5. 9. 61.

Dear Mrs Boyle,

Since I visited you some eighteen months ago, I have done a little further work on English dancing, and I keep finding things which I would like to ask you. I had hoped to call on you again, but I am not sure when I shall be in the Lakes again, so feel that I had better commit my queries to writing. I am sorry to bother you like this, but I shall be most grateful if you can help me.

There seem to be quite a lot of questions, so can I attempt to save you writing – at the risk of appearing impertinent – by turning this letter into a sort of informal questionnaire with spaces left for any answers you care to make, so that you can simply return the letter to me.

(a) My first question concerns the dance Kendal Ghyll, which was collected by your pupil, Leta Douglas. When I saw you in 1960, you told me that, at your suggestion, Miss Douglas altered this dance to make it more interesting. You did tell me of the changes which she made, but I was not familiar enough with the dance at the time for these to register, and unfortunately I made no note at the time. Since then I have met the dance outside the area where Miss Douglas collected it, and I am very interested in knowing the original version. The figures published by Miss Douglas were:

1. Circle six and back
2. The men and the women each dance a hey for three
3. The arching figure with the handkerchiefs, done twice and ending in places
4. All cast off, 1st couple make an arch at the bottom, 2nd & 3rd couples dance up under the arch (so that the 1st couple ends in bottom place).

I think you told me that Miss Douglas added the figure (4). Is this correct? And if so, do you know if she altered the order of the other figures? If my memory is wrong here, could you tell me what the alterations were, please?

(b) In the orginal letters which you wrote to Mr Kennedy in 1926 concerning Richard Allen of Rangwathby, you mentioned an "old Westmorland County Dance Book which contains no less than three distinct versions of 'The Triumph'" which was probably in the possession of one of your friends, since you wrote at the time that you could probably get hold of it for Mr Kennedy to see. Since I ~~first~~ read your letters, in 1957, I have often wondered whether this book is still in existence, and whether you know its present whereabouts. I should very much like to see it if it would be possible for me to borrow it for a short period. Could you possibly enquire for me, please?

(c) When you took Mr Kennedy to see Mr Allen, in 1926, you also took him to see Mr Clifton & his son in Ambleside — two very good step-dancers. You have already told me that old Mr Clifton is now dead, but I don't think I have ever enquired about the son. Do you know if Mr Clifton junior is still alive?

(d) When we ~~first~~ corresponded, via Miss Jackson, in 1957, you wrote that "it was usual for the schools to be closed for some weeks in each village as [the dancing-masters] came round so that the children could learn their steps". I meant to ask you more about this when I saw you, but we had so many things to talk about that unfortunately this one slipped my mind. Can I ask if you could tell me, please, the sources of your information here, and the districts and the periods referred to? Please don't think I am casting doubt on your information here, for

I am not. I have myself met one lady in the Cashmel area whose mother did not go to school when the dancing-master came round — this would have been in 1858 — and I am anxious to know the latest date at which this happened, and also the areas in which it took place. Can you help here, please?

(e) My last question is a quick one. Can I ask if you kept a record of the notations you sent to Cecil Sharp House in 1936. Unfortunately these copies were destroyed in the war.

I hope you will forgive my bothering you like this, but I shall be very grateful for your help.

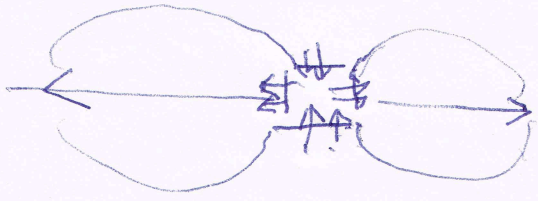
Yours sincerely

T. M. F.

1. Circle six and back
2. The men and the women each dance a hey for three
3. The arching figure with the handkerchiefs, done twice through and ending in places.
4. All cast off, 1st couple make an arch at the bottom, and 2nd and 3rd couples dance up under the arch (so that the 1st couple ends in bottom place).

I think you told me that Miss Douglas added the figure (4). Is this correct? And if so, do you know if she altered the order of the other figures? If my memory is wrong here, could you tell me what the alterations were, please?

No, Miss Douglas did not alter or add anything. I myself made the variation of having two sets, facing in opposite directions, the two 'top' couples meeting in the middle between the sets and making the four arches through which the following cpls dance, - this is very effective in massed demonstrations.



(b) In the original letters which you wrote to Mr Kennedy in 1926 concerning Richard Allen of Langwathby, you mentioned an "old Westmorland Country Dance Book which contains no less than three distinct versions of 'The Triumph'," which was probably in the possession of one of your friends, since you wrote at the time that you could probably get hold of it for Mr Kennedy to see. Since I first read your letters when Miss Jackson sent them to me, I have often wondered whether this book is still in existence, and whether you know its present whereabouts. I should very much like to see it if it would be possible for me to borrow it

for a short period. Could you possibly enquire for me, please?

I am afraid I have no record of this book now and at present I have no time for further research. The only place might be the Armitt Library, Ambleside, and you could certainly not borrow any book to take away from there.

(c) When you took Mr Kennedy to see Mr Allen in 1926, you also took him to see Mr Clifton and his son in Ambleside - two very good step-dancers. You have already told me that old Mr Clifton is now dead, but I don't think I have ever enquired about his son. Do you know if Mr Clifton junior is still alive?

Mr. Clifton had four sons and four daughters; only one son now lives at Ambleside, a bus driver, and you might get in touch with him at: Stoney Lane, Ambleside. One son was known to be a clog dancer, and he will be able to give you details which of his brothers is the man. I do not know him personally.

(d) When we first corresponded, via Miss Jackson in 1957, you wrote that "it was usual for the schools to be closed for some weeks in each village as [the dancing-masters] came round so that the children could learn their steps". I meant to ask you more about this when I saw you, but we had so many things to talk about that unfortunately this one slipped my mind. Can I ask if you could tell me, please, the sources of your information here, and the districts and the periods referred to?

Please don't think that I am casting doubt on your information here, for I am not. I have myself met a lady in the Cartmel area whose mother

did not go to school when the dancing-master came round - this was in 1858 - and I am anxious to know the latest date at which this happened, and also the areas in which it took place. Can you help here, please?

This closing of the schools when the Robinsons came round to teach dancing is a wellknown tradition in Cumberland and Westmorland, and many of the older people told me about having taken such lessons as children. The Robinsons went round until about 1890 or so, I have no exact date. The last person to have had such lessons was Miss Short who died six months ago. You called on her I believe. The same 'closing of the schools' and the tradition of 'Barring the schoolmaister' also applied to the Furness District I have written about these old customs in 'Cumbria'.

(e) My last question is a short one. Can I ask if you kept a record of the dance notations you sent to Cecil Sharp House in 1938? Unfortunately their copies were destroyed in the war.

I may have done, but if so they will be buried under masses of other papers. As I am preparing lectures on central European history at present - I am giving courses of these lectures at three places, besides numerous single lectures, starting next week, and am also involved in vast correspondence and meetings connected with

I hope you will forgive my bothering you like this, but I shall be very grateful for your help.

the R.S.P.C.A., and am trying to publish a pamphlet about Palestine besides other publications, I really have not the time to spend hours searching at present. They will be somewhere; but I was doing war work at the BBC, and in charge of Press Policy Section, Informat. Services Control in Germany, for ten years during and after the war. I may be able to do something during the Christmas holidays. Please let me know about this.

With very best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Yours sincerely,

Mr Flatt