and competitions were held throughout England, including venues in London, Birmingham, Brighton, Hastings, Hull, Liverpool, Newcastle, Whitby and York. See *EFDS News*, 10 (Nov 1925).

³⁶ Dommert, p. 75. The celebrations to which he refers are the Silver Jubilee of George V in 1935 and the coronation of George VI in 1937.

Although the English Folk Dance Society was seen by many as preoccupied with teaching dance in schools, the Society did attempt to encourage traditional teams by impressing upon them the importance of the continuation of the tradition by providing practical assistance where possible and through access to such events as the North of England Musical Tournament (1919-1939), the Whitby Competitive Festival (1920s to the present), and the Albert Hall Festival (1926 intermittently until 1983).³⁷ These occasions introduced traditional dance teams into the national arena, furnishing venues, performance opportunities, and media cover, each contributing to the gradual move of the dance away from being essentially village entertainment. This contextual shift, as will be discussed further in Chapter Seven, created conditions which, among other things, would lead to changes in attitudes about the presentation of the dance, in turn affecting the nature of the team and the individuals within it.

Although the English Folk Dance Society was encouraging the perpetuation of traditional teams in the years between the First and Second World Wars, the bulk of their revival activity took place in the classroom. Increasingly, however, folk dance enthusiasts began to feel that this context should not form the basis of a revival. In 1924 a group of Cambridge University men formed the Travelling Morrice for the express purpose of taking the morris back to the villages and into the streets. The Travelling Morrice inspired the formation of a number of new teams which joined together in 1934 under the title of the Morris Ring. While this organisation has a detailed history worthy of investigation and lengthy discussion, what is important to note for this study is the extent to which the Morris Ring not only adopted survival theory, but has used it as a mechanism for legitimising and perpetuating the attitudes and behaviours of Ring club members. The Morris Ring was established as a male only organisation modelled along the lines of a college fraternity. As the Cambridge University Morris Men were largely responsible for the founding of this federation, this is hardly surprising. However, this newly formed federation gained credibility for its activities through identification with a primitive past. As one of my informants commented,

I always get an impression... that they sort of tried to build a four- or five-hundred

³⁷ By 1926, the English Folk Dance Society had established the Traditional Dancers' Fund, collections for which were made at various displays and competitions; see *EFDS News*, 11 (Apr 1926), pp. 350 & 352. See Chapters Five and Six.

year old history out of nowhere. And adhere to it.³⁸

Portraying morris dancing as a survival of an ancient fertility ritual also served, and continues to serve, as a means of legitimising their male-only membership criterion.³⁹ However, at the time of the inception of the Morris Ring, this criterion was not something which necessarily had to be legitimised, as the Ring was formed for the sake of facilitating a particular leisure activity, not unlike, for instance, the Women's Institute or the Girl Guides, which also happened to be gender-specific organisations. Nevertheless, morris and sword dances were clearly seen by revivalists as "men's dances",⁴⁰ and while it was acceptable for women to be involved in the teaching of these forms in the context of, say, an English Folk Dance Society class or display, public performance of these "ritual" dances was regarded by Sharp and his followers as rightfully an exclusively male domain.

It is interesting to note that this male/female distinction did not apparently concern the traditional performers of the time. For example, William Kimber of Headington Quarry (the first morris team that Sharp encountered) and his cousin quite willingly went to London to teach their dances to Mary Neal and the Espérance Club girls.⁴¹ During the 1920s the longsword team from Kirkby Malzeard, near Ripon in North Yorkshire, appeared at the York area Women's Institutes' annual folk dance competition and would often informally coach the women's sides after their display.⁴² Similarly, a man who had been a member of the Grenoside Sword Dancers from 1926 until 1947, continued his involvement in dancing by, among other things, apparently teaching a team of girls in the

³⁸ CMS-71/A - 17.40.

³⁹ Pagan imagery is also invoked when collecting money while dancing in public. Explaining that morris and sword dancing is an ancient fertility ritual and that giving money insures good luck and prosperity appears to legitimise for themselves and their audiences the collection of money (often to be spent on "refreshments" afterwards) by white middle-class men. See Barrand (1980), p.11; John Forrest, "Here We Come A-Fossiling", *Dance Research Journal*, 17:1 (1985), p. 33; and tape-recorded interviews from my collection, for example, CMS-40/B - 07.55, CMS-55/A - 22.30, CMS-59/A - 04.15.

⁴⁰ Douglas N. Kennedy, "The Folk Dance Revival in England", *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 2 (1935), p. 76. See also Maud Karpeles, "Past and Present", *Folk Music Journal*, 2:2 (1971), p. 100; Frank Kidson and Mary Neal, *English Folk Song and Dance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915), p. 149.

⁴¹ Karpeles (1967), p.71. See also William Kimber's words as quoted by Roger Johnson, Letter, *English Dance and Song*, 36:4 (1974), p. 149.

⁴² Stone (1980). pp. 31-32.

nearby village of High Green.⁴³ These few examples, while not necessarily conclusive, do point to a difference in attitude between traditional performers and revivalists, further indicating that the male-only criterion was a by-product of survival theory adopted by the revival and not part of the perceptual framework of the tradition bearers themselves.

Thus the popularity of survival theory, which connected morris and sword dancing with pagan fertility rituals, existed in the 1920s and '30s in middle-class revival circles. This belief greatly contributed to the establishment of a gender-specific claim to the right of public performance. However, as will be discussed briefly below, this claim would be called into question in the context of post World War Two Britain.

With the advent of the Second World War, the activities of the English Folk Dance and Song Society and the Morris Ring, as well as performances of the traditional teams, declined. However, by 1948 events such as the Albert Hall Festival had been revived, bringing traditional dance once again into the national arena. While folk dancing continued to be taught in schools, a marked increase in adult interest accompanied postwar efforts to reassert national identity. Royal interest, as evidenced in Princess Margaret's patronage of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, was influential in the growing popularity of folk dance,⁴⁴ and the local and national celebrations associated with the Festival of Britain in 1951 provided opportunities for the re-emergence of many traditional forms of entertainment, especially dance.⁴⁵

The 1950s saw the formation of university and community folk dance clubs and classes and a subsequent increase in the number of competitions, demonstrations, and festivals. Other sorts of physical recreation organisations, such as rambling and climbing clubs and the Youth Hostels

⁴³ CA-131 and CECTAL Archive Tape A30-73.

⁴⁴ Douglas N. Kennedy, *English Folk Dancing: Today and Yesterday* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd, 1964), p. 93.

⁴⁵ See, for example, "Festival of Britain", *English Dance and Song*, 16:1 (1951), pp. 4 & 20; Ian Russell, "The Commentary to the Film 'This is Morris Dancing': The Derbyshire Traditions of Castleton, Tideswell and Winster" *Traditional Dance*, 2 (1983), p. 26; also CMS-04/B - 20.15, CMS-05/B - 31.47, CMS-11/A - 08.22, CMS-11/B - 05.43, CMS-21/A - 10.32, CMS-21/B - 25.30, CMS-30/A - 01.20, CMS-45/A - 21.40, CMS-48/A - 41.45.

Association, began to incorporate folk dancing into their social activities.⁴⁶ This sphere of interest, as will be seen in Chapter Six, became an avenue for recruiting new members into existing teams. The English Folk Dance and Song Society, while responding to the needs of revival interest through workshops and courses, also continued, albeit with varying degrees of success, to support and encourage traditional dance teams.⁴⁷

The next wave of enthusiasm for traditional dance occurred in the 1960s, as an offshoot of the folk music/song revival.⁴⁸ The English Folk Dance and Song Society continued to play a central role in popularising traditional dance. One informant recalled that in the 1960s,

there was a movement... by the [Yorkshire] area organiser of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, who was based in Leeds.... and he took it upon himself to come down to Sheffield and organise some folk dances which were held... in pub rooms. I think it was intended to get people interested in the song clubs interested in folk dancing.⁴⁹

Typically, as an alternative to the usual song session, a folk club would organise a ceilidh, an evening involving both singing and dancing. This social dancing would then often lead to an interest in other forms of traditional dance and perhaps the formation of a team as a splinter group of the song club.⁵⁰ As one man explained,

a number of morris sides... have started from people going from ceilidhs and from folksong clubs, [but] they haven't really lasted. You know, it's been the thing to do... and it's petered out. Because really the interest hasn't been there and they haven't been dancers in the first place.⁵¹

Indeed, the 1960s and 1970s saw the coming and going of a number of "flash-in-the-pan" dance teams. However, many sides persisted and survived the flush of popular enthusiasm, indicating

⁴⁶ CMS-40/A - 11.03, CMS-45/A - 16.15, CMS-49/A - 42.00, CMS-50/A - 00.10.

⁴⁷ See Chapter Six.

⁴⁸ On the basis of data collected, there is scope for further research into the relationship between the folksong revival of the 1960s and the subsequent founding and development of dance teams. For more information on the folksong revival, see Fred Woods, *Folk Revival: The rediscovery of a national music* (Poole, Dorset: Blandford Press, 1979).

⁴⁹ CMS-43/A - 07.05. See also CMS-28/A - 17.30.

⁵⁰ This will be discussed further in Chapter Six in relation to the founding of Barnsley Longsword.

⁵¹ CMS-78/A - 34.05. See also CMS-62/B - 01.40 and Karpeles (1971), p. 101.

more than just a passing fad.⁵²

Traditional teams also benefitted from this revival of interest, in that they attracted a new generation of dancers to sides that were often short of men and struggling to meet the performance demands of the revival context; as will be seen in later chapters, the advent of new members -- coming from different backgrounds and with different motivations and abilities -- would have a profound impact on the Grenoside and Handsworth teams. Traditional dance by this time was clearly no longer simply village entertainment but, due to such social changes as increased mobility and communications, the breakup of communities, and rapid conurbation, was becoming a popular middle-class form of recreation established on a broadening social and geographic base. Annual national and international folk festivals began to provide a focal point for the performance activity of traditional and revival teams alike. The revival atmosphere, with frequent displays, workshops, and tutorials in various forms of traditional dance provided teams with the opportunity to learn and perform a wider range of material. Reflecting on the effects of this atmosphere on traditional teams in particular, one man commented that,

because they've got a greater awareness of what's happening on the whole folk scene, they feel that they've got to put on a complete folk show and not just their thing.⁵³

The adaptation and expansion of repertoire will be taken up in Chapter Seven, yet the circumstances which enabled such expansion also contributed to the rise and establishment of women's teams performing dances previously considered suitable for men only. As can be seen through the perspectives presented in such publications as *Morris Matters*, *The Morris Ring Circular*, and *English Dance and Song*,⁵⁴ the issue of public performance of morris and sword dances by women becomes the subject of heated debate in the 1970s and continues, though with less vehemence and frequency in the 1980s and 1990s. While this issue has certainly been fuelled by contemporary socio-political trends toward equal rights and opportunities for women, the correspondence pages of *English Dance and Song*,

⁵² Dommett (1982); Trevor Stone (1980); *Lore and Language*, 6:2 (July 1987).

⁵³ CMS-49/B - 02.15.

⁵⁴ *Morris Matters* is the quarterly newsletter/magazine of the Women's Morris Federation; *The Morris Ring Circular* is the biannual newsletter of the Morris Ring; *English Dance and Song* is the quarterly/tri-annual/biannual magazine of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. See, for examples, the following issues of *English Dance and Song*: 36:3 (1974), p. 110; 36:4 (1974), pp. 149-150; 37:1 (1975), p. 29; 40:2 (1978), p. 63; 40:3 (1978), pp. 102-103; 41:1 (1979), p. 16; 41:2 (1979), p. 20; 41:3 (1979), p. 19; 43:1 (1981), p. 21; 43:3 (1981), p.20; and *The Morris Ring Circular*, 10 (1986), pp. 1-2.

for example, reveal a renewal of appeal to survival theory and its accompanying pagan fertility baggage in order to justify certain male-only attitudes. The following examples illustrate this point:

We are threatened with women performing in public a ritual which is intended to fertilise the earth!⁵⁵

The Morris is an intrinsically masculine activity by the mere fact of its origin.⁵⁶

The Morris is a ritual dance form performed to appease a female deity, and therefore should not be performed by women.⁵⁷

To be fair, there are also aesthetically-based opinions expressed as to why these dance forms are not thought to be suitable for women, as well as dismissals of the notion of fertility as being at all relevant to twentieth century leisure activities. Nevertheless, the influence of survival theory is quite apparent in these series of correspondences.

However, it is not only in the popular mind that this appeal to the primitive past is apparent; indeed, it is highly likely that this popular opinion reflects the available literature, revealing the nature of much dance research. Although other approaches to the study of traditional dance have emerged in recent years,⁵⁸ an examination of the literature pertaining to English traditional dance from the turn of the century to the present⁵⁹ reveals a perpetuation of survival theory and a noticeable preoccupation with the search for origins.⁶⁰ As Theresa Buckland remarks:

Frazer's theories and methodology have long been discredited, but keeping abreast of anthropological studies is not, judging by the folk-dance literature, a noted

⁵⁵ Celia Smith, Letter, *English Dance and Song*, 36:4 (1974), p. 150.

⁵⁶ L. Frank Masters, Letter, *English Dance and Song*, 36:4 (1974), p. 150.

⁵⁷ S.A. Duke, Letter, *English Dance and Song*, 41:1 (1979), p. 16.

⁵⁸ For examples of these research developments, see *Traditional Dance*, 6 vols., ed. Theresa Buckland (Crewe, Cheshire: Crewe and Alsager College of Higher Education, 1982-1988), and *Lore and Language*, 6:2 (July 1987).

⁵⁹ For thorough and critical reviews of the relevant literature, see Buckland (1982), and Theresa Buckland, "Definitions of Folk Dance: Some Explorations", *Folk Music Journal*, 4:4 (1983), 315-332.

⁶⁰ See, for example, Sharp (1911); Sharp (1912); Kidson and Neal (1915); R.R. Marett, "Survival and Revival", *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 1:2 (1933), 73-78; Douglas N. Kennedy, *England's Dances* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1949); Kennedy (1964); Lewis Spence, *Myth and Ritual in Dance, Game and Rhyme* (London: Watts and Co., 1947); Violet Alford, *Introduction to English Folklore* (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd, 1952); Alford (1962); Russell Wortley, *The XYZ of Morris* (U.K.: The Morris Ring, 1978); Armstrong (1985); Jeremy Monson, "The Morris and Human Sacrifice", *The Morris Dancer* 2:12 (February 1991), 210-212.

characteristic of the British school.⁶¹

However, one should not be completely dismissive of research which incorporates, on whatever level, notions of pagan survivals. Much of the literature contains valid impressions and reflections on various aspects of traditional dance.⁶² Yet even more importantly, such literature provides a particular body of rhetoric to the general public which, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven, enables dancers to describe performance-based experiences of certain states of being which are otherwise indescribable.

To summarise, then, the performance and study of traditional dance have been shaped by various social, historical, and intellectual trends. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries dance occurred in the context of community activities tolerated, if not supported by, the patronage of the local gentry. With the gradual rise of middle-class Victorian morality dance related customs were seen as possible avenues for reforming the working classes, yet where behaviours could not be suitably modified, attempts were made to eliminate these activities by such means as denying access to customary venues.

However, the development of evolutionary theory, as well as nationalistic fervour of the late Victorian era, created an environment ripe for the encouragement of British culture and tradition. In this context Cecil Sharp began to collect traditional dances for the purpose of reviving their performance. The publications, activities, and beliefs of Sharp and his followers largely informed the direction of traditional dance scholarship, focussing primarily on the nineteenth-century-based search for origins as well as the issues raised by the twentieth century folk dance revival.

This brief overview of the development of the performance and study of traditional dance in England provides some of the background details which are necessary to bear in mind while examining the nature of longsword dancing in South Yorkshire. Having laid these contextual foundations, then, we can now turn to a detailed description of the dances.

⁶¹ Buckland (1983), pp. 317-318.

⁶² See my review of Lucile Armstrong's *A Window on Folk Dance* in *Lore and Language*, 5:1 (Jan. 1986), 95-96.

Chapter Four

The Dances

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to present a description of each of the dances under investigation in sufficient detail to enable the reader to understand the formal structure and style of the dances, as well as the mechanics involved in their performance.¹ These notations provide a framework in which to view the continuity of the dances, and a background against which to describe the changes which have occurred over time. These observations provide a starting point for later discussions of the dynamic forces involved in effecting visible changes in the performance of the dance and in maintaining a sense of continuity in space and time.

Three broad topics will be discussed for each dance:

1. **Costume** - a description of the costume presently in use as well as a survey of the variations from the earliest available records.
2. **Dance** - a detailed description of the dance based on observations of performances and practice sessions between 1985 and 1988 and supplemented by explanations and clarifications acquired through formal and informal interviews.
3. **Changes in the dance** - a description of the changes which have occurred in the style and structure of the dance over time.²

This last topic is potentially the most elusive of the three to discuss, in that data cannot be cross-checked through direct observation. However, cine film and video have been used to record each of the dances, in the case of Grenoside and Handsworth from as early as the 1920s, and whilst film and video capture particular performances, and might therefore encompass idiosyncratic movements and "mistakes", their reliability is substantiated through written records and informant recall.

¹ It is important to note that the longsword dances are, or have been, part of the teams' larger repertoires of performance activities; even so, longsword is the primary dance form of each team, with additional repertoire having supplementary status. The issue of the expansion of repertoire will be addressed in Chapter Seven.

² The changes described are known to be persistent, or long-term, changes of some significance. Incidental variations and "one-off" fluctuations are not considered here.

4.2 Notation Key

4.2.1 Music

Standard musical notation is used throughout and, in keeping with informants' usage, the first strain (usually consisting of eight bars) is labelled "A" and the second strain "B" for any particular tune. A distinction is made between song and dance tunes. Musical notations appear in Appendix VI.

4.2.2 Dance

Verbal descriptions - terms

1. **Hilt** - refers to the handle of the sword.
2. **Point** - refers to the tip/end of the sword.
3. **Hilt-and-point** - refers to a manner of linking the dancers whereby each holds the hilt of his own sword in one hand (usually the right) and the point of his neighbour's sword in the other.
4. **Pivot** - refers both to the position vis-à-vis the floor around which all other movement rotates in a given figure and to the dancer who occupies this position.

Symbols and diagrams -

1. The dancers are numbered consecutively around the set and a "v" indicates the direction the body is facing.³ The path of the dancer is indicated by a dashed line, e.g. -----.

Dancers are seen primarily as vehicles for "making the swords dance",⁴ therefore their paths are traced in relation to the moving, or "active", swords as seen from above. The recording of the horizontal movement of the swords is further supplemented by a system of colour coding by relative heights of the swords in relation to the body. These notations may occasionally only show active swords where, because of the closed nature of the particular figure, to include the inactive swords results in a cluttered the diagram and detracts from the primary movement being illustrated.

³ Cecil Sharp uses this notation in *The Morris Book* (London: Novello, 1907), and in all subsequent publications on morris and sword dancing.

⁴ This phrase was used numerous times by informants both in the course of teaching and in the interview context.

2. A sword is represented as a solid line, and its colour indicates the height at which it is held at a specific time in a particular figure. The nine locations have been selected on the basis of the frequency of their occurrence, as well as the distinct use of these heights as reference points by informants (see Figure 4.01). Whilst such colour coding could be seen as arbitrary, the order of the assigned colours and their relationship, both to each other and relative to the dancers' bodies, is derived from the spectrum and the Chakra points as used in Eastern meditation and healing.

3. Arrows indicate the direction of travel of swords and dancers.

4. The positions shown in the colour coded diagrams are those which occur on the musical bars and beats and are labelled accordingly. Therefore a diagram with the heading "1.2" refers to the position occurring on bar one, beat two.

Stepping (Grenoside only)

The stepping notation is based on the system used by Geoff Hughes in *Clog Steps for Beginners*.⁵ Four primary foot movement terms are employed, and are defined as follows:

1. Step (S) - weight taken onto the ball of the foot.
2. Hop (Hp) - a step onto a previously weight-bearing foot.
3. Tap (t) - a non-weight-bearing tap of the toe.
4. Heel (h) - a non-weight-bearing tap of the heel.

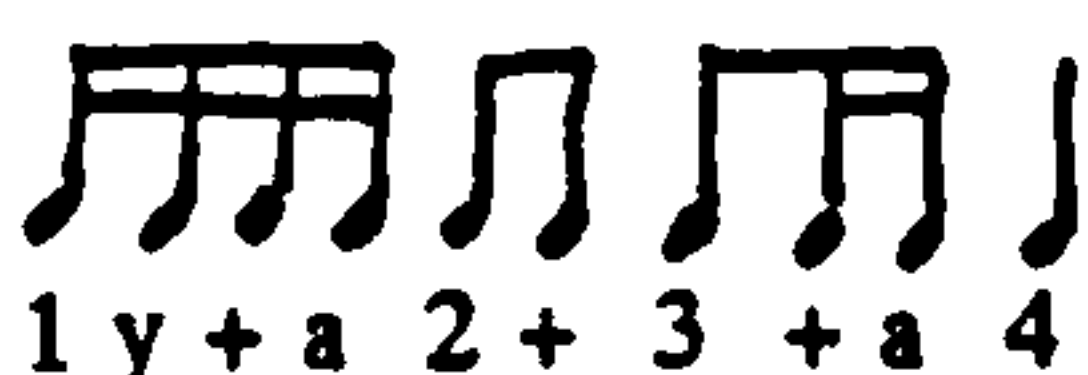
The notation consists of two columns, one for the left foot and one for the right, running down the page from top to bottom. The rhythm of the stepping coincides with musical bars and phrases which appear alongside the step notation, as illustrated below:

		<u>Left</u>	<u>Right</u>
<u>Bar 7:</u>	1	S	
	+		t
	2		h
	+		t
	3		S
	+	t	
	4	h	
	+	t	
<u>Bar 8:</u>	1	S	
	2		t
	3		S

Numbers indicate the strong beats within the measure of music. The secondary stresses, which occur

⁵ Geoff Hughes, *Clog Steps for Beginners* (London: The English Folk Dance and Song Society, 1975).

equidistant between the strong beats and enable the notator to work in eighth note units, appear as "+" and should be read as "and". Two additional signs, "a" (as in "abroad") and "y" (as in "any"), are used to further break down the beat into sixteenth notes. A sound made with the clog immediately after the strong beat is indicated by "y", and a sound made immediately after the secondary stress is indicated by "a". For example, a measure (or bar) in 4/4 time might read "1y+a2+3+a4", or in musical terms as follows:



4.3 Grenoside

4.3.1 Costumes

The present team wear high-collared jackets of red paisley patterned material decorated with red and green braiding and green rosettes, and white trousers, either cricket-style or overalls, with a two inch wide red stripe down the outside of each leg. They wear black peaked caps with gold trim and a half inch gold button on top, and clogs, either with irons on the soles for outdoor performances or rubbers for dancing indoors. Each dancer carries a sword, approximately thirty-three inches long, comprising a steel blade and wooden handle. The Captain is dressed similarly to the dancers, but his jacket also has braid epaulettes, and he carries a cavalry sabre and wears a fox fur hat. The musician does not wear a cap and may wear black shoes rather than clogs.

There are two sets of jackets in use: one is heavily lined, or "winter weight", and dates from 1952 (Illus. 4.01), and the other set is summer weight and was made for the occasion of the teams' appearance at the Sidmouth International Folk Festival in August 1985 (Illus. 4.02). New caps were also made at that time. The 1985 jackets are a lighter shade of red, appearing almost pink at a distance. The braiding, which runs in two rows from the front hem, up the torso, over the shoulders, and down the back, and in a horseshoe shape on the outside of the lower arm, is straighter on the 1985 jackets than on earlier ones, and the rosettes are fewer (Illus. 4.03).

In reviewing the available visual and written records of the Grenoside costume from the 1880s onward, there are some noticeable differences. While the white trousers with red stripe and the clogs appear consistently, caps have not always been worn, and the style of the jackets varies considerably.

Two photographs taken on the same occasion c. 1885 (Illus. 4.04 and 4.05) show each man in a jacket of different paisley or floral print calico fabric with elaborate braiding in various patterns on the front, sleeves, round the neck, and presumably on the back as well. Although the colour of the jackets cannot be ascertained from these photographs, it is likely that the colours of the fabric were as varied as the print. The braiding in particular presents a striking contrast to the style of braiding on the present jackets, which is clearly uniform in its design. The Captain's jacket is a darker colour than the others and has several distinctive rows of braiding banded around the arms. His hat is made of rabbit fur (rather than fox) with the head of the animal at the front and decorated with several bows of ribbon placed apparently haphazardly. The dancers wear dark, perhaps black, pillbox-style hats. The musician, holding a flutina, or "old English accordion", wears a suit and bowler hat.

The next available account of the Grenoside costume appears in *The Pall Mall Gazette* of 8th January, 1895. The dancers are described as wearing jackets:

decked and piped with wild traditional devices in patterns of scarlet.... the captain, with a fantasy of rabbit skin about his head.⁶

The article includes several drawings (Illus. 4.06 and 4.07) which clearly coincide with the 1885 photographs, especially the braiding designs on the Captain's sleeves and the rabbit fur hat. The fabric was most likely linen or cotton, perhaps calico, available to the working classes at the end of the nineteenth century.

In May 1910, Cecil Sharp visited Grenoside and described the sword dancers' costumes as,

close fitting tunics of small pink patterned calico with curious devices -- all different -- made of puckered red and blue braid, covering back and front. Bows and rosettes of same material dotted about. A red or blue -- usually the former -- frill of braid for collar.... The trousers are white overalls with red stripe. Caps of black velvet with peak, and yellow button on top. All wear clogs. Captain similarly dressed except that he wears a rabbit skin hat with head and ears of rabbit over forehead and five rosettes round it.⁷

Unfortunately, Sharp apparently did not take any photographs of the team he saw, as none appear in *Sword Dances of Northern England* nor exist in his collection housed at the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library.

⁶ (H. Cust), "Twelfth Night on the Moors", *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 8 Jan. 1895, p.1, col.3 - p.2, col.1.

⁷ Cecil J. Sharp, MSS, "Folk Dance Notes", (English Folk Dance and Song Society Collection, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, London), vol. 1, folio 193.

The Grenoside team lapsed during World War One, but in the early 1920s one of the old dancers trained a side of boys,⁸ initially as a Scout activity. It was this team which went on to perform at the English Folk Dance Society's first festival held at the Great Hall of the University of London in 1926 (Illus. 4.08). Similar to previous teams in the village, they appear in white trousers with a red stripe down the leg, and black clogs. The significant difference, however, is in the style of the jackets -- short-waist with high collar made of red satin, with four rows of black braiding and frogs across the chest, and eight brass buttons down the front. These hussar jackets, as they are known, are similar to the uniform of the military dragoons of 1825.⁹ The musician is identically clad, rather than dressed in an ordinary suit, as is the Captain with the only exception being that he also wears a rabbitskin hat. While the dancers do not wear caps in the 1926 photograph, soon after their appearance in London, their patrons, Colonel Mackenzie and Lady Mabel Smith of Barnes Hall, who will be discussed further in Chapters Five and Six, presented them with black peaked caps trimmed with yellow piping and a half inch gold button on top.

Meanwhile, the men's side re-formed and began performing again. A photograph taken in the 1935 (Illus. 4.09) shows jackets in a variety of floral and paisley patterned fabrics and each with some decorative braiding but certainly not as elaborate as the jackets in the 1885 photograph and subsequent descriptions. The musician is wearing a suit, and the Captain is distinguished by the rabbitskin hat. Although the dancers are not wearing caps, a photograph taken in 1938 (Illus. 4.10) shows them wearing black peaked caps with presumably yellow or gold trim, similar to those presented to the Scout team in 1926. Since the young team had by this time disbanded, it is not inconceivable that the men's team acquired their caps. Another feature of the costume in the 1930s is that underneath the jackets the men wear shirts with collars and ties. It was also during this period, in 1933, that the team donated their swords to the English Folk Dance and Song Society's museum at Cecil Sharp House in London and were presented with a new set of steel swords, which are still in use today.

With the outbreak of World War Two, the team's activities virtually ceased. However, in the years following the war, the team received the encouragement and support both of local patrons, such as

⁸ This will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

⁹ C.W. Cunnington, P. Cunnington, and Charles Beard, *A Dictionary of English Costume* (London: Black, 1960), p. 111.

the Smiths, and the local and national offices of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. In January 1947 Douglas Kennedy, who was the Director of the Society at the time, came to Sheffield to present a set of swords each to the Grenoside and Handsworth teams. Unfortunately, these swords are bevelled and therefore unable to hold the lock, a key figure in all longsword dances. Shortly after this occasion, the Grenoside team split (see Chapter Six), and the Captain's hat and sword went missing. Colonel Mackenzie Smith provided the Grenoside team with a cavalry sabre and a pith helmet, which he covered with fox fur (Illus. 4.11). Both of these are still in use, although the internal structure of the Captain's hat, which was deteriorating, has recently been replaced.

In 1952 the team appeared in new, tailor-made trousers and jackets, and a set of peaked caps which were made and presented by Lady Mabel Smith (Illus. 4.12). The jackets for the first time are identical with each other, both in fabric and braiding designs, with the exception of the Captain's additional epaulettes. From this point onward, the musician almost always wears, if not a complete uniform, then at least a jacket. The most recent set of jackets and caps was made in 1985, as mentioned above. The team is currently investigating the possibility of having a new set of winter-weight jackets made, but finding suitable, let alone affordable, paisley patterned fabric is proving extremely difficult.

4.3.2 The Dance - Style

"Style" refers to the quality of a movement or series of movements and is composed of two broad components: 1) the characteristic use of the body in terms of posture, use of certain parts of the body, and locomotion, and 2) the dynamics, or relative amounts of energy or effort used to effect the characteristic movements. Dynamics are manifested by variations in tempo, shape and flow, which texture the movement in space and time.¹⁰

The Grenoside dance is most strongly characterised by the manner of locomotion -- a walk, or rather, a steady tramp which is accentuated by the sound of the clogs on the ground. The body posture is generally upright, except when the dancers are required to bend forward at the waist in order to lower swords. The arms are used to make movements with the swords and are most visibly characterised by

¹⁰ These concepts and their usage are drawn from Judith Lynne Hanna, "Ethnic Dance Research Guide: Relevant Data Categories", *Dance Research Journal*, 6:1 (1973), 42-44.

being extended above and below the body. The arms, wrists and hands are also flexed and rotated to effect certain movements, but these appear secondary to the extended movements of the arms. In terms of dynamics, the Grenoside dance is flexible in its use of space. Movement occurs consistently in curves rather than straight lines, and the set routinely opens out into a ring, using the maximum space possible within the obvious parameters determined by the linking of the dancers with the rigid swords. The flow of the movement is controlled and, for the most part, steady, with a quality of deliberateness. However, the movement is textured by the periodic breaks in the flow of movement for the two bar Shuffle Off, the sharpness of the clashing in the Reel, and the extreme fluidity of movement in the Roll.

4.3.3 The Dance - Structure

The set is fixed relative to the dancing space, that is, each dancer returns to the same place at the end of each revolution of each figure. Given this stability, when working in pairs the dancers may be referred to as "couples", as in country dancing, and their positions in the set identified as "top", "middle", or "bottom", so that 1 and 6 are the top couple, 2 and 5 are the middle couple, and 3 and 4 are the bottom couple.

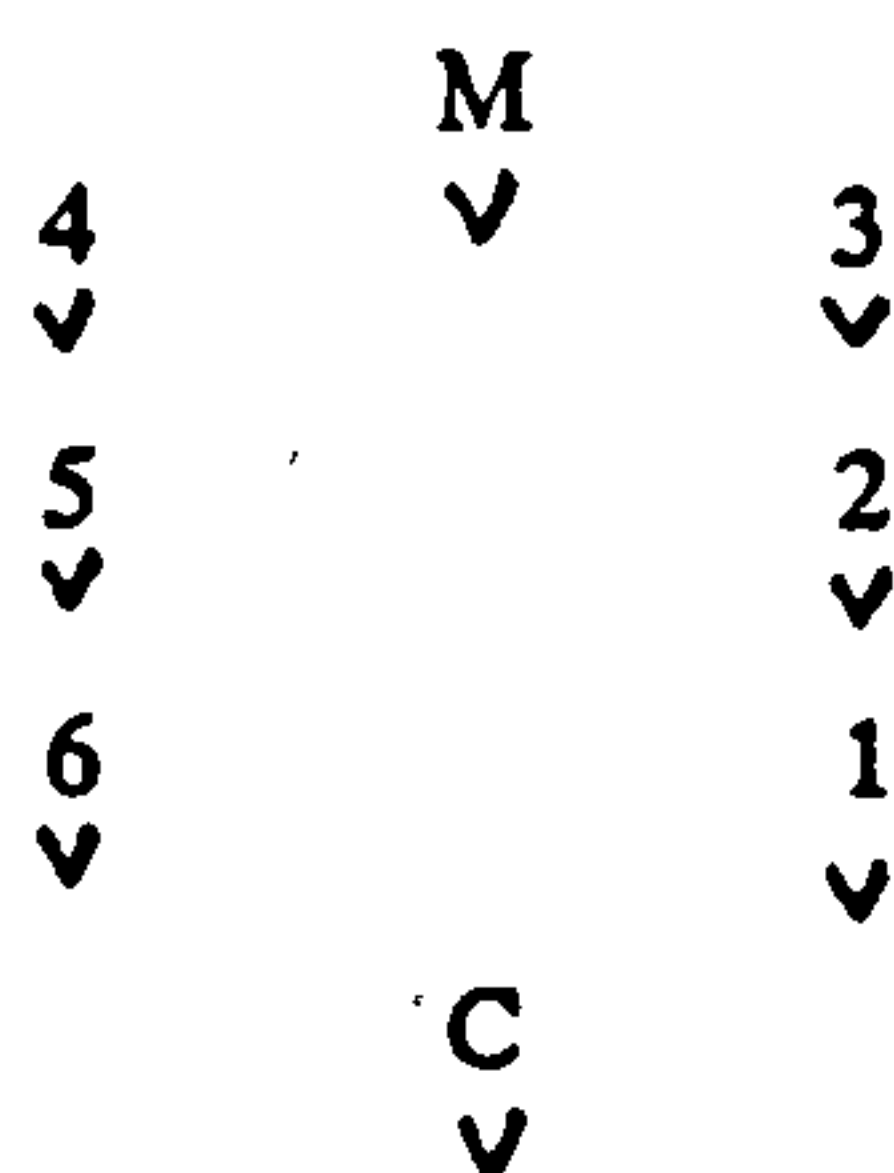
Participants: six dancers, one Captain, one musician.

Performance time: approximately nine minutes.

(1) March On and Captain's Song

(Illus. 4.13)

The performance begins with the participants marching into the performance space; the Captain (C) leads, followed by two columns of three dancers each. The musician (M), in this case a fiddler, usually follows behind, but does not play. (Illus. 4.13)



Each man holds his sword vertically in his right hand, arm bent at a right angle at the elbow. As they approach the dancing space, the Captain slows and stops in the middle of the set while the musician positions himself off to one side. When the set comes to a halt, the dancers turn in to face the middle of the set and lower their swords to their sides. The Captain then sings the following song¹¹ while walking slowly back and forth between the two rows of dancers.

[Note: The first verse is sung to tune 1 and all subsequent verses to tune 2. See Appendix VI]

Oh, ladies and gentlemen,
I'll have you make room,
Contented a while for to be.
It is I and myself that have brought us along,
And my trade you will quickly see.

Whilst in foreign parts we've rambled,
All both proper, stout, and tall.
Though we've passed through many dangers,
And at last I caught a fall.

Wounded by a charming lady,
Her charms I almost dread,
To *die* for her I am quite ready,
And at last I conquered her.

Six stout lads have I a-by me,
Both of honour and renown.
Festive¹² time is drawing nigher,
And since we've come in this town.

Since that we have all come hither,
Fiddler, draw thy strings, advance.
Play beside us, *here* to guide us,
And these lads will show you a dance.

On the word *die* in verse three, the Captain makes a slashing movement with his sword. In the final verse, he gestures to the musician on *fiddler* and moves into the middle of the set. On *play* the dancers link up by raising swords horizontally to waist level enabling the dancer to the right to grasp the point of

¹¹ This set of words is based on the performance of the song by the present captain, Ted Frost. The deputy captain, Gerry Bates, who takes on the leading role when the captain is unable to attend, consistently uses slightly different wordings in two places; "Till" in place of "And" in the last line of verse two, and "we came to this town" in place of "we've come in this town" in verse four.

¹² "Festive" is replaced by "Christmas" when appropriate.

the sword. On *here* they turn slightly to the left, numbers 1, 3, 4, and 6 stepping with the right foot toward the centre of the set to form a ring, ready to move in a clockwise direction. Simultaneously all the swords are placed horizontally over right shoulders. At the end of the Captain's song there is a slight pause where each man thinks (or occasionally whispers) "one", and then the musician begins playing the jig.

(2) Shoulders

Music: "Drops o' Brandy" (9/8, slip jig), Tune 1.

(Illus. 4.14-4.15)

Leading with left feet, the dancers begin moving in a clockwise direction while simultaneously raising swords off right shoulders, overhead and onto left shoulders. Beats two and three of the bar are taken on right and left feet respectively. On beat one of the next bar, the dancers step onto their right feet while simultaneously moving their swords overhead from left to right shoulders (Illus. 4.14). Beats two and three are taken on left and right feet respectively. This motion is repeated off alternate feet for a total of six bars. Meanwhile, the Captain, in the centre of the ring, marks time while turning counter-clockwise in place and moving his sword, held vertically at chest height, in a small arch repeatedly from right to left and back again. On bar seven, each dancer turns to the right in place and repeats the pattern of moving in a counter-clockwise direction for six bars, while the Captain turns in a clockwise direction (Illus. 4.15).

(3) The Lock

Music: Tune 1

(Illus. 4.16-4.18)

As the dancers return to their starting positions, they bring their swords over their heads, lower them to waist level, and turn in to face centre. The Captain kneels down on one knee, lays down his sword and removes his hat. The lock is made around his neck by the dancers crossing their hands, right over left, and securing the point over the hilt of the sword to the right. The Captain raises the lock (Illus. 4.16 and

4.17), marking time and turning counter-clockwise while the dancers circle round him clockwise for six bars. They then turn and circle in the opposite direction (as in Shoulders) back to place. The Captain lowers the lock around his neck, replaces his hat, and picks up his sword. The dancers each grasp a hilt and pull (or "draw") their swords out. The Captain lunges out of the top of the set, between Nos. 6 and 1, and falls to the ground dropping his sword and discards his fur hat by nodding it off (Illus. 4.18).¹³ He will remain on the ground until the tune changes to the hornpipe, unless it is particularly cold or wet.

(4) The Low Clash

Music: Tune 1

(Illus. 4.19-4.20)

As soon as the Captain falls, the dancers begin the clash. With right arms extended downward and slightly in towards the centre of the circle, they clash swords on the beat in pairs -- 1 and 6, 5 and 4, 3 and 2 -- with odd numbers using the edge of their blades against the flat of their partners' swords (Illus. 4.19). The dancers execute this movement while again circling clockwise, turning, and returning counter-clockwise to place. However, there is no specified length of time for the clash. It depends largely on how quickly the Captain falls out of the set and subsequently when the dancers are able to start circling. When the dancers return to place, the musician slows slightly, pauses for about one second while the dancers link up, and begins the hornpipe with a two-bar introduction (bars 7 and 8) to which the dancers "Shuffle Off" (Illus. 4.20).

(5) The Shuffle Off

Music: "Roxbury Castle" (2/4, broken time hornpipe), Tune 2.

The Shuffle Off, or "break", occurs on the last two bars of every eight as each revolution of each figure is completed and the dancers open out into a ring. There are four variations of the stepping, though the

¹³ The Captain does not always fall down. It depends on the weather, the venue, and how he is feeling. The current Deputy Captain occasionally lets out a cry as he falls.

first one is thought to be the most "proper" and is therefore the version taught to new members.

	(1)	<u>Left</u>	<u>Right</u>	(2)	<u>Left</u>	<u>Right</u>
Bar 1:	1	S		S		
	+		t			h
	2		h			t
	+		t			h
	3		S			S
	+	t		h		
	4	h		t		
	+	t		h		
Bar 2:	1	S		S		
	2		t			t
	3		S			S

	(3)	<u>Left</u>	<u>Right</u>	(4)	<u>Left</u>	<u>Right</u>
Bar 1:	1	S		S		
	+		h			t
	2		S			h
	+	h				t
	3	S				S
	+		h	t		
	4		S	h		
	+	h		t		
Bar 2:	1	S		S		
	2		t			h
	3		S			S

As the hornpipe begins, the Captain rises, replaces his hat, picks up his sword and marches round the set, joining in on each Shuffle Off. Throughout the dance he moves around the outside of the set, stopping at each sword in turn and signalling to indicate the particular figure.

(6) Over Your Own Sword

Music: Tune 2

(Illus. 4.21 and Figure 4.02)

The sword that each dancer steps over is actually his left-hand neighbour's rather than his own. The overall effect of this figure is a continuous coil drawn in space by the movement of the swords (see Figure 4.02).

No. 6's sword initiates the movement, as it will in each figure in this hornpipe section of the dance. No. 6 lowers his sword to approximately six inches from ground level while No. 1 steps over it, describing a small counter-clockwise circle. To do this he steps onto his left foot on the first beat, over and onto his right foot on beat two, and raises his right arm overhead to facilitate this turning on the spot (Illus. 4.21). Immediately, he lowers his sword for No. 2 to step over. Each man follows in turn, taking two beats (or one bar) to step over, for a total of six bars, with two bars remaining for the Shuffle Off. The movement is then initiated with No. 1's sword and so on round the set. During this figure, the Captain holds his sword down his right side and moves round counter-clockwise, stopping during the Shuffle Off at the sword which will initiate the next revolution of the figure.

(7) Single Sword Down (or Single Down)

Music: Tune 2

(Illus. 4.22 and Figure 4.03)

The overall effect of this figure is a symmetry of movement in pairs creating mirror-image circles under and over arches (see Figure 4.03). Nos. 6 and 1 swing No. 6's sword between them back slightly, as a gesture to embellish the beginning of the movement. They then swing the sword down as low to the ground as possible while moving slightly forward to meet the approaching dancers. The couple opposite, Nos. 3 and 4, holding their linking sword horizontally at chest height, take three steps to approach the lowered sword and pass over with right feet. Swords are always stepped over with the right foot. No. 5 follows behind No.4, and No. 2 follows behind No. 3, angling the swords which link them to the previous pair to facilitate following closely behind and passing over the lowered sword on beat six. (This angling is a constant feature of the inactive swords as it is difficult to cover the necessary ground if the swords continue to be held horizontally.) Immediately the first pair step over the sword, they raise their linking sword overhead, turn away from each other and pass round the set back to place, moving the raised sword overhead across the set. The second pair step over the sword, turn out and circle back to place as Nos. 6 and 1 raise their linking sword to waist level and move backwards to place in the ring for the Shuffle Off. This movement is then initiated by No. 1's sword and each sword in turn. The Captain

indicates the start of this figure by holding his sword horizontally, one hand on each end, with arms extended comfortably downward (see Illus. 4.22). Again, he moves counter-clockwise to each initiating sword in turn.

(8) Single Sword Up (or Single Up)

(Illus. 4.23 and Figure 4.04)

Music: Tune 2.

No. 6's sword is raised immediately while Nos. 3 and 4 approach it, as in Single Down. Nos. 6 and 1 wait for four beats (until 3 and 4 pass under the sword), and then move forward for two beats with the arch still raised, turn inward, each tracing a complete circle while returning to place. The movements of Nos. 3 and 4, and 5 and 2 are the same as for Single Down, except that they will travel under rather than over No. 6's sword. The figure is repeated by each sword in turn. The Captain indicates the start of this figure by holding his sword horizontally at eye level for the first initiating sword and at chest level for the remainder (see Illus. 4.23).

(9) Double Sword Down (or Double Down)

Music: Tune 2.

(Illus. 4.24)

No. 1, operating as the pivot, brings both hands together and down as Nos. 2 and 6 simultaneously approach each other, No. 6 bringing his sword down to meet No. 1's. As No. 6 must step over the two swords on the second beat of the first bar, he begins to move toward No. 2 on the last beat of the Shuffle Off. Having stepped over the two swords on beat two, No. 6 turns left around No. 2, keeping his sword lowered next to No. 1's. The two swords are moved slowly toward the approaching dancers as Nos. 5, 4, 3, and 2 each step over them. As soon as No. 2 steps over, Nos. 6 and 1 rise up to standing positions, No. 1 turning to his left to disentangle himself, and Nos. 2 and 6 backing into place. The movement is then initiated by No. 2 operating on the pivot, and so on round the set. The Captain indicates this figure

by holding his sword down along his right side.

(10) Double Sword Up (or Double Up)

Music: Tune 2.

(Illus. 4.25)

Double Up is exactly the same as Double Down with two exceptions: 1) the swords are raised rather than lowered, and 2) the pivot dancer is able to gradually turn clockwise on the spot while the other dancers pass under the swords, rather than turning all at once after the last man has passed under the swords. The Captain indicates the beginning of this figure by holding his sword vertically, as when marching on. On the final Shuffle Off for this figure, the dancers back into two lines of three, as at the beginning. At the conclusion of the Shuffle Off, the music ends, and each dancer releases the point of his neighbour's sword and lowers his own to his side.

(11) Captain's Verse and Tantiro

(Illus. 4.26)

Standing at one end of the set, the Captain then sings (to song tune B):

Since that we have all come hither,
And so sweetly I do sing,
Now, my lads, you'll take to singing,
When you hear these swords to ring.

During the last line the Captain raises his sword and gradually lowers it, down the centre of the set, to waist level. The dancers simultaneously sweep their swords upward and toward the centre to meet the Captain's sword on "ring" (Illus. 4.26), and the musician plays a short note to pitch the following verse which the dancers then sing in unison:

Tantiro, tantiro, the drums they do beat,
The trumpets they do sound upon cail.
Methinks music's here,
Some bold captain's near,
March on ye brave soldiers away.

(12) The Reel

Music: "The Wonder Hornpipe" (2/4), Tune 3.

(Illus. 4.27-4.28)

The musician plays a short note (approximately one full second) while each dancer raises his sword vertically, as when marching on. However, as the sword is raised each dancer briefly loosens his grip to let about one third of the blade slide through his hand. This hold prevents excessive vibration of the sword, which can cause discomfort to the dancers and detract from the crisp sound desired during the clashing which follows. While raising the swords, Nos. 2 and 3 turn to face each other, as do Nos. 4 and 5, along the sides of the set, while Nos. 1 and 6 remain in position to face each other, as follows:



What follows is essentially what is called a Grand Chain in country dancing. Each dancer passes the first dancer he meets by moving around him to the left, and passes the next dancer by moving around him to the right, producing an overall weaving effect. The chain begins with a clash and a simultaneous step with the left foot, bringing the set into a hexagonal shape which is retained for the duration of the figure (Illus. 4.27 and 4.28). A clash occurs at the beginning of bars one, three, and five. On returning to place at the end of bar six, the dancers Shuffle Off. However, because this is a dotted rhythm (see Appendix VI, Grenoside Dance Tune 3), the stepping necessarily has a slightly different emphasis. This pattern is then repeated a further three times. The Captain meanwhile circles the set counter-clockwise twice. At the end of the fourth round, the dancers return to two lines of three, and during the Shuffle Off, link up in pairs with their opposites by lowering their swords horizontally to waist level and grasping the point of their partner's sword.

(13) The Roll

Music: "Smash the Windows" (4/4), Tune 4.

(Illus. 4.29-4.30 and Figure 4.05)

Linked in pairs, the top couple, Nos. 1 and 6, move down the set by raising and passing their swords over

the heads of the middle couple, Nos. 2 and 5, who travel to the top of the set. Nos. 1 and 6 continue down the set by passing under the raised swords of the bottom couple, who are making their way up the set. When a pair reaches either end, they raise their swords overhead while turning away from each other on the spot to face the rest of the set. Each couple continues moving up or down the set until returning to place at the end of eight bars (see Figure 4.05 and Illus. 4.29 and 4.30). This movement is then repeated once more at the same tempo and twice more with the pace gradually increasing. During this figure the Captain continues circling the set. As the dancers complete the final roll, they release their partners' swords and form a close circle, facing inward, for the final stepping.

(14) The Finish

Music: Tune 4.

(Illus. 4.31-4.32)

Each dancer places his left hand on the shoulder of his left-hand neighbour while holding his own sword vertically, point upwards, at shoulder level (Illus. 4.31). Starting with weight on the left foot, they step for four bars (sixteen beats), performing a sequence of double and single shuffles, as follows:

		<u>Left</u>	<u>Right</u>
Bars 1-3: (repeat twice)	1	S	
	+		h
	a		t
	2	S	
	+		h
	a		t
	3		S
	+	h	
	a	t	
	4		S
	+	h	
	a	t	
Bar 4:	1	S	
	+		h
	a		t
	2		S
	+	h	
	a	t	
	3	S	
	4		h (Heel planted firmly on floor in centre of ring with toe pointing upward)

The Captain joins in on the stepping while moving to the bottom of the set. As the right foot is planted in the centre on the final beat of music, the swords, including the Captain's, are thrust upward, with arms fully extended, to finish (Illus. 4.32).

After pausing for a moment in this position, the dancers lower their swords to their sides and back out of the ring, once again forming two lines of three. The Captain then walks up and then down the middle of the set acknowledging the applause at each end, and leads the dancers off in the same manner as the entrance.

4.4 Grenoside: Changes in the Dance

4.4.1 Sources

When compared with other traditional dance teams, such as Handsworth, the Grenoside Sword Dance has been well recorded, both in written and visual forms, since the end of the nineteenth century. The following sources, supplemented with the recollections of certain participants, have proved invaluable in analysing the changes which have occurred in the style and structure of the dance between 1895 and 1988:

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1895 | "Twelfth Night on the Moors",
<i>The Pall Mall Gazette</i> , January 8th. |
| 1910 | Cecil Sharp's fieldnotes and <i>The Sword Dances of Northern England</i> , Part 1, published in 1911. |
| 1927 | Cine film taken at Buxton, Derbyshire by the English Folk Dance Society. |
| 1938 | Cine film taken by R.K. Schofield on behalf of the English Folk Dance and Song Society.

Written notation by R.K. Schofield.

Letters from Lewis Wroe, Grenoside dancer and musician, to R.K. Schofield. |
| 1943 | Letters from Lewis Wroe to the English Folk Dance and Song Society. |
| 1948 | Letter from Douglas Kennedy, then Director of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, to the Grenoside team. |
| 1949 | Written notation by Kathleen Mitchell. |

- 1950 Cine film taken by May Cassie.
- 1960s Several short cine film clips taken by Jean Massey.
- 1970 CECTAL audio recordings [A5-70, A6-70, A7-70, A12-70, A13-70, A14-70, A15-70, A27-70, A28-70, A29-70, A30-70, A31-70, A32-70, A-68-70, A27-73, A28-73, A29-73, A30-73].
- 1970-74 Cine film taken by Dick Shepherd, retired Grenoside dancer.
- 1972 *Roy Dommett's Morris Notes*, Vol. 4: Sword Dances, pp 4-5.
- 1976 Cine film and notes taken by A.G. Barrand.
- 1978 Cine film taken by the Morris Ring Archives.
- 1979 Cine film and notes taken by A.G. Barrand.
- 1985 Written notation by Christopher Walker.

It is important to note that Cecil Sharp's two primary documents, the typed and bound fieldnotes and *The Sword Dances of Northern England*, occasionally contradict each other in the reporting of certain descriptive details. One well-known example of Sharp's misinterpretation is his description of the Double Sword figure of the Kirkby Malzeard sword dance.¹³ Douglas Kennedy notes in 1927¹⁴ that Sharp's description does not coincide with what the traditional team was then doing, and speculates as to whether or not the figure had ever been danced as Sharp describes. In an article some twenty years later,¹⁵ Kennedy produces documentary evidence, predating Sharp's visit to Kirkby Malzeard by four years, which confirms that the figure was performed the same in the early years of the century as it was when Kennedy was observing and writing in 1927. Nevertheless, despite the occasional mistakes, alterations and contradictions, Cecil Sharp's notations are important and useful documents¹⁶ Therefore, on the basis of

¹³ Sharp (1911-13), Part I, pp. 48-49.

¹⁴ Douglas N. Kennedy, "Sword Dance Variants", *The English Folk Dance Society News*, (1927), 48-51.

¹⁵ Douglas N. Kennedy, "Fresh Light on the Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dance" *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 5:2 (1947), 68-71.

¹⁶ For further examples of Cecil Sharp's alterations of dance steps and figures, see Dommett (1986). Further examples appear in Roy Dommett, "Extensions of the Traditional Repertoire and Newly Conceived Traditions", *Lore and Language*, 6:2 (July 1987), 33-64, Gordon Ashman, "With One Bound They Were Free... From the Cotswolds to the Welsh Border in One Stride", *Lore and Language*, 6:2 (July 1987), 105-116, and A.D. Townsend, "Cecil James SHarp as Collector and Editor of Traditional Dance", *Traditional Dance*, 5/6 (1988), 53-76. For a discussion of Sharp's treatment of song materials, see Dave Harker, "May

the Kirkby Malzeard case where a discrepancy does occur, the version which coincides with other accounts will generally be favoured.

4.4.2 Changes in Style

Upon reviewing the available evidence, the most striking differences in the style of the dance can be seen in the manner of locomotion and stepping. Rather than a steady tramp, the earliest film, taken in 1927, reveals a jaunty walk. Similarly, in this film the stepping is executed with more flair, encompassing hops, as well as steps and taps, and involving a more active use of the legs in executing the movement. There are also quite distinctive variations in the stepping between individuals to an extent which no longer exist. Although the characteristic use of the body in terms of posture and limbs is much the same as today, the movements in the 1927 and 1938 films are generally less bound or impeded. However, by the 1950s, the jaunty walk and the distinct variations in the Shuffle Off give way to a much more deliberate, even and uniform style of moving and stepping. This style persists through the late 1970s and remains the aim of the present team. One particular factor influencing these stylistic qualities is tempo, which has gradually increased. For example, with the exception of the jig (Tune 1), Cecil Sharp records the dance tune tempos at rates substantially below recordings made in the 1970s and 1980s.

	<u>Cecil Sharp - 1911¹⁷</u>	<u>1970 - 1988</u>
Tune 1	= 132	= 124
Tune 2	= 96	= 108 - 116
Tune 3	= 84	= 96 - 104
Tune 4	= 76 --> 108	= 120 --> 200

Although the increase in tempo should be seen as contributing to the perceived stylistic changes, certain contextual factors, which will be discussed in Chapter Seven, are also significant.

Some very slight stylistic variations have also occurred in the text and tune of the Captain's Song, shaped

Cecil Sharp be praised?" *History Workshop*, 14 (1982), 44-62.

¹⁷ See Cecil J. Sharp, *Sword Dance Tunes, Book I* (London: Novello and Company, Ltd., 1911), pp. 6-13.

by such factors as process of transmission, both between performers and between performer and recorder, the performance context, and, to a certain extent, personal choice.

Changes in Structure

(1) March On and Captain's Song.

It is worth noting that the musician, if playing a melodeon, concertina, flutina or similar instrument, used to play an accompaniment to the Captain's Song in the 1920s and 1930s and possibly prior to that time.¹⁸

A fiddle is not considered to be a suitable instrument for accompanying the song, and the Captain's song has, therefore, been unaccompanied since 1947.¹⁹

Concerning the March On, there is no evidence before the late 1940s to indicate that the team would routinely march into the performance space. Reg Ward remembers the team dancing in the village just before World War Two, and recalls that the dancers simply formed two lines of three when the Captain, or "the old fool" as he was then known, was ready to begin his song.²⁰ George Hoyland, who played for the team from 1926 until about 1936, remembers that the formality of their entrance would depend upon the venue, and for prestigious occasions the team would march on in a similar fashion as they do today.²¹

¹⁸ The three musicians during that period confirm this. See CA4-104, and commercially available cassette, *Grenoside Musicians*, FSC-60-212, recorded by Peter Kennedy at Wortley, near Sheffield, South Yorkshire, on 20 August 1959.

¹⁹ CA4-104, CMS-19/B-23.00, CMS-21/A-17.30 and CMS-30/A-39.00.

²⁰ The older members, including Reg Ward, Fred Myers, and George Hoyland, recall the use of the phrase "the old fool" to refer to the captain. The phrase was not meant to be facetious, as George Hoyland explains (CMS-86/A - 08.45):

GH- They call him "the captain" now because they, they felt that "the old fool" was a derogatory sense.

CS- Was it meant that way in your day [1920s/30s]? Was it meant to be derogatory, or not?

GH- No, no, it wasn't!

²¹ CA4-98.

(2) Shoulders

The earliest written description of this figure is provided by Cecil Sharp. As mentioned above, occasional discrepancies between the two primary documents exist. In his fieldnotes, Sharp records that the swords are initially taken onto right shoulders, as they are today. However, in his published version he states that "each man places his sword horizontally over his left shoulder".²² The 1927 film, though, reveals that the swords are initially placed over right shoulders, which is confirmed by all subsequent accounts; therefore, it is more likely that either a mistake was made in the copy, or Sharp intentionally altered the instruction for publication. A more striking feature of this figure recorded in the early written notations and in the 1927 film is the inclusion of several bars of stepping which occur after the set circles clockwise and before returning counterclockwise to place. Sharp records that the dancers circle for eight bars, and then step for eight bars. The 1927 film shows the dancers circling for six bars and stepping for two bars, for a total of eight bars, before reversing direction. The stepping appears in this figure in some form until the team reformed after World War Two.

(3) The Lock

Several significant developments have occurred in the activities of the Captain during this figure. The article in *The Pall Mall Gazette* (1895) states that the dancers

broke out an admirable double-shuffle in faultless time and tact, springing to a quick-step march with waving swords [Shoulders] wherein on a moment, turning on the common centre of their captain, the swords were locked together as you may have seen table-knives, and necklaced about the leader's neck. Another quick high-stepped dance around him, and the first movement was over.²³

There is no mention of the Captain falling, or even of his fur hat coming off. This is not to imply that neither of these actions took place. However, such drama and its associated imagery would most likely have been reported by this particular observer who reveals his fascination with the search for origins:

And where and when were the wild rites born? Was it art, was it religion, was

²² Sharp, 1911, p. 58.

²³ (H. Cust), 1895, p. 2, col. 1.

it the mystery of Christ or the cultus of Pan that breathed the earliest inspiration?²⁴

The suspicion that neither the Captain nor his hat fall to the ground is supported by Cecil Sharp's accounts some fifteen years later:

On the last beat of the final bar of music, each man suddenly, and with great vigour, draws his own sword from the Lock; the captain slips out of the ring, the tune changes, the dancers quickly link themselves together with their swords...²⁵

There is no further mention of the Captain or his hat in this figure. However, in the introduction to that volume, Sharp discusses the implications of the drawing of swords from around the Captain's neck:

We have the captain with the swords interlaced about his neck, kneeling down in the midst of the ring. The dancers solemnly march or dance round him. At the climax of the figure they simultaneously and vigorously draw their swords across his neck; there is a grinding clash of steel, and the Lock is disentangled. *So realistic is the scene in actual performance, that when I first saw it I should not have been surprised if the Captain's head had toppled from his shoulders and rolled to the floor!* [my emphasis]

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 the victim in an old nature-rite.²⁶

Although Sharp's interpretation of the drawing of the Lock leaves one speculating as to whether or not the Captain's hat, as the focus of the "mock sacrifice", topples to the ground, the confirmation of such an action is clearly missing.

In the 1927 film, we see the Captain kneel down and remove his hat while the Lock is made around his neck. He rises and displays the Lock, and then lowers it round his neck while returning to a kneeling position. Unfortunately, at this moment the camera is turned slightly to one side, and while two of the dancers are visible, we cannot see what the Captain does when the swords are drawn. When the camera is righted, during the following figure, the Captain, with hat on head, is standing off to one side where he presides over the dance.

While the Lock figure is missing from the 1938 film, R. K. Schofield's account from the same year states that

The dancers grasp their swords @ [sic] "draw"... The captain slip [sic] out of the ring @ as he does so one of the dancers knocks his hat off. They at once link up hilt and

²⁴ Ibid., p. 2, col. 2.

²⁵ Sharp, 1911, p. 59.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 28-29.

point ready for the next figure.²⁷

This feature is also confirmed in Lew Wroe's 1943 account:

Captain again kneels the dancers having formed into position again all ready together draw their swords at the same time. No 2 with a slight lift of his sword knocks off the captains hat. Captain gets up picking his hat and sword up nips out between Nos 1 @ 6 and dancers there while they perform dance.²⁸

These accounts of the Captain's hat coming off are further confirmed by Fred Myers, who joined the team in 1936,²⁹ and Ted Frost, who first learned the dance in 1938.³⁰

The first account of the Captain falling as his hat is knocked off is in Kathleen Mitchell's 1949 notation. According to Fred Myers, Ted Frost, and Reg Ward,³¹ Leonard Brookes, who became Captain in 1947,³² introduced the falling "to make a bit of drama out of it".³³ This feature is further embellished by the present deputy Captain who, as mentioned above, occasionally lets out a cry as he falls.

(4) The Low Clash

This figure is not mentioned in the 1895 article, nor in Cecil Sharp's accounts. In his fieldnotes, Sharp writes:

each dancer lays hold of the hilt of his own sword and rapidly draws it out from the lock. The captain slips out of the circle, the dancers form ring in usual way and the regular dance begins with Dance over your own Sword.³⁴

However, the 1927 film shows the dancers clashing, though in a different manner than today. Rather than clashing in pairs, all the swords are brought together into a "basket", a cone shape formed by all the

²⁷ R.K. Schofield, MSS, "Grenoside", 1938, p. 3.

²⁸ Lewis Wroe, MSS, 1943, p. 2. This quotation is reproduced as written.

²⁹ CA2-143.

³⁰ CMS-21/B - 01.30.

³¹ See CA2-143, CMS-21/B - 02.50, and CMS-30/A - 40.35 respectively.

³² Leonard Brookes was also the captain of the Scout team in the late 1920s, but his movements during the dance at that time cannot be confirmed.

³³ CMS-21/B - 02.50.

³⁴ Sharp, "Folk Dance Notes," Vol. 1, folio 194-195.

swords meeting at a particular point in the centre of the set.³⁵

Although Schofield does not mention the clash in his 1938 notation, Lew Wroe explains that the dancers

march round as before... repeat movement over again clashing all swords as they go round, then join up by taking hold of each others [sic] sword.³⁶

As with the Captain's falling, the clashing in pairs is first recorded in Kathleen Mitchell's 1949 notation.

(5) The Shuffle Off

Details of stepping do not appear in Cecil Sharp's fieldnotes, although they do appear in *The Sword Dances of Northern England*. He writes that the stepping,

was not executed in the same way by all the dancers; but most of them danced a step which they adapted to the different measures [of music]...³⁷

He describes the stepping as double-shuffles, where a shuffle refers to

a glancing stroke (something between a scrape and a tap), forwards and backwards, of the toe or ball of the foot [while the other foot is used] to support the weight of the body.³⁸

As described by Sharp, the stepping is very similar to the style used in rapper sword dancing and, when describing the stepping for the Swalwell rapper dance, Sharp states that the dancers "'step' as in the Grenoside dance".³⁹

The 1927 film shows a great variety of stepping, though the most common appears to be the sequence which, as mentioned above (pp. 11-12), the present team teach to new members. However, at least four other sequences can be identified.

³⁵ There are two sorts of baskets used in longsword dancing --- "low" where the swords meet at or below knee level, and "high" where the swords meet over the heads of the dancers.

³⁶ Lewis Wroe, MSS, 1938, p. 2.

³⁷ Sharp, 1911, pp. 55-56.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 56.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 73.

1.	<u>Left</u>	<u>Right</u>	2.	<u>Left</u>	<u>Right</u>
	1	S		S	
	+				t
	2				h
	+	h			S
	3	S		t	
	+			h	
	4			S	
	+	h			t
	1	S			S
	2			S	
	3				S
3.	<u>Left</u>	<u>Right</u>	4.	<u>Left</u>	<u>Right</u>
	1	S		S	
	+				t
	2				h
	+	H		H	
	3				t
	+	t			h
	4				S
	+			t	
	1	S		h	
	2			S	
	3				S

With such a variety of steps involving an extensive use of heel beats recorded only seventeen years after Sharp's visits, and with several of the same dancers, it is not inconceivable to suggest that Sharp might have simplified the stepping for the sake of publication. Bearing in mind that he travelled to Grenoside to notate the dance and the tunes on only two occasions,⁴⁰ and without the aid of any mechanical recording devices, it is equally possible that he was not able to give the attention required to fully comprehend and describe such footwork.

The 1938 film also reveals a wide variety of steps. One dancer, who was reputed for his expertise,⁴¹ executes several sequences of steps during the two-bar Shuffle Off. Such stepping skill appears to reach its peak in the 1930s, and is fundamental to "Ring o' Roses", a figure performed after the complete dance which will be discussed later in this section.

After World War Two, while still retaining variations, the stepping tends to become more

⁴⁰ Sharp visited Grenoside on May 13th and August 27th, 1910.

⁴¹ CMS-10/B - 26.50, CMS-86/B - 22.45.

uniform, with new members generally learning one particular sequence of steps. Subsequent variations are influenced by individual ability and preference.

(6) Over Your Own Sword

On the basis of the available information, the structure of this figure appears not to have changed. However, the role of the Captain in this figure, and throughout the remainder of the dance, has developed significantly.

According to Sharp, the Captain's role is limited to singing the song at the beginning and the verse before "Tantiro", and to raising and displaying the Lock. The 1927 film shows that after slipping out of the set, the Captain stands at the top of the set, near the musician, marking time and joining in on the stepping. In the 1938 film the Captain advances and retires down the middle of the set during the stepping in the Reel and the Roll, and also takes part in "Ring o' Roses" (see below). The Captain's falling after the Lock is drawn has developed since World War Two, as described above. During this period the Captain also started moving around the outside of the set, and Ted Frost, who became Captain in 1963, developed the present system of signals for indicating the different figures.⁴²

(7) Single Down

Sharp's description of this figure contains three variants: 1) No.1's sword, rather than No.6's, initiates the movement, 2) the person holding the point of the lowered sword also steps over the sword, rather than simply backing out into place, and 3) the dancers step over the sword singly rather than in pairs.

The first variant, concerning the initiating sword, is likely to be a mistake on Sharp's part. He states that the previous figure is initiated with the activity of No.6's sword, and the 1927 film and 1938 film and notations confirm the present execution of the figure, initiated with No.6's sword. The nature of the figure itself, two symmetric circles revolving over the lowered sword, is also conducive to being initiated from the top of the set by No.6's sword.

The second difference, that of the dancer holding the point of the lowered sword stepping over the sword, is also possibly a mistake, or even an alteration, on Sharp's part, based on what he thought

⁴² CMS-21/A - 36.00 and CMS-20/A - 04.20.

ought to be done. The Kirkby Malzeard sword dance was the first one that Sharp saw and notated; Grenoside was the second. As the Grenoside "Single Down" figure is the same as the Kirkby Malzeard "Double Over", with the exception of the activity of the dancer holding the point of the lowered sword, it is possible that Sharp observed the Grenoside dancers performing the figure without the point person passing over the sword. Based on his observations at Kirkby Malzeard, he may have surmised that the Grenoside figure had simply lost this feature over time, and described what he thought ought to be danced. Certainly, there are other instances where Sharp describes what he thinks ought to be danced.⁴³ However, as there is no evidence to refute Sharp's description, it remains a matter for speculation. Be that as it may, the 1927 film and all subsequent materials reveal that neither dancer holding the lowered sword steps over it.

The third point, the dancers stepping over singly rather than in pairs, has a more complete and interesting record of development. While the dancers follow the same paths as described in Figure 4.03, defining two symmetric circles stepping over the lowered sword, Sharp states that the dancers step over the sword individually. His description is confirmed by the 1927 and 1938 films. Schofield's notation, however, implies that the dancers work in pairs, stating that the first two should step over the sword "abreast".⁴⁴ Lew Wroe also writes that the pair should "try to go over [the sword] together",⁴⁵ though it is not always achieved. Certainly, this movement of dancers in pairs is well established by the late 1940s and has remained a feature ever since.

(8) Single Up

This figure has experienced the same changes with regard to the dancers working in pairs.

(9) Double Down and (10) Double Up

There have been no perceivable structural changes in either of these figures based on the available

⁴³ For example, in his description of the Handsworth "Double Up" figure, Sharp states that its "method of execution is probably a corruption due to forgetfulness." He then goes on to describe the figure as it "should be performed." See Cecil (1911-13), Part III, pp. 41-42.

⁴⁴ Schofield, MSS, p.4.

⁴⁵ Lewis Wroe, MSS, 1938, p.3.

information.

(11) Captain's verse and Tantiro

As mentioned above, the Captain's singing was accompanied until after World War Two. However,⁴⁷ "Tantiro" continued to be accompanied by the musician until the early 1980s.

(12) The Reel

There are several minor inconsistencies between Sharp's two accounts of this figure, such as the number of times the movement is repeated. Both accounts, however, include eight bars of stepping before repeating the grand chain, or "reel". Unfortunately, the 1927 film ends after "Double Up" so is unable to shed any light on the development of the rest of the dance. Although the 1938 film only shows part of the figure, it clearly includes a section where the dancers return into two lines, facing each other, step for eight bars, and then begin the reel again. Schofield explains that they dance the reel twice (sixteen bars), step for eight bars, reel twice more, and step for eight bars, using a total of forty eight bars of music.⁴⁶ This sequence is confirmed by Lew Wroe and Reg Ward.⁴⁷ The stepping does not appear in Kathleen Mitchell's 1949 notation, and oral accounts confirm that it has not been done since at least 1947.⁴⁸

(13) The Roll and (14) The Finish.

Similar to the Reel, the Roll is described by Sharp and confirmed by all available documents until after World War Two as including eight bars of stepping before repeating the roll twice at a gradually increasing tempo. Stepping occurs after this repetition, as is the case today, during which the dancers close into the centre of the ring to finish. Again, the stepping is missing from Mitchell's 1949 notation, which records that after repeating the roll in ordinary time, the dancers then immediately repeat it twice more while increasing the tempo.

⁴⁶ Schofield, MSS, p. 6.

⁴⁷ Lewis Wroe, MSS, p. 5 and CMS-10/B - 26.50, respectively.

⁴⁸ CMS-05/A - 11.20 and CMS-10/B - 27.30.

(15) Ring o' Roses.

Cecil Sharp makes no mention of this figure, either in his fieldnotes or in his publication. The 1938 film and the notations by Schofield and Wroe, however, include this figure, which is performed without swords. Having set the swords aside, each man in turn goes into the middle of the ring, starting with the Captain, or the best step dancer, and dances a series of steps. The other dancers then join hands in a ring and move round to the left, and then to the right, back to place. To finish, they all step together.

Reg Ward, who danced with the Scout team in the 1920s and early 1930s, recalls dancing "Ring o' Roses", but

in a line, not in a ring.... so that you could clearly see the man and what he was doing, as well as hear him.⁴⁹

Mitchell does not mention "Ring o' Roses", and three men from the re-formed 1947 team confirm that it has not been danced since World War Two.⁵⁰

4.4.4 Summary of Changes in the Grenoside Dance

On the basis of the foregoing descriptive reconstruction, it can be seen that the Grenoside sword dance has experienced several significant structural and stylistic changes during the course of this century. Stylistically, the dance has become more uniform, the jaunty and frequently embellished style of moving and stepping giving way, in the 1950s, to concerted movements and a deliberate, steady tramp. Although variations in the stepping persist, they are fewer and less distinct, tending to be slight variations on the same general form.

The most obvious structural change in the dance is the omission of several sequences of stepping in Shoulders, the Reel, and the Roll, as well as Ring o' Roses. In contrast to these postwar losses, however, is the development of the role of the Captain during this period and further in the 1960s. A final structural development is the movement of the dancers over and under the swords in Single Down and Single Up in pairs rather than singly. The causes of these stylistic and structural changes will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

⁴⁹ CMS-05/A - 02.15.

⁵⁰ CMS-08/A - 22.45, CMS-10/B - 28.40 and CMS-21/A - 29.00.

4.5 Handsworth

4.5.1 Costumes

The present team wear high-collared hussar style jackets of black velvet with maroon velvet waistband and cuffs. The waistband comes to a slight point at the back, and the cuffs form a peak on the outside of the sleeves. There is white trim around the collar, waistband, and cuffs, and seven pairs of white braid strips across the chest, tapering in length from shoulder to waist (Illus. 4.33 - 4.35). They are secured at the front with nine brass buttons. The hats are made of maroon velvet and are similar in style to glengarry bonnets. They are decorated with two pom-poms, one red and one white, at the front and a red, white and blue rosette with ribbons at the back. The Captain is distinguished by an identical rosette pinned to his jacket above his left breast. This set of jackets and hats was made in 1974. Each man provides his own white trousers and black boots, and the costume is completed with black leather gaiters. The swords are made of stainless steel and date from 1963. The musicians normally appear in full uniform (Illus. 4.36). Even though the Handsworth uniform has not experienced the degree of variation that the Grenoside costume has, several differences are apparent in reviewing the available visual and written records from the 1890s onward. As with Grenoside, the trousers and footwear remain constant, although photographs taken by Cecil Sharp c. 1912 reveal that some dancers wore high-top boots to the same effect as ordinary boots worn with gaiters.

The 1891 photographs (Illus. 4.37 and 4.38) reveal slight variations between jackets, especially noticeable in the braiding across the chest, where some strips are angled toward the middle while others are rather more straight across. Half of the jackets have six pairs of braids, while the other half have seven, indicating perhaps that the jackets were made by different people and/or were acquired at different times. The style of the collars also varies somewhat; none are as high as at present, and several come to more of a V-shaped neck. Some men wear cravats underneath, though nothing is visible under the higher collars. The cuffs are straight bands of fabric around the wrist. The hats are a pillbox type -- round and flat on top. They appear to be decorated with two large rectangular-shaped pieces of natural sheep's wool on top, near the front, and ribbons appear to hang down the back. The Captain wears a rosette with ribbons over his left breast. The 1891 photographs also include two musicians, both holding concertinas and wearing ordinary clothing, and two clowns, in one piece overalls of various fabrics and lavishly

decorated hats.

By 1909/1910 (Illus. 4.39) the braiding across the chest has become more uniform, each jacket having seven pairs of white braid strips down the front. The style of the collars is also more regular, slight V-shaped necks which expose a variety of cravats and one shirt and tie. The hats are similar to those shown in the 1891 photographs, though appear to be decorated with feathers.⁵¹ One man wearing a suit and cap holds a concertina, and there are two clowns.

In 1913, Cecil Sharp made two visits to Handsworth, and in addition to compiling a written description of the dance, he also took a series of photographs, several of which appear in *The Sword Dances of Northern England*. The jackets and hats appear to be the same as in 1910, although these photographs of the dancers in action reveal three aspects of costume which would otherwise go unnoticed: 1) the jackets gently taper to a point in front and in the back, 2) the trousers come above the waist and cummerbunds are worn, and 3) each hat has a small rosette with ribbons pinned at the back. Sharp describes the tunic as black velvet with dark crimson cuffs, and the hat as

a crimson velvet skull-cap, shaped like a glengarry bonnet, with six coloured ribbons attached to the back, and two large pads of white and blue crocheted wool stitched to the front.⁵²

While the origins of these costumes are unknown, a letter dated 26 January 1913 from Sharp to J.H. Siddall, the Handsworth Captain at that time, suggests that the jackets were purchased, perhaps ex-army surplus, and that the hats were made individually. Sharp explains,

I am writing to the Imperial Clothing Company about the dress, but I am wondering if any of you people could get one of your womenkind to make me a cap.⁵³

The hussar-style of jacket dates back to the early nineteenth century and was worn by the Light and Heavy Dragoons. With the rise of Chartist activity in the 1830s and 1840s, dragoons and yeomanry became more commonplace.⁵⁴ By the late Victorian period such military dress was in widespread use by various

⁵¹ This is confirmed by Bill Siddall who recalls that the hats at this time had feathers on them. Tape-recorded interview, 29 November, 1978, A-12.25, Handsworth Archive.

⁵² Sharp, 1913, p. 37.

⁵³ Cecil J. Sharp, letter to J.H. Siddall, 26 January 1913, Handsworth Archive.

⁵⁴ LeTall reports the presence of the Heavy Dragoons in the Handsworth area during the colliery disturbances of 1893. See William James LeTall, *Doings in Handsworth Woodhouse, and in Handsworth Parish, 1876 to 1899, & c.* (York: William Sessions, Printer, &c., n.d.), p. 20.

community groups, such as dance troupes and brass bands.⁵⁵

In 1925 the team, due to age, disbanded and a side of young men began performing the dance and inherited the costumes of the older men. Illustration 4.40 shows six of the eight dancers wearing white shirts and black ties rather than cravats, and this feature becomes standard in later years. The musician, with concertina, wears a suit and cap, and a clown appears in multicoloured trousers, waistcoat and jacket, and a straw boater. After this time, however, clowns do not appear in any documents or photographs until their revival in the mid-1970s. The jackets and caps used by this team are worn throughout the 1920s and 30s, and by the team which re-formed after World War Two.

A new set of jackets and caps (Illus. 4.41) was made in 1966 for the occasion of their appearance at the Albert Hall in London, and the musician appears in uniform for the first time. These jackets were modelled on the previous set, though the waistline is less pointed at the front, and the neck opening is slightly larger. White shirts with collars and black ties are worn underneath. The hats are similar to the previous set, though the two pieces of wool, one white and the other a shade of pink, are smaller, and there is a small red, white, and blue rosette at the front, as well as at the back with ribbons.

The most recent set of jackets and caps, as mentioned above, was made in 1974, and they differ in several respects from their predecessors. The high collar, fastened at the throat, is a marked contrast to the V-neck style. White shirts with collars and ties are therefore no longer necessary. The cuffs, previously simply bands around the wrists, define a striking peak on the outside of the sleeve. Rather than pieces of wool and a single rosette on the front, the 1974 hats are decorated with two pom-poms which are set on the front, rather than on the forward portion of the top of the hats.

4.5.2 The Dance - Style

Similar to Grenoside, the Handsworth dance, in stylistic terms, is most strongly characterised by its primary means of locomotion. In sharp contrast to Grenoside's steady tramp, though, is Handsworth's

⁵⁵ The Kirkby Malzeard sword dancers appeared in military style uniforms in 1910 (Sharp, 1911, p. 39), as did the Ampleforth team at the turn of the century (Sharp, 1913, p. 50). Dr. Gatty writes in *A Life at One Living* (London: Bell, 1884, p. 38) that the Ecclesfield Church band appear in hussar uniforms, and numerous examples of a similar sort are recorded by T.L. Cooper in *Brass Bands of Yorkshire* (Clapham, Lancashire: Dalesman Books, 1974).

jog step, with a heavy emphasis, or drop, onto the right foot. This is not the only means of moving the entire body, however, for the first few figures of the dance also use a march-like walk and a sideways slide, or slip, step. Nevertheless, once the jogging begins, forty bars of music into the dance, it persists, to a greater or lesser extent depending on the allowances of the particular figure, throughout the rest of the dance. The body posture is generally upright, and often slightly forward under the force of locomotion. This posture is maintained except when the dancers are required to bend forward at the waist in order to lower swords or, occasionally, to pass under them. The arms effect gestures with the swords by extending away from, usually above or below, the body. The arms, wrists, and hands are also rotated and flexed during the course of certain movements.

In terms of the dynamic aspects of style, the Handsworth dance is, on the whole, flexible in its use of space; movement occurs in circles and curves and generally uses the maximum possible space. The two Divide figures (see below) are more direct, that is, they have a quality of straightness with movement occurring in lines rather than curves. This contrasting use of space contributes to the overall texture of the dance, as does the nature of the movement flow. While the flow is continuous, it varies between being free and unimpeded, like in the Run Around, and being more bound and hampered in those figures where one or more dancers must interrupt their momentum in order to lower a sword. The texture of the dance is further augmented by the various means of locomotion described above.

4.5.3 The Dance - Structure

Participants: eight dancers, one or more musicians.

Performance time: approximately nine minutes.

(1) March On

Music: "British Grenadiers" (2/4), Tune 1.

The musician marches on,⁵⁶ with right foot leading, followed in single file by Nos. 1, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3,

⁵⁶ The musician may not always lead the dancers into the performance space. If he has already taken his place, No.1 leads the dancers on.

and 2 respectively. Each man holds his sword in his right hand and vertically along his arm. The left arm swings smartly in step, tracing an arc in space of approximately ninety degrees (seventy five degrees in front of the body and fifteen degrees behind). While the musician takes his place, No.1 leads the dancers into a counter-clockwise facing ring, or rather, a horseshoe shape, with a gap between Nos. 1 and 2. This usually takes between sixteen and twenty four bars of music.

(2) March Around

Music: "The Girl I Left Behind Me" (2/4), Tune 2.

(Illus. 4.42).

After a slight pause, the musician begins Tune 2, and after an eight bar introduction (once through the A part), the dancers set off marching, in the same fashion as before, in a counterclockwise ring. No.1 closes the gap between himself and No.2 in the first couple of strides.

(3) The Clash

Music: Tune 2.

(Illus. 4.43).

On the last beat of bar eight of the March Around, the dancers all turn left to face clockwise, closing into the centre of the circle, and raise their swords to form a high basket. While circling clockwise, they all clash swords on the beat for eight bars, clashing a total of sixteen times. The clashing movement is quite small and controlled, being effected by a quick flick, or twist, of the wrist.

(4) The Slip

Music: Tune 2.

(Illus. 4.44).

At the end of the Clash, the dancers lower their swords and link up hilt-and-point, facing centre, and circle clockwise for eight bars using a slip step.

(5) The Snake

Music: "Cotton Socks" (2/4), Tune 3.

(Illus. 4.45 and 4.46, and Figure 4.06).

Without pausing, the tune changes and the dancers come to a halt, bend at the waist to hold the swords at knee level, and begin marking time. No.1 raises his left arm and turns to the right to jump over his own sword in four beats (two bars) by stepping onto the left foot on beat one, onto the right foot on beat two, over the sword with the left foot landing on beat three, and completing the turn by stepping onto the right foot on beat four. This movement is repeated by Nos. 2 through 8 in turn, for a total of sixteen bars. No.1 then reverses the direction by turning to the left and jumping over his left-hand neighbour's sword with the right foot. To facilitate the change from left to right feet, the dancers stamp twice on the right foot at the end of the first revolution. No.8 then jumps over his left-hand neighbour's sword, followed by Nos.7 through 2 in turn.

(6) Run Around.

Music: Tunes 4-9.

The dancers break into the jog with drop step, as described above. This manner of locomotion is maintained throughout the remainder of the dance, until the Lock is made. The Run Around is eight bars of counterclockwise ringing which occurs after the Snake and each of the following six figures.

(7) Single Sword Up (or Single Up)

Music: "The Keel Row" (2/4), Tune 4.

(Illus. 4.47 - 4.49).

No.1 raises his sword overhead and begins turning to the right. Simultaneously No.8, with a sweeping motion, raises his sword to meet No.1's. No.2, holding the point of No.1's sword, facilitates this meeting by moving slightly toward No.8. As No.1 completes his turn, No.8 passes under the swords and around No.2 to the left. He is followed by Nos. 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, and finally 2. The raised swords remain relatively stationary, though may occasionally move slightly toward the oncoming dancers as Nos. 1, 2, and 8 mark time. This movement occurs in a total of eight bars of music, and each dancer passes under the sword

on the first beat of the bar, the first one to pass under (who is also raising his sword to meet the other) does so on the first beat of bar one. This movement is then initiated in turn by No.2, and so on. The complete figure covers sixty four bars of music.

(8) Single Sword Down (or Single Down) (Illus. 4.50 - 4.52).

Music: "Nellie Gray" (2/4), Tune 5.

This figure is similar to Single Up, except that No.1 bends at the waist away from the oncoming dancers and lowers his sword as near to the ground as possible. No.8 raises his own sword while passing over No.1's sword and turning to the left around No.2. As in the previous figure, No.2 moves toward No.8 to enable No.8 to step over the sword on the first beat of the first bar. He is followed in turn by Nos. 7 through 2. As soon as the last man (i.e. No.2) steps over the sword, he lowers his own sword to the ground for the next revolution. Unlike Single Up, the lowered sword does not move forward, but remains stationary. However, since the last man goes over and immediately lowers his sword, the next sword is further around the circle vis-a-vis the ground. By the time each sword has been lowered, they will have travelled, in effect, a complete circle. This movement is initiated from each position and covers a total of sixty four bars of music.

(9) Divide Up

Music: Tune 4, or "Cock o' the North" (6/8), Tune 6.⁵⁷

(Illus. 4.53 and 4.54, and Figure 4.06).

A complete revolution requires twelve bars of music rather than the usual eight bars. The complete figure, then, takes a total of ninety six bars.

Divide Up begins like Single Up, with No.1 raising both hands together overhead and turning to the right. No.8 passes under the arch (Arch A) formed by his own and No.1's swords, and turns to the left around No.2. He is followed by Nos. 7 and 6 on bars two and three respectively. No.5, however, after passing under the swords, turns to the right, and raises his own sword, at the beginning of bar five,

⁵⁷ "Cock o' the North" is difficult to play on the melodeon, which is currently the primary instrument in use, so the musician often opts for "The Keel Row" (Tune 4) for this figure.

to form a second arch (Arch B), which also passes back over the set. On bar six, No.4 follows No.5 around to the right while Nos. 2 and 3 abreast pass under Arch A. On bar seven Arch A is lowered, and Nos. 3 and 2, still abreast, pass under Arch B. On bar eight, Nos. 3 and 2 raise their linking sword (No.3's) overhead, turn away from each other (No.3 to the right, No.2 to the left) to form Arch C, which then passes back over the set. Arch B is lowered on bar eleven, and Arch C is ready to become Arch A for the next revolution of the figure. As Figure 4.6 illustrates, the three arches formed during the course of the twelve bars move over the set from top to bottom. In the next twelve bar revolution, however, the three arches are formed at the bottom and move back over the set to the top. While this forward and backward movement occurs, the entire set gradually rotates counterclockwise. This last aspect is the result of the initiating sword being moved slightly forward to meet the other sword with which it forms Arch A, thereby reorienting the line of dance.

In terms of the overall movement effect, except for those dancers dividing (that is, turning right rather than left), the set continues to move in a counterclockwise direction. However, because of this dividing, the movement is necessarily less curved and takes on a linear quality.

(10) Divide Down

Music: "Kafoozalum" (2/4), Tune 7.

(Illus. 4.55).

This figure is the same as Divide Up except that the initiating sword is lowered to the ground, and the dancers step over it. All subsequent arches pass over the set, as before.

(11) Double Sword Up (or Double Up).

Music: "John Peel" (2/2), Tune 8.

This figure is essentially the same as Single Up except that 1) the dancer initiating the movement turns at the end of the eight bar revolution, rather than at the beginning, and 2) the raised swords remain stationary, rather than pass over the oncoming dancers.

No.1 turns slightly left to face the set, raising both arms overhead and placing the backs of his hands together, with the right palm facing him. No.8 sweeps his sword up to meet No.1's, passes under

the swords and to the left around No.2 (as in Single Up) followed by Nos. 7 through 2 in turn. This movement is then initiated by No.2, and so on, filling a total of sixty four bars of music.

(12) Double Sword Down (or Double Down)

Music: "Country Gardens" (2/2), Tune 9.

(Illus. 4.56 - 4.58).

No.1, as the pivot, lowers his sword, and No.2 moves in to meet No.8, who simultaneously lowers his sword and approaches No.2. This actually occurs in the last bar of the Run Around. No.7 jumps over the two swords on the first beat of bar one and turns to the left around Nos. 8 and 2. He is then followed by Nos. 6, 5, 4, 3, and 2 who each go over the swords on the first beat of consecutive bars of music. Meanwhile, No.8 creeps over the two swords, turning to the left around No.2. On bar seven, No.1 unwinds by leaping up, raising both hands overhead and turning to the left. He lands on bar eight, lowering his sword to the ground and meeting No.2's sword. No.3 must be ready to move in to meet No.1, as this shortens the distance both for No.1 to cover while turning, and for the next man to approach and pass over the swords. No.2 is the new pivot. Like the previous figures, this movement is performed eight times, initiated by each dancer in turn.

(13) Fast Single Up

Music: Tune 4.

(Illus. 4.59 and 4.60).

The set closes in during the first eight bars of this figure. On the first beat of bar one, No.1 raises his right arm to the left shoulder of the man in front, tucking his sword vertically down the inside of this dancer's left arm. This action is repeated on the first beat of each consecutive bar by Nos. 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, and 2 in turn. This results in a tight circle. No.1 then raises both hands above his head, turns to the right, and while the rest of the set continues to circle counterclockwise, No.1 quickly moves around the outside of the set in a clockwise direction until returning to place. No.2 then immediately turns to his right and moves clockwise around the set and back to place. He is followed in turn by Nos. 3 through 8, each taking four bars to complete the movement.

(14) The Lock

Music: Tune 4.

(Illus. 4.61 - 4.63).

Still in this tight, counterclockwise moving circle, the dancers ring for four bars, then open out for four bars. Each dancer then makes a complete turn in place to the left, raising both hands overhead in the process. Having, in effect, crossed right hands over left by turning, the Lock is completed by each dancer placing the point in his left hand over the hilt of his right-hand neighbour. No.1 (the leader) then raises the Lock while the dancers remain facing centre, and the music continues to the end of the phrase.

(15) March Off.

Music: "Bobby Shaftoe" (2/4), Tune 10.

After a very short pause, the musician plays a two bar introduction, at the end of which the dancers turn in place to the right to face counterclockwise. With the Lock still raised, No.1 leads the dancers off in single file followed by the musician. Free of the swords, except of course No.1, the dancers are able to swing both arms in ninety degree arcs while marching off.

4.6 Handsworth: Changes in the Dance

4.6.1 Sources

As mentioned in section 4.5, the Handsworth dance has not enjoyed the quantity or quality of documentation that Grenoside has. This is particularly unfortunate in the light of the fact that the Handsworth dance appears to have experienced some rather more fundamental changes since the early years of this century. However, many of these developments have occurred within living memory, and so we are able to draw upon the recollections of various participants. In addition to this oral testimony are recordings of performances and observations made in the course of fieldwork between 1985 and 1988, as well as the following written and visual materials:

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|--------|--|
| 1913 | Cecil Sharp's fieldnotes and <i>The Sword Dances of Northern England</i> , Part III. |
| c.1925 | Cine film taken behind the rectory of St. Mary's Church, Handsworth by the English Folk Dance Society. |

- 1964 Cine film taken by Kathleen Mitchell at Handsworth.
- 1969 Series of black and white photographs taken by Paul Smith on Boxing Day at Beighton and Woodhouse.
Audio recordings made by John Widdowson on Boxing Day at Beighton, Woodhouse and Handsworth.
- 1974 Cine film taken at the Sheffield Ring Meeting by the Morris Ring Archive.
- 1976 Two cine films, one taken by the Morris Ring Archives, and one by A.G. Barrand.
- 1978 *Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers*, booklet written by Geoff Lester and published by the team.
- 1979 Three cine films, two taken by A.G. Barrand, and one by the Morris Ring Archive.
- 1986 Video recording taken by Trevor Stone at Bolton.

4.6.2 Changes in Style

As with Grenoside, the most striking difference in the style of the Handsworth dance is in the manner of locomotion. Cecil Sharp describes the step in 1913:

This is a high-springing, exuberant, running step, the dancers as they bound from one foot to the other freely raising the knee of the free leg. In movements like the Ring [Run Around], and whenever the dancer has a clear space before him, the step is executed as vigorously as possible. At other and less favourable moments in the dance, it is modified and danced more quietly. Occasionally, too, the dancers do a kind of shuffling step, lazily dragging the free leg on the ground.⁵⁸

The 1925 film confirms this description and reveals that each dancer has a slightly different way of moving, including hops, skips, and flicks of the leg. These individual styles persist into the early 1950s⁵⁹ at which time the stepping becomes more regular and the heavy emphasis on the right foot is universally adopted.⁶⁰ The drop step is now one of the most distinctive features of the Handsworth dance, and the

⁵⁸ Sharp (1911-13), Part III, p. 38.

⁵⁹ Geoff Lester, *Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers* (Sheffield: Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers, 1978), p. 15.

⁶⁰ CMS-25/A - 28.40, CMS-28/A - 39.30, CMS-33/A - 44.30 and CMS-45/A - 07.40.

unity of sound it produces is clearly important to the overall effect of the performance. Yet, despite the right-footed emphasis, the style of locomotion is more even, or smooth, relative to the vertical movement of the dancers in space, than the springing step described by Sharp and conveyed in the 1925 film. This stepping style also has structural repercussions in that the swords, when lowered, must reach the ground in order to maintain the flow.

In addition to the manner of locomotion, certain stylistic changes can be seen in the movement of the limbs, as well as the general posture and carriage of the dancers. The 1925 film reveals that individual arm and leg movements are generally bigger and often more elaborate. There is a distinct flick of the lower leg as many of the dancers pass over lowered swords, and the Clash is effected by the movement of the entire arm, like a blow, rather than a compact and controlled twist of the wrist. The posture has become increasingly and uniformly more upright over time, and the carriage, as perceived and described by numerous informants as well, has acquired a distinct military flavour.⁶¹

4.6.3 Changes in Structure

An innovation which has affected the overall structure of the dance in terms of timing, is the standardising of the figures and the tunes which occurred in the early 1960s. As the above description reveals, each figure is danced to a specific tune and to a certain number of bars. According to Sharp, writing in 1913, four tunes are used: "Napoleon's March" for the March Around and the Clash, either "The Girl I Left Behind Me" or "The White Cockade", "according to the taste of the musician",⁶² for all of the figures through to, and including, the Lock, and "The Keel Row" for the Roll,⁶³ which will be discussed below. These were apparently not the only tunes used at that time, however. Cecil Sharp's correspondence with the Captain of the Handsworth team following his visit in January 1913 suggests that he did not notate

⁶¹ CMS-25/A - 28.40, CMS-28/A - 42.35, CMS-17/A - 27.15, CMS-22/B - 15.15, CMS-45/A - 08.35.

⁶² Sharp, MSS, *Folk Dance Notes*, Vol. 4, folio 2.

⁶³ Sharp (1911-13), Part III, p. 37.

the tunes when he saw the team dance. He writes:

I want first of all the names of the tunes, and if possible the tunes themselves (the melodies only) which the player played for you.⁶⁴

In February 1913, Sharp received notations of four tunes from Mr. Shaw of Darnall, the next village to Handsworth. These tunes are "Cock o' the North", "Our Soldiers", "The Girl I Left Behind Me", and one which is untitled, but identified and published by Sharp as "Napoleon's March".⁶⁵ This would indicate, therefore, that there were at least six tunes in use in 1913.

"Napoleon's March" and "The Girl I Left Behind Me" were still in use in the 1920s and 1930s, according to Jim Goodison and Bill Siddall, both of whom began dancing in 1925.⁶⁶ Jim Goodison remembered marching on to popular tunes of the day, like "K-K-K-Katie",⁶⁷ and Bill Siddall recalled that the musician would have to follow the timing of the dancers, as the figures were not set to a specific number of bars, let alone particular tunes.⁶⁸

In the years following World War Two, regular musicians were continually difficult to find. The tunes used, therefore, were dependent on the repertoire and skill of the musician at hand.⁶⁹ However, in 1960 Bernard Kidd, a professionally trained musician, joined the team. At this time, the team were working on regulating the figures to fit into certain musical phrases, and with the advent of a regular musician, were able to devise a series of tunes to complement the series of figures, as listed below:

March On	"Bobby Shaftoe"
March Around Clash Slip	"The Girl I Left Behind Me"
Snake	"Cotton Socks"
Single Up	"The Keel Row"

⁶⁴ Cecil J. Sharp, letter to J.H. Siddall, 19 January, 1913, Handsworth Archive.

⁶⁵ Cecil Sharp, *Folk Tunes*, Vol. 14, Nos. 2816 - 2819.

⁶⁶ Tape-recorded interview, 29 November, 1978, Handsworth Archive, A-03.45.

⁶⁷ CMS-36/A - 11.42, CMS-22/B - 17.50 and CMS-46/B - 01.40.

⁶⁸ Tape-recorded interview, 29 November, 1978, Handsworth Archive, A-37.20.

⁶⁹ CMS-16/A - 23.20, CMS-22/B - 17.35 and CMS-36/B - 05.22.

Single Down	"Nellie Gray"
Divide Up	"Cock o' the North"
Divide Down	"Kafoozalum"
Double Down	"Country Gardens"
Fast Single Up The Lock	"The Keel Row"
March Off	"Bobby Shaftoe"

Except for substituting "The Keel Row" for "Cock o' the North" (see footnote 56), there are only two slight differences between the set of tunes compiled in the 1960s and those played today. The first is the substitution of "Bobby Shaftoe" with "British Grenadiers" for the March On. "Bobby Shaftoe", however, is still used for the March Off. The second difference is the addition of "John Peel" when the Double Up figure was reintroduced in the 1970s (see below).

Another general structural change is the order in which the figures occur after Single Up and Single Down. Cecil Sharp, in his manuscripts and in *The Sword Dances of Northern England*, records that, after Single Down, they dance Double Sword Up, Double Sword Down, and then Divide Up and Divide Down. This contrasts with the current structure with the two Divide figures coming before the two Double figures. The 1925 film, however, shows that Divide Up is danced immediately after Single Down, though a slight pause in the film could possibly indicate that the camera was stopped for a period of time during which Double Up and Double Down may have been performed. Unfortunately, the film ends after the Divide figures. From the 1950s through the early 1970s, these figures occur in the following order: Single Up, Single Down, Divide Up, Double Down, and Divide Down. For aesthetic reasons which will be discussed in Chapter Seven, the Double Up figure was omitted, and Double Down was placed between the two Divide figures. In the early 1970s, Double Up was reintroduced and the structure which exists today was established.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ It is worth noting that the dance is occasionally shortened in certain performance contexts. Two figures, usually Three Divide Down and Double Up, will be omitted.

(1) March On

Sharp does not describe how the dancers enter the performance space, but begins his notation with them standing in the horseshoe shape. Certainly, by the 1920s they are marching on and apart from the tune variations noted above, this figure appears not to have changed in any distinguishable way since. However, in the late 1970s when the two clowns are reintroduced, one clown often leads the dancers on with the other following at the end.

(2) March Around

Sharp refers to this figure as "The Ring",⁷¹ but describes it, at least in structural terms, in the same way in which it is performed today. Again, in the late 1970s the clowns, carrying brooms, sweep out the horseshoe during the eight bar introduction.

(3) The Clash and (4) The Slip

Sharp states that the dancers, moving in a clockwise direction, clash for "eight bars A music, four bars B music, twelve bars in all." He continues, "During the last four bars of B music the dancers link up, hilt-and-point, and dance round to a very vigorous step".⁷² This vigorous dancing round is most likely the foundation of the Slip as described above, for it follows the Clash and immediately precedes the Snake, which Sharp then goes on to describe. This description contrasts with the eight bars of clashing and then eight bars of slip step ringing which have been performed since at least the 1950s.

The 1925 film confirms the accuracy of Sharp's notation and lends further support to the notion that the clockwise ringing at the end of the Clash developed into the Slip. Unfortunately, there is no documentary evidence to indicate how the young team of 1925 danced these two movements, nor is there any record until the 1950s.

(5) The Snake

Cecil Sharp records that one complete revolution of the Snake, that is, each man going over a sword in

⁷¹ Sharp (1911-13), Part III, p. 38.

⁷² Ibid, p. 39.

turn, occurs in eight bars of music, rather than the current sixteen bars, each man taking two beats, rather than four, to go over. This is similar to "Over Your Own Sword" in the Grenoside dance. Again, the 1925 film confirms Sharp's description. Furthermore, the film reveals that the dancers do not remain bent at the waist during the entire figure, but simply bend down when required to either lower a sword or jump over one. The figure apparently persisted in much the same manner until the 1950s, when it developed into its present form.⁷³

(6) Run Around

There is no mention of ringing between figures in Sharp's 1913 fieldnotes or publication. The 1925 film reveals that the dancers move from one figure straight into the next, and Bill Siddall and Jim Goodison confirm that they never used to circle but simply carried on to the next figure.⁷⁴ Indeed, the Run Around first appears after World War Two, and becomes an important component in the standardization of figures and tunes in the early 1960s (see Chapter Seven).

(7) Single Up

Cecil Sharp's description of this figure contrasts with the current manner of performance in two ways. First of all, Sharp states that the arch formed by the raised swords is actively moved to the opposite, or bottom, end of the set while the dancers pass under. On the following revolution the arch is returned to the top, not unlike the forward and backward motion of the arches in Three Divide Up. Secondly, Sharp states that each revolution occurs in four bars of music, totalling thirty two bars for the completion of the entire figure.

The 1925 film confirms Sharp's description, except that the movement of the arch over the set appears to be effected primarily by the pivot person moving quickly around the set, thereby creating a more circular movement. This film also reveals that the dancers close in together and bend considerably forward at the waist to pass under the swords. These qualities are, to a great extent, symptomatic of executing the figure in four bars of music.

⁷³ CMS-25/A - 33.15, CMS-49/A - 25.20.

⁷⁴ Tape-recorded interview, 29 November, 1978, Handsworth Archive, B-06.15.

This four bar timing is maintained until the 1950s when it is altered so that each revolution occurs in the space of eight bars. The speed of the movement of the swords over the set is thus more relaxed, and the movement of the dancers holding the arch is smaller, as they have twice the time in which to travel the same distance. Although the movement of the swords over the set is more controlled, this movement is still a feature of the figure through the 1960s and 1970s, as revealed in photographs and films. However, by 1985 the arch is moving less than half the distance it did in the mid to late 1970s. This decreasing trend continues to its present form whereby the movement of the arch is slight, if at all.

(8) Single Down

This is similar to Single Up, and Sharp describes each revolution as occurring in four bars of music; the 1925 film confirms this. The film also reveals that in some, though not all, cases the lowered sword is actually moved towards the oncoming dancers by the pivot person, who is facing away from the set, moving backward. Again, this figure appears to acquire its present form -- execution in eight bars of music and with a stationary sword -- in the 1950s.

(9) Divide Up

Cecil Sharp's description of this figure is essentially the same as it is performed today, though with two noticeable differences: 1) the figure requires eight bars of music, rather than twelve, for each revolution, and 2) the dancers appear to move backward under Arch C into the ring before beginning the next revolution. The 1925 film confirms Sharp's notation and reveals that these differences create a very different overall effect. In order to execute the movement in eight bars the set closes in very tight. Furthermore, for three or four men to pass under an arch simultaneously, those men holding the arch need to move wider apart, and subsequently lose height on the arch. The dancers passing under, therefore, are required to bend down lower. In the 1950s this figure began to develop into its present form, and was solidified during the period of figure and tune regularization in the 1960s.

(10) Divide Down

This figure has experienced the same developments as Divide Up.

(11) Double Sword Up (or Double Up)

Cecil Sharp states that in 1913 Double Up was danced the same as Single Up, except that "the two swords, which are passed over the dancers, are held wide apart instead of together." He continues:

This method of execution is probably a corruption, due to forgetfulness. It is suggested that the figure should be performed in the following way.⁷⁵

Sharp then goes on to describe what he believes ought to be done, which incidentally is the same as Single Up with the swords passing over held wide apart, but with one further variation: the pivot person performs his clockwise turn at the end of the movement rather than at the beginning. Like Sharp's description of Single Up, this figure requires four bars of music per revolution. Unfortunately, as mentioned already, the 1925 film does not include Double Up or Double Down, so there is no further information available on these two figures until the 1950s. For reasons which will be addressed in Chapter Seven, the Double Up figure was not danced in the 1950s and '60s. In the early 1970s, however, it was reintroduced and developed into its present form, which is, apart from the timing, the figure which Sharp prescribed in 1913.

(12) Double Sword Down (or Double Down)

Cecil Sharp's description of this figure in *The Sword Dances of Northern England* coincides with what is performed today with the exception that he claims that each revolution takes place in four bars of music. Sharp's fieldnotes, however, state that "the movement is very quick and performed in 4 bars (sometimes 8)."⁷⁶ The eight bar timing becomes a regular feature from the 1950s onward.

(13) Fast Single Up

There is no mention of a fast figure in Cecil Sharp's typed and bound fieldnotes (*Folk Dance Notes*) or in *The Sword Dances of Northern England*. However, the list of figures recorded in Sharp's original notebook⁷⁷ includes a "Quick figure" before the Lock. Unfortunately, Sharp fails to describe this figure,

⁷⁵ Sharp (1911-13), Part III, p. 41.

⁷⁶ Sharp, *Folk Dance Notes*, Vol. 4, folio 5.

⁷⁷ For this information and documentation I am indebted to Roy Dommett.

and there is no record of it until its reintroduction in the 1950s.⁷⁸ It was performed in the 1950s largely as it is today, but with two important differences: 1) rather than closing the set up by each man in turn raising his sword toward the man in front, in the 1950s the entire set closed in simultaneously at the end of the Run Around, and 2) it is now danced in double time,⁷⁹ each man completing his circuit as quickly as possible.⁸⁰ However, both of these aspects developed into their present form in the early 1970s.⁸¹

(14) The Lock

Apart from the entrance into the Lock, which Sharp records as coming from a clockwise moving ring rather than the Fast Single Up, the method of making the Lock has not changed. However, according to Sharp, the clown enters the ring and the Lock is placed over his head. He notes that it is occasionally made around the clown's neck, and in the event that no clown is present, the lock is placed over the head of one of the dancers. It is then raised by the clown, or the dancer, and exhibited. These activities are confirmed by Bill Siddall and Jim Goodison⁸². In the late 1920s and 1930s, the Lock is raised by No.1, displayed, and then carried off, and this continues in the years following World War Two⁸³.

(15) March Off

As with the entrance of the dancers, Sharp neglects to describe how they leave the performance space. Although his account includes a figure following the Lock (see below), there is still no indication as to how the dancers exit. As described above, the general format since the 1920s has been that a clown or a dancer carries the Lock off, leading the dancers in much the same way as their entrance.

⁷⁸ CMS-33/B - 03.10, CMS-46/B - 03.30, and A. G. Barrand personal field notes taken on 27 December, 1976.

⁷⁹ CMS-07/A - 02.40, CMS-46/B - 04.50/B-09.25, and CMS-78/A - 34.45.

⁸⁰ The three performances recorded in 1969 average at six bars per man.

⁸¹ CMS-07/A - 03.00, CMS-17/B - 16.23, and CMS-46/B - 09.25.

⁸² Tape-recorded interview, 29 November 1978, Handsworth Archive.

⁸³ The clowns were revived for a short period during the late 1970s. The Lock might occasionally be made around the neck of one of the clowns or be carried off by him.

(16) The Roll

Sharp describes this figure in his fieldnotes and publication but reveals that he did not see it performed, at least on his first visit. In his January 1913 notes he writes:

This movement I did not see because they had three colts in the team who could not do it.⁸⁴

However, in a letter to J.H. Siddall in March 1913, he expresses his desire to view this figure.

I should like if possible to see the Roll. I think I understand it, but there is nothing like seeing it.⁸⁵

It is not known whether or not Sharp actually saw the Roll performed, but he does provide a lengthy and detailed description of the figure in *The Sword Dances of Northern England*. Bill Siddall and Jim Goodison confirm that the Roll was performed by the old (pre-1926) team, and explain that,

we was being taught into it.... but I don't think we ever mastered it to the perfection to do it out.⁸⁶

The Roll has not been performed since, and although the present team have worked on it on several occasions, for reasons which will be addressed in Chapter Seven, it has not been revived.

A Note on the Role of the Clowns

In 1913 Cecil Sharp mentions that the Lock is placed, or made, around the neck of one of the clowns. Bill Siddall recalls that in the 1910s the clowns collected money and engaged in horseplay, common circus clown buffoonery, to entertain the audience while the dance was in progress. When the clowns were briefly revived in the late 1970s, they marched on and swept out the horseshoe shape before the dance began. They would then begin fooling, mimicking the movement of the dancers, and would occasionally raise the Lock.

⁸⁴ Sharp, *Folk Dance Notes*, Vol. 4, folio 7.

⁸⁵ Cecil Sharp, letter to J. H. Siddall, 18 March 1913, Handsworth Archive.

⁸⁶ Bill Siddall, tape-recorded interview, 29 November 1978, A-15.40, Handsworth Archive.

4.6.4 Summary of Changes in the Handsworth Dance

On the basis of the foregoing description, it can be seen that the Handsworth dance has experienced several structural and stylistic changes of varying degrees since the time of Sharp's visits in 1913. It is important to bear in mind that changes in style and structure, or form, frequently interrelate. In Single Up, for example, when altering the timing from four bars to eight bars per revolution, the style is subsequently affected in that the extended time available in which to effect the movement requires less effort to cover the same distance.

In general, the dance has become more uniform; from the 1950s onward, individual embellishments and idiosyncrasies have given way to a well-drilled and restrained style of moving. Where movements of the body, as in Single Up, or the limbs, as in the Clash, had been somewhat diffuse and unrestrained, they are now deliberate and controlled.

Apart from variations in the order of figures, the most obvious and pervasive structural change in the dance is the alteration and regularisation of the timing of the figures, and the subsequent setting of the tunes, which occurred in the 1950s and '60s. Other important changes include the loss of the Roll, the omission and later addition of Double Up, and the introduction and development of the Fast Single Up. Having described these stylistic and structural changes, their causes, implications, and consequences will be addressed in Chapter Seven.

4.7 Barnsley Longsword

4.7.1 Costumes

As Barnsley Longsword perform two longsword dances, they have a distinct costume for each. Neither costume, however, has changed since it was first adopted. Both of the costumes will be described here, but the dances will be dealt with individually in the following sections.

For the Kirkby Malzeard dance, the men wear black knee-breeches, white shirts, red knee socks,

black shoes, and red and white peaked caps (Illus. 4.64). The Captain, or singer of the calling-on song, is similarly dressed, although he may also wear a black tailcoat, and he carries a sword with red and white ribbons attached to the hilt (Illus. 4.65).

The Haxby costumes are a simple adaptation of the Kirkby gear. The caps are removed and tabards are slipped over the shirts. These tabards are white and covered with red and white rosettes with red ribbons. A white sash, approximately four inches wide, drapes over the right shoulder and across the chest and back to the left hip (Illus. 4.66).

The musicians for both dances are dressed in the basics -- breeches, shirts, socks, and shoes.

4.8 Barnsley Longsword - The Kirkby Malzeard Dance

4.8.1 Style

As with Handsworth, the body posture in the Kirkby Malzeard dance is generally upright and slightly forward with the momentum of movement. Forward bending at the waist occurs when the swords are lowered, and the knees may be flexed to facilitate this. The movements of the arm are most prominent as they are the vehicles for displaying the swords. As in Handsworth and Grenoside, the arms are most often extended above or below the body, and the hands and wrists are flexed and rotated to effect particular gestures. The manner of locomotion is a steady jog-trot with right foot leading, similar to Handsworth but without the drop step, and therefore somewhat more fluid. Unlike Grenoside and Handsworth, however, Kirkby Malzeard as danced by Barnsley Longsword, is on the whole not set to the music -- most figures do not occur during specified bars or musical phrases. Nevertheless, two figures, the Clash and Over Your Own Sword, do have specific timing, and other figures appear to have certain tendencies, that is, they tend to take approximately the same amount of music each time they are danced. Single Up, for example, is usually completed in approximately thirty two bars.

In terms of dynamics, Kirkby Malzeard is flexible in its use of space. The flow is continuous, free and unimpeded with the exception of the Clash, which requires smaller steps and restrained, directed arm movements, and Over Your Own Sword, which is hampered by a temporary locomotion pause. The steady tempo and movement flow create a very smooth texture, again with the exception of the Clash and Over Your Own Sword.

4.8.2 Structure

Participants: Six dancers, one Captain, one or more musicians.

Performance time: Approximately eight minutes.

(1) Entrance

(Illus. 4.67)

Music: "The Keel Row", Kirkby Malzeard Tune 1, or very occasionally another suitable tune.

The dancers, in single file numbered 1 through 6, are led on by the Captain.⁸⁷ The swords are held in right hands and rest in a vertical position along the arm and against the shoulder. The dancers stop in a line facing the audience, and the Captain then sings the calling-on song unaccompanied.

(2) Calling-on Song

Music: Song Tune 1.

(Illus. 4.68)

The song presented here in bold is a transcription of a recording made on 14th June, 1986, and therefore should not be considered the definitive version. However, it is the one which I recorded most frequently. Performers have slightly different wordings and manners of delivery, and during the period of fieldwork it was performed by no less than six individuals. The variants appear in normal type underneath the most frequently recorded version.

**You noble spectators where'er you may be,
Ye noble spectators where'er you may be,**

Your attention I beg and I crave.

**It is our desire that you make us large room
For it is our desire that you make such large roon**

And abundance of pastime we'll have.

⁸⁷ Depending on the venue and the availability of performers, the Captain and the song may not be included. The "Captain" is the singer of the calling-on song and should not be confused with the official of the same title within the structure of the team (see Chapter Seven). To distinguish these two, a capital "C" will be used for the singer of the calling-on song and a small "c" for the officer.

**I am second Sampson in Judges you'll find,
I am the second Sampson in Judges you'll find,**

Who delights in his darling so dear.

**What a blockhead was I for to tell her me mind,
What a blockhead were I for to tell her me mind,**

As you gallant and quickly shall hear.

Now the first he comes on like a ranting young lad,

He conquers wherever he goes.

**He is scorned by his enemies to be controlled,
And he's scorned by his enemies to be controlled,**

And his name it is King William Roe.

And his name is King William Roe.

[The Captain and No.1 bow to each other]

**The second's his brother, you might think 'em twins,
Now, the second's his brother, you might think 'em twins,
The next is his brother, you might think 'em twins,
Why, the next is his brother, you might think 'em twins,**

And I thought for the world they would fight.

**But when these two Philistines fell upon me
But when these two Philistines seized upon me**

**You'd have thought they'd have ruined me quite.
Well, I thought they had ruined me quite.**

[The Captain and No.2 bow to each other]

**The third is a man of some much milder blood,
Now, the third is a man of some much milder blood,**

Some pity there's lodged in his breast.

**He oft' (sic) times has promised to do me some good,
And he oft' times has promised to do me some good,
I oft times am told he might do me some good,**

But he daren't for fear of the rest.

[The Captain and No.3 bow to each other]

**Now the fourth he comes on like a ranting young lad,
The fourth he comes on like a ranting young lad,**

**He's like some majestical stand.
He is a majestical stand.**

**It was he that gave orders that I should be polled,
'Twere him that gave orders that I should be polled,**

So they fettered me feet and me hands.

[The Captain and No.4 bow to each other]

**The fifth is as cruel as cruel can be,
The fifth he's as cruel as cruel can be,
Now the fifth is as cruel as cruel can be,
And the fifth is as cruel as cruel can be,**

**The others on him did advise.
The others on he did advise.
The others on he do advise.
The others and he do advise.
And the others on he do advise.**

**'Twere he that gave orders I should no more see,
'Twere him that gave orders I should no more see,
Was he that gave orders that I shouldn't see,**

So they instantly bored out me eyes.

[The Captain and No.5 bow to each other]

**The sixth is no better at all than the rest,
The sixth, he's no better at all than the rest,
Well, the sixth is no better at all than the rest,
Now the sixth, he's no better at all than the rest,**

**He was the first breeder of strife.
And if any of you had been there in me place,
If any of you'd been here in me place,**

**You'd have been glad to come off with your life.
You'd be glad to come off with your life.**

[The Captain and No.6 bow to each other]

These are the six lords, then, that first ruined me,

Without the consent of me dear.

But I will get even with them by-and-by,

As you gallant and quickly shall hear.

When they were all merry, carousing with wine,

**And the first upon Sampson did call,
And first upon Sampson did call,
And the first upon Sampson did fall,**

**Well, I pulled down the house and killed all at that time,
I pulled down the house and killed all at that time,
Why, I pulled down the house and killed all at that time,
Why, I pulled down the house, and I killed all at that time,**

**And that put an end to them all.
And that were an end to them all.**

(3) Ring

Music: Song Tune 2.

No.1 then leads the line of dancers into a clockwise moving circle (Illus. 4.69) while simultaneously all sing unaccompanied:

**We are six actors bold,
Ne'er been on stage before,
And we will do our best,
And the best can do no more.**

**You've seen us all go round,
Think on us what you will,
Music strike up and play
"T'old Lass of Dallowgill".**

On "seen", the swords are lowered into a low basket (Illus. 4.70), which is similar to Handsworth's high basket except made with a full extension of the arm downward, the swords intersecting below knee level.

On "lass", the swords are raised into a high basket by sweeping them out of the centre of the ring, across the front of the body and upward to form a high basket. Immediately their song finishes, the musicians begin playing, and the dancers go into the next movement.

(4) The Clash

(Illus. 4.71 - 4.73)

Music: Kirkby Malzeard Tunes 2 and 3 are used throughout the rest of the dance, the musicians alternating between them as desired. However, they are sure to be playing Tune 3 sometime before the Final Clash, so that the modulation draws further attention to this feature which marks the immanent making of the Lock. While continuing to circle clockwise, the dancers clash swords on the beat for eight bars (making a total of sixteen clashes). This is a broader sweep than the Handsworth Clash, having almost a hacking quality. The swords are then lowered to rest horizontally over left shoulders, and each man grasps the point of the sword in front of him with his left hand. The set continues to circle in this position for six bars, and on bars seven and eight, the swords are raised overhead to open out into a hilt-and-point ring, from which the dancers go immediately into the following figure.

(5) Single Sword Up (or Single Up)

(Illus. 4.74)

Single Up operates as a chorus, and therefore occurs after each of the following five figures. This figure is essentially the same as Handsworth Single Sword Up, in that the two swords are raised under which the dancers pass in turn. However, there are several notable differences in the way the figure is performed which contribute to the different visual quality it effects.

The pivot person, No. 2 in the first revolution, brings his two hands together and then sweeps them up over his head while turning to the right. Furthermore, once the swords are raised, they are actively moved over the set and are allowed to separate (six to eight inches apart). Handsworth contrasts in that the two swords are raised separately, but held close together and relatively stationary for the dancers to pass under.

(6) Single Sword Down (or Single Down)

(Illus. 4.75 - 4.77)

This is again essentially the same figure as Handsworth Single Down, except that it is initiated by No.2's sword, and the swords are held at shin level, rather than at ground level. Also, since the music continues regardless of the progress of the dancers, the first man to approach the lowered sword may take two or four steps to prepare, though two are preferred. What is important is that he jump over the sword with the right foot. Each dancer follows in turn on consecutive right-footed beats. This figure takes approximately forty eight bars of music, eight bars per revolution.

(7) Double Sword Down (or Double Down)

(Illus. 4.78)

This figure is similar to Grenoside Double Down, of course without the Shuffle Off. Again, the movement is initiated by No.2, his sword being lowered to just above knee height. No.1 approaches No.2's sword while lowering his own to meet it. He then jumps over the two swords, and passes around No.3 to the left followed by Nos. 6, 5, 4, and 3, who each jump over the sword with their right feet. This figure is repeated, as usual, from each position and takes approximately forty-eight bars.

(8) Arches Up

(Illus. 4.79 - 4.80 and Figure 4.08)

This figure is similar to Grenoside Single Up in that one sword is raised under which the dancers pass in pairs. The first pair then raise their linking sword to form an arch under which the dancers pass again. There are, however, several slight differences that, in addition to stylistic features like locomotion, produce a rather different effect. Nos. 1 and 2 and Nos. 4 and 5 in pairs swing the swords which link them backward, nearly to shoulder height and then forward, in order to lead into the following movement. Nos. 1 and 2, shoulder to shoulder, with the sword held at waist level in front of them, approach Nos. 4 and 5, who sweep their linking sword upward and overhead while approaching Nos. 1 and 2. Nos. 1 and 2 pass under the raised sword, followed by Nos. 3 and 6 abreast. Nos. 1 and 2 take two steps beyond the arch, and then turn away from each other 180 degrees to face in the opposite direction. Their linking sword is raised overhead to facilitate the turn and to form an arch to pass over the dancers as they move back to place. Meanwhile, once Nos. 3 and 6 pass under the arch made by Nos. 4 and 5, the latter pair lower the arch, making a half turn inward, move back to place by passing under the arch formed by No.1's sword, and finally unwind by raising the sword and turning away from each other. Each revolution takes approximately six bars of music, for a total of thirty-six bars for the entire figure.

(9) Arches Down

(Illus. 4.81 - 4.83)

This figure is similar to Arches Up, with three exceptions: 1) the sword is lowered to calf height, rather than raised, for the pairs to step over, 2) the dancer holding the point of the lowered sword jumps over the sword after the second pair, and 3) the initiating sword does not move once it has been lowered.

(10) Over Your Own Sword

This figure is similar to the first, counterclockwise, half of the Handsworth Snake, with two slight differences: 1) each dancer remains upright until required to bend at the waist to lower, or jump over, a sword, and 2) the men do not mark time in place, but only move their feet when necessary for locomotion.

(11) The Final Clash

(Illus. 4.84)

After the final Single Up, the dancers may ring counterclockwise for a few bars in order to finish the musical phrase and allow the musician to prepare to move into Tune 2. When the next phrase begins, the dancers turn to the left, and raise their swords into a high basket. Moving in a clockwise direction, they clash for eight bars. The swords are then lowered onto left shoulders for six bars, and then raised overhead and lowered to a hilt-and point ring during bars seven and eight, as at the beginning.

(12) The Lock

(Illus. 4.85 - 4.87)

Each man swings his arms back slightly to highlight the beginning of the Lock, as well as to provide an opportunity for the Captain to enter the ring. After this backswing the dancers then sweep the swords in toward the centre of the ring, crossing right hands over left. Still circling clockwise, each man passes his hilt to his left-hand neighbour and then secures the Lock by placing the point over the hilt. This movement occurs over the head of the Captain, who is kneeling in the centre of the set, rather than the Lock being made around the Captain's neck as in the Grenoside dance. The Captain then raises the Lock, joins the circle, and leads the dancers off in single file. If the Captain is not present, No.1 raises the Lock and leads the dancers off.

4.9 Changes in the Kirkby Malzeard Dance

4.9.1 Sources⁸⁸

Although the Kirkby Malzeard dance, as performed by Barnsley Longsword, only dates to 1968,⁸⁸ there have been several noticeable changes in the dance since that time. Besides the recollections and insights of the participants, which are germane to the reconstruction, the following sources have also been referred

⁸⁸ With the exception of the 1969 film, these sources also include performances of the Haxby dance.

to:

- 1969 Cine film taken by Kathleen Mitchell, Whitby, August.
- 1975 Audio recording made by J.D.A. Widdowson, Cawthorne, December.
- 1979 Cine film taken by A.G. Barrand, Cawthorne, December.
- 1984 Video recording, Chipperfield, July.
- 1985 Three video recordings:
1) Worsborough Mill, June.
2) Cawthorne, June.
3) Cawthorne, December.
- 1986 Three video recordings:
1) Worsborough Mill, June.
2) Cawthorne, June.
3) Chipperfield, July.
- 1987 Video recording, Cawthorne, December.

4.9.2 Changes in Style

The general movement style, including the characteristic use of the body and the dynamics, that is, the relative amounts of energy used to effect the characteristic movements, appears not to have changed. There have been fluctuations in the tempo,⁸⁹ which affect the flow of the dance, which relate to the experience and proficiency of the side.

4.9.3 Changes in Structure

(1) Entrance

The entrance of the performers into the performance space has been experimented with in the past. In the mid-1970s, the dancers stand amongst the audience and are called on one by one during the Captain's song. No.1 enters and begins walking in a clockwise circle, and each dancer in turn follows on behind him. They are then in position to sing their song and begin the Clash. Although this was felt to be an effective way of beginning the performance, the format occasionally proved problematic when dancers

⁸⁹ CMS-27/A - 12.30, CMS-37/A - 19.35, CMS-38/B - 00.18, and CMS-62/B - 18.05.

were distracted by the audience and missed their cue to enter.⁹⁰ It was therefore abandoned for the present form.

(2) Calling-on Song

The fact that the song varies with the particular singer has already been mentioned. There have also been some changes in the activities of the dancers during the song. As described above, during the mid-1970s the dancers enter the performance space and form a clockwise moving circle as the Captain calls each one on. Yet, by 1979, the dancers enter by marching on in single file, as they do today. However, their actions during the Captain's song differ slightly from the present in that they would all simultaneously lower their swords to their sides at the end of verse two and raise them to their previous position individually after bowing to the Captain. This movement persisted until the autumn of 1985, when it was decided to keep the swords in the upright position and that the dancers would simply bow to the Captain in turn.

(3) Ring

Apart from the entrance into the Ring, as described above, this figure appears not to have changed.

(4) The Clash

According to several informants,⁹¹ until the mid-1970s the Clash took place at the very tips of the swords, rather than one third to one half of the way down the blade, and was executed with a smaller arm movement. One man describes it as "a flick, rather than a blow",⁹² and the resulting style was much more like Handsworth.

(5) Single Up and (6) Single Down

These two figures appear not to have changed from when they were originally developed.

⁹⁰ CMS-47/B - 04.15.

⁹¹ CMS-33/B - 02.15, CMS-45/B - 37.15, and CMS-57/B - 07.20.

⁹² CMS-33/B - 02.15.

(7) Double Down

This figure has changed significantly from the way in which it was originally performed. In the 1969 film, No.2 lowers his sword and No.1 approaches, lowers his sword to meet No.2's and jumps over both, as they do today. However, rather than being followed by Nos. 6, 5, 4, and 3 in turn, he is followed by Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 3, which is how Cecil Sharp describes the figure in *The Sword Dances of Northern England*.⁹³ In order to unwind on the pivot, No.2 rises and lifts both hands overhead while making a quick counterclockwise turn in place, not unlike the movement of the pivot person in Handsworth Double Down. The figure was consciously changed to its present form in the early 1970s.

Based on the available recollections and resources, the remaining figures in the dance appear not to have changed.

4.10 Barnsley Longsword - The Haxby Dance

4.10.1 Style

The Haxby dance was introduced into the repertoire of Barnsley Longsword in 1973 and is performed in much the same style, in terms of characteristic body movements and dynamics, as Kirkby Malzeard. The texture in Haxby, however, is somewhat more marked by the tempo change which occurs after the Snake (see below).

4.10.2 Structure

Participants: eight dancers, one or more musicians, and occasionally two fools, Tommy and Betty.⁹⁴

NOTE: This dance is performed with wooden swords.

(1) March On

⁹³ Sharp (1911-13), Part I, p.48.

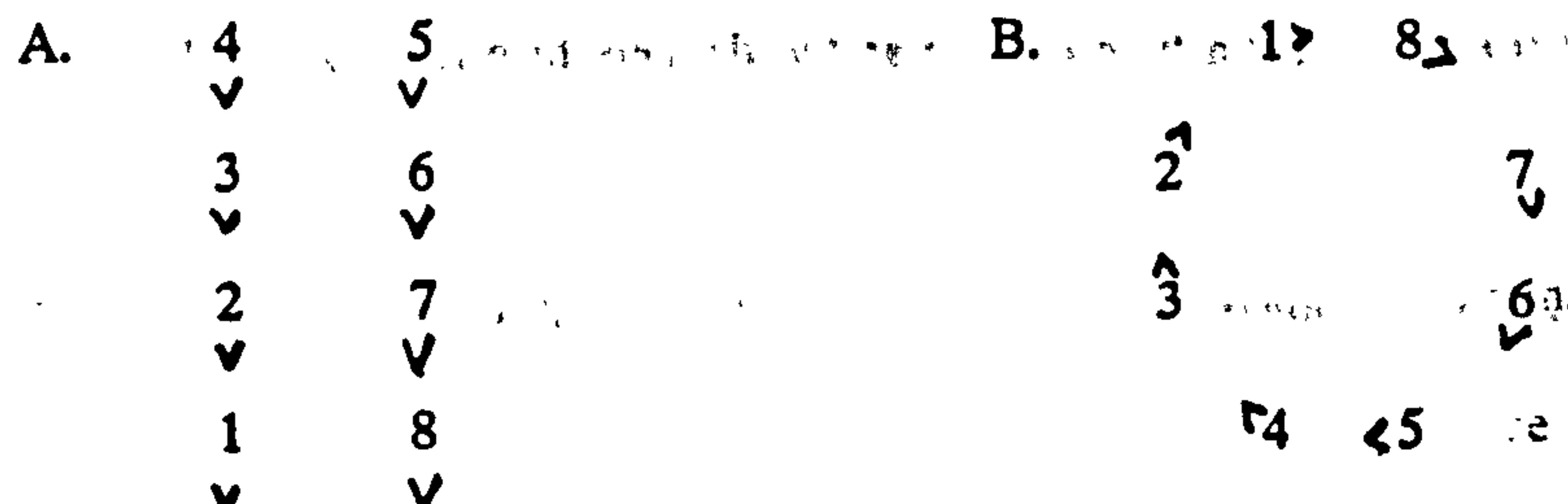
⁹⁴ The Betty, a man dressed as a woman, is a common character in British traditional drama and is often associated with traditional dance in a fooling capacity.

(Illus. 4.88)

Music: "The Keel Row", Kirkby Malzeard Tune 1.

With swords held in right hands and shouldered, as in Kirkby Malzeard, the dancers march on in two rows of four dancers each, then cast away from each other and around to form a clockwise facing circle as

shown below:



If the fools are present, they lead the dancers into the performance space. After a brief pause, the musician begins playing "The Girl I Left Behind Me", Haxby Tune 1.

(2) The Clash

(Illus. 4.89 - 4.90)

Music: Haxby Tune 1, d = 84.

After an eight bar introduction, the dancers raise their swords into a high basket as in Kirkby Malzeard, but without the sweeping motion. Moving in a clockwise direction, they clash for four bars (eight clashes). Then, the dancers all transfer their swords into their left hands, turn to the right to face counterclockwise and circle in that direction while clashing for four bars. The last two bars of the musical phrase are then repeated while the dancers transfer their swords back into their right hands and link up, hilt-and-point, for the next figure.

(3) The Snake

(Illus. 4.91)

This figure is essentially the same as the Handsworth Snake, with two exceptions: 1) the dancers remain upright except when required to bend in order to execute the movement, and 2) because the tempo is more

relaxed, the dancers step, rather than hop, over the swords. This figure takes thirty two bars of music to complete.

The music then immediately changes into "Three Jolly Sheepskins", Haxby Tune 2, at approximately twice the speed. This tempo is maintained throughout the rest of the dance. Similar to Kirkby Malzeard, the next four figures are not strictly timed to the music. Also, the musician alternates between the two tunes and tries to effect a tune change as the dancers turn into the Lock.

(4) Single Sword Down (or Single Down)

(Illus. 4.92 - 4.95)

No.1 lowers his sword to shin level; No.8 leaps over it and turns to the right. No.1 must pass his left arm over his head to enable No.8 to move around him to the right (see Illus. 4.92). No.8 is followed in turn by Nos. 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, and 2, the last two leaping over the sword simultaneously. No.2 then turns to his left and raises his sword, under which No.1 then passes and turns to the left. No.1 is followed by Nos. 8, 7, 6, 5, and 4. The arch formed by No.2's sword moves across the oncoming set, and those holding the raised sword (Nos. 2 and 3) may move either sideways or backward to place. After all of the dancers have passed under, No.2's sword is lowered, and the movement is repeated successively by the swords of Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. The entire figure requires between ninety-two and one hundred bars of music.

(5) Single Sword Up (or Single Up)

(Illus. 4.96)

This figure is essentially the same as Single Down, except that the initiating sword is raised overhead rather than lowered. As the flow is not complicated by the dancers having to leap over a sword, this figure only requires approximately eighty-six bars of music to complete.

(6) Arches Down

(Illus. 4.97)

This figure is the same as Kirkby Malzeard Arches Down except that the movement is initiated by No.1's sword being lowered for the pairs to step over, rather than No.1's sword being the link between the first

pair to pass over the lowered sword opposite.

(7) Arches Up

This figure is the same as Arches Down except that the sword is raised for the dancers to pass under, rather than lowered for them to step over.

(8) Shoulders

Immediately upon finishing Arches Up, the dancers release the points in their left hands, turn right to face counterclockwise in a ring, placing their swords over right shoulders and grasping the point of the sword in front with left hands. In this position, the dancers ring counterclockwise until the end of the phrase of music.

(9) The Lock

(Illus. 4.98 - 4.99)

On the first bar of the next phrase of music, the dancers change direction by raising right arms overhead and turning to face centre. While circling clockwise, they cross right hands over left and make the Lock by passing their hilts under the point held by left-hand neighbours. Still circling clockwise, No.1 then raises and displays the Lock.

(10) The Wheel

(Illus. 4.100)

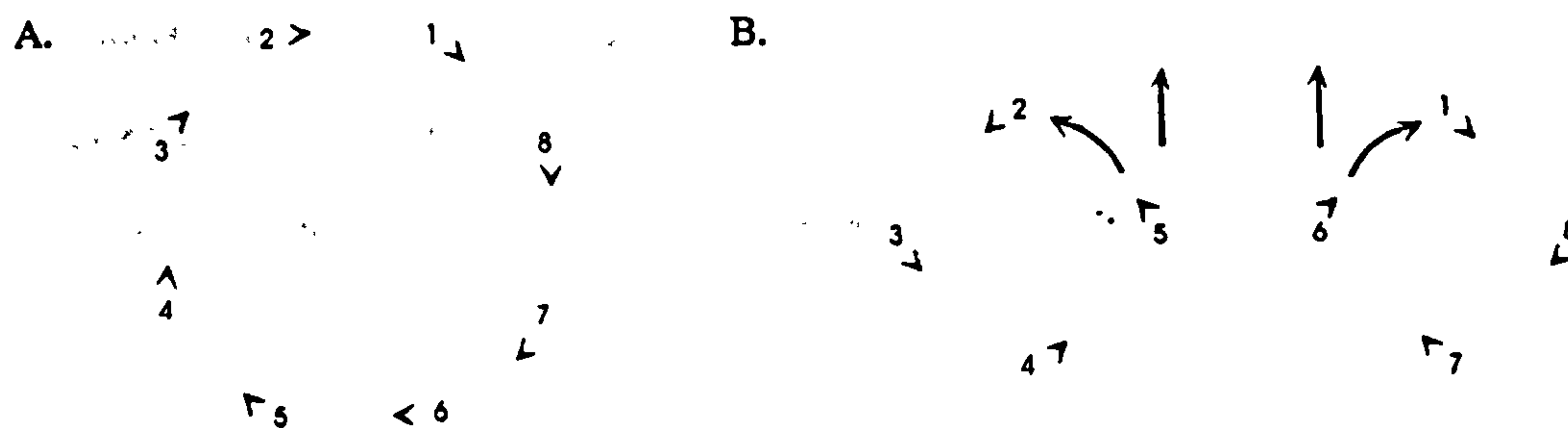
Still moving clockwise, No.1 passes the Lock overhead to No.2, who then passes it on to No.3 and so on around the set (taking approximately sixteen bars of music) until it returns to No.1 who displays the Lock for a further eight bars.

(11) The Rose

(Illus. 4.101)

This figure is performed in one of two ways:

1) If no fool (Tommy) is present, the Lock is lowered to waist level, while the set continues to move clockwise. At the end of the eight bar phrase, each man draws his sword downward to break the Lock and immediately returns the sword to the "March On" position. The musician finishes with a final note or chord. After a short pause, he plays an eight bar introduction, at the end of which Nos. 5 and 6 lead the dancers off in two rows of four. Nos. 5 and 6 move across the set and then cast out, creating two symmetric circles, and coming back up the middle to lead off, as follows:



2) If Tommy is present, he enters the ring during the Wheel, and the Lock is then lowered around him at shoulder or chest height. The swords are drawn, the music finishes, and Tommy falls to the ground (Illus. 4.101). The Betty, or another dancer, then brings on a woman from the audience who revives the man by kissing him. The fools with the woman lead off, followed by the two rows of four dancers led by Nos. 5 and 6. This second way of bringing the dance to a close developed when the fools were introduced in 1975.

A Note on the Role of the Fools

In addition to their involvement in this last figure of the dance, the fools also pass through the set during other figures, often engaged in a mock chase. The dancers appear to ignore their behaviour, thereby creating an impression of seriousness against which the comic antics of the fools are juxtaposed. Furthermore, as they are not directly involved in the dance, the fools are able to interact with the audience.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ For a discussion of the art of fooling, see Anthony G. Barrand, "The Morris Dancer as Straight Man: A Fool's Eye View of Humour in Seasonal Morris Dance Performances" paper presented at the International Conference on Traditional Humour hosted by The Folklore Society and The Centre for

4.10.3 Changes in the Haxby Dance

Apart from the addition of the fools, and their activities, as well as slight fluctuations in the tempos, the Haxby dance has experienced no stylistic or structural changes since it was first performed in 1973⁹⁶.

4.11 Summary

This chapter has presented a detailed description of the dances, including aspects of style, structure, and costume, and the ways in which these have changed over time. Implicit in the drawing out of differences, however, is the clarification of aspects of non-change. This begs the question of why and how the dance experiences change while retaining an overall sense of continuity. Yet, in order to understand this dynamic process we must look beyond the dance itself to the human groups involved in its perpetuation over time, as well as the role of the dance in the lives of individuals and the group as a whole. Therefore, it is to a discussion of the nature of the dancers and their communities that the following two chapters are devoted.

English Cultural Tradition and Language, August, 1988.

⁹⁶ Single Down, however, was adapted due to a "mistake" which occurred during a practice session before it was ever danced out.

Chapter Five

The Dancers and their Communities from the 1880s through World War Two

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the dancers and their communities, the latter providing the social networks from which the dancers are drawn, as well as the primary contexts in which the dance is performed, from the 1880s until the end of World War Two.¹ The dancers will be discussed in terms of who they are, including their relationships to each other, how they come to join the team, and what motivates them to participate. "Community" refers to a group of people somehow associated in a familiar way, which during this period is formed largely on the basis of family, place of residence, and occupation.² The relationship between this socio-economic network and the dancers will be discussed in terms of the nature of the dancers' activities within the community and the degree of support provided by the community. These relationships will be further clarified in the light of developments in the wider social context, in particular under the influence of the English Folk Dance Society and the folk dance revival of the 1920s.

As this chapter concentrates on the period from the 1880s through World War Two, we are obviously only concerned with the Grenoside and Handsworth teams, and not Bamsley Longsword. This chapter will be divided into two sub-sections:

- 1) from the 1880s up to World War One, and
- 2) from the 1920s until the end of World War Two.

In addition to covering relatively equal lengths of time, the sub-division reflects the decrease in activity, indeed, virtual lapse of both teams during World War One, the notable changeover of dancers in the 1920s, and the role of the English Folk Dance Society in the reappearance and perpetuation of the dance

¹ Although information is available about the dancers and their activities from the 1880s onward, the performance of the dance can be traced further back. See Appendix VI.

² Malcolmson (1973), p. 52.

in the inter-war years.

Before discussing the dancers and their communities as detailed above, it is necessary to provide some general information on the wider socio-economic environment which shapes the communities and influences the nature of the dancers and their activities.

5.2 The Socio-Economic Context

5.2.1 Introduction

Although the villages of Grenoside and Handsworth have been absorbed by the city of Sheffield, in the mid-nineteenth century they were each quite distinct communities, comparatively remote from the urban centre, and largely self-contained. However, the substantial increase in population and developments in transportation and industry, especially after 1850, increasingly influenced the nature of these communities.

5.2.2 The Economy up to World War One

Between 1801 and 1901 the population of England and Wales quadrupled. Yet, while Yorkshire as a whole followed the national trend, the population of the West Riding increased nearly fivefold, and that of the parish of Sheffield alone increased from 45,755 in 1801 to 380,793 in 1901. Sheffield was certainly not alone in experiencing such phenomenal growth, for the general increase in population during the Victorian period was accompanied by the movement of people from the rural areas into the cities in search of employment.³

The industrial developments in the Sheffield area in the second half of the nineteenth century were part and parcel of the railway age. Not only did the building of railways demand the products of the steel works, it also increased access to other industrial materials, especially coal, previously transported on the waterways. Indeed, the railway, which reached the Handsworth-Woodhouse district in 1849, had

³ See David Hey, *Yorkshire from AD 1000* (London: Longman, 1986), pp. 245-250.

a profound effect on the opening of large-scale mining works.⁴ Furthermore, the employment opportunities created by the expansion of the steel and coal industries subsequently attracted workers from the neighbouring counties of Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Lincolnshire, as well as from as far away as Ireland.

While the steel and coal industries expanded after 1850, the light trades undertaken by independent craftsmen -- filecutters, edge-tool makers, cutlers and the like -- began to decline. This was primarily due to foreign competition and tariff barriers in the late Victorian era and increased mechanisation as the century came to a close.⁵ Nevertheless, the light crafts continued to provide employment, especially from communities on the outskirts of Sheffield such as Grenoside, until World War One.

In terms of economic activity, the village of Grenoside was experiencing considerable transformation in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. In 1841,⁶ occupations were characterised by light trades practised alongside an established agricultural base. Grenoside is also noted for its quarries, the stone from which was in demand for the Sheffield grinding trades, as well as house building, throughout the Victorian and Edwardian periods. The primary occupations in 1841 were, in decreasing order of frequency:

- agricultural fork making
- nailmaking
- quarrying
- farming
- screw bolt making
- filecutting
- spindle, spindle tip, and shuttle tip making.

These last trades supplied the textile industry in the Halifax area and were popular primarily because the main route between Sheffield and Halifax passed through Grenoside. Some villagers were also employed in the local iron and steel works, and the community's needs were catered for by five publicans, four shopkeepers, three school teachers, two blacksmiths, two tailors, two clog makers, and one poor relief

⁴ John Roberts, *Woodhouse* (Woodhouse, Sheffield, South Yorkshire: Woodhouse West School, 1966), pp. 22-25.

⁵ Hey (1986), pp. 267-269.

⁶ Occupational details included in the 1841 census of Grenoside are kindly provided by Kenneth Staves.

officer. What is clearly missing from this diversified picture, however, is the mention of trades connected with the coal industry. Yet by 1881 miners constituted seven percent of the Grenoside workforce.⁷ As the population of the village more than doubled between 1841 and 1881, Grenosiders increasingly had to seek employment elsewhere, primarily in the collieries and foundries in places several miles to the north and east, such as Chapeltown, Wentworth, Elsecar, Tankersley, and Pilley (see Map 3). In 1881, filecutting was the predominant occupation, engaging 16% of the workers, followed by quarry employees at 14%. The heavy industries combined occupied seventeen percent of Grenoside's working population, and this percentage steadily increased as the demand for Grenoside stone declined and the filecutting trade became increasingly mechanised in the years leading up to World War One.

Similar to Grenoside, the village of Handsworth also experienced an economic transformation in the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1841 the primary occupations were agriculture, domestic service -- the only option for women -- and coalmining. Mining in this area, as mentioned above, occurred very much on a small scale until the railway came through in 1849. By 1881, however, nine pits had been opened,⁸ and the collieries, occupying twenty three percent of the workforce, were the primary employers for Handsworth. Although the iron and steel industries employed only two percent of the Handsworth working population in 1881, this increased in the years leading up to and including World War One.

5.2.3 Post World War One Economy

The postwar boom in the coal and steel industries occupied a greater percentage of the indigenous workforce and continued to attract immigrants to the area. As Maps 4 - 11 reveal, Grenoside was not as noticeably affected, at least in terms of physical size, as Handsworth was by this influx, primarily because Grenoside, as mentioned above, is situated several miles from the industrial sites. Although Grenoside was increasingly reliant on mining, its dependency was not nearly so pervasive as Handsworth's, which became acutely apparent during the 1926 strike. The repercussions of the worldwide depression of 1929-

⁷ Occupational details compiled from the 1881 census appear in Appendix VII.

⁸ Roberts, p.22.

31, however, were felt in both communities. A survey conducted in the winter of 1931-32 revealed that 42.8% of the unemployed in Sheffield were living in poverty.⁹ Although the problem of unemployment was not to be eradicated until the onslaught of World War Two, living and working conditions in general improved slightly during this period in which the foundations for the Welfare State were being laid.

5.2.4 Social Life

In the nineteenth century there were essentially two places outside the home where spare time could be spent: the church or chapel, and the public house.¹⁰ The pub provided a place for meeting, sharing gossip, and making or finding entertainment. The pub served as the headquarters for various political and social groups, and by the turn of the century was organising community activities ranging from fishing clubs to seaside excursions. Indeed,

there were few areas of nineteenth-century working-class life which remained untouched by the pub. And for those in search of warmth, light, liquid refreshment or convivial company, or simply looking for an escape from dark, cold and overcrowded houses, the place of drink was always on hand, and almost always open.¹¹

Apart from the social fulfilments of the public house, the occasional excessive consumption of alcohol, primarily beer, enabled people to cope with the extremely hard living and working conditions which they were forced to endure.¹² George Orwell's vivid description of working class life in *The Road to Wigan Pier* reveals that few improvements had been made by the 1930s, and drink remained an escape. Beer met certain nutritional needs, replenishing the body after heavy labour.

Drunkenness, however, was not uncommon, and from the mid-nineteenth century onward was a target for the activities of the church and chapel. Writing in 1884, Dr. Alfred Gatty, the vicar of

⁹ John Stevenson, *British Society 1914-45* (London: Penguin, 1984), p. 43.

¹⁰ Bailey, Peter, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: rational recreation and the contest for control* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p.9. See also Caroline Reid, "Middle Class Values and Working Class Culture in Nineteenth Century Sheffield --- The Pursuit of Respectability", in S. Pollard and C. Holmes, eds., *Essays in the Economic and Social History of South Yorkshire* (Barnsley: South Yorkshire County Council, 1976), 275-295; and James Walvin, *Leisure and Society, 1830-1950* (London: Longman, 1978).

¹¹ Walvin (1978), p.35.

¹² Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p.213. See also Bailey (1978), Walvin (1978), and Malcolmson (1973).

Ecclesfield parish, of which Grenoside is a part, comments on the situation.

A sad experience of the fruits of intemperance in this village has convinced me, that we shall get no moral improvement, until drunkenness is regarded as a disgrace, and a drunkard shunned as a vicious person. So long as a fortnight's hard drinking can be lightly termed, "going on the spree", I see no hope of amendment.¹³

In an attempt to draw people away from the indulgences of the pub, the church and chapels began to organise social events, brass bands, glee clubs, and annual festivities such as Whitsuntide processions. Middle-class initiatives also led to the organisation of team sports, especially cricket and football, and the establishment of reading rooms with the provision of games such as table tennis, darts, and billiards. Yet, despite these efforts, the public house was a firmly rooted working-class institution and continued to serve as a focal point for village social life. Church, chapel, and temperance society activities simply expanded the available pastimes, so that by the turn of the century the typical working-class man was apparently happy to partake in a Sunday School anniversary celebration one evening and have a sing with his mates in the pub the next.¹⁴ Such organised leisure activities, inspired by the Victorian principle of "rational recreation" (see Chapter Three) increasingly became a part of working-class life, especially as the length of the working week was reduced following World War One.

In addition to these pastimes, elderly people in Grenoside and Handsworth recall the visits of itinerant entertainers, including organ grinders, conjurers, and men with dancing bears, performing in the streets and pub yards for money and refreshment, as well as the annual "feast", or fair, with games, exhibits, and roundabouts.¹⁵ Other forms of entertainment, specifically the radio and the cinema, became more accessible to the working class after World War One. Also, with the provision of public transportation between outlying areas and the city in the 1920s and '30s, the younger generation began to frequent the dance halls and theatres in Sheffield.

¹³ Gatty (1884), pp. 30-31.

¹⁴ Walvin, p.41.

¹⁵ See Harold Wasteneys, *Grenoside Recollections* (Sheffield: The Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language, and the Division of Continuing Education, the University of Sheffield, 1980), pp. 45-46, 57-68. Also CMS-25/B - 05.40, CMS-86/B - 00.35, and CMS-77/B - 36.00.

5.2.5 Summary

The period from the 1880s to World War Two is characterised by a transformation in the economic activity of the villages of Grenoside and Handsworth under the influence of the growth of heavy industry, especially coalmining. Due to its proximity to the collieries, Handsworth grows substantially from the turn of the century onward, rapidly becoming part of the conurbation to the east of the city. Working-class social life also develops during this period, in the wake of largely middle-class efforts to improve conditions for living and working. Leisure time activities diversify with the organisation of cricket clubs, musical groups, dramatic societies, and so on, and with developments in transportation and the media in the inter-war years.

It is in this socio-economic context, then, that the Grenoside and Handsworth longsword dancing traditions persist from the 1880s to World War Two, and it is therefore in the light of this context that the dancers and their communities are now to be presented.

5.3 The Dancers and their Communities from the 1880s through World War One

5.3.1 Grenoside - The Dancers

The information available on the dancers before the turn of the century is somewhat limited, simply because living memory seldom reaches that period. However, the dancers and musician in the 1885 photograph (Illus. 4.04) have been identified, and their occupations and place of residence ascertained from the 1881 census records. The Captain in this photograph is thought to have been George Wood, who is known to have been dancing during this period¹⁶. Wood's brother, Arthur, (the official town crier

¹⁶ CMS-02/A - 10.35.

appointed by the Duke of Norfolk) was also a member of the team before the turn of the century,¹⁷ as were William Henry Housley, William Hoyland, and William Wragg, although they do not appear in the photograph.¹⁸ Details of the Grenoside team before 1900 are as follows:

Name	Date of Birth	Residence	Occupation
BEEVER, Joseph	1856	The Cupola Grenoside	quarryman
COOPER (Wragg), William ¹⁹ (son of Joe Wragg, below)	1866	Main Street, Grenoside, then Westwood Row, Tankersley, c.1900	iron moulder, then miner
CROSSLAND, William "Snap"	1857	Bower Lane Grenoside	quarryman
HOUSLEY, Benjamin "Little Benny" (cousin of William Housley, below)	1857	Thackery Row Main St. Grenoside	quarryman
HOUSLEY, Frank (nephew of William Housley, below) cousin of Wm. Henry Housley, below)	1865	Grenoside	quarryman
HOUSLEY, William (cousin of Ben Housley, above; uncle of Frank Housley, above; father of Wm. Henry Housley, below)	1837	Swifts Row Lump Lane Grenoside	quarryman
HOUSLEY, Wm. Henry (son of William Housley, above; cousin of Frank Housley, above)	1868	Swifts Row Lump Lane Grenoside	iron moulder
HOYLAND, William (brother-in-law of Wm. Crossland, above) musician - flutina	1867	Bracken Hill (Chapeltown), then Hoyland	miner

¹⁷ Wasteneys, p.71.

¹⁸ Confirmation of their membership came via Reg Ward (CMS-05/A - 24.30), George Hoyland, and several of his cousins (CMS-84/A - 10.30, CA4-119, CA4-122), and Lew Wroe (MSS 1943).

¹⁹ Although Bill Cooper is the son of Joe Wragg, he was born before Maria Cooper and Joe Wragg were married. It was apparently not uncommon for the first child in a family to be born out of wedlock, as is the case with two other men who were members of the sword team in the 1920s and '30s (see below).

WOOD, Arthur "Spank" (brother of George Wood, below)	1865	Grenoside	quarryman
WOOD, George "Spank" (brother of Arthur Wood, above)	1851	Swifts Row Lump Lane Grenoside	carter
WRAGG, Joseph (father of William Cooper, below; cousin of Walter Wragg, above)	1844	Bower Lane Grenoside	iron moulder
WRAGG, Walter "Mallock" (cousin of Joe Wragg, above) musician - flutina	1851	Thackery Row Main St. Grenoside	iron moulder

With the exception of Bill Hoyland, who was the brother-in-law of William Crossland (see Figure 5.01), all of the men lived in Grenoside, indeed, in the same end of the village (see Map 5). The families represented appear in the 1841 census records and were therefore well established in the village. In addition, the 1895 *Pall Mall Gazette* article states that the "oldest dancer's grandfather danced all his life".²⁰ While the participants' occupations are indicative of local industry, the concentration is influenced by family connections, as revealed in Figure 5.01. Kinship, then, appears to be a significant factor in the recruitment of dancers, and as will be seen presently, remained an important element in the perpetuation of the tradition through World War Two²¹. Involvement in the sword team appears also to have occurred through friendships made in the workplace and the neighbourhood.²²

Although two of the team members listed above finished dancing by 1900, a further seven members appeared between 1900 and 1912 (see Figure 5.02). Details of these dancers are as follows:

²⁰ (H. Cust), 1895, p.2, col.2.

²¹ The importance of family involvement in other traditional dance forms has been recorded by numerous scholars. See, for example, Theresa Buckland, " 'Hollo! 'Here We are Again!' Godley Hill Morris Dancers': A Study in Longevity", *Traditional Dance*, 2 (1983), 37-57; Keith Chandler, "Morris Dancing in the South Midlands: The Socio-Cultural Background to 1914", *Traditional Dance*, 2 (1983), 58-90; and Roy Dommett, "The Cotswold Morris in the Twentieth Century", *Traditional Dance*, 1 (1982), 59-92.

²² Theresa Buckland records a similar network of relationships amongst the Coco-Nut Dancers of the Rossendale Valley, Lancashire, in "The Tunstead Mill Nutters of Rossendale, Lancashire", *Folk Music Journal*, 5:2 (1986), 132-149.

Name	Date of Birth	Residence	Occupation
BEEVER, Lawrence "Buff" (son of Joe Beever, pre-1900)	c.1880	Grenoside	iron moulder
COOPER, George "Jud" (cousin of Bill Cooper, above)	1880	Lump Lane, then Thackery Row, Main Street, Grenoside	miner
CROSSLAND, Arthur (son of Wm. Crossland, pre-1900)	c.1890	Woodside Lane Grenoside	miner
HOUSLEY, Albert	1880	Grenoside	?
HOUSLEY, Harry "Soldier" (nephew of Ben Housley and the Woods, pre-1900; cousin of Arthur "Navy" Kirk, below)	1878	Main Street Grenoside	miner
KIRK, Arthur "Navy" (nephew of the Woods, pre-1900; cousin of Harry Housley, above)	1875	Thackery Row, Main Street, Grenoside, then Westwood Row, Tankersley, c. 1914	miner
NEEDHAM, Willis	c.1880	Grenoside	miner

The dates of these men reveal that they were a new generation of dancers, and Figure 5.01 shows that important family lineages are represented. The shift in predominant occupations, from quarry work to mining, in this period is an indication of the trend in Grenoside, and in the Sheffield area generally, as discussed in section 5.2 above.

To summarise, then, the Grenoside dancers from the 1880s to World War One were working-class labourers related to each other by family -- both across and between generations -- occupation, and place of residence. These relationships formed the social group which supplied the team with members. Yet, the question of *why* particular individuals chose to participate cannot be answered solely on the basis of the personal information presented above. In order to understand the dancers' motivations we need to explore their activities and the contexts in which they occurred.

5.3.2 Grenoside - The Dance and the Dancers in the Community

Between the 1880s and World War One, the Grenoside dancers performed annually during the Christmas season in the village streets and at the houses of the local gentry, commonly referred to as the "big houses". The annual tour would begin with two performances on Main Street (or the Turnpike, or the Old Coach Road,²³ as it was then known), the first at the junction of Norfolk Hill, and the second at the top of Lump Lane (see Map 5).²⁴ The dancers would then travel the district by foot, calling in at the houses of the gentry and well-to-do, such as Barnes Hall and Whitley Hall,²⁵ their performance adding to the seasonal festivities of the household.²⁶ As the area encompassed a number of "big houses", the touring would commonly occur over a period of days; the *Pall Mall Gazette* (1895) records that "from Christmas Eve for thirty days, day and night, they dance",²⁷ though the frequency implied by this report may be slightly exaggerated.

In addition to dancing out at Christmas time, the sword team would appear at local events, such as the Hospital Parade. This annual event, first organised by Ecclesfield and benefitting the various hospitals in Sheffield, consisted of people appearing in fancy dress on lavishly decorated vehicles. Sunday school classes, as well as village clubs and societies, would build a scene, such as a thatched cottage, or a symbol, such as a cross, to be covered with flowers and carried on the back of a dray. These would

²³ Jim Beever, *The Truant's Return* (Ecclesfield, Sheffield: Ecclesfield Parish Council, 1983), pp. 40-41, CMS-02/A - 04.20, and CMS-08/A - 19.30.

²⁴ Wasteneys, p. 60; CA1-38, CMS-04/A - 02.25; Thomas Arthur Hoyland, interviewed by Dr. Ian Russell, 20.4.71.

²⁵ It is worth noting that the sword dance during this period was not alone in its capacity as a seasonal house-visiting custom both locally and further afield. See Ruairidh Greig, "Seasonal House-Visiting in South Yorkshire" (unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Sheffield, 1988) and Theresa Buckland, "Family, Gender and Class in an English Ceremonial Dance Event", *The Dance Event: A Complex Cultural Phenomenon*, proceedings of the fifteenth annual symposium of the International Council of Traditional Music Study Group on Ethnochoreology (Copenhagen: ICTM Study Group for Ethnochoreology, 1989), 99-109.

²⁶ CMS-86/A - 28.24; "Yorkshire Folk Dances", *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, 2nd February, 1921; and J.T. Higgins, "Grenoside in Picturesque Competition To-day", *Sheffield Daily Independent*, 1st January, 1926.

²⁷ (H. Cust), 1895, p.2, col.2.

be judged and awarded prizes. Photographs of the parade between 1908 and 1910 include members of the sword team in their costumes.²⁸

Dancing also occurred at various times of the year outside of the village public houses which, despite the opening of the "new road" (Penistone Road) in 1820 which by-passed the heart of the village, continued to attract the custom of travellers. According to several sources,²⁹ the sword team would perform whenever they could raise a side and were assured of an audience who might be willing to spare a few coppers for a bit of entertainment.

Indeed, the collection of money appears to be the primary motivation for the dancers' activities from the 1880s until World War One, as it was for much customary activity in the nineteenth century.³⁰ While it must not be forgotten that dancing also provided entertainment for the performers themselves, its foremost function was to provide entertainment for others willing and able to pay for the privilege. The Captain, referred to as the "Fool" until after World War Two,³¹ would use his fur hat as a receptacle for collecting when the dance was finished. The dancers, meanwhile, might perform something else, such as Ring o' Roses, a solo step dance, or even a song to amuse the crowd while the Captain went around.³² Occasionally, a trick might be played on the audience in order to insure a good collection. Reg Ward vividly recalls the first time he saw the sword team, in 1913.

I remember being at the top of Lump Lane with me dad. They always called them "Morris dancers". And they were shouting, "Come on! There's Morris dancers!" And he lifted me up and put me on his shoulders, and I was only six. And I looked down, and the first thing I saw was this; they had a chamber pot with lemonade and sausages [to look like feces]. Well, anyone who drank were okay, but the ones who wouldn't drink paid sixpence. Well, all the strangers didn't drink, I can assure you... I remember that, my stomach doing a back somersault.³³

²⁸ See, for example, Wasteney (1980), p.61.

²⁹ CMS-04/A - 38.00, CA3-83, and Harold Wasteney, *Harrowin Times* (Grenoside, Sheffield: the author's family, 1982), p.52.

³⁰ Bushaway (1982), p. 259 and Malcolmson (1973), p. 57.

³¹ CMS-08/A - 26.20, CMS-86/A - 06.20, CA1-97, CA1-197, CA3-83, CA4-146, Lewis Wroe MSS (1938), and T.A. Hoyland, interviewed by Ian Russell, 13.6.71.

³² (H. Cust), 1895, p.2, col.2; T.A. Hoyland, interviewed by Ian Russell, 13.6.71; and David T. Smith, "A Yorkshire Christmas", *Blackwood's Magazine*, 235 (Jan-June 1934), 73-81 (p.80).

³³ CMS-04/A - 38.00.

While a collection was the norm in the context of the village streets, when performing at private homes the team would usually receive a single payment from the master of the house and/or refreshments.

Whereas the action of collecting money is public behaviour, and therefore easier to document, the use of the funds by the team members is much less explicit. The money received during the Christmas season would be divided amongst the performers. At other times the collection would also be shared out, unless the occasion or event was for the benefit of a particular charity when most, if not all, of the money would be donated to the cause.

Once the collection was shared out amongst the members it was essentially up to the individual what he did with it. Similar to nineteenth and early twentieth century Morris dancers in the South Midlands and Shropshire,³⁴ the money often went to supplement the family income. Although real wages after 1850 gradually increased,³⁵ there were times when, often due to extreme weather conditions, quarry workers and miners would be laid off. Harold Wasteneys recalls one particularly harsh winter which affected the Grenoside quarrymen.

Winters appeared to be much more cold than at the present time and these workers would be laid off many weeks in the winters owing to frost and ice. What's more there was no dole and they had to manage. In 1896 there was a period of sixteen weeks of continuous frost. The men built near the quarries a large snow house, where dances were held and refreshments served, the proceeds being distributed among the starving quarrymen. They borrowed a "dray" from a local contractor, with which they toured the surrounding villages which of course were not affected [as they did not rely on quarries for work], asking for alms of any kind to aid the sorry plight of themselves and their families.³⁶

While some of the money which the men collected would be used to relieve such conditions and improve the general standard of living of their families, it seems that the shareout was most often spent on drink. Writing in 1949, Walter Fleetwood explains that,

nearly all of the people I have asked seem to have formed the same opinion, "That in the olden days Sword Dancing provided the opportunity to drink a lot of beer."³⁷

³⁴ See Chandler (1983) and Ashman (1988).

³⁵ John Burnett, *Plenty and Want* (London: Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1966), pp. 91-95.

³⁶ Wasteneys (1980), p.28.

³⁷ Walter Fleetwood, letter to Kathleen Mitchell, 21st July, 1949.

Harold Wasteney's further confirms that drink was an essential part of the team's activities.³⁸ Reg Ward, who worked with several of the pre-World War One team members recalls that their "ambition in life was to get stoned [drunk] out of their senses".³⁹ Another man who knew the old team explains:

The only refreshment that the Grenoside team fancied were beer... I wouldn't say drunkards. That's a bit, it would be unjust to say that. They liked to drink a beer.... [But] I never saw them the worse for drink. They'd have, oh, seven or eight pints. But, I mean, to people of that nature seven pints, eight pints are nothing to them.⁴⁰

Whether they used the money to supplement family incomes during lay-off periods, or to purchase their fill of liquid refreshment, the sword team provided entertainment for themselves and others, and reaped the economic benefits of their skills. Furthermore, utilising such alternative means to afford recreational drinking insured that more of the week's wages was available to meet the needs of the household⁴¹.

The economic activities of the sword team did not stop at extracting money from the public, however, for it was common practice for novice members to pay a weekly subscription. The 1895 *Pall Mall Gazette* article records that "Threepence a week they pay during the season to meet occ. expenses".⁴² What the expenses entailed is not revealed but possibly included the provision of costumes. Sharp also mentions this custom in 1910.

There is the same ritual with regard to teaching probationers as is observed by Morris men, viz. 6 weeks instruction at 3d. a week with fines, etc.⁴³

Sharp does not relate what the fines were or for what offences they were levied, and no further references to fines have come to light. Several informants, however, recall the weekly payment,⁴⁴ and Reg Ward

³⁸ Wasteney's (1980), p.60.

³⁹ Reginald Ward, MSS, November 1985.

⁴⁰ CMS-86/A - 31.50.

⁴¹ Drinking away the week's wages was apparently a common occurrence in Grenoside before World War One. One man recalls, "My dad used to go to work, and call at every pub on the way home. And four weeks out of five there was nothing left for the wife. It's happened many times at my home." (CMS-05/B - 13.54)

⁴² (H.Cust) 1895, p.2. col.2.

⁴³ Sharp, "Folk Dance Notes", Vol.1, folio 200.

⁴⁴ CMS-05/A - 00.25, CMS-08/B - 27.20, and Walter Fleetwood, letter to Kathleen Mitchell, 21st July, 1949.

is quite explicit about the use of the subscriptions.

You used to pay threepence of the old money. That bought a pint of beer and a half ounce of tobacco, at that time.⁴⁵

Although it seems likely that the money received from novice dancers also contributed to the team's recreational drinking, to be fair, it possibly could have paid for costume materials at one time. According to Sharp's notes, Mrs. Walter Wragg, the wife of the team's musician (from at least the 1880s to World War One), made the jackets.⁴⁶ However, by the 1930s each man was responsible for providing his own jacket, which one of his female relations would make from fabric left over from making curtains, settee covers, and the like. Be that as it may, it appears that most of the money was divided amongst the members of the team, and most of that was spent on beer.

Drinking, especially to excess, was apparently greeted with strong disapproval from certain sectors of the community. Apart from offending those working-class individuals in pursuit of respectability,⁴⁷ frequent excessive drinking, which inevitably consumed some of the household wages, inevitably led to conflict within the family. Referring to his father, Reg Ward recalls a common occurrence.

He came home many times, having called in the pub and spent two-thirds [of his pay], or they may have had a good day, and the wife benefitted a little bit, you know. But more often than not they didn't, and there wouldn't be enough, and arguments ensued. And the men bumped the women, and that sort of thing.⁴⁸

In general, then, the women tended to decry drink, and many were therefore involved in temperance activities, associated primarily with the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist Chapels in Grenoside.

The chapel worthies strongly decried this drunken state, rarely missing an opportunity to denounce it. Children were invited to join the Band of Hope in an effort to point out to them how wrong it would be to follow their father's habits. It was a worthy try but on the whole it bore little fruit. The main chance of these "ranters", as they were called, to get their message over, was at the Whitsuntide "Sing" on Whit Monday. It was the practice of the Wesleyans to parade around and join up with the Methodists at the junction of Norfolk Hill and Main Street immediately opposite the *Angel* and the *Harrow* [public houses].... The chapels now having assembled in good order, the fiddlers would play the Whitsuntide hymns accompanied by the crowd, after which the worthy speaker, standing on a box, would get under way on the evils of the demon drink, and, pointing to the two hostelrys, denounce them in very strong terms as "The devil's

⁴⁵ CMS-02/A - 03.44.

⁴⁶ Sharp, "Folk Dance Notes", Vol.1, folio 193.

⁴⁷ See Caroline Reid (1976).

⁴⁸ CMS-26/A - 04.15.

parlour, serving the devil's brew".... Really what he had to say was common sense... [because] the wage earners spent far too much on drink to the detriment of their families' welfare. What they preached was well meant, but this was a way of life at the time.⁴⁹

Given this state of affairs, it is hardly surprising that the recreational drinking associated with the sword team's activities was often viewed with contempt by certain members of the village. However, their involvement in charitable events such as the hospital parade helped to reconcile their position within the community. The team also enjoyed a degree of support from their social peers (drinking pals) and, as mentioned above, from visitors, travellers, and passers-by. Yet by 1910, Cecil Sharp notes that the Grenoside dancers find it increasingly

difficult to get money nowadays especially out of the general public. The gentry support the dancers to a certain extent, but the villagers and townspeople are very apathetic. "Drink" as usual has also played a part in the work of disintegration.⁵⁰

Not only does this passage expose the dancers' economic motivations and the attitude of the community to the associated drinking, it also touches on a factor which proves to be vital to the perpetuation of the tradition before World War One -- the patronage of the gentry.

The patrons were the residents of the "big houses" of the district where the dancers would perform during their annual Christmas time tour. After completing their programme, which would include the sword dance, some solo stepdancing, and perhaps a song or two, the team would usually receive a payment and some refreshment before setting off to the next venue.

Although the extent to which the different households supported the team varied, the patronage of the Gatty family of Ecclesfield appears to have been particularly central to the maintenance of the team. The Rev. Dr. Alfred Gatty, vicar of Ecclesfield parish during the mid- to late nineteenth century, was apparently instrumental in organising the Christmas tours by "recommending them to perform at the residences of the gentry of the parish".⁵¹ Dr. Gatty's offspring continued to support the team, especially his son, Sir Alfred Scott Gatty, and daughter, Mrs. H.K. Eden, a well-known author of children's books. A report in the *Sheffield Daily Independent* gives credit to their involvement:

⁴⁹ Wasteneys (1980), pp.11-12.

⁵⁰ Sharp, "Folk Dance Notes", Vol.1, folio 200.

⁵¹ Lewis Wroe, "Grenoside Sword Dance", *English Dance and Song*, 10:2 (1945), p.22.

Thanks are due to the Gatty family of Ecclesfield... for keeping the folk dance and its traditions alive to this day. Were it not for the Gattys, the Grenoside dance probably would have been lost in obscurity... They provided the dress of the dancers at times, kept the oral tradition alive and the words by committing them to manuscripts; and as Mr. Cecil Sharp... told me, they introduced him to the most forgotten dance.⁵²

The involvement of the Gatty family continued with Col. Mackenzie Smith of Barnes Hall, a grandson of Dr. Gatty, and his wife, Lady Mabel Smith, the sister of Earl Fitzwilliam, who supported the team from the turn of the century through the 1950s.

The Smiths of Barnes Hall were well known, in fact, for their support of other forms of customary activity, especially during the Christmas season. Writing in 1934, but recalling some thirty years earlier, David T. Smith, a brother of Mackenzie, reveals the extent of the family's patronage.

On [St. Thomas' Day, 21 December] widow women come to [Barnes] Hall and claim a glass of milk or ale, generally the latter, a slice of plum cake, a sixpence and a gossip in the kitchen.... As the last widow goes away, a farm-cart loaded with coals may be seen following her; it is a Christmas present to the old ladies at the alms-house.⁵³

On Christmas Eve, each man in the Smiths' employment would receive a gift of food and cloth, or money. In addition to these essentially charitable claims, Barnes Hall would also receive the various local troupes of performers. The Mummers, enacting a version of the St. George play,⁵⁴ would be followed by a group performing the Derby Tup,⁵⁵

an even 'bludgeyer' folk-play than that of the Mummers; but the best of this class of entertainment is to come with the arrival after supper of the sword-dancers... the Grenoside sword-dance is the finest performance of its kind I have ever seen.... After the main performance the men give exhibitions of clog-dancing, at which they are expert.... Yorkshire songs, such as "The Old Hat", "Ilkla Moor", and "Billy Johnson's Ball" follow, before we bid them goodnight and leave them to their plum-cake and ale.⁵⁶

Besides indicating the variety of customary activity in the Grenoside area at the turn of the century, this piece reveals an interest in, and respect for, the skills of the sword dancers. To the patrons, the dancers

⁵² J.T. Higgins, "The Folk Dance Revival: Grenoside and Gatty Traditions", *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, 31st December 1925, p.9.

⁵³ Smith (1934), p. 75.

⁵⁴ See Greig (1988).

⁵⁵ See Ian Russell, "A Survey of Traditional Drama in North East Derbyshire, 1970-78", *Folk Music Journal*, 3:5 (1979), 399-478.

⁵⁶ Smith (1934), p.80.

appear to be engaging in "rational recreation", improving their situation by providing entertainment for rewards. In this context, the performers would most likely moderate their drinking so as to insure that they would continue to be made welcome in future. Indeed, the 1895 reference describes the dancers as "Churchmen all and men of marked moral worth".⁵⁷

The patronage of the local gentry and well-to-do was a vital element in the perpetuation of the Grenoside sword dance between the 1880s and World War One. Besides providing the team with an annual venue for performing and receiving pay and refreshments, and contributing toward the maintenance of the costume, the approval of the patrons, who were generally highly regarded within the community, increased the dancers' status and legitimised their activities, some of which might otherwise be held with contempt stemming from the occasional associated excesses occurring in the village context.

To summarise, then, in the period from the 1880s to World War One, the Grenoside sword dance was performed annually at Christmas time in the village and at the big houses of the district. The dancers would also appear at other times of the year when opportunities arose. Dancing provided entertainment for themselves and others, but the dancers appear to have been primarily motivated by the prospect of receiving payment for their activities, which would then either supplement the family income or, more often, be spent on beer. Although some of the villagers disapproved of the excessive drinking which often followed a good collection, the dancers' occasional charitable efforts and the patronage of the gentry for their seemingly rational form of recreation helped to reconcile this conflict.

5.3.3 Handsworth - The Dancers

As with Grenoside, the information available about the Handsworth dancers before the turn of the century is somewhat limited. However, the reconstruction of the events of this period is further complicated by the apparent transfer of the dance to Handsworth from the neighbouring village of Woodhouse in the late 1880s. The dynamics involved in this transfer will be discussed further below.

⁵⁷ (H. Cust), p.2, col.2.

Five sources, dating from 1912 to 1927, record that the dance was maintained in Woodhouse until 1887 or 1888. How long it had been in Woodhouse is unknown, although one account reports that it came to the area with Joseph Rhodes (see below) of Dronfield, Derbyshire,⁵⁸ six miles to the southwest of Woodhouse (Map 14), in about the 1860s. Concerning the movement of the dance from Woodhouse to Handsworth, a letter to Cecil Sharp from Matthias Parkin of Woodhouse, dated December 28, 1912, states that the Woodhouse team has not danced "for about 25 years".⁵⁹ In January 1913, Sharp records that the dance has been performed at Handsworth for twenty-three years (since 1889/90) after the Woodhouse team lapsed two years before that (1887/88).⁶⁰ Two articles appearing in the *Woodhouse Express* in August 1925 record the dance as having been performed in Handsworth since 1887.⁶¹ However, an article appearing in the *Woodhouse Express* in 1927 tells us: "In 1888... the Woodhouse team broke up".⁶² Regardless of whether the Woodhouse team lapsed in 1887 or 1888, and the Handsworth team began in 1887, 1888, or even 1889, it is clear that the dance had been performed by a group of men from Woodhouse until the late 1880s when a group of men from Handsworth took it up. However, an investigation of the dancers between the 1880s and World War One reveal that the shift was more of a gradual transformation than a sharp break.

Although no photographs of the Woodhouse side have been discovered, an article in the *Woodhouse Express* in 1927 names the members of the Woodhouse team which lapsed some time in the mid 1880s.⁶³ Most of the following information, however, is derived from the 1881 census records.

⁵⁸ "Sword Dancing: Handsworth Team to Visit London", *The Woodhouse Express*, 26th November, 1927.

⁵⁹ Matthias Parkin, letter to Cecil Sharp, 28th December, 1912, English Folk Dance and Song Society Collection.

⁶⁰ Sharp, "Folk Dance Notes", Vol.4, folio 1.

⁶¹ "Handsworth Garden Fete", *Woodhouse Express*, 8 Aug. 1925, and "The Handsworth Sword Dancers", *Woodhouse Express*, 22nd August, 1925.

⁶² *Woodhouse Express*, 26th November, 1927, p.9.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

Name	Date of birth	Residence	Occupation
CHANDLER, Anthony b. Canterbury, Kent	1860	Chapel Street Woodhouse	colliery banksman
COCKAYNE, Walter	1848	Woodhouse	miner
REDFERN, George	1856	Tannery Street Woodhouse	miner
RHODES, Joseph b. Dronfield, Derbys.	1839	Woodhouse	miner
WELLS, Clement "Boxer" (brother of George, below)	1862	Tannery Street Woodhouse	miner
WELLS, George (brother of Clem, above)	1859	Market Place Woodhouse	miner
WHEELER, Alfred	1852	Sheffield Road Woodhouse	miner
YOUNG, George (Note: probably born elsewhere as he does not appear in local census records before 1881)	?	Sheffield Road Woodhouse	miner

The fact that all of these men worked in the collieries is not only indicative of the trend in industry, but is also most likely the primary means by which the dancers were well-known to each other. Although there is one pair of brothers, what is clearly missing here, when compared to the pre-1900 Grenoside team, is a predominance of family relationships connecting the dancers. All of the men lived in Woodhouse in the 1880s, but several were born elsewhere. This feature, which appears consistently in the membership between the 1880s and World War One, reflects the influx of people into the area in search of employment in the late Victorian period (as discussed in section 5.2, above). Similar to Grenoside, the dancers appear to have resided in the same part of the village (Map 15) with the exception of Alfred Wheeler, who lived near the Angel Inn along the Sheffield Road.

In the late 1880s the Woodhouse team lapsed, and Alfred Wheeler eventually raised a new side of dancers, with George Young, formerly a member of the Woodhouse team, becoming Captain. Why this team disbanded cannot be determined, but since the average age of the membership was thirty three,

the lapse can hardly be attributed to elderliness. There may have been a decrease in community support of the dancers' activities, although the side raised in the late 1880s appears to have been well-supported by patrons (see below). Perhaps the men in the pre-1887 team had other interests which increasingly occupied more of their leisure time; George and Clement Wells, for instance, were members of the village cricket team, and Clem is also reported to have been a keen gardener.⁶⁴ Whatever the cause(s) of the lapse, Alfred Wheeler and George Young were interested in continuing, and they formed a team with the following men:

Name	Date of birth	Residence	Occupation
BAGSHAWE, Harry	1868	St. Joseph's Road Handsworth	?
BROADBENT, J.	c.1865	Handsworth	?
FLYNN, Frank b. Bradford, W.Yorks. musician - concertina	1855	Old Workhouse Yard Woodhouse Mill	quarryman
SCOTT, John Henry b. Lincs. (brother of William, below)	1865	Handsworth	miner
SCOTT, William b. Sheffield (brother of John Henry, above)	1870	Handsworth	miner
SIDDALL, John Henry "Harry" b. Sheffield parents b. Lincs. (brother of William, below)	1865	Medlock Road Handsworth	miner
SIDDALL, William b. Rawmarsh, S.Yorks. (brother of John Henry, above)	1868	Medlock Road ⁶⁵ Handsworth	miner
WALLIS, Horace	1870	Handsworth	miner
WHEELER, James (brother of Alfred, pre-1887??)	c. 1865	Woodhouse	miner
WIGLEY, Thomas	c. 1865	Woodhouse	?

⁶⁴ "Woodhouse's Oldest Man", *Woodhouse Express*, 9th September 1950, p.1.

⁶⁵ Medlock Road was called Clough Road until 1925 and was referred to by the local people as "Fast End" (CMS-32/B - 32.40 and CA3-287).

This set of dancers, with Alfred Wheeler and George Young, constitute a transitional team which appears to have persisted until about 1890. Whereas the pre-1887 side consisted entirely of men living in Woodhouse, of the twelve men associated with the team in the late 1880s, seven (or 58.3%) lived in Handsworth, four (or 33.3%) lived in Woodhouse, and one member (or 8.3%) lived in Woodhouse Mill. The recruitment of men living in Handsworth most likely occurred primarily through work; although many Woodhouse residents worked in the Birley collieries to the south and west of the village, some worked in the pits at Handsworth, Orgreave, and Treeton. Alfred Wheeler apparently worked, for at least some time, at Orgreave where many of the Handsworth dancers were also employed.⁶⁶ Family relationships, as revealed in two, and possibly three, sets of brothers also clearly played a role in recruitment. How Frank Flynn, a quarryman from Woodhouse Mill, was drawn into the team is not known, although a marriage-based connection, which proved to be active in Grenoside (see Figure 5.01), cannot be ruled out. Similar to the previous side, several of the members were born outside of Handsworth.

In about 1890, and certainly before the team was photographed in 1891 (Illus. 4.38), another substantial turnover in membership occurred. Alfred Wheeler and George Young from the Woodhouse team no longer appear, nor do Harry Bagshawe, J. Broadbent, Horace Wallis, James Wheeler or Thomas Wigley (see the Handsworth Time Chart, Figure 5.03). By 1891, Harry Siddall is the Captain, and the team had acquired the following seven new members:

Name	Date of birth	Residence	Occupation
BARKS, George "Joppy"	1868	Medlock Road Handsworth	railway signalman
DENTON, Frank musician - concertina	c.1865	Handsworth	miner
FARRELL, Tom	c.1870	Handsworth	?
SIDDALL, Joseph (brother of Harry and William, above, and Walter, below)	1870	Medlock Road Handsworth	miner
SIDDALL, Walter (brother of Harry, William, and Joe, above)	1871	Medlock Road Handsworth	miner

⁶⁶ CMS-73/A - 38.25.

VERDON, Patrick c.1870
 (Note: possibly born elsewhere,
 as he does not appear on any of
 the available local census records)

Medlock Road
 Handsworth miner

WALLIS, Fred 1872
 (brother of Horace, above)
 musician - concertina

Handsworth miner

With the exception of one of the musicians, Frank Flynn of Woodhouse Mill, by 1891 the team consisted entirely of men living in Handsworth, six of them in the same street, Medlock Road. Several strong kinship ties are represented in two sets of brothers: 1) John Henry and William SCOTT, and 2) John Henry (Harry), William, Joseph, and Walter SIDDALL. Although the Wallis brothers, Horace and Fred, are each associated with the team, there is no evidence that their periods of involvement overlapped (see Figure 5.03); nevertheless, Fred's involvement may have been influenced by his brother.

A final turnover of membership occurred in the years before World War One. In 1896 Frank Flynn stopped playing for the team,⁶⁷ and Tom Gray, a twenty-five year old miner from Darnall, filled the vacancy. Between about 1900 and 1905, five other members -- John Henry Scott, William Scott, Frank Denton, Tom Farrell, and Fred Wallis -- appear to have dropped out, leaving only Patrick Verdon, George Barks, and the four Siddall brothers. The following seven new members were then acquired (Illus. 5.03):

Name	Date of birth	Residence	Occupation
BEAUMONT, W.	c.1880	Handsworth Road (opposite New Crown) Handsworth	miner
HEENAN, James b. Ireland musician - concertina	c.1880	Medlock Road Handsworth	miner
LOGAN, Patrick (father b. Galway, Ireland)	1879	Medlock Road Handsworth	miner
LOMAS, Ernest	1871	Handsworth	miner
O'BRIAN, James b. Ireland musician - concertina	c.1880	Handsworth	miner

⁶⁷ *Woodhouse Express*, 26th November, 1927, p.9.

STANIFORTH, Thomas	c.1885	Handsworth	miner
YARBY, W.	c.1880	Handsworth	miner

A striking feature of the Handsworth team in the years immediately before World War One is that at least eight of the thirteen members -- the four Siddalls, George Barks, Pat Verdon, Jimmy Heenan, and Pat Logan -- lived in Medlock Road. It has been further confirmed that at least seven of the team worked together at Orgreave colliery.⁶⁸ Apart from the obvious family connections, friendships made in the neighbourhood and the workplace appear to have been important factors in drawing members into the sword team.

To summarise: between the 1880s and World War One the Woodhouse and Handsworth dancers, similar to Grenoside, were related to each other by family, occupation, and place of residence. Unlike Grenoside, however, a number of team members during this period were born elsewhere and came into the district in search of employment. Indeed, the transient nature of the working population in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is possibly responsible for initially introducing the sword dance into Woodhouse. There is no record of a sword dance in Woodhouse before the 1880s, and if the dance came to the village with Joseph Rhodes, who was born in Dronfield, north Derbyshire, in 1839, it would not have started much before about 1860.⁶⁹ If a side was raised at about that time, then the pre-1887 team could have been the second generation of dancers that Woodhouse had seen. The "transfer" of the dance from Woodhouse to Handsworth, which occurred initially through the social network of the workplace, happened over a period of a few years and developed through additional networks based on family and residence. Given the transient nature of the community, and indeed of the custom, it is unlikely that the changeover in personnel, which effected a change in place, was perceived, either by the dancers or the community, as particularly significant at the time. In practical terms the shift would simply entail the team, for the sake of convenience, meeting and practising nearer home, hence the adoption of the New Crown Inn at Handsworth as the team's headquarters at the turn of the century. Once the

⁶⁸ CMS-73/A - 38.25, and CMS-77/A - 23.45.

⁶⁹ Rhodes was certainly living in Woodhouse by 1871 when his first child was born, and he appears to have married a Woodhouse native.

meetings began there, men who lived in the area were drawn into the team, while those who lived further away from the venue, such as Alfred Wheeler, George Young, and the other Woodhouse residents, dropped out. Although the place with which the dance is associated (i.e. "Handsworth") was to become quite important to the identity of the group and the prestige of the community in the course of the twentieth century,⁷⁰ given the mobility of the population and, indeed, the dance, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, it may be concluded that the dance "belonged" to those interrelated groups of individuals who were interested in performing it, and not to the place where some of those individuals might happen to live.

5.3.4 Handsworth - The Dance and the Dancers in the Community

Unfortunately, there is little information available about the activities of the Handsworth dancers before World War One and the advent of Cecil Sharp and the folk dance revival. However, similar to Grenoside, the Handsworth dancers (and the Woodhouse-based team before them) would tour the district at Christmas time, performing at the big houses and calling in at the pubs along the way.⁷¹ Writing to Sharp in December of 1912, C.V. Collier recalls the sword dancers:

When a boy in South Yorkshire, a very complicated sword dance was performed in the district of Woodhouse Argreave [Orgreave] and Treeton.... I cannot describe it now as it is now about 30 years [c.1882] since I saw it performed.⁷²

Despite his assertion that he is unable to describe the dance, he gives sufficient detail in terms of numbers of dancers, the length of the performance, and especially the costume, to indicate that the troupe was most likely Joseph Rhodes' Woodhouse dancers. Cecil Sharp's notes confirm that the dance, since being taken

⁷⁰ For example, the Centenary celebrations in 1987 commemorating the one hundred years that the dance has been based at Handsworth. See Chapters Six and Seven.

⁷¹ Matthias Parkin, letter to Cecil Sharp, 28th December 1912; tape-recorded interview with Bill Siddall, 29 Nov. 1978 A-02.15; CMS-73/B - 19.05, and CMS-77/A - 00.40.

⁷² Carus Vale Collier, letter to Cecil Sharp, 4th December 1912, English Folk Dance and Song Society Collection.

up by the Handsworth men, was being "performed every Christmas or New Year without break".⁷³ The area encompassing Handsworth, Woodhouse, Orgreave, and Treeton included numerous big houses -- such as Handsworth Hall, Woodthorpe Hall, Bramley Hall, Handsworth Grange, Ballifield Hall, Dore House, and Orgreave Hall -- which could provide performance opportunities for the dancers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Map 9).⁷⁴ The area was also well serviced by public houses; Handsworth alone had five hostelries -- the Norfolk Hotel, the New Crown Inn, the Turf Tavern, the Cross Keys, and the Old Crown Inn -- which, similar to Grenoside, had thrived with commerce, as the Sheffield to Worksop turnpike road passed through the heart of the village.⁷⁵

Also similar to Grenoside is the fact that the sword dance was one of several customary activities before World War One associated with the Christmas season. Carol singers would be seen going from house to house on Christmas Eve, and groups of children called on their friends and neighbours on New Year's Eve to "let the New Year in":

You used to go in with a, a piece of coal and a stick, poke the fire up and throw the coal on the fire, "Happy New Year"... They used to give you a mince pie and a sixpence.⁷⁶

Also popular among the village lads was the Derby Tup, which they would perform in the doorways of public houses.⁷⁷ Like much of this customary activity, the sword dance was performed with the hope of receiving money and/or refreshments.

Although there is no further information on the performance of the dance before the turn of the century, several sources indicate that the team in the years leading up to the war appeared at other times of the year, dancing at local garden parties and special events, such as Whitsuntide gatherings, the Handsworth Flower Show, and Darnall Medical Aid (Illus. 5.01 and 5.02).⁷⁸ Several informants also

⁷³ Sharp, "Folk Dance Notes", Vol. 4, folio 1.

⁷⁴ Although the Handsworth team appeared at Barnes Hall and Wentworth Woodhouse in the 1920s and afterward, there is no evidence that they performed in either place before World War One.

⁷⁵ Roberts, p.21. This road (now part of the A57) remains an important route to and from Sheffield.

⁷⁶ CMS-74/A - 25.20.

⁷⁷ CMS-74/A - 21.20.

⁷⁸ CMS-32/A - 27.15 and CMS-77/A - 06.40.

recall seeing the sword team dancing in front of the local public houses at Easter time.⁷⁹

While the collection, if taken, at church, chapel, and charity-related events would usually be donated to the cause, at other times, and especially during the Christmas season, the dancers would clearly be providing entertainment for which they expected some reward. Indeed, these two aspects --- entertainment and reward --- are institutionalised in the clown characters, which appear with the dancers from at least 1891 (Illus. 4.38) through the mid-1920s (Illus. 4.40), and again in the late 1970s. The clowns, usually two in number, would engage in "horseplay", typical circus clown buffoonery, and "anything to make anybody laugh".⁸⁰ Then, at the conclusion of the dance, they would approach the audience shaking the collection boxes.

Part of the collection most likely contributed to the maintenance of the costumes, for as mentioned in Chapter Four, the jackets appear to have been purchased, rather than made from leftover household fabrics as at Grenoside.⁸¹ Furthermore, while the collection money would occasionally serve to supplement the dancers' wages during the winter months, it appears frequently to have been spent on drink. There are, however, no references to, or recollections of, the sort of excessive drinking associated with the Grenoside team during that period.⁸²

Coupled with their charitable activities, the relationship between the dancers and the community appears to have been mutually supportive and beneficial, especially after the turn of the century. While the extent to which the local gentry patronised the Handsworth team is unknown, it appears that, although this patronage provided important performance opportunities, the village community formed the basis for the team's regular, rather than strictly seasonal, appearances. The team's participation in community events and charitable benefits aroused further encouragement and engaged a mutually supportive relationship.

This contrasts somewhat with the picture which emerges of Grenoside where a degree of conflict

⁷⁹ CMS-32/A - 25.05, CMS-73/B - 20.42, and CMS-77/A - 32.05.

⁸⁰ CMS-77/A - 07.53; also taperecorded interview with Bill Siddall, 29th November 1978 A-23.30; Cecil Sharp's photographs, English Folk Dance and Song Society Collection.

⁸¹ Cecil Sharp, letter to J.H. Siddall, 26th January 1913, Handsworth Archive.

⁸² CMS-77/B - 03.10; tape-recorded interview with Bill Siddall, 29th November 1978.

between the dancers and the community existed, although this conflict was largely mitigated by the prestige the dancers acquired through the patronage of the local gentry. This difference can be explained, at least to some extent, by a consideration of the nature of these two communities in the early twentieth century.

Grenoside, as discussed earlier, was not affected by migrating populations to the extent which Handsworth was during this period. The members of the Grenoside team tended to belong largely to interrelated families which were well established in the village and had enjoyed a long association with the sword team. Many of the Handsworth dancers, on the other hand, originated from elsewhere, or were at most first generation residents of Handsworth village. While this is reflective of the general influx of newcomers to the area, it is also indicative of the relative immaturity of the team, which would in later years yield to a strong hereditary component. Given the fluid nature of the community, hence the team, it was perhaps more conducive, and even more necessary, for the Handsworth dancers to be communally active, thereby establishing new and acceptable performance opportunities in an urbanising context.

5.4 The Dancers and their Communities from the 1920s until the end of World War Two

With the advent of World War One, the activities of the Grenoside and Handsworth teams declined. While they may have continued their Christmas tours during the war, there is no record of it. However, by the early 1920s the performance of the dance reappears in both villages, influenced largely by the English Folk Dance Society and the upsurge of national interest in traditional forms of dancing, as discussed in Chapter Three. Support offered by the Society ranged from letters of encouragement to the establishment of new and prestigious performance opportunities which began to attract younger members of the community into the team. Besides organising activities which established a focal point for the teams, in the years following World War One, the doctrines of the English Folk Dance Society began to influence the attitudes, identities, and subsequent activities of the traditional performers. The patronage

of the gentry and well-to-do also remained important during this period, and the local representatives of the English Folk Dance Society often worked with and through these people to perpetuate the tradition.

5.4.1 Grenoside - The Dancers

In February of 1921 a folk dance campaign was mounted in the *Sheffield Daily Independent* in order to encourage the local dance teams to begin practising and performing again. Referring to Grenoside one article states:

Six out of the seven members of the last troupe are still alive, but it is eight years since a performance was given. Strong efforts have been made to hand the dancing down to another generation, but, strangely enough, the younger men do not take kindly to the idea.⁸³

This appeal apparently inspired Harry ("Soldier") Housley to teach the dance to a group of young men who were members of the Rover Scouts.⁸⁴ The group included his two sons, Harrington and Colin, who did, it seems, "take kindly to the idea". The team included the following (Illus. 4.08):

Name	Date of birth	Residence	Occupation
ALLOT, Roy	c. 1905	Grenoside	?
BEEVER, Edgar	c. 1905	Grenoside	?
BROOKES, Leonard (cousin of Albert Burkinshaw, below)	c. 1902	Grenoside	foundry worker
BURKINSHAW, Albert (cousin of Len Brookes, above)	1905	Grenoside	foundry worker
FLEETWOOD, Walter musician - fiddle	1905	Grenoside	foundry worker

⁸³ "Folk Dance Revival", *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, 2nd February 1921.

⁸⁴ John Mitchell, "Is there a Folk Culture in Yorkshire?" *English Dance and Song*, 35:1 (1973), p.9.

HOUSLEY, Colin ⁸⁵ (son of Harry, pre-war, and brother of Harrington, below)	1905	Grenoside	foundry worker
HOUSLEY, Harrington (son of Harry, pre-war, and brother of Colin, above)	1902	Grenoside (then Penistone, then Chapeltown)	foundry worker
MOULSON, Alan	c. 1905	Grenoside	?
WARD, Reginald	1907	Main Street Grenoside	foundry worker
WATERFALL, Jack	1904	Grenoside	foundry worker

Although initiated as part of the activities of a group of Scouts, this team, with a changeover of one or two members, continued to dance after leaving the Scouts until about 1930. Harrington Housley was soon co-opted into the men's team (see below), and the Captain, Jack Waterfall, dropped out in 1926 due to conflicting engagements with the Fox Hill Male Choir, of which he was a leading member. Although a majority of this team were in the Scouts together, they also knew each other simply from growing up in the village and through working together at the foundries. Furthermore, as Reg Ward explains:

Apart from being a sword team we were pals. When we weren't in the sword, we all congregated at what we called the corner, the crossroads, you know. Always. We were all pals, apart from the sword team. We knew one another very well.⁸⁶

Reg Ward, in fact, was drawn into the team by Roy Allot and Alan Moulson, with whom he would go ballroom dancing several nights a week. The members of this post-World War One team, then, knew each other primarily through growing up together in the village, and further through work and common interests.

The success of this young team, including a trip to London to appear in the first National Folk Dance Festival of the English Folk Dance Society in January of 1926 (see below), prompted several members of the pre-war team, including "Soldier" Housley, to recruit a few more men, and begin

⁸⁵ Colin Housley appeared with the men's ("traditional") team once in 1943, and then on a regular basis beginning in 1946. See Chapter Six.

⁸⁶ CMS-02/A - 13.00.

practising again. As Figure 5.02 illustrates, Bill Cooper (Wragg), "Buff" Beever, Arthur Crossland, "Soldier" Housley and "Navy" Kirk (as Captain) begin dancing again in about 1925. Harrington Housley was coopted from the Scouts, which had sufficient members, and a further three men joined to complete the side:

Name	Date of birth	Residence	Occupation
HOYLAND (CAVILL), George ⁸⁷ (nephew of William Hoyland, pre-1900) musician - flutina	1894	Bracken Hill (Chapelton)	miner
WRAGG (KIRK), Herbert Arthur "Tarty" ⁸⁸ (son of "Navy" Kirk and father of Gordon Wragg, below)	1897	Thackery Row, Grenoside, then Westwood Row, Tankersley, c. 1914	miner
WROE, Lewis (married the first cousin of William Hoyland, pre- 1900 and brother-in-law to STan Dearden, below) occasional musician - flutina	1895	Charlton Brook, then Bracken Hill (Chapelton), then Bromley Carr (Wortley)	miner

While Arthur Wragg (Kirk) was obviously drawn into the team via his father, "Navy" Kirk, George Hoyland (Cavill) and Lew Wroe, who had been friends for many years, were apparently introduced to the team through Bill Hoyland, to whom they were each related.⁸⁹ Despite dropping out at about the turn of the century because of work and family commitments, Bill Hoyland continued to see most of the members of the team socially until his death in 1927.

In addition to this core of nine members, the following three men performed with the team occasionally for several years during the late 1920s and early 1930s (see Figure 5.02):

⁸⁷ Similar to Bill Cooper (Wragg), George Hoyland (Cavill) was born before his parents, Elizabeth Hoyland and George Cavill, were married. However, he was known and referred to both as George Hoyland and as George Cavill. He will henceforth be referred to here as George Hoyland (Cavill).

⁸⁸ Again, Arthur Wragg (Kirk) was born before his parents, Sarah Wragg and Arthur "Navy" Kirk, were married.

⁸⁹ CMS-84/A - 10.30.

Name	Date of birth	Residence	Occupation
HOYLAND, George (son of William Hoyland, pre-1900) musician - flutina	1910	Hoyland	postal messenger, then clerk
HOYLAND, Thomas Arthur (son-in-law of Benny Housley)	1895	Grenoside	foundry worker
KIRK, Thomas (son of "Navy", brother of Herbert Arthur)	c.1910	Thackery Row Grenoside, then Westwood Row, Tankersley, c. 1914	miner

Again, these men were drawn into the team primarily through the various family connections noted.

In the mid to late 1930s some of the older men -- "Buff" Beever, "Soldier" Housley, and Bill Cooper -- prepared to retire, although Bill Cooper and "Soldier" Housley occasionally appeared in the role of Captain. Several new members were recruited, largely through family connections, to replace the older dancers (Illus. 4.09 and 5.03):

Name	Date of birth	Residence	Occupation
DEARDEN, Stan	c.1905	Charlton Brook (Chapelton)	miner
DRANSFIELD, Cyril "Chissie", "Chisel"	c.1905	Charlton Brook (Chapelton)	miner
MYERS, Fred (son-in-law of "Soldier" Housley, nephew of Bill Cooper)	1909	Grenoside, formerly of Potter Hill (High Green)	miner
WARD, Wilfred (cousin of Reg Ward, Scout team)	1918	Grenoside	miner

In addition to family connections, Dearden, Dransfield and Ward knew several of the team members from living in the same area, as well as working in the pits.⁹⁰ Fred Myers also knew Dearden and Dransfield, but he was drawn into the sword team primarily through his wife, who was a daughter of "Soldier" Housley. He explains:

⁹⁰ CA1-37.

' wasn't really interested [in the sword team] until I got married. And, of course, Maud's brother, both brothers, and her father was in it. So I, I don't know whether she pushed me into it or what. Anyway, I got with them and she kept me at it ever since.⁹¹

A final influx of members occurred in 1938 when the team made a conscious effort to form a side of younger dancers. The new recruits included:

Name	Date of birth	Residence	Occupation
BLACK, Arthur	c.1915	Chapelton	?
GORE, Arthur	c.1920	Charlton Brook (Chapelton)	foundry worker
HOUSLEY, Hubert (son of Benny Housley, pre-World War One)	c.1905	Grenoside	?
MOLLART, Roy	c.1915	Grenoside	?
STEWART, Jack	c.1915	Chapelton	miner, shopkeeper
WRAGG, Gordon (son of H.A. Wragg (Kirk) grandson of "Navy" Kirk)	1930	Westwood Row, Tankersley, then High Green	insurance clerk, caretaker

Again, these men were related to the established members of the team based on occupation, residence, and family. Bill (Cooper) Wragg, an active member since before the turn of the century, died in 1939 and shortly thereafter four of the new members joined the armed forces.⁹² However, as most of the dancers were in the mining and metallurgic industries, and therefore in tied jobs, the team managed to sustain itself during the war and performed occasionally (see below).⁹³

Also in 1938, another Rover Scout team was trained by Harrington Housley. A member of this

⁹¹ CMS-08/A - 27.10.

⁹² Wroe (1945), p.23. The men who left the team to join the armed services are believed to have been Arthur Gore, Hubert Housley, Roy Mollart and Jack Stewart.

⁹³ Between 1939 and 1945 the team consisted of: Arthur Crossland, Harry "Soldier" Housley, Harrington Housley, Colin Housley, Navy Kirk (Captain), Herbert Arthur Wragg (Kirk), Fred Myers, Lewis Wroe and George Hoyland (Cavill). H.A. Wragg (Kirk)'s son, Gordon Wragg joined the team toward the end of the war and danced occasionally for several years.

team explains:

The Scouts were putting a big show on in Sheffield, and they wanted turns for it. And Harrington thought our sword dance would be a good, a good thing. And so we learnt it [but] it wasn't accepted for the show. But when we went to camp, this was August 1939, just before war broke out...we did this at the campfire.⁹⁴

Although most of the names of the young men involved in this team have been forgotten, two of those who learned the dance with the Scouts, Ted Frost and Syd Cotton, would join the men's team after World War Two (see Chapter Six).

To summarise, then, similar to those involved in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Grenoside dancers between the 1920s and World War Two were known to each other through family, place of residence, and occupation. While neighbourhood and family connections obviously continued to be important networks for recruiting members, friendships made in the workplace appear to predominate in the 1920s and 1930s in the membership of both sides. This trend leads to a marked increase in the number of team members who resided in villages other than Grenoside. Before World War One there appears to have been only one member, Bill Hoyland, who lived elsewhere, although he was related by marriage to another member of the team. However, as more Grenoside men began to seek employment in the mines a few miles to the north and east, men from other villages, especially Charlton Brook and Bracken Hill (see Map 3) joined the team. As it was not uncommon from World War One onward for people to move to the pit villages in order to be closer to work, several of the dancers, including Bill Cooper (Wragg) and "Navy" Kirk and his sons, moved to Westwood Row in Tankersley. Therefore, by the start of World War Two, nearly two-thirds (twelve out of nineteen) of the men who could be called upon to perform the sword dance lived outside of Grenoside; given the nature of the available employment which increasingly drew men away from the village, thus expanding their social network, this trend is hardly surprising. Yet, as will be discussed presently, and further in Chapter Six, in the context of the 1920s and '30s, and finally crystallising in the mid 1940s, the place from which the dance, and ultimately the dancers, originate becomes inflated with importance. Therefore, while the expansion, largely through occupational ties, of the social network, or community, from which the dancers are drawn is a natural consequence of wider socio-economic changes during the inter-war period, it would eventually

⁹⁴ CMS-21/A - 02.00.

lead to interpersonal conflict in the years immediately following World War Two.

5.4.2 Grenoside - The Dance and the Dancers in the Community

In the context of the folk dance revival of the 1920s and 1930s, the performance opportunities for the Grenoside sword dancers, as with many traditional teams,⁹⁵ increased dramatically. As mentioned above, a newspaper campaign was mounted in the *Sheffield Daily Independent* in February 1921 for the revival of English folk dances. The infrastructure necessary for such a revival to occur in the Sheffield area was established after a meeting the following June called for the purpose of founding a local branch of the English Folk Dance Society. Indeed, it was largely through the efforts of two of the officers of this branch, the Honorary Secretary, Miss Hannah Mawson, and the Chairman, Commander E.H.M. Nicholson, that numerous local and national performance opportunities were accessed by the Grenoside and Handsworth dancers.

The local gentry, however, remained a source of support in the inter-war years, and the Smiths of Barnes Hall, in particular, actively encouraged "Soldier" Housley in his efforts to raise a side from the ranks of the Grenoside Rover Scouts. It is likely that the Smiths provided at least part of the funding for the red satin Hussar-style jackets, and there is evidence that Lady Mabel Smith presented the team with caps after their appearance at the Albert Hall in 1926.⁹⁶ Once established, the young team began touring at Christmas time after the fashion of the previous side. They would begin with one performance in Main Street in front of the Old Harrow Inn, where they practised, and then they would tour the district calling at places such as Birley Hall, Wentworth Woodhouse, Whitley Hall, and finishing at Barnes Hall.

In 1925 Miss Mawson, the Honorary Secretary of the Sheffield and District Branch of the English Folk Dance Society, invited the team to attend and display their dance at a Country Dance Party in Sheffield. Douglas Kennedy, the Director of the Society, was present and was apparently inspecting their

⁹⁵ Roy Dommett (1983), pp. 63, 66-75.

⁹⁶ CMS-02/B - 20.30.

performance to ascertain whether or not the standard would be acceptable for appearing at the Society's first festival in London the following January. Shortly after this occasion, the team received an invitation to go to London. The event was well publicised nationally, and several feature articles on the Grenoside sword dancers appeared in the *Sheffield Daily Independent*, indicating the level of interest aroused locally.

An article appearing on 31 December 1925 opens:

Folk dancing is much in the air in view of the National Folk Dance Festival which opens in London to-morrow. Famous Yorkshire dances, performed by native troupes from the shire of broad acres, will be included in the programme, and, not least interesting, the Grenoside dancers will be there.⁹⁷

The piece goes on to describe the possible origins of the tradition as well as the importance of patrons, such as the Gattys of Ecclesfield and the Smiths of Barnes Hall, in supporting the custom. The article concludes with a brief discussion of the revival of the team.

For some years during the war the custom failed, the dancers had grown old and Father Time had claimed victims, and with none to fill the gaps the Grenoside dancers seemed likely to die out.

But once more the Gatty family came to the rescue, and in 1922, through the interest of Colonel Mackenzie Smith, of Barnes Hall, a grandson of Dr. Gatty, it was revived with the result that to-day the troupe seem to be alive as ever and hopeful of winning laurels in the great Metropolis of the Empire.⁹⁸

This excerpt not only provides evidence of middle class benevolent paternalism (as discussed in Chapter Three), but also reveals the prestige that the Grenoside team were gaining as their dance became a focal point of national interest.

An article appearing the following day, 1 January 1926, describes the contemporary team and their recent activities.

Tradition was honoured during Christmas in the best of style. A public performance was given in the snow in the main street of the village, and much interest was aroused....

Countess Fitzwilliam [of Wentworth Woodhouse] displayed much personal interest in the visit to Wentworth... and she said she hoped the troupe would give the most distinguished display at the London Festival.

The usual visit to Barnes Hall, the home of Lieut-Col and Lady Mabel Smith, is deferred until after the London trip, when the dancers will appear specially at a house party. But many villages, institutes, and clubs have witnessed their performance during the holiday season.⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Higgins (1925), p.9.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Higgins (1926), p.8.

Besides providing evidence of the continued support of the local gentry, this passage indicates that this young team was also active in the community. It has already been mentioned that the pre-World War One team must have enjoyed a degree of support from the community, but this support was limited in the light of the dancers' exploits. One member of the young team recalls the difficulties they initially faced trying to overcome the negative (i.e. drink associated) aspects of the reputation of the previous side.

It took years to, to, you know, kill that boozing lot. Years and years it took. First when we started people wouldn't look at us... and not a man drank!¹⁰⁰

Certainly the fact that the young team, averaging twenty years of age in 1926, did not drink, except in moderation,¹⁰¹ contributed to their gradual acceptance within, and encouragement by, the community. Two additional factors must also be considered: the nature of the team's activities, and as mentioned earlier, the status gained by the dancers, and subsequently the village community, through appearances at prestigious events, such as the London Festival.

Concerning the young team's activities, there is, first of all, a marked shift away from dancing at inns and public houses. Although their Christmas tours included some street dancing outside, from which they might draw an audience, they apparently did not spend much time refreshing themselves afterwards, nor, as will be illustrated shortly, did they appear to be collecting money to be spent on drink during or after the tour. The young team were essentially interested in performing at the big houses but would also call at various charitable institutions and hospitals en route from one patron to the next. The decrease in performances by the young team at public houses became inevitable when the men's team reformed in 1925 and began performing again at their established haunts. Furthermore, following their trip to London, the young team were keen to attend other such events.

This [London Festival] wetted (sic) our appetites and we decided to use the money we received during our Christmas Tour to visit various Festivals and Competitions.¹⁰²

In 1928 this team attended the Nottingham Musical Festival and won first prize in the folk dance competition. Also in 1928, and again in 1929, the team travelled to Newcastle-upon-Tyne to compete in

¹⁰⁰ CMS-02/A - 13.31.

¹⁰¹ CMS-02/A - 13.31, CMS-04/A - 42.10, CA1-123, CA1-132, and CA3-82.

¹⁰² Walter Fleetwood, letter to Kathleen Mitchell, 21st July 1949.

the North of England Musical Tournament, winning second prize both years. Due to other interests (e.g. football, cricket, courting) and family responsibilities, however, the young team disbanded in about 1930.

Meanwhile, the reformed men's team took up their annual Christmas tour of the district and were increasingly in demand to give displays at various charity events in Grenoside, neighbouring villages, and throughout the Sheffield area. In 1927, for example, the Grenoside dancers, along with the Handsworth team, performed at the Sheffield Works' Convalescent Homes' Bazaar at the Cutlers Hall.

Furthermore, like the Scout team, the men's side benefitted from the new performance contexts which the national folk dance revival opened to them in the 1920s and 1930s. In August 1927 they performed at an English Folk Dance Society summer school at Buxton, Derbyshire, and in January 1938 they appeared at the Society's thirteenth annual festival at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Although the activities of the team decreased with the start of World War Two, the Sheffield and District branch of the Society continued to organise events. For example, both the Grenoside and Handsworth teams were invited to perform at a weekend of dance held at the Wisewood Council School in Sheffield in 1943.

Indeed, once they were re-established, the men's team appear to have been given priority over the Scout side when invitations were being issued. This naturally lead to a certain degree of ill-feeling amongst the young team who had, after all, revived the dancing after the war while the former side remained complacent.¹⁰³ However, as mentioned above, following their London appearance the young team became interested in attending competitive festivals which enabled them to travel and continued to provide them with a focal point, that is, something to work toward. Furthermore, according to several informants,¹⁰⁴ the two teams rarely, if ever, came into contact, and in fact, consciously avoided meeting each other when performing locally during the Christmas season. Naturally a certain degree of rivalry existed, but this would be exacerbated and lead to conflict in the years following World War Two (see Chapter Six).

Although the team seldom received a fee *per se* for performing on these occasions, the Society paid for their travel and, if necessary, accommodation expenses, and reimbursed them for wages lost in the course of making the appearance. Financially, then, the dancers were no better or worse off for having

¹⁰³ CMS-05/B - 17.53.

¹⁰⁴ CMS-02/B - 12.25, CMS-06/A - 07.30, and CMS-77/A - 33.15.

given a display. During the 1920s and '30s the prospect of economic gain as a motivation for performing appears to have been superseded by the fringe benefits of Society organised events. Certainly, given the generally improving social and economic conditions after World War One, the receipt of money for providing entertainment was no longer necessary for supplementing family incomes. Furthermore, the dance was clearly becoming more than simply a means of obtaining beer money, since for both the Scout team and the men's team, the chance to travel and have time away from work and the routine of village life was an opportunity few would miss.

Yet far more pervasive was the personal, team, and indeed village pride which such prestigious events fostered. Although previously only known locally and referred to simply as "the morris dancers",¹⁰⁵ upon entering the national arena the team were billed as "The Grenoside Sword Dancers". While national exposure increased the dancers' status within the community, through this identification with place (i.e. "Grenoside") the sword team became a vehicle for village pride.

In addition to providing new and acceptable performance venues for the Grenoside dancers, the influence of the English Folk Dance Society can also be seen in some of the attitudes and related activities of the dancers. Recognition by a national organisation interested in the preservation and perpetuation of the dance not only legitimised the dancers' activities within the community, but consequently raised their awareness of their own distinctiveness. In other words, in the wake of the folk dance revival the dancers became conscious of their role as tradition bearers and subsequently reflective about the history and the future of the dance.

One man in particular, Lew Wroe, responded to this trend, and according to relatives and friends, he was very keen to research the past and record the present.¹⁰⁶ In 1933 Wroe wrote to Douglas Kennedy, the Director of the English Folk Dance Society, offering to donate his sword, an item he knew would be of interest to the Society, to their museum at Cecil Sharp House. By May of 1934 an entire set of swords had been negotiated and a new set presented to the team.¹⁰⁷ Lew Wroe continued to

¹⁰⁵ See above, section 5.3.

¹⁰⁶ CMS-85/A - 02.52/B-36.35, CA4-112, CA4-119, and CA4-122.

¹⁰⁷ "Grenoside Sword Dancers' Ancient Swords", *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, 29th May 1934, p.9; "Current Topics", *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 31st May 1934, p.6; "Last Dance for Old Swords", *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, 1st June 1934, p.8.

correspond with local and national Society officials, such as Kennedy, R. Kenworthy-Schofield, and Hannah Mawson, over a twenty year period¹⁰⁸ and his manuscripts serve to illustrate the influence of the doctrines of the folk dance revival on his ideas about, and attitudes toward, the dance. For example, included in a piece written by Wroe in 1943 entitled "Customs and Traditions of Grenoside Morris Sword Dancers" (sic) are the following statements:

1. The locking of the swords round the captains neck represented that of locking them round that of a bullock and the quick draw at the same time No 2 knocking the captains hat off represents the cutting off of the bullocks head and the dance then preformed around the bullock as it is roasting for the feasting...
2. The captain having been killed in action is brought to life again and the dance is one of joy and jubilation.
3. That when a dancer puts on his trousers he automatically becomes a member of the kings army.¹⁰⁹

The imagery in this passage is clearly reminiscent of the antiquarian writings of late nineteenth and early twentieth century anthropologists and folklorists, discussed in Chapter Three. While the dancers themselves may have held such beliefs, it is quite likely that they were influenced by theories of popular revivalists, like Cecil Sharp and Douglas Kennedy, who incorporated the doctrine of survivals into their works. The expression "killing the bullock", however, has been referred to by several informants,¹¹⁰ and Ecclesfield was known to have had a troupe of "Ploo Bullocks".¹¹¹ Yet, what is important here is that Wroe is making a conscious effort to explain and rationalise certain aspects of the tradition in the light of the revival context and couched in terms of popular contemporary explanations of similar customary activities.

The dancers were certainly exposed to this sort of rhetoric, both verbally and through the printed page. Sharp's publications, for instance, were readily available, and he was known to supply copies to

¹⁰⁸ After the team split in 1947 (see Chapter Six), Wroe appears to have discontinued his correspondence. However, he was interviewed in 1959 by Peter Kennedy, the son of Douglas and collector of traditional dance and song in his own right, and in the 1970s by members of the Survey of Language and Folklore (now the Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language) at the University of Sheffield.

¹⁰⁹ Lewis Wroe, MSS, 1943, p.2, English Folk Dance and Song Society Collection. The quotation has been reproduced verbatim.

¹¹⁰ Reg Ward, Fred Myers, and George Hoyland.

¹¹¹ Ian Russell Collection, and Greig, MPhil (1988), p. 170.

informants if requested.¹¹² The dancers had further opportunity to learn of the "origins" of their dance when Sharp, and later Kennedy, lectured on the subject. In October of 1921 Sharp spoke at a meeting of the Sheffield and District branch of the Society, which at least some of the local traditional dancers attended.¹¹³ The following summary of Sharp's lecture on that occasion appeared in the *Woodhouse Express*:

The lecture emphasised the religious or spiritual origin of the dances; like all forms of art they were a means of expression; they embodied the essential English spirit --- that of unaffected and unself-conscious merriment.¹¹⁴

The sentiments evoked in this excerpt, especially the notion of "unself-conscious merriment", are echoed in Wroe's comments of "joy and jubilation".¹¹⁵ Whether or not the participants perceived the dance as a remnant of an ancient religion is essentially a moot point, for regardless of the nature of the explanation, the fact that the participants were reflecting on the nature and meaning of the dance is symptomatic of the context of the revival. Furthermore, as the dancers became more reflective about the nature of the tradition, they also became more aware of their active role in the perpetuation of that tradition. It was impressed upon the dancers by representatives of the Society that they had a duty, indeed an obligation,¹¹⁵ to insure that their dance did not lapse, as so many other local customs had since World War One.¹¹⁶ Not only is this sense of duty revealed in the several conscious efforts to recruit younger men into the team, as mentioned above, but also in the dancers' attitudes and expressed motivations. Reg. Ward explains:

The sword team [before World War One], they danced not to preserve the tradition, they danced for beer money. They preserved the tradition, which I appreciate now, but they didn't dance with that purpose in view. You know, like this chamber pot, with the lemonade and the sausages, you know. Anyone who didn't drink... paid sixpence. Beer money! They didn't care about the tradition at all, but they did preserve it.¹¹⁷

¹¹² Cecil J. Sharp, letter to J.H. Siddall, 12th February 1920, Handsworth Archive.

¹¹³ "The Sword Dancers", *Woodhouse Express*, 15 Oct. 1921.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ This will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six, as these sentiments crystallise and their consequences appear in the years following World War Two.

¹¹⁶ *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, 1st June 1934, p.8.

¹¹⁷ CMS-26/A - 07.35.

Although this sense of obligation to perpetuate the tradition has its roots as a motivating force in the inter-war years, its implications as a concept and its effectiveness in maintaining a side would not emerge until after World War Two.

To summarise then, in the period from the 1920s to World War Two the performance of the Grenoside sword dance is greatly influenced by the opportunities provided by the folk dance revival and the activities of the English Folk Dance Society. The dancers also continue to benefit from the patronage of the local gentry, and through the team's regular appearance at local charitable events, as well as their increased status in the light of the revival, they solidify their position within the community. Furthermore, the ideas and doctrines fostered by the revivalists begin to influence the attitudes and activities of the dancers, and this period witnesses the emergence of the dancers' awareness of themselves as tradition bearers.

5.4.3 Handsworth - The Dancers

There is no record of the Handsworth dancers performing after the First World War until April 1920 when, in response to an invitation from Cecil Sharp, they gave a display at an English Folk Dance Society event in York. The team included the four Siddalls, George Barks, Pat Verdon, Tom Staniforth, Ernest Lomas, and Tom Gray (concertina), all of whom were dancing prior to the war (see Figure 5.03). This side continued to dance together, with the exception of Pat Verdon who was eventually replaced by Frank Hatter, a Handsworth miner, until 1925 when due to age they retired.

As these men prepared to retire, they trained a new team of dancers, and for a short time Frank Hatter took on the role of captain and Tom Gray continued as the musician, until others could be found to fill these roles. The young team, which first performed in public in 1926, included the following men (Illus. 4.40):

Name	Date of birth	Residence	Occupation
BARKS, Charles "Joppy" (son of George, pre-1926 team)	c.1905	Medlock Road Handsworth	miner

BROWNETT, Edgar [born elsewhere] ¹¹⁸	c.1908	Handsworth	miner
GOODISON, Jack (brother of Jim, below)	1905	Handsworth	miner
GOODISON, Jim (brother of Jack, above)	1908	Handsworth	miner
KANE (or CAIN), Jim	c.1910	Handsworth	miner
LOMAS, Ernest "Donkey" (son of Ernest)	c.1905	Handsworth	joiner
SIDDALL, Jack (son of William, nephew of Harry, Joe, and Walt, and cousin of William, below)	c.1900	Medlock Road Handsworth	miner
SIDDALL, William (son of Harry, nephew of William, Joe, and Walt, and cousin of Jack, above)	1902	Medlock Road Handsworth	miner

As with the Grenoside Scout team, these young men knew each other primarily through growing up together in the village. Several were drafted into the team through their father, and most were also members of the Handsworth Church Lads Brigade football team.¹¹⁹ Friendships based on occupational ties might also have played a part in the formation of this young team.

Once the side was established Frank Hatter dropped out and the role of Captain was taken up by Billy Siddall, the son of the previous Captain, Harry. The musician, Tom Gray, was also eventually replaced, and during the 1920s and '30s the following young men appear with the team:

Name	Date of birth	Residence	Occupation
BELLAMY musician - concertina	c.1910	Handsworth	miner
BOLSOVER, Mark musician - piccolo	c.1905	Handsworth	miner

¹¹⁸ CMS-74/A - 11.35.

¹¹⁹ CMS-34/A - 11.30 and CMS-74/A - 20.22.

COOK, Tom musician - piccolo	?	Woodhouse	miner
GOODISON, Alfred (brother of Jack and Jim, above, and Willis, below)	c.1912	Handsworth	miner
GOODISON, Willis (brother of Jack, Jim, and Alf, above)	c.1910	Handsworth	colliery blacksmith
PERCIVAL, Wilfred (nephew of Harry, William, Joe, and Walt and cousin of Jack and Billy, above)	c.1905	Handsworth	miner
WILLOUGHBY, Lawrence (Lol)	c.1905	Medlock Road Handsworth	road works

As Figure 5.03 illustrates, by the late 1920s at least fifteen men could be called upon to perform, and most of these continued to dance through World War Two. Although this number included three musicians (Bellamy, Bolsover and Cook) rarely would more than one play for any particular performance. Tom Cook came from a family known to be actively involved in the Woodhouse Prize Band, and it is believed that during the 1920s and '30s the band occasionally may have played for the sword dancers.¹²⁰

Again, these men were known to each other, and to the established team members, through family and neighbourhood connections as well as occupational and recreational ties. With the exception of Lol Willoughby, all of these men worked in the mining industry. Willoughby lived in Medlock Road, where Jack and Billy Siddall, and their fathers before them, resided.; however, kinship networks emerge as the predominant means of acquiring new members. The two Goodisons, Alf and Willis, were recruited by their elder brothers, Jack and Jim, and Wilf Percival no doubt was drawn into the team, at least in part, through the influence of his cousins, the Siddalls. Yet recruitment of dancers through these lateral kinship ties is certainly not unique to this set of dancers before the turn of the century the Handsworth team included three sets of brothers. However, by the 1920s the linear depth of the family underpinning emerged to produce a new generation of dancers; as Figure 5.04 illustrates, the majority of team members between 1926 and World War Two have lateral and/or linear kinship ties to other past or present members.

¹²⁰ CMS-73/B - 00.40 and Lester (1978), p.15.

To summarise then, as with Grenoside, the Handsworth sword dance team after World War One is characterised by the appearance of a new generation of members. Yet, unlike Grenoside where two teams existed for about a five year period, this transition from the old dancers to the new ones was deliberate and planned. Like previous groups, the dancers in this period are known to each other through various social networks formed on the basis of neighbourhood, occupation, and family. However, whereas friendships made in the neighbourhood and the workplace appear to be equally as important as kinship ties in forming the team in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, family relationships appear more substantial, though not exclusive, with the advent of a new generation.

5.4.4 Handsworth - The Dance and the Dancers in the Community

As with Grenoside, the activities of the Handsworth team in the inter-war years are shaped by two trends:

1) the new performance opportunities provided by the English Folk Dance Society and the growing national interest in folk dance, and 2) the renewed support of, and the mutually beneficial relationship with, the local community.

Although the extent of the team's activities during and immediately after World War One is unknown, the team was certainly performing again by 1920. They renewed their annual Christmas tour, although their appearance at Wentworth Woodhouse and Barnes Hall might suggest that the interest of the gentry in their own district in maintaining the dance was waning.¹²¹ Be that as it may, the Handsworth dancers found a strong supporter in the Rev. W.A. Baker, Rector of St. Mary's Church, Handsworth, which would set a precedent for future clergymen.¹²² Baker's support was most likely earned through the team's community activities, for although the Christmas touring was clearly for the dancers' personal economic gain, their local appearances at other times were primarily for the benefit of various charitable causes. As with Grenoside, in the light of generally improving economic conditions

¹²¹ Lt-Col J.W.B. Landon, letter to J.H. Siddall, 16th December 1925, and Lady Mabel Smith, letter to J.H. Siddall, 18th December 1925.

¹²² Rev. Baker was followed by Heneage Ferraby, who as rector for some forty years continually supported the dancers. Ferraby's successor, Rev. Bruce Leng, continues this tradition. See Chapter Six.

following World War One, the receipt of money for providing entertainment was no longer as fundamental in supplementing family incomes. The dancers, therefore, were able to spend their leisure time performing and collecting for the benefit of community organisations.

In August of 1921, for example, the team performed at the Handsworth Country Fair, an event organised in order to raise money for a peal of bells to be installed in St. Mary's Church Tower as a war memorial.¹²³ The final performance of the old dancers in 1925 was, in fact, at a charitable event -- a garden fete organised by the Handsworth and District Branch of the British Legion.¹²⁴

The new side of dancers continued to support charitable causes. Indeed, one of their first public performances was at the High Hazel's Hospital Fete in 1926,¹²⁵ an event organised by the Attercliffe, Darnall and Handsworth Hospital Committees for the benefit of the "penny in the pound" scheme.¹²⁶ Furthermore, largely due to their own dependency on coalmining, the team were very active in raising money for soup kitchens during the seven month long mining strike in the latter half of 1926. In 1927 the Handsworth dancers performed at the St. James' Woodhouse Cricket Club garden fete and, along with the Grenoside team, at the Sheffield Works' Convalescent Homes' Bazaar. In 1929 they performed at the Endcliffe Vale Hostel (Sheffield) garden party, and in 1930 and 1933 they appeared at Sheffield hospital benefits.¹²⁷

Through these charitable activities the Handsworth sword dancers not only won the respect and admiration of the community,¹²⁸ but also inspired the active patronage of certain members of the community, such as Rev. Baker who is said to have loaned the team the money for their trip to London in 1927 to perform at the Royal Albert Hall.¹²⁹ Furthermore, similar to Grenoside, the support of local

¹²³ "Fun of the Fair", *The Sheffield Daily Independent*, 27th August 1921.

¹²⁴ "Handsworth Garden Fete", *Woodhouse Express*, 8th August 1925.

¹²⁵ "High Hazel's Fete", *Woodhouse Express*, 3rd July 1926.

¹²⁶ The "penny in the pound" scheme was a form of national health insurance which preceded the establishment of the National Health Service in 1948. See Walter L. Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today, 1830 to the Present* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1983), pp.216-217.

¹²⁷ This information is based on correspondence contained in the Handsworth Archive.

¹²⁸ CMS-73/B - 24.10, CMS-77/A - 06.40, and *Woodhouse Express*, 3rd July 1926.

¹²⁹ Lester (1978), p.12.

patrons and the community in general increased in the light of the team's growing regional and national popularity through exposure at English Folk Dance Society events.

As previously mentioned, the Handsworth team appeared at the English Folk Dance Society's Easter vacation school at York in April 1920. This performance eventually led to each member of the team being awarded the silver badge of the Society. In a letter to the Handsworth captain, Harry Siddall, Sharp explains that this badge

is the highest award we [the Society] can make and may be worn only by those who have taken our Advanced Certificate, or by those to whom it has been formally awarded by the Committee. You and your dancers who have performed before our Society are naturally those to whom the award should be made.¹³⁰

This award inspired one of the dancers, Joe Siddall, to compose the following poem:

The Dancers

By the badge ye shall know them, for they wear it with pride,
These dancers of Handsworth who are famed far and wide;
For that badge is the symbol that they have stood the test
For many long years, and still are the best
Troupe of sword dancers to be found in the land;
And to see them in action --- by gum, it is grand!
March, Clash, Snake, and Single Sword Up,
And in Three Divide they are just warming up.
Then quickly they slip into Double Sword Down,
A difficult figure that has won them renown.
And all through the figures they work like a clock,
And wind up the dance by making the Lock.
And the badges they wear are the locked swords, you see,
Presented to them by the E.F.D. Society
For that great display they gave at York,
Which for many days after was all the town's talk.
J.H. Siddall is captain, and his brothers Joe, Walter, and Will,
Along with Lomas, Barks, and Staniforth, are dancers of skill,
And little Verdon, whose first name is Pat,
A neat little dancer as quick as a cat;
And the musician, by name Tommy Gray,
Who while they are dancing fine music does play.
And that's the full list of the dancers of note,
Who proudly carry the badge on their coat.¹³¹

¹³⁰ Cecil J. Sharp, letter to J.H. Siddall, 17 Nov. 1920, Handsworth Archive. The Advanced Certificate referred to was a qualification issued by the Society in an attempt to ensure that folk dance teachers upheld the standards which the Society set forth.

¹³¹ Handsworth Archive, and published in Lester (1978), p.11, and G.A. Lester, "Cecil Sharp and the Handsworth Sword Dancers 1913-1924", *Folklore*, 99:i (1988), 110-123 (p. 122).

Apart from being a valuable record of the structure of the dance and the identities of the performers in 1920, this piece reveals the pride and prestige experienced by the dancers, as well as the community (see line sixteen). As with Grenoside, this period marks the beginning of the dancers' awareness of themselves as tradition bearers, and it is through the sense of prestige referred to above that the sword dancers become a vehicle for village pride. Furthermore, this poem reveals the esteem in which the dancers view the English Folk Dance Society and their response to the new performance opportunities which the Society's activities have provided.

The Handsworth team continued to be supported by, and in turn supported, the English Folk Dance Society during the inter-war years. In June of 1921 a number of the Handsworth dancers attended a meeting in Sheffield called for the purpose of forming the Sheffield and District Branch of the English Folk Dance Society,¹³² and on the 6th of October the team performed on the occasion of Cecil Sharp's visit to Sheffield.¹³³

This relationship with the Society was continued by the young team throughout the inter-war period. Although they were invited to perform at the Yorkshire Festival for the Cecil Sharp Memorial Fund at Leeds Town Hall in February 1926, the Chairman of the Sheffield Branch, Com. Nicholson, withdrew them from the programme only days before the event. Writing to Harry Siddall, who had taken charge of training the new side, Nicholson explained:

I have every hope that with your assistance the Junior Team will achieve the excellence to which the Senior Team attained and that at a future Folk Dance meeting we shall have the pleasure of seeing their dance.¹³⁴

Apparently, at this early stage in their training, the young team were not felt to be achieving the standard of dance expected at a Society event. Indeed, as will be discussed in Chapter Seven, beginning in the 1920s, the expectations of the English Folk Dance Society, as well as a paying audience, placed new aesthetic demands on traditional dance teams.

By May 1927 the team had apparently attained the degree of excellence sought after, for they appeared at a Folk Meeting in Sheffield and were presented with a new set of swords by the Master

¹³² Miss M. Butt, letter to J.H. Siddall, 16 June 1921, Handsworth Archive.

¹³³ *Woodhouse Express*, 15 Oct. 1921.

¹³⁴ Com. E.H.M. Nicholson, letter to J.H. Siddall, 10 Feb. 1926, Handsworth Archive.

Cutler, David Flather. In August they gave a demonstration at an English Folk Dance Society summer school in Buxton, Derbyshire, and like their predecessors were awarded silver badges for their service. In November of the same year they performed at the Society's Second Folk Dance Festival at the Royal Albert Hall in London.

As with the Grenoside Scout team, following their appearance at the Albert Hall, the Handsworth team became interested in attending other festivals and competitions. In March 1928 they attended the Whitby Folk Dance Competition, and in May they competed in the North of England Musical Tournament at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. In 1929 they took part in a folk dance competition in Sheffield, but by this time the team's interest and subsequent activity appeared to have been waning. Like the young Grenoside team, by 1930 the Handsworth dancers are courting, marrying, and beginning to raise families. However, in contrast to the Grenoside team, they continue to dance, albeit somewhat less frequently, during the 1930s. This may be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that they were the only side of dancers in the village, and therefore continued to receive the support of the English Folk Dance Society and to be called upon to meet community needs; in Grenoside, since the older men continued to perform, the lapse of the young team was essentially unnoticed. Certainly, the Handsworth dancers performed at charity benefits into the 1930s, and appear at English Folk Dance Society events up to and including the Second World War. In 1938, and again in 1939, they gave displays at meetings of the Sheffield and District Branch of the Society, and in November of 1943 both the Handsworth and Grenoside teams performed during a weekend of dance in Sheffield. Further displays were given at local Society events in June and July of 1944.¹³⁵ Indeed, English Folk Dance Society engagements appear to have provided important focal points for the team throughout this period.

To summarise: as with Grenoside, the Handsworth team was influenced by the opportunities provided by the folk dance revival and the activities of the English Folk Dance Society from the 1920s through World War Two. Although the patronage of the local gentry appears to have been on the decline, the village community continued -- indeed, developed -- its mutually beneficial relationship with the team. While the dancers performed for the entertainment of themselves and others, during the inter-war period

¹³⁵ The details of venues and dates in the preceding paragraphs are based on correspondence contained in the Handsworth Archive.

their efforts were increasingly channelled into charitable causes. Furthermore, in the light of their growing popularity on the local, regional and national folk dance scene, the team became a focal point for the identity of the village and a vehicle for community pride.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has presented the dancers and their communities from the 1880s through World War Two. During this period the community consisted of social networks established on the basis of family, neighbourhood, and occupation. Not only did the community form the social context from which the dancers were drawn, it also provided the primary context within which the dance was performed. Between the 1880s and World War One, the sword dances in Grenoside and Handsworth were performed annually at Christmas time in the village streets and at the homes of the gentry and well-to-do of the district, as well as at other times of the year at various village events. Apart from serving as a means of collecting money for the purchase of alcoholic drink and, decreasingly, to supplement family incomes, the activities of the sword team provided entertainment for the participants in an era when entertainment was almost entirely self-made. The allegedly excessive drinking often associated with the dancers, especially in Grenoside, however, was certainly looked down upon by certain sectors of the community, although a strong family commitment and the support of certain patrons ensured the perpetuation of the dance. Nevertheless, following World War One, the dancers experienced a new wave of community interest with the advent of the folk dance revival.

The period from the 1920s through World War Two saw a marked transformation in the nature of the activities of the Grenoside and Handsworth sword dancers, accessing new and appropriate performance contexts in the community, as well as on the regional and national levels with appearances at various festivals and competitions. Indeed, as will be discussed further in following chapters, by appearing at such non-community events, the Grenoside and Handsworth teams not only accessed new performance opportunities, but in so doing entered into a different level of performer-audience relationship. No longer primarily interested in economic gain, the dancers were motivated by the prospect of travel,

the prestige of their growing popularity, and the subsequent increase in social status within the community. Certainly by the 1930s the dancers were becoming aware of their roles as tradition bearers. Furthermore, through their association with place (i.e. "Grenoside" and "Handsworth"), the dancers and their activities became focal points for community pride. It was therefore most important to the community as a whole that the dancers appeared respectable. While this association with place was generally a positive development, in the case of Grenoside this association would exacerbate an unfortunate interpersonal conflict in the years following World War Two. Indeed, the post-war period marked the beginning of a new stage of development in the Grenoside and Handsworth sword dance traditions. As will be discussed in the following chapter, the post-war social changes would have a substantial influence on the nature of the community from which the dancers are drawn and in which the dance is performed.

Chapter Six

The Dancers and their Communities

from post World War Two up to the present

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the dancers and their communities from the mid 1940s up to the present. As in Chapter Five, the dancers will be discussed in terms of who they are, including their relationship to each other, how they came to join the team, and what motivates them to participate. During this period the nature of the dancers' communities transforms, and while still providing the social networks from which the dancers are drawn, the community no longer serves as the primary context in which the dance is performed. The years covered by this chapter will be divided into two main subsections:

- 1) from post World War Two up to the mid 1960s, and
- 2) from the late 1960s up to the present.

While establishing a division in the 1960s serves to create periods of relatively equal length, the division more importantly delineates two distinct periods of development in the history of the teams concerned. The postwar years see the revival of both the Grenoside and Handsworth teams, including the consolidation of trends which had their roots in the 1920s and 30s. By the late 1960s both teams begin to experience an influx of new members who constitute the backbone of each team well into the 1980s, enabling them to take advantage of new performance opportunities. Furthermore, by the late 1960s the folk music revival leads to a renewed interest in folk dance and consequently the formation of numerous Morris and sword dancing clubs, including Barnsley Longsword.

Before discussing the changes which occurred in the dancers and their communities following

World War Two, it is necessary to give a brief description of developments in the wider socio-economic environment which have shaped the communities and influenced the attitudes of the dancers and the nature of their activities.

6.2 The Socio-economic Context

The late 1940s saw the continuation of wartime austerity in Britain. Plagued by an uneven balance of payments, and the subsequent need to export goods, the government continued to ration food and clothing for several years after the end of World War Two. These conditions, as will be seen in section 6.3, inevitably had an effect on both the Grenoside and Handsworth teams. In addition, the policy mandating two years National Service, which persisted into the mid 1950s, further affected the continuity and activities of the Handsworth team in particular.

The policies of the postwar Labour government which contributed to the formation of the Welfare State gradually led to an overall improvement in the standard of living. Legislation included the National Insurance and National Health Service Acts of 1946 and the nationalisation of major industries (e.g. coal in 1946, electricity in 1947, gas in 1948, iron and steel in 1951). Furthermore, in the years following the war, working hours became regulated with most full-time employees working between thirty-five and forty hours per week. This change obviously provided the average person with more time for leisure activities, and with the prosperity enjoyed by most Western societies from the mid 1950s onward¹ more people were increasingly in a position to reap the benefits of developments in communications (e.g. radio, cinema, television) and transport (e.g. high-speed railways, motorways, and the accessibility of motor vehicles).²

Government-supported housing development schemes also helped to improve standards of living. Communities were gradually moved out of city centres and into newly built suburbs, and many older

¹ Hey (1986), 312.

² Walter L. Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today, 1830 to the present* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath, 1983), 363-364.

properties were modernised, with amenities such as indoor plumbing becoming commonplace. Although the village of Handsworth had largely been absorbed by Sheffield through prewar industrial expansions, it was not until the late 1950s that the village of Grenoside began to be noticeably affected by suburban development. Nevertheless, the population of both villages increased substantially through this suburban growth, which brought in more newcomers who invariably made their living outside of the village.

Although the growth of Grenoside and Handsworth inevitably detracted from their "everybody knows everybody" nature, the primary factor undermining village cohesion was the social, and subsequent geographic, mobility characteristic of the 1960s onwards. This mobility, moreover, was largely a result of the social and economic opportunities provided by the development of post-secondary education. With the economic prosperity of the 1950s education, especially at the university level, re-emerged as a national concern. Through government funding, that which had previously been a privilege of the wealthy gradually became more accessible to individuals from all social backgrounds. Furthermore, with the number of students increasing substantially during the 1960s, the number of universities rose from seventeen in 1945 to forty four in 1970.³ Teacher training colleges and technical colleges also provided opportunities for higher education. Although improvements in the standard of living of most British people were obviously contributory factors, it was primarily the availability of post-secondary education that led to the expansion of the middle classes, or "middle stratum",⁴ during the 1960s and 70s. Noble (1981) reports that during this period there is an increase in the proportion of men employed in management, the professions, and non-manual work, and a marked reduction in the number of men in manual jobs,⁵ and stresses that changes in the proportions of the working population leads to changes in social and geographic mobility patterns. In 1969 Raynor reports that, on the basis of socio-economic grading, thirty-two percent of the population can be described as middle class.⁶ By 1978, however, over forty-seven percent of the population falls into this category.⁷ Certainly, the decline in such predominant

³ Arnstein (1983), p. 364.

⁴ J. Raynor, *The Middle Class* (London: Longmans, 1969), p. 11.

⁵ Trevor Noble, *Structure and Change in Modern Britain* (London: Batsford, 1981), p. 202.

⁶ Raynor, pp. 8-9.

⁷ Noble, p. 206.

industries as steel and coal must be taken into account when considering these figures. While foreign competition led to the bankruptcy of many steel firms in the 1960s and 70s, the importation of crude oil, and more recently the exploitation of the North Sea oilfields, led to the closure of many economically unproductive mining operations in South Yorkshire.⁸ Since the traditional trades gave way to new technology in the 1980s, more skilled personnel have been required and subsequently the number of people employed in non-manual occupations has increased.

Given these national trends one would expect to see a certain degree of such socio-economically based change represented in the dance teams. Furthermore, as will be discussed below, middle class values, attitudes, and activities have had a significant impact on the nature of the perpetuation of longsword dancing in South Yorkshire from the mid 1940s up to the present.

6.3 The Dancers and their Communities

from post World War Two up to the mid 1960s

6.3.1 Grenoside - Introduction

The period from the mid 1940s up to the mid 1960s sees the realisation of changes in the motivations and activities of the Grenoside dancers which had their roots in the prewar era. Certainly postwar British society was not only receptive to the performance of traditional dance, amongst other aspects of traditional culture, but actually encouraged activities seen as peculiarly British at a time when nationalistic feelings were understandably strong. As noted earlier, the Festival of Britain in 1951 was mounted precisely for the purpose of re-asserting national identity. Yet, although such a context was conducive to encouraging the continuation of traditional dance, in the case of the Grenoside Sword Dancers, and to a lesser extent the Handsworth team, the role of the English Folk Dance and Song Society had a much more immediate and profound influence on the perpetuation of the tradition.

⁸ Hey (1986), pp. 311-312.

6.3.2 Grenoside - The Crisis of 1946-1947

The word "crisis" is used here to refer to a decisive period or a time of particular adversity. However, in this context the use of the term "crisis" is intended to further encompass the anthropological sense of "life crisis", that is, a period of transition involving the redefinition of roles and identities. Although commonly applied to a period of transition in the life of an individual, the concept of "life crisis" may also be useful when investigating the processes of transition and redefinition in small social groups.⁹ Furthermore, the applicability of this concept will be further demonstrated in relation to the Handsworth team in the following chapter. What is important here is that "crisis" should not be perceived simply as an event, or series of events, even if the visible or public manifestation of conflict can be seen as such. Rather "crisis" should be viewed as a period in which various socio-cultural, historical, and interpersonal elements are operating to influence attitudes and behaviours of members of the social group and, eventually, the outcome of the situation.

As discussed in Chapter Five, in the years following World War One the ideas and doctrines of the English Folk Dance and Song Society began to influence the activities, as well as the attitudes, of the Grenoside Sword Dancers. The interwar years saw the emergence of the team as a focal point for community pride through appearances at regional and national competitions and exhibitions, and the development of the dancers' own awareness of themselves as tradition bearers. Furthermore, it was impressed upon the dancers by representatives of the Society that they had a duty to ensure that their dance did not lapse, thereby encouraging several conscious efforts to recruit younger men into the team.

However, in addition to influencing the attitudes of the dancers and their communities toward the tradition, the continued intervention of the English Folk Dance and Song Society in the activities of the team unwittingly and unintentionally led to a division of the team in 1947. Although the Grenoside Sword Dancers had continued to perform during World War Two, their public appearances gradually decreased, and so the Society once again sought to encourage the team to begin regular performances after the war.

In the autumn of 1946, Miss Hannah Mawson, the Secretary of the Sheffield branch of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, contacted the Grenoside team to inform them that the Society's

⁹ See, for example, Barrant (1987).

director, Douglas Kennedy, would be visiting Sheffield in order to present the team with a new set of swords and to honour each member with the silver badge of the Society for their part in perpetuating the tradition. Could they, Miss Mawson wondered, get together eight men (that is, six dancers, the Captain and a musician) to perform on this occasion?

There were at that time enough men living in the area who had performed with the team in recent years to field two sides, and two groups, in fact, had been practising. One group revolved around "Navy" Kirk, his son Arthur Wragg (Kirk), and Arthur's son, Gordon, who had joined the team in 1945 at the age of fifteen. This side consisted of those men who lived, and therefore practised, in the High Green area; although born and bred in Grenoside, Navy Kirk had moved (c.1914) to Westwood Row, Tankersley, to be nearer to the mine where he worked. As discussed in Chapter Five, the social network, or community, from which the dancers were drawn expanded to include men living in nearby villages as a consequence of wider socio-economic changes occurring in the interwar period. The other group revolved around "Soldier" Housley, his two sons, Harrington and Colin, his son-in-law, Fred Myers, and several other men living in Grenoside. Both of these groups naturally wished to dance in the display for Douglas Kennedy, and receive the swords and silver badges, and a not too friendly rivalry ensued. Feeling somewhat responsible for this turn of events, Hannah Mawson sought to mitigate the situation through what became a lengthy series of correspondence with Lew Wroe, and later George Hoyland (Cavill), the Secretary of the High Green group, as well as with Fred Myers, the Secretary of the Grenoside group. Unfortunately, only Miss Mawson's letters (and perhaps not all of them) have come to light. While these letters are extremely informative in themselves, coupled with the written and taperecorded recollections of some of the key figures, an extraordinarily complete picture emerges of this particular period of the Grenoside Sword Dancers' history.

A letter dated the 14th October 1946 and addressed to Lew Wroe provides the first indication of the crisis. It begins:

I am very sorry to hear that there are some misunderstandings among the members of your team but I feel sure we shall soon be able to straighten them out & (sic and passim) get working happily & contentedly again.¹⁰

Not only does this passage reveal that an interpersonal conflict of some sort had arisen amongst

¹⁰ Hannah Mawson, letter to Lew Wroe, 14th October, 1946.

the sword dancers, but it also indicates the active role which Miss Mawson, as a representative of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, intended to assume. The letter continues:

We want to be fair & do the right thing to every-one & I will try to put my view & that of the members of the Club as clearly as possible for you all to consider.

The "club" refers to the Sheffield Teachers' Folk Dance Club which formed the active core of the Sheffield branch of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, and this excerpt further reveals the advisory nature of the Society's role. As discussed in Chapter Three and further illustrated in Chapter Five, the largely middle-class members of the Society saw it as their social duty not only to promote, and thereby "preserve", traditional dance, but to ensure that the traditions were perpetuated in what they considered to be an acceptable fashion. In this vein, Miss Mawson continues:

You, like all Folk Dancers will agree that it is a privilege as well as a duty to have the responsibility of carrying on your unique traditional dance & we must do all we can to help you to keep an honourable link with the past as well as with the future in as happy and harmonious a manner as possible.

Following this rhetoric, Miss Mawson reveals her views on the apparent point of conflict:

The old order must perforce change & yield place to new & as the older members relinquish their places in the team there must be younger ones ready & willing to fall in. The true form of the dance must be maintained & dancers must keep in practise to ensure this. Yet while ensuring the correct tradition in this way, unnecessary changes in the team should be avoided & the senior team should keep together unless there is very good cause for changes. The secondary team should practise so that reserves are always available but they will readily realise that the senior team will be the one to take first place.

Here, Hannah Mawson suggests that the most experienced members should constitute the "senior" team, and therefore perform at the presentation, and the rest should serve as a "secondary" team to supply the senior team with reserves. This would appear to be a fair and logical solution to the dispute and the Society's concern that the tradition be maintained. However, such a suggestion failed to appreciate the nature of the structure of the social group that performed the dance and would subsequently lead to further misunderstanding and conflict. As mentioned above, following World War Two there were at least sixteen men who could perform the Grenoside dance. Although affiliated by membership in what may be called a "team", there had been no fixed side of men who were considered "the team", let alone a structured form of hierarchy, as the establishment of "senior" and "secondary" teams would imply. An exception may be the position of Captain, which was usually filled by one person, "Navy" Kirk. However, there were occasions when the role of Captain was assumed by other senior dancers, such as Bill Cooper and Harry

"Soldier" Housley, the latter filling the role of Captain for the 1938 Albert Hall performances (see Illus. 5.09). Nevertheless, on any particular occasion the "team" consisted of whoever happened to turn up, and although the older, more experienced performers were acknowledged, the younger, less experienced members were equally considered to be part of the team.¹¹ Therefore, to suggest establishing a fixed team of eight men, with the remaining men relegated to the status of "reserve" or "secondary" would inevitably cause upset.

However, having posed this solution, Miss Mawson's letter then appeals to the Grenoside men to raise a team for Douglas Kennedy's visit and adds further pressure by suggesting that unless the team comply with the Society's wishes, they would not be included in the presentation ceremony:

Forget the little differences you may have had & work for the greater cause. I know it won't be easy at first but let's see if we can get together & be a real team in every sense of the word. I shouldn't like to have to tell Mr. Kennedy that we can only ask the Handsworth team to come. The Club members say they want the men whom they have seen dancing during the last few years in the team & I think they are right.

Again, the difficulty here is that the team membership had been quite loose and fluid, so that even the "team" which performed during the war years would entail more than eight men. This passage further illustrates the protective, even patronising, role of the middle-class revivalists (see Chapter Three) and their "we're all in this together" attitude. The letter concludes with more rhetoric:

I hope you will soon get together again & once again be the truly traditionally happy & honoured team with your reserves & Secondary Team eager & willing to practise & follow on in your footsteps...

My best wishes to every one of you. Yours is a privilege granted to very few - -- a privilege which of necessity entails a duty & a very worthy one too. I feel proud to have been associated with you in all your good work.

This letter prompted responses from both the High Green area and Grenoside village groups, pointing out that not only had they been practising separately, but also that each side had a significant number of experienced members and therefore had equal claims of seniority in this respect.¹² Miss Mawson explained that the Society was unable to supply two new sets of swords and appealed for a compromise -

¹¹ This is supported by five individuals on the following sound recordings: CECTAL A13-70, CMS-02/B - 42.27, CMS-04/A - 38.10, CMS-05/A - 35.15, CMS-08/A - 00.25, CMS-21/A - 01.20, and CMS-84/A - 10.30.

¹² Hannah Mawson, letter to Fred Myers, 6th November, 1946.

- a side consisting of an equal number of members from each group to perform for Douglas Kennedy and receive the new swords, even if the swords must then be "kept in reserve by Commander Nicholson [the Chairman of the Sheffield branch] until such time as there is another team acceptable to Headquarters as representing the Traditional Dancers."¹³ Nor would any silver badges be presented until their criteria were met. The two groups did compromise for the sake of receiving the new swords at the presentation on January 24th, 1947, and the display team consisted of four men from the High Green group -- "Navy" Kirk as Captain, Arthur Wragg (Kirk), Stan Dearden, and Lew Wroe as musician -- and four men from Grenoside -- Harrington and Colin Housley, Fred Myers, and Roy Mollart. However, as is often the case with compromises, the result was an increased amount of ill-feeling between the dancers.

Over the following months, the two groups continued to meet separately, each performing occasionally at village fetes and garden parties in the area.¹⁴ Yet, disputes continued to arise between the groups, primarily over which one had rightful ownership of the new set of swords, the set of caps, and the Captain's hat and sword, all of which were agreed to be the "communal" property of the team, as opposed to the trousers, jackets and clogs which were each man's personal property.¹⁵ Although it was suggested and agreed that the paraphernalia be stored at Barnes Hall under the protection of Colonel Mackenzie and Lady Mabel Smith, the longtime patrons of the sword dancers, and made available for use by both parties, two of the dancing swords and the Captain's hat and sword eventually disappeared.¹⁶

In the light of these disputes, and in order to discuss the establishment of one team "acceptable to Headquarters as representing the Traditional Dancers", a meeting was called in November of 1947 by Commander Nicholson. Due to the poor quality of the available copy, the official report of the meeting is reproduced below.

¹³ Hannah Mawson, letter to Fred Myers, 9th January, 1947.

¹⁴ Confirmed by Fred Myers from the Grenoside team and Gordon Wragg from the High Green team.

¹⁵ Hannah Mawson, letter to Fred Myers, 26th January 1947; George Cavill, letter to Fred Myers, 10th February, 1947; Hannah Mawson, letter to Fred Myers 13th February, 1947.

¹⁶ CMS-02/B - 38.30, CMS-08/A - 13.11, CMS-21/A - 14.50, and Margaret Dean-Smith, personal communication, 22nd February 1986.

GRENOSIDE SWORD DANCERS

Notes of the Meeting held on Sunday the 23rd November 1947, in the Saddle Room at Barnes Hall, Grenoside.

Present: F.W. Myers,
C. Housley,
E.A. (T). Frost,
H.A. Wragg [(Kirk)],
G. Wragg,
W.L. Wroe,
Arthur Gore,
D. Ward,
S. Dearden,

Colonel Mackenzie Smith,
Commander Nicholson.

1. The Meeting was poorly attended, but was sufficiently representative.
2. It was confirmed that Mr. F.W. Myers had been elected, nem: con: to fill the post of Secretary, and Mr. Wroe formally announced his retirement from that position.
3. The necessity for re-establishing the Team was recognised, and Mr. Myers undertook to invite all the men whose names appear to the attached List, to meet for the purpose of electing the Members to form the "Traditional" Team, with Reserves and Musicians.
4. It was agreed that failure to accept this invitation must be regarded as being tantamount to loss of interest in the welfare of the Grenoside Organisation, and involve the resignation of the individual from such position as he had previously held in it.
The Secretary was asked to include in the invitation, a notice to that effect.
5. The Uniform Dress and Appurtenances are the personal property of the Dancers, but in so far as the Stainless Steel Swords, the Caps, the Dance and Music Books, and the Fund, are concerned, all of which have been presented to the Team, these must be considered as being the property of the Organisation, and will be held pro: tem: by Colonel Mackenzie Smith, to be ultimately transferred to the charge of the Secretary.
6. Mr. Myers was requested to keep Commander Nicholson fully informed of the progress made in the re-constitution of the Team so that, as its Local Representative, he may be able to report to the English Folk Dance & Song Society.

4th December 1947.
EHMN/Sd/25.

List referred to in Para: 3 above.

F.W. Myers,
Mr. Harrington Houseley (sic),
C. Houseley (sic),
R. Mollart,
S. Cotton,

E. A. Frost,
L. Frost,
Steadman,
R. Ward,
A. Kirk,
S. Dearden,
H. A. Wragg,
G. Wragg,
D. Ward,
A. Chesman,
J. Stewart,
G. Cavill,
L. Wroe,
W. Fleetwood,
Arthur Gore.

As agreed in points three and four of the above report, a meeting was called the following week for the purpose of electing the "Traditional" team. Fred Myers explains:

We always practised at Colonel Mackenzie [Smith]'s home, Barnes Hall. We practised in his saddle room, because he was a big patron of ours. He was one of the men what kept it going. And he said, he said at the meeting we had then, he says to me, "Can you get a team of Grenoside people?" I says, "I can." So he says, "You get them and you'll be the traditional team."¹⁷

This sequence of events is further supported by Ted Frost, who learned the dance with the Scouts in 1938:

[Colonel Mackenzie Smith and Commander Nicholson] asked all the people who had ever learnt the dance in or around Grenoside, ever danced it or learned, who knew the dance, to go to a meeting at Barnes Hall one Sunday afternoon. Quite a number of us went, and just one of what we call the old team who lived out of the village with his son, he turned up, and they thought this wasn't very satisfactory. And so another meeting was called and non-attendance at this meeting would mean that they weren't interested. And so the question was asked, "Have you got a side living in Grenoside who could make a team?" And we had.¹⁸

It perhaps seemed a logical and straightforward solution to the mediators that, as the team were widely known as the *Grenoside* Sword Dancers, the members of the "traditional" team should come from Grenoside. Furthermore, as mentioned above, it is understandable given the prestige associated with the performance opportunities provided by English Folk Dance and Song Society events, that every man

¹⁷ CMS-08/A - 01.10.

¹⁸ CMS-21/A - 05.00.

wished to be a member of the recognised team.¹⁹ However, with retrospective insight, Ted Frost continues:

There was a bit of jealousy, perhaps, and, rightly or wrongly, at the time we decided that you had to live in Grenoside...to be a member of the team.²⁰

By this criterion, then, quite a number of experienced dancers were excluded from the recognised, "traditional", team, including the Kirk/Wragg lineage which extended over three generations. Although the non-village group apparently tried to keep a side going, without the institutional support that the Grenoside team enjoyed, it lapsed after a couple of years.²¹ While wishing only to ensure the perpetuation of the tradition by rewarding, and thereby encouraging, the dancers, the criteria that the English Folk Dance and Song Society established in their effort to do so simply led to rivalry amongst the performers and ultimately the alienation of a number of men who had danced with the team for many years.

Yet, why had the Society been unwilling to recognise two teams of equal status? Given the generally well-off membership of the Society, as well as the support of local patrons such as the Smiths, there scarcely could have been serious concerns over the possible cost of providing, for example, a second set of swords and silver badges. Clearly, considering the efforts the Society made in order to establish "the traditional team", it was contrary to their conception of "tradition" to have more than one active side. However, such team divisions are natural progressions which have historically led not only to the geographic spread of longsword dancing, but to significant variations in its form, as for example in the Cleveland (North Yorkshire) area dances.²²

Be that as it may, the English Folk Dance and Song Society were pleased to have a "re-established" team, and the relationship which developed between the Society and the Grenoside Sword

¹⁹ Theresa Buckland has found the issue of place of residence to be significant in matters of ownership and control of the Abbots Bromley Horn Dance. See Buckland (1989).

²⁰ CMS-21/A - 14.50.

²¹ CMS-08/A - 08.30 and CA4-148. Mr. Gordon Wragg maintains that the High Green team had difficulty fielding a side while he was away fulfilling his National Service obligation, and that they had disbanded completely by the time he returned to the area in 1950.

²² Stone (1980), pp. 12-18.

Dancers would have a significant influence on the development of the dancers and the community in the following years.²³

6.3.3 Grenoside - Changing Contexts: The Influence of the Folk Dance Revival

Although all of the members of the re-established Grenoside team knew the sword dance, they had never danced together as a team. Fred Myers, Roy Mollart (who would leave the team within the year), Harrington Housley, and Colin Housley had danced with the team before and during the war. Prior to joining the men's team, however, the two Housleys had danced with the Rover Scout team in the 1920s. Three other men from this Scout side, Reg Ward, Leonard Brookes, and Walter Fleetwood, the musician, were invited to join the 1947 team, and Len Brookes was appointed Captain. Ted Frost and Syd Cotton learned the dance with the Scouts in 1938, and Leonard Frost, Ted's cousin, was reportedly among a group of schoolboys to whom Walt Fleetwood taught the dance in the 1930s.²⁴ Compared to the other members of the team, these last three recruits were relatively inexperienced dancers.

Given the diversity in their training, it would take some time before the new team would be ready to perform. Nevertheless, the English Folk Dance and Song Society offered immediate encouragement and support. Although several of the men had uniforms, others were in need of jackets and/or trousers, and in some cases clogs. While a completely new set of uniforms for the entire team was the longterm aim (and would become a reality in 1952), as wartime rationing was still in effect, this was not possible. However, to meet the team's immediate needs, Hannah Mawson approached Douglas Kennedy who, in his capacity as the Director of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, appealed to the Board of Trade

²³ The English Folk Dance and Song Society's obliviousness to the upset caused by their role is further illustrated by the inclusion of a photograph of "Navy" Kirk, his son, Herbert Arthur Wragg (Kirk) and grandson, Gordon Wragg in an article publicising the appearance of the (re-established) Grenoside Sword Dancers at the Royal Albert Hall in January 1949. See "Grenoside Sword Dancers", *English Dance & Song*, 13:1 (Jan 1949), 6.

²⁴ CMS-21/A - 12.50.

for coupons for the necessary materials.²⁵ The clothing coupons were issued in January 1948, and the Society made a further donation to the team of five pounds for the purchase of clogs.

In addition to such practical financial support, the Society sought to provide the team with a focal point for its dancing standards, as it had after World War One, through invitations to perform at various local, and later regional and national, events. In March 1948, for example, the team performed at two local folk dance displays, and the following summer they appeared at a country dance party in Sheffield where Headquarters' staff were present and gave their seal of approval to the progress of the team. Ted Frost recalls:

They said, more or less, "You've passed, and you are now the recognised traditional team in Grenoside."²⁶

In addition to several more local bookings, the team were subsequently invited to perform at the Leicester Folk Dance Festival in November 1948 at which Douglas Kennedy awarded each member with the silver badge of the Society for their part in maintaining the tradition. The following January they appeared at the Royal Albert Hall Festival, and in addition to eleven local bookings in 1949, they performed at the Northern Folk Dance Festival in Preston, Lancashire.²⁷

As the Grenoside Sword Dancers' appearances at local, regional, and national folk dancing events increased, it was virtually inevitable that the dancers, and especially their wives and girlfriends who often accompanied them on outings, became interested in other forms of traditional dance, in particular country dancing. Certainly, as discussed in Chapter Three, there was a growing national interest in folk dancing in the early 1950s, but it was primarily through the sword team's friendly working relationship with the local English Folk Dance and Song Society representatives that an adult education class in folk dance was established in the village in 1947.²⁸

Although predominantly concentrating on country dance, under a Society-certified instructor, Kathleen Mitchell, and later Dick Shepherd, Morris, garland, and sword dancing were also included in the

²⁵ Hannah Mawson, letters to Fred Myers, 3rd December 1947, 14th December 1947, 18th December 1947, and 16th January 1948.

²⁶ CMS-21/A - 07.30.

²⁷ Fred Myers, Grenoside Sword Dancers' Secretary's Reports, 1948-1949.

²⁸ Hannah Mawson, letters to Fred Myers, 2nd March 1947 and 9th March 1947.

syllabus. By 1949 there were several weekly classes, from which the Haymakers Folk Dance Club was eventually formed, catering to different degrees of proficiency. In 1950, Dick Shepherd began teaching Morris dancing to the sword team for a competition,²⁹ and several men particularly interested in pursuing Morris dancing founded the Grenoside Morris Men. From among the ranks of the Morris team, a rapper sword dancing side soon emerged.

On the whole, then, the community was very keen to learn and perform traditional dance, and according to numerous informants, the folk dancing classes provided a necessary postwar boost to the village.³⁰ Moreover, this trend had positive repercussions vis-à-vis the sword team. With interest in traditional dance in general increasing in Grenoside in the 1950s, the local community was ever more supportive of the activities of the sword dancers. The team became a regular feature at school socials, garden parties, church fetes, and other charitable functions. On a more pragmatic level, the use of the Grenoside schoolroom for folk dancing classes provided the team with a regular practice venue when Miss Mawson, in her capacity as a physical education inspector in the Sheffield area, arranged for the room to be available to the sword team free of charge after the scheduled class.³¹ Later, the landlord of the Old Harrow Inn offered the team the use of an outbuilding for their practices, as well as a small room in the pub in which to change into their uniforms for the annual Boxing Day performance. Finally, the increase in community interest in folk dancing attracted several more men into the team during the 1950s and 1960s (see Figure 6.01). This not only further ensured that the tradition would, at least for the time being, continue, but with a larger membership to draw on, also enabled the team to accept numerous invitations to dance, both locally and further afield.

Although the postwar folk dance revival had a significant impact on the village of Grenoside, and at this local level on the sword team itself, the revival as a national phenomenon proved to be particularly influential vis-à-vis the nature of the men who subsequently joined the team, as well as the venues at which the team performed.

²⁹ The Darlington Competitive Musical Festival, held February 24th, 1951.

³⁰ CMS-02/A - 21.30, CMS-11/A - 09.00, CMS-21/A - 15.00, CMS-21/B - 25.30 and CMS-29/B - 17.10.

³¹ Hannah Mawson, letter to Fred Myers, 28th March 1949.

In terms of the dancers, after the reconstruction of the Grenoside team, the first man to join the side was Dick Shepherd who, as mentioned above, taught the team to Morris dance in 1950. In fact, it was largely as an expression of gratitude for his time and effort in this endeavor that he was invited to join the sword team as an "honorary" member in 1951. This "honorary" position, however, entailed much more than just a title, for Dick enjoyed active participation in the dance team, indeed full membership in every sense of the word;³² conferring honorary membership simply enabled the team to bend the "Grenoside residents only" rule established in 1947.

Yet, the admission of Dick Shepherd into the team not only set a precedent for allowing "outsiders" to join, it also marked the beginning of a period of significant change in the nature of the dancers, in terms of their backgrounds, motivations, and the community from which they were drawn. Although as a schoolboy in Sheffield Dick had been exposed to folk dancing as part of the physical education curriculum, his serious interest in country dancing, and subsequently Morris and sword dancing, developed when he was in teacher training college after the war, and later as a member of the Sheffield Teachers Folk Dance Club. Folk dancing became Dick's main recreational activity, and in so doing became central to his social life - week night classes, Saturday night barn dances, weekend courses, and dance club tours. In sharp contrast, then, to the other members of the Grenoside Sword Dancers, Dick Shepherd came into the team via the folk dance revival, and thereby with a general interest in and knowledge of traditional dance, acquired primarily through participation in folk dance classes and clubs associated with various educational institutions. Indeed, as will be discussed further below, the popularity of folk dancing as a recreational activity in institutions of higher education would have an increasing effect on the socio-economic make-up of both the Grenoside and Handsworth teams during the 1960s and 1970s.

The second "outsider" to join the Grenoside Sword Dancers, Graham Hardwick, from Birley Carr (situated less than one mile to the south of Grenoside), was also drawn into the team through other folk dancing activities (Illus. 6.02). As a teenager, Graham occasionally accompanied his parents to "old time" dances, but in the early 1950s his parents joined the Haymakers' Folk Dance Club and began "pressurising" him to attend the Saturday night barn dances. He finally agreed to go and before long "got

³² Honorary membership was awarded to Kathleen Mitchell in 1949 for her support of the team, although she was necessarily excluded from active participation on the basis of gender.

hooked" on country dancing.³³ He joined the Sheffield Teachers' Folk Dance Club, enrolled on various English Folk Dance and Song Society courses, and within two years was a certified folk dancing teacher for the West Riding Education Authority. Thus, although his interest was not sparked in an educational environment, it was furthered through the various education-based channels which had originally been established through the revival of the 1920s and '30s. Graham Hardwick was invited to join the Grenoside Sword Dancers in 1955, after having been an active member of the Haymakers' and the Grenoside Morris Men for a couple of years.

A third man who joined the team in the period from 1947 through the mid-1960s was George Bell, who although born and reared in Southey Green, less than a mile south-east of Grenoside, was actually living in Grenoside when he was invited to join the team in 1960.³⁴ Nevertheless, George had no prior association with the sword team and, as a newcomer to the village, was as much an "outsider" as Dick or Graham.³⁵ Indeed, similar to these two men, George Bell first became interested in country dancing, subsequently joined the Grenoside Morris Men, and was finally co-opted into the sword team.

What is significant about these three men is not so much the fact that, to a greater or lesser extent, they may be described as "outsiders", but rather that they became members of the Grenoside Sword Dancers through involvement in a variety of folk dancing activities. For each of these men, folk dancing was a primary leisure activity and formed the basis of his social life -- indeed, both Dick and George met their wives through folk dancing.³⁶ Furthermore, as members of the Grenoside Sword Dancers, they not only had the opportunity to travel to festivals all around the country, but also the explicit honour of participating in the perpetuation of the tradition.³⁷

Another factor which distinguishes Dick Shepherd, Graham Hardwick, and George Bell from their

³³ CMS-51/A - 06.45.

³⁴ One other man, Malcolm Brothers, danced with the Grenoside Sword Dancers from c.1958 to c.1966, but efforts to contact him for his assistance have been in vain.

³⁵ While the term "outsider" is consistently used by my informants, it is not intended to imply that a person described as an "outsider" cannot become an integral part of the team.

³⁶ No fewer than eight of the twenty-six men involved in the team between 1951 and 1988 met their wives through folk dance or song clubs.

³⁷ CMS-05/A - 01.50, CMS-51/B - 35.38.

predecessors, and may be linked to the route via which they came into the team, is the fact that, although they have working class backgrounds, their occupations (school teacher, office clerk, and technical college lecturer, respectively) and values, especially a concern with higher education, move them into the ranks of the middle class. Having said that, Ted Frost and Syd Cotton also exemplify this upward social mobility indicative of opportunities available after the war (see Fig. 6.01). However, what is important here is that, while one might expect to see a natural increase in the proportion of middle-class occupations represented in the team to follow national postwar social trends, the middle-class audiences tapped by the folk revival through various educational institutions and recreational organisations begin to serve as the "community", a community of interest, from which new dancers are recruited.

As individual members of the Grenoside team become increasingly involved in a wide range of folk revival activities in the 1950s, it is not surprising that the activities of the team itself develop along these lines. In 1951, several members of the sword team, who were also members of the Morris and country dance clubs, suggested that the village organise a summer folk dance festival as part of the Festival of Britain celebrations. Having attended numerous such festivals in recent years, the members of the sword team were particularly familiar with this style of presentation, and Dick Shepherd undertook the production of the event, which involved the village dance clubs, as well as teams of local schoolchildren. A festival committee was formed, consisting of representatives from the Grenoside Sword Dancers, the Grenoside Morris Men, and the Haymakers' Folk Dance Club, and the success of this day of dance led to its establishment as an annual event (Illus. 6.02 and 6.03).³⁸

In addition to the Grenoside Festival, the Grenoside Sword Dancers performed on no fewer than twenty occasions during 1951, including the aforementioned Darlington Competitive Musical Festival, and other folk festivals organised by district branches of the English Folk Dance and Song Society at Hull, York, Lincoln, Leeds and Birmingham, as well as the national festival held at the Royal Albert Hall in London. In 1952, the sword team performed on seventeen occasions, including the Darlington Competitive Musical Festival, the Eisteddfod at Llangollen in Wales, and at various festivals around the country. Between 1953 and 1957, the Grenoside Sword Dancers continued to perform at regional and

³⁸ The Grenoside Festival continued, in more or less the same format, until 1983 when the village festival committee formally retired. The Grenoside Sword Dancers established their own annual summer weekend of dance in 1985.

national events, although the number of appearances dropped to an average of eleven occasions per year. Nevertheless, the decrease in the number of non-local bookings accompanied a period of development of local activities. The sword team were influential in expanding the Grenoside Festival programme to include not only more local country dance groups, but also well-known traditional teams, such as the Handsworth Sword Dancers and the Britannia Coco-Nut Dancers, from Bacup in Lancashire. Furthermore, in 1956 the sword, Morris, and country dance teams organised their first annual "tour", for which they hired a coach for a day and travelled around North Derbyshire, stopping to dance at popular holiday spots, such as Castleton, Bakewell and Buxton.³⁹

The establishment of these two annual activities, the tour and the festival, further illustrates the impact of the folk dance revival on the participants, especially on the sword team which was instrumental in founding the first country dance classes in the village out of which the Haymakers' Folk Dance Club and the Grenoside Morris Men were born. No longer were the Grenoside Sword Dancers merely reaping the benefits of the activities of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, but also organising their own events in the spirit of revival. In an address to the participants of the first tour in 1956, Walter Fleetwood, the sword team's musician and a leading figure in the local country dance scene, underscores this shift from beneficiary to benefactor:

What can we, as a group, do to further the interests of the Society? First of all it is essential that we develop the team spirit. Without this we can do nothing. We should try to get people interested, and, I think, tours, like we did a few weeks ago could help tremendously.

Thus, although the Grenoside Sword Dancers continued to attend non-local folk dance festivals during the late 1950s, the sword team, and related dance groups, made a conscious effort to increase their activities locally, and in so doing helped to further the folk dance revival.

However, by the end of the 1950s the number of annual appearances of the sword team decreased substantially; in 1958 the team had only five engagements, including folk dance festivals at Birmingham and Shrewsbury, and in 1959 they made only four appearances, all local.⁴⁰ Although the team membership stood at thirteen in 1960, seldom could a side be raised, as it became increasingly difficult

³⁹ Details of the sword team's bookings summarised in this paragraph are provided by Fred Myers, Grenoside Sword Dancers' Secretary's Reports, 1951-1957.

⁴⁰ Fred Myers, Grenoside Sword Dancers' Secretary's Reports, 1958-1959.

for members to commit themselves to attending numerous engagements, especially those events further afield which occupied all or part of a weekend. First of all, there were pressures of work and family: Sid Cotton's participation, for example, became intermittent after 1954 when he became a factory manager, and several members of the team increasingly needed to turn their attentions to their growing children. Indeed, the extent of any particular member's active participation appears to fluctuate with the cycle of the family, which necessarily influences both the number and type of engagements accepted.⁴¹

In addition to family and work commitments, all of the members of the sword team had at least one other dance interest: in 1960, each of the thirteen members were involved to varying degrees in country dancing, eight men were also members of the Grenoside Morris Men,⁴² and Dick Shepherd, Graham Hardwick, Ted Frost and Reg Ward were involved in teaching dancing in the area and also frequently attended English Folk Dance and Song Society weekend courses and summer schools. Finally, age and ill health began to take their toll on the members of the sword team. By 1960, only three members were under forty years of age, with six of the remaining ten in their fifties. Moreover, the Captain, Len Brookes, began to suffer with heart trouble, which further limited the number of bookings the team accepted in the early 1960s.

Leonard Brookes' death in 1963 dealt a severe blow to the sword team, for they not only lost a friend of many years, but also a member who filled a specialised role within the dance. This vacancy was eventually filled by Ted Frost who met the primary criterion of having a powerful singing voice. However, this left the team with one fewer dancer, the pressure of which was compounded in 1965 when Reg Ward dropped out because of family commitments and Dick Shepherd accepted a new job near London. Thus, by the mid-1960s the Grenoside Sword Dancers were making far fewer appearances than they had been less than a decade before. Be that as it may, a side would always be raised to perform on Boxing Day and at the annual summer festival, both of which served as focal points for the dancers and the community.

⁴¹ This factor appears to influence the activities of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers and Barnsley Longsword, as well as the Grenoside Sword Dancers.

⁴² Sid Cotton never danced with the Grenoside Morris Men, and Fred Myers, Harrington Housley, Colin Housley, and Len Brookes had dropped out by that time.

6.3.4 Grenoside - Summary

During the period from 1945 up to the mid-1960s, several significant developments occurred in the motivations and activities of the Grenoside Sword Dancers and their community. Although the postwar intervention of the English Folk Dance and Song Society precipitated the 1947 split, the continued direct support of the Grenoside team by the Society, as well as the increase in performance opportunities afforded by the revival atmosphere, proved extremely beneficial for both the sword team and the local community. Indeed, where once the sword team had simply been a vehicle for community pride, during the 1950s the team was instrumental in raising local interest and establishing a variety of folk dance groups in the area. Furthermore, through these activities the Grenoside Sword Dancers became involved in the perpetuation of the folk dance revival in general, and in so doing began to effect a broadening of the boundaries of "community", tapping a network of interpersonal relationships based on a common interest. The advent of Dick Shepherd, Graham Hardwick and George Bell, therefore, signifies not only the manifestation of this trend, but also the beginning of the transformation in the nature of the dancers, and by implication their communities, from working class participants before World War Two, to almost entirely middle class participants by the 1980s. Finally, as the period from 1945 up to the mid-1960s drew to a close, numerous factors, including the pressures of work and family, other folk dancing commitments, and age and ill health, led to a reduction in the team's membership, accompanied by a decrease in their activities (see Figure 6.02). However, as will be discussed in section 6.4, the Grenoside Sword Dancers would experience an important influx of new and younger members in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

6.3.5 Handsworth - Introduction

The period from the mid-1940s up to the mid-1960s sees the revival of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers.⁴³ Despite the renewed support of the English Folk Dance and Song Society and St. Mary's

⁴³ The word "traditional" is first included in the title of the Handsworth team during this period, with the earliest recorded reference appearing in the *The Sheffield Telegraph*, Thursday, 13 November, 1952. The importance of including the word "traditional" will be discussed Chapter Seven.

Parish Church, Handsworth, immediately after the war, it is not until the early 1960s that the team is once again firmly established. A significant changeover in membership introduces new attitudes and motivations into the team, and similar to developments at Grenoside during this period, there is a broadening of the boundaries of the community from which the dancers are drawn and within which the dance is perpetuated.

6.3.6 Handsworth - 1946-1950: Reformation and Decline

As discussed in Chapter 5, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers performed regularly at local charity benefits and English Folk Dance and Song Society events throughout the 1930s, and on at least two recorded occasions during World War Two (see section 5.4). Furthermore, although the team did not make their annual local Christmas time tours during the war, Jim Goodison maintained that the team did, in fact, occasionally meet to have a run through the dance.⁴⁴

By the end of the war the team's activities had virtually ceased, with no known public appearances since 1944. Thus, as in the 1920s, the Sheffield branch of the English Folk Dance and Song Society once again sought to encourage the Handsworth team to begin performing regularly. Unlike the Grenoside Sword Dancers, who could field two sides at this time, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers had only enough members to make a team -- Edgar Brownnett, Jimmy Cain, Jim, Jack and Willis Goodison, Ernest Lomas, Lol Willoughby, Billy Siddall, resuming his captaincy, and G. Shephied as musician.⁴⁵ This team was invited to perform at several local Society events in 1946, including displays at Wisewood and Shirecliffe schools.⁴⁶

In January 1947, along with Grenoside, the members of the Handsworth team were presented with

⁴⁴ CMS-06/B - 26.10 and CMS-34/A - 12.35.

⁴⁵ The name "G. Shephied" (possibly misspelled) appears in the programme of the January 1947 presentation ceremony, and in view of his award of a silver badge, it may be deduced that he had played for the team for a reasonable period of time, probably since their first postwar performance in 1946.

⁴⁶ Hannah Mawson, letters to Billy Siddall, 4th April, 1946, and 11th November, 1946, Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers' Scrapbooks, vol. 3, Handsworth Archive.

silver badges and a new set of swords by Douglas Kennedy, then Director of the Society. In addition to their performance at the presentation ceremony, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers performed on at least two other occasions in 1947: the open day of the Sheffield District of the United Nations Association on September 20th, and at a folk dance party for the Sheffield Diocese of the Girls' Friendly Society on November 17th.⁴⁷ While these two events were not organised by the English Folk Dance and Song Society, the invitations came via Hannah Mawson, the secretary of the Sheffield branch.

Apart from these five performances in 1946-47, there are no other recorded appearances of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers until the early 1950s. Yet, given the prewar popularity of the team in the community and the direct support of the rector of St. Mary's Parish Church, the Reverend Heneage Ferraby, it is likely that the dancers occasionally performed during this period at village fetes and garden parties.

However, despite the support of the local community, as well as the English Folk Dance and Song Society, by 1950 the activities of the sword team had again ceased, largely due to the loss of the captain, Billy Siddall. Having been a keen ballroom and "old time" dancer for many years, Billy Siddall started his own dancing school in Sheffield after the war, and as business picked up, he was less able to commit himself to sword team engagements.⁴⁸ Although Ernest Lomas succeeded Siddall as captain, thereby taking on the responsibility of organising practice sessions and performances, the team was now one dancer short, and so few, if any, appearances were made between 1948 and the early 1950s.⁴⁹ Even so, the team apparently continued to meet regularly to have a run through the dance, and although these meetings seemed to function more as social occasions than rehearsals in view to perform, there was also a sense of duty involved.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ United Nations Association, Sheffield District, letter to Billy Siddall, 6th September, 1947, and M.S. Wynn, secretary of the Sheffield Diocese of the Girls' Friendly Society, letter to Billy Siddall, undated, Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers' Scrapbooks, vol. 3, Handsworth Archive.

⁴⁸ CMS-25/A - 25.35 and CMS-34/A - 00.30.

⁴⁹ It is possible to perform the dance with six or seven dancers, rather than eight, as evidenced on several occasions since about 1952. However, it is obviously preferable to perform with a full complement of dancers.

⁵⁰ CMS-22/B - 10.05.

6.3.7 Handsworth - 1951 up to the mid 1960s

Harry Pitts, the present captain of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers, recalls how he was invited to join the team in 1951:

There was Lol Willoughby, he was MC for old time dances. And Norma and I used to go old time dancing to the community centre at [the neighbouring village of] Darnall, and so forth, and different places. And we, I knew him with that... And one morning I was on a tram and he, he got on the tram at Handsworth. And we started talking about dancing, and he told me about Handsworth sword dance. I'd never heard of it. I'd been living at Handsworth most of my life and never even heard of sword dancing. And he said, "Why don't you come along?"⁵¹

At that time, only a few men were regularly attending practices - Jim and Willis Goodison, Ernest Lomas, and Lol Willoughby. Two other men had recently joined - Tom Staniforth, whose father had danced with the team from about 1905 until 1925, and Tom's cousin, Frank. Nevertheless, the team was still shorthanded and apparently keen to attract some new and younger members. Harry Pitts mentioned the invitation to his future brother-in-law, Norma's brother, Clive Turner from Darnall, who decided to go along to the practices as well.⁵² Harry recalls the lack of enthusiasm of most of the older dancers during his first year with the team:

I used to be there for half seven or eight. And no one would turn up until nine. And then they'd do the dance once and then go to the pub. That's what used to happen. Just, just go and run through it once.⁵³

With two more members, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers were once again able to accept engagements. They danced at one or two Sunday socials at Handsworth Church, and in 1952, albeit with only six dancers, at the Grenoside Festival.⁵⁴ Yet, despite these appearances, few dancers were committed to attending regular practices and working toward establishing a competent team. Harry Pitts explains:

They were very irregular turning up, and then for some reason they, they just dropped off. And I was still going up every week, and no one turning up... So I went to see Jim

⁵¹ CMS-22/A - 08.38.

⁵² At that time, practice sessions were held regularly at the community centre on Hendon Street, or weather permitting, on the lawn behind the Parish Church.

⁵³ CMS-22/B - 10.05.

⁵⁴ CMS-45/A - 19.20, CMS-45/A - 35.30, and photographs from the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers' Scrapbooks, vol.3, Handsworth Archive.

[Goodison]. I said, "I'm going to start building a team up again." It was actually handed over to me, and, and they just said, "You, you do it." And they just suddenly lost interest.⁵⁵

In the light of the conscious commitment demonstrated by these older dancers to maintaining the tradition in the 1920s, 1930s, and into the war years, it is unlikely that they lost interest in the perpetuation of the tradition *per se*; rather, with the advent of Harry Pitts, with his youth and enthusiasm, they were clearly ready to relinquish their roles in this process to a new generation of dancers. Nevertheless, this changeover would not be entirely without continuity with the past, for Jim Goodison had particularly wanted to reestablish the team and, as he was only in his mid-forties, wished to continue dancing. Jim's knowledge and experience would be invaluable during this period of revival, since although Harry Pitts and Clive Turner had been dancing with the team for about a year, and therefore knew most of the practicalities of the dance, they had rarely, if ever, danced with a complete set. Tom Staniforth and his cousin, Frank, also continued dancing for a short period of time until they both moved away from the area.⁵⁶ However, by that time several new members had been recruited.

As with Grenoside, the young men who were drawn into the team in the 1950s came with a more general interest and involvement in folk dancing, which was by that time, of course, a national "craze". In fact, when Harry and Clive first joined the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers they were also attending a folk dance club run by Hannah Mawson, as well as Saturday night folk dances at various venues around Sheffield. Clive Turner describes the extent of their involvement in the folk dance scene in the early 1950s:

We were all terribly enthusiastic and earnest about it then, because it was, there was at that time a, a folk dance, square dance craze. Um, and so, that there were quite a lot of people involved... it was easy to get people to, to commit themselves to it... The Teachers' Club had an annual day of workshops, and [Harry and I] had heard how marvelous these things were, so we went along. And they really were marvelous. And we actually did the longsword workshop... But round about that time I saw Grenoside for the first time, and I thought this was quite something. And it was soon after that, that we actually joined Handsworth. So it all came on very, very quickly.⁵⁷

Not surprisingly, then, it was through these folk dancing activities that Harry Pitts found the first

⁵⁵ CMS-22/B - 10.30.

⁵⁶ CMS-45/A - 32.30.

⁵⁷ CMS-45/A - 21.50.

enthusiastic new recruits for the sword team in 1952 -- Bill Tune, and Arnold and Kenneth Bashforth, all from Darnall. For each of these men, folk dancing was a hobby, and on this level joining the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers was simply an extension of this sort of leisure activity. Yet similar to the men joining the Grenoside team at this time, there was also an element of prestige in participating in the perpetuation of a traditional dance.⁵⁸

Yet, even with these three new members, the team was still short-handed, often needing to "rope in" girlfriends to make up a full set at practice.⁵⁹ In June 1954, the team was invited to attend the York Folk Dance Festival, and although they did appear, they performed with only six dancers (see Illus. 6.04). However, the situation improved by the mid-1950s when Tony Houghton, from Rotherham, joined the team, followed shortly afterwards by Leslie Seaman, who lived locally. Both keen ramblers, Tony and Les had first met at a Youth Hostel in the Derbyshire Peak District, and through rambling had also met Clive Turner. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the Youth Hostel Association incorporated folk dancing into its social activities. Les explains:

I started with the YHA, Youth Hostel Association, used to run a social group in Sheffield, and they started in running folk evenings, dances, dance classes, and invited a teacher and a pianist along to teach us folk dancing... And then [the Sheffield Teachers' Folk Dance Club] ran dances, different village, church halls, and different ballrooms. And we used to go along, and they used to run these dances once a month. And so all the different classes from all over the city used to go to these dances, as a social dance... So you would meet people, and that's when Harry [Pitts] started to run a class [at the community centre at Darnall]. And he let it be known that he was running this class and were we interested, and I said I was. At that time I was living at Handsworth and it was convenient to go down.⁶⁰

After attending Harry's folk dance class for some months, Tony and Les were invited to join the sword team. Two of Tony's friends, Ron Yates and Doug Lamb, also started attending practices at that time, but Ron eventually lost interest, and Doug, a builder by trade, broke his foot when he fell off some scaffolding, and did not return to the team after recovering.⁶¹

Thus, despite inviting several new men to join the team in the mid-1950s, the Handsworth

⁵⁸ CA4-15 and Kenneth Bashforth, questionnaire.

⁵⁹ CMS-33/A - 06.00 and Arnold Bashforth, personal communication, 18th January, 1987.

⁶⁰ CMS-16/A - 24.48.

⁶¹ CMS-33/A - 13.25.

Traditional Sword Dancers were still having trouble raising a complete side of eight dancers for a practice, let alone a performance. Nevertheless, in June 1956 the team attended their second Grenoside Festival, this time with a full complement of dancers: Jim Goodison, Harry Pitts, Clive Turner, Arnold Bashforth, Ken Bashforth, Bill Tune, Tony Houghton and Les Seaman. However, the team made few, if any, appearances until 1959, due to its unstable membership.⁶²

This instability stemmed primarily from the obligatory two-year National Service duty which, as illustrated in Figure 6.03, affected four members of the team between 1953 and 1959. Although Clive Turner completed his service in November 1955, he went away to teacher training college in Surrey in September 1956 until July 1959. This period coincided with the absence of Arnold Bashforth, and the following year Ken Bashforth and Les Seaman, to undertake their service obligations. Once again the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers were shorthanded, and although another man, Mike Heppenstall, joined the team in 1958, it was not until both Arnold Bashforth and Clive Turner returned to Sheffield that the team was able to perform.⁶³

The team's difficulties throughout the 1950s were further compounded by the constant search for a competent and committed musician. Harry Pitts recalls the trouble the team was having when he first joined in 1951:

We used to dance [at practice] without a musician. And we kept asking different people to, who we knew played some kind of instrument, to come along. Ah, there was one called Bob Brighton. He was a pianist, he's, he used to have a dance band at one time, a modern dance band. And he used to come along whenever he could. He was very good, but he was so busy with his band work he, he just couldn't ... come along to a practice.⁶⁴

When Les Seaman joined the team in 1956, they were still looking for a musician:

We had great problems with music then, because we hadn't got a musician, a regular musician. We recruited a chap from the local Darnall church who played fiddle, very slowly. He was a church organist, and he didn't, he played rather slowly, so we had a

⁶² There is no record in the Handsworth Archive of any performance between 1956 and 1959, nor is there any recollection by the participants.

⁶³ The team joined the Manchester Morris Men for a one-day Derbyshire tour in the summer of 1959, albeit with six dancers. The team consisted of Harry Pitts, Jim Goodison, Clive Turner, Arnold Bashforth, Bill Tune and Tony Houghton.

⁶⁴ CMS-22/A - 02.53.

bit of a problem there.⁶⁵

However, this problem was solved in 1960 when Bernard Kidd joined the team, having returned to Sheffield after studying music at the University of Leeds:

I came to be involved in the team because I'd been doing Morris dancing and playing [piano accordion] for Morris dancing when I was at University... And people said, "Oh, you know, you want to get in touch with Handsworth. They'll welcome a musician." And very vaguely I knew Mr. Pitts and his wife... because we'd been to the same barn dances, square dancing and things like that.⁶⁶

Nevertheless, the team still needed more dancers, compounded by the departure, because of various work and family commitments, of Mike Heppenstall, Ken Bashforth, Arnold Bashforth, and Bill Tune in the early 1960s. However, between 1962 and 1965 eight new members joined the team -- Patrick Malham, Clifford Barstow, Ivor Allsop, Arthur Bentham, Ivor Hardwick, Frank Kirton, Jack Pickering and, on a temporary basis, Ted Laughton -- raising the total number of dancers to thirteen (see Figure 6.03 and 6.04). All of these men were involved in folk dancing to varying degrees and came into the team via this interest. By way of illustrating this point, as well as establishing a basis for comparison with the Grenoside team, several short "case histories" will be presented.

Like Tony Houghton and Les Seaman, Pat Malham first became involved in country dancing through Youth Hostel Association social activities. When he came to study at the University of Sheffield in 1952 he joined the University folk dance club, learning and performing a variety of traditional dance forms, including Morris and longsword dancing. Pat also danced with Leeds Morris Men and White Rose Morris Men (of Leeds) for a short time in 1957 while living in Wakefield. After completing his National Service duty, he found a teaching position and moved back to Sheffield in 1960. Pat explains how he came to join the team in 1962:

[My wife] Margaret and I used to go out almost every Saturday night to a dance, and we got to know, we saw Harry and Norma at these dances now and again... And then one Saturday... Harry said, "Are you interested in doing any sword dancing?"⁶⁷

Similar to Pat Malham, Ivor Allsop had known Harry Pitts for some time before he joined the team. Ivor Allsop became interested in country dancing while he was still at school in Sheffield. In 1946

⁶⁵ CMS-16/A - 16.30.

⁶⁶ CMS-36/A - 02.55.

⁶⁷ CMS-15/A - 04.10.

he joined the Sheffield Teachers' Folk Dance Club, where he continued to learn country dancing, as well as Morris, longsword and rapper sword dancing. As treasurer of the club from 1954 until about 1974, he was involved in organising frequent dances and the occasional weekend of workshops, and it was through these activities that he met quite a number of the Handsworth dancers, including Harry Pitts, during the 1950s. Although he had been interested in joining the team for a number of years, he was unable to do so until the autumn of 1962 when he finished teaching night school.

Several months later, Clifford Barstow approached the team:

I didn't know anybody in the side. I remember, I can distinctly remember going in the first night there... There was Pat Malham sat there, and his first words were "White Rose", because he'd danced with White Rose, you see. I just went along one night, one Wednesday night, to see if they wanted any members.⁶⁸

Cliff had started country dancing when studying metallurgy at the University of Leeds in the late 1940s, and was invited to join the University Morris team, which at that time also performed several longsword dances. In 1953 he formed the White Rose Morris Men and for several years danced with both White Rose and the University side. In 1961 he moved to Rotherham, South Yorkshire, to lecture at Rotherham College of Technology and, wishing to continue dancing, decided to join Handsworth in 1963, as it was "the only side within any striking distance" of where he was living.⁶⁹ As will be discussed in Chapter Seven, Cliff Barstow was instrumental in expanding the team's repertoire in the mid-1960s to include Morris dancing.

Not unrelated to the route via which new members came into the Handsworth team during this period were their motivations for joining the side. To a great extent, joining the sword team was simply an extension of their other folk dancing activities; dancing was an enjoyable pastime, and here was an opportunity to learn and perform another form of traditional dance.⁷⁰ With its weekly meetings, the sword team also functioned as a social club for its members and, as an all-male activity, constituted a "night out with the lads".⁷¹ Finally, for at least some members, there was an appeal in the fact that the

⁶⁸ CMS-78/A - 24.02.

⁶⁹ CMS-78/A - 25.00.

⁷⁰ CMS-15/A - 04.10, CMS-33/A - 04.30, CMS-36/A - 02.55, CMS-45/A - 23.00, and CMS-78/A - 24.00.

⁷¹ CMS-16/A - 12.45 and CMS-78/A - 28.30.

Handsworth team was a highly revered "traditional" side. There was certainly personal status to be gained on the folk scene as a member of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers, with invitations to various festivals as a star attraction. Moreover, there was also the pride associated with being party to the continuance of a long-standing tradition, supported by the revival of the annual Christmas time dancing in 1963.⁷² However, the appeal of the team's traditionality appears to be more of a secondary motivation than a primary one for joining the team, at least for most of the members during this period. Clifford Barstow underpins the pervading attitude:

I don't believe in keeping a tradition alive unless it has meaning and is enjoyable. So, if you see what I mean, I wouldn't just join it because it was a traditional side. I would have come along and danced because it was enjoyable to do.⁷³

As will be seen in section 6.4, these motivations, varying in degree of importance, persist through the 1970s and into the 1980s.

With a complete set of eight dancers and a regular musician, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers were able, by the summer of 1963, to become more active, performing a total of fifteen times.⁷⁴ In addition to performances at the Sheffield University Arts Festival and a folk dance festival at Granville College, Sheffield, the team went on a one-day tour around South Yorkshire with the White Rose Morris Men. Furthermore, as mentioned above, in December 1963 the team revived the annual Christmas time dancing, performing the dance at several locations in and around Handsworth on Boxing Day morning.

In 1964, the team performed the sword dance twenty-one times on at least five different occasions, attending events further afield such as the Shakespeare Quartercentenary Celebrations and the Stratford-upon-Avon Morris Ring Meeting.⁷⁵ Finally, by 1965, and with the incorporation of Morris dancing into their repertoire (see Chapter Seven), the team's activities had greatly increased. The sword dance was performed thirty-six times on fifteen occasions, including the annual Handsworth Parish Church garden party, two joint one-day tours -- one with the White Rose Morris Men, the other with the

⁷² CMS-16/A - 11.50, CMS-22/B - 08.30, CMS-45/A - 27.15, and CMS-50/A - 19.45.

⁷³ CMS-78/A - 29.10.

⁷⁴ Team Report 1963, Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers' Scrapbooks, vol.3, Handsworth Archive.

⁷⁵ Team Report 1964, Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers' Scrapbooks, vol.3, Handsworth Archive.

Grenoside Morris Men -- the Mid and East Yorkshire Festival at York, and two Morris Ring Meetings, one of which was held in Sheffield and organised by the Handsworth team.⁷⁶

By the mid-1960s, then, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers were once again well-established and performing at a frequency not previously realised. Yet, although their activity increased, apart from the annual Boxing Day performances established in 1963 and the Handsworth Parish Church garden party, which would become a regular event in the team's diary from 1965 onward, the team made no other appearances in Handsworth village or the surrounding district. Certainly, this was more a matter of circumstance than of choice, since the national reputation of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers effected by the folk dance revival afforded numerous performance opportunities around the country. However, the trend is clear; in contrast to the previous side, the Handsworth team by the mid 1960s no longer consisted of local men who lived, worked and socialised in the village. Moreover, unlike Grenoside, the Handsworth team did not initiate a folk dancing revival in the village, simply because those members interested in other forms of traditional dance were already involved in established classes in the area. Therefore, rather than being an integral part of the village community, the team was inevitably becoming a part of the "community of interest" to which its members belonged.

6.3.8 Handsworth - Summary

Similar to Grenoside, during the period from 1945 up to the mid 1960s, several significant developments occurred in the membership, motivations and activities of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers and their community. Despite immediate postwar encouragement by the English Folk Dance and Song Society and the rector of Handsworth Parish Church, it was not until the early 1960s that the team established a stable membership and was then able to increase its activities (see Figure 6.03). The men who joined the team had a general interest in folk dancing, which was an extremely popular leisure pursuit, and their interest was often sparked through YHA social activities and/or college or university folk dance clubs. These interests were furthered through the active folk dance scene in Sheffield, primarily through the dances and workshops organised by the Sheffield Teachers' Folk Dance Club and the closely related

⁷⁶ Team Report 1965, Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers' Scrapbooks, vol.4, Handsworth Archive.

Sheffield branch of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. During this period the folk dance scene began to serve as a fundamental network of social relationships, indeed a community based upon a common interest. Like Grenoside, the social make-up of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers began to transform during this period under the influence of this "community" which was, due to the nature of the audiences tapped by the folk revival, becoming increasingly middle class (see Figures 6.01 and 6.03). Finally, by entering this community, the team not only acquired new members, but also received support for its activities, thereby accessing new performance opportunities.

6.4 The Dancers and their Communities

from the late 1960s up to the present

The period from the late 1960s up to the present sees the consolidation of changes in the dancers and their communities which began in the years following World War Two. The tendency toward a community of interest from which the dancers are drawn becomes firmly established, although trends in the folk revival necessarily vary the membership and scope of this community. This period is further distinguished by the influx of a new generation of dancers into the Grenoside and Handsworth teams, as well as the formation of Bamsley Longsword. Finally, the diversification of performance contexts is clarified, revealing the range of opportunities, as well as the performers' interests.

6.4.1 Grenoside - Introduction

As discussed in the previous section, by the middle of the 1960s both the membership and the activities of the Grenoside Sword Dancers had decreased substantially in comparison with the previous decade. Attempts to build up their numbers by interesting local residents in joining the team were met with indifference.⁷⁷ Yet, despite this lack of enthusiasm at the village level, since the Grenoside team, like

⁷⁷ CMS-08/A - 43.00, CMS-19/B - 25.35, CMS-21/A - 15.00, CMS-51/A - 14.30, CMS-55/B - 05.45 and CMS-82/A - 20.00.

Handsworth, had been gravitating toward a new community for support, the team was able to attract new and younger members. However, the persistence of the "Grenosiders only" rule impeded full recovery of the side until the early 1970s when, out of necessity, the rule was abandoned by the membership.⁷⁸ Certainly this rule had been "bent" in the recent past, but as a criterion for membership, it had not only become part of the team's identity, but still more a measure of the team's "traditionality". It was, therefore, not without a degree of conflict that the new members were incorporated into the team.

6.4.2 Grenoside - The Dancers

The first man to join the Grenoside Sword Dancers in the period from the late 1960s up to the present was admitted to the team with the "Grenosiders only" rule still in effect, albeit slightly modified. John Parsons joined the team c.1968, and although he originated from Sidford in Devon, he married a woman from Grenoside, whom he had met through folk dancing. He subsequently moved to Grenoside, and with such connections to the village, he was admitted into the team. John had become involved in the folk dancing club at the University of Sheffield while he was studying for a degree in physics, and from there joined the Sheffield University Morris Men and the affiliated rapper sword team, the Sheffield Cutlers.⁷⁹ Moreover, he was active in the wider Sheffield folk scene, and it was through this community that he met a number of the men whom he would later introduce to the sword team.

In 1971, Doug Thompson was invited to join the Grenoside Sword Dancers when "a couple of their members who [also] belonged to Escafeld [Morris Men] asked me, because the team looked like folding up".⁸⁰ Indeed, between 1965 and 1970 four men -- Malcolm Brothers, Len Frost, and Harrington and Colin Housley -- retired, leaving the team short by one dancer.⁸¹ Doug, an engraver by trade, had

⁷⁸ Although the need to move beyond the local community for recruiting members remains, there is a prevalent feeling that those members with Grenoside village connections should be given preference when choosing the side to perform the first dance on Boxing Day.

⁷⁹ Although the Sheffield University Morris Men and the Sheffield Cutlers grew out of the University folk dance club, by the late 1960s membership was not restricted to university students.

⁸⁰ Doug Thompson, questionnaire.

⁸¹ Although the team was at least one dancer short for weekly practice sessions, Dick Shepherd would return from London to dance on Boxing Day and at the Grenoside Festival when necessary.

been involved in folk dancing in Sheffield since leaving school in 1958, and was a founder member of the Escafeld Morris Men, formed under the leadership of Graham Hardwick and Walter Fleetwood after the Grenoside Morris Men disbanded in the late 1960s. Having lived all of his life in the Sharrow area of Sheffield (some six miles from Grenoside), Doug's invitation came via Graham and Walter, the latter being not only particularly keen to revitalise the sword team, but also influential in persuading the team to look outside the immediate geographical vicinity for new members. Certainly, Doug's acceptance into the sword team was promoted by the fact that he "also knew most of the members through folk dancing".⁸²

In the autumn of 1972, an unprecedented influx of new members occurred. One man recalls the situation at this time:

It was a standing joke, but it was very true, that a good 'flu epidemic would have wiped out the team. I mean, I've been to Grenoside, I've been up there in sort of the early 1970s when they actually didn't start dancing [on Boxing Day] until twenty past eleven, because they were a man short, and they were, sort of somebody had to go out and knock on a few doors and say, "Come on, we need an extra man." And they'd come up, and they'd dance... It had got to that stage that, you know, it was a problem ... They had to change the rules... The rule was that unless you were actually born in Grenoside, or married a Grenosider, you couldn't dance with the team. And they were in such a sorry state with members that they had a recruitment drive, and John Parsons said, "I know three or four guys that will come, come regular and dance."⁸³

According to the team's minute book, six new members - Gerry Bates, Dave Brookes, Pete Civico, Joe Dunn, Eric May and Pete Swift - attended a meeting of the Grenoside Sword Dancers on Friday, 6th October, 1972, at St. Mark's Church hall, Grenoside. Having been invited to attend the prestigious Sidmouth (Devon) International Festival the following summer, the team decided that it was time to make a concerted effort to recruit some new members.

Although four of the new men came from various parts of Sheffield, the other two were drawn into the team because they were living in the village, yet not without prior involvement in folk dancing. Eric May came to live in Grenoside when he married in 1954. He got to know the sword team Captain, Ted Frost, through attending country dances in the area, and when looking for more members, Ted invited him to join the team. Pete Swift, on the other hand, who comes from an old Grenoside family, actually

⁸² Doug Thompson, questionnaire.

⁸³ CMS-82/A - 18.30.

sought out the team after, rather ironically, first learning about the Grenoside Sword Dancers at the Sidmouth Festival. Pete explains:

I had seen them [as a kid], but I didn't know they were particularly a Grenoside team... In fact, I were down at Sidmouth Folk Festival... and I were talking to somebody down there, and he said, "Where do you come from?" And I said, "Grenoside"... And he said, "They've got a sword dancing team, haven't they?" I said, "Well, I don't know." He said, "Oh, they have. They've got like a famous type team there."... I think they only used to dance on Boxing Day then... and they danced at the Grenoside Festival... But if you, if you didn't happen to be about at that time... You didn't see much publicity about them.⁸⁴

Pete made a few inquiries and discovered that Fred Myers, who lived opposite, had been a member of the Grenoside Sword Dancers for many years, and it was through Fred that he was invited to join the team. Like Eric May, Pete Swift had been interested in folk dancing for some time, having danced with the Sheffield University Morris Men in the late 1960s and with the Escafeld Morris Men in the early 1970s, and he knew several members of the sword team through these channels. However, Pete's interest in folk dancing grew out of participation in the folk song revival of the 1960s, a prominent feature in the backgrounds of most of the men who joined the team in the 1970s.

Indeed, in the case of Gerry Bates, Dave Brookes and Pete Civico, they each became interested in traditional dancing through the folk song revival.⁸⁵ In fact, they had been going to Grenoside on Boxing Day for several years, not only to watch the dancing, but also to participate in the carol singing in the pub afterwards.⁸⁶ Participation in the folk community also brought these men into contact with each other, and with John Parsons, through whom they were invited to join the Grenoside Sword Dancers.

Gerry Bates explains:

[My brother and I] started getting interested in folk songs from television programmes actually, because there were some quite good television programmes, weekly television programmes on at that time, with people like Martin Carthy... [In 1965] my brother and I took two other chaps down [to the Sidmouth Folk Festival]. In fact, they were two fellows involved in running the folk song club in Sheffield that we were involved with. So the four of us went down in '65, and then the next year, we were so enthusiastic about this that we, we took over thirty from the club. And again the following year, a similar number... And, through going to Sidmouth, and really seeing rapper sword

⁸⁴ CMS-67/A - 27.05.

⁸⁵ According to several informants, Joe Dunn also became interested in traditional dancing via the folk song revival, although I have been unable to contact him to confirm this. CMS-07/A - 08.05, CMS-67/A - 41.45 and CMS-82/A - 33.30.

⁸⁶ CMS-20/A - 11.00, CMS-29/A - 23.10, CMS-43/A - 31.05 and CMS-55/B - 03.00.

dancing that, that stirred it up first, because there was a team from Sheffield... the Sheffield Cutlers, and they were, they were very impressive... So we became interested... my brother and I, Dave Brookes and Pete Civico, and one or two others... We decided we wanted to form our own rapper team. So, Joss Mellor from the University [Morris Men and Sheffield Cutlers], he took it upon himself to instruct us, and we called ourselves the Sheffield Apprentices... In the end, it was getting difficult to find a room to practice in... so Joss said, "Well, why don't you come along and practise with, with the University on Monday nights?" So, we used to go along, and sit out during Morris practise and just join in the rapper practise. And then eventually John Parsons... would say, "Come on, then. Join in with us. Come on, don't just sit around." So that was our introduction to Morris.⁸⁷

By the time these men were invited to join the Grenoside Sword Dancers in 1972, they had developed an interest in a variety of traditional dance forms, and had also gained several years of experience through dancing with the University sides, attending workshops at various folk festivals, including Sidmouth, and local days and weekends of dance. Moreover, these men remained active, as participants as well as organisers, in the Sheffield folk song clubs, which were not only sparking an interest in dance amongst a younger generation of folk enthusiasts, but in so doing, expanding the sphere of the folk community.

By the end of 1972, two other men -- Pete Stewart, a fiddle player, and Derek Hardwick (no relation to Graham Hardwick) -- had joined, the former a musician with the Sheffield University Morris Men, drawn in through John Parsons and the other University dancers, and the latter, a slightly older man, who had been involved in folk dancing since the 1950s revival, and invited to join by Walt Fleetwood, Fred Myers and Ted Frost, who he knew through attending folk dances in the area. While these additions brought the total membership to sixteen, at about this time, three men -- Syd Cotton, Graham Hardwick and Doug Thompson -- left the team in quick succession. As mentioned in section 6.3, Syd Cotton had been less active in the team because of work pressures, and "because younger dancers had joined" he felt that, after twenty-six years, his services were no longer required.⁸⁸ There was also certainly an element of redundancy amongst the reasons for both Graham Hardwick and Doug Thompson leaving the team; yet, more importantly, the influx of new members changed the "atmosphere" of the team to an extent that neither Graham nor Doug felt as if they fitted in. Graham Hardwick explains:

John [Parsons] came in, and then he started bringing two or three of the University

⁸⁷ CMS-43/A - 01.30.

⁸⁸ Sydney Cotton, questionnaire.

[Morris] lads with him... When they started to come in there, there seemed to be a different atmosphere, you know, and... there wasn't the incentive for me to go over there as there was before.⁸⁹

Although group dynamics, and the constituent individual interpersonal relationships, will be discussed further in following chapters, it is necessary that certain factors involved in producing this "different atmosphere", which relate to the backgrounds and relationships of the new dancers, as well as their motivations for joining the team, be presented here. As mentioned above, all of the men who joined in 1972 were involved in other folk dancing activities, and most became interested in dance through participation in the folk song revival of the 1960s. This interest in song would, of course, continue to influence the team's membership and activities. Nearly all of the young recruits knew each other through the Sheffield University Morris Men, which necessarily effected a high degree of camaraderie amongst these members which would not only set them apart from the older, more established members of the team, but, indeed, potentially be seen as threatening.

Similar to the men who had joined since 1950, for the new recruits joining Grenoside, sword dancing was an extension of their folk activities, which were an important part of their social lives, as well as their primary recreational outlet.⁹⁰ For those who were also members of other dance teams, regular practice sessions provided the opportunity for another night out with the lads. There was also the possibility of attending more folk festivals, which would provide the opportunity of a day, weekend, or week away for the entire family. One man, in fact, revealed that his interest in going to festivals was one reason for joining the team:

I'd heard that Grenoside had been invited to Sidmouth, to the festival, so I thought if I joined the team, I'd get a free ticket.⁹¹

However, for most of the men who joined at this time, a prominent attraction was the personal prestige associated with belonging to a "traditional" team. Certainly, there had been an element of increased status within the community associated with being a sword dancer from as early as the 1920s. Yet, whereas this prestige was once accompanied, even overshadowed, by a sense of duty to preserving

⁸⁹ CMS-51/A - 36.10. See also, Doug Thompson, questionnaire.

⁹⁰ CMS-43/A - 09.05, CMS-55/A - 25.35, CMS-67/A - 34.45 and CMS-82/A - 03.15.

⁹¹ CMS-67/A - 33.40.

the tradition (continually impressed upon the team by the English Folk Dance and Song Society), by the early 1970s, with popular interest and activity in traditional dancing so vast, the urgency of this sense of responsibility was greatly diminished. Indeed, as evidenced by the arrival of eight new members in the space of a few months, there were obviously plenty of people interested in joining the team. However, although these new members viewed so-called "traditional" teams, like Grenoside, with a great deal of admiration,⁹² they joined initially more for the thrill and prestige of belonging to such a team, than for the sake of perpetuating the tradition. Pete Civico explains:

It's a reflected glory of just being a member of the team... to be able to be a member of a *traditional* team. You know, it's like wearing a badge.⁹³

Dave Brookes adds:

We used to travel miles to go and see [traditional teams] like Headington, Bampton and Chipping Campden, and people like this, you know. "Oh, fantastic... Aren't they brilliant?" I mean, really, if you looked at them, no, they weren't that brilliant, but at the end of the day, it was a *traditional* team. So when I was given the opportunity of dancing for a traditional team, you know, I just grabbed at it. I think that was, you know, that was probably the pinnacle at the time - dancing for a traditional team.⁹⁴

It should be emphasised, however, that although the desire to experience membership of a traditional team may have been an initial primary motivating factor, the aura of intrigue has, over the years, given way in these same men to a strong sense of commitment to maintaining the tradition.

In 1974, Chris Swift, Pete Swift's younger brother, and then their brother-in-law, Bob Heath, joined the Grenoside Sword Dancers. Bob, who had moved to Grenoside in 1972 from Rotherham, a large town adjacent to the northeast side of Sheffield, explains how he became involved:

Well, Pete was dancing, you see, when I came [to live] up here... He introduced me to it, or, well, he mentioned it to me, and said, "Do you fancy having a go? ... They go all over the place... and it's a very traditional thing in the village." I think I needed a little bit of encouragement.⁹⁵

Although Bob had never participated in any form of traditional dancing before, he had been interested in

⁹² CMS-43/A - 29.10, CMS-56/A - 39.40 and CMS-82/A - 41.15.

⁹³ CMS-55/B - 32.00.

⁹⁴ CMS-82/A - 41.15.

⁹⁵ CMS-60/A - 06.30.

folk music for a number of years and viewed dancing as "following on from folk singing."⁹⁶

Chris Swift was also introduced to the sword team through Pete. Like Bob, Chris had been interested in folk music for some time, but had also previously danced with the Sheffield University Morris Men and the Escafeld Morris Men, following his brother's lead.⁹⁷ For Chris and Bob, dancing was an enjoyable recreational and social activity; indeed, shortly after joining the longsword team, Bob, Chris and Pete extended their dancing activities by forming a village rapper sword dancing team under the leadership of Reg Ward. Yet, the longsword team was traditional to the village where they lived.

Chris explains:

It was the obvious thing to do [to join the Grenoside Sword Dancers], because, I mean, we were interested in dancing, and that was a village dance.⁹⁸

Bob was also attracted by the fact that the sword dance was a village tradition, especially as he was a newcomer to the area:

It was a traditional thing, you see. I mean, I was born in London; of course, there are plenty of traditional things about London, but nothing so specific, you know. I were never a part of a little village. Then to be moved up to Rotherham, which is a fairly big place, and, of course, you're just sort of one of many in places like these. But in Grenoside, you're, you know, trying to fit into a smaller community. And [joining the sword team] caught my eye.⁹⁹

Obviously, for Bob Heath, joining the Grenoside Sword Dancers helped him to feel more a part of the village community. Certainly, with himself and Chris Swift joining in 1974, 64% (nine out of fourteen) of the members were Grenoside residents, so there was necessarily a "village feel" about the team. However, as mentioned earlier, and as will be discussed further below, the team was clearly moving away from an attachment with a geographically-based community toward a community of interest from which to receive support.

In 1975, Pete Stewart, Joe Dunn and Derek Hardwick left the team, although the reasons for their departures are unknown, since attempts to contact them have been fruitless. George Bell also retired from the team during this year, "to let the younger ones in, with the promise I would stand in should they be

⁹⁶ CMS-60/A - 10.45.

⁹⁷ CA3-283.

⁹⁸ CMS-69/A - 24.00.

⁹⁹ CMS-60/A - 09.15.

short at any time."¹⁰⁰ Despite these losses, the team still had nine dancers, a captain and a musician.

Yet, although the number of dancers was sufficient, the fiddler, Walt Fleetwood, who was then approaching seventy years of age, began to look around for another musician, an "apprentice" of sorts, to prepare to take his place in the team. Ray Ellison, the team's present fiddler, whose grandfather, George Cooper, had danced with the team, recalls how Walt began "priming" him "for the job" in the mid-1970s:

Pete Swift came and saw me, because he knew I played the fiddle, and said that Reg [Ward] was training up a side of Grenoside lads for rapper. And Walt was playing for them, but Walt had suggested that since they were all young blokes, that they try and get a young bloke to play as well. So they contacted me, and I went along and had a few practices with Walt; and he sorted me out, and then he left me to it. And then he said, "You fancy playing for some Morris?" because he was playing for Escafeld then... I said, "Yeah"... So he started taking me down to Escafeld, to their practices. And I got involved there, and he left me to it. And then he said, "What about playing for some barn dances?" So I said, "Yeah." So I used to go around occasionally with him and play at the barn dances, you know. And he said, "It's about time you started coming up to the sword practice."¹⁰¹

So, when Walter Fleetwood died in 1978, although the team lost a valuable member and leader, they were left with a well-prepared musician. Like his contemporaries, Ray was interested and involved in folk music, and through that became interested in dancing and playing for dancing. Furthermore, similar to the Swifts, "it was the natural thing" to join the village team,¹⁰² although commitment to perpetuating the tradition has become more important over time.

In 1976, Graham Stothard joined the team; again, like his contemporaries he had initially been interested in folk music, subsequently became involved in dancing, and through knowing several members of the team through the folk community, was invited to join. He explains:

I'd been going to the [folk song] clubs for a number of years, and it's amazing how quickly you make friends... I think it was Gerry [Bates], they were saying about, they were recruiting again for the University Morris side... They'd asked at the folk club because, as normal with a university side, every three years the, the team ceases... So they co-opted people from outside. And I went along... and I danced with the University side for a number of years.¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ George Bell, questionnaire.

¹⁰¹ CMS-19/A - 13.30.

¹⁰² CMS-19/A - 16.00.

¹⁰³ CMS-65/A - 06.40.

I was dancing with Sheffield University Morris and Cutlers Rapper team; after Dave [Brookes], Gerry [Bates] and Pete [Civico] joined Grenoside, I was invited to join the team. I had seen Grenoside dance and was interested, and when invited to dance, what an opportunity. "The longsword team."¹⁰⁴

Again, like many of the men who joined during the 1970s, Graham Stothard was motivated to join the Grenoside Sword Dancers as an extension of the folk activities central to his recreational and social life.

Yet, the "traditional" status of the team greatly increased the appeal:

It was an honour at the time really, to be asked to dance with Grenoside... They've always had a reputation, you know, it's always been, "Oh, Grenoside!"¹⁰⁵

In 1981, John Newman joined the Grenoside Sword Dancers when he was "asked by Gerry [Bates] and Pete Civico"¹⁰⁶ after dancing with them for a number of years as a member of the Sheffield City Morris Men, a break-away team from the Sheffield University Morris Men.¹⁰⁷ John had been interested in folk music since he first stumbled upon the Barley Mow Folk Club, held at The Three Cranes public house in Sheffield, in December of 1968, through which he met Gerry and Pete, amongst others.

John explains how he became involved in dancing:

In 1975 I was asked by Pete Civico... if I wanted to join a newly starting Morris team. He was, he was really touting around for anybody. He'd tried in the past, he'd asked me in the past... and I had no interest at all. But he asked me that, that time, and I think it was just purely that it was a time of, a time of life whereby things had passed on a bit. I was... twenty-four, and I'd got a young family, and other kinds of activities were a little bit out of the question at that time. You know, to some extent a bit, like you go through that phase where, where you've had a, you've lost all your school friends, and you're sort of, you're trying to break into new areas, and it just seemed like a good area to break into. So to some extent it was, it wasn't something I particularly wanted to do, but I just thought it might be a good avenue, a good *social* avenue really... bearing in mind that I knew a lot of people that were going to be in the team anyhow.¹⁰⁸

Indeed, belonging to the Sheffield City Morris Men has been central to John Newman's social life:

The Morris team for, for the past ten years really, has been my, my life, socially. There's, there's no doubt about it. I mean, I go on holiday every year with, you know, a large number of people out of the Morris team who always go on a group holiday

¹⁰⁴ Graham Stothard, questionnaire.

¹⁰⁵ CMS-65/B - 13.30.

¹⁰⁶ CMS-48/A - 10.25.

¹⁰⁷ For details on the formation of the Sheffield City Morris Men, see Dave Eyre, John Newman, and Peter Delamere, "The Origins of Sheffield City Morris Men: Medup, We Did It Our Way", *Lore and Language*, 6:2 (July 1987), 83-97.

¹⁰⁸ CMS-48/A - 02.00.

together. I'd say nearly all me (sic) friends, socially, are through the Morris.¹⁰⁹

Furthermore, it was precisely through his friendships with those men who dance with both the Sheffield City Morris Men and the Grenoside Sword Dancers that he was drawn into the longsword team. Clearly, then, John joined the team as another social outlet; indeed, unlike most of the other members of the team, John was not particularly attracted initially by the team's "traditional" status. However, the performance of the dance, as a tradition, has since become important to John, and has emerged as a factor in maintaining his commitment to the team.

The actual sword dance means more to me *now*, having done it... It is something that people just want to, want to keep on doing.¹¹⁰

In September 1983, Peter Clarke joined the Grenoside Sword Dancers.¹¹¹ Unlike most of the new members since the late 1960s, Peter was in his mid-fifties, and rather than being drawn in through the song revival, he had been actively involved in folk dancing since the early 1950s. Although he had seen traditional dancing as a child before the war by the local Morris team in his home village of Deddington, Oxfordshire, Peter first participated in folk dancing after he was evacuated to America in 1940. Having enjoyed country dancing, he joined the folk dance club while at Oxford University, through which he met his wife, Sheila. They both became active members of the English Folk Dance and Song Society and dancing, especially country dancing, became a very important part of their social lives.¹¹² Of course, the Clarkes continued country dancing when they came to Sheffield in 1960 and became active in the South Yorkshire branch of the Society, through which they became part of the Sheffield folk community. In about 1970, Peter and Sheila attended the Grenoside Festival and saw the Grenoside Sword Dancers for the first time. Peter explains:

From the country dancing classes, and so on, that we went to, we heard about the festival... We went along to look at that, and then I think that, as usual, Ted [Frost] said

¹⁰⁹ CMS-48/A - 30.30.

¹¹⁰ CMS-48/A - 34.00 and CMS-48/B - 25.45.

¹¹¹ Ken Hinchcliffe also joined the team in 1983, but as I was unable to contact him during the period of research, details of his background and motivations are unavailable. As Figure 6.01 illustrates, he was only with the team for about two years.

¹¹² Peter Clarke, questionnaire.

something like, you know, "It's *really* done on Boxing Day", and so we came along.¹¹³ Boxing Day at Grenoside made such an impact on them that they attended every year since.

In the meantime, Peter had become particularly keen on longsword dancing, having attended workshops at folk festivals such as Sidmouth and Whitby, as well as day and weekends of dance organised by the South Yorkshire branch of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. In fact, on at least two occasions, Ted Frost ran Grenoside workshops which Peter attended. However, it was following a workshops run by the Handsworth captain, Harry Pitts, that Peter Clarke joined Grenoside.

I'd been really sold by the Whitby [Folk Festival] longsword [workshop] with Harry Pitts. And we'd done [the dance from the village of] Askham Richard [near York]. And our set had done really well, and it had been, you know, really exciting. And that really sold me... That's what got me up the courage to ask Ted [Frost] when I saw him. He was calling for us at a dance a month or so later.¹¹⁴

Peter had, in fact, fancied joining the Grenoside Sword Dancers for some time, but "had been hesitant to ask before because I felt the village tradition was important to maintain in its sense of locality, and I am a "foreigner".¹¹⁵

Certainly, Peter was motivated to join the team for the enjoyment of performing the dance. However, as the following statement illustrates, there was clearly a conscious element of becoming part of what he regarded as a very special tradition which had a greater appeal than the style and structure of the dance itself.

I had, in fact, been to workshops of both [the Grenoside and Handsworth] dances... In fact, I think Handsworth is probably a more exciting dance to do, because of the, the driving nature of it. And... because I'd just been learning from Harry Pitts [at Whitby], I would have thought there must have, might have been some quite powerful pulls in the direction of Handsworth... So, I think it must have been the loyalty [to Grenoside], the sense of Grenoside as a, a *real* tradition...I joined to dance on Boxing Day. And that was what I *thought* of as the Grenoside dance, was *the* Boxing Day dance.¹¹⁶

Unlike other members of the team, then, it appears that Peter Clarke was not primarily looking for a permanent, year-round, recreational and social outlet. Indeed, the commitment to participating in, and

¹¹³ CMS-58/A - 01.00.

¹¹⁴ CMS-58/B - 06.45.

¹¹⁵ Peter Clarke, questionnaire. The persistence of this association of the tradition with place will be addressed in Chapter Seven.

¹¹⁶ CMS-58/B - 09.35.

thereby perpetuating the tradition of performing the dance, particularly on Boxing Day, has been paramount to maintaining Peter's involvement in the team.

Malcolm Harper joined the Grenoside Sword Dancers in 1984, "following an introduction from a friend after a long interest in folk (at a distance)."¹¹⁷ Unlike most other members of the team, Malcolm had no prior experience of traditional dancing, except social dancing at barn dances and ceilidhs. In fact, it was through participating in the Sheffield folk community on this level that brought him into contact with the team. Like his contemporaries, Malcolm was motivated to join out of an interest in learning and participating in another form of traditional dance, which is an important part of his recreational and social life.

In 1985, three men -- Trefor Owen, George Clark, and Pete Smith -- joined the team. Trefor Owen had been actively involved in traditional music, dance and drama since the early 1970s. He first danced with Green Ginger Morris -- a Cotswold Morris side who also do some longsword dancing -- while working as a teacher in Hull. He later became involved in North West Clog Morris and currently dances with Wakefield (West Yorkshire) Morris.¹¹⁸ In the mid-1980s, having established himself as a clog maker in Wakefield, Trefor came to live at Wath-upon-Deerne (ten miles to the northeast of Grenoside), and continued his craft. Indeed, although he had seen the Grenoside Sword Dancers perform before, it was through clog making that Trefor met several members of the team. Wishing to extend his dancing activities, he accepted the invitation to join in January 1985.¹¹⁹

George Clark had never participated in any sword or Morris dancing prior to joining Grenoside, although he and his wife enjoy social dancing. George qualified as a doctor in 1971, and worked in London, Northampton and Swindon before moving to Sheffield in 1974. Similar to Bob Heath, as a resident of Grenoside, George had seen the Grenoside Sword Dancers perform on numerous occasions and was motivated to join not only for the recreational aspects of the dancing, but also for the social dimension of participating in what he perceived as a local activity.

¹¹⁷ Malcolm Harper, questionnaire.

¹¹⁸ Trefor also dances occasionally with Horwich Prize Medal Morris Men, Rose and Castle Morris Men, and Mandrake Morris, all of which are North West Clog Morris teams.

¹¹⁹ Trefor Owen, questionnaire.

As I lived in Grenoside I saw them dancing quite a few times, and as I was part of [the] village community, asked if I could join [in the autumn of 1985].¹²⁰

Finally, Pete Smith joined the team at the end of 1985 after having been encouraged to join for some time by John Newman and Gerry Bates, both of whom he'd known for many years as an active participant in the Sheffield folk scene. Pete had been singing at various song clubs since the early 1970s and was drawn into dancing through this avenue. He eventually joined the Sheffield City Morris Men, and through his friendship with Gerry and John who were members of both teams, he accepted their invitation to join Grenoside. Again, like most of the other members of the team, Pete was interested in joining as an extension of his folk activities, which are fundamental to his social life. However, since joining, Pete has also expressed an interest in the history of the sword team and conveys a commitment to perpetuating the tradition.¹²¹

In contrast to the men who joined the Grenoside Sword Dancers from the late 1960s through the 1970s, the men who joined the team during the 1980s, with the exception to Peter Clarke, were less attracted by the "traditional" status of the team than by the recreational and social opportunities membership provided. Even George Clark joined out of the desire to participate in a local activity, not necessarily a "traditional" activity, but one which he perceived as part of village life. Thus, it is not surprising that it was primarily through social networks that these men were drawn into the team. Nevertheless, as discussed above, once involved these men developed a strong sense of commitment to the team and to the perpetuation of the tradition.

To summarise, then, from the late 1960s up to the late 1980s the members of the Grenoside Sword Dancers are primarily participants in the Sheffield folk community who generally have a wider interest in traditional dance and/or music, and are drawn into the team largely through acquaintances and friendships made in this community of interest. Membership in the team provides social and recreational opportunities -- a way of meeting people and making friends, as well as occasions for spending an entertaining evening, day or weekend away from home (see Illus. 6.05). During the 1970s, the social and recreational aspects of membership are coupled with a desire to be part of a "traditional" team, although

¹²⁰ George Clark, questionnaire. Due to work commitments, in 1988 George asked for a "leave of absence" from the team.

¹²¹ Personal communications.

by the 1980s the "traditionality" of the team, with few exceptions, is no longer a primary motivation for new members, but rather, in time, becomes an important factor in maintaining members' commitment to the team.

6.4.3 Grenoside - The Performance of the Dance

From the late 1960s up to the present the frequency of the performance activities of the Grenoside Sword Dancers have naturally fluctuated with the size and availability of the membership (see Figure 6.02). Thus, during the late 1960s and early 1970s the team was fairly inactive; other than the annual Boxing Day and Grenoside Festival performances, the team made few appearances, with the highlight being the Royal Albert Hall Festival of the English Folk Dance and Song Society in 1969. Although the team's public appearances generally increased following the influx of members in 1972, the geographic range of their performances was limited to the Sheffield area between 1975 and 1977, inclusive. The number of performances decreased again in the early 1980s when several members became less active.¹²² Yet, by 1985 the number of engagements the team were accepting again began to increase.¹²³

Regardless of the frequency of the team's public appearances during this period, the nature of the contexts of their performances have certainly been influenced by the opportunities available. The team's activities are also shaped by the interests and motivations of the performers themselves. Finally, the performer-audience relationships entailed in the variety of performance contexts not only reveal the changing nature of the dancers' community, but also highlights the extent to which the team no longer relies on its community for many of its performance opportunities. In order to discuss these factors, the Grenoside Sword Dancers' performance activities will be detailed below.¹²⁴

As mentioned above, the Grenoside Sword Dancers made few appearances during the late 1960s

¹²² Bob Heath and Chris Swift became less active after 1981 due to work and family commitments, and Fred Myers, although still involved in the running of the team, performed less often from the early 1980s, due to age.

¹²³ Through personal communication with the Grenoside Sword Dancers since the autumn of 1989, the team's activities again appear to be decreasing, due to the unavailability of members. The need to recruit members has been acknowledged.

¹²⁴ Details of performance occasions appear in the Grenoside Sword Dancers' Minute Book (1970-1982) and Scrapbooks, as well as my Condensed Accounts, vols. 1-4.

and early 1970s. However, by 1973 the team was active again, performing at four folk festivals around the country, including the week-long Sidmouth International Festival, as well as at two local events, including a tour with the Escafeld Morris Men. In 1974, the team again attended several folk festivals around the country, including the English Folk Dance and Song Society's annual event at the Royal Albert Hall in London, and on several occasions at events organised by members of the Sheffield folk community, including the Morris Ring Meeting hosted by the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers. Their national reputation also led to their appearance in a television advertisement for the Samuel Smith Brewery in 1974.

The team's appearances were limited to the Sheffield area, largely as entertainment at charity functions, in 1975, 1976, and 1977, with the exception of performing at a festival in Derby in May 1975. Also, on Boxing Day 1975, the team was filmed by the BBC for a television programme, *The Pagan Year*. In 1978, the team performed at the York Youth Folk Festival, at several events in the Sheffield area, including charitable occasions at Jessop Hospital for Women, Herries Secondary school, and a social for the Home Help services. In addition, the team appeared in the BBC television programme *Discovering Churches*. In 1979 the Grenoside Sword Dancers again performed primarily in the Sheffield area at school, church and village galas (e.g. Chapeltown, Park House Secondary school, St. Mark's Church at Grenoside, St. Oswald's Church at Millhouses), although they made at least one non-local appearance at a festival in Bradford, West Yorkshire.

In 1980, the team danced on three occasions in Sheffield (Nether Edge Hospital, Bradfield well-dressing, Wortley Hall) and around nearby Rotherham with Yorkshire Chandelier Women's Clog Morris (from Sheffield). They also appeared at two non-local festivals -- at Derby (Dancing England) and Whitley Bay (Tyne and Wear). In 1981, the team again toured with Yorkshire Chandelier, and performed for charitable causes at Grenoside Grange Mental Handicapped Hospital, Grenoside Church, and the Attercliffe Youth Club. They attended the first Longsword Festival at Malton, North Yorkshire, and performed at a Christmas social at Wentworth Woodhouse, a Sheffield Polytechnic site since 1977.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ The West Riding County Council negotiated a two hundred year lease on Wentworth Woodhouse from the Eighth Earl Fitzwilliam in 1949, to use the premises for educational purposes, allowing a portion of the building to be retained for the private use by the Fitzwilliam family. Lady Mabel College of Physical Education was opened on the site soon thereafter. Rotherham Borough Council inherited the lease in 1974, and in 1977 Lady Mabel College was taken over by Sheffield City Polytechnic, which used the

The Grenoside Sword Dancers' activities decreased in number during the early 1980s; at this time, they performed primarily at small local events, with the one exception being a trip to Antwerp in 1983 to attend the annual half-Lent festival of the Lange Wapper Dansgroep.¹²⁶ By 1985 the team was becoming active once again, with several local performances at galas and garden parties, as well as appearing at the Sidmouth International Festival and the Saddleworth (Greater Manchester) Rushbearing ceremony. They also travelled abroad for the second time, to a festival in Bochum, Germany. In 1986, the team performed in the Sheffield area at Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet's Craftsman's Fair, the Grenoside Gala, the Sheffield Day of Dance for Africa, and again at a Christmas party at Wentworth Woodhouse. Slightly further afield, the team appeared at the Bamford (Derbyshire) Fair, and Bolsover Castle (near Chesterfield, Derbyshire). They also performed at Newcastle-under-Lyme (Staffordshire), Clitheroe (Lancashire) Folk Festival, and Abingdon (Oxfordshire) Mayor Making (Illus. 6.05). In 1987, the team had several local engagements, including performances at the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce convention, the Northern Festival of Traditional Arts, held at the University of Sheffield, and again at Wentworth Woodhouse. They also appeared at the Kirtlington (Oxon) Lamb Ale, the Whitby Folk Festival, and for the second time at "Dancing England" in Derby, as well as at a Medieval Market in Nottingham on August Bank Holiday Monday. Finally, the team made one local appearance before fieldwork ended in March 1988, at the Hefts and Blades ceilidh club.

It is clear from the above description, that the performance activities of the Grenoside Sword Dancers from the late 1960s up to the present have been varied, encompassing a wider range of performance contexts than ever before. Indeed, although the dance is performed in Grenoside annually on Boxing Day and at the Grenoside Festival, the vast majority of the sword team's performance activities occur outside of the village, provided by the activities and events of the folk revival and the community of interest it inspired in Sheffield and other areas, and by a more general and growing popular interest in English heritage, as well as the support for international cultural exchanges. Having previously expanded their activities to include local charitable functions, and local, regional and national folk events, during

building until 1986. Stephen McClarence, "Want to buy a stately home?" *The Sheffield Star*, 14th January 1986, p.5.

¹²⁶ Renaat Van Craenenbroeck, *De Antwerpse Zwaarddans* (Antwerp: Lange Wapper: 1985). See especially p.62.

the 1970s and 1980s, the team accessed these new performance opportunities.

Furthermore, the team's activities over these two decades, which fall roughly into six categories - annual local events (i.e. Boxing Day and the Grenoside Festival), charity benefits in the Sheffield area, folk festivals, civic and private non-folk oriented occasions (such as the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce convention), local folk club appearances and tours of the area with other dance teams, and television appearances -- are indicative of the participants interests.

As discussed above, the sword team is an important, if not the primary, recreational and social outlet for most of the members, and in addition to the regular practices, each performance occasion provides an opportunity to satisfy these needs through regular social contact, as well as the chance of having a drink and a chat or music and song session. Moreover, the number of engagements suggests an interest in public performance -- that is, if the members were not interested in performing the dance, then invitations would not be accepted. After all, the dance is the *raison d'etre* of the group, and therefore central to the team's role as a social and recreational outlet.

While serving as a social and recreational occasion for the team, the activities in each of the six categories are also appealing for additional reasons. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that not every member is interested in participating in every type of performance opportunity; indeed, some activities are met with mixed feelings, giving rise to a degree of ideological conflict within the team over the appropriateness of particular performance occasions.¹²⁷

The annual local events, especially Boxing Day, not only encompass the concept of perpetuating the tradition, but also serve as a means of maintaining links with the village community.¹²⁸ Apart from enabling the team to support a worthy cause, charity functions provide an opportunity for performing the dance, especially for some of the less experienced members of the team who may not be chosen to perform on more prestigious occasions. Due to most members' experience and interest in other types of traditional dance, as well as folk music and song, festivals provide a range of entertainments to participate in when not performing. Moreover, because of the usual variety of activities at these events, wives and

¹²⁷ See Chapter Seven.

¹²⁸ For attitudes toward the importance of maintaining links between the team and the village, see Chapter Seven.

children can be included, providing the opportunity of a weekend, or week, away for the whole family. Non-"folk" oriented events, on the other hand, are occasionally entertaining events in themselves (e.g. Nottingham Medieval Market), although in most cases the team is primarily attracted by the offer of a substantial fee, which in turn contributes toward maintaining the costumes and activities of the team. Performing at local folk clubs (e.g. Hefts and Blades) and on tour with other dance teams not only allows the team to perform in a socially familiar environment (see below), but may also provide an opportunity to expand the repertoire (see Chapter Seven). Finally, television appearances naturally involve a degree of prestige for the participants, and often a novel performance context, as well as a generous fee.

While the performance activities of the Grenoside Sword Dancers have clearly been influenced by the available opportunities, as well as the interests of the team members, the nature of the performer-audience relationships in these contexts not only underscores the changing nature of the dancers' community, but also reveals that the team no longer relies on its "community" for many of its performance opportunities:

It has already been demonstrated that the community from which the dancers are drawn gradually changed from one before World War Two which was largely geographically defined and based upon family relationships and friendships made in the neighbourhood and the workplace, to a community emerging in the 1950s and 1960s ostensibly defined by a common interest and networks of friend, and some family, relationships. Not surprisingly, this new community has not only supported the team through supplying members, but also by creating new performance opportunities -- folk clubs, organised tours by local dance teams, and the like. What is significant about these performance contexts is that the audience consists essentially of members of the folk community, creating an atmosphere of interest, expectation and familiarity. Indeed, even when touring with other teams and dancing in public to passers-by, there is normally a high degree of support and encouragement provided by the other teams when any particular group is performing (Illus. 6.09).

Despite the performance opportunities created by the dancers' new community, the longevity of the Grenoside Sword Dancers' association with place, the village of Grenoside (see section 6.3), coupled with the performers' conceptions of the tradition (see Chapter Seven), perpetuates not only an attachment to the village, but a high regard for the occasions of performing in the village, especially Boxing Day.

Yet, while there are a significant number of villagers (primarily former dancers, relatives of former dancers, and participants in the village-based folk dance revival in the 1950s) who have attended the performances for many years, much of the Boxing Day audience are members of the Sheffield folk community, as well as some "folkies" from further afield, and the families and friends of the dancers (Illus. 6.10 and 6.11). Nevertheless, Boxing Day is an important social occasion for all involved, providing an annual venue and occasion for people to meet. Therefore, there exists on Boxing Day in Grenoside a multiplicity of relationships between the performers and the audience, and within the audience itself, which reveal that while the team receives the most continuous and active support from a community based upon common recreational and social backgrounds and interests, there remains an affection for the performance of the dance in the village and, as will be discussed further in following chapters, a strong desire by the team to maintain this connection.

Apart from performance occasions occurring in the village of Grenoside and those provided through participating in the Sheffield folk community, the Grenoside Sword Dancers perform in contexts in which there are few, if any, personal relationships between the dancers and the audience; in other words, they perform in non-community contexts. In fact, of the ninety-five recorded performances from the late 1960s through the completion of fieldwork in 1989, 60% were in non-community contexts: charity benefits, civic and private events, and folk festivals.¹²⁹ Indeed, although folk festivals provide an interested and often knowledgeable audience, there are still too few connections between the performers and audience for it to be considered a community-based context.

To summarise, the performance of the dance from the late 1960s up to the present reveals that many performances occur outside of the dancers' community. Moreover, the nature of the Grenoside Sword Dancers' activities is shaped by the wide range of opportunities available, are further influenced by the interests and motivations of the members, and serve to underscore the changes in the community.

¹²⁹ Performances in Grenoside village constitute 32% of the total and performances within the boundaries of the Sheffield folk community add up to another 6%. The non-community performances break down as follows: charity benefits 26%, folk festivals 23%, and civic and private functions 11%. Television appearances which have involved artificial, manufactured, contexts account for 2% of the total. Invitations to non-community events occasionally involve a contact between a member of the team and the particular organisation (especially for charity appearances), although many invitations are extended on the basis of the popularity and reputation of the team.

6.4.4 Grenoside - Team Continuity

As Figure 6.01 illustrates, the Grenoside Sword Dancers have experienced a high degree of continuity in its membership for nearly two decades. Indeed, the influx of 1972 emerges as particularly important since five of the six men who joined that year were still dancing when this research began in 1985. Furthermore, while there have been four men who joined since that time who only remained with the team for a period of two or three years each, fifteen men, or 75%, have continued into the late 1980s.¹³⁰ This stability, however, is not unusual when viewed in the light of team cycles from as far back as the 1880s. Indeed, a quick look at Figures 5.02 and 6.01 reveal six periods, including the present one, of relatively little change in membership: the 1880s up to World War One, an overlapping period from the turn of the century into the 1920s (post-war revival), the 1920s (Scout team), the late 1930s through World War Two, the 1947 revival, and 1972 up to the late 1980s. Clearly, these cycles are indicative of generations of dancers, yet with the benefit of a more complete knowledge of the backgrounds, motivations and activities of the present generation of participants, it is possible to positively delineate the reasons behind the longevity of the current period of team stability. Indeed, the continuity in the membership of the Grenoside Sword Dancers may be attributed to several key factors: 1) the social cohesion of the members, 2) their enjoyment of the dance and the occasions of its performance, and 3) their interest in and commitment to the tradition.

The first, indeed, primary, reason for the stability of the Grenoside team appears to be the social cohesion of the membership, involving the network of interpersonal relationships established within the Sheffield folk community which, as detailed above, constitutes the social arena from which the dancers are drawn. Indeed, particularly in modern urban society where geographically-based communities have become less conducive to meeting the social and recreational needs of the individual, a community, a network of interpersonal relationships, established on the basis of common social and recreational needs and interests emerges. As illustrated above, it has been largely on the basis of acquaintances and friendships made in this community of interest, the Sheffield folk scene, that individuals have been drawn into the team. Moreover, as Figure 6.01 reveals, as the membership of the Grenoside Sword Dancers is

¹³⁰ Although the participation of Bob Heath, Chris Swift and Fred Myers has decreased since the early 1980s, they continued to dance when needed, and are therefore included in the 75%.

drawn from this community, which has become increasingly middle class in its socio-economic make-up, it is not surprising that the percentage of middle-class members increased from less than 40% in 1957, to 50% in 1967, to more than 71% in 1977, and finally to over 83% in 1987 -- clearly creating an element of, at least socio-economic, homogeneity within the team. Finally, because the sword team is perceived as a social outlet by the membership, this aspect is self-perpetuating, thus attracting more individuals seeking a new, or another, basis for social contact. Even those few members who joined the team because it is an institution in the village in which they reside, the motivation of seeking a social outlet persists.

The second reason for the continuity in the membership of the Grenoside Sword Dancers concerns the members' enjoyment of the dance and of the occasions on which it is performed. As detailed above, all of the men who have joined the team since the late 1960s have at least had an interest in folk music and/or dance, and of the nineteen dancers, fourteen, or nearly 74%, had experience in one or more forms of non-social English traditional dance (i.e. Cotswold Morris, North West clog Morris, rapper sword, longsword) prior to joining the team. For the participants, dancing is not only an enjoyable activity, but the regular practice sessions, as well as the events at which the dance is performed are important recreational outlets, for themselves and often for their families as well.

Finally, the stability in the membership of the Grenoside Sword Dancers over nearly two decades is contributed to by the members' affection for the tradition and their commitment to perpetuating it. Although this dedication may not have been a primary motivating factor of most of the members for joining, it has nevertheless since become important to virtually the entire membership of the team.

6.4.5 Grenoside - Summary

During the period from the late 1960s up to the present, several significant developments have occurred in the nature and activities of the Grenoside Sword Dancers and their community, consolidating changes which had their foundation in the years following World War Two. In particular, the influx of new members in 1972 not only enabled the team to become active after a period of years marked by few public appearances, but, because of the interests and motivations of these recruits, also confirmed the trend toward the sword team serving as a primary social and recreational outlet for its members. Furthermore, during this period, the sword team continued to receive support from what has been termed the "folk

community", thus becoming further incorporated into this "community of interest"; although a majority of the team's performances occur in non-community contexts. Finally, this period is distinguished by a high degree of stability in the membership of the Grenoside Sword Dancers, due to the congruence of the needs and interests of the members and the team's ability to fulfill them.

6.4.6 Handsworth - Introduction

As discussed in section 6.3, by 1965 the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers were once again well-established as a team and performing more often than ever before. Indeed, moving into the late 1960s, the frequency and scope of their performances continued in much the same vein, encompassing both local and non-local events. However, like Grenoside, during the period from the late 1960s up to the present the number of appearances have fluctuated with the size and availability of the membership.

6.4.7 Handsworth - The Dancers

As a consequence of personal circumstances, five members of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers departed between 1966 and 1969. With these departures the team was cut back to the minimum of eight dancers and one musician (see Illus. 6.12 and Figure 6.04), which necessarily limited the number of engagements which the team could accept.

However, similar to the turn of events at Grenoside at this time, between 1969 and 1972 the team acquired eight new members.¹³¹ Moreover, in addition to the fact that this was an unprecedented influx of members which has not yet been repeated, as will be illustrated below, there are other similarities between these developments in the Handsworth team and what occurred simultaneously at Grenoside.

In September 1969, Steve Sinclair and Brian Smith joined the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers, after having seen them dance. Brian explains:

¹³¹ Figure 6.03 lists two members in the late 1960s which are not included in the present discussion because their participation was minimal. Peter Evans played the fiddle for the team on a few occasions when Bernard Kidd was unavailable, and Brian Thorne was apparently only a member of the team for a couple of years, making few public appearances, and attempts to contact him for further information have been unsuccessful.

We went to see Handsworth [on Boxing Day] the Christmas before Steve and myself joined. And that was the first time we'd actually seen them. But I knew [of them] obviously; we'd been playing and singing around the clubs and that, and getting a bit of [social] dancing in.¹³²

Like many of the young men who were joining Grenoside at this time, Brian Smith and Steve Sinclair became interested in traditional dancing after participating in the 1960s folk revival for several years. Brian and Steve had met at teacher training college in Sheffield and joined the college folk club. They started singing together, learned to play guitar, and eventually formed a folk group called "Sheffield Collection". Steve recalls how he came to join the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers:

Somebody from Handsworth had been around the folk clubs and said, "We're short of dancers. Would anybody like to join?" So Brian and myself went along... and joined, just to see what it was like.¹³³

Brian adds that, having seen the team perform,

Steve and myself decided that it would be interesting to join a sword side. So we went along to Handsworth, basically because I lived quite close to Handsworth [at Darnall] at that time.¹³⁴

Over the following year, 1970, four new men joined the team - Alan Thornsby, Martin and Dave Higham, and Danny Gallagher. Although Alan Thornsby had known Brian Smith from school and youth group, and was drawn into the team through this friendship, he had been interested in folk music and dance for some time. Moreover, because he was living in the neighbouring village of Woodhouse, he was particularly interested in the Handsworth dance as a local tradition.

[I became involved in the folk scene in] the typical way of the time in the... early '60s, where a friend had a guitar, I wanted a guitar, so I bought a guitar. We sort of taught ourselves to play and got into sort of "Peter, Paul and Mary", "The Clanceys", and the early sort of American-influenced folk... It sort of brought you... into the British revival... I found out about Handsworth, it must have been through reading... You know, you're sort of trying to find out all about English traditions, and I found out that there was this thing called a sword dance in Handsworth... We must have moved to Woodhouse at that point... And one day I was walking past a shop - it was obviously mid-December - with a notice they were dancing at Boxing Day. And... I told Brian Smith.¹³⁵

So, when Alan returned to Sheffield from teacher training college, he joined the team.

¹³² CMS-18/A - 04.30.

¹³³ CMS-28/A - 15.55.

¹³⁴ CMS-18/A - 02.10.

¹³⁵ CMS-72/A - 02.45.

Not long after this, two brothers, Dave and Martin Higham, were drawn into the team, through knowing Brian and Steve through the folk clubs, as well as Alan, who was courting their sister. Again, the Highams had been interested in folk music for a time and had been introduced to dancing through this channel.¹³⁶

Finally, Danny Gallagher joined the team, as a musician, in 1970 through playing with Brian Smith and Steve Sinclair in "Sheffield Collection".¹³⁷ Unlike the other men who joined the team during this period, however, Danny had a more extensive background in folk music. He explains:

My father played an accordion. It's a melodeon he used to play. He's an Irishman, and he used to play at home in Ireland before they moved over here. And my uncle... was a fiddle player. So, I kind of, I used to just pick up the accordion really, the button accordion, and play a few tunes on that, more or less instinctively. I suppose I never was really taught how to play it; I just picked it up. And then he bought me a piano accordion for my... eleventh birthday, a small piano accordion. And I just started playing tunes on this.¹³⁸

Danny also differed from his contemporaries in the team in that he was not a Sheffielder. Born at Grimsby, South Humberside, Danny worked on the Grimsby *Evening Telegraph* for five years after finishing school. In 1970, he moved to Sheffield to work as a journalist on *The Star*, and as a way of meeting people, he started going to one of the folk clubs, through which he met Brian and Steve.

When I moved over to Sheffield I used to attend a folk club at the Highcliffe [public house] in Sheffield, and got to know the lad who ran it... And so I was chatting to him, and I said that I was keen on kind of joining a band... and he put me in touch with Steve and Brian, and I met up with them and played a few tunes, and they suggested that if I was interested, I should come along to the Handsworth practice. Because at that time, they only had the one musician, Bernard [Kidd]... Then Bernard tended to drop out because he had other commitments.¹³⁹

Although Bernard continued to play for the team occasionally until 1972, after becoming a city councillor in 1969, his spare time was greatly restricted, and he often had to attend meetings on practice nights.

¹³⁶ CMS-18/A - 03.40. Unfortunately, neither Dave nor Martin responded to requests for assistance in this research, so their details are necessarily brief. Martin's participation dropped off during the mid-1980s after he moved to Nottingham, although he danced on at least one occasion in 1986. Dave went to live in France in 1987.

¹³⁷ Tim Long played piano accordion for the team for a short time in 1972 before Danny Gallagher joined, then joined Barnsley Longsword when he moved to Penistone, seven miles to the west of Barnsley, in 1973.

¹³⁸ CMS-80/A - 01.15.

¹³⁹ CMS-80/A - 02.05.

Furthermore, Bernard also became the organist at St. Mary's Parish Church, Handsworth, and as his services were primarily required on weekends, he was even less able to commit himself to playing at sword team engagements.¹⁴⁰

In 1971, Alan Ledger joined the team, again through knowing Brian Smith and Alan Thornsby at school, as Brian explains:

Alan Ledger went all the way from [aged] four to eighteen in the same school as me, and often in the same class.... [He] was at university and... once he came back to Sheffield, he then joined, through knowing me.¹⁴¹

Like the other new members, Alan had been attending folk clubs, and through this interest, coupled with the friendships, he was motivated to join the team.

The last of the eight men to join the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers between 1969 and 1972 was Mike Tissington, who was encouraged to join by Steve Sinclair. Mike explains how his interest and involvement in singing and dancing developed:

Steve and myself met each other in the scouts.... And we started singing at the scout camps, because they had the sing-songs, and somebody had to lead them and carry on, and that's when we started... And then Steve went to college, to teacher training college, and he found a folk club... So we started going there, and before we knew where we were, we were going every single night to a folk club somewhere in Sheffield.... Then we started going to the Mailcoach [public house], and they had, one night, a ceilidh, instead of just a sing, they had a ceilidh.¹⁴²

Mike and his future wife, Julie, whom he had met through the college folk club, then started regularly attending ceilidhs and barn dances around Sheffield. They got to know people involved in the various dance teams in the area, and before long Mike was invited to join the Escafeld Morris Men.

At a dance one night, Graham Hardwick and Doug Thompson came up to me and said, "Fancy joining a Morris team?" So I said, "What's a Morris team?" I didn't know what a Morris team was! So, they said, "Do you want to come along? You know, we're just starting, and we haven't got enough yet. Are you interested?"... I went along, and I thought it was superb. And at the same time as I joined them, Steve joined Handsworth.¹⁴³

However, following a team trip to France, Mike resigned from Escafeld, due to a disagreement over

¹⁴⁰ Bernard Kidd played for the team on rare occasions after 1972, as evidenced in A.G. Barrant's cine film taken on Boxing Day 1976.

¹⁴¹ CMS-18/A - 04.35.

¹⁴² CMS-63/A - 03.40.

¹⁴³ CMS-63/A - 12.40.

dancing standards, and he decided to join Handsworth.

Similar to the influx of new men into the Grenoside team during this period, these eight new members of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers joined the team as an extension of their recreational interests in folk music and dance. Furthermore, since most of these men were drawn into the team through friendships, for these men the team became, as one man expressed, "part of my social background, part of my social life."¹⁴⁴ Finally, in addition to the social and recreational benefits of membership, there was an appeal in joining a "traditional" team. As Alan Thornsby explains,

[The fact that it was a traditional team] was part of it all, you know, sort of finding out about it, that there was this thing that had happened, for I don't know how many years, in Handsworth that I'd never come across, and then finding it was still in existence. It's just one of those things that's got some attraction.¹⁴⁵

However, similar to Grenoside, although the thrill and prestige of belonging to a traditional team was certainly an initial attraction, these men, who as Figure 6.03 reveals have formed the backbone of the team for many years, have acquired a sense of commitment to the tradition which continues to motivate them to participate. Yet, as Steve Sinclair points out below, the social and recreational needs fulfilled through belonging to the team have played a vital role in maintaining its continuity.

A lot of people have got the, are interested in keeping the dance alive, the tradition, you know; they've now got that sort of feeling for the dance, [but] there's still this sort of enjoyment aspect of it... It's much more of a social thing... I mean, if it wasn't for all the other things that went with it... I think some people wouldn't stay with it. I've got quite a few close friends in Handsworth; it's social reasons, it's good fun.¹⁴⁶

But Steve also adds:

I suppose there's a bit of, a bit of pride in it as well... It's a well-respected team.¹⁴⁷

Danny Gallagher underscores these sentiments:

If we didn't enjoy it, we wouldn't do it. But we obviously do enjoy it. But at the same time, we're serving a purpose, because we are keeping alive a tradition.¹⁴⁸

Like the men who joined the Grenoside team during this period, then, the men who joined the

¹⁴⁴ CMS-72/A - 12.00.

¹⁴⁵ CMS-72/A -07.30.

¹⁴⁶ CMS-28/A - 12.00.

¹⁴⁷ CMS-28/A - 14.05.

¹⁴⁸ CMS-80/A - 29.30.

Handsworth team between 1969 and 1972 were motivated to join for recreational and social reasons, as well as an interest in participating in the tradition. Moreover, the continuity in membership effected by this influx reflects the extent to which the activities of the team have satisfied the members' social and recreational needs, as well as the development of feeling within the team for the tradition.¹⁴⁹ The Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers have not experienced such an influx of members since this time;¹⁵⁰ nevertheless, a high degree of continuity has been achieved, not only through the stability provided by the eight men described above, all of whom were still participating when research began in 1985, but also through the commitment of the majority of the men who have joined since then. In order to discuss this continuity, it is necessary to briefly describe how and why each man, since 1972, joined, and why over 73% remained with the team.

Yet, before proceeding, it is important to acknowledge the departures of several longstanding members of the team in the early 1970s. Between 1970 and 1974, five members -- Jim Goodison, Clive Turner, Bernard Kidd, Ivor Hardwick, and Ivor Allsop -- left the team (see Figure 6.03). Bernard Kidd's reasons for leaving have already been discussed, and Jim Goodison and Ivor Hardwick retired from the team, similar to some of the Grenoside Sword Dancers at this time, because there were now young men to take over from them.¹⁵¹ While these departures, primarily due to age, were to be anticipated, the departure of Clive Turner, and then Ivor Allsop, were not, especially since both remained active members of Barnsley Longsword (see below).

Both Clive Turner and Ivor Allsop were motivated to leave the team primarily because of, in their opinion, a deteriorating standard of dancing.¹⁵² Although the factors involved in this deterioration during the late 1960s and early 1970s will be discussed further in Chapter Seven, it is important here to highlight those aspects which stem from the backgrounds and attitudes of the members. As detailed above, both Clive and Ivor became involved in traditional dancing during the post-war folk dance revival. They

¹⁴⁹ Concepts of tradition will be discussed further in Chapter Seven.

¹⁵⁰ This is in spite of efforts to recruit members.

¹⁵¹ Jim Goodison retired from the team in 1970 at the age of sixty-two, and Ivor Hardwick retired in 1972 at the age of fifty-six.

¹⁵² CMS-07/A - 01.15, CMS-45/B - 37.40.

attended classes and workshops to learn and improve their dancing and were particularly interested in dancing as an aesthetic, as well as a recreational and social, activity. They were both involved in the Handsworth team during the early 1960s when the team began to recover from the war period. Through much hard work the team achieved a high standard of dancing, as evidenced by their invitation to perform at the Royal Albert Hall Festival in 1966, for which they "practised really hard... really worked and sweated blood".¹⁵³ However, the expansion of the team's repertoire in the mid-1960s to include rapper sword and Morris dancing, leaving less practice time for the longsword dance, led to the team being "under-rehearsed" for the 1970 Royal Albert Hall Festival, resulting in "a pretty poor performance".¹⁵⁴ This occasion precipitated Clive Turner's resignation several weeks later.

Similarly, Ivor Allsop left the team following numerous poor performances of the sword dance during the 1974 Sheffield Morris Ring Meeting hosted by the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers. The team's "emphasis on Morris"¹⁵⁵ coupled with trying to incorporate a number of new members, inevitably led to a deterioration in the standard of dancing to which Ivor was accustomed. However, this decline in the standard of dancing was somewhat symptomatic of a change in attitude within the team, introduced by the influx of new dancers. As described above, the young men who joined the team during this period were introduced to dancing through participation in the folk song revival which, as discussed in Chapter Three, placed more of an emphasis on the social and recreational, than on the aesthetic, aspects of the dance. This is not to imply that these members have not been interested in the standard of dance (see Chapter Seven), but that they came into the team with different expectations and much less dancing experience than their immediate predecessors. Moreover, like Grenoside, since the new members were all friends, there was an atmosphere of camaraderie between them which set them apart from other members of the team. Finally, while the quality of dancing was obviously of primary importance to maintaining Clive Turner's and Ivor Allsop's involvement, membership in the team also provided various social and recreational opportunities. Indeed, their resignation from Handsworth was most likely facilitated by simultaneous membership of Barnsley Longsword, which not only continued to provide such

¹⁵³ CMS-45/B - 35.10.

¹⁵⁴ CMS-45/B - 35.50.

¹⁵⁵ CMS-13/B - 32.10.

opportunities, but whose orientation at that time coincided with Clive's and Ivor's aesthetic aims.

Despite the resignations of Clive Turner and Ivor Allsop and the retirement of Jim Goodison and Ivor Hardwick, in 1974 the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers had twelve members, all of whom were still participating when research began.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, as mentioned above, over 73% of the men who joined since this time have remained with the team into the late 1980s.¹⁵⁷

In 1974, two men -- Geoff Lester and Bob Arkley -- joined the team. As a schoolteacher specialising in dramatics, Bob Arkley was interested in movement and performance and was particularly keen to work on the mummings' play which the team performs annually during the Christmas season (see Chapter Seven). However, because of his other drama interests, Bob left the team after about six years.¹⁵⁸

Geoff Lester, a senior lecturer in the English Language Department at the University of Sheffield, joined the team after having seen them performing in Sheffield during the 1974 Morris Ring Meeting.

He explains:

There was a Ring Meeting in 1974... I saw a group of Morris teams with Les [Seaman] sort of in attendance... in a place near where I live. And that was just the spur; it wasn't the first time that I was ever aware of Morris dancing, but they were giving out these leaflets and suggested that people come along to practices. So I kept one of those and decided I would go.¹⁵⁹

Like the men who joined the team several years earlier, Geoff was primarily interested in the recreational and social aspects of participating in a traditional dance team.

I wanted some exercise, that was one of the factors. Another factor is that I wanted to, I particularly like the idea of some sort of team thing... And another thing - I really

¹⁵⁶ Danny Gallagher's participation has decreased somewhat since the mid-1980s, due to work; although he is rarely able to attend practices, he plays at as many engagements as possible.

¹⁵⁷ Two men listed in Figure 6.03 - Rod Wainwright and Michael Theaker - have not been included in this calculation because of the intermittent and brief nature of their membership. Mr Wainwright attended practices irregularly for a couple of years and finally quit in 1988. Likewise, Michael Theaker attended practices on and off for about a year when he decided to concentrate on clog dancing with the Sheffield Celebrated Clog Dancers. From there he became involved in contemporary dance and in 1988 enrolled at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance in Leeds, West Yorkshire.

¹⁵⁸ No further details about Bob Arkley's background or motivations are available; as there was no response to several research inquiries. According to other team members, however, Mr Arkley left the team in order to pursue various drama-based activities, including puppetry. CMS-18/B - 27.25, CMS-63/A - 23.00.

¹⁵⁹ CMS-24/A - 13.30.

wanted some sort of activity which was unlike, which gave me a sort of relaxation from my job. In the course of my job I am often the focus of attention... conducting a class. Sometimes I find it very wearying... It's so much better to be one of the group... just being one of the boys, one of the team.¹⁶⁰

Yet, unlike most members, Geoff Lester had no personal connection or contact with the team prior to joining. Indeed, at the time, he was "considered to be quite brave in just going along out of the blue".¹⁶¹ Furthermore, he admits that he had "no reason specially for joining Handsworth",¹⁶² rather than any other Sheffield team, except that the invitation was there. The "traditional" nature of the team, then, was not a motivating factor for Geoff, although he has since developed an interest in and commitment to the sword dance as a local tradition.¹⁶³

During the latter half of the 1970s, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers acquired five new members. In 1975, Roger Lloyd, a schoolteacher, and John Baker, a college lecturer, joined the team, although Mr Baker left just a few years later when he moved to Shropshire for work. Like their contemporaries, they were interested in the dance as a recreational activity and the team as a social outlet. Roger Lloyd, in fact, was drawn into the team through his friendship with Bob Arkley, whom he knew from college, and like Bob, he was particularly interested in the mumming plays.¹⁶⁴

In 1976, at the age of fifteen, John Pitts, Harry's son, joined the team. Having been exposed to the activities of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers for all of his life, John explains how joining the sword team "seemed natural, the "thing" to do":¹⁶⁵

Ever since I was small I got dragged along. And then there was a phase, a phase when I wasn't too sure about it, when I was about twelve or thirteen, probably. And I did actually go through the dance a few times then, but it was quite obvious that I wasn't strong enough, or tall enough... So it was 1976 that I started; it was after the team had been to Whitby [Folk] Festival that year... I just thought, well, you know, all these years apprenticeship, as it were... I think it was because the team were on a real high at that

¹⁶⁰ CMS-24/A - 21.50.

¹⁶¹ CMS-24/A - 16.35.

¹⁶² Geoff Lester, questionnaire.

¹⁶³ Geoff Lester's interest in the history of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers has led to two publications: *Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers* (Sheffield: Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers, 1978), and "Cecil Sharp and the Handsworth Sword Dancers, 1913-1924", *Folklore*, 99:i (1988), 110-123.

¹⁶⁴ CMS-18/A - 07.15.

¹⁶⁵ John Pitts, questionnaire.

time. It was a very good team, and they went down really well at Whitby, and it made you feel proud, you know, to be involved.¹⁶⁶

Clearly, then, John was initially attracted by the prestige and pride associated with belonging to a well-known and respected team. Moreover, there was a further appeal in the fact that the sword dance came from Handsworth, where he had lived all his life, and that through his father's involvement, it was part of his "family history".¹⁶⁷ Yet, while participating in the perpetuation of the tradition remains a primary motivating force, John also not only enjoys the performance of the dance, but also the recreational and social opportunities it affords.

In 1978 Gordon Lawson joined the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers after an invitation from his brother-in-law, Martin Higham. Gordon had never participated in traditional dancing of any sort before, although he "used to go to folk clubs and sing along with [the] artists".¹⁶⁸ He joined for "friendship, enjoyment in dancing, [and] regular drinking sessions";¹⁶⁹ indeed, for Gordon the sword team was an important recreational and social focal point, especially since leaving school two years earlier. However, Gordon left the team in 1982 when he married, moved to Grenoside, lost his transport, and found that he "had no spare time to go to sword practice".¹⁷⁰

The last man to join the team during the 1970s was Neil Parker, a schoolteacher, who in 1979, similar to Geoff Lester before him, had seen the team performing and decided to go along to a practice. Again, he was attracted by the recreational aspects of dancing, as well as the various social opportunities provided by the practice sessions and performance occasions.¹⁷¹

During the 1980s, (up to the time fieldwork for this research was concluded) eight men joined the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers.¹⁷² In October 1981, Peter Mackey joined the team, after

¹⁶⁶ CMS-25/A - 13.20.

¹⁶⁷ John Pitts, questionnaire.

¹⁶⁸ Gordon Lawson, questionnaire.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ CA2-43.

¹⁷² This figure does not include two men whose participation was irregular.

having been involved in country dancing for several years and deciding he wanted to try something new.

He explains:

There was a set of friends I was at school with [in Loughborough, Leicestershire] started getting involved with going along to a folk dance club when we were sixteen or seventeen... And then I came up to [Sheffield] University [in 1978]. And I hadn't really danced that much at home. And there was the folk dance club at the University which I got involved in running... I decided, well, through the, through the folk dance club, I'd been down to the Sidmouth Folk Festival, and I tried a Morris workshop. And I, I decided that I'd enjoy Morris dancing, so [after leaving University] I looked around at the sides that were available in Sheffield, and Handsworth, well, I knew Les [Seaman] through the Hefts and Blades [ceilidh] club. I'd been going along there, and I asked him.¹⁷³

Peter was originally interested in learning Morris dancing, thus he was not particularly attracted to the Handsworth team by a desire to learn the longsword dance or to participate in perpetuating the tradition.¹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, as a member of the team, Peter now feels very proud of the tradition, and "regards the sword dance as being by far the most important thing that we do".¹⁷⁵

In the autumn of 1982, Tom Parry joined the team, having become interested in folk music while reading classics and English at the University of Cambridge. He explains:

It was good fun, and I played fiddle & sang in folk clubs and at ceilidhs. [I] joined Eagle Yard Rapper [sword] team (an offshoot of Cambridge Morris) first as a fiddler, then as a dancer. We also danced longsword...¹⁷⁶

After receiving his P.G.C.E. from Cambridge in 1982, Tom came to Sheffield to take up a teaching post at Ecclesfield Comprehensive school, where he met Pat Malham, by whom he was invited to join the team. Certainly, Tom was keen to participate again in a familiar and enjoyable recreational activity, but having just moved to the area, he found that "dancing was a particularly good social activity".¹⁷⁷ Given his previous sword dancing experience, he learned the Handsworth dance quickly, and he danced, as well as played, for the team in public during the spring and summer of 1983. However, although he continued to work in Sheffield until 1985, Tom moved to Nottingham the following autumn and, finding it difficult

¹⁷³ CMS-53/A - 18.10.

¹⁷⁴ CMS-53/A - 25.15.

¹⁷⁵ CMS-53/A - 44.50.

¹⁷⁶ Tom Parry, questionnaire.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

to attend practices and performances, he left the team.

Peter Dashwood also joined the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers in 1982, having moved to Doncaster (some twenty miles to the northeast of Sheffield) in his job as National Training Officer of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, for which he had worked since 1964. In his job Peter had been actively promoting the practise and performance of folk dance, including Morris and sword dancing; however, dancing, especially country dancing, had also been his primary leisure interest for a number of years, and together with his wife, country dancing was an important facet of their social lives.¹⁷⁸ When he moved to the area, Peter decided to join a team, and the proximity and reputation of the Handsworth team made it the obvious choice. Furthermore, the uniqueness of the dance itself was appealing, as was the team's "traditionality", given his background and position within the Society.¹⁷⁸ However, due to circumstances of work, and then illness, Peter Dashwood's participation in the team began to drop off during the summer of 1986.¹⁷⁹

In 1984, Ray Dyson joined the Handsworth team, having been invited to do so by his friend and neighbour, Neil Parker. Ray had also been a member of Barnsley Longsword since 1980 (see below) and continued to dance with both teams during the period of research. However, for a time following the birth of his first child, Ray was unable to regularly attend Barnsley Longsword practices on Tuesday nights; his wife had other commitments and he was needed to baby sit. The Wednesday evening practices of the Handsworth team proved less problematic to attend, and although it involved a journey of some twenty-five miles from his home in Penistone (seven miles to the west of Barnsley town centre), he was able to share a ride with Neil. Ray was keen to continue participating in dancing as a recreational activity, and was also particularly interested in learning Morris dancing, as well as another longsword dance.¹⁸⁰

In the autumn of 1985, three men -- Brian Goddard, Steve Howlett, and Peter Machan -- joined the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers, as a result of a recruitment drive effected primarily through a three-week exhibition at Sheffield City Central Library, as well as an advertisement in the South

¹⁷⁸ Personal communication, 9th April, 1986, CA1-243.

¹⁷⁹ Peter Dashwood was made redundant by the English Folk Dance and Song Society at the end of 1986, and was diagnosed as suffering from Motor Neurone Disease in 1988.

¹⁸⁰ Personal communication, 11th June, 1989, CA2-43.

Yorkshire folk magazine, *Stirrings*.

Peter Machan, a head teacher and local historian, saw the team perform for the first time at Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet's Craftsman's Fair, which he was involved in organising, the previous May. He recalls that he was "impressed by the friendly, co-operative nature of the members".¹⁸¹ He was interested in pursuing some form of physical recreation, and dancing appealed as he was keen on dancing, having belonged to various ballroom dancing formation teams as a schoolboy in Sheffield. He was further attracted to the sociability of the team as a group of people, as well as by the fact that the dance was a local tradition.¹⁸²

Like Peter Machan, Brian Goddard and Steve Howlett were looking for a social and recreational outlet when they joined the team.¹⁸³ A very accomplished tin whistle player, Steve had been interested in folk music for some time, although he had never before tried sword or Morris dancing.¹⁸⁴ Brian had also been interested in folk music for some time, especially Irish fiddle music, attending folk clubs in the area, as well as the occasional ceilidh, but again had never been involved in sword or Morris dancing. Yet, having lived in Handsworth since 1971, Brian had seen the team perform locally on numerous occasions and "admired their technique"¹⁸⁵. He decided to join in 1985 after seeing the advertisement in *Stirrings*.

The last man to join the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers up to the conclusion of this research was Stuart Bater, who joined the team in 1986. He explains how he became interested in traditional dance:

I have always had an interest in "folklore", and [my wife's] family were/are interested in folk music and dance, hence I was introduced slowly over a period of years to the area of folk dance and music which complemented my interests. Although [social] folk dance has never tempted me, the Morris did... When I took the [metallurgy] job at the University [of Sheffield in 1979] I found an advert in the "house" newsletter and joined the Sheffield University Morris Men. Since then my interest in the history of the Morris

¹⁸¹ Peter Machan, questionnaire.

¹⁸² Personal communication, 25th June, 1986, CA2-88.

¹⁸³ Personal communications, 25th June, 1986, CA2-87.

¹⁸⁴ Steve Howlett left the Sheffield area for work reasons in 1988.

¹⁸⁵ Brian Goddard, questionnaire.

and its practise has grown until now it is one of my main obsessions.¹⁸⁶

When the Sheffield University Morris Men disbanded, for lack of members, in 1986, Stuart started looking around at the other teams in the area.¹⁸⁷ Like Peter Mackey, he was initially primarily interested in dancing the Morris. In fact, he admits:

I had seen Handsworth dancing [the sword dance] out several times, especially on Boxing Day morning, but had never been tempted.¹⁸⁸

However, once he began attending practices his attitude changed:

Watching them [dance the sword] in practice, I became intrigued, so when someone handed me a sword one evening and said - "fancy a go" - I did.¹⁸⁹

Like the other men who joined the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers during the 1980s, Stuart Bater's participation in the team fulfills certain recreational and social needs. He is motivated by the "challenge to learn and perform the dance for its own sake", as well as "the friendship and kindness shown by the team".¹⁹⁰ In addition, another incentive, which has developed over time, is "a sense of pride in keeping up a living tradition".¹⁹¹

To summarise, then, similar to the men joining the Grenoside team from the late 1960s up to the late 1980s (Illus. 6.13), the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers attract men who have a wide interest, if not experience, in traditional dance and/or music. Moreover, it is largely through friendships and acquaintances made through participating in the Sheffield folk community that men are drawn into the team, although latterly advertising is attracting men who have no personal contacts in the team. While the members are primarily motivated to join because of the recreational and social opportunities that membership affords, until the mid- to late 1970s the fact that Handsworth is a "traditional" team is also a motivating factor. However, as with Grenoside, the more recent recruits do not appear to be initially attracted by the team's traditional status; nevertheless, a strong affection for and commitment to

¹⁸⁶ Stuart Bater, questionnaire.

¹⁸⁷ Stuart Bater also occasionally dances with Harthill Morris Men and Chesterfield Morris Men.

¹⁸⁸ Stuart Bater, questionnaire.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

maintaining the tradition emerges through participation.

6.4.8 Handsworth - The Performance of the Dance

As with the Grenoside Sword Dancers, the frequency of the performance activities of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers from the late 1960s up to the present have varied with the size and availability of the membership. Due to the departure of a number of men during the late 1960s and early 1970s, then, the team made fewer public appearances, although by 1971, as a result of the influx of new members, their activities began to gradually increase. This trend continued into the late 1970s and early 1980s, with an average of sixteen events per year between 1979 and 1981 inclusive, varying in length from a single performance to numerous performances over a period of days. The team's activities appear to have decreased somewhat during the mid-1980s, although began to increase once again during the period of research.¹⁹²

When compared with the Grenoside team, Handsworth appears to have maintained a more stable level of activity over these two decades; while this is partly due to a larger overall membership on which to draw,¹⁹³ it is also due to the fact that with the incorporation of morris dancing, mumming plays, and finally the ceilidh band into the team's repertoire, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers have been able to access opportunities for performing the sword dance that the Grenoside Sword Dancers have not (see Chapter Seven).

Nevertheless, Handsworth's performance activities fall into the same categories as the activities of the Grenoside team: annual local events (i.e. Boxing Day, Handsworth Parish Church fete, and later the team's Sunday-before-Christmas social), folk festivals (including Morris Ring Meetings, and days and weekends of dance hosted by teams in other areas), local folk club appearances and tours of the area, civic and private non-folk oriented occasions, and charity benefits. Unlike Grenoside, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers have not performed specifically for television, although television cameras have

¹⁹² Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers' Scrapbooks, vols. 7-10, Handsworth Archive, and my Condensed Accounts, vols. 1-4.

¹⁹³ In addition to the minimum number of members required to perform, Handsworth have had a larger number of "extras" (1967 four, 1977 eight, 1987 nine) when compared with Grenoside (1967 two, 1977 six, 1987 five).

recorded performances on occasion. A brief run-down of the team's performance activities from the late 1960s up to the present will serve as an illustration.

In addition to their annual performances, in 1966 the team performed on seven different occasions: the three-day Royal Albert Hall festival, the first North East Traditional Folk Gathering at Scarborough (North Yorkshire) a Morris Ring Meeting at Leicester, and in Sheffield at a local folk festival, as well as on several occasions in the cathedral forecourt. The team also performed outside the cathedral on two occasions in 1967, as well as in Paradise Square and at the City Museum, as part of National Folk Week. They also appeared locally at several church benefits (St. Paul's, Granville Road, and St. Luke's at Lodge Moor), and a well-dressing ceremony at Dore. Outside of the Sheffield area, the team appeared at folk festivals at York and Derby, and Morris Ring Meetings at Thaxted (Essex) and Sutton Coldfield (West Midlands).¹⁹⁴

As mentioned above, the activities of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers decreased somewhat between 1968 and 1970, although they continued to perform on Boxing Day and at the Handsworth Church Fete, as well as on several other occasions, including a tour of Derbyshire with Black and Gold Sword (from Huddersfield, West Yorkshire) and Barnsley Longsword, Morris Ring Meetings at Stafford and Coventry, and again at the Royal Albert Hall.¹⁹⁵

By 1971 the team was clearly recovering from the membership changeover, with at least thirteen performance occasions in addition to the annual events, including Morris Ring Meetings at Manchester and Huddersfield, tours (often with other teams) of Handsworth, Sheffield (on two occasions), Derbyshire, and Wharfedale (North Yorkshire), folk festivals at York, Nottingham and Stratford, and village festivals at Ashover and Hathersage (both in north Derbyshire), as well as the Grenoside Festival.¹⁹⁶

The team's performance activities continued in a similar vein throughout the 1970s,¹⁹⁷ increasing in number while remaining within the five categories outlined above, as evidenced by their diary for 1979: 13 January - Dancing England festival at Derby, 11-13 May - their own weekend of dance,

¹⁹⁴ Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers' Scrapbooks, vol 4, Handsworth Archives.

¹⁹⁵ Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers' Scrapbooks, vols 4 and 5, Handsworth Archive.

¹⁹⁶ Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers' Scrapbooks, vol 5, Handsworth Archive.

¹⁹⁷ Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers' Scrapbook, vol 6, Handsworth Archive.

18 May - Moulton (Cheshire) village festival, 28 May - tour of the Yorkshire Dales with Leeds Morris Men, 9 and 17 June - Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet's Craftsman's Fair, 22-24 June - Morris Ring Meeting at Hull, 6-8 July - Loughborough (Leicestershire) Folk Festival, 3-10 August - Sidmouth International Folk Festival, 1 September - Ilam (north Derbyshire) Folk Festival, 15 September - Sheffield University's beer festival (with other local teams), 21-23 September - Bromyard (Hereford) Folk Festival, 6 October - Bedford Morris Men's day of dance, 15 December - display at Westfield Comprehensive school, Mosborough (five miles south of Handsworth), 23 December - Hefts and Blades Ceilidh Club in Sheffield, and, of course, at venues in and around Handsworth on Boxing Day.¹⁹⁸

During the 1980s the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers continued to perform in similar contexts within the five categories: annual local events, folk festivals (e.g. Crewe and Nantwich in 1980, Malton Longsword Festival in 1981, Abingdon Mayor Making in 1982, Royal Albert Hall Festival in 1983, Morris Ring Golden Jubilee in 1984, festivals in France and Belgium in 1985, Sidmouth in 1986, Northern Festival of Traditional Arts in 1987), local folk club appearances and tours with other local and/or visiting teams, civic and private non-folk oriented events (e.g. ceilidhs for Burngreave Liberals and Chesterfield Council in 1981, civic reception at Weston Park Museum in 1982, Sheffield Local History Fair in 1987), and charity events (e.g. Woolley Wood Special School in 1980, Nether Green PTA in 1981, Hyde Park Association in 1983, Sheffield Day of Dance for Africa in 1986).¹⁹⁹ There has, however, been a slight shift in emphasis away from attending Morris Ring Meetings and similar occasions that exclude wives and children, toward attending events which are designed to involve families (e.g. folk festivals).²⁰⁰

It is clear from the above description that the performance activities of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers from the late 1960s up to the present have been varied, encompassing a wider

¹⁹⁸ Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers' Scrapbook, vol 7, Handsworth Archive.

¹⁹⁹ The team may receive a fee for their services at charity events, although a donation is often made to the cause. Details of performances between 1980 and 1987 appear in the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers' Scrapbooks, vol 8-10, Handsworth Archive, and in my Condensed Account, vols 1-4. There are two hundred and ten recorded performance occasions between 1966 and 1987, which are distributed within the five categories as follows: annual local events 21%, charity benefits 6%, folk festivals (including days and weekends of dance with teams in other areas) 30%, civic and private non-folk functions 11%, and local folk club appearances and tours 32%.

²⁰⁰ CMS-18/B - 40.40, CMS-24/B - 30.10, CMS-64/A - 09.55.

range of performance contexts than ever before. In particular, the development of the ceilidh band during the 1980s has accessed new performance occasions by enabling the team to provide an evening of entertainment, involving a band and caller for social dancing, with song spots and sword and Morris dancing displays.

Yet, in addition to the performance opportunities accessed by expanding the repertoire, the activities of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers, as with the Grenoside Sword Dancers, are further shaped by the interests and motivations of the performers, and in this respect the discussion, presented above, concerning the relationship between the Grenoside Sword Dancers' activities and the participants' motivations applies equally to the Handsworth team. Following on from this, the changes in the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers' community, as well as the extent to which the team's performance occasions constitute dance for the public rather than dance in the community, further mirrors the situation at Grenoside. In view of the similarities in the backgrounds and interests of the membership, as well as the activities, of these two teams, these parallels are not surprising. Further similarities will be seen in the case of Barnsley Longsword.

6.4.9 Handsworth - Team Continuity

As Figure 6.03 illustrates, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers, like Grenoside, have experienced a high degree of continuity in membership for nearly two decades. The influx of members between 1969 and 1972 appears particularly significant since each of the eight men who joined the team at that time were still active when research began in 1985. Indeed, the two men who have since left the team, Dave and Martin Higham, have both moved away from the area. Furthermore, 53% of the men who have joined since 1972 have remained active members into the late 1980s. While this might seem unimpressive when compared with Grenoside's figure of 75% for the same period, it should be emphasised that of those members who have left the Handsworth team, four men (over 23%) did so when they moved away from the area, and one man dropped out due to illness, leaving only three men, or less than 18%, who left the team in order to pursue other interests.

As with the Grenoside team, this stability is not unusual when considered in the light of the team's cycles from as far back as the 1880s. Indeed, Figures 5.03 and 6.03 reveal seven previous periods

of continuity: the latter half of the nineteenth century up to 1887; 1887-1890, with two participants remaining from the previous era; 1890-1925, again with several participants continuing from the previous period, as well as an overlapping cycle during the early 1900s; 1926 through World War Two; 1951/2 up to the early 1960s; and 1962/3 through the late 1960s. Similar to the Grenoside Sword Dancers, these cycles indicate generations of dancers, with the possible exception of this last period which appears to be indicative of postwar geographic and social mobility, having been terminated by the departure of five members taking advantage of job opportunities elsewhere.

Yet, while the present period of continuity in the membership of the team is clearly not an unusual phenomenon, it is nevertheless significant in that, given the detailed knowledge of the backgrounds, motivations and activities of the current team, the factors involved in effecting this continuity may be delineated. Indeed, the continuity in the membership of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers may be attributed to: 1) the social cohesion of the members, 2) their enjoyment of the dance and the performance occasions, 3) repertoire developments, and 4) the members' interest in and commitment to perpetuating the tradition.

The first and primary reason for the recent stability of the Handsworth team appears to be the social cohesion of the membership. The interpersonal connections between the members through which the 1969-1972 recruits, in particular, were drawn into the team have already been described at length. However, the importance of the longevity and depth of the friendships between these men, that is, their social bases, to effecting continuity in the team should not be underestimated. Furthermore, the participation of these men in the Sheffield folk community has reinforced the trend toward this community serving as the social arena for acquiring new members. In fact, of the men who have joined the team since 1972, 82% were involved to some extent in the folk community,²⁰¹ and over 78% of these had a personal contact within the team.²⁰² Moreover, since the team is perceived as a social outlet by the membership, this aspect further attracts individuals seeking a basis for social interaction. Finally, as Figure 6.03 illustrates, since the membership of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers is largely

²⁰¹ The three exceptions are Geoff Lester, Peter Machan, and Rod Wainwright.

²⁰² The exceptions are three recent additions to the team: Brian Goddard, Steve Howlett and Stuart Bater.

drawn from this community, which has become increasingly middle-class in its socio-economic make-up, the percentage of middle-class members, comparable to Grenoside, has increased from 25% in 1957, to almost 70% in 1967, to more than 70% in 1977, and finally to over 83% in 1987. Thus, the cohesion of the membership is further underscored by a high degree of socio-economic homogeneity.

The second reason for the continuity of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers involves the members' enjoyment of the dance and the performance occasions. Similar to the Grenoside team, and as detailed above, a vast majority (88%) of the men who have joined the team since the late 1960s have had a recreational interest in traditional music and/or dance as an enjoyable activity. Furthermore, because of the level of skill required to become proficient at performing the Handsworth dance, especially to the standard expected, regular and arduous practice sessions are required, not only for newcomers but also to keep the performance of more established members in check (see Chapter Seven). Certainly, members persevere the training while benefitting from the other recreational and social aspects of membership, but there is clearly an interest in the performance of the dance which is, after all, the focal point of the weekly meetings. Finally, the variety of performance occasions contribute toward the continuity of the membership by, as discussed above, providing social and recreational opportunities for the performers, and often also for their families.

A third factor involved in maintaining the stability in the membership of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers is the expansion of the team's repertoire, beginning in the mid-1960s, to include Morris dancing, mummers' plays, and during the 1980s, a ceilidh band.²⁰³ Although the repertoire development is to some extent a response to the expectations of modern audience (see Chapter Seven), it also sustains members' interest, especially amongst the more experienced sword dancers, by providing the team with a variety of material on which to work. Furthermore, performing the Morris as well as the sword dance on any particular occasion enables more members to be involved in the performance, as does incorporating the mummers' play on select occasions, which is especially suited for new members whose dancing skills may not yet be developed enough to dance in public. In contrast to the Grenoside Sword Dancers, who normally only perform the one dance, the members of the Handsworth

²⁰³ The Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers also practised and performed rapper sword dancing for a short time during the mid-1960s.

Traditional Sword Dancers need not look outside of the team in order to satisfy certain other dancing interests. Moreover, the ceilidh band provides an opportunity for the team's regular musicians to play tunes other than those used for sword and Morris dancing, as well as for other members to play music, sing and call for social dancing. The expansion of the team's repertoire, therefore, provides the variety of activities vital to maintaining the members' continuous participation.

Finally, the stability in the membership of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers over nearly two decades is contributed to by the members' affection for the tradition and their commitment to perpetuating it. While this aspect may not have been a primary motivating factor for many of the men joining the team, by creating a sense of purpose, the "tradition" has since become an important element in the dedication of the members, and hence the continuity of the team. As one member explains, "at the end of the day, once we're in those uniforms, we're Handsworth, and everybody wants to keep it going".²⁰⁴

6.4.10 Handsworth - Summary

During the period from the late 1960s up to the present, several significant changes occurred in the nature and activities of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers and their community. Similar to the Grenoside Sword Dancers, the Handsworth team experienced the consolidation of trends which had their roots in the years following World War Two, as well as the influence of the recent folk music, song and dance revival. Indeed, the influx of men during the late 1960s and early 1970s, whose participation was a result of this revival, have formed the mainstay of the of the team into the late 1980s. Moreover, the interests and motivations of these men, and of those who have joined since that time, further confirm the trend toward the sword team serving as a recreational and social outlet for the membership. This period also sees the team taking advantage of the variety of performance opportunities available, and even creating new contexts for the performance of the sword dance through the expansion of the team's repertoire to include a ceilidh band. Furthermore, similar to the Grenoside team, Handsworth continues to receive support from the "folk community", especially in terms of providing recruits, although many

²⁰⁴ CMS-63/B - 45.00.

of the team's performances occur in non-community contexts. Finally, this period is distinguished by a cycle of stability in the membership of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers, which, as with Grenoside, is due to the correspondence between the needs and interests of the members and the team's ability to fulfil them.

6.4.11 Barnsley - Introduction

As discussed at length above, a community formed on the basis of a common recreational interest in folk dance, music and song emerged in Sheffield during the 1950s and 1960s, which has increasingly served as the network of social relationships through which members are drawn into the Grenoside and Handsworth teams, as well as one of the contexts in which the dance is performed. A similar community of interest appeared in Barnsley during this period, somewhat related to the Sheffield folk community through various overlapping participants, and it was in this context that Barnsley Longsword was formed in the autumn of 1968.

6.4.12 Barnsley - The Formation of Barnsley Longsword

In the autumn of 1968, several members of the Barnsley Traditional Folk Music Club,²⁰⁵ which met weekly at the King George public house, Peel Street, in Barnsley town centre, decided to form a longsword dancing team. Since the early 1960s, many members of the club had attended the Whitby Folk Festival each August,²⁰⁶ and in 1968 two men in particular, Jim Potter and Derek Elliott, were inspired by the dancing they saw there to form a team in Barnsley. Ivor Allsop, one of the founding members of Barnsley Longsword, explains:

Several of us had been to, we used to go to the Morris workshops [at Whitby], and [Jim] Potter had been to the sword workshop, looked in on the sword workshop. And went with [Derek] Elliott and Dave Burland. And they were sat on the beach, along with a bloke called Keith Border, talking about dancing generally, and between them they said, you know, "Why the hell don't we have a sword team in Barnsley?"... And they

²⁰⁵ Membership in the Barnsley Traditional Folk Music Club, as with most folk clubs, was open to anybody; to become a "member" simply entailed paying a regular fee (e.g. weekly, monthly, annually) to gain entrance.

²⁰⁶ At that time, Whitby Folk Festival was only a weekend event, growing into a week-long affair during the 1970s.

felt that they ought to have this sword team, and out of the, you see, all these were members of the, well, Derek [Elliott] and Burland and Potter were resident [performers] at the Barnsley Traditional Folk Music Club.²⁰⁷

Derek Elliott and Dave Burland, in fact, were involved in organising the folk club.

Tom Owen, another founder member of Barnsley Longsword, recalls how the team got underway:

When they came back... from Whitby, the first time the King George folk club met, one of them got up and said, "Is there any of you feel like coming to a sword team, joining a sword team?" And if you were interested, you put your hand up. And so they counted up, and they said, "Ah, we should have enough, so we'll arrange a meeting." And it was left at that. So, this would be...sometime in September. And then a week or two went by, and I'd forgotten all about it, and I was sat [at home] and a thump came at the door. It was a Monday night, and it was Derek Elliott. He said, "What about this sword team, then?" I said, "I didn't know anything about it." He said, "Oh, first meeting's tonight." So I said, "Okay." I put my jacket on and went.²⁰⁸

Nine men attended the meeting, held at the workshop of Jim Potter's business, the Camping Emporium: Ivor Allsop, Keith Border, Dave Burland, Derek Elliott, Dave Martin, Bob Musgrave, Tom Owen, Jim Potter and Clive Turner. As mentioned above, the team emerged from the Barnsley Traditional Folk Music Club, and several of the men, Jim Potter, Dave Burland and Derek Elliott, were well-known semi-professional singers.²⁰⁹ However, apart from Ivor Allsop and Clive Turner, who were with the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers at that time, few of the recruits had any dancing experience, and none had ever tried sword dancing. Although Ivor frequently attended the folk club at this time, he and Clive were, in fact, specifically invited to join the team because of their expertise. Ivor explains:

Clive and myself were dancing with Handsworth, and we'd attended various [sword] workshops... They actually asked us to go along because of our dance experience... There were five of them who had no dance experience, anyway, no sort of formal ritual dance experience. They had, out of the side, Tom was a ballroom dancer [and had] done some country dancing... And Jim and Derek had done a little bit of Morris with [the] Grenoside [Morris Men]. They'd done no sword.²¹⁰

Given his experience, Ivor was appointed as "Foreman" to teach the team, and on the basis of the fact that there were no known sword dances indigenous to the Barnsley area, as well as on certain criteria agreed

²⁰⁷ CMS-14/A - 18.40.

²⁰⁸ CMS-35/A - 03.40.

²⁰⁹ Jim Potter sang with the "Cropper Lads" during the 1960s and early 1970s, Derek Elliott and his wife, Dorothy, were known as "Yorkshire Relish", and Dave Burland has been a professional singer since 1969. CMS-06/A - 38.00.

²¹⁰ CMS-14/A - 20.10.

upon at the first meeting,²¹¹ they decided to learn the Kirkby Malzeard dance, as noted by Cecil Sharp in *The Sword Dances of Northern England*.

6.4.13 Barnsley - The Dancers

Over its twenty year history, the Barnsley Longsword team has had a far greater number of members, at least forty-nine, than either Grenoside (twenty-nine) or Handsworth (thirty-four) during the same period.²¹² Figure 6.06 reveals a period of extraordinary instability between 1969 and 1975, in which, although twenty-five men joined the team, fifteen of these men left by the mid-1970s, a further five had departed by the late 1970s, another man by the early 1980s, leaving only four men, or 16%, who have remained active members up to the present.²¹³ Moreover, nearly 60% of the men who joined the team during this period left the team after less than five years. Be that as it may, of the original nine members from 1968, five men, or over 55%, have continued into the late 1980s,²¹⁴ and of the men who joined the side since the mid-1970s, over 73% (eleven out of fifteen) were dancing throughout the period of research.²¹⁵

Given the large number of participants, it is therefore not practical to discuss the backgrounds and motivations of every member individually. However, although it has been impossible to trace a number of the men who were involved in the team for short periods during the 1970s (see Chapter Two), on the basis of information provided by other past and present members, it is possible to determine pervading trends. In order to substantiate these generalisations, several representative cases will be

²¹¹ The criteria for choosing a dance were threefold: 1) a dance tradition which included a calling-on song, since most of the members were interested in singing, 2) a 'continuous' dance, that is, where there are no breaks in the dance from the time it begins until the dancers leave the performance area (like the Handsworth dance), and 3) a dance that was not being performed by any other team that they were aware of at the time.

²¹² This figure does not include a number of musicians who played/play for the side occasionally, e.g. Steve Rusby, Ken Hudson and Bert Cleaver.

²¹³ Since fieldwork was completed, Roger Thompson has rejoined the team.

²¹⁴ Due to back injuries, Bob Musgrave became inactive in 1982, although he began to practice and perform again in 1987.

²¹⁵ As my research concluded, Ron Harper accepted a position in Liverpool, so he and his family moved to Merseyside.

highlighted. Furthermore, as with Grenoside and Handsworth, each of the current members will be mentioned, not only to clarify changes in the nature of the membership, but also to lay the groundwork for exploring group identity and dynamics in later chapters. Finally, although the way in which the founding members joined the team has already been described, it is necessary to briefly look at their interests and motivations in order to address the practical and ideological conflicts involved in forming and establishing a new team.

As discussed above, Barnsley Longsword emerged from the Barnsley Traditional Folk Music Club, and with the exception of Clive Turner, all of the founding members attended the club, either as resident performers or enthusiasts. Yet, regardless of the degree of one's involvement, attending the club was an important regular social and recreational occasion,²¹⁶ and this motivation extended the members' reasons for joining the sword team. It was clearly as a result of participating in the folk club that these men came to join the team, keen to include dancing in their leisure activities.

Indeed, the founding members of Barnsley Longsword were motivated by an interest in learning and performing a form of English traditional dance. The fact that longsword dancing is considered to be a "Yorkshire" tradition was also appealing, as Dave Martin explains:

I think one of the reasons I fancied doing sword [dancing] is because it were from Yorkshire... it's traditional to the area.²¹⁷

In addition to an interest in the dance itself, as well as the obvious social and recreational benefits of belonging to the team, many of the men were further motivated by an interest in reviving a dance which had apparently not been performed since about 1930.²¹⁸ In fact, this feeling was pervasive enough to be established as one of the criteria upon which the Kirkby Malzeard dance was selected as the first item in the team's repertoire (see above). As one man explains:

Originally the idea was to do the dance, and return the dance to Kirkby Malzeard, and then go away and revive another, and that. Because nobody were (sic) doing Kirkby when we started doing it.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ CMS-06/A - 38.00, CMS-35/A - 06.55, CMS-57/A - 00.30, CA4-62.

²¹⁷ CMS-57/A - 36.50. This sentiment is supported by several other members: CA2-152, CA4-62, CMS-35/A - 18.15, and Ivor Allsop, personal communication on numerous occasions.

²¹⁸ Ivor Allsop Collection, personal communication, 6th April 1987. See also Appendix I.

²¹⁹ CMS-38/B - 32.55, confirmed by CMS-14/B - 33.05, CMS-35/B - 23.30, and CA2-18.

This supports Georgina Boyes' conclusion, in her article "Cultural Survivals Theory and Traditional Customs", that revival performers are often interested in "taking defunct and dying traditions and giving them back to culture."²²⁰ While this altruistic approach initially provided Barnsley Longsword with a goal, a purpose, to work toward, as will be discussed in later chapters, the Kirkby Malzeard dance soon became an inextricable part of the team's public and private identity.

Yet, although the notion of reviving a lost tradition appealed to the members' revivalist sentiments, on the day-to-day level, learning, practising and performing the dance, as well as enjoying the social and recreational opportunities afforded by weekly meetings and performance occasions, provided the most immediate and tangible benefits to members. That these aspects were of primary importance to the founding members of Barnsley Longsword is confirmed by six informants (two-thirds of the membership) from the original team.²²¹

The social and recreational aspects of the sword team continued to attract members in the years following its formation, and indeed, into the late 1980s, as will be illustrated presently. Furthermore, the close association between Barnsley Longsword and the Barnsley Traditional Folk Music Club, which persisted well into the 1970s, continued to serve as the primary route via which men were drawn into the team at this time. Indeed, as Figure 6.05 reveals, between 1969 and 1971 eleven men joined the team, ten of whom attended the folk club. The one exception was Graham Hardwick, then also a member of the Grenoside Sword Dancers and the Escafeld Morris Men, who was invited by Ivor Allsop, whom he knew through attending folk dances in Sheffield, to play melodeon for the team for a few years while they had no regular musician.²²² Having had no previous dancing experience, most of these new men were drawn into the team through acquaintances and friends from the folk club. John Ashton's words echo the common experience:

I became interested in longsword dancing through my involvement in the local folksong club at the King George Hotel in Barnsley. Several other members of the team were

²²⁰ Georgina Boyes, "Cultural Survivals Theory and Traditional Customs: An Examination of the Effects of Privileging on the Form and Perception of Some English Calendar Customs", *Folk Life*, 26 (1987-88), 5-11 (p. 9).

²²¹ CMS-06/A - 38.00, CMS-35/A - 06.55, CMS-45/A - 23.10, CMS-57/A - 00.30, CA2-151, CA4-62.

²²² CMS-51/B - 07.15.

regulars.²²³

Furthermore, these men, like their predecessors, were motivated to join the team as an extension of their folk activities, which functioned as a primary social and recreational outlet, as John details:

I'd seen the team perform a few times, and it looked like they had good fun. And I knew a lot of the blokes in the side from the folk club... And they went round dancing at folk festivals, and that. And, of course, a lot of beer was supped!²²⁴

The folk community in Barnsley continued to serve as the main "supplier" of members to Barnsley Longsword between 1972 and 1974, during which time ten men, none of whom had any dancing experience, joined the team.²²⁵ Again, the connections between the Barnsley Traditional Folk Music Club and the sword team were particularly influential, as Nigel Balchin explains:

I used to go to the folk club... and sort of drifted into the sword team... They were always saying [at the club], you know, "We're always wanting members."²²⁶

The folk club, however, did not provide the only social network via which men were recruited during this period, for at least one man was drawn into the team through his activity in the wider folk community. Tim Long, who grew up in York, knew Derek Elliott through playing and singing, semi-professionally, at folk clubs and festivals around Yorkshire. When Tim came to live in Barnsley in 1970, he got to know Derek quite well and through this friendship was eventually asked if he would join Barnsley Longsword as their regular musician.²²⁷ Thus, even though he did not come into the team directly as a result of attending the folk club, Tim nevertheless became involved in the Barnsley folk community and, in that context, with the sword team.

Yet, while all the men who had joined Barnsley Longsword up to this point not only participated in the Barnsley folk community, but also knew one or more members of the team, Mick Roberts, who joined in 1972, did not. Mick, who was born and reared in London, describes the unlikely way in which he joined the side:

²²³ John Ashton, questionnaire.

²²⁴ John Ashton, personal communication, 11th October 1988.

²²⁵ Nigel Balchin later joined the nearby Wath-upon-Deerne Morris Men.

²²⁶ CMS-71/A - 03.25.

²²⁷ CMS-62/A - 23.35.

[As a professional musician] I was doing a summer season at Whitby. I had a little orchestra at that time, and the folk festival came and used the hall, that we normally played for dancing in, for one of their ceilidhs. And we got free tickets for that and a night off from the band. And I went to this ceilidh and they, Barnsley Longsword, were doing a spot within this ceilidh. So I didn't think anymore about it. I didn't know who they were. I knew I was going to [take a teaching post in] Barnsley when I finished the summer season. But when I got to Barnsley there was nowhere to, for me to live, so I booked into the [King George] hotel. And the longsword [team] were practising that Tuesday night when I arrived. And as I came out of my room to go down to the bar... I heard this tune that I'd heard in Whitby coming out of this room. And I thought, "This is really strange." And I opened the door and stuck my head in, and there they were - all practising their longsword. And I went in and joined them. Which were great, because I was new to the town, and I instantly had a load of friends.²²⁸

Mick had become interested in folk music, largely through the compositions of Ralph Vaughan Williams, while at music college in Leeds in the late 1960s, but, unlike his contemporaries in the team, he joined Barnsley Longsword not so much as an extension of his folk interests, which were minimal at the time, but as a means of becoming part of a community. Indeed, Mick's interest in folk music has essentially been pursued through the activities of the sword team. Mick's immediate welcome into the group is indicative of the social fabric of the team, and the fact that he remains an active member reflects the importance of the team as a social base.

Although the social and recreational aspects of membership in the team were particularly important for Mick Roberts as a newcomer to the area, they remained important factors in attracting men into the team during the mid-1970s. Between 1975 and 1977, seven men joined Barnsley longsword. In line with the established trend, five of these men knew other members of the team through attending the Barnsley Traditional Folk Music Club, although two of these men had some dancing experience, having been members of Green Oak Morris Men of Doncaster for a couple of years.²²⁹ Indeed, for those, like Billy Creasy, who "knew everybody else that was in", it was simply a matter of being "press-ganged" into joining.²³⁰ Nevertheless, a significant break in the trend occurred with the advent of two brothers, Jack and Ron Ledger, who joined in quick succession in 1975, neither of whom had been particularly interested in any sort of folk music, song or dance prior to joining Barnsley Longsword. They did, however, know

²²⁸ CMS-27/A - 01.20.

²²⁹ Peter Dudhill and Keith Helmsley had danced with Green Oak Morris Men since 1975.

²³⁰ CMS-71/A - 04.05. Also CMS-38/A - 18.15 and A - 35.40, and Nigel Deakin and Peter Dudhill, questionnaires.

a couple of the men in the team: Jack knew Dave Martin (see below), and through Dave he knew Bob Musgrave, and Ron knew Bob through work, as well as Dave through Jack. Jack explains how he came to join the team:

When I started seeing [my future wife] Shirley, who worked with Dave [Martin]'s wife [Betty], we used to go out as a foursome... usually in Dave's car... If there were an Irish music session anywhere, he'd drive out to that, and if he got the chance of a song, he'd drive out somewhere, sing a song and owt (sic) like that... So we used to just go along with them.... Basically I went for the beer. Dave went to play, and I went along because Dave used to drive me, and I'd go along and have four or five pints!... And after a while he sort of started trying to get me into the sword team. And I didn't want, I didn't want to join a puffy thing like that... And I couldn't believe that Dave did owt like that! And then, eventually, he nearly got me to go, and I backed out of it at the last minute. Coward... And about a month or so later, I says, "Right, that's it. I'll go tonight." And I went. Eight o'clock in the King George, and I turned up and Dave, Dave's always late... and I'd been in ten minutes before he actually came in, and I thought, "Well, I'm not going in [to the practice]. I'm going out." And he happened to turn in, and he said, "Come on, then." And I've been ever since.²³¹

Ron Ledger had a similar introduction to the team through Bob Musgrave. He recalls:

I first saw Barnsley in 1975 at the Centenary Rooms, Civic Hall - Barnsley Folk Festival. Forgotten who, they were on with somebody else... I think it might have been Tony Capstick who were, who was on. And, I went with a friend, a girlfriend. She was interested and I got, I tagged on... And she said, "Why don't you join them?" You see, Dave [Martin] were always trying to get our Jack to go down to the practices... And one week I was just having a drink in the King George, on a Tuesday night, and Bob Musgrave came in and said, "Come in." So I did.²³²

Therefore, in the cases of both Ron and Jack Ledger, they were drawn into the team as a result of friendships made outside of the folk community. Moreover, the Ledgers were not particularly interested in folk music or dancing, and although Jack has since learned to play the concertina and both Jack and Ron have picked up a few songs, these are performed only in association with the sword team, at team gatherings and socials. In other words, the Ledgers have not subsequently become involved in folk clubs and other folk events independent of sword team activities; rather, the sword team forms the core, not simply an extension, of their "folk" interests, not unlike Mick Roberts, as discussed above.

Indeed, for Mick, Jack and Ron, the sword team served to satisfy certain physical and creative, as well as social, needs for which they had no other outlet. Mick was new to Barnsley and by joining the team "instantly had a load of friends." Although Jack had always lived in Barnsley, and therefore already

²³¹ CMS-38/A - 00.45.

²³² CMS-47/A - 00.50.

had a circle of friends, he explains that:

When I met Shirley, I sort of stopped seeing [my old friends] as much. And I don't know whether it caught me at a time when I had, had not really got an interest in much else... I enjoyed everything about [Barnsley Longsword]. The people were great.²³³

For Ron Ledger, too, the sword team became an important recreational outlet, as well as a group of friends:

As a kid I used to do amateur dramatics, and [sword dancing] is sort of just an arm from it... I used to enjoy doing a play, and I think that's probably an extension. You know, going out into the streets, in front of, in front of an, I *always* like an audience.... And in the sword team, I'll speak up and say what I, what I think. Always have done in the team. Although I don't in, in life, I can do that in the team, you know, because we are good friends, and everybody listens, and has a good joke.²³⁴

That the sword team offered a recreational and social outlet to the Ledgers is not unusual in view of its function for other members. However, the fact that the team quickly became central to their recreational and social lives, rather than simply an extension of other activities, appears to be connected with maintaining their involvement with the team up to the present. Certainly, as will be discussed below, the role of the team in the participants' lives is vital to the continuity of the membership. Furthermore, although it does not recur until the 1980s, the Ledgers are not unusual in being "non-folkies".²³⁵ Finally, the Ledgers arrival in the team in 1975 signifies a broadening of the social networks through which men are drawn into the team, clearly extending beyond the boundaries of the Barnsley Traditional Folk Music Club, and even the local folk community.

Despite the broadening of the social networks which brought the Ledgers into the team, and would re-emerge in the 1980s, during the late 1970s, the folk community, and the King George folk club in particular, continued as the primary source of members. Indeed, of the five men who joined the team in 1978 and 1979, four were drawn in through friends made at the folk club. The one exception was Norman Bearon, who had previously danced with Manchester Morris Men and Rumworth Morris Men, and upon moving to the area decided, because it was "traditional to Yorkshire", he would join a longsword

²³³ CMS-38/A - 04.25.

²³⁴ CMS-47/A - 04.20 and CMS-47/A - 36.50.

²³⁵ CMS-35/B - 07.15 and CMS-39/A - 07.25.

team.²³⁶ Furthermore, like the vast majority of the men who joined the team from the folk clubs, none of these four men had any previous dancing experience. One man, Alan Lucas, admits that he "actually joined the team, at first, just to perform the calling-on song for the Kirkby Malzeard dance",²³⁷ although he subsequently became interested in learning and performing the dance.

Like their predecessors, the men who joined Barnsley Longsword in the late 1970s were interested in the recreational and social opportunities that membership afforded. Even Norman Bearon, who admits to being primarily interested in the dance itself, was further attracted to the team by the fact that it "seemed quite a good sort of friendly crowd."²³⁸

Yet, for Ron Harper, who moved to Barnsley from Belfast in 1976, the social nature of the team was particularly appealing. He explains how he came to be involved:

I got a job in Barnsley, and I didn't know anybody. I just arrived here... And I just saw a folk club advertised one night, and thought, "Oh, I'll go to that." Because I didn't know anybody, so you've got to do something, haven't you? And I started going to the folk club... And then I knew Johnny Booker [who was a member of Barnsley Longsword since 1969], and the other regular people [at the King George club]... There were several other clubs around Barnsley and [my future wife, Anne, and I] went to them. And then one night... one Tuesday night, we were going to the King George, and we bumped into Booker... And he said he was going to the Wheatsheaf [where the sword team had recently started having practices]. He said he was going dancing and says, "It's alright if you come along." And I, I'd never seen sword dancing, I'd never seen Morris dancing. I knew nothing about it!²³⁹

Ron goes on to explain the appeal of joining the team:

I went along and I thought it was great... I wasn't really a dancer, and I wasn't really strongly, heavily involved in the folk scene... I just simply went along for the drink... it was a night out. But to me, the sword, the dancing side is far more important than... the folk club. It's a good social night out, you know, practice night's not just that you go along and do the dance, full stop. There's the social, social side of it as well. So, there's the two attractions. We're all pretty good friends, and I think that if people join, and they don't get on with the people, they won't stick to dancing, because you've got to get on with the people to stick at it.²⁴⁰

These sentiments are expressed by the seven men who have joined Barnsley Longsword from

²³⁶ Norman Bearon, questionnaire, and CMS-41/A - 10.50.

²³⁷ Alan Lucas, questionnaire.

²³⁸ CMS-41/A - 11.00.

²³⁹ CMS-37/A - 01.40.

²⁴⁰ CMS-37/A - 04.40.

1980 onwards, all of whom continue to participate at present.²⁴¹ As Chris Davison summarises: "I like the dancing. Great company, plus it's a night out."²⁴²

However, while the motivations for joining the team have essentially remained consistent with previous periods, the way in which a number of these men came to join the team has differed. Chris Davison joined after a long involvement in various folk dancing activities, and John Langley became involved through an acquaintance he met through going to ceilidhs and folk clubs,²⁴³ but the other five men were not drawn into the team through participating in the folk community. Similar to Mick Roberts, Geoff Chadwick had no personal contacts in the team, although he had done a bit of rapper sword and Morris dancing while at college. As he was living in the area, he happened upon the team at the Spencer Arms at Cawthorne and asked if they needed any more members²⁴⁴ The other newcomers, however, joined the team through knowing one or more members of the team. For example, Peter Starling worked with Stuart Leake, a member since 1979, Rob Morton met two members through a role-playing game (e.g. "Dungeons and Dragons") club,²⁴⁵ and Duncan Wood got to know the team through working part-time at the pub where they practise.

To summarise, then, similar to the Grenoside and Handsworth teams, the members of Barnsley Longsword from their formation in 1968 up to the present have been motivated to join the team because of the recreational and social opportunities it provides. The fact that longsword dancing is considered to be a part of the heritage of Yorkshire has also had an appeal, as has the notion of helping to revive extant traditions. Barnsley Longsword emerged from a community of interest, not unlike the community which began to supply both the Grenoside Sword Dancers and the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers with new and younger members during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Originally closely associated with the Barnsley Traditional Folk Music Club, the team attracted a membership with an active interest in folk

²⁴¹ John Langley, Rob Morton and Peter Starling, questionnaires. Also Ray Dyson, Geoff Chadwick and Duncan Wood, personal communications on numerous occasions.

²⁴² CMS-75/A - 15.25.

²⁴³ CMS-75/A - 01.05, John Langley, questionnaire.

²⁴⁴ CMS-39/A - 07.35.

²⁴⁵ Peter Starling, questionnaire; CA1-43.

music and song who saw the sword team as an extension of their other folk activities. However, by the mid-1970s men began to be drawn into the team through friendships made at work, as well as through other recreational and social channels. Furthermore, the sword team became the basis, rather than simply an extension of their folk activities. This trend has continued during the 1980s, and while some new members join the team after having participated in the folk scene, 42% (eight out of nineteen) of the current team have not been drawn in through the folk community (Illus. 6.14)

6.4.14 Barnsley - The Performance of the Dance

Although Barnsley Longsword has never experienced any periods of particularly low membership,²⁴⁶ like Grenoside and Handsworth the frequency of the team's performance activities has varied with the availability of the members. However, because the membership since 1969 has always far exceeded the number of men required for a given performance, Barnsley Longsword has been able to sustain a relatively high level of activity. Between 1969 and 1979, for example, the team performed at an average of sixteen occasions per year.²⁴⁷ Yet, when research began in the autumn of 1985, although the number of members stood at eighteen, the team was experiencing a period of relative inactivity, largely due to members' other commitments, thus averaging eleven engagements per year.²⁴⁸

The sorts of occasions on which Barnsley Longsword presently performs are not unlike those of the Grenoside and Handsworth teams. For example, in 1986 the team danced at a number of folk events, including the Dancing England Festival at Derby, weekends of dance at Chipperfield (Buckinghamshire) and Rye (East Sussex), on tour in Barnsley and neighbouring districts, at a local nursing home, and at their own two annual events -- the weekend of dance in June and the Sunday after Christmas. Of these last

²⁴⁶ Figure 6.06 reveals that Barnsley Longsword have always had a healthy membership, with the lowest number of members being nine in 1968, the highest being twenty-two in 1975, and the average over the twenty year period being eighteen. Compare with Figures 6.02 and 6.04.

²⁴⁷ Barnsley Longsword Log Book, 1969-1979.

²⁴⁸ Several members, including Mick Roberts and Jack Ledger, have work commitments which occasionally conflict with sword team engagements, and John Booker, who is still very involved in folk singing, is often away at festivals during the summer season when much of the performing occurs. Furthermore, eight members have families, many of them young, which may prevent them from going away for weekend events unless wives and children are able to attend.

two events, more will be discussed below. As might be expected, the team's performance activities fall into the same categories as those of the Grenoside and Handsworth teams: annual team events, folk festivals (including Morris Ring Meetings, and days and weekends of dance hosted by other teams), local folk club appearances and tours of the area, civic and private non-folk oriented occasions, and charity benefits. The team has also appeared on television.²⁴⁹

In the first couple of years following their formation, Barnsley Longsword performed primarily at folk-oriented occasions; given the interests and motivations of the members, as well as the performance opportunities provided by the revival context in which the team emerged, this is not surprising. Their first performance, in fact, was at a day of dance in March 1969 organised by the Sheffield Teachers' Folk Dance Club, in which both Ivor Allsop and Clive Turner were involved. They performed at seven other folk events in the Barnsley and Sheffield areas during 1969, including two ceilidhs at Barnsley Civic Hall, the Grenoside Festival, and on tour with the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers. They also appeared at seven folk festivals, including Stainby (Lincolnshire), Whitby and Hull, and at a National Gathering at Cecil Sharp House, the national headquarters in London of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Indeed, apart from establishing their own annual performance occasion -- a lunchtime session on the Sunday after Christmas at the pub where they practised -- 100% of their activities for 1969 centred on folk events.²⁵⁰

In 1970, the team performed at fifteen folk events, including the Barnsley Festival and a Sheffield Folk Concert, as well as festivals at Stainby, Whitby and Keele, and a Morris Ring Meeting at Coventry. Such occasions comprised 84% of their performance activities for that year. They also appeared at Cawthorne Village Carnival (five miles to the west of Barnsley town centre) and at St. Joseph's Parish Church Fayre, Brighouse (West Yorkshire), in addition to their annual Sunday, which was augmented to include performing at the Spencer Arms at Cawthorne, as well as at their practice venue. Finally, in 1970 the team danced for the first time at the wedding of one of its members, setting a precedent to be repeated

²⁴⁹ Barnsley Longsword was filmed dancing at the King George Hotel, Barnsley, for a West German television programme in 1973, and later appeared on the Yorkshire-based television serial *Emmerdale Farm*.

²⁵⁰ Barnsley Longsword, Log Book, 1969.

on no fewer than five occasions since.²⁵¹

Over the following five years, the team continued to perform primarily at folk events, both locally and further afield, although by 1975 these performances constituted less than 70% of the team's activities.²⁵² This period saw an increase in the number of non-folk oriented civic and private events (e.g. Rotherham Centenary, 1971), as well as charity benefits (e.g. Barnsley Physically Handicapped Benefit in 1972, Multiple Sclerosis Concert in 1975), at which the team performed.

This trend continued into the latter half of the 1970s, with folk events providing less than half of the team's performance occasions. Indeed, between 1976 and 1979 nearly 53% of their performances occurred in non-folk contexts, evidenced by such events as Kexbrough (near Barnsley) Darby and Joan Club (1976), Notton (near Barnsley) Village Fayre (1976), Holy Cross Junior School (Carlton, near Barnsley) Fete (1977), Midgley (near Halifax) Village Gala (1977), Scunthorpe (Humberside) Town Gala (1977), Carlton Silver Jubilee Gala (1977), Barnsley Metropolitan Shopping Festival (1977), Barnsley Civic Hall Centenary (1978), Maltby (South Yorkshire) Grammar School Gala (1978), Priory School (Barnsley) Fete (1978), Kendray Hospital (Ardsley, near Barnsley) Geriatrics Social (1979), Barnsley Trade Fair (1979) and Shelley High School (Barnsley) International Evening (1979). The folk events at which the team performed during this period tended to be the same sort of events at which they had appeared before, such as days and weekends of dance (e.g. with Westminster Morris Men in 1976 and 1978, and Boar's Head Morris Men in 1976 and 1979), Morris Ring Meetings (Newcastle 1976, Chipperfield 1976, Ravensbourne 1977, Ludlow 1978, Thaxted 1979) and folk festivals (e.g. English Folk Dance and Song Society's annual event at the Royal Albert Hall in 1978, Ryedale Longsword Festival in 1979), although the team attended fewer festivals at this time than in previous years. Finally, having attended various weekends of dance hosted by other teams, Barnsley Longsword decided to organise one of their own in 1978. The event was based at Cawthorne village hall, and several teams that they had

²⁵¹ Barnsley Longsword, Log Book, 1970.

²⁵² Folk-oriented performance occasions between 1971 and 1975 included Huddersfield Morris Ring Meeting (1971), Barnsley Civic Hall Ceilidh (1971, 1973), Keele Festival (1971, 1973), Chipperfield Weekend of Dance (1971, 1973), Barnsley Festival (1972, 1974, 1975), Thaxted Morris Ring Meeting (1972, 1974), Whitby Festival (1972), Felixstowe International Festival (1974), Headington Quarry Morris Ring Meeting (1974), Kirklees Festival (1974) and Tyne and Wear Folk Moot (1975). Barnsley Longsword, Log Book, 1971-1975.

come to know well over the years were invited to attend a weekend of dancing in the Barnsley area. The success of this weekend led to its establishment as an annual occasion, typically held on the second weekend in June.

Although less than half of Barnsley Longsword's performances occurred at local, regional and national folk events during the late 1970s, during the 1980s this percentage has gradually increased to an average of over 60%.²⁵³ Examples of such occasions include: a tour of the Yorkshire Dales with Leeds Morris Men (1980), Saddleworth Rushbearing (1981), Gorton (near Manchester) Rushbearing (1981), an international folk festival in Holland (1982), Dancing England Festival at Derby (1986), Westminster Day of Dance (1986), Rye and Chipperfield Weekends of Dance (1986) and Monkseaton Morris Men's Weekend of Dance at Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear (1987). The number of Morris Ring Meetings the team has attended during the 1980s has decreased markedly, the highlight being the Morris Ring's Golden Jubilee Celebrations in Birmingham in 1984. The recent increase in the percentage of folk festivals, days and weekends of dance, and so on, coincides with a decrease in the average number of engagements, as mentioned above. In 1978 and 1986, for example, although the team attended the same number of folk events, these comprised 46% and 63%, respectively, of the team's total performances. Therefore, while the percentage has increased, the actual number of folk events attended has not. Indeed, as several informants have expressed, when work or family commitments cause them to accept fewer engagements, they tend to choose those events which they have attended before and particularly enjoyed (e.g. Westminster, Chipperfield), especially if families may be included (e.g. Rye Weekend of Dance).²⁵⁴

In the late 1980s Barnsley Longsword continued to perform at its own two annual events, civic and private non-folk oriented occasions and charity benefits, in addition to folk festivals, days and weekends of dance, tours of the area and, to a lesser degree, Morris Ring Meetings, local ceilidhs and folk clubs. It is clear from the above discussion, then, that the performance activities of Barnsley Longsword, from their first appearance in 1969 up to the present, have been varied, encompassing a wide range of performance contexts. These activities are comparable to the performance opportunities accessed by the

²⁵³ Details of the performances of Barnsley Longsword between the autumn of 1985 and the spring of 1988 appear in Condensed Accounts, vols 1-4.

²⁵⁴ CMS-27/A - 26.35, CMS-37/B - 14.00, CMS-38/A - 11.45 and CMS-57/B - 44.10.

Grenoside and Handsworth teams during this period. Furthermore, as with Grenoside and Handsworth, the performance activities of Barnsley Longsword are indicative of the interests and motivations of the participants.

As noted earlier, the sword team is an important, if not the primary, recreational and social outlet for most of the members, and each performance occasion, as well as the practice sessions, provide opportunities to satisfy these needs. Moreover, similar to the Grenoside and Handsworth teams, the number of engagements accepted by Barnsley Longsword suggests an interest in public performance; indeed, as will be discussed further in following chapters, the dance is the *raison d'être* of the group, and its performance is thereby fundamental to the team's functioning as a recreational and social outlet.

Nevertheless, the different types of performance occasions (as defined in the categories outlined above) are appealing to the participants for additional reasons. Barnsley Longsword's own two annual events are considered to be the team's most important occasions,²⁵⁵ and are therefore particularly indicative of the members' strongest motivations. Given the historical precedent of longsword dancing being "traditionally" performed at Christmas time in Yorkshire (see Chapter Five and Appendix I), the members of Barnsley Longsword in 1969 sought to establish an annual occasion, partly because of the desire to "revive" the tradition, but even more so to provide a focal point for the team -- not only a social and recreational focal point for the members and their families and friends (i.e. a reason to get together on a Sunday lunchtime for a drink and a chat and to sing a few Christmas carols), but also an aesthetic focal point, an event for which to achieve a high standard of dancing. It is the event's role as a focal point which remained particularly relevant to the team's motivation in the late 1980s. The annual June weekend also serves as a focal point for the team's aesthetic standards, especially with the added dimension of performing in conjunction with other dance teams. However, the members of Barnsley Longsword are particularly keen on this event as an opportunity to socialise, eat, drink and sing, as well as dance, with other like-minded men. In contrast to the annual Christmas time performance which is very much a family occasion, their June weekend of dance is specifically designed as a "weekend with the lads".²⁵⁶ Indeed, these motivations are central to the team's interest in attending days and weekends of

²⁵⁵ This opinion is held by 100% of the men questioned.

²⁵⁶ CMS-38/A - 27.10.

dance hosted by other teams, although some of these events also have the added appeal, as mentioned above, of accommodating families. Folk festivals are particularly suitable for involving families, and for those team members who are interested in folk music and song, and other forms of traditional dance, festivals provide a range of entertainments and activities to participate in when not performing. Non-folk oriented events may be entertaining occasions in themselves, but the team primarily accepts invitations to perform at such civic and private events by the offer of substantial fees, which in turn contribute toward maintaining the costumes and supporting other activities (e.g. the June weekend of dance, the annual team dinner).²⁵⁷ Moreover, civic occasions also provide the team with opportunities to perform in public, which is especially valuable to the less experienced members, as do charity benefits. Touring Barnsley centre and outlying areas provide further opportunities for gaining performance experience, as well as for collecting money for the team's funds. Despite these various additional reasons for performing in such a range of contexts, it must be emphasised that the members' primary motivations remain the recreational and social aspects of the performance of the dance and the occasions on which it is performed.

While the performance activities of Barnsley Longsword have clearly been influenced by the available opportunities, combined with the interests of the team members, the performer-audience relationships inherent in the various performance contexts underscore the nature of the dancers' community and helps to delineate between performances "in the community" and performances "for the public".

As discussed at length above, Barnsley Longsword emerged from the Barnsley folk community in the late 1960s, a community defined by a common interest and maintained by a network of friendships and acquaintances. This community has supported the team through supplying members, even into the late 1980s, albeit to a lesser degree, as well as by providing performance opportunities in a familiar and supportive environment. Such performance occasions include regular ceilidhs at Barnsley Civic Hall from 1969 through the mid-1970s, the annual Barnsley Festival from 1970-1975 and 1986 through the present,

²⁵⁷ Tim Long recalls that in 1977 - the year of Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee - the team received so many invitations to dance at town and village Silver Jubilee galas that they tended to accept only those with a substantial fee attached, e.g. £80 for one performance at Scunthorpe Town Gala. CMS-62/B - 37.00.

as well as folk club appearances in Barnsley (and Sheffield) during the 1970s.²⁵⁸ By the late 1970s, however, Barnsley Longsword had accessed enough performance opportunities so as to no longer require that level of support from the folk community. Even so, in the late 1980s, the members of this community still support the team's activities by attending their local performances, especially their annual Christmas time appearance.

It is clear from the composition of the audience which gathers at the Spencer Arms at Cawthorne each year on the Sunday after Christmas that, while still an important foundation of support, the team's community extends beyond the parameters of the folk community. Indeed, the audience consists largely of the performers' families and friends, previous team members, as well as a number of people who know the team through participating in the folk scene (Illus. 6.15 and 6.16). Similar to the Boxing Day performances of the Grenoside and Handsworth teams, this occasion, because of its annual occurrence and fixed venue, serves as an important social event for all involved, providing a regular date and place for people to meet. This occasion, therefore, not only constitutes a performance "in the community", but the personal nature of the relationships between the performers and the audience, which creates an atmosphere of familiarity, contributes to the team's feeling that this event is one of their most important performance occasions.

The team's other important event is their annual weekend of dance in June. However, as mentioned above, this event is not intended as an occasion for bringing together family and friends as much as an opportunity for the team to perform and socialise with other men's traditional dance teams, which Barnsley Longsword has met through attending festivals and days and weekends of dance elsewhere. Nevertheless, some of the members' families attend the public performances, as do friends and past members of the team, as Illustrations 6.17 and 6.18 reveals. Yet, this photograph further illustrates that the bulk of the audience often consists of the guest dance teams. Thus, most of the audience, similar to the Sunday after Christmas, has a personal knowledge of the members of Barnsley Longsword, and the performance, therefore, remains a performance "in the community", albeit one

²⁵⁸ The relationship between Barnsley Longsword and the Barnsley folk community, however, should not be viewed as one-sided, for while the community may provide performance contexts, through performance the sword team is serving the community by providing entertainment and participating in the event.

augmented by the nature of the occasion itself.

However, many of the venues at which Barnsley Longsword performs during the June weekend of dance are primarily public places, such as Barnsley shopping precinct and Worsborough Mill Country Park, which introduces an element of non-familiarity between the performers and the audience. Such non-community performances -- performances "for the public" -- account for the majority of the team's appearances, including at days and weekends of dance in other areas, civic and private non-folk events and most charity functions. Similar to Grenoside and Handsworth, non-community contexts account for well over 60% of the team's performances in recent years. This percentage is contributed to by the fact that, although folk festivals provide an interested audience, in most cases there are still too few personal connections between the performers and the audience for a festival to be considered a community-based context.

To summarise: Barnsley Longsword's performances, from their first appearance in 1969 up to the present, reveal that many performances occur outside of the dancers' community. The nature of the team's activities are shaped by the range of opportunities available, along with the interests and motivations of the members. Finally, the quality of the relationships between the performers and the audience serves to underscore the substance of the dancers' community and to delineate between performances "in the community" and performances "for the public".

6.4.15 Barnsley - Team Continuity

As discussed above, the Barnsley Longsword team has had a far greater number of members over its twenty year history than either the Grenoside or Handsworth teams during the same period. This is due primarily to the aforementioned period of instability in membership in the early 1970s, which is illustrated in Figure 6.05. Nevertheless, of the original nine members, over 55% have continued to participate into the late 1980s, and over 73% of the men who have joined since 1975 were still active throughout the period of research. Thus, despite the rapid turnover in members in the early 1970s, Barnsley Longsword has experienced a level of continuity in membership comparable to the Grenoside and Handsworth teams.

However, before discussing the reasons for this continuity, it is necessary to briefly mention the factors involved in creating the period of instability. The national popularity of folk music, song and

dance during the 1960s and into the 1970s naturally led to a large number of young people becoming interested in participating in such activities, as was the case with the men who joined the Grenoside and Handsworth teams at this time. Furthermore, the close association between the Barnsley Traditional Folk Music Club and Barnsley Longsword meant that the sword team acquired most of its members through this channel during the 1970s. However, it is significant that of the twenty men who joined Barnsley Longsword between 1970 and 1975, the only three who have remained active members -- Mick Roberts and Jack and Ron Ledger -- were not drawn into the team through participating in the Barnsley folk community, although the Ledgers had contacts in the team made through other social networks. Certainly, a few of the seventeen men who left the team moved away from the area (e.g. John Ashton, John Edgington) or had less leisure time due to increased work and/or family commitments (e.g. Tim Long). Even so, most of the men left the team in order to pursue other recreational interests (e.g. Nigel Balchin, Bill Creasy, Tony Heald), thus building or tapping in on other social networks. Since these men had initially joined the sword team as an extension of their folk interests, and as a direct result of participating in an associated recreational and social sphere, the sword team was by no means fundamental to their social and recreational needs. In contrast to these men, for Mick, Jack and Ron the sword team served to satisfy certain physical, creative and social needs for which they had no other outlet at the time.

Indeed, the role of the team in the participants' lives is vital to the continuity of the membership. Similar to Grenoside and Handsworth, the social cohesion of the members and their enjoyment of the dance and the occasions of its performance are two prominent factors affecting team stability. As discussed earlier, the members of Barnsley Longsword have been drawn into the team largely through friendships, many forged in the folk community from which the team emerged and some through other social networks. Such interpersonal connections between members necessarily established a level of social stability within the team. Given the revival context in which the team was formed and the networks through which members were subsequently recruited, it is not surprising that Barnsley Longsword has become increasingly middle class in its socio-economic make-up -- clearly creating an element of, at least socio-economic, homogeneity within the team, comparable to both Grenoside and Handsworth. Finally, the social cohesion of Barnsley Longsword is further underpinned by the self-perpetuating nature of the perception of the sword team as a social outlet by the membership, thereby attracting more men seeking

a new basis for social interaction.

Similar to the Grenoside Sword Dancers and the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers, the continuity of Barnsley Longsword is contributed to by members' enjoyment of the dance and the occasions on which it is performed. A majority of the men have at least had a recreational interest in folk music, and in some cases traditional dance, prior to joining the team. Like Grenoside and Handsworth, the members of Barnsley Longsword find dancing an enjoyable physical and creative activity. Moreover, the regular practice sessions and performance occasions are valuable recreational outlets.

A third factor affecting the continuity of Barnsley Longsword includes the development of the team's identity and their concept of tradition. Although these ideas will be detailed in Chapter Seven, it is relevant to this discussion of the team's continuity that the members have developed an interest in and commitment to maintaining the team and perpetuating their activities (in particular the annual Sunday after Christmas performances), much like the sentiments of the members of the Grenoside and Handsworth teams.

6.4.16 Barnsley - Summary

Founded in 1968, Barnsley Longsword emerged from a community of interest not unlike nor unrelated to that which has increasingly served as the network of social relationships through which members have been drawn into the Grenoside and Handsworth teams. Furthermore, similar to these two teams, the members of Barnsley Longsword have been motivated to join the team because of the recreational and social opportunities it provides. Although for some members, particularly during the early and mid-1970s, joining the sword team was simply an extension of their other folk activities, for those members who remain active participants in the late 1980s, the sword team serves as a primary social and recreational outlet. The team's performance activities have been shaped by the interests and motivations of the members, as well as by the opportunities available, both within the folk community and outside of it. Indeed, while Barnsley Longsword still receives a degree of support from this community, similar to Grenoside and Handsworth, their performances increasingly occur in non-community contexts, where there are few, if any, personal relationships between the performers and the audience. Finally, despite a period of relative instability, the Barnsley Longsword team has enjoyed a high level of continuity in its

membership which, again like Grenoside and Handsworth, is largely a result of the congruence between the needs and interests of the members and the ability of the team to fulfil them.

6.5 Summary

This chapter has presented the dancers (who they are and how and why they come to join the teams) and their communities (the social context from which the dancers are drawn and in which the teams exist) from the mid 1940s up to the present. We have seen the fundamental influence of the folk revival, in particular the "community of interest" it fostered, on the re-establishment of the Grenoside and Handsworth teams during the mid 1960s and in the formation of Barnsley Longsword in 1968. The new social network accessed by this revival effected the transformation in the dancers from entirely working class participants in the 1940s to 83% middle class participants by 1988.²⁵⁹ Since the early 1970s each team has enjoyed a stable membership base; the continued participation of most of the men who joined at that time has provided a level of continuity which, in the cases of Grenoside and Handsworth, has not occurred since before World War One. Finally, this period sees the consolidation of the shift in the role of the dance -- from an activity of an established social group to the *raison d'etre* of the group itself.

Having presented the dancers and their communities, the following chapter addresses the functioning of the teams and explores the dynamic factors involved in the production of the dance.

²⁵⁹ Percentage of middle class participants:

	<u>1945</u>	<u>1968</u>	<u>1988</u>
Grenoside	0%	50%	83%
Handsworth	0%	69%	83%
Barnsley	-	77%	84%

Chapter Seven

The Dance as a Product of Team Dynamics

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters I have presented the dances (describing changes and developments in style and structure, costume and performance contexts), the dancers (who they are and how and why they come to join the team) and their communities (the social contexts lending support to the dance) from the 1880s up to the present. I have traced the development of the dance team as a social and recreational outlet for its participants and the emergence of the dance as the *raison d'être* of the social grouping.

This chapter will focus on the dance team as the group of individuals who, through their interactions and activities, produce and perform the dance. It is in this forum that the interests, ideas, abilities and needs of individuals confront, and must be reconciled with, the demands of the dance and the maintenance of the group. By focusing on team dynamics, the factors leading to change in the dances can be ascertained.

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the nature of the small group. The structure and operating procedures of each team is presented, followed by an analysis of the dynamic factors affecting the production and performance of the dance. Changes in the dance are then addressed, and the factors contributing to continuity are considered. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the Zen experience, an altered state of consciousness which occurs in the course of performing the dance.

7.2 The Small Group

7.2.1 Definition and Functioning

A group is "a collection of people whose activities relate to one another in a systematic fashion and toward some end. This "end" or Group Goal exerts an organising influence on the activities of the group

members."¹ What must be emphasised is that a group is a dynamic association of *individuals* with a variety of backgrounds, interests, needs and abilities, each of whom certainly perceives the group goal -- in this case the production and performance of a particular dance or repertoire -- but may also seek to satisfy other needs, as supported by the individual motivations for joining the teams discussed in Chapter Six. We can also discern two interrelated aspects of a group: the *behavioral* (the activities of the group) and the *cognitive* (individual experiences and concepts) which together contribute to group identity.²

In any small group, a leader, or leaders, either official or unofficial, will emerge; a leader is generally the individual who holds the most influence over the activities of the group. He will initiate action, make decisions and settle disputes between group members. The leader's function is to "ensure that the group maintains a balance between the demands of the task and the demands created by the personal and interpersonal feelings of the group members."³ A group will have a role structure, including the roles of *expert* (who has extensive knowledge and skill relevant to the group's primary task), *facilitator* (who assists with the progress of achieving the task), *coordinator* (who acts to integrate the diverse elements within the group and to organise their activities) and *morale-builder* (who acts to build the confidence of individuals and raise group spirit).⁴ At the very least, there will be an unofficially recognised leader who will to some extent fill these roles; at the most, there will be a highly structured organisation with well-defined office-holders and rigid procedures. However, for the efficient functioning of the group to occur, it is necessary that each of these roles is adequately filled most of the time.

A breakdown in the functioning of any of these roles will lead to a degree of instability, dissatisfaction, disintegration, or conflict within the group. Conflict -- opposition between ideas and interests -- is an integral dynamic of any social grouping. Depending on the nature of the conflict and the way in which the group addresses it, conflict may result in a reaffirmation of existing roles and activities,

¹ Cheryl Hunt, "Group Work Notes", (unpublished manuscript, Division of Continuing Education, University of Sheffield, 1986), p.1. See also J. McLeish, W. Matheson and J. Park, *The Psychology of the Learning Group* (London: Hutchinson, 1973), M.E. Shaw, *Group Dynamics: The Psychology of Small Group Behaviour* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), and P.D. Ashworth, *Social Interaction and Consciousness* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 1979).

² See Chapter Two, p. 34 and Figure 2.05.

³ Hunt, p.1.

⁴ J. Klein, *Working with Groups* (London: Hutchinson, 1961).

the emergence of new or altered roles and activities, or the disintegration of the group. The occurrence of conflict clearly signals issues of importance, and maintenance of the group will depend on the resolution of conflict.⁵

7.2.2 Group Identity

Group identity refers to the dynamic set of characteristics by which a group is recognised. Groups usually have names (e.g. Barnsley Longsword), wear distinctive clothing or insignia (e.g. costume or uniform), have special criteria for admission to membership (e.g. men only), carry out activities as a group (e.g. perform a dance), will defend property and other rights vis-à-vis others (e.g. ownership and control of dance), may have special words or slogans which distinguish ideologies (e.g. "traditional"), may have distinctive rules of behaviour (e.g. dance on a certain date and time each year at a particular place), and have internal structures and role differentiation (e.g. "captain", "foreman", "secretary").⁶ Group identity is influenced by public and private perceptions of the group's history and emerges from the interface between the private interactions and activities of the group -- its fluid nature related to the inherent variation of individual perceptions and signalled by such linguistic indicators as "we are... but we *should* be" -- and the group's public behaviour.

Each of the longsword dance teams of South Yorkshire have developed particular organisational structures and identities, related to certain internal and external factors, which determine the group's approach to the production and performance of the dance.

⁵ Conflict has been observed to operate in morris dancing teams in England and North America. See Roy Dommett, *Roy Dommett's Morris Notes*, ed. Anthony G Barrant (New York: Country Dance and Song Society of America, 1986), Vol I, Part I, p. 76, and Anthony G Barrant, "Zen in the Art of Morris Group Maintenance", *Lore and Language*, 6:2 (July 1987), 11-31.

⁶ Pelto & Pelto, p. 211.

7.3 Team Structure and Operation

Every small group has some form of role structure and hierarchy which facilitates interaction and activity.

Each of the longsword teams of South Yorkshire has developed a structure which relates both to the nature of the members of the group and to their collective activities.

7.3.1 Grenoside Sword Dancers - Team Structure

The Grenoside Sword Dancers, by their own admission, have an *ad hoc* structure and procedures.⁷ There is no officially recognised "leader"; the "Captain" is considered to be primarily a role, or position, within the dance, although he also generally acts as a public figurehead and spokesman for the team.⁸ The Deputy Captain takes over this role when the Captain is unavailable. However, there is clearly a degree of prestige associated with the position of Captain which, if held by a strong personality, lends itself to being a position of authority. There is no specified or official "teacher".

The team does have two officers, the Secretary and the Treasurer. The Secretary's role is to handle correspondence and enquiries, circulate information to the team and accept engagements on their behalf, book the practice room, and ensure that "things get done".⁹ The Treasurer manages the team's bank account, depositing fees received and making payments for team activities or requirements (e.g. their annual festival or new uniforms). All fees and collections go into the team's funds, although travel expenses ("petrol money") may be allocated for non-local bookings.

There is no constitution, annual general meeting or formal mechanism for adopting or changing roles or procedures. The Captain, Vice-Captain, Secretary and Treasurer remain in post until they wish

⁷ Observations made at practices and performances, and confirmed through interviews: CA1-061-062, CA1-156-160, CA1-185-188, CA1-212-217, CA1-256-258, CA2-024-030, CA2-049-057, CA2-104-108, CA2-143-147, CA2-227-229, CA2-339-346, EA-164, EA-193, CMS-19/A-30.30, CMS-43/B-05.25, CMS-48/A-27.45, CMS-56/A-21.45 and CMS-82/B-16.15.

⁸ CA1-072, CA1-212, CMS-19/B-38.00, CMS-48/B-00.25, CMS-56/A-29.20 and CMS-82/B-15.00.

⁹ CMS-19/A-30.30.

to step down and someone else is prepared to assume the position. In terms of decision-making, Grenoside operates along democratic lines; every member is entitled to voice an opinion, whether concerning how a particular figure in the dance should be executed, or whether or not they should undertake a particular engagement. There are, however, several long-standing, members who hold authority and who together might be described as a "silent committee". Since about 1984, this has included Dave Brookes (Captain since 1991), Gerry Bates (Deputy Captain), Ray Ellison (Secretary) and, until his retirement from the team on Boxing Day 1990, former Captain Ted Frost.¹⁰ This unofficial committee selects who will perform on any occasion and makes other decisions as necessary.¹¹ Dave Brookes is considered by most members to be the unofficial leader.¹² He is a natural coordinator and facilitator, and is an experienced and observant dancer who can advise and assist in the production of the dance, both from within and outside of the set.¹³ Ray Ellison acts as caretaker and morale-builder; he is sensitive to the feelings and needs of the members and is conscious of ensuring that everyone feels that they have a valuable contribution to make.¹⁴ Ray is also in a potentially powerful position by his status as the team's only musician.

It appears that the Grenoside Sword Dancers have always had a relatively loose structure, and the leadership has essentially depended on the nature of the individuals involved. It is not certain whether the role of Captain entailed any official authority prior to World War Two, except that which would naturally accrue to senior members of the team.¹⁵ From at least the 1930s there was a Secretary and a Treasurer (or combined post) to handle the increasing number of enquiries and invitations to dance.¹⁶ From 1947 (until his death in 1963) the Captain, Leonard Brookes, together with the musician, Walter

¹⁰ Fred Myers, who joined the team in 1936 and was still active during the period of fieldwork, was also regularly consulted by Ray Ellison and Ted Frost.

¹¹ CMS-19/A-34.00, CMS-43/B-27.00, CMS-48/B-22.00, CMS-65/B-18.50 and CMS-68/A-23.15.

¹² CMS-19/A-34.00, CMS-43/B-27.00, CMS-48/A-25.00, CMS-59/A-22.40 and CMS-82/B-12.35.

¹³ CMS-43/B-27.00, CMS-48/A-25.30 and CMS-59/A-22.40.

¹⁴ In his diary recording how he joined the Grenoside Sword Dancers and learned the dance, Peter Clarke records a number of occasions on which Ray Ellison acted as caretaker and morale-builder (e.g. 03/05/84, p.31 and 19/05/84, p.48). Also CA2-051, CA3-198, CMS-19/A-33.50 and CMS-67/B-41.00.

¹⁵ CMS-02/B-14.50, CMS-08/A-00.25 and CMS-21/A-01.02.

¹⁶ CMS-08/A-00.25, CMS-19/A-20.45 and Lewis Wroe, personal communication to R.K. Schofield, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library.

Fleetwood, took responsibility for teaching and maintaining the dance, although they were never officially regarded as "teachers" or "leaders". Walter carried on in that role late into the 1970s.¹⁷

The Grenoside Sword Dancers acknowledge the *ad hoc* nature of their organisation, and they view it as integral to their identity. Ray Ellison explains:

Speaking generally about sides that have a formal approach to their organisation, like AGMs and quorums... there seem to be more problems thrown up out of points of order and things like this that swamps the purpose of being there... I suppose the reason why we don't have anything like that is [because] it's such a long-standing thing, and things just evolve in a way... I think it's a smashing way of carrying on -- it's just so relaxed. And things get done... as long as there are people that are prepared to shoulder a lot of the responsibility, and there always has been... I'd sooner do that extra bit of work and keep things the way they are, you know, in a sort of nice relaxed atmosphere. I've never known any animosity.¹⁸

Gerry Bates describes their "laid back" approach as "typical Grenoside",¹⁹ and Dave Brookes believes it contributes to their "friendliness".²⁰ However, this lack of formalised structure occasionally leads to frustration and conflict in the course of producing the dance.²¹

The team has no formal means for recruiting members and they do not advertise. Most members join through personal contacts or by approaching the team after having seen them perform. Any man is welcome to join.²²

7.3.2 Grenoside Sword Dancers - Practice Format and Teaching Methods

The Grenoside Sword Dancers meet to practise, usually on a fortnightly basis, in a room at the Grenoside Community Centre. The room is approximately 5 x 6 metres, although the area available for dancing is

¹⁷ CMS-30/A-40.20, CMS-43/A-24.58, CMS-48/B-06.25, CMS-52/A-38.30, CMS-60/B-07.32, CMS-65/B-18.50 and CMS-82/A-25.35.

¹⁸ CMS-19/A-33.00.

¹⁹ CMS-43/B-10.30.

²⁰ CMS-82/B-24.15.

²¹ CMS-43/A-43.30, CMS-48/A-28.00, CMS-59/A-18.10 and CMS-82/B-24.15.

²² CMS-19/A-10.45.

reduced by the presence of a desk along one wall and chairs lining the remaining walls. The rug is rolled up to expose a linoleum-covered wood floor. Practices are generally fairly relaxed occasions, as one member describes:

Go in, do a dance, well, that's when everybody turns up, eventually. Do a dance, sit down, light up a fag, sit around and talk for a while, swap stories. And then somebody says there's a letter [an invitation to dance] and all this takes about three-quarters of an hour. Maybe do the dance again and away to the pub.²³

Scheduled to begin at 8.30 p.m., there are rarely enough men to form a set before 8.45 p.m., and it is often 9.00 p.m. by the time the dancing is under way. The Secretary, Ray Ellison, brings the swords (in a wooden box with handle), and the newest member of the team tends to hand them out, offering them to the most senior members first and keeping the last for himself. It is a role which most novices fall into naturally, through both an eagerness to proceed with the dancing and a desire to be accepted.²⁴ The men wear ordinary clothes, allowing for a certain degree of freedom of movement, and shoes. "Indoor" clogs are very occasionally worn.

The practice begins with the performance of the entire dance, although usually only the last verse of the Captain's song is sung, as a lead in to the dance. The "March On" is also omitted. There is then a break during which the Secretary conducts business, reading out letters or invitations received and reminding members of forthcoming engagements. The invitations are discussed, and if there is sufficient interest expressed, the engagement will be accepted. The men then get up to dance again, and those who danced the first time will usually offer their swords to anyone who did not. After performing the dance as before, the team retires to one of the local pubs for a drink; they may occasionally discuss team business at greater length, although conversation tends to be of a more general nature.

As their role structure suggests, the Grenoside Sword Dancers' approach to incorporating new members and to maintaining the dance is informal. In 1938, Lewis Wroe wrote to R.K. Schofield (of the English Folk Dance and Song Society): "I may tell you we've no real method of training recruits. It reminds me very much of breaking young horses, you're put in between two old hands and off you go."²⁵

²³ CMS-61/B-15.30.

²⁴ EA-028-029 and observation at practices.

²⁵ Lewis Wroe, letter to R.K. Schofield, 21.03.38, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library.

The approach to training new members is essentially unaltered.²⁶ Even the more senior members of the team, who experienced the leadership of Walter Fleetwood, recall that they were given "no precise instructions on exactly where to put your feet or your hands at any one time."²⁷ Most new members will have seen the team perform and, since many have other folk dance interests, may even have learned a longsword dance.²⁸

At his first practice, a novice will normally watch the team perform the dance once or twice before being put into the set and "pushed and pulled through it."²⁹ He will be placed in between two experienced dancers who will give both verbal and nonverbal cues, and he will dance in the same position in the set at each practice. Without a recognised "teacher", incorporating a new member has largely been a matter of "everybody putting their own bit in",³⁰ although in recent years Dave Brookes has taken a more active part in explaining the figures and demonstrating the stepping. The other members of the "silent committee" also tend to assist in the instruction of new members; in particular, the musician, by the nature of his role in the performance, is able to watch the dancers at all times and will comment on problem areas. The execution of the figures is facilitated by the actions of the Captain, who moves around the set during the dance (both in practice and performance) stopping at the sword which initiates the next movement.

This unstructured approach to teaching the dance can be frustrating for the learner and requires him to take a considerable amount of initiative:

It's a very ineffective way of learning the dance... I asked on occasion if we could go through other bits and bobs, you know, "Could we go through that again?" And

²⁶ A more systematic approach -- introducing one figure at a time -- was necessary in teaching the Rover Scouts team, which consisted entirely of novices, in the 1920s, and again in 1972 when six new dancers were incorporated.

²⁷ CMS-43/B-11.40. Also CMS-55/B-13.30.

²⁸ Peter Clarke, for example, had learned several longsword dances, including Grenoside, at folk festival workshops and training days organised by the South Yorkshire Branch of the English Folk Dance and Song Society.

²⁹ CMS-48/A-18.35. Also EA-166, EA-226-228, CA2-028, CMS-55/B-13.30, CMS-61/B-44.45 and CMS-68/A-01.55.

³⁰ CMS-65/B-19.30.

*occasionally we did.*³¹

Individuals who are less inclined to ask for clarification may continue to experience confusion; even so, it is not uncommon for a detail to be explained in a certain way by one person, only to be contradicted by another person at the next practice.

Although the structure of the dance prescribes certain of the mechanics, the approach to instructing new members not only allows for considerable variation in individual style, but perpetuates it. Variation is most evident in the stepping and persists as a result of the interactive way in which the dance is produced.

The stepping is usually demonstrated by somebody, but usually by everybody. Ted [Frost] will say, "This is the stepping." Gerry [Bates] will say, "This is the stepping." And somebody else will say, "This is the stepping", and so on.³²

Invariably, beginners will be told what the stepping is *supposed* to be (section 4.3.3) but that, as long as there are eleven taps, it does not matter precisely how it is achieved.³³ A novice's success in learning the dance will depend on his ability to master the basic mechanics -- by copying the movement of other dancers and responding to verbal and kinesthetic cues -- and on his ability to assess and adopt the finer structural and stylistic details.

This lack of formal instruction necessitates personal interpretation in the learning process; similarly, the lack of any person charged with the responsibility of overseeing the production of the dance results in a democratic but undirected approach to maintaining the dance. Most members of the team will participate by raising particular points during practice or after a performance. "To whomever it occurs that a point need be made, makes it";³⁴ indeed, points are often made and details are occasionally agreed, but implementation is inconsistent.

³¹ CMS-48/A-18.35. Also EA-166, EA-226-229, CMS-04/B-02.20, CMS-43/B-17.20, CMS-55/B-13.30, CMS-56/A-31.07, CMS-60/A-10.40 and CMS-69/A-32.35.

³² CMS-48/A-22.00.

³³ CMS-19/A-39.10, CMS-21/B-19.20, CMS-65/B-43.40 and CMS-69/A-17.15.

³⁴ CMS-43/B-13.00.

7.3.3 Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers - Team Structure

In sharp contrast to Grenoside, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers have an overt, complex and well-defined structure.³⁵ The team has seven officers: Captain, Vice-Captain, Bagman, Squire of the Morris, Publicity Officer, Scrapbook Keeper and Archivist:

The **Captain** is the team's figurehead. In consultation with the Vice-Captain and the Squire of the Morris, he apportions practise time to the team's various activities. Recognised as the senior member of the team and (using Klein's terminology) the expert, he offers advice in the teaching and maintenance of the sword dance. In consultation with the Vice-Captain, he chooses the dancers for Boxing Day, and he may also arrange the programme for the team's ceilidh dance band, especially if it involves the "roadshow" (sword and morris dances and possibly some singing). The Captain will normally dance in the No 1 position when performing the sword dance. The parameters of this position have been defined in direct relation to the present Captain, Harry Pitts, and will be discussed further below (section 7.4.3).

The **Vice-Captain** is responsible for teaching and maintaining the standard of the longsword dance. He also functions as expert, as well as the primary facilitator and morale-builder. The Vice-Captain will normally dance in the No 1 position in the sword dance when performing, or will choose someone to fill that position, and will select the other dancers. He assumes the responsibilities of the Captain, in private and public, when the Captain is not available. If the Vice-Captain is unable to attend a practice or performance, he appoints someone to take on his responsibilities.

The **Bagman** is a position combining the roles of Secretary and Treasurer. He is the team's main coordinator and handles all correspondence and enquiries, prepares the agenda and any other papers for the Annual General Meeting (AGM), keeps a register of bookings (in which members indicate their intention to participate) and manages the finances. Of any fee received, 50% will normally go into the general team funds which, similar to Grenoside, pay for team events (such as their centenary celebrations in 1987) and requirements (such as new uniforms or swords). The remainder of the fee is divided equally

³⁵ Observations made at practices and performances, and confirmed through interviews: CA1-007-013, CA1-027-034, CA1-0440056, CA1-089-095, CA1-109-115, CA1-124-129, CA1-136, CA1-204-211, CA1-238-243, CA1-284-289, CA2-009-017, CA2-041-048, CA2-082-088, CA2-099-103, CA2-131-138, CA2-241-249, CA2-277-281, CA2-351-365, CMS-15/A-40.00, CMS-15/B-09.10, CMS-16/B-19.15, CMS-16/B-27.20, CMS-18/A-35.50, CMS-22/A-35.00, CMS-24/A-00.18, CMS-25/B-06.00, CMS-33/B-13.07 and CMS-53/A-00.55.

between the participants and credited to their individual "accounts", which helps to subsidise attendance of events, such as Morris Ring Meetings, where fees are charged for each participant. The Bagman regularly reports on the level of individual accounts, as well as the state of general team funds.

The Squire of the Morris supervises the morris practice and selects which dance traditions will be practised and performed during the season. He may teach and/or appoint other members to teach as desired. When performing, he selects the programme and dancers and acts as "master of ceremonies". In his absence, he will appoint someone to take over his responsibilities. The Publicity Officer, who works closely with the Bagman, handles all publicity matters, including producing and distributing posters and leaflets, and may occasionally organise exhibitions. The Scrapbook Keeper collects materials, such as programmes, mementos, photographs and press cuttings, for the team's current scrapbook, and the Archivist is responsible for maintaining the team's earlier records.

Handsworth do not have a constitution, but their Annual General Meeting serves as the formal mechanism for change in the role structure, procedures and overall activities of the team. The AGM is held in the autumn, and several weeks beforehand the Bagman will ask for any items for the Agenda to be brought to his attention. He produces the agenda and circulates it at the meeting. The meeting is chaired by the Captain and includes a review of the year's activities (prepared and presented by the Captain), a statement of accounts and reports by other officers as necessary, and the election of officers. Each office is up for election annually, although in practice most positions are held by the same people for several years; Harry Pitts has held the office of Captain since the early 1950s. There is a formal nomination, with proposer and seconder, and a vote by a show of hands and decided on the basis of a simple majority. The election is considered to be a formality, since the continuation or replacement of officers is generally discussed and decided (outwith the practice environment) in the weeks or months before the AGM.³⁶ In addition to these standard items, there is usually discussion about the team's repertoire and performance activities and other significant issues, such as the purchase of new uniforms, or whether or not they should teach the dance to "outsiders".³⁷ In contrast to Grenoside, Handsworth do advertise for members, usually

³⁶ CMS-15/B-05.25, CMS-16/B-38.40, CMS-24/A-07.00, CMS-25/B-06.00, CMS-53/A-00.55 and CMS-63/A-46.15.

³⁷ The question of teaching their dance to non-members was addressed at the AGM in 1979.

through the local folk magazine, and in recent years most new members have joined through that channel.³⁸

The role structure described above was clarified and adopted at the AGM in 1986. Prior to that time, the position of Captain entailed all of the responsibilities now divided between the Captain and Vice-Captain. The position of the Squire of the Morris was formerly a figurehead, or "master of ceremonies" when performing morris dances, and had no direct responsibility for teaching; this was the role of the Foreman of the Morris. Now these roles are combined in the single position of Squire, although there may be others involved in teaching, as their experience may justify. The factors involved in this political restructuring will be addressed further below; relevant to this discussion is the fact that the changes effected in 1986 were essentially a redefinition of roles, rather than the institution of a formalised structure.

Prior to World War Two, the leadership of the Handsworth team resided entirely with the Captain.³⁹ He took responsibility for teaching the dance, as well as acting as the figurehead, and appears to have handled all invitations to dance and any correspondence. The formal team structure began to develop during the 1960s in response to the development of repertoire and performance activities. Although the Captain continued to teach the sword dance, the teaching of the morris dance repertoire was taken on by other individuals within the team, specifically appointed to teach the morris, and occasionally supplemented by external expertise.⁴⁰ The position of Bagman first appeared in 1965, in the run up to the Morris Ring Meeting hosted by Handsworth in 1966, although following that event, the handling of the team's business reverted to the Captain. It was not until the early 1970s when, as a result of the influx of members, the team began to increase its performance activities, necessitating a division of labour and effecting a degree of decentralisation. It was at this time that AGMs were instituted and the separate position of Secretary/Treasurer, later referred to as Bagman, was established.

The Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers meet once a week in a room at St Mary's Parish

³⁸ CMS-16/B-30.00, CMS-24/A-13.30 and CMS-25/A-33.30.

³⁹ CMS-06/B-26.10, CMS-22/A-02.53, CMS-25/B-13.40, CMS-33/A-05.12, CMS-45/A-19.20 and CMS-50/A-30.00.

⁴⁰ Reg Ward from Grenoside helped to teach morris to the team during the late 1960s. CMS-15/A-13.40, CMS-16/A-07.15 and CMS-23/A-40.00.

Centre, Handsworth. The room is approximately 7 x 7 metres plus the slight protrusion of a bay window. There is a table along one wall and a chest in the adjacent corner. Most of the chairs are stacked in the recess of the bay window, and two rugs are rolled up to expose a wood floor. Practice officially begins at 8.00 p.m. and the team is invariably dancing by 8.15 p.m. The Captain or Vice-Captain takes the swords out of their bag and hands them out, usually first to any new members, who will be in the set for most of the practice. The men wear ordinary clothes and shoes.

7.3.4 Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers - Practice Format and Teaching Methods

The first hour or more is spent rigorously practising the sword dance. They begin with dancing through most or all of the dance before working on the details of individual figures. Although novices will be kept in the set, the more experienced dancers will be interchanged so that each one dances at some point during the evening. The dance is usually performed in its entirety again before there is a short break at about 9.15 p.m. During the break, the Bagman draws attention to letter and invitations, which are then discussed. If sufficient members commit themselves to attending a particular event, then the engagement is accepted. The Bagman also reminds members of any forthcoming performances, and any other matters (such as assisting with the cost of repairing one of their musician's instrument or the design of new uniforms) are raised and discussed by the team as a whole. The remaining time (until 10.00 p.m.) is spent practising the morris repertoire or, in the weeks before Christmas, a mummers play. Following practice, most of the team go for a drink in the local pub.

As their team structure suggests, Handsworth take a more formal approach to training new members and to maintaining the standard of dance. The Vice-Captain stands outside of the set for most of the practice, watching for problem areas which are then worked on individually. Difficulties with the mechanics of any particular figure are addressed through verbal explanation and by "walking through" the figures without music, so as to ensure that each dancer is aware of what movements to effect at which point in the sequence. The figure is then danced repeatedly, with verbal coaching or cuing by the Vice-

Captain, until the dancers are comfortable with the movements. Considerable attention is paid to stylistic detail in an effort to achieve a highly polished and uniform performance, and the Vice-Captain will address individual idiosyncrasies through demonstration and verbal explanation, and subsequently through verbal cues (e.g. "don't duck" or "put the sword flat on the floor") when the dance is in progress.

In contrast to Grenoside, a novice is trained in a structured manner. He initially watches the team perform the dance in its entirety, and then the Vice-Captain puts him into the set in a specified position - usually a less significant position which is not required to initiate any figures -- which he will assume each week until he has learned the dance. The dance is introduced one figure at a time: each figure is first demonstrated by an experienced set while the Vice-Captain offers verbal explanation, and then the novice is put into the set to walk through the figure several times. The standardised structure of the dance lends itself to being broken down into small movement units based on beats and bars of music. The figure is then danced repeatedly and the novice will be assisted by verbal cues from the Vice-Captain and kinesthetic cues from the dancers on either side of him. Once the mechanics of the figure have been grasped, the next figure in the dance is introduced. Stylistic points are often addressed as they arise, although emphasis is placed on first mastering the structural aspects of the dance.

Although the Vice-Captain is in charge of teaching the dance, other members assist in the process by raising points with the Vice-Captain and offering suggestions to, and answering the questions of, new members. Nevertheless, the majority of instruction is initiated and conducted by the Vice-Captain who is, therefore, in a key position to shape both the style and structure of the dance.

Although not of direct concern in this thesis, it must be noted that the teaching and maintenance of the team's morris dance repertoire is conducted along similar lines. The Squire of the Morris, and/or his appointed teacher(s), leads the practice, and the basic movements and figures are taught through demonstration and rote, supplemented by verbal explanation and cuing. Kinesthetic cuing, however, does not operate to the same extent as in the sword dance, since morris dancing does not entail the dancers being physically linked.

7.3.5 Barnsley Longsword - Team Structure

Barnsley Longsword has a well-defined team structure and established operating procedures.⁴¹ There is a written Constitution which specifies the roles of officers, as well as the terms of membership, details of uniform, the team's relationship to the Morris Ring, and the procedure for convening the Annual General Meeting and Extraordinary General Meetings.⁴²

The team has four officers: Foreman, Captain, Bagman and Treasurer. The Foreman, assumes the role of expert and is responsible for teaching and for maintaining the standard of the team's dance repertoire. He runs the weekly practice sessions and selects the programme and dancers for performances. He determines when a new member is ready to perform and decides when members receive their team badge (awarded in recognition of dancing ability and/or services to the team). The Foreman's authority is not entirely exclusive, in that every member is entitled to contribute to the production of the dance through suggestion and discussion during practice. The Foreman considers this input and makes the final decision.

The Captain of the team should not be confused with the role of "Captain" in the Kirkby Malzeard dance (i.e. the one who sings the calling-on song). He is both the facilitator and the morale-builder. The Captain assists the Foreman in all of his activities and takes over for the Foreman when required. Although not specified in the Constitution, the Captain is also the team's public figurehead and chairs General Meetings. The Bagman is the team's coordinator and is responsible for correspondence and enquiries, organising performances and team activities, and handling publicity. He issues notices of General Meetings and prepares the agenda and minutes. The Treasurer manages the team's finances; he handles all receipts and payments and produces a balance sheet for the AGM.

Similar to Handsworth, Barnsley Longsword hold their AGM in the autumn. The AGM serves

⁴¹ Observations made at practices and performances, and confirmed through interviews: CA1-001-006, CA1-041-043, CA1-063-066, CA1-083-088, CA1-103-105, CA1-198-203, CA1-227-233, CA2-001-007, CA2-019-023, CA2-031-040, CA2-060-064, CA2-151-157, CA2-200-207, CA2-236-240, CA2-300-335, CMS-01/A-00.60-20.00, CMS-27/A-21.50, CMS-35/A-30.35-43.00, CMS-37/A-08.45, CMS-38/A-08.25-26.35, CMS-47/A-22.45-45.00, CMS-50/A-38.25, CMS-71/B-11.30 and CMS-75/B-41.50.

⁴² Barnsley Longsword has had two Constitutions, one which was agreed in January 1974 and the current one, which was agreed in November 1977. See Appendix IX.

as a formal mechanism for making changes in the role structure and post-holders, for assessing and revising activities, and as a forum for members to air their concerns. It is considered to be "an effective way of letting off steam", but it is generally agreed that more is accomplished "by a bit of quiet lobbying".⁴³ Approximately halfway through the meeting there is a "beer break" where each member receives a pint of beer courtesy of the team funds; this has been standard procedure for many years and was instituted to provide members with an incentive to attend the AGM. The meeting is held at their practice venue and typically begins with the Bagman reading out the minutes of the previous AGM, after which any matters arising are addressed. The officers present formal reports, consisting of reviews, assessments and recommendations, which are then discussed by the meeting. Following the reports, the election of officers is conducted. Each office is up for election annually and all serving officers are eligible for re-election; in practice, offices are retained by the same individuals for several years.⁴⁴ There is a formal nomination, with proposer and seconder, and a vote by a show of hands. If there is more than one nomination for any office, the nominees leave the room and their proposers and seconds speak on their behalf before the vote is taken. The winner is decided on the basis of a simple majority. Any other business is then addressed, including the organisation of the team's annual weekend of dance.

Barnsley usually recruit new members through personal contacts, although any man is welcome to join. They tend not to advertise through any formal means, having found it to be ineffective in the past.⁴⁵

When Barnsley Longsword formed in 1968, considerable authority resided with the Foreman, Ivor Allsop, whose knowledge of sword dancing was fundamental to the existence of the team whose members, as discussed in Chapter Six, were essentially novices. Ivor Allsop was recognised as the team's leader, and even though the offices of Captain, Bagman and Treasurer were established within a short period, along with the formal institution of the Annual General Meeting, authority primarily resided with the Foreman, as one member recalls:

⁴³ CMS-76/A-04.00. Also CMS-27/B-27.30, CMS-35/A-30.35, CMS-37/B-08.15, CMS-38/B-10.15, CMS-47/A-38.05 and CMS-57/B-41.05.

⁴⁴ Ivor Allsop held the post of Foreman from 1968 until 1986.

⁴⁵ CMS-27/B-33.05 and CMS-39/A-06.05.

When I first started [in 1975]... it virtually were "Ivor Allsop's Barnsley Longsword Team". He'd probably admit to that, because it were. You know, if Ivor said we were going somewhere, nine times out of ten, he'd talk people into going... and if Ivor had packed in at that point, I think the team would probably have folded.⁴⁶

Up to the late 1970s Ivor Allsop, as Foreman, remained the team's central figure and driving force. It was only when he was elected as Squire of the Morris Ring in 1979 (to 1981) that other officers, and the Captain in particular, began to assume responsibility and control.

[Ivor] spent a good part of that year, as Squire-elect, going round with the Squire.... [and the team] were getting upset because Ivor were still holding the reigns, but he were hardly ever here.... There were this idea that they were wanting a bit more devolved authority.... with some scope in [the Foreman's] absence to be able to make the decisions.⁴⁷

This conflict, described as resulting from "too much politics" and "too many personalities",⁴⁸ did not result in a formal redefinition of roles. The ultimate responsibility and authority remained with the Foreman, but the Captain's role as defined in the Constitution -- "to aid the Foreman and take over the duties of the Foreman in his absence"⁴⁹ -- facilitated the necessary, if temporary, decentralisation of control. When Ivor's term as Squire of the Morris Ring ended, he resumed his responsibilities as Foreman, until 1986 when he retired from that position. Although he no longer holds the position of Foreman, he remains the senior figure of the team and the acknowledged expert to whom the team's officers refer for advice in the production and performance of the dance.

7.3.6 Barnsley Longsword - Practice Format and Teaching Methods

Barnsley Longsword meet weekly in a room in a public house in Barnsley town centre. Tables and chairs are moved to create a small carpeted area (not much larger than 3 x 3 metres) in which to dance. Similar to Grenoside and Handsworth, the men practise in ordinary clothes and shoes, although their footwear is

⁴⁶ CMS-38/A-08.25. Also, CMS-45/B-41.15 and CMS-47/A-22.45.

⁴⁷ CMS-71/A-09.55 and CMS-71/B-11.30.

⁴⁸ CMS-71/A-10.30. Also CMS-27/A-21.50, CMS-38/B-10.15 and CMS-47/A-25.50.

⁴⁹ Barnsley Longsword Constitution, agreed November 1977. See Appendix VIII.

more in keeping with what they wear when performing. Practice begins sometime after 9.00 p.m. when the Foreman takes the swords out of their bag and hands them around. They usually begin with the Kirkby Malzeard dance. They omit the calling-on song, going straight into the "Ring" with the unaccompanied singing of "We are six actors bold", and perform the entire dance. Individual figures are worked on at some length, and they perform the entire dance again before moving on to another one. There is no set time at which the Bagman conducts business, although it tends to be half-way through the evening during a break in the dancing. He draws attention to any new or pending invitations and engagements. The team will also discuss any other matters, such as progress with plans for their annual weekend of dance. After the break, the team may continue to work on Kirkby Malzeard, or may move on to the Haxby dance or rapper.⁵⁰ The dancing often continues until 11.00 p.m., facilitated by the nature of the practice venue which overcomes the need to go elsewhere for a drink.

Similar to Handsworth, Barnsley Longsword approach the teaching and maintenance of their dance repertoire in a formal and structured way. The Foreman leads the practice and stands outside of the set for most of the session, watching for problem areas which are then addressed in detail. Whether dealing with mechanics or a stylistic element, the Foreman conveys his ideas through demonstration and verbal explanation, supplemented by verbal cuing while the dance is in progress. Figures are often "dissected",⁵¹ broken down into small units of movement, and then gradually rebuilt and consolidated through repeated execution. As discussed above, the Foreman's role in teaching and maintaining the dance is fundamental but not exclusive; other members of the team participate by making comments and suggestions during practice. It is also common for performances to be assessed by the team as a whole, not only immediately after the fact, but also during the following practice, and any problem areas are worked through in detail.⁵²

New members are invariably taught the Kirkby Malzeard dance first; it is their primary dance

⁵⁰ The Haxby longsword dance is practised less frequently due primarily to the lack of space in which to execute an eight-man dance.

⁵¹ CA2-096.

⁵² For example, following a problematic performance at Dancing England in Derby in January 1986, an entire practice was devoted to analysing the mistake and working out ways of rectifying it, if it should happen again in a performance situation. EA-114-116.

and is considered to be quintessentially "Barnsley Longsword",⁵³ but it also contains a "chorus" figure (Single Up) which serves as a point of orientation as the dance progresses and a new figure is added to the sequence. The method of incorporating new members is very similar to Handsworth -- demonstration, dissection, verbal explanation, repetition, and verbal and kinesthetic cuing. Novices retain the same position in the set and are assisted by the experienced dancers in the set.

7.3.7 Summary

Each of the longsword dance teams of South Yorkshire has a role structure and general operating procedures, effected in regular practice sessions, which relate to the individuals involved, as well as the group's primary activity -- the production and performance of dance. As will be seen in the next section, the organisation of each team provides the framework in which the dynamic factors involved in the production of the dance operate.

7.4 Factors Affecting the Production and Performance of the Dance

The practice context constitutes the regular forum in which the teams meet; their main activity is the production of their dance repertoires, although the participants may also have other reasons for attending.

Through the interaction of the members in this environment, the dance is produced and the performance of the dance is determined. This section focuses on the interrelated factors involved in the production and performance of the dance and explores the dynamic forces which inform choices and shape activities.

7.4.1 External Factors

Physical Environment:

The physical environment refers to both the practice venue (the size and shape of the dance area and the surface of the floor) and the clothing worn by the dancers to practise, both of which are relatively stable

⁵³ CMS-36/B-16.10, CMS-37/A-19.35, CMS-38/A-14.20, CMS-47/B-24.35 and CMS-71/A-10.25.

elements in the process of producing the dance.⁵⁴ The rooms in which Grenoside and Handsworth practise provide sufficient space in which to perform their sword dances.⁵⁵ Barnsley, on the other hand, have barely enough space in which to execute the Kirkby Malzeard dance, making the eight-man Haxby dance nearly impossible to perform. Their small space has the positive affect of necessitating anticipated and concise movements, but it also results in the Haxby dance being practised infrequently.⁵⁶

The surface of the floor is also a consideration for each team. The carpeted floor at Barnsley requires rubber-soled shoes, but otherwise does not hinder the practice of their longsword dances, but practising rapper sword dancing is problematic, as the stepping in considerably more difficult to execute. The linoleum-covered floors at Grenoside and Handsworth can be slippery; given the pace of the Grenoside dance, it is not significantly affected, but the flow of the Handsworth dance can be noticeably impeded.⁵⁷

Clothing worn at practice, especially footwear, affects the production and eventual performance of the dance. The dancers are aware of the need to wear clothing which enables them to move freely,⁵⁸ but footwear tends to be neglected. Barnsley's costume does not require a standard style of shoe, and the shoes worn in practice are similar to those worn when performing. Grenoside and Handsworth, on the other hand, both have specialist footwear for performance which neither team routinely wears for practising.⁵⁹ The result is that each team produces a movement style and a pace that are rather more difficult to maintain in performance with the additional weight and physical limitations imposed by clogs

⁵⁴ Barrand (1986) identifies climate, as well as dance area and clothing, as "Controllable Sources of Movement Style" (pp. 114-117); climate is not relevant here, as the emphasis is on the factors effecting continuity and change in the dance, rather than elements which might impede its performance on any particular occasion.

⁵⁵ The size of Handsworth's practice venue has a noticeable affect on their morris dancing; while the room enables a set to form, it does not allow large movements, thereby contributing to their compact style of morris dancing.

⁵⁶ CMS-41/A-17.40, EA-001-003, EA-053, EA-103, EA-114-116 and EA-211.

⁵⁷ EA-058, EA-062, EA-145, CA2-340, CMS-18/B-06.50 and CMS-28/B-00.05.

⁵⁸ CMS-01/A-20.30, CMS-02/B-24.50, CMS-08/A-17.10, CMS-14/B-31.35, CMS-16/B-07.40, CMS-20/A-14.00 and CMS-34/A-28.00.

⁵⁹ I observed the Grenoside Sword Dancers wearing their "indoor" clogs during one practice.

or boots and gaiters.⁶⁰ One Grenoside dancer commented: "We always practise in shoes, and as soon as I get the clogs on... it becomes progressively harder."⁶¹ However, the Grenoside and Handsworth musicians are aware of this challenge and are conscious of the need to make allowances.⁶²

Performance Contexts:

The nature of the audience -- the spectators' relationships to the performers and why the spectators are there -- varies with the performance context. Audience expectations are acknowledged by the teams and exert a certain amount of influence on their activities. Six broad categories of performance context were identified in the previous chapter, each of which entails a different type of audience.

1. Annual local events (including Boxing Day at Grenoside and Handsworth and Barnsley Longsword's Sunday-after-Christmas dancing at the Spencer Arms at Cawthorne) - The audiences on these occasions, numbering between 100 and 300, consist largely of people familiar to the dancers (relatives, friends and acquaintances known to team members through the local or folk communities). There is generally an atmosphere of reunion -- people meeting up with others, some of whom they may not have seen since the same occasion last year; the performance of the dance is the reason for people coming together. On Boxing Day in Grenoside and Handsworth in particular, there are also a significant number of spectators who are members of the wider folk community and are not personally known to the performers; they come (some from long distances) on a regular basis and have developed a degree of knowledge of the dance. The audience tends to be loyal and supportive, but do expect to see a good performance. The teams are conscious of this expectation and feel that it "should be the best display of the year."⁶³ There is also a consideration of the programme. With its three dances (two longsword and one rapper), Barnsley is able to provide a display of reasonable length;⁶⁴ Grenoside, on the other hand, invite other local teams to

⁶⁰ CA2-043, CA2-085 and CA2-102.

⁶¹ CMS-48/B-03.55.

⁶² CMS-28/A-25.15, CMS-36/A-06.20, CMS-36/A-16.00, CMS-80/A-03.40, CMS-80/A-22.25, CA2-076 and CA3-171-172.

⁶³ CMS-72/A-08.05.

⁶⁴ EA-089-092 and CA3-204-209.

dance on Boxing Day in order to provide a longer programme.⁶⁵ Handsworth have also attended to their repertoire to include a mummings play for the Christmas season, although this functions to involve a greater number of members as well.⁶⁶

2. Local (district/regional) folk club appearances - The audiences on these occasions consist of members of the "community of interest". There is generally a high degree of familiarity between the dancers and the audience, and there is a significant amount of pressure on the team to perform well in the presence of their peers. In this context the dance team is usually one of several groups or individuals filling a short "spot" in a varied evening of entertainment. Handsworth have responded to this opportunity by developing their "roadshow"; with a ceildh band and caller, sword and morris sides and members capable of singing a few songs, they are able to run an entire evening event.

3. Local (district/regional) tours - The audience in this context consists largely of "passers-by" who have not come out especially to see the performance; they are not obliged to stop and therefore have low expectations regarding the quality or quantity of the entertainment provided. The teams will often tour with one or two other teams in order to make more of a show. Handsworth can provide a full display by including morris dancing, and Barnsley occasionally fill out their programme by including some of the members' wives and daughters who step dance.⁶⁷

4. Charity benefits - At these events, the audience is there to support the cause, not necessarily to watch the dancers, so their expectations of the performance are relatively low. It is often "enough to see some coloured uniforms."⁶⁸

5. Civic and private non-folk events - These audiences do not usually have extensive knowledge of the dance, but since the dancers invariably receive a fee or other remuneration, there is, at least on the part of the organising body, an expectation that the performance be of a reasonable standard and of sufficient

⁶⁵ CMS-20/A-08.30, CMS-51/A-34.00, EA-083-085 and CA3-198-199.

⁶⁶ CMS-17/B-10.15, CMS-23/A-09.10, CMS-25/B-34.25, CMS-28/A-36.00, CMS-33/A-21.20, EA-086-088 and CA3-200-201.

⁶⁷ CMS-36/A-21.25, CMS-47/B-37.10 and CMS-53/B-14.00.

⁶⁸ CMS-05/A-07.30. Also CMS-47/B-37.10.

content. As one Handsworth dancer remarked: "The customers have got to get what they want."⁶⁹

6. Folk festivals - At these events the audience has a particular interest in traditional dance (they are usually dancers themselves) and some spectators may be very knowledgeable about longsword dancing. The team may perform at a variety of venues, including formal halls and arenas where a large, fee-paying audience watches a series of teams perform. The audience is generally knowledgeable and has high expectations of the standard of the performance. A member of Barnsley Longsword commented: "The only time it really matters [how well you dance] is when you've got to dance in front of all those other dancers... because they know what you're doing."⁷⁰ In this context the audience has paid to see the team dance and therefore "expect value for money".⁷¹ One Grenoside dancer explained that "people are not just paying money for it because it's traditional but because it looks reasonable."⁷² A member of the Handsworth team echoes this sentiment: "If a team turns up, I don't care how traditional they are, if they're rubbish, you're not going to ask them back."⁷³

7.4.2 Internal Factors

Individual Ability and Skill:

As discussed in Chapter Six, all of the members of the three teams have an interest in dance, although their interest may not be the only or, indeed, the primary motivation for joining or remaining with the team. The men have varying degrees of dance experience and because the teams primarily serve a social and recreational function for the members, they consist of individuals with a range of dancing ability. In

⁶⁹ CMS-63/A-27.00.

⁷⁰ CMS-75/B-35.25.

⁷¹ CMS-09/A-01.00.

⁷² CMS-69/A-18.55.

⁷³ CMS-63/B-26.00.

each of the teams there are only a few "natural" dancers;⁷⁴ most become competent sword dancers through training and practice.⁷⁵ Norman Bearon, formerly of Barnsley Longsword, aptly describes the typical range:

In every team there is a cross-section of people... it's got its natural dancers who will fit in anywhere and can do, if they put their mind to it, do any form of dance and pick it up fairly quickly. And it's got those who have slogged away at it and they've got that particular dance off well and make a terrifically good, sound team member, but would be absolutely hopeless if they tried to pick up anything else without an awful lot of effort. And then there's the ones who never quite make it anyway, in any situation.⁷⁶

Those who "never quite make it" often leave of their own accord; alternatively they may find other roles within the team.⁷⁷

This disparity in ability can be overcome, or at least evened out to some extent, through training. The role of the teacher is therefore of vital importance; not only must he have expertise and personal dancing ability, but he must also be a skilled teacher capable of integrating men of diverse abilities into a team. If given long-term authority within the structure of the team, the teacher may also be in a position to effect and sustain developments in the dance. The difficulties faced by the Grenoside Sword Dancers because of their lack of an official teacher were mentioned in the previous section, and during the period of research the persistence of a disparity in skill through lack of training, and the resulting standard of dance, was a source of some tension in the team.

In addition to raw ability, the physical limitations of the dancers have an impact on the dance. An individual's temporary or permanent disability, for example a "bad back", requires that other dancers in the set make certain allowances.⁷⁸ "It only needs one [dancer] who is not as agile as he should be and

⁷⁴ The extent of a person's natural dancing ability becomes clear when they are confronted with a different form or style of dance. In the spring of 1986, the Handsworth team practised the Askham Richard longsword dance, in preparation for running a workshop at the following Sidmouth International Folk Festival. Over four sessions, few of the men were able to adapt to a new manner of locomotion. EA-222-225, CA1-242, CA1-289 and CMS-18/A-16.25.

⁷⁵ CMS-24/A-22.20, CMS-41/B-34.50, CMS-43/B-30.30, CMS-48/A-04.00, CMS-69/A-17.15, CMS-75/A-28.10 and CMS-82/A-25.05.

⁷⁶ CMS-41/B-34.50.

⁷⁷ CMS-23/A-20.50, CMS-23/A-23.55, CMS-36/A-06.20 and EA-120.

⁷⁸ CMS-37/B-34.35, CMS-38/B-01.05 and CMS-48/B-12.50.

it can slow it right down."⁷⁹ Such idiosyncrasies may lead to stylistic fluctuations in the performance of the dance, but because they are usually limited to a single person in the team, they tend not to lead to permanent changes in the dance. Age also has an impact on the dance; it affects tempo and the fluidity of movement.⁸⁰ However, the aging of the team as a whole, particularly in view of the stability and longevity of the membership base of each of the teams (see Figures 6.01, 6.03 and 6.05), could lead to more permanent stylistic changes:

You have to slow down for the aged members because you've got to fit in with the dancers you've got... If we're all still dancing together in twenty years time, we will be a set of old men dancing, and it would be a different dance. It would have to change, we would have to evolve it to fit our style.⁸¹

The skill of the teacher in the production of the dance has already been mentioned; also of importance are the members' other dance experience and skills. For example, the expansion of Handsworth's repertoire in the 1960s to include morris dancing stemmed from the skill of one member, Clifford Barstow, as a morris dancer and teacher, supported by the morris dancing experience of several other members. Other (especially concurrent) dance experience influences a person's movement style and may have an impact on his interpretation of movements in other dances (as will be illustrated in sections 7.5.2 and 7.5.3).

Participants' Interests:

As detailed in Chapter Six, the dance teams serve important social and recreational functions for their members, although an interest in dance is a common motivating force. The interests of the members influence two areas: the development of repertoire and the selection of performance occasions.

1. The development of repertoire: Maintaining the interest of its members appears to be a problem facing many contemporary dance teams.⁸² Boredom can lead to infrequent attendance at practice on the part of experienced dancers, which in turn has implications for the training of new members (see below). With

⁷⁹ CMS-17/A-15.50.

⁸⁰ CMS-27/A-15.25, CMS-27/B-27.30, CMS-38/B-03.00, CMS-65/B-38.55 and CMS-72/A-37.20.

⁸¹ CMS-37/A-22.25.

⁸² Dommett (1986), Part I, pp. 76-80 and Barrand (1987), pp. 26-27.

the team meeting regularly, an expanded repertoire helps to sustain the interest of members.

This was one of the reasons why the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers started morris dancing. "It makes for a much more interesting evening of dancing."⁸³ Increasing the repertoire also accommodates a large membership; while the sword dance requires eight men, when fielding a side of twelve or fourteen for any performance occasion, performing morris dances as well as the sword dance allows all of the members to participate in the performance without having to repeat material.⁸⁴ Indeed, Handsworth's repertoire, including the ceilidh band, has resulted in the team being able to access a wider range of performance opportunities, which further serves to satisfy the members social and recreational needs.

Nevertheless, their repertoire development has led to some conflict within the team. Some members express frustration at what they consider to be inadequate time available to maintain reasonable standards: "The more you do, the less well you do it, because you've got less time to practise."⁸⁵ Some members also feel that morris dancing is inappropriate for a "traditional" sword team to perform. They may choose not to participate in morris dancing, and occasionally the matter is raised at the Annual General Meeting. However, their concern is tempered by the fact that the majority of members enjoy the various benefits of the inclusion of morris dancing in their repertoire, as well as the knowledge that "if we dropped the morris tomorrow... we'd have trouble getting a sword team together."⁸⁶ The continuation of the sword dance remains the team's priority: "Everybody in the side regards the sword as being by far the most important thing that we do. But, on the other hand, we're quite happy to choose morris for certain occasions if dancing morris is the right thing."⁸⁷

⁸³ CMS-78/A-42.30. Also CMS-17/A-04.25, CMS-17/B-12.40, CMS-24/A-05.20 and CMS-28/A-05.15. Brian Smith explained why they do not include other longsword dances in their repertoire: "I think the feeling has been at Handsworth that we've always thought of Handsworth as being... possibly one of the best [sword] dances, so it would be a bit of a waste of time learning an inferior dance if you've got possibly the best sword dance in England." (CMS-18/A-16.25).

⁸⁴ CMS-17/A-37.35, CMS-22/A-33.00, CMS-24/A-05.25 and CMS-28/A-36.00.

⁸⁵ CMS-28/A-08.15. Also CMS-18/A-40.55, CMS-72/A-35.55 and CA2-017. This was one of the reasons for the departure of Clive Turner in 1970 and Ivor Allsop in 1974.

⁸⁶ CMS-25/B-28.45.

⁸⁷ CMS-53/A-44.25. Also CMS-06/B-35.40, CMS-14/B-16.30, CMS-15/A-23.45 and CMS-16/A-10.00.

Maintaining the standard of dance with an expanded repertoire has also been a concern for Barnsley Longsword.⁸⁸ Since the early 1970s, the team has performed three dances -- the Kirkby, Malzeard and Haxby longsword dances and the Earsdon rapper sword dance. During the mid 1970s the team practised the Papa Stour longsword dance and, for a trip to Holland in 1982, added the Ampleforth and Sleights longsword dances to their repertoire. The rapper dance has also been occasionally accompanied by a calling-on song and a play. However, during the mid 1980s, the team reverted back to the three dances, having found it difficult to sustain a large repertoire of a suitable quality.

In contrast to Handsworth and Barnsley, Grenoside have not expanded their repertoire.⁸⁹ They make no apology for having only one dance, and although it does limit the nature of the performance opportunities available to them, they still perform on a regular basis (see section 6.4.3). Most members have other dance interests; many enjoy social dancing, over 50% of the team are involved with other teams and others have been in the past. By satisfying other dance interests through different outlets, there is little pressure for the team to expand their repertoire; however, the level of commitment involved in belonging to more than one dance team can lead to a conflict of interests.

2. Selection of performance occasions: Whether or not a particular engagement is accepted obviously depends on sufficient members being available to attend. Having an appropriate repertoire is also relevant, but the selection of performance occasions primarily relates to the members' interests. Indeed, it is often the social nature of the occasion, rather than the fact of performance, that attracts interest:⁹⁰ "When you go somewhere, it's not just the dancing. You might have a good sing and a good drink."⁹¹ The potential personal enjoyment of an occasion may also be combined with the opportunity of a weekend away for the family. Such occasions also provide the team with social time unconnected with the practise environment and are therefore important for the cohesion of the team as a social group.

There are also other reasons for selecting performance occasions. For example, the team may

⁸⁸ CMS-27/B-06.25, CMS-38/B-03.25, CMS-46/A-38.40 and CMS-47/A-08.00.

⁸⁹ The Grenoside Sword Dancers previously had close connections with Grenoside Morris and Rapper, which are now defunct.

⁹⁰ CA2-047, CA2-057, CMS-19/B-01.05, CMS-25/B-01.10, CMS-28/A-12.00 and CMS-59/A-18.30.

⁹¹ CMS-28/A-20.00.

choose to dance at a charity event in order to support the cause, but these events (when audience expectations may be relatively low) serve the important function of providing less experienced members with an opportunity to perform in public. There are also pragmatic reasons for accepting an invitation; if the team requires funds (for new costumes, for instance), then an engagement with a reasonable fee attached may be undertaken.⁹² Even so, the appropriateness of the performance context is a matter for consideration, and conflicting viewpoints emerge as to the merits of certain performance occasions. "Appropriateness" relates to group identity and will be addressed further below.

Aesthetic Ideas and Attitudes:

Aesthetic ideas are communicated in the practice context, usually by the individuals who take responsibility for the teaching and maintenance of the dance; a teacher with strong ideas, and the ability to convey them, can have a profound impact on the style and structure of the dance, as will be seen in section 7.5.⁹³ Most members are able to assess their team's dancing and have aesthetic attitudes which inform their approach to the production of the dance.⁹⁴

During the period of research, members of each team expressed dissatisfaction with their standard of dance and cited the acquisition of new members and the simultaneous departure of, or lack of commitment from, established members as the primary reason. One Grenoside dancer commented: "I think the dancing isn't very good at the moment... [because] there's quite a lot of new people and we don't see very much of the experienced members nowadays."⁹⁵ This is echoed by a member of Handsworth: "I don't think the sword's very good at the moment... there's an awful lot of new people, and some old ones

⁹² Funds are required for attending certain events, such as Morris Ring Meetings and for financing regular team activities, such as Grenoside's annual festival and Barnsley's annual weekend of dance.

⁹³ EA-193-200, CA2-024-030, CA2-104-108, CA2-339-346 (Grenoside); EA-011-018, EA-037-044, EA-057-063, EA-120-124, CA3-045-049, CA3-121-126, CA3-247-254, CA3-302-308 (Handsworth); EA-001-010, EA-051-055, EA-100-104, EA-114-116 (Barnsley).

⁹⁴ CMS-19/A-39.10, CMS-25/A-20.30, CMS-27/B-30.30, CMS-33/B-01.55, CMS-35/A-17.00, CMS-38/A-09.25, CMS-43/B-35.00, CMS-48/A-14.50, CMS-53/B-21.40, CMS-60/B-19.50, CMS-63/A-44.10, CMS-65/B-17.15, CMS-72/A-08.05, CMS-75/A-19.25 and CMS-82/A-25.05.

⁹⁵ CMS-48/A-16.20.

going, and the balance is not quite right."⁹⁶ The situation is similar at Barnsley: "The newer dancers have been keen enough to learn, it's just that we haven't been able to get the experienced dancers... to come along and practise regularly enough to pass on their experience to the new dancers."⁹⁷

Concern over the standard of dance highlights the desire to perform well -- a desire related not only to individual enjoyment and satisfaction, but also to the performance context and audience expectations already discussed. Each of the teams has at one time been recognised for the quality of their dancing, to which their appearances at national and international events testify. These "high points" set the aesthetic parameters against which the standard of dance is assessed and toward which the teams concentrate their efforts. Jack Ledger of Barnsley Longsword explains:

There are times when we've danced superbly... When we were dancing at the Albert Hall [in 1978] we were dancing marvellously. You can't let your standards slip, you see, and we've realised that we've started slipping a little bit, so we're going to fight back now.⁹⁸

In each of the teams, the standard of dance has led to frustration and tension, and in the case of Handsworth, precipitated conflict. At Barnsley, Ivor Allsop's decision to step down as Foreman in 1986 was prompted by his concern at being unsuccessful in improving the team's standard of dance. Similarly, concern over their standard of dance was a factor leading to the restructuring of the Handsworth team in 1986 (see section 7.4.3). In both cases, a change of teachers was considered to be the way to at least address, if not improve, the dancing. At Grenoside, however, matters were complicated by their *ad hoc* structure. Although the members of the team universally acknowledge that their standard of dance could be improved,⁹⁹ tension exists between the point of view that something ought to be done to improve it and the attitude that it is "as good as you would expect a traditional village sword team to be".¹⁰⁰ The frustration is compounded by the lack of a formal mechanism or means for the matter to be addressed.

⁹⁶ CMS-18/A-16.20.

⁹⁷ CMS-37/B-11.25.

⁹⁸ CMS-38/B-35.15. Also CMS-22/B-05.00, CMS-24/A-19.50, CMS-27/A-18.25, CMS-28/A-15.00, CMS-37/B-13.00, CMS-49/B-02.00, CMS-53/A-40.25, CMS-63/A-30.45 and CMS-80/A-43.15.

⁹⁹ CMS-09/A-14.55, CMS-19/A-39.10, CMS-20/B-23.00, CMS-21/B-19.20, CMS-40/A-21.55, CMS-43/B-35.00, CMS-48/A-14.50, CMS-60/B-20.25, CMS-65/B-43.40, CMS-68/A-43.00, CMS-69/A-17.15 and CMS-82/A-25.05.

¹⁰⁰ CMS-43/B-35.25.

Aesthetic ideas and attitudes not only reveal the participants' approach to the dance as a creative activity, but because the performance of the dance is the substance of their public behaviour as a group, their standard of dance and the resulting reputation is fundamental to group identity.

Conceptions of Tradition:

As discussed in section 7.2, group identity involves two interrelated aspects: the public perception of the team based on its public behaviour, and the private conceptions of the group based on the ideas, attitudes and perceptions of the members. The impact of the public aspect of group identity on the production and performance of the dance (in relation to the standard of dance and the content of the performance) have already been discussed, as have the influence of members' interests, abilities, skills and aesthetic ideas and attitudes. The influence of the concept of tradition held by the members of each team will now be addressed.

Grenoside Sword Dancers: Paramount to the Grenoside Sword Dancers' identity is their status as a "traditional" team. For many members this status was a consideration when joining the team, and participation in the perpetuation of the tradition is an important factor in the members' continued commitment to the team.¹⁰¹ Inherent to their identity as "traditional" is the association with the village of Grenoside; their annual Boxing Day performance in front of the Old Harrow Inn is viewed as the single most important performance occasion of the year.¹⁰² Yet the hangover of the "Grenosiders only" rule (established in 1947 and abandoned in the early 1970s) results in an underlying tension between "insiders" (Grenosiders, by birth or marriage) and "outsiders", as perceived by some of the "outsiders". One man commented: "I feel I shouldn't push... [my opinions and ideas] because perhaps it's not my place."¹⁰³ Similarly, another man explained: "I am very conscious that I don't wish to appear pushy to [the

¹⁰¹ CMS-20/A-07.50, CMS-40/A-21.00, CMS-43/A-31.10, CMS-48/A-34.00, CMS-51/B-35.40, CMS-55/B-21.40, CMS-56/A-36.15, CMS-58/B-09.50, CMS-60/A-09.15, CMS-65/B-13.30, CMS_68/A-42.30, CMS-69/A-16.20, CMS-82/B-04.35 and CMS-83/A-00.12.

¹⁰² CMS-20/A-07.50, CMS-43/A-31.05, CMS-48/B-21.20, CMS-55/B-01.00, CMS-58/B-09.50, CMS-60/B-31.00, CMS-65/B-27.00, CMS-68/A-42.30, CMS-69/B-45.15 and CMS-82/B-44.00.

¹⁰³ CMS-43/B-03.15.

Grenosiders]... I don't really feel that it is my place."¹⁰⁴ This has resulted in the avoidance of assuming leadership roles by capable and experienced members. Their perceptions of being "outsiders" are particularly felt in relation to their role in the team on Boxing Day:

I always feel that if there are Grenoside people there, if a Grenoside bloke came, I would let him have my place. I do feel it has something to do with the village, and if six Grenoside blokes came along that day and wanted to do it, as long as they could actually do the dance..., I'd definitely let them have my place, you know, wouldn't have any qualms about it.¹⁰⁵

It would be fair to say that the prevailing attitude is that a team consisting entirely of Grenoside people would be preferable.¹⁰⁶ However, Ray Ellison expresses the view held by the Grenosiders:

I don't think you can look at "traditional" as you would look at it fifty years ago when you got to be born in Grenoside to dance it. As society changes, and as pressures on a team to keep going changes, I think you've got to alter your definitions... So long as the dance is traditional, that's the important thing, but the more Grenoside blokes you've got in it, the better. But I think if blokes are willing to come, and have the right sort of feeling for the tradition, then you can't argue against that - they're welcome. It's more important to keep the thing going.¹⁰⁷

The concept of tradition influences the Grenoside Sword Dancers' approach to the production and performance of the dance. Reg Ward, who first danced in the 1920s, believed that "traditions change... and they can be improved."¹⁰⁸ Present members concur: "Tradition's fine, as far as it goes, but things do alter, and if the whole team agrees to alter something, then that is still tradition."¹⁰⁹ The team's view of the dance as something which can develop may lead to changes in the dance; certainly, this point of view has facilitated changes in the past (see section 7.5.1).

The team's concept of tradition also informs the performance of the dance. The importance of Boxing Day as their "traditional" day is a positive force for the continuation of the performance of the dance on that occasion. The appropriateness of dancing at any particular event also relates to their identity

¹⁰⁴ CMS-82/B-12.35.

¹⁰⁵ CMS-48/B-23.50.

¹⁰⁶ CMS-08/A-42.55, CMS-43/B-04.00, CMS-48/B-23.50, CMS-51/A-05.20, CMS-55/B-14.20, CMS-69/A-15.20 and CMS-82/B-13.00.

¹⁰⁷ CMS-19/B-25.40.

¹⁰⁸ CMS-09/A-08.45.

¹⁰⁹ CMS-60/A-42.30. Also CMS-43/A-38.40, CMS-48/A-38.20, CMS-55/B-21.40, CMS-65/B-42.15 and CMS-70/A-15.40.

as a traditional team:

We should dance out as a traditional team, we should show the dance to the public, but by the same token, I think we've got to be aware of whether we're actually in the right place.... Even if they're paying money, I still think it is wrong to go and dance where you're not appreciated.¹¹⁰

Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers: Handsworth's identity is also distinguished by their status as a traditional team and has an impact on the production and performance of their dance. The incorporation of the word "Traditional" into their name is significant. Although there is a feeling for the importance of place (the connection with the villages of Woodhouse and now Handsworth), having a personal association with the geographical community appears never to have been a prerequisite for membership; hence there is no perception of a preference for a team consisting of Handsworth residents. The team present a view similar to Grenoside on the concept of tradition: "I think the dance has had to evolve and change with the times."¹¹¹ "One of the nice things about being a traditional team [is that] you can more or less do what you like with the dance and it's still traditional."¹¹² "There is no reason why we shouldn't change the dance to suit us... If needs arose, there's no reason why we shouldn't devise a new figure... It's our dance and if we want to change it, then why not?"¹¹³ The team is generally aware of the ways in which the dance has changed and see development as an integral part of the tradition.¹¹⁴ The team's identity as traditional also informs the selection of performance occasions. Similar to Grenoside, Handsworth's "traditional" day of dance is Boxing Day; it is viewed as the most important performance of the year and the team's feeling for the tradition operates to ensure the continuation of the performance of the dance.

By informing the team's approach to the production and performance of the dance, the concept of tradition serves to legitimise their activities; tradition can also act as a force in the resolution of conflict

¹¹⁰ CMS-82/B-04.50.

¹¹¹ CMS-25/A-32.30.

¹¹² CMS-28/A-38.40.

¹¹³ CMS-53/B-42.25.

¹¹⁴ CMS-16/A-20.00, CMS-17/A-22.25, CMS-18/A-35.50, CMS-22/B-10.15, CMS-25/A-28.40, CMS-28/A-05.45, CMS-33/A-44.30, CMS-36/B-05.40, CMS-45/A-07.40, CMS-64/A-03.00, CMS-72/A-28.35 and CMS-80/B-06.25.

and the maintenance of the group, as will be seen presently in a case study of Handsworth's leadership crisis.

Barnsley Longsword: Barnsley Longsword is a "revival" team; it was born out of the interest in traditional dance generated by the folk revival of the 1960s and formed with the specific intention of reviving longsword dances that were no longer performed and returning them to their place of origin.¹¹⁵ Their initial interpretation of the nature of tradition and perception of their role in the revival process resulted a desire to reconstruct the dances as accurately as possible from written notations.¹¹⁶

However, Barnsley Longsword's initial interpretation of their relationship to the "tradition" has given way to a concept of tradition not unlike that which influences the Grenoside and Handsworth teams. There is a prevailing belief within the team that traditions, even those taken on by revivalists, can change.¹¹⁷ There is also a minority opinion that the dances which the team performs, especially Kirkby Malzeard as their first and standard dance, are becoming Barnsley's own "traditional" dances.¹¹⁸ Both of these conceptions of tradition may influence the future development of the team's dances.

Barnsley Longsword also has an annual day of dance which, similar to Grenoside and Handsworth, is regarded by the participants as the most important performance occasion of the year. Although this occasion was originally created as a focal point for the team to work toward, its meaning and function for the participants is similar to Boxing Day at Grenoside and Handsworth.

Our dancing at Spencer's [on the Sunday after Christmas] is very important. I think if the sword team went down, and dwindled in numbers... and perhaps even stopped meeting on a Tuesday night and stopped having our annual dinner, I think there'd still be enough support around amongst the old dancers to say, "Well, we're still going to dance at Spencer's at Christmas, because that's the traditional thing"... That's a very strong thing and we must keep it going.¹¹⁹

Like the other factors described in this section, the concepts of tradition held by the members of Barnsley

¹¹⁵ CMS-06/A-38.00, CMS-27/A-06.45, CMS-35/B-23.25, CMS-47/B-16.20, CMS-57/A-35.55, CMS-71/B-25.20 and CMS-75/B-24.00.

¹¹⁶ CMS-06/B-18.35, CMS-14/A-10.15, CMS-35/A-45.30 and CMS-46/A-42.45.

¹¹⁷ CMS-37/A-22.25, CMS-38/B-32.55, CMS-57/A-36.15, CMS-62/B-10.00, CMS-71/B-25.20 and CMS-75/B-20.00.

¹¹⁸ CMS-37/A-22.25 and CMS-38/B-32.55.

¹¹⁹ CMS-37/A-25.00. Also CMS-27/A-45.05, CMS-38/B-37.15, CMS-47/B-16.30, CMS-50/A-14.05, CMS-57/B-06.03, CMS-62/B-08.05 and CMS-71/B-02.15.

Longsword inform the team's approach to their dances.

Summary:

This section has explored the factors affecting the production and performance of the dance, including the physical environment, performance contexts, individual ability and skill, participants interests, aesthetic ideas and attitudes, and the concept of tradition as a dynamic of group identity. In section 7.5, these factors are considered in relation to the changes which have occurred in the teams' longsword dances. However, in order to illustrate the dynamic way in which these factors interrelate and operate, a brief case study will now be presented.

7.4.3 The Handsworth Leadership Crisis

The word "crisis" is used here as it was in the discussion of the Grenoside Sword Dancers' post World War Two crisis (section 6.3.2) to refer to a decisive period of transition involving the redefinition of roles and identities.

At their Annual General Meeting in September 1986, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers effected a change in their team structure relating to the role of the Captain. The control over the teaching of the sword dance and the selection of dancers for all performances was taken from the Captain and instituted in the newly created office of Vice-Captain.¹²⁰ The Captain's role was essentially transformed from authority to figurehead, not because of the nature of the role of the Captain within the team, but because of the nature of the postholder, Harry Pitts.

This action was prompted by a desire for a more direct approach to teaching and maintaining the dance:

Harry's the sort of person that would not want to single people out for criticism for fear of hurting their feelings, but by not doing that, by saying "someone, some of you", you don't know whether you're doing it right or wrong. Because you can think you're doing

¹²⁰ The Captain still participates in the selection of dancers for the Boxing Day performances, but in collaboration with the Vice-Captain.

something, and in fact, you're not.¹²¹

This concern over teaching method was combined with a desire for a more democratic approach to the development of the dance. Harry Pitts had been the only teacher since the 1950s, and it was felt that there was a need for some "fresh ideas".¹²² One man commented: "Harry thinks it's his dance, but I always take it as being our dance, and I think we all ought to have a say in developing the dance."¹²³ Another observed: "Harry has very personal views on the dance; it is his dance... therefore, he's very possessive about it."¹²⁴

Harry's personal views on the dance are understandable; he was not only the force behind the revival of the team in the 1950s but also in developing distinctive aspects of the style and structure of the dance (see section 7.5.2). Harry's role in the continuation of the dance as a tradition is acknowledged: "He has kept it going"¹²⁵ and "the team as a group of people performing a particular dance owe Harry a lot."¹²⁶ However, the depth of association between Harry Pitts and the sword dance is not recognised, for the dance is not only "the main interest in Harry's life",¹²⁷ it is a fundamental aspect of Harry's self-identity. To Harry, the dance is of paramount importance, and it is this point of view, more than an inability to direct personal criticism, that was at issue. Harry's approach to the dance is serious, sometimes even severe,¹²⁸ practice exists for the sole purpose of producing the dance, and the full attention and energy of the members are expected to be directed toward this task.¹²⁹ Yet, while the dance may be the

¹²¹ CMS-72/A-41.00. Also CMS-17/B-24.20, CMS-33/B-01.55, CMS-53/A-06.30 and CMS-63/A-13.45.

¹²² CMS-63/A-43.10. Also CA2-274, CA3-105, CMS-17/B-25.30, CMS-18/B-21.00, CMS-53/A-07.15 and CMS-72/B-01.15.

¹²³ CMS-17/B-25.30.

¹²⁴ CMS-72/A-44.50.

¹²⁵ CMS-63/B-04.00. Also CMS-24/A-03.25, CMS-33/B-16.45, CMS-53/A-06.15 and CMS-80/A-26.50.

¹²⁶ CMS-72/B-01.15.

¹²⁷ CMS-53/A-08.15.

¹²⁸ EA-040, EA-058, EA-122, EA-147 and EA-224.

¹²⁹ CA2-292, CA2-352, CA2-363, CA3-110, CA4-124, CMS-46/B-17.15 and CMS-79/A-15.40.

reason that the team meets each week, it is not the only reason why the members are there; for them, the team is an important social and recreational outlet.

Harry also views the presentation of the dance with considerable reverence, which again is in conflict with the view of the majority of the team's members: "everybody's proud of it... [but] it doesn't have to be taken necessarily *that* seriously."¹³⁰ The seriousness of purpose with which Harry approaches the production and performance of the dance relates to his deep personal identification with the dance. To appropriate from anthropologist Clifford Geertz, it is only apparently a dance that is on display. Actually, it is a man.¹³¹

The underlying conflict of interests between the leader and the team, and the resulting tension, led to increasing discontent which, through informal discussions ("all the real decisions are made in the pub"),¹³² was agreed to be threatening the membership base and, therefore, the future of the team. There was considerable concern over the possible consequences of a change in leadership which everyone wanted to avoid; there was a fear that Harry might decide to leave the team, which in turn might precipitate a split.

"We wanted to hurt Harry as little as possible, and so, much discussion went into how it could be phrased and what responsibilities the different posts ought to have."¹³³ Les Seaman, a long-standing and well-respected member and friend of Harry's, played a key role by acting as negotiator between Harry and the rest of the team in advance of the Annual General Meeting. He coordinated ideas and considered opinions in an attempt to integrate the diverse needs of everyone involved.

The most critical time of the crisis occurred after the AGM with the adjustment of the team, and Harry in particular, to the new structure.

Effectively, Harry has been moved sideways, and establishing what his role is going to be within the team in future is going to be difficult, because on Wednesday nights [at

¹³⁰ CMS-53/A-44.25. Also CMS-24/A-19.50, CMS-28/A-12.00, CMS-63/A-30.45, CMS-80/B-44.45, CA2-047, CA3-115 and CA3-338-339.

¹³¹ Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight", *Daedalus* 101 (1972), 1-37. "It is only apparently cocks that are fighting. Actually, it is men." (p.6).

¹³² CMS-63/A-46.15.

¹³³ CMS-53/A-35.25. Also CMS-63/B-40.10, CMS-72/B-00.50, CA2-123, CA2-276, CA2-281, CA2-356, CA3-106 and CA3-108.

practice] he isn't going to have a particular function.¹³⁴

His role is more [that] of the advisor, the -- not unkindly -- the old man, who has a wealth of knowledge which he should be able to share, yet who is perhaps getting beyond his dancing capabilities. Yet, within that, it's difficult to find him a definite function.¹³⁵

There was also a degree of uncertainty expressed:

[Harry] has been teaching the sword, and it's been his life for almost forty years. I suppose it's not unlike making people redundant... I'm not sure that the sword is more important than the man.¹³⁶

Again, Les Seaman, as the new Vice-Captain, assumed a central role, this time as caretaker and morale-builder, in reintegrating the team and reinvolving Harry in practice, both as dancer and advisor.¹³⁷ Also at work in the resolution process was the concept of tradition as a dynamic of group identity:

[It's] the only thing that's kept Handsworth together. You've had all these clashes of personalities, people talking about people behind their back, but at the end of the day, once we're in those uniforms, we're Handsworth, and everybody wants to keep it going.¹³⁸

In 1987, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers celebrated the 100th anniversary of the dance moving from Woodhouse to Handsworth. In October, they held a ceilidh to which they invited all former members, as well as other local dance teams. Captain Harry Pitts was honoured with the presentation of a silver dish in recognition of his services. Held in the context of their "community of interest", this celebration of the team and of the tradition, and the public acknowledgement of Harry's role within it, marked the end of the period of uncertainty and served the important function of consolidating the resolution of conflict.

¹³⁴ CMS-53/A-03.45. Also CMS-63/B-40.10, CMS-72/B-00.50, CA2-280, CA2-361, CA3-072 and CA3-107.

¹³⁵ CMS-72/B-10.00.

¹³⁶ CMS-53/A-07.30.

¹³⁷ CA3-106-109, CA3-114-116 and CA4-129.

¹³⁸ CMS-63/B-44.45. Also CMS-72/A-28.10, CA2-123, CA2-276, CA2-281, CA2-356, CA3-106 and CA3-108.

7.5 Understanding Change in the Dance

As the previous sections illustrate, the dance is the product of the activities of the small group; it is in the context of the team, and in the practice forum in particular, that the ideas, interests, skills and abilities of the individuals interact to produce the dance. Certain factors have been identified as significant in shaping the dance, and this section will consider how these factors have effected visible changes in the dances.

7.5.1 Grenoside

The changes which are known to have occurred in the Grenoside dance during this century are characterised by a move toward greater uniformity of presentation, including a marked standardisation of the style and a consolidation of the structure of the dance.

Costume: The uniform costumes of the Rover Scouts team of the 1920s/30s represent a departure from the costumes of the men's team of that period. It is not certain whether the Hussar-style jackets were purchased as ex-Army surplus, or were tailor- or home-made; what is significant is that they were made to specification and were uniform in appearance. Uniformity was seen as desirable for presentation outside of the village context, especially in English Folk Dance Society competitions and demonstrations.¹³⁹ In contrast to the men's team, the Scouts' musician also appeared in uniform.

The team which formed in 1947 initially appeared in jackets in a variety of floral and paisley patterned fabrics; however, by 1952 (with the assistance of the English Folk Dance and Song Society) they were wearing new tailor-made trousers and jackets of a uniform fabric and style. It is not insignificant that four members of this team were also members of the Rover Scouts team; they viewed uniformity of costume, as well as uniformity in the style and structure of the dance (see below), as important to the

¹³⁹ CMS-02/A-36.10 and CMS-02/B-24.50.

public presentation of their dance.¹⁴⁰

Style: The most striking changes in the Grenoside dance relate to style, in particular the manner of locomotion and stepping. The 1927 and 1938 films reveal a jaunty walk during the figures and, when compared with films and videos taken from 1950 onward, there was a wide variety of stepping, executed with more flair, often encompassing hops, as well as steps and taps. By 1950, the very distinctive variations in the stepping gives way to a much more deliberate, even and uniform style. According to several men who danced with the post World War Two team, the move toward a more uniform style was the result of a conscious decision taken by the team in response to an external factor -- change in the performance context. As described in Chapters Five and Six, from the 1920s the Grenoside Sword Dancers began to access new performance opportunities, many connected with English Folk Dance and Song Society. Uniformity was required in order to score well in competitions, and in correspondence between the Grenoside Sword Dancers and Society representatives during the 1940s, uniformity of style is suggested as necessary to a good performance, and therefore in maintaining access to regional and national performance opportunities.¹⁴¹ The increase in tempo which occurred during this period relates to the intentional move toward uniformity; a slightly faster tempo leaves less time for individual idiosyncrasies and therefore leads to a more rigid style of presentation. However, it must be emphasised that complete uniformity of style has never been achieved, reflecting the nature of the team's role structure and functioning; nevertheless, variations are fewer and less distinct and appear to be slight modifications on the same form.

Structure: The striking aspect of the structural changes in the Grenoside dance is that nearly all have occurred since World War Two. However, there are two exceptions to this rule: 1) The Captain's Hat - By the 1930s the Captain's hat is known to have been knocked off as the lock is drawn and the Captain leaves the ring. This feature was clearly missing at the end of the nineteenth century and when Sharp

¹⁴⁰ CMS-04/B-39.20, CMS-08/A-17.10 and CMS-20/A_14.00.

¹⁴¹ CMS-08/A-20.30, CMS-09/03.45, CMS-10/B-27.00, CMS-21/B-19.20, CMS-86/B-22.45, and personal correspondence to F.W. Myers.

recorded the dance in 1910. Unfortunately, it cannot be ascertained as to precisely when and why this development occurred. 2) **The movement of the dancers in the Single Down and Single Up figures -** Visual and written records from 1910 through the 1930s have the dancers moving over and under the swords singly, but in 1938 Schofield's notations and the notes from Grenoside dancer and musician Lew Wroe state that the dancers work in pairs. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the dancers would either work singly or in pairs in these two figures, depending on the amount of space available; certainly during the 1930s the team practised in a small pub room which necessitated the dancers moving in single file.¹⁴²

The remaining structural changes in the Grenoside dance have occurred since the reformation of the team in 1947, and for the most part were consolidated by the early 1950s. As will be shown below, these changes were consciously and intentionally effected by individuals within the team, although external considerations may have informed their choices.

Stepping sequences and Ring o' Roses: The most obvious structural change in the dance is the omission of several sequences of stepping in the Shoulders, Reel and Roll figures, and the omission of Ring o' Roses which, although it constituted a separate piece performed without swords, was considered to be part of the performance.¹⁴³ Prior to the team's 1949 Albert Hall performances, the director of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, Douglas Kennedy, wrote to the team expressing his concern over the length of their dance, which at that time, with Ring o' Roses, extended to twenty minutes. He wrote:

It is in the interest of the dance that I am begging you to cut down your performance to five minutes... I know the dancers won't agree with me, but they are too much in the dance to realise what an audience feels. It is far better to leave off when everyone is still keen to see more than to go on just a little too long. In these modern days, especially with London audiences, the rather spoilt spectator gets quickly bored, and I should hate anyone to have a wrong impression of the beauties of Sword Dancing.¹⁴⁴

The team responded by cutting out the stepping sequences and Ring o' Roses for this occasion, and under the influence of the positive response they received to their performances, the team decided to permanently

¹⁴² EA-118, EA-158, CMS-08/A-20.30 and A.G. Barrand Fieldnotes (27/12/76).

¹⁴³ CMS-21/B-01.30 and CMS-20/A-39.00.

¹⁴⁴ Douglas Kennedy, letter to F.W. Myers, 7th December, 1948.

institute the changes.¹⁴⁵

Mock "death" of the Captain: Another significant change in the dance is the appearance, by 1949, of the "death" of the Captain when the Lock is drawn and the Captain falls out of the ring onto the ground. This feature was devised by the Captain of the post World War Two team, Leonard Brookes, in order to "make a bit of drama out of it".¹⁴⁶ It was felt that their performance had to be more spectacular in order to please audiences, especially at large displays such as the Royal Albert Hall performances. It is known that the team referred to Sharp's book, *The Sword Dances of Northern England*, and it has been suggested that Leonard Brookes developed the figure after reading Sharp's discussion of the "meaning" of the Grenoside Lock figure in the introduction to Part I (see section 4.4.3).¹⁴⁷ Certainly from 1947 onward, the Grenoside Sword Dancers have been aware of, if not influenced by, cultural survivals theory.¹⁴⁸

Minor changes: In addition to the significant structural changes discussed above, several minor details have changed since World War Two. Since the late 1940s the team has routinely performed the "March On/Off" as a way of entering and exiting the performance space; this procedure was developed for presenting the dance in formal contexts such as competitions and large displays.¹⁴⁹ Similar to the stylistic changes, two structural details were altered with the intention of producing a better performance. The Low Clash was changed from all swords clashing together, to swords clashing in pairs, producing a "cleaner" sound.¹⁵⁰ Likewise, after becoming Captain in 1963, Ted Frost developed the practice of moving round the set; it not only provides the Captain with a more active role in the dance, but by signalling which

¹⁴⁵ CMS-08/A-20.30, CMS-21/B-17.22 and A.G. Barrand Fieldnotes (27/12/76).

¹⁴⁶ CMS-21/B-01.30. Also CMS-20/A-39.00, EA-082 and EA-162.

¹⁴⁷ CMS-02/A-26.15, CMS-02/B-10.35, CMS-11/A-16.30 and CMS-21/A-41.05.

¹⁴⁸ CMS-04/A-05.05, CMS-20/A-04.20, CMS-52/A-11.10, CMS-56/A-44.20, CMS-58/B-24.25 and CMS-86/A-27.20.

¹⁴⁹ CMS-04/A-08.00, CMS-10/B-26.00 and CMS-30/A-40.15.

¹⁵⁰ CMS-10/A-14.10.

sword will initiate the next movement, it helps to ensure a smoother performance.¹⁵¹

To summarise, the changes which have occurred in the Grenoside dance are characterised by a post World War Two move toward a uniformity of presentation, involving a standardisation of the style and a consolidation of the structure of the dance. Whether initiated by an individual or worked out in the team context, these changes result from the conscious decisions of the group.

7.5.2 Handsworth

Similar to Grenoside, the changes which have occurred in the Handsworth dance are characterised by a move toward uniformity in the style and structure of the dance, although in the Handsworth dance the standardisation is even more marked and pervasive. The changes have also occurred since World War Two and follow a reformation of the team. However, unlike Grenoside, these developments can be linked largely to the initiatives of one man, Captain Harry Pitts.

Costumes: Similar to Grenoside, the changes in costume detail reflect developments in the style and structure of the dance. The Handsworth costumes have always been distinguished by considerable uniformity, although a degree of variation in neckwear (cravats or collars and ties) persisted until after World War Two (see section 4.5.1). Since then the Handsworth costume has become uniform in every detail. Slight changes, such as the substitution of pom-poms for wool on the caps, have been made on the basis of availability.¹⁵² The only major change -- from a v-neck to a high, closed collar on the jacket - - was made in 1974 to overcome the need for collars and ties, thus further ensuring uniformity of appearance,¹⁵³ although the team's choice was also informed by their desire to return to the original

¹⁵¹ CMS-21/A-36.00.

¹⁵² CMS-16/A-39.00.

¹⁵³ CMS-16/B-04.05.

hussar design.¹⁵⁴

Style: As described in Chapter Four (section 4.6.2), a fundamental change in the style of the Handsworth dance occurred in the 1950s after Harry Pitts became Captain and revived the team by recruiting a new and younger set of dancers. Although these recruits had some dancing experience, they were essentially novices to sword dancing (see section 6.3.7); therefore, Harry Pitts had the opportunity of establishing a corporate style.

With the intention of producing an impressive, well-drilled performance, Harry Pitts interpreted the dance in a "military" way; he instituted an upright posture and a driving, steady carriage.¹⁵⁵ The movement of limbs became concise and controlled, exemplified in the manner of executing the Clash (a compact flick of the wrist, in contrast to the previous chopping blow). The most striking stylistic change, however, occurred in the manner of locomotion, with the development of the drop-step (the heavy emphasis on the right foot). Without the benefit of a regular musician during the 1950s, the team typically practised, without music, by simply counting out the beats. This was facilitated by the standardisation of the figures (see below). A common difficulty experienced by novices is getting over the sword, in such figures as the Snake, Single Down and Divide Down, with the correct foot. Harry Pitts imposed the drop-step to help to overcome this problem. Clive Turner explains:

It was to get you over [the sword] right-footed. It was as simple as that really. I can remember almost the evening it happened; it was when the side was at a very low ebb [in the mid 1950s]... There were new dancers in and always the problem is to get people the idea that you must go over right-footed... So we did it for a bit and... it became part and parcel of it.¹⁵⁶

Clive Turner's other dancing experience enabled him to easily adopt the drop-step:

I'd been doing, in college, the Weaving Lilt, the Hebridean Weaving Lilt, and there you get every fourth beat is a heavy one. And so I'd been used to dancing with this heavy right-footed emphasis.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ CMS-16/B-04.05, CMS-34/A-28.00, CMS-49/B-31.35 and CMS-63/B-10.41.

¹⁵⁵ EA-127, CMS-17/A-27.15, CMS-22/B-15.15, CMS-24/A-19.50, CMS-25/A-28.40, CMS-28/A-42.35 and CMS-45/A-08.35.

¹⁵⁶ CMS-45/A-07.40. Also CMS-33/A-44.30 and CMS-36/B-08.10.

¹⁵⁷ CMS-45/A-08.30.

The change in movement style which was developed during the 1950s persists today; indeed, the regimented, uniform style of the Handsworth dance, and the distinctive drop-step in particular, are recognised as fundamental aspects of the dance which serve to distinguish it from other longsword dances.¹⁵⁸

Structure:

General: The uniformity of style toward which Harry Pitts was working in the 1950s was furthered by the standardisation of figures (during the 1950s) and tunes (in the early 1960s). It was an intentional change which was devised to create a more effective, precise and polished performance.¹⁵⁹ Executing each figure to a specific number of beats also assisted the learning process: "You are able to tell exactly where you should be on what beat in what bars of the music at any one time."¹⁶⁰ Standardisation directly led to the changes (as described in Chapter Four) of the following figures: the Snake, Single Up, Single Down, Divide Up, Divide Down, Double Up and Double Down.

Another general structural change occurred in the sequence of figures. From the 1950s until the mid 1970s, Double Up was omitted (see below); Harry Pitts decided to move Double Down in between Divide Up and Divide Down in order to achieve a better balance of figures.¹⁶¹ When Double Up was reintroduced, the sequence returned to its original order.

Run Around: This figure was, in effect, created when the standardisation of figures occurred. It enables the dancers to prepare for the next figure and the musician to prepare to change tunes.¹⁶²

Single Up: The virtual lack of movement of the arched sword was developed by Harry Pitts in an effort to produce a figure which more clearly mirrored its partner figure, Single Down.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ EA-015, CA4-123, CMS-28/A-42.35, CMS-36/B-08.10, CMS-49/A-25.20 and CMS-72/A-29.00.

¹⁵⁹ Harry Pitts collaborated with Bernard Kidd, musician from 1960 to 1972, on the selection of tunes. CMS-22/B-15.15 and CMS-36/A-15.05. Also CMS-16/A-20.00, CMS-17/A-25.00 and CMS-45/A-10.10.

¹⁶⁰ CMS-17/A-25.00. Also CMS-45/A-10.10 and CMS-49/A-25.20.

¹⁶¹ CMS-17/B-04.00, CMS-33/B-03.30 and CMS-72/A-28.40.

¹⁶² CMS-46/B-00.55.

¹⁶³ EA-038, EA-058, EA-066 and EA-134-136.

Double Up: As mentioned above, this figure was omitted from performance for over twenty years. It was worked on in practice, but it was felt that they "could never come up with a satisfactory method that made it dramatically different to Single Up."¹⁶⁴ Harry reintroduced the figure in the mid 1970s in order to balance the dance.¹⁶⁵

Fast Single Up: Harry Pitts introduced this figure in the mid 1950s to "try and make it more exciting at the end."¹⁶⁶ Some minor adjustments were made in the 1970s, which were again initiated by Harry.¹⁶⁷

The Roll: The Roll has not been performed since the 1920s (see section 4.6.3). According to Bill Siddall, who joined the young team in 1926, they practised the Roll but never "mastered" it and, therefore, never performed it in public.¹⁶⁸ Since the 1950s, the team has worked on this figure on a number of occasions, but has agreed that it does not fit in with how the dance is performed today.¹⁶⁹ Brian Smith explains:

The Roll is superfluous... it's an anti-climax. It would be a total anti-climax if, after doing this superb, self-contained dance, if we were to pratt back on, start doing this pathetic little thing... the audience would walk out!¹⁷⁰

To summarise, the stylistic and structural changes which have occurred in the Handsworth dance are characterised by uniformity and standardisation. These developments are largely the result of aesthetic choices made by Harry Pitts with the intention of producing an impressive display and effected through his position as Captain from the 1950s up until 1986 when the teaching and maintenance of the dance was assumed by the Vice-Captain. Operating as both stylist and choreographer, he was able to effect changes which are now viewed as fundamentally "Handsworth"; this level of personal involvement in the development of the dance explains the depth of feeling with which Harry Pitts holds the dance.

¹⁶⁴ EA-128-129.

¹⁶⁵ CMS-17/A-22.35, CMS-17/B-03.50 and CMS-72/A-28.35.

¹⁶⁶ CMS-36/A-23.20.

¹⁶⁷ CMS-07/A-02.40 and CMS-46/B-09.25.

¹⁶⁸ Tape-recorded interview, 29th November, 1978, Handsworth Archive.

¹⁶⁹ CMS-17/A-23.00, CMS-22/B-16.00, CMS-28/A-42.35 and CMS-33/B-04.50.

¹⁷⁰ CMS-17/B-02.30.

7.5.3 Barnsley

There has been little change in the style and structure of the Kirkby Malzeard and Haxby longsword dances performed by Barnsley Longsword. Given the relative youth of the team and the stability of the Foreman, this is not surprising. There have been minor fluctuations of tempo in Barnsley's dances, reflecting the proficiency of the performers; similarly, the Kirkby Malzeard calling-on song has varied with the singer. Nevertheless, there have been several changes which warrant comment.

Style: Ivor Allsop, who assumed the position of Foreman when the team formed in 1968, started with a team consisting almost entirely of dance novices, and like Handsworth in the 1950s, was able to develop a team style. However, the fact that Ivor Allsop and Clive Turner concurrently danced with Handsworth until the early 1970s appears initially to have influenced certain stylistic details. Clive Turner explains:

[The other members of] Barnsley were fortunate in that they had the great advantage of everything being new and fresh. But [Ivor and I] were almost trying to superimpose Handsworth-like style onto Barnsley -- it was difficult not to.¹⁷¹

The Kirkby Malzeard Clash, for example, was originally executed at the tips of the swords with a controlled flick of the wrist in a manner almost identical to Handsworth; in the mid 1970s, however, Barnsley's Clash developed into the present chopping movement, with swords meeting halfway down the blades. Similarly, Double Down was reminiscent of Handsworth in that the pivot person leapt up in order to unwind; this feature disappeared when the structure of the figure was changed in the early 1970s. The extent of the influence of Handsworth style also touched the manner of locomotion; founder members recall that in the early years "there was even a definite stamp on the right foot."¹⁷² From the mid 1970s the style developed independently of any such direct external influence.

Structure:

Kirkby Malzeard - Double Down: As described in Chapter Four (section 4.9.3), the execution of this figure changed significantly in the early 1970s. Attempting to reconstruct the dance precisely, with the

¹⁷¹ CMS-49/B-09.30. Also CMS-14/A-10.15 and CA2-156.

¹⁷² CMS-49/B-10.00. Also CMS-14/A-10.15 and CA2-156.

original intention of reviving and returning "the tradition" to the village of Kirkby Malzeard, Ivor Allsop strictly adhered to Cecil Sharp's notation of the dance in *The Sword Dances of Northern England*.¹⁷³ However, in about 1970, Ivor came across an article written by Douglas Kennedy in 1947 providing documentary evidence that this figure had been incorrectly notated in Sharp's book.¹⁷⁴ Still striving for as close a reconstruction of the dance as possible, Ivor instituted the necessary changes.

To summarise, although minor fluctuations are evident in the the longsword dances performed by Barnsley Longsword, few changes have occurred. This is partly due to their relatively short period of existence, but also relates to the stable role played by Ivor Allsop, as Foreman, in the teaching and maintenance of the dance from 1968 until 1986 and his continued participation in the team. The changes which have occurred point to the relevance of other dance experience and the conscious intentions of the Foreman.

7.5.4 Summary

This section has addressed the visible changes in the longsword dances of each team and demonstrates that certain dynamic factors involved in the production of the dance have effected lasting changes. The Grenoside and Handsworth dances are characterised by a post World War Two move toward uniformity resulting from aesthetic choices made in consideration of contemporary performance contexts. In the case of Grenoside, the influence of the English Folk Dance and Song Society and the role played by personal innovation have been key factors in shaping the dance. At Handsworth, where stylistic and structural change has been more pervasive, the role of one man, as the authority in the teaching and maintenance of the sword dance for thirty-five years, has been fundamental in initiating and consolidating change. Similarly, the role of Barnsley's Foreman in the production of the dance has been significant.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ CMS-14/A-10.30, CMS-27/A-06.45, CMS-35/B-23.30, CMS-38/B-32.55 and CMS-71/B-25.20.

¹⁷⁴ Douglas N. Kennedy, "Fresh Light on the Kirkby Malzeard Sword Dance", *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 5:2 (1947), 69-71.

¹⁷⁵ Harry Pitts and Ivor Allsop have not directed the production of the sword dances at Handsworth and Barnsley, respectively, since 1986. Continued observation of the teams will reveal the impact that subsequent teachers may have on the style and structure of the dances.

7.6 Continuity in the Dance

The dances of each of the longsword dance teams of South Yorkshire have been shown to have experienced, to varying degrees, stylistic and structural change. Yet, even in the Handsworth dance, where the changes have been considerable, there remains an overall continuity in the dance. Indeed, in viewing films taken fifty years apart, the dance is immediately recognisable as Handsworth.

As detailed in Chapters Five and Six, the continuation of the performance of the dance relates to the persistence of the team (which, in turn, relates to the interests of the participants) and the ability to access sufficient performance opportunities. Likewise, continuity in the dance also relates to the team and the regularity of performance.

Just as a change in leader/teacher can lead to a change in the dance, stability in leadership can effect continuity. For example, although striking changes occurred in the Handsworth dance, most can be traced to the early years of the Captaincy of Harry Pitts; having instituted the major structural and stylistic changes and set the aesthetic parameters, Harry's position in the team acted as a force for continuity in the dance. Therefore, one would expect to see the authority and long-term stability of subsequent teachers relating to continuity in the dance.

Stability in the membership of a team is also relevant in maintaining continuity in the dance. In the Grenoside and Handsworth dances, significant changes occurred after the reformation of the teams. However, since that time, the acquisition and replacement of dancers has taken place within the framework of a stable core of members (never less than 40%, see Figures 6.01 and 6.03), allowing for a consistency in the transmission of the dances. The situation is similar at Barnsley where, since the mid 1970s, 40% of the membership has remained constant (see Figure 6.05). Even with a range of abilities, skills, interests and attitudes, the gradual turnover in membership ensures a degree of continuity over time.

Change in the dance has also been related to change in the primary performance contexts. However, over the past twenty years, the nature of the performance opportunities available to the teams has remained relatively stable. Moreover, the quantity and frequency of performance occasions not only results in regular performances, but also necessitates regular practise, both of which further contribute to continuity.

7.7 The Zen Experience

There are times when it happens, and I think it happens to everybody [in the set], but there are times when you dance out and everything clicks and everything is right... I've always been told about the "magic of the dance". I never really believed it, and just for a few minutes, while we were dancing, I really experienced the magic of the dance, and I never wanted it to stop.¹⁷⁶

Dave Brookes of the Grenoside Sword Dancers struggles to describe that feeling which most dancers -- and certainly all dance enthusiasts -- have experienced, but for which they seem to have no adequate descriptive term.¹⁷⁷ Other members of the Grenoside team, as well as members of Handsworth and Barnsley, have also expressed that they have experienced this phenomenon, and in attempting to describe it, employ such words as "magic" and "ritual", and the phrase "the magic of the dance".¹⁷⁸ Given that cultural survivals theory is "well established in public consciousness, and is still defying most academic attempts to shift it",¹⁷⁹ it is not surprising that the dancers draw upon its rhetoric when addressing phenomena which seem to be at least extraordinary, if not supernatural. Nevertheless, a distinction must be drawn between the use of cultural survivals theory to legitimise or explain activities in the public forum, and the use of its rhetoric to describe performance-based experiences of a certain state of being which are otherwise indescribable.¹⁸⁰

Peter Civico (Grenoside) describes it as "dancer's hysteria, where you're not aware of what's

¹⁷⁶ CMS-82/B-07.25.

¹⁷⁷ As a dancer, I have also experienced this phenomenon, and this personal knowledge was fundamental in identifying the occurrence of this phenomenon in the longsword dance teams of South Yorkshire.

¹⁷⁸ See, for example, CMS-43/B-30.30, CMS-50/A-25.00, CMS-55/B-02.45 and CMS-72/A-07.50.

¹⁷⁹ Boyes (1987-88), p. 8.

¹⁸⁰ A circular distributed by the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers during the late 1960s and early 1970s states that the sword dance is "probably a survival of an ancient fertility rite to ensure that the earth did not die but would come to life again." Similarly, a flier prepared by the Grenoside Sword Dancers for their 1985 trip to Bochum, Germany, refers to the "killing of the Captain and his rising again, the weaving ring of swords...[as] powerful symbols of a natural order in the cycle of the seasons and the rightness of death and new beginnings." One informant explained that many participants "need something to justify doing it, and bringing in those symbolisms is a way of justifying it to somebody that might find it hilarious to watch." (CMS-40/B-03.10).

outside you. All that you can see is the dance, and you don't even think about what you do next."¹⁸¹

Alan Thornsby (Handsworth) refers to it as a "high"¹⁸² and Clive Turner (Handsworth and Barnsley) recalls "high spots" when the dance is "magically drawn along".¹⁸³ Ron Harper (Barnsley) feels "part of the ritual which sometimes can produce a personal, inside, emotional experience."¹⁸⁴ Finally, Ivor

Allsop explains:

There's a feeling that happens occasionally which we call the Magic of the Dance. Something just happens... It really is a feeling of euphoria that comes over you and everybody else in the side at the same time.¹⁸⁵

Dr Anthony G Barrand, Associate Professor of Anthropology at Boston University and authority on English traditional dance, has observed the occurrence of this phenomenon in morris and sword dancing teams in America and the United Kingdom. Barrand borrows the term "Zen" from eastern Taoist philosophy, "the timeless way", in order to describe this extraordinary phenomenon:

To be able to recognise "IT" in another team's performance or to feel "IT" on those rare moments in one's own dancing, is to experience Zen, to be "one" with the moment and the occasion. It is the kind of ultimate reality or absolute knowledge Eastern mystics say lies beyond the reach of words, reason, or even the senses.... When dancing embodies Zen, you know it and everyone else knows it.¹⁸⁶

In his article "Zen in the Art of Morris Group Maintenance", Barrand explains that he has "seen it and on too few occasions, felt it",¹⁸⁷ and has heard descriptions of the Zen experience "from people in a

¹⁸¹ CMS-55/B-02.45.

¹⁸² CMS-72/A-07.50.

¹⁸³ CMS-50/A-25.00.

¹⁸⁴ Ron Harper, questionnaire.

¹⁸⁵ Ivor Allsop, quoted in Peter Dunn, "The dance that is strictly for the blades", *The Independent*, 18th January 1989, p. 13.

¹⁸⁶ Barrand (1987), pp. 13 & 17. That Zen is experienced by other dancers in the set, and perceived by spectators, is supported by my research (see, for example, CMS-43/B-30.30, CMS-55/B-02.45 and CMS-82/B-07.25). How it is communicated between dancers and the audience is considerably more difficult to evaluate. Smyth suggests that kinesthesia may be involved, but that the process by which kinesthetic imagery is communicated is not yet understood. See Mary M. Smyth, "Kinesthetic Communication in Dance", *Dance Research Journal*, 16:2 (1984), 19-22.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

wide range of endeavours, from team sports players to jazz musicians."¹⁸⁸

With reference to morris dancing, this phenomenon has been described by other scholars.¹⁸⁹ In his study of morris dancers in Norfolk in the 1980s, John Seaman refers to some dancers experiencing a "natural high" and states that "many reported experiencing an almost hypnotic state of mind while dancing."¹⁹⁰ In *Mysterious Derbyshire*, Rickman and Nown suggest morris dancing as a way of "experiencing certain energies normally unsensed."¹⁹¹ Although their referencing is inadequate, Rickman and Nown indicate that they have undertaken some fieldwork with contemporary morris dancers:

A number of dancers have talked to us about a strange "timeless" state entered after a particularly complex and strenuous dance in which all their senses and emotions were engaged. Suddenly, after a period of intense concentration, the dance seems to do itself, the dancer is no longer responsible for his movements and, instead of his previous aching tiredness, he feels a growing exhilaration and a one-ness with his surroundings.¹⁹²

The use of the Taoist words "timeless" and "one-ness" ties in with Barrand's observations and experiences and further supports the adoption of the term "Zen" to describe this phenomenon.

Although Barrand aptly identifies the Zen experience, he does not directly address the question of what factors contribute to the experience, with the exception of stating that it occurs "when the dancers, the musicians and the spectators...trust their intuitions and dance, play or enjoy the moment."¹⁹³ On the

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 17. Social anthropologist John Blacking hints at having experienced this phenomenon when playing in a chamber music ensemble: "We have felt a qualitative change and ... quite independently, different musicians often agree on 'magic moments' in a piece of music." See John Blacking, *A Commonsense View of all Music: Reflections on Percy Grainger's Contribution to Ethnomusicology and Music Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 34. I wish to thank Dr Julia Bishop for bringing this work to my attention.

¹⁸⁹ See John Seaman, "A Study of Contemporary Morris Dancers in Norfolk: Their Social Makeup and Their Motivation for Becoming and Remaining Morris Dancers" (unpublished MPhil thesis, University of Sheffield, 1987), and Philip Rickman and Graham Nown, *Mysterious Derbyshire* (Clapham, Lancashire: Dalesman Books, 1977). I wish to thank Dr. Gillian Bennett for bringing the latter work to my attention. At an international folk dance meeting in 1935, this phenomenon was mentioned by Dr. Scaife of Mataria, Egypt: "When we dance, we experience more than what is described, colloquially, as 'pleasure.' This 'something more' is the magical content of the dance." See discussion following "The Folk Dance Revival in England", *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 2 (1935), p. 77.

¹⁹⁰ Seaman, p. 92.

¹⁹¹ Rickman and Nown, p. 43.

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁹³ Barrand (1987), p. 17.

basis of my research, three interactive factors emerge as significant to achieving the Zen experience: the dance, the dancers, and the performance environment and occasion.

1. The Dance: The "high" or euphoria" associated with regular rhythmic activity, such as aerobics or running, is widely acknowledged¹⁹⁴ and supports the research of Judith Lynne Hanna and other anthropologists into altered states of consciousness brought on by the rhythmic, repetitive movement of dancing.¹⁹⁵ Hanna has identified the physiological factors involved in effecting such altered states: changes in the level of adrenalin and other chemicals in the body and "the release of endorphins thought to produce analgesia and euphoria."¹⁹⁶ Although such physiological facts may be integral to the occurrence of altered states of consciousness, they cannot operate in isolation; if that were the case, then the Zen experience would occur each time the dance was performed. Rather, dance movement can be seen to generate the pre-requisite physiological conditions.

Of particular relevance to longsword dancing is the fact that an altered state of consciousness, "which may clear the mind of distractions and bring about insight into one's mind and community",¹⁹⁷ is reached through "vertiginous, spinning and turning, movements."¹⁹⁸ However, although more rapidly achieved in vigorous dance forms -- the basic jog-trot step used by Handsworth and Barnsley in their dances being particularly conducive -- these physiological changes can clearly be brought on by the less energetic, but equally repetitive, circling movements of the Grenoside dance. It is not surprising, though, that the Zen experience is less frequently reported by the Grenoside Sword Dancers.

2. The Dancers: The Zen experience occurs in groups of reasonably experienced dancers. They must be "dance-fit" and have reached a level of proficiency to enable them to perform the dance without having

¹⁹⁴ See, for example, Bob Glover and Jack Shepherd, *The Runner's Handbook* (London: Penguin, 1988), pp. 347-357.

¹⁹⁵ See Judith Lynne Hanna, *The Performer-Audience Connection: Emotion to Metaphor in Dance and Society* (Austin & London: University of Texas Press, 1983), Judith Lynne Hanna, *Dance and Stress: Resistance, Reduction and Euphoria* (New York: AMS Press, 1988), Gail Skinner Lorian, "Transformation of Energy and Consciousness through Dance" (unpublished masters thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1984), and Allegra Fuller Snyder, "The Dance Symbol", *Dance Research Annual*, 6 (1972), 213-224.

¹⁹⁶ Hanna (1988), p. 12.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

to fully concentrate. Gerry Bates (Grenoside) comments that "you can feel it when there's a good strong team together, and they don't have to think about what they're doing too much."¹⁹⁹ Clive Turner explains that "the men have got to be dancing together for a fair period of time; it's only when you've got absolute confidence in the people each side of you".²⁰⁰ Experienced dancers are also generally more able to control or overcome nerves and self-consciousness to enjoy the activity of public performance.

Psycho-social factors, such as the state of interpersonal relationships, may also affect the occurrence of the Zen experience. After their Boxing Day performance at Handsworth in 1986, only three months after the Annual General Meeting at which the changes in leadership were effected, several members of the Handsworth team expressed dissatisfaction with what is generally held to be the special occasion of the year.²⁰¹ One man explained: "I didn't enjoy it, and I don't know why. There was just some, some magic not there... there was something that just didn't feel right about the dance" and suggested that the team was still adjusting to the leadership changes.²⁰² Although not conclusive, this suggests that psychological and interpersonal factors may be particularly relevant and warrant further investigation.

3. The Performance Environment and Occasion: Barrand has identified certain aspects of the physical environment which influence the performance of the dance: the dance area, the climate and clothing.²⁰³ Although each of these environmental factors need not be satisfied to its optimum level, less than adequate dance area (e.g. a cramped space or a slippery floor), climatic conditions (e.g. rain or cold) or clothing (e.g. ill-fitting uniforms or footwear) may cause enough of a distraction for the dancers to be unable to lose themselves in the moment.

The performance occasion must also be considered. The Zen experience seems to occur more frequently after several performances by the same set in a short period of time (within hours), as required

¹⁹⁹ CMS-43/B-30.30.

²⁰⁰ CMS-50/A-25.00.

²⁰¹ CA3-201-203.

²⁰² CMS-72/A-07.50.

²⁰³ Barrand (1986), pp. 114-117.

on tours, or by a stable set which dances together regularly.²⁰⁴ The perceived "importance" or "meaning" of the occasion also appears to be relevant. As mentioned above, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers consider Boxing Day to be the most important performance of the year and one on which they especially expect to feel something special; these sentiments are echoed by the Grenoside Sword Dancers of their Boxing Day performance and Barnsley Longsword of their performance at Cawthorne on the Sunday-after-Christmas.²⁰⁵ One Grenoside dancer captured the sentiment: "It always feels special dancing on that little bit of ground outside the Old Harrow there on Boxing Day. It sort of... lifts you and makes you dance that bit better."²⁰⁶ On these occasions, then, the dancers embrace an attitude of receptiveness which may be more conducive to experiencing Zen.

That the Zen experience occurs is indisputable, and the question of how it occurs has been addressed, revealing that the nature of the dance, the experience and psycho-social state of the dancers, and the performance environment and occasion are significant factors. There are likely to be other personal and circumstantial factors which only additional research will identify. Returning to the dancers' descriptions of the Zen experience presented at the beginning of this section, what emerges from their recollections is the elusive nature of the phenomenon ("sometimes", "occasionally") and their strong desire to experience it ("I never wanted it to stop"). Its appeal lies not only in the "magical" sensation it evokes, but in the fact that it is experienced and communicated through the group; its significance stems from the ultimate satisfaction of the physical, creative, social and psychological needs of both the individual and the team.

7.8 Summary

This chapter has considered the dance as a product of team dynamics. The structure and operating procedures of each team have been presented and have been shown to constitute the system within which

²⁰⁴ CA2-061, CA2-249, CA4-063 & 064, CA4-108, CMS-50/A-25.00, CMS-55/B-02.45, CMS-72/A-08.20, CMS-82/B-07.00, Barrand (1987), p. 17.

²⁰⁵ For Grenoside, see CMS-20/A-27.00, CMS-48/B-21.20, CMS-58/B-09.48, CMS-60/B-32.00, CMS-65/B-27.00, CMS-68/A-34.30 and CMS-83/A-04.40. For Barnsley, see CMS-37/A-28.00, CMS-47/B-16.30, CMS-50/A-14.05, CMS-57/B-06.03 and CMS-62/B-08.05.

²⁰⁶ CMS-55/B-01.00.

the dance is produced. Certain internal and external factors emerge as significant in the process of producing the dance and determining its performance, and a brief case study illustrated the dynamic way in which these factors can interrelate and operate to both cause and resolve conflict. Finally, the Zen experience, an altered state of consciousness which occurs in the course of performing the dance, was described and identified as a significant, if occasional, phenomenon which works to satisfy the needs of both the individual and the team.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

8.1 Summary and Implications

This study is the result of an historical and anthropological investigation of the three longsword dance teams of South Yorkshire: the Grenoside Sword Dancers, the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers and Barnsley Longsword. Having previously received no serious academic attention, this study represents the first interdisciplinary exploration of the tradition of longsword dancing in the United Kingdom.

In Chapter Two, the original and revised research aims were discussed, along with the methods employed in the acquisition, and subsequent analysis, of data collected during twenty-eight months of intensive fieldwork. The emergent themes were integrated into an interactive model (Figure 2.05) which provided the conceptual framework for addressing continuity and change in the dance, the dancers and their communities.

The history and development of academic and popular interest in traditional dance was discussed in Chapter Three. In particular, attention was drawn to the influence of cultural survivals theory on the attitudes and activities of individuals involved in the folk dance revival of the early twentieth century and the formation of the English Folk Dance Society.

Chapter Four presented detailed descriptions of the costume, style and structure of each of the longsword dances under investigation and, through the analysis of visual and written records (substantiated by personal recall), traced the changes which have occurred.

The dancers, their communities and the performance of the dance from the 1880s until the end of World War Two formed the focus of Chapter Five. During this period the dancers were working class labourers related to each other through kinship, occupational and residential ties. Until the 1920s the dances were performed annually at Christmas time in the village streets and at the houses of the gentry and the well-to-do of the district, as well as at other times of the year at various village events. The dance

functioned as entertainment for the participants and the spectators, but also provided the dancers with a mechanism for economic gain. From the 1920s, both the Grenoside and Handsworth teams began to access new and regular performance opportunities as a result of the national folk dance revival in general and the role of the English Folk Dance Society in particular. This period was distinguished by a change in the attitudes and activities of the sword dancers and by the emergence of the dancers' awareness of themselves as tradition-bearers.

Continuing along the lines of the previous chapter, Chapter Six addressed the dancers, their communities and the performance of the dance from the mid-1940s up to the present. The dancers were presented in terms of who they are and how and why they came to join the teams, revealing a social transformation in participants from entirely working class in the 1940s to over 80% middle class by 1988. This shift resulted from a change in the social context in which the dance teams exist, from that of the local village community to a "community of interest", and from the development of the dance as the *raison d'être* of the social group. Of particular significance is the fact that Barnsley Longsword emerged from a community of interest not unlike (nor unrelated to) that which serves as the network through which Grenoside and Handsworth acquire members.

Finally, Chapter Seven explored the dance as a product of team dynamics. Factors affecting the production of the dance were considered and were shown to be relevant to the explanation of change in the dances. The role of conflict as an integral dynamic in the social group and in highlighting issues of particular importance was demonstrated, and the Zen experience, an altered state of consciousness achieved through performance, was shown to exist and to contribute to the satisfaction and integration of personal and group needs.

Throughout this study the concepts of continuity, conflict and change have been addressed. Continuity and change, as fundamental aspects of all traditions, have been central to the presentation of the dance, the dancers and their communities. Conflict has been highlighted in an attempt to overcome the neglect of this dynamic factor in considering the process of tradition; in retrospect, the primary reason for this neglect would appear to be the difficulties involved in identifying and handling conflict in the fieldwork situation and in utilising and presenting such data. Conflict has been shown to stem from and to precipitate change, to effect the redefinition of roles and procedures, and to signal issues of particular

significance to the members of the social group; indeed, in the case of both the Grenoside Sword Dancers in 1946 and of the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers in 1986, conflict related not only to the immediate question of control of the dance but ultimately to the maintenance of the team and the perpetuation of the tradition. Furthermore, by drawing attention to the existence of variant or opposing viewpoints, conflict has served to signify the importance of the individual in effecting continuity and change in the dance and its performance.

In addition to highlighting conflict, this study has indicated the role of the concept of tradition in the process of tradition. The word "tradition" has emerged as a pervasive and powerful term for the members of each team. It is used to refer to longsword dancing as a genre as well as to describe particular dances, dance teams and performance occasions. "Tradition" is cited as a motivation for participating in longsword dancing, it is invoked to legitimise personal viewpoints and group activities, and it functions to identify, bond and privilege certain groups. Members of each of the longsword dance teams of South Yorkshire are conscious of themselves as tradition-bearers, and concepts of tradition have been shown to affect the production and performance of the dance. It is very likely that the participants' conceptions of tradition, as well as the role of conflict, are significant factors in the production and performance of other forms of traditional dance and may have implications for the study of other contemporary customs in the United Kingdom.

8.2 Future Research

Perhaps of greater importance than this thesis to the study of traditional dance is the vast collection of material on the history, development and current practice of longsword dancing which now exists as a result of the research conducted. In some respects, three years was an excessive length of time to spend "in the field" for the purposes of this study, and led to difficulties in ascertaining a focal point for analysis and in selecting material for inclusion. With hindsight, a detailed study of one team, within the context of a more superficial study of the other teams, would have proved to be sufficient. From a purely personal perspective, the depth of fieldwork resulted in friendships which, while entailing rewards far beyond the

clinical parameters of research, led to complications both in disengaging from fieldwork and in addressing the use of some of the more sensitive data.

Be that as it may, on the basis of the research already conducted, a number of directions for future work may be recommended.

8.2.1 The Zen experience

Having identified this phenomenon as occurring amongst the three South Yorkshire longsword dance teams, more in-depth research is required in order to more fully understand the multiplicity of factors -- physical, psychological, interpersonal, environmental -- involved in the manifestation of the Zen experience. A detailed examination of the actual contexts of occurrence is required, as well as immediate post-experience interviewing.

8.2.2 The learning process

Although this study presented the teaching methods employed by the three teams, the learning process was not addressed in detail. However, relevant information was obtained through fieldwork in the practice environment which could serve as the foundation for future investigation. Further participant observation of the process of incorporating new members would be useful, attending to such factors as the means of conveying and perceiving information (visual, verbal, kinesthetic) and the skill and dance experience of the individual.

8.2.4 Comparative choreography

In 1989 two teams, other than the Grenoside Sword Dancers, were known to perform the Grenoside dance, one team, other than the Handsworth Traditional Sword Dancers, claimed to perform the Handsworth dance, and although only Barnsley Longsword was known to dance Haxby, nine other teams reported that they performed the Kirkby Malzeard dance.¹ There is clearly scope for a comparative study of the style

¹ In 1989 Trevor Stone conducted a further survey of teams which dance longsword. He has presented the findings from four surveys, including our collaborative effort in 1986, in "Survey of Longsword Dance Teams 1979 to 1989", *Rattle Up My Boys*, 3:4 (Spring/Summer 1992), pp. 1-4.

and structure of particular dances as performed by different groups.²

8.2.3 Extension to other areas

This study provides the foundation for extending the research of longsword dancing to other areas of England. The database of historical references and the 1986 survey would together be useful in identifying areas with a potential for employing both historical and anthropological methodologies (e.g. Cleveland). Comparative work with contemporary European longsword dance traditions may now also be conducted.

² An interesting comment was made by Keele Rapper in the 1986 survey; they described the longsword dance they performed as a "variant on Barnsley".

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