

Mr Brian Chapman, Dent, Yorkshire, aged 75.

[By the time I saw Mr Chapman, I knew most of the right questions to ask in Dentdale; this, and the following interview, were therefore more productive than those which had come previously.]

Mr Chapman was born and brought up in Dentdale, 2 miles from Dent village. He danced regularly in Dent and Cowgill, and also travelled by bicycle to dances in Chapel-le-Dale, Hawes, Inglestone, and Kettleby Lonsdale.

When Mr Chapman was aged ca 15 or 16, he attended dancing classes held by Pop John Mason in the George and Dragon "outroom" in Dent village. Pop John held these classes every 2 or 3 years - he had a good few in his time. (at this time, ca 1900, he was a man of ca 40-45). The classes which Mr Chapman attended took place two evenings a week for about 8 or 10 weeks (they definitely did not run right through the winter), from 7.30 to 10 p.m. Pop John charged the men 8/- for the session, but let girls in free. In this way he ensured a supply of partners for the men. He also ensured that there would be at least a few girls present who could already dance, and this must have eased his teaching considerably.

Pop John gave definite instruction in the dances (he was a proper teacher, not just a 'caller'), and he also gave brief instruction on how to ask a girl for a dance, and how to escort her back to her seat.

Every fortnight, on one of the class evenings, Pop John held a dance. The members of the class came in to this without extra charge, but outsiders had to pay a fee of 3d.

Pop John was a good step-dancer, and he put the 3-Reel on at his classes if there was anyone present who could do it.

1461

The dances in use in Mr Chapman's young days -in all the places he danced - were

Quadrilles	Lancers	Cucassion ♂
Ninepins	Cottagers	Square-8
Swinging-6	Turn-off	Highland Fling
3 Reel	Waltz	Polka
Schottische	Barn Dance	

Not Buttered Peas or Kendal Ghyll.

Mr Chapman never did the 3-Reel - "I didn't step-dance, though there were a lot of good step-dancers when I was young". There were lots of different steps in the 3-Reel, and he has seen old men of 70 doing step-dancing. For example, one old farmer of 70, Burton Greenbank, used to dance in the 3-Reel at the Deeside Shooting Balls when Mr Chapman was young.

Pop John Mason definitely taught Square-8, Swinging-6, Turn-off, & Cottagers though possibly not the Highland Fling.

Incidentally, Quadrilles was by no means a new dance to this date when Mr Chapman was young : "Quadrilles was an old dance here".

I asked Mr Chapman about the dancing at Dent Fair. In his young days the fair was held on the Saturday following Whit Monday. There were sports in the afternoon, and the dancing began after they were finished - it went on usually from about 5% to midnight. Pop John Mason hired the "outroom" at the George and Dragon, and some other musician hired the "outroom" at the Sun Inn. At both places, the dancers came and went as they pleased. The men were charged 1d for every dance they performed, while the girls paid nothing.

At the George and Dragon Pop John would announce the dance, and then, when the dancers had taken their places on the floor, he would go round and collect a penny from each of the men - he collected the pennies in his hand, & had change in his pocket if he wanted it.

These "outrooms" were built over the stables and coach-house owned by the pubs. In those days the pubs kept horses, and ponies & traps, for hire. You could either drive yourself in the trap, or could hire a driver to go with it. Usually the "outroom" was separate from the pub, in so far as there was no direct entry from the pub itself. At the George and Dragon, the outroom adjoined the pub itself, but the only entrance to the outroom was up a set of stairs outside the pub. [It has now been incorporated into the pub as an extra lounge] At the Sun Inn, the stables and outroom were across the road from the pub itself [with hove now been pulled down]. The outroom at the George and Dragon was a good room. It could take 4 sets of Lancers comfortably. Mr Chapman has seen 6 sets of Lancers dancing there, but that was too many for comfort.

The dancing in the outrooms at the fair took place only in Mr Chapman's young days. Later, the Sports Committee organised a dance in the schoolroom on the evening of the fair, and this put paid to the outroom dancing.

There was also a "Tap fair" in Dent on 28<sup>th</sup> October, but there was no dancing on that occasion.

There were 2 or 3 dances in Dent each year for the Church & the Reading Room. Sometimes there would be a concert & dance, or a whist drive & dance. But altogether there might be no more than half a dozen dances in the winter.

The Darside shooters ball was going when Mr Chapman was 15 or 16, i.e. about 1900.

They had a bonfire in Dent - down on the cobbles by the bridge - but there was no dancing round it. Possibly the surface was unsuitable for dancing.

People went pace-egging at Easter. Generally schoolboys went round, in the guise of the various characters mentioned by Peter Beversford, etc. Here, however, they begged mainly for eggs for dyeing and rolling, and cash was incidental. What cash they did get was divided among themselves.