

# **THE HISTORIES OF THE MORRIS IN BRITAIN**

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Edited by Michael Heaney

**Consequences of Bringing North-west  
Morris to South-east England:  
The Chanctonbury Ring Effect**  
Sean Goddard and Ed Bassford

pp. 215-249



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Sean Goddard and Ed Bassford†<sup>1</sup>

# **Consequences of Bringing North-west Morris to South-east England: The Chanctonbury Ring Effect**

## **Purpose of this paper**

In 1975 Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men learned and started dancing the North-west morris dance style on the South coast of England. We will investigate the reasons why the side based on the South Downs in Sussex decided to learn this style of dance that at that time was relatively unknown outside of the North-west of England, and had its origins in the industrial North. We will also look at how the dance helped to define and develop the side, which continued to dance the more well-known Cotswold style.

## **Morris Dancing in Sussex**

There are no surviving set Morris dances from Sussex such as those that survive in the Cotswolds, North East and North West areas of England. However, there are remnants of similar dances including 'Over the Sticks' which is described by Mary Neal,<sup>2</sup> and other solo dances including step and broom dances that have been described by Scan Tester and others.

All morris-dance sides within the county are the product of the folk-dance revival. Formed in 1953, the Chichester-based Martlet Morris and Sword Dance Club has its origins in the Arundel Sword Dance Club which met in West Sussex during the 1930s,<sup>3</sup> while Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men was formed by members of the Shoreham Country Dance Club in 1953.<sup>4</sup> In Sussex today there are a number of

<sup>1</sup> Ed Bassford died on 28 July 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Neal, *The Espérance Morris Book*, Part 2 (London: Curwen, 1911), pp. 11-12, 16.

<sup>3</sup> Martlet Sword and Morris Men, *About Martlet Sword and Morris Men* <<http://www.martletmorrismen.org.uk/about.html>> [accessed 12 October 2016], para. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men, *Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men: A History* (Woodmancote: Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men, 1978), p. 5.

morris-dance sides representing all forms; many will trace their membership and origin back to one of these two sides.

## **Who are the Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men?**

The Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men are a men's morris side from Sussex. It owes its origins to the post-World War II folk-dance revival supported by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS). The Shoreham Country Dance Club was formed by Paul Plumb in 1949 and by 1951 it had developed into a dynamic club and began to branch out to discover other types of English folk dance. In June 1952 (Whitsun) a number of men made the trip up to Bampton to see the morris, and soon after the club developed its Morris Group. Feeling constrained by being part of a Country Dance Club, in September 1953, the Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men were formed. The original members were all members of the Shoreham Country Dance Club Morris Group, with first Squire and Captain being Geoff Biggs and the Bagman Ian Scott-Walker. On their first day touring in May 1954, a photograph was taken at Fulking, which subsequently appeared in *The Times* the following Monday.<sup>5</sup> What a start!

By invitation, the first non-Shoreham-club members joined for the practice season 1954/55. Dilution continued and by the early 1960s almost all the original members had ceased to be active (Geoff Biggs and Paul Morris both died tragically early, while others such as Ian Scott-Walker had moved away) and its members now came from many different backgrounds.

In 1967, Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men started a morris side at the University of Sussex, in response to a Morris Ring directive to try and get young people involved in morris dancing. Ed Bassford was an original University member while Sean Goddard joined later, in 1980. The side operated in parallel with Chanctonbury Ring, dancing at the same stands with many men (including Ed Bassford) moving across to join Chanctonbury Ring as they completed their studies. In

<sup>5</sup> *Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men*, p. 6; Sean Goddard, 'Following in the Footsteps', *Morris Ring Circular*, 62 (2010), 14-16.



1987 that side changed its name to Brighton Morris Men as fewer members from the University were involved.



Figure 1: Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men, Alfriston 1967 © Sean Goddard.

The connection with the Shoreham Club was not fully severed. In 1953 Paul Plumb had manufactured a May Morning celebration (bringing together a number of celebrations from traditional English festivals) and Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men supported this event from the start to 1982, the event ceasing in 2003 (Figure 1).<sup>6</sup>

Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men regularly dance on Wednesday evenings throughout Sussex and at other high-profile local events such as Alciston Skipping on Good Friday, Lewes Bonfire Celebrations (5 November) and during the Christmas and New Year period on Boxing Day and Apple Howling in January. They have also appeared at festivals and other events further afield, featuring several times on the BBC's 'Noel's Edmond's House Party' including the 1994 'Gotcha' for Barbara Windsor's 'Around Basingstoke' tour and later in 2008 appearing in one of John Lydon's advertisements for Country Life butter.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Shoreham Country Dance Club Scrapbook (1949 ongoing), currently (November 2017) in the possession of John Portlock, Shoreham.

<sup>7</sup> 'John Lydon Butter Advert', *YouTube* <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvR2Qij8wno>> [accessed 8 November 2017].

Chanctonbury Ring's North-west side was formed in 1975, the first men's side performing this type of dance south of a line drawn through Lowestoft, Coventry and Aberystwyth. Currently the Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men have approximately 20 members and supports both a Cotswold and North-west side.

## The North-west Morris

As suggested by the Morris Ring, the North-west Morris has its origins in the nineteenth-century industrial towns of Cheshire and Lancashire and it often accompanied rushcarts, Rose Queen carnivals and wakes weeks.<sup>8</sup> Unlike the Cotswold dance which is formed generally in sets of six or eight dancers, the North-west morris probably developed as a processional dance and can contain a large number of dancers, generally divisible by four.

Although we use the term North-west morris, or clog morris, in this paper, the term is fairly modern. The first use of a similar term is by Joseph Needham in 1936, where he uses the term 'North-western' to describe dances found in Cheshire and Lancashire.<sup>9</sup> Previous researchers, including John Graham, described the dances as coming from the counties of Cheshire and Lancashire whereas Maud Karpeles' describes it as the Lancashire morris dance.<sup>10</sup> Traditional practitioners of this form of dance generally refer to it as morris dancing: North-west or clog morris is a modern term to distinguish it from the Cotswold and other styles. It is suggested both terms should be avoided: we will use them only for convenience.

The exact origin of the North-west style of dance is unknown. A painting of the Lymm rushbearing dated about 1860 clearly shows morris dancing<sup>11</sup> although dancers seem to be waving handkerchiefs

<sup>8</sup> Morris Ring, *North West Morris – Lancashire and Cheshire*, <<http://themorrisring.org/about-morris/north-west-morris-lancashire-and-cheshire>> [accessed 6 October 2016], para 1.

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Needham, 'The Geographical Distribution of English Ceremonial Dance Traditions' *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society* 3.1 (1936), 1-45 (pp. 3, 14-17).

<sup>10</sup> John Graham, *Lancashire and Cheshire Morris Dances* (London: Curwen, 1911); Maud Karpeles, *The Lancashire Morris Dance: Containing a Description of the Royton Morris Dance* (London: Novello, 1930).

<sup>11</sup> Geoff Bibby, 'Morris Dancing in Lymm: Revival of the Old Dance and Development of the New', *The Morris Dancer* 4.2 (2010), 40-54 (p. 42); Lymm Heritage Centre, 'Rushbearing', <<https://www.lymmhc.co.uk/rushbearing>> [accessed 16 November 2017].

which are not generally associated with North-west dancing. Haslett records that newspaper reports of morris dancing in West Lancashire start as early as 1880,<sup>12</sup> while Roy Dommett says:<sup>13</sup>

*Then there is the north western morris, mostly in Lancashire and Cheshire but extending into Yorkshire and the Lake District, once a processional dance and at first associated with the annual taking of rushes on carts to church for floor covering. Festivities which grew from the middle of the 19th century like Rose Festivals and Knutsford May day provide[d] many new performance opportunities. The dance form grew in popularity during the second half of the 19th century. [However] It suffered great losses of dancers during the first World War and was restarted often with teenagers or children.*

The Manchester Morris Men's website lists over 130 distinct dances.<sup>14</sup> This is likely to be a conservative estimate as individual teams regularly compose new ones.

The team from Royton (in Oldham) came under the influence of the EFDSS in the late 1920s, when Maud Karpeles undertook folk-dance research in the area.<sup>15</sup> Higgins suggests that the Royton team was started by Michael and James Coleman in 1891 and based at the Hope and Anchor Inn. The side would dance to Manchester, Blackpool and others places on Saturdays during the summer and in wakes week.<sup>16</sup> Michael Higgins has fully investigated the origin and development of the morris dance in Royton and Oldham and the in-

<sup>12</sup> Johnny Haslett, *Morris Dancers and Rose Queen: An Anthology of Reported Carnivals and Galas in West Lancashire to 1900*. (Leyland: Fairhaven Press 2007), p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Roy Dommett, *What You Didn't Know about the Morris: [Section: Other Forms of the Morris]* <<http://www.opread.force9.co.uk/RoyDommet/Others/Whatno.htm#Form>> [accessed 8 October 2016].

<sup>14</sup> Manchester Morris Men, *Index of Towns in the Archives of the Manchester Morris Men* <<http://www.manchestermorrismen.org.uk/archives/townlist.php>> [accessed 28 December 2016].

<sup>15</sup> Karpeles, *The Lancashire Morris Dance*, p. 9

<sup>16</sup> Michael Higgins. *Interesting Roytonians: James (Jimmy) Coleman 1885-1970* <[http://www.rlhs.co.uk/new\\_page\\_22.htm](http://www.rlhs.co.uk/new_page_22.htm)> [accessed 8 October 2016].

fluences of the Coleman and McDermott brothers, and John Cheetham.<sup>17</sup>

The Royton Men danced at the Manchester Branch of the English Folk Dance Society's (EFDS) Christmas Party in December 1929, and on 4 January 1930 they performed at the EFDS's annual Folk Dance Festival at the Royal Albert Hall, London.<sup>18</sup> The report in *The Times* on 7 January said this about Royton's performance:<sup>19</sup>

*Bampton had a style quite its own, rather suggestive of convivial exuberance, while the neat and exact vigour of the Royton team more clearly showed the ceremonial origin of this type of dance. Their dress rivalled even that of the Basque team for effect.*

During their visit to London, Maud Karpeles reports that the Royton team also danced at the Great Hall of London University and at Friends' House.<sup>20</sup>

Later that year Maud Karpeles published her book *The Lancashire Morris Dance*, which detailed the figures she had collected of the Royton dance in the late 1920s.<sup>21</sup> It is this book and team that influenced North-west sides within the EFDS, later the EFDSS, Morris Ring and many other sides. As Roy Dommett suggests, Maud Karpeles's Royton combined the two elements of polkaed figures and stepping sequences and appeared at the time as a pinnacle of the North-west tradition.<sup>22</sup> Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men consider the Royton dance to be the most difficult and involved dance.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Michael Higgins 'A Properly Conducted Morris Dance': The Role of Jimmy Cheetham before the Great War in Oldham and Royton, Lancashire', *Traditional Dance* 4 (1986), 73-104.

<sup>18</sup> Manchester Morris Men, *Manchester Morris Men: The Early Years* <<http://www.manchestermorrismen.org.uk/history/earlyyears.pdf>> [accessed 7 October 2016], p. 6.

<sup>19</sup> 'Folk Dancing: The All-England Festival', *The Times*, 7 January 1930, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> Karpeles, *The Lancashire Morris Dance*, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Karpeles *The Lancashire Morris Dance*, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Roy Dommett, *The Sources of Our Dances* <<http://www.great-western.org.uk/dommett/sources.pdf>> [accessed 10 December 2016], para 10.

<sup>23</sup> Ed Bassford, interview with Sean Goddard, at The Swan, Falmer. 25 August 2016.

Manchester Morris Men presented the Godley Hill Morris Dance at the Tideswell Ring Meeting in 1937.<sup>24</sup> The first North-west side to perform at a Morris Ring meeting was Manley Morris Men at the Tideswell Meeting in September 1952,<sup>25</sup> while also in 1952 the Manchester Morris Men danced the Godley Hill dance at Cecil Sharp House, London.<sup>26</sup> Manley Morris Men performed at the EFDSS's Albert Hall Festival in 1953 and 1956.<sup>27</sup> It was not until 1969, when the Manchester Morris Men attended the Sidmouth Folk Festival, England's foremost folk festival, that North-west dancing was seen there.<sup>28</sup> Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men were early adopters of this style of dance outside of the North-west and have performed this style of dance since 1975.

Derek Schofield gives an excellent overview of the development of North-west morris at a previous morris-dance conference in 1996.<sup>29</sup>

Unlike Playford, country, Cotswold, long- and rapper-sword styles of dance, which through the endeavours of Cecil Sharp and the EFDSS are known throughout England, the North-west style of dance is less well known. Although relatively well known in the North-west of England, and known to the wider folk world since the 1930s, its performance outside of the North-west up to the 1970s was infrequent. As Theresa Buckland suggests, in the 1970s there was concern in the North-west of England that the North-west style of dance would undergo a similar transformation to that which Cotswold morris underwent earlier in the twentieth century: dances would be per-

<sup>24</sup> Manchester Morris Men, *How the MMM Kit has Evolved, Section 2* <<http://www.manchestermorrismen.org.uk/history/kitchanges.php>> [accessed 29 December 2016].

<sup>25</sup> Morris Ring, *An Index to The Morris Ring's Previous Meetings, Table B* <<http://themorrisring.org/about-mr/history/previous-meetings>> [accessed 7 October 2016].

<sup>26</sup> Manchester Morris Men, *Notable Dates in the History of MMM* <[http://www.manchestermorrismen.org.uk/history/brief\\_history.php](http://www.manchestermorrismen.org.uk/history/brief_history.php)> [accessed 7 October 2016].

<sup>27</sup> During the 1950s, Manley Morris Men performed twice at the EFDSS's yearly Albert Hall Festivals, in 1953 and 1956. In other years, guests included Headington Quarry Morris Dancers, the Britannia Bacup Coconut Dancers, Padstow 'Obby 'Oss and the Helston Furry Dancers: 'Albert Hall. Folk Dance Festival', *The Times*, 10 January 1953; p. 8; 'Albert Hall. Folk Dance Festival', *The Times*, 7 January 1956, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Derek Schofield, *The First week in August: Fifty Years of the Sidmouth Festival* (Matlock: Sidmouth International Festival, 2003), p. 59.

<sup>29</sup> Derek Schofield, 'Which Past? The Influences of Tradition and Revival on the North-west Morris', in *Morris: The Legacy of the Past: Proceedings of a One Day Conference on Morris Dancing, Birmingham, 20th April, 1996*. (London: Morris Ring; Morris Federation; Open Morris, 1996), pp. 94-109.

formed by Morris sides without any connection with its region of origin.<sup>30</sup>

Even 40 years or so later, teams performing this style of dance outside of the North-west are still outnumbered by the Cotswold and Border styles. A morris survey of 594 sides undertaken by Jack Worth in 2014 suggests that 16% of the sides nationwide performed North-west morris as their main dancing style; this compares with 41% Cotswold, 18% Border, 6% Rapper and 4% Longsword (Figure 2).<sup>31</sup>

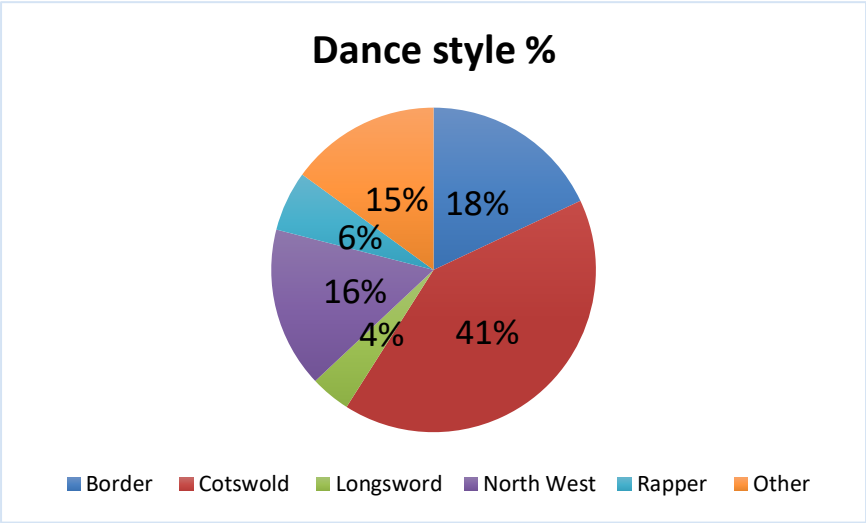


Figure 2: Dance style (from Worth, Morris Census).

There is a modern misconception by some that all North-west morris was danced in clogs. As Chas Marshall shows, 37% of all traditional teams (which could be male or female) performing between 1880 and 1939 wore clogs, while the others wore shoes or other footwear. Most clog-dancing teams were located on the Pennine foothills. However, if men-only teams are considered it rises to 50%.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Theresa Buckland, 'Being Traditional: Authentic Selves and Others in Researching Late-twentieth-century Northwest English Morris Dancing', in *Dancing from Past to Present: Nation, Culture, Identities*, ed. by Theresa Buckland (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), pp. 199-222.

<sup>31</sup> Jack Worth, *Morris Census: Insights on Morris Dancing in the 21st century from the Morris Census* <<http://www.morrisconsensus.uk/p/sides.html>> [accessed 7 October 2017].

<sup>32</sup> Chas Marshall, 'Clog Morris : There's no Such Thing!', *Morris Matters* 11.1 (1982) pp. 19-25 (p. 23).



Pruw Boswell's research suggests that 35% of teams wore clogs between 1890 and 1939. However, if the Horwich area only is sampled (seven sides have footwear description), 57% have clogs, but in a sample of 13 sides in the Preston area she finds a return of 83% in favour of non-clogs (shoes and plimsolls). Boswell further notes that in the Preston area some leaders wore clogs while the dancers wore shoes.<sup>33</sup> When performing, Chanctonbury Ring dance all North-west dances in clogs with irons.

Theresa Buckland further describes changes in costume. Considering the Godley Hill Morris Dancers in the nineteenth century, Theresa Buckland establishes that they are recorded as generally wearing low shoes but in 1901 they are recorded as wearing clogs. Likewise, at the end of the 1870s they wore long black trousers but in 1881 they are recorded as wearing 'old fashioned knee breeches'.<sup>34</sup>

## Morris in the 1970s: A Turning Point

In 1974 the Morris Ring published Lionel Bacon's *Handbook of Morris Dances*.<sup>35</sup> This book concentrated on the Cotswold-style dance, but also a few Border-style dances. The book brought together in a usable form (or at least for captains/foremen of sides) the published versions of dances collected by Cecil Sharp, as well as manuscript notes from Sharp, Janet Blunt, Russell Wortley and Roy Dommett and others. Bacon added personal notes indicating current usage of material by revival clubs. This book was not intended to present 'this is the way to do it', but rather an *aide-memoire*. A long-term effect of the book was that clubs no longer had to rely upon the often difficult to obtain published versions of dances, or to attend Morris Ring workshops (although that was encouraged), but could look at Bacon's book and interpret dances themselves. Dommett suggests that the innovation of clubs using a manuscript or the adaptation of dances dates from 1956 and followed comments by Geoffrey

<sup>33</sup> Pruw Boswell, *Morris Dancing on the Lancashire Plain: The Preston Tradition* (Preston: The Morris Ring, 1981) pp. 19-20; Pruw Boswell, *Morris Dancing on the Lancashire Plain: The Horwich Inquiry* (Preston: The Morris Ring, 1984), pp. 24-40.

<sup>34</sup> Theresa Buckland, 'Hello! "Here we are again!" Godley Hill Morris Dancers: A study in longevity', *Traditional Dance*, 2 (1982), 37-58 (p. 47).

<sup>35</sup> Lionel Bacon, *A Handbook of Morris Dances*. (Henlow: The Morris Ring, 1974).

Metcalf to ensure clubs distinguished themselves from others.<sup>36</sup>

As Roy Dommett records, at the Sidmouth Folk Festival in 1970 workshops on morris dancing were limited to male participants. In 1972 Bill Rutter (Sidmouth's Director) introduced a 'Women's Ritual' session, designed to allow women to take part in a form of morris dance without offending the Morris Ring, the EFDSS and others. Following this women went home and started to form clubs.<sup>37</sup>

Ashley Hutchings was instrumental in producing four tradition-based dance records. Hutchings, previously a founder member of Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span, was well known and respected, not only in the folk-rock world, but in the rock world too. Anything that Hutchings was involved in would be noticed over a wide musical spectrum.

The record *Morris On*, a collection of morris-dance tunes and songs played at danceable speed (but in medley form) on traditional Morris instruments backed by bass and drums, was issued in 1972 and put Cotswold morris music in the modern-sounding world. *Rattlebone and Ploughjack*, issued in 1976, while not quite popular or academic, brought the knowledge of the traditional dances, tunes and songs from the Welsh border and East Anglia (molly dance) to a wider audience, using archive and contemporary material. As Patricia Bater suggests, a consequence of this record was to stimulate the revival in molly and Welsh border dance.<sup>38</sup>

As Tony Forster indicates, the Seven Champions Molly Dancers formed in 1977 'from the treacle mines of Kent' were the first revival Molly side and based their original dances on the collected dances from the Cambridgeshire villages of Comberton and Girton, as well as 'Bacca Pipes' from the Cotswold repertoire. Almost all their dances are now composed.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Roy Dommett, 'The Cotswold Morris in the Twentieth Century', *Traditional Dance*, 1 (1981), 59-92 (pp. 78-80).

<sup>37</sup> Dommett, *The Sources of our Dances*.

<sup>38</sup> Patricia Bater, "'Blackening up': English Folk Traditions and Changing Perceptions about Black People in England' (master's thesis, University of Sheffield, 2013)

<[http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/4181/1/MPhil\\_upload.pdf](http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/4181/1/MPhil_upload.pdf)> [accessed 29 July 2017], (p. 177).

<sup>39</sup> Tony Forster, *Molly Dancing into the Twenty-first Century*. (London: The Morris Federation, 2002) pp. 15-17.



Meanwhile, John Kirkpatrick had formed the Shropshire Bedlams and Martha Rhoden's Tuppenny Dish in 1975, and subsequently developed this form of neglected Morris dance style.<sup>40</sup> In 1979, they performed at the first Dancing England event at Derby representing Border Dance, and as Derek Schofield suggests they were flamboyant.<sup>41</sup>

Ashley Hutchings's other two records influenced traditional dance in other directions. *The Complete Dancing Master*, issued in 1973, reviewed English traditional dance music interspersed with readings, while *Kickin' up the Sawdust* is a collection of barn-dance/ceilidh tunes played by a mixture of traditional and revival musicians, issued in 1977.

In 1970, Chanctonbury Ring was one of three morris sides in Sussex. The Martlet Men covered the Western part of the county and Chanctonbury Ring the Eastern part. The other side was the University of Sussex Morris Men, started by Chanctonbury Ring in 1967. The University side were in reality a Chanctonbury Ring sub-side: they danced a similar repertoire and were taught by the same teachers. In 1972 Harry Mousdell left Chanctonbury Ring and formed a new side in Horsham, the Broadwood Morris Men, while in the East Grinstead area at the same time, the Ashdown Forest Morris Men were formed.<sup>42</sup> These two new sides were located firmly in Chanctonbury Ring's catchment area.

<sup>40</sup> John Kirkpatrick, *The Shropshire Bedlams* <[http://www.johnkirkpatrick.co.uk/mo\\_ShropshireBedlams.asp](http://www.johnkirkpatrick.co.uk/mo_ShropshireBedlams.asp)> [accessed 29 September 2017].

<sup>41</sup> Derek Schofield, 'Dancing England', *English Dance and Song* 43.2 (1981), 12-13.

<sup>42</sup> Broadwood Morris Men. *Horsham's Favourite Morris Side since 1972!* <<http://www.broadwoodmorris.info>> [accessed 17 January 2017]; Ashdown Forest Morris Men, *Welcome to the Ashdown Forest Morris Men's Home Page* <<http://www.afmm.org.uk>> [accessed 17 January 2017].

## North-west Morris at Chanctonbury Ring, 1950s



Figure 3: Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men dancing Royton, 1956. Front to back Geoff Biggs, Bill Horton, John Portlock and Mike Nash. © Sean Goddard.

A North-west morris dance (Royton) was danced by Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men on 6 May 1956 at the Shoreham Country Dance Club annual May Dance held at St. Mary's Hall, Shoreham,<sup>43</sup> then at a limited number of summer performances later that year (Figure 3). The Royton dance was taught by Geoff Biggs, with music supplied by Jim Hoare on the fiddle. As John Portlock, who took part in this dance, suggests, this was part of Chanctonbury Ring's drive to experiment with other English dances beyond the normal Cotswold repertoire (later Chanctonbury Ring tried longsword (Grenoside) and rapper), but the dance was dropped the following year. Portlock confirms that North-west was tried because some members of the side had seen it performed at the EFDSS's annual Royal Albert Hall Festival in January that year by the Manley Morris Men, and also by the availability of Maud Karpeles's book. John Portlock confirms the dance was performed in standard Chanctonbury Ring

<sup>43</sup> Shoreham Folk Dance Club Scrapbook, 1956, in the possession of John Portlock.

kit without baldrics, bells and hats, but the shoes had bells tied to them with silver ribbons.<sup>44</sup>

## North-west Morris at Chanctonbury Ring, 1970s: Getting Started

On 11-13 April 1975, four members of the Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men (Ed Bassford, Dave Hood, Eric Moquet and Ed Lyons, now collectively known as the 'Persnore Four') attended a weekend North-west morris dance workshop at Persnore, Worcestershire,<sup>45</sup> organized by the Morris Ring and led by Derek Froome from the Manchester Morris Men with Roy Dommett as musician (piano-accordion). Ed Bassford recalls:<sup>46</sup>

*The dances learnt were Milnrow, Colne and Ashton and using tunes such as Brighton Camp, Cock o' the North and Rushcart Lads. We took copious notes and felt that with a bit of effort we could to teach these dances to other members of the side quickly and perhaps dance them out later that summer.*

As Dave Hood describes, he was a new member of the side at that time, having joined in the autumn of 1973. He shared a flat with Ed Lyons and assumes that's how he became a member of the 'Persnore Four':<sup>47</sup>

*I was totally enjoying Cotswold dancing at the time and I suppose that North West clog just seemed a great idea - something new, different and exciting to try. I hadn't even seen a North West side in action.*

Mike Stevens, who joined the side as an apprentice in 1974, suggests:<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> 'Albert Hall: Folk Dance Festival', *The Times*, 7 January 1956, p. 8; details about the Shoreham performances are from John Portlock, interview with Sean Goddard, 7 October 2016.

<sup>45</sup> Dave Hood, diary entry, 11-13 April 1975. Details included in email to Sean Goddard, 5 September 2016.

<sup>46</sup> Ed Bassford interview.

<sup>47</sup> Dave Hood, email to Sean Goddard, 5 September 2016.

<sup>48</sup> Mike Stevens, email to Sean Goddard. 18 August 2016.

*One of the reasons that North West was considered as an addition to the side was that there was dissatisfaction with the standard and a perceived lack of ambition in the Cotswold teaching. Paul Setford was Captain at the time. During my novice year there were 12 of us new men – taken in hand by Eddie Upton. Possibly 6 or 8 of us were considered capable enough to be elected members at the end of our first season [1975]. The desire for North West was for a dance style in which precision, energy and spectacle could be achieved.*

The 1974 membership list comprised thirty-five active members, and the Chanctonbury Ring minute book records that eleven men were elected to full membership of the side in 1975. In the years between 1971 and 1976, thirty-six men were elected, but this does not take into account those men who only attended for a short time or who did not meet the criteria for election to full membership.<sup>49</sup> With the addition of the eleven elected men, the 1975/76 practice season could have had six Cotswold sides up for practice or performance, allowing for absences, musicians and watchers. During the 1970s, Chanctonbury Ring became a large side.

The North-west side first danced out on Monday 25 August (Bank Holiday Monday) at the Green Man, Horsted Keynes as part of a Chanctonbury Ring day tour (Figure 4). Three dances were performed, the same dances that had been learned earlier in the year. As can be seen in the photograph, the costume was simple in form, but significantly different from the Cotswold side. At this time, the men who danced North-west were also members of the Cotswold side and as the two styles were sometimes performed during the same show, a ‘quick change’ was often necessary. Hats off, baldrics to sash, white to red socks, and shoes for clogs. There were no embellishments such as beads or hats generally associated with other North West sides.

<sup>49</sup> Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men, AGM Minute Book, 1971-76.



Figure 4: Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men at The Green Man, Horsted Keynes, 1975. ©Dave Hood.

In 1978, the North-west side processed for the first time at the Lewes Bonfire Celebrations as guests of the Borough Bonfire Society.<sup>50</sup> This is an annual event on 5 November when the town of Lewes is closed to traffic while upwards of 50,000 spectators watch the various Bonfire Societies and their guests parade through Lewes. Although the celebrations celebrate the 17 Protestant martyrs who were burnt at the stake in Lewes between 1555 and 1557 and the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, Bonfire Societies traditionally parade as Zulus, Vikings and Smugglers and regularly introduce other styles including the St Trinian's Girls complete with battered hockey sticks in 1979,<sup>51</sup> and more recently Samba Bands. From personal experience the authors suggest that parading through Lewes on 5 November is exhilarating and a nightmare: having bangers and crow

<sup>50</sup> Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men, *A History*, p. 14.

<sup>51</sup> Brian Pugh, *Bonfire Night in Lewes*, (London: MX Publishing, 2011), pp. 126, 160. St. Trinian's Girls were introduced in 1979: 'Burning Spirit is Still Alive', *Evening Argus*, 6 November 1979, p. 3.

scarers thrown at you, trying to navigate around the manhole covers with irons on in the dark, the smoke and noise!



Figure 5: Chanctonbury Ring Morris men, Lewes, 2013. ©Clive Funnell.

Although well accepted at Lewes, dancing the morris at Lewes Bonfire caused controversy. As Ed Bassford and Mike Stevens explained, there was debate between the various Bonfire Societies that the inclusion of morris dancers would bring an undesirable element of carnival into the proceedings.<sup>52</sup> An article in the *Sussex Express* on 10 November 1978 says ‘The Borough Bonfire Society introduced the controversial Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men’, and included a photograph of the team processing.<sup>53</sup> No mention was made of Chanctonbury Ring’s appearance in 1979 or 1980, so whatever the controversy was, it had disappeared! The side has appeared regularly ever since (Figure 5).

<sup>52</sup> Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men, *A History*, p, 14’ and Mike Stevens, email to Sean Goddard, 15 August 2016.

<sup>53</sup> ‘White Rabbit Leads in a Record Crowd’, *Sussex Express*, 10 November 1978, pp. 17, 40. I can find no additional reports of the controversy in the Lewes-based *Sussex Express* or the Brighton-based *Evening Argus* in October or November 1978.



In December 1979, to celebrate the end of the International Year of the Child, the Bonfire Societies were asked to parade from Horse Guards Parade in London along The Mall and through the gates of Buckingham Palace in torchlight procession, where the Queen listened to the carols from the balcony of the Palace. Chanctonbury Ring were there as guests of Borough Bonfire Society who led the procession. As Mike Stevens records, after the procession, Chanctonbury Ring formed up at Victoria's statue and then processed all the way back again to Victoria Station, on our own, but to some popular appreciation.<sup>54</sup> During the afternoon, the side had danced outside Westminster Abbey.<sup>55</sup>

In 1980 the side was invited to dance at the Whitby Folk Festival, and in 1982 it danced at the Sidmouth International Folklore Festival. Cathy Lesurf was the Arena Producer; while Eddie Upton, who was also a member of Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men, was the Dance Director (booking bands and callers) and also a member of the Albion Dance Band said:<sup>56</sup>

*My memory is that I started taking a back seat from Chanctonbury about the same time as the North West team was starting. The two things are not connected as I was stepping back because of increasing commitments to Etchingham Steam Band and, more significantly, Albion Dance Band. I'm hopeless on dates I'm afraid, but The Albion Dance Band held a big day at the Riverside Studios in London and each member of the band invited another artist to take part in the day – my invitation was to the North West team and they did it and did very well. I also invited the North West team to dance on the Arena at Sidmouth – another success. I didn't invite the Cotswold side to either event because I didn't think they were good enough!*

<sup>54</sup> Brian Pugh, p. 156 and Mike Stevens email to Sean Goddard, 16 August 2017.

<sup>55</sup> Ed Bassford, interview.

<sup>56</sup> Eddie Upton, email to Sean Goddard. 30 August 2016.

## Practices, Teaching and Standards

When the North West side started, they practised on Tuesdays in the Red Cross Centre in Brighton. The Cotswold side practised on Wednesdays in Shoreham so men were able to take part in both styles.

As recorded by Dave Hood in his diary for Tuesday 22 April 1975, ‘Clog practice’ practices started directly after the Pershore workshop, and on subsequent Tuesdays.<sup>57</sup> Practices were held at the Red Cross Centre (training room) in Montpelier Road, Brighton: Hood’s mother was president of the local Red Cross so that was helpful. As Dave Hood further recalls:<sup>58</sup>

*Although a good location for us, the Red Cross building was in between residential houses and the neighbours used to get really pissed off with the noise of the clogs - quite rightly so if you think about it! At one point they must have complained to the local authorities as my diary entry for 27th April 1976 states 'Clog practice - health inspector'.*

Dave Williams joined Chanctonbury Ring in the autumn of 1975 while part of the team that built the Lewes bypass. Dave had previously been a member of the Winchester Morris Men and when the by-pass had been completed in 1980 he returned to live in Hampshire and re-joined them; he also danced with King John’s Morris Men based in Southampton. Dave Williams comments:<sup>59</sup>

*My first real experience of North West was at a Ring Meeting, I think in Liverpool, which I attended with Winchester. At the massed display on the Saturday evening after a tour with only other Cotswold sides, a side I had not heard of before was introduced over the PA. They were not in position to start but then the drums started in the distance followed by the Concertina Band which was the music for the Manley Morris who started dancing and processed on to the dance area. Before*

<sup>57</sup> Dave Hood, email 5 September 2016.

<sup>58</sup> Dave Hood, email 5 September 2016.

<sup>59</sup> Dave Williams, email to Sean Goddard, 16 October 2016.



*the side had even entered the arena I was sold on North West which I considered to be one of the best things I had seen or heard relating to Morris Dancing. I was very pleased to hear that the side was dancing North West as well as Cotswold as by this time I was keen to get involved in North West after my early experience referred to above.*

*I was not present at the start of the Chanctonbury's North West side but practices were on a separate day to the normal Wednesday night practices, I think on a Sunday, and this was because there were some in the side who did not wish to dance North West. It was almost considered as a separate thing to the main activities of the side. For most of my time at Chanctonbury this was the way things were done with some men not getting involved with the North West side but I did not consider this to be fractious but the choice of some men.*

*I first danced out North West with the side at a EFDSS Dance again at Hove Town Hall just before Christmas 1975 after a couple of practices.*

This arrangement lasted until 1980, when the Red Cross Centre became unavailable and the practice evenings were then shared with the Cotswold side: a ratio of 1:3 in favour of Cotswold on Wednesdays, with the addition of some Sunday practices. As Paul Setford (Cotswold Captain) expressed at the 1982 AGM and recorded in the minutes:<sup>60</sup>

*One Wednesday per month to be given over to practicing North West Morris. This would introduce some new men to the clog whilst also helping to reunite two factions. Those wishing to dance out would still have to attend special Sunday practices as well. Some Cotswold practices could continue in the corridor. 3rd Nov would be first such practice as it precedes Lewes Bonfire on the 5th.*

It would appear from Setford's comments that the side had been drifting apart: had the sides ever been united? At the 1979 recon-

<sup>60</sup> Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men Minute Book, 1982, AGM.

vened AGM there had been discussions about the sides splitting, while Dave Hood had raised questions that North-west novices and members need not be involved with the Cotswold side.<sup>61</sup>

Membership of the North-west side and its relationship with the Cotswold (and other Morris Ring sides) is an ongoing issue (see Membership section below).

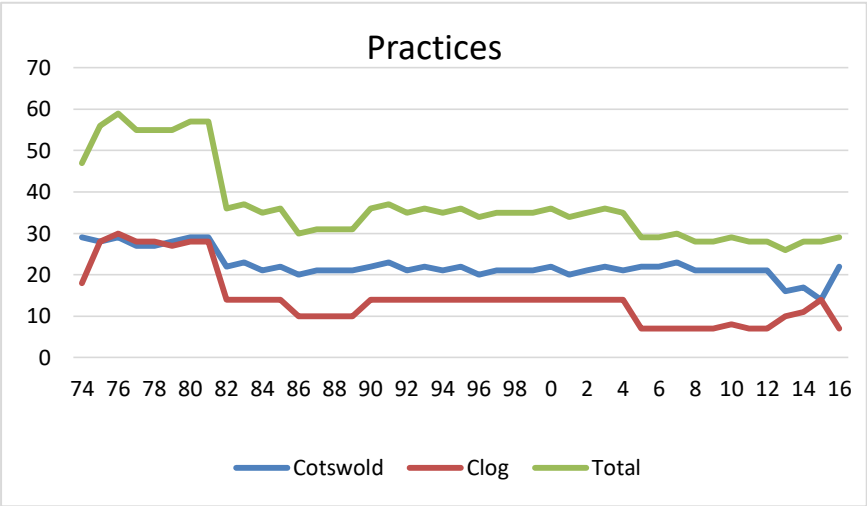


Figure 6: Number of practices each year, 1975-2016.

Between 1990 and 2004, the practice ratio was 2:3 in favour of Cotswold. North-west practices took place on the first Wednesday and Sunday of the month during the practice season, while Cotswold had all the remaining Wednesdays. This worked reasonably well, although Sunday practices were not always well attended and were finally dropped in 2004. The number of dances performed, although never very large in number, fell to five in 2012. Between 2012 and 2015 the ratio of North-west to Cotswold practices increased to 1:3 in 2012, 1:2 in 2013 and 2014 and finally to 1:1 in 2015 (Figure 6).<sup>62</sup>

The number of dances performed remained low at five, and at the 2016 AGM the side decided that the standard of Cotswold dancing

<sup>61</sup> Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men Minute Book, 1979, AGM.

<sup>62</sup> Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men Minute Books, 1990-2015, AGM.

had reduced significantly that the ratio would be increased in favour for Cotswold to 1:4.<sup>63</sup>

However, the reason for the decline in the Cotswold standard of dance in part can be placed on the shoulders of the Cotswold Captain (Sean Goddard), as he has for some years followed a policy of inclusion in the hope of retaining new members, with dancing standards taking a secondary role.<sup>64</sup>

Until the untimely death of Ed Lyons in 2016, the North-west side has benefited from having only three Captains (teachers): Ed Bassford and Ed Lyons were members of the Pershore Four, while Paul Setford joined the Tuesday practices and danced at the first performance at Horsted Keynes. Sean Goddard took over in November 2017 as an interregnum following the death of Ed Lyons. This has allowed for a consistent approach in content and style.

## Dances and Music

There were three dances learnt at Pershore: Milnrow, Colne and Ashton. While Milnrow and Colne have remained in the side's repertoire, Aston was dropped in 2005. Piper's Ash, learned from Chester Morris Men, was an early taught dance, while Holme-in-the-Dale was learnt in 2005 and was danced until 2008.

The side has performed other collected dances including Millbrook, Godley Hill and Royton. Godley Hill is based on the dance collected by Maud Karpeles from Mr Broadbent and Robert Brookes and others of Hyde, Cheshire in 1929.<sup>65</sup>

The side regularly danced Royton from 1976 until 2012. From 2000 the side struggled to perform this dance well and it has not been performed in public since 2012.

The side has composed two dances, 'Uncle Bernard's Polka' and 'Guernsey Roundabout'.

<sup>63</sup> Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men Minute Book, 2016, AGM.

<sup>64</sup> Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men Minute Books, 2009- 2016, AGM.

<sup>65</sup> 'Godley Hill Morris', London, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Maud Karpeles Manuscript Collection, MK/1/1/4594 <<https://www.vwml.org/record/MK/1/1/4594B>> [accessed 6 August 2017].

Currently the side performs regularly five dances: Milnrow, Marston, Piper's Ash, Godley Hill and Colne. Milnrow and Colne still exist from the original workshop, while Piper's Ash was learned shortly after (Table 1).

Table 1: North-west dances in Chanctonbury Ring's repertoire.

	First danced	Last danced in performance
Ashton	1975	2005
Colne	1975	Current
Godley Hill	1978	Current
Guernsey Roundabout	1983	1988
Holme-in-the-Dale	2005	2008
Marston	1978	Current
Millbrook	1998	2003
Milnrow	1975	Current
Piper's Ash	1977	Current
Royton	1976	2012
Uncle Bernard's Polka	1982	2010

It is interesting to observe that that dances learnt early in the development of the side (Milnrow, Colne, Piper's Ash Reel Marston and Godley Hill) form the repertoire of the side today. Other dances have been introduced but have fallen out of favour.

There may be many reasons for this, but the main one is familiarity. If a new member joins Chanctonbury Ring, the first dance they generally learn is Colne (as it contains no polka steps!), followed generally by Milnrow (has polka steps, but easy figures!). If a new member joins every year or two, the whole team relearns the dance and becomes well versed with these dances. Other dances such as Marston and Piper's Ash have more difficult figures or awkward timing. Chanctonbury Ring's Cotswold side has followed a similar pattern: some dances performed today were included in their initial years: Adderbury, Bampton and Fieldtown. The side's constitution does not allow for any man to leave, they become a 'Country Member' and a historical repertoire is useful as they are entitled to just turn up and dance, if they can remember how! In this case you fall back on dances that are generally taught to beginners.

At the beginning of the North-west side, music was mainly supplied by Dave Hood (melodeon), Pete Rogan (trombone), Keith Phillips (fiddle), Joan Drumbrell (piano accordion) and Tony Pepler (side drum) supplemented by others such as Vic Gammon.

Since 1985 Brian Cooper has been the lead musician, and has developed the tune base. When the side first learnt Marston it was performed to the tune of 'A Hundred Pipers', however in 2010, the tune was changed to the 'Regimental March of the Sussex Regiment'. Likewise, when Colne was learnt at Pershore it was performed to the tune of 'Cock o' the North'. With the publication of Vic Gammon and Anne Loughran's, *A Sussex Tune Book* in 1982, local tunes became readily available and two tunes, 'The Ball' and 'Wentworth House' have been used for this dance since 1989.<sup>66</sup> The two tunes have different time signatures, which gives a distinctive feel to the two halves of the dance. Tunes from the same book have also been used for Chanctonbury Ring's set of Cotswold style dances.

The Milnrow dance has traditionally been danced to polkas, including 'Brighton Camp' and 'British Grenadiers'. Since 2012, Cooper has during the last figure (four-hand reel) and the last fast polka introduced a jig (6/8) version of 'Brighton Camp'. Again, this gives a different feel to the dance.

Tunes noted by Maud Karpeles for the Royton dance included 'O Sussanna', 'Yankee Doodle', 'Brighton Camp' and 'Cock o' the North'. Chanctonbury Ring follows this trend and use tunes such as 'The White Cockade', 'In and Out the Windows' and 'Golden Slippers'.

Chanctonbury Ring have danced to the Petworth Town Band, the Beddingham Silver Band and the Steenderen Town Band when attending the Steenderen Folk Festival in Holland, and on many occasions the tunes used had to be modified to ensure a good fit. As Dave Williams explains:<sup>67</sup>

*While dancing with King John's Morris, on one occasion when we were performing in Bournemouth and while walking through a Public Park to get to our next spot we came across*

<sup>66</sup> Anne Loughran and Vic Gammon, *The Sussex Tune Book* (London: EFDSS, 1982).

<sup>67</sup> Dave Williams, email, 16 October 2016.

*the Band of the Royal Signals playing in a Band Stand. With a little help from the Band Sergeant I was able convince the Band Master that if they were able to play the Radetzky March we would dance to it. It was necessary to adapt the sequence of figures a little and required some intense concentration from the dancers and the Captain but what a performance and memory. We had the entire band on their feet at the end applauding our performance. I don't think that would have had the same affect if we had been dancing Cotswold.*

Although Williams's comment refers to a King John's Morris experience, something similar did occur when Chanctonbury Ring danced at the Steenderen Folk Festival in the Netherlands in 1995. The Town Band were playing a march, Chanctonbury Ring formed up and danced Milnrow until the band finished. Applause all round!

## Membership

To gain membership of the Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men, a dancer must be able to dance to an acceptable standard and current practice is that each dancer must have a year as an apprentice, even if transferring in from another side. Once elected they are then entitled to wear a Chanctonbury Ring badge, have voting rights, stand for office and pay subs. This was not always the case: in the early years joining the side was by invitation only. It is not recorded when this changed, but likely to be during the 1960s. As described earlier, the side's constitution does not allow for any man to leave, they become Country Members.

As seen in Figure 7, the number of active dancers within the side has gradually decreased. This is a trend that other morris dance sides, especially those who are members of the Morris Ring, have followed. The average age of Chanctonbury Ring dancers has increased, but this is not recorded (lack of new men!). As Worth reports, the average age of a Morris Ring side was 53 in 2010 and this had increased to 56 in 2014. Sides who are members of the Morris Federation tend to be younger.<sup>68</sup> The authors consider the average age of Chancton-

<sup>68</sup> Worth, Section, Age.

bury Ring members is slightly older than the Morris Ring average age.

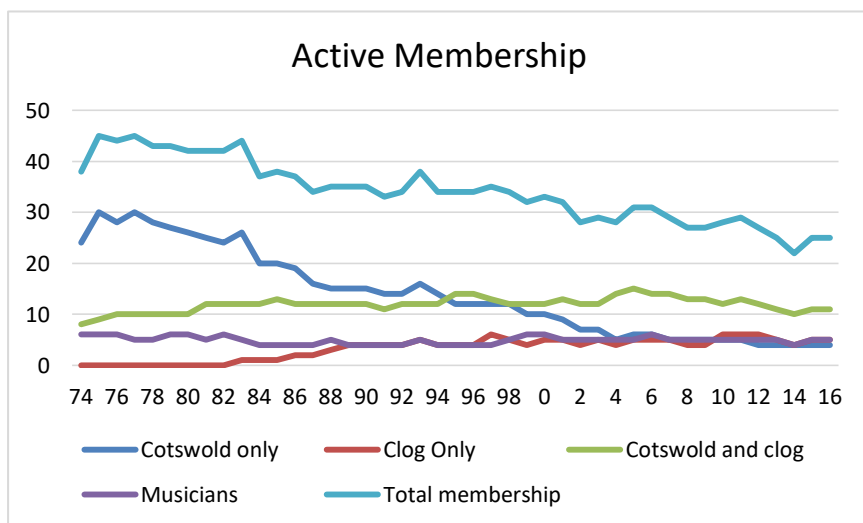


Figure 7: Number of active members 1975-2016.

At the 1982 AGM a motion was passed (almost unanimously) that all future members of the North-west side had to gain elected membership by dancing Cotswold.<sup>69</sup> This was reversed at the 1990 AGM, when this motion was passed:<sup>70</sup>

*After discussion it was agreed by a majority that, whilst all men would be encouraged to take part in Cotswold dancing they could be elected a member of the team without an involvement in Cotswold dancing, providing their standard was of the same level that would earn them membership if they had been dancing Cotswold.*

At the previous three AGMs, Ed Bassford had reported that the North-west side had begun to struggle for numbers. This reversal of policy was to encourage new members, especially from other local morris sides whose members had expressed an interested in joining

<sup>69</sup> Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men Minute Book, 1982, AGM.

<sup>70</sup> Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men Minute Book, 1990, AGM.

just the North-west side, while remaining dancing Cotswold with their original teams. It didn't work!<sup>71</sup>

The number of the side's musicians has remained fairly constant. The actual musicians have changed during the years. The North-west side, unlike the Cotswold side, welcomes female musicians. There have been two of note, Joan Drumbell who played accordion in the 1970s and 80s, while Milly Murphy has played clarinet since 1985. This has caused 'problems' at times with other Morris Ring sides. Previously, women may not have been made welcome at formal Morris Ring events, and on several occasions invitations have been refused due to this policy.<sup>72</sup>

Chanctonbury Ring's constitution does not allow female members, female musicians are welcome to play for the North-west side, but they do not have any formal membership, voting or other rights. In effect, they hold an honorary position.

Recruitment to the team is an ongoing concern. New men are recruited; however, they tend to reflect the current average age of the membership of the side. There many factors that influence this: firstly, the practice hall is in the countryside away from any centre of population, meaning that new members must drive; secondly, in the past Chanctonbury Ring have the reputation of being unfriendly and not welcoming new men (this is a hangover from the side's policy in the 1970s when Chanctonbury Ring were a very large side and for a few years did not recruit any new members); and lastly, Chanctonbury Ring are considered by some to be an inward-looking side as they rarely dance at festivals or days of dance.

## Performance

It has not possible to ascertain every performance of the Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men. Performances generally take place outside and can be affected by the weather and cancelled at short notice. The availability of men can cause cancellations, and private and addition-

<sup>71</sup> Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men Minute Books, 1987, 88 and 89, AGM. Also Ed Bassford, 2016, interview.

<sup>72</sup> Ed Bassford, interview. In the 1980s, invitations to take part in day tours organized by Yateley Morris Men and Hartley Morris Men were withdrawn or refused due to this policy.



al performances are not always recorded. Using yearly programmes, Bagman's notes and AGM minutes, Figure 8 shows the probable number of yearly performance days, or at least to within 10%. Visits to festivals and similar events are counted as one performance day.

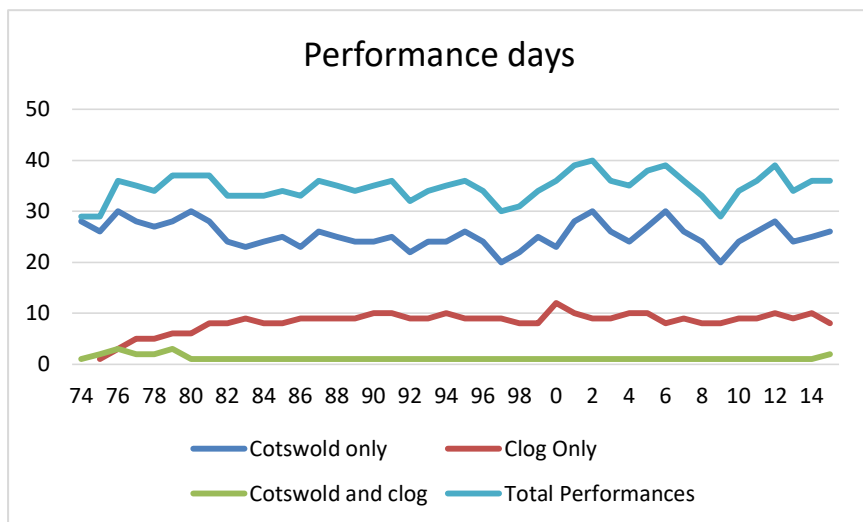


Figure 8: Estimated number of performances yearly.

It can clearly be seen that once the North-west side got established the number of performance days remained fairly static, with an average of nine performance days each year, compared with Cotswold with 25 performance days. There is a peak of more performance days in 2000: this was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the formation of the North-west side, and a special effort was made to dance with other long-dancing Sussex sides. There is a corresponding dip in Cotswold dancing the same year as many performances took place on Wednesdays.

The North-west side performs once a month during the summer dancing season; generally this means four or five times. It also performs two other events, Good Friday Skipping at the Rose Cottage, Alciston (with the Knots of May team) and the Lewes Bonfire Celebrations as guests of Borough Bonfire Society. Until recently they danced at Lewes Garland Day on the first Bank Holiday in May (again with the Knots of May), however, recently they have exchanged this day for the Broadwood Day of Dance in Horsham (organized by the

Broadwood Morris Men). They are regularly invited (as opposed to the Cotswold side) to dance at other events, especially local Folk Festivals, but these are often refused due to various factors.

## Costume/Kit

From the beginning of the North-west side, the kit has been kept fairly simple. Unlike many North-west sides, beads and flower-pots in hats have not been worn.

When the North-west side started, the Cotswold side wore black shoes, white socks, black breeches, white shirt, Panama hat and baldricks: as seen in the photograph above. Initially the North-west side was made up of members of the Cotswold side and occasionally both types of dance were performed at the same performance. It was essential then to have a kit that could be interchangeable: both for cost and ease of change.

The 1975 kit can be seen in the photographs of the time (Figures 4 and 9): red socks, black breeches, white shirt and red sash with a rosette. Red and white sticks were also used and red slings. As Dave Hood describes, each man had two pairs of clogs, one pair with irons for outdoor dancing, and a pair with rubbers for indoor dancing. Originally the clogs were purchased from Jack Crawshaw's clog shop in Waterfoot, Rawtenstall; later Mike Stevens, a member of the side, started making clogs.<sup>73</sup>

As Hood also describes, Vic Gammon was an occasional musician for the North-west side, and often wore a red waistcoat.<sup>74</sup> Jenn Price elaborates, she made it, and it was pillar-box red made from the same material as the sashes and fully lined with the same colour. She then made more waistcoats for the Knots of May<sup>75</sup> and they took Chanctonbury Ring's red and white (although the initial other colour was brown) for the main colours for their musicians' uniform. As Dave Hood elaborates:<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Dave Hood, email 5 September 2016.

<sup>74</sup> Dave Hood, email 5 September 2016.

<sup>75</sup> Jenn Price, email to Sean Goddard. 15 October 2016.

<sup>76</sup> Dave Hood, email to Sean Goddard, 16 October 2016.

*In 1977 we were invited to the Fylde Folk Festival - quite a big thing for the Knots of May at the time, and it was 'suggested' by the dancers that the band should have a kit for such a big event. After some discussion we went for brown trousers, white shirts, red waistcoats and flower-decorated bowlers. I remember that the brown trousers we bought faded very quickly with washing and it wasn't long before the band sported a variety of shades of brown. Mine retained the most colour - basically because I was a dirty bugger and washed mine less than everybody else! I think it was this that triggered the change of kit to white trousers.*

An early change happened in 1979 with the addition of a green sash. Major changes came in the 1990s. In 1990 sashes were removed and replaced with a red cummerbund, and followed swiftly in 1994 by the addition of green (leprechaun-style) waistcoats. The 1990s change was the innovation of Bob Kilby (who had danced North-west with Earlsdon Morris Men in Coventry) and Cliff Marchant who felt that the North-west kit needed brightening up!

When Chanctonbury Ring was formed in 1953, the side's colours were green and white. To celebrate the beginning of the 1970s, a red strip was added to the Cotswold baldric. The North-west side began with just red and white, but added a green sash in 1979. When the North-west sided updated the sticks to red and green barber-pole style in 1990, red or green ribbons were added to each end. To celebrate 60 years from the formation of the side, in 2013 the Cotswold side started dancing with red and green handkerchiefs, and in 2017 new red and green slings were purchased. Whether dancing North-west or Cotswold, red for port is always held in the left, while green for starboard, in the right! The kit transitions are illustrated in Figures 9-12 and Table 2.

Table 2: Changes in North-west kit.

Date	Kit
1975	Black clogs, red socks, black breeches, red sash, white shirt
1977	Bowler hats added with flowers. Horizontal green and red hat band
1979	Green sash added
1990	Sashes removed replaced with red cummerbund. Original white and red sticks replaced with green and red. Vertical green and red hat band with simple/few flowers
1994	Green waistcoat added. Flowers removed from hats
2017	New red and green slings were purchased following a bequest from the family of Paul Plumb, a founder member

The sticks and slings are based on the dimensions described by Maud Karpeles. Slings are approximately 40 cm (14 inches) in length, while the short sticks based on her description of those used at Godley Hill.<sup>77</sup> It is likely that the Pershore Four's experience at the Manchester workshop in 1975 may have influenced the design.

## Wider Influence: Other Sides

Bringing North-west to the South coast has had an influence on local sides.

King John's Morris Men, based in Southampton, were formed in 1975 as a Cotswold side. However, similarly to Chanctonbury Ring, they started a North-west side in 1980, with the dance form introduced by Dave Williams, a Chanctonbury Ring man. Dave Williams explains how this happened:<sup>78</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Karpeles, *The Lancashire Morris Dance*, pp. 6, 13.

<sup>78</sup> Dave Williams, email, 16 October 2016.



Figure 9: Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men at The Green Man, Horsted Keynes, showing the original kit, 1975 © Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men.



Figure 10: Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men, unknown location and date, showing the addition of the green sash. © Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men.





Figure 11: Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men at The Rose Cottage, Alciston. 1992  
© Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men.



Figure 12: Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men, 2013 © Clive Funnell.

*I moved back to Hampshire in June 1980 and returned to dance with Winchester Morris Men. I was by now heavily involved with the folk dance scene as a Caller and got involved with the local EFDSS committee.*

*One of the things they organised was all day Sunday Workshops during the winter and I offered, and they accepted, to*

*do one for North West Morris in 1981. At this time there were no sides in the area dancing North West.*

*I think one Winchester man came but quite a few from King John's Men who were formed in 1975 and a good number of others including some from mid Hampshire (eventually forming as Knock Hundred Shuttle Morris). A great day with a good effort by all. My best memory was the teaching of some basic figures from Milnrow in the morning which we then used to dance to the Pub half a mile away at the other end of the village for lunch. King John's Morris men then asked me to come down to Southampton to teach them North West.*

*They like Chanctonbury had some men that did not wish to get involved with North West so we practiced on a Sunday evening. Things got going pretty quickly and after a few months' practice and getting some kit together the side danced at a EFDSS Christmas Ceilidh. We danced into the hall with 16 men up for Milnrow followed by Colne and another session of Milnrow which by now had a few extra figures in it when compared with the Chanctonbury version. Since then the numbers dancing North West grew to the stage when all of the side were either involved as dancers or musicians.*

King John's Morris Men dance in a similar style to Chanctonbury Ring, and both sides have joined together and danced jointly as one side, most recently in 2015 at the Saddleworth Rushcart when neither team could raise a full side.

The Broadwood Morris Men, based in Horsham, had a North-west Morris side in the 1980s. The side started after seeing Chanctonbury Ring dance at the Crawley Folk Festival. I have been unable to confirm the actual dates of the North-west side.

Knock Hundred Shuttles are a mixed North-west side based in Midhurst, West Sussex and are a 'once removed' side of Chanctonbury Ring influence. Founder members attended a workshop taken by Dave Williams in Hampshire in 1981. As Sue Beveridge says, practices started in September 1982, with the first dance out taking place in

spring 1983.<sup>79</sup> They have since developed into a colourful side with an excellent reputation.

In 2014, Ed Lyons and Brian Cooper ran a North-west workshop at Washington, and again in 2015. A number of dancers from other sides attended the workshop and in the winter season 2015 a female side was formed, Temporary Measured. This side was tutored by Ed Lyons and their first dance out was at Lewes Folk Day, 2016.

## Wider Influence: Audience

The North-west morris presents a wider opportunity to impress audiences and to keep them attentive. It is different in form from Cotswold and can be danced to popular tunes and marches without modification. Chanctonbury Ring has in the past danced to the Petworth Town Band and the Beddingham Silver Band. It is probably one of the two spectacular forms of the dance, the rapper dance being the other: double somersaults may eclipse it. As Dave Williams indicates:<sup>80</sup>

*The main thing that I think North West brought to the side was variety and introduced what I consider to be a more spectacular form of the Morris. I remember some great occasions where we danced North West and received a great response from the audience. Lewes Bonfire and the procession down The Mall to Buckingham Palace come to mind, not sure that they would have been so memorable as a Cotswold event.*

## Conclusion

The introduction of a North-west repertoire to Chanctonbury Ring has had positive effects. Firstly, it brought the North-west style of dance to a new audience in Sussex. Branching out from Chanctonbury Ring, two local sides developed North-west style in the 1980s (given that the Knots of May were already in existence) and this did not start an avalanche of sides dancing the North-west style as antic-

<sup>79</sup> Sue Beveridge, email to Sean Goddard. 3 November 2016.

<sup>80</sup> Dave Williams email, 16 October 2016.



ipated by some in the 1970s. The North-west style is now more widely known, but as Worth observes, only 16% of UK dance sides cite North-west as their main style.

Secondly, it has allowed Chanctonbury Ring to perform at events where Cotswold would not have been appropriate. Dancing at Lewes Bonfire is the best example. There was concern from Bonfire Societies and others that the introduction of morris dancers into processions would bring a sense of carnival into the proceedings. It may be the case that Cotswold would have, but as North-west has its origins in processions, with more control and uniformity, it was accepted more readily.

Lastly, Chanctonbury Ring is predominantly a Cotswold side. The side had been dancing the Cotswold style for twenty years before the introduction of North-west, and it was viewed by some that it was 'newish men' who wished to introduce the new form. The introduction of the North-west upset the balance: stands in the early years of the North-west were shared, then the North-west had its own stands, reducing the number of Cotswold, although this was never large, with an average of about 1:3 in favour of Cotswold. Invitations were shared, sometimes with heated discussions about which dance form would be best and accusations that one form always got preference.

Despite the internal politics, the introduction of North-west Morris has enhanced the reputation of Chanctonbury Ring Morris Men. The current age profile of the side is such that both the Cotswold and North-west styles are in danger of folding: they have not capitalized fully on their position as one of Sussex's premier sides.

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