

Miss L.A. Maddern, 2 Coniston Road, Barrow-in-Furness, aged c.70.

2, CONISTON RD.,

BARROW-IN-FURNESS.

Aug. 12th/62.

Dear Sir,

On reading your letter in the Barrow News I thought the enclosed might be of interest. I have copied it from a programme (a family relic in raggy condition), of a Ball in which my grandmother, not then sick, took part.

Whicham is at the foot of Black Combe and school was closed during the dancing master's visit.

Yours truly,

R.A. Maddern.

The interview with Miss Maddern added little to this letter. Her grandmother was Hannah Pool, and was aged 5 at the time of the classes. She was brought up on a farm at Whitbeck, and rode to the classes on a pony, whilst her brothers walked beside her. The school mentioned would be Whicham School, and the fact that the school closed for the dancing-master's visit is quite definite.

Miss Maddern remembers her grandmother quite well - it was her grandmother who first taught her to read and write, and she can remember her grandmother showing her how Mr. Crannett taught them to point their toes.

Brackets with B, G added
 { B = Boy
 G = Girl
 Original gives names. F

Mr Garnett's

BALL

Will be Held

At James Shephard's, at Sledbank,

IN WHICHAM,

On FRIDAY Evening, the 15th Day of APRIL, 1825,

Part I

To commence with a grand Promenade March.

Dance (1 B, 1 G)

Long Reel (2 B, 2 G)

Four Reel Single Time (2 B, 2 G)

Dance (G)

Reel for Six

Dance (G)

HORNPIPE (B)

Reel by eight

Dance (2 G ?)

HORNPIPE (2 B)

Dancing through the Hoop (2 G)

Dance (G)

HORNPIPE (2 B)

Country Dance (least Class)

Dance (2 G)

HORNPIPE (2 B)

Strathspey by eight Ladies with Garlands.

Dance (2 G)

Reel two Sets four each

HORNPIPE (2 B)

New Jockey Dance (2 B)

Dance (2 G)

Figure Dance by sixteen

HORNPIPE (2 B)

Spanish Dance by six Ladies with Garlands

Dance (2 G)

Figure Dance by seventeen

Strathspey by eight Ladies

HORNPIPE (2 B)

Waltz Steps (2 G)

Quadrilles Two Sets, eight each Set. L. A. Marie

Antoinette L. E. Coulon L. E. Duc d'Angoulême

Fraternité Anglaise Der Freyschutz

High Dance (2 G)

A Medley (2 G)

Allemande by four (2 B, 2 G)

Part II

A Medley (2 G)

Allemande by four (2 B, 2 G)

Dance (2 G)

Dance through the Hoop (2 G)

Single Dance (G)

Country Dance (tall Class)

A Medley (2 G)

Favourite set of Quadrilles

HORNPIPE (B)

Single Dance (G)

A French Figure Dance by sixteen, Waltz Figure

Long Reel (2 B)

HORNPIPE (B, 2 G)

Allemande... by four Ladies and four Gentlemen

a friend has brought to my notice the article on
Tunstun of fifty years ago in your issue of —
For some time I have been carrying out research
on traditional dancing in England and in the course
of this work I have collected a fair amount of
information about the Robinson family of dance-
leaders - one of whom was mentioned in the ball
programme of 1863 which illustrated the article.
I would very much like to see the original
of this ^(ball programme) and I would be very grateful if you
could tell me ~~its~~ present owner ~~of the programme~~
and also whether you could let me have a
copy of the photograph which you used in the
your reproduction.

Such early ball programmes could add
very considerably to our knowledge of the influence
of ~~the~~ professional dancing-masters on traditional
dancing and I wonder whether you would permit
me to use the correspondence columns of your paper
for an enquiry about any other such programmes
which may still exist in the district? I have
embodied my enquiry in the enclosed letter which
I hope will be suitable for publication in
your columns.

Highland Reel by eight, Danced in the Highland style Four Reel (double time) (2B, 2G)

A Medley (2G)

New Jockey Dance (2B)

HORNPIPE (G)

Dance (2G)

Irish Reel by three ladies and three Gentlemen.

Garland Dance by fourteen, who will form a Square

HORNPIPE with the broad sword... (2B) in uniform.

To conclude with God Save the King

Doors to be opened at half past six, and to commence precisely at seven.

Printed by the Trustees of the late J Soulby, King Street, Ulverston.

Dear Miss Madden,

I enclose your old ball programme and copy of Cumbria which you very kindly lent me - I have had the programme photographed in a form suitable for reproduction. I eventually succeeded in finding four of the old programmes, though none of the others three came within 35 years of yours. Thank you very much indeed for your help in this matter - I am most grateful.

Yours sincerely

T. M. F.

2, Ockleston Rd.,

BARROW-IN-FURNESS.

Sept. 22nd 1962.

Dear Dr. Helt,

Looking through my
 Cumbrias I came across two of Clara
 Boyle's items on country dancing &
 thought you might like to have them.
 I don't want them back again.

"Underlay Hall" was the place
 I could not remember when you called.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely,

L. A. Madden.

Reply

7.10.62. Dear Miss Madden,

It was most kind of you to send me the two cuttings from
 Cumbria - I am very pleased to have them.

You will probably remember that the copy of Cumbria which I borrowed from you contained
 an article on dancing by a Mrs Halliwell (C.B. comments on it in the second of the cuttings) and in it there
 is a reference to a programme of 1861. I wrote to Mrs Halliwell, and she has now lent us the programme so
 that we can have it copied. It helps to complete our set, which now spans the century, from 1825 to 1922.

With best regards: Yours sincerely: T. M. F.

Clara Boyle Writes

... about the day
poor Nellie slept

WHEN Henry Boyle, then a lad of twenty, brought his eighteen-year old bride to Ambleside, in 1861, they were by no means the shy young couple one might have expected. Henry, fresh from Oxford, was a brilliant scholar, outstanding in both science and literature, a wit and raconteur who was welcome everywhere.

Nellie captivated all Ambleside with the charm of her dainty little person, her lovely face but, above all, her sweet soprano which was much in demand in those days of making music at home.

Among the friends who received the young couple hospitably were the Le Flemings of Rydal Hall. The first really important dinner party to introduce the young couple was given here by Gen. Hughe Le Fleming, and Nellie promised to sing after dinner.

After coffee had been handed round, everybody sat expectant, but nothing happened. Poor Nellie, slumped in her chair like a dormouse, was fast asleep. When at last Henry managed to wake her, she explained tearfully: "I knew that coffee always sends me straight to sleep, but I did not like to refuse on this first occasion."

After that, on numerous subsequent occasions, everybody was most careful to keep the coffee away from her!

... and takes up a point about dancing

I WOULD LIKE to thank Belle Halliwell very much for her recollections of village balls, held in the old days under the auspices of the Robinsons or Mr. Cannon.† Yes, and they did know how to swing their legs in the lively *Mazurka*, just as I learned to dance it in my native Poland.



Cumbria, April 1962



Cumbria, Dec. 1961

HENRY had bought Eller How from Arthur Clough, the poet and one of the favourite pupils of Dr. Arnold, of Rugby fame, and the young couple were now facing their first winter in this northern clime.

The Le Flemings made this an occasion for a really big ball at Rydal Hall in honour of Nellie and Henry. Nellie, an excellent dancer, was looking forward to this great occasion with shining eyes. There was hard frost, and when the carriage appeared, Nellie was bundled in, completely muffled up in furs and rugs. The Rydal Hall butler relieved her of these wrappings and she immediately entered the big ballroom, for in those days of no make-up and smoothly parted, looped hair, there was no need to tidy oneself before a mirror.

She flew from arm to arm and had already danced several dances before Dora Quillinan, Wordsworth's daughter, was able to draw her aside.

"Nellie," she said, "have you forgotten . . ."

Nellie's hand flew to her face. There it was, the little fluffy ball of grey fur, fitting snugly over her nose, held by two narrow black silk ribbons behind her head—her beloved nose-muff!

How she blushed and stammered—but everybody smiled affectionately and the incident was soon forgotten.

of the schoolmaster,
the dancing master.

were not at any fixed time, day after the school meadow rebellion" The door was und girls awaiting his arrival fulfilled their expectations, t the door should be opened then listened to the request "s," upon which the school- and then retired.

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was a famous family of such insons, whose prowess was s of Ambleside in the early

† See pp 244-8

500 miles a week, spanning the entire "Diocese," from Wigton and Carlisle to Settle, from Barrow to Shap and Penrith. I was always amazed how, especially in remote villages, the dancers would tramp in all weathers, often more than five miles, from farmsteads and fells to their weekly or fortnightly dancing classes.

Often when the weather was inclement and the snow lay deep on unswept roads, I felt greatly tempted to give it up for that night, but I was always glad that I had battled my way through when I saw some forty or more dancers assembled, eager for their "lesson."

The great event was, of course, our annual summer pageant at Underley Hall and the Branch party in the winter. Usually this winter party was our one and only opportunity for a massed rehearsal of the summer pageant, and coaches arrived from far and wide, spilling out their cheerful, well muffled passeng-
* *Kirkby Lonsdale.*

At first we used to dance in Kendal Parish Hall, but our numbers grew, and when even Kendal Town Hall proved too small, I remember arranging for the party to be held in the drab, but spacious drill hall.

It was soon filled, almost to overflowing, but one important coach was missing. The Shap dancers, led by Mr. Milray, at that time neither a J.P. nor chairman of the Council, but a sprightly young man keeping down his weight by vigorous Morris Dancing, had not arrived. Mr. Milray was most necessary for our rehearsal, for he was to lead the whole of North Westmorland in a processional entrance dance, facing, in the far distance, Mr. Hotson of Grasmere, who was leading the main Westmorland body, Mr. Spence joining in with his Furness District dancers.

We were already an hour late, and with a heavy heart I decided to take Mr. Milray's place instead of conducting the massed rehearsal "overall," when a bedraggled group of some 30 dancers appeared. Mr. Milray explained how the Shap dancers had got stuck in deep snow on Shap Fell, but they would not give up, and all the men put their shoulders to the wheel and shovelled snow, while all the women sat shivering but valiantly facing it out. They arrived just in the nick of time.

Is it really only thirty years ago since we were a hardy race?

† See pp 244-8

Clara Boyle

Writes . . .



Cumbria, Dec. 1961.

. . . about the barring out of the schoolmaster, and the winter-time visits of the dancing master.

NOT so very long ago the holidays were not at any fixed time, but generally the first fine Thursday after the school meadow had been cut was chosen for the "rebellion." The door was locked against the schoolmaster, boys and girls awaiting his arrival with great excitement. He always fulfilled their expectations, acting his part well. He demanded that the door should be opened immediately, threatened penalties, and then listened to the request of the strikers for "six weeks' holidays," upon which the schoolmaster uttered more feigned threats and then retired.

* * *

The moment of his going away was the signal for the whole school to break out, the scholars rushing across the meadow to take cover in the wood beyond. Out they came, every big boy dragging a little one as fast as their little legs would carry them. For the schoolmaster had only waited behind his house, and now he ran out to catch them, a big stick in his hand. But it was only in fun, only pretence, and no one was ever caught. The moment his flock reached the wood, they called out merrily, "Four weeks' holidays," and this demand was, of course, always granted.

* * *

But there was another time, in winter, when the schools in Westmorland and Cumberland were unceremoniously closed. That was when the dancing master used to go round from village to village, with his fiddle, to teach the country dances of the district, the *Three Reel*, the *Six Reel*, the *Eightsome Reel*, *Cottagers* or *The Rifleman*, *The Triumph*, or *God Speed the Plough*, with the *Cumberland Eightsome* thrown in. He would also bring the newest tunes from far-off Liverpool. And then, of course, there was the local step-dancing, with 24 different steps to teach. So the schools were closed, and for some four weeks or so the boys and girls went instead to their dancing classes.

* * *

In the late nineteenth century there was a famous family of such dancing-masters and fiddlers, the Robinsons, whose prowess was still cherished by the older inhabitants of Ambleside in the early years of our century.

2, CONISTON RD.,

BARROW-IN-FURNESS.

Oct. 14th 1962.

Dear Dr Hlett

I was pleased the cuttings from Cumbria were useful and that you have programmes covering a century!

I thought you might like to have this cutting from our local weekly paper of Sept. 28th and also Mrs Halliwell's article from Cumbria[†].

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

R. A. Madden.

† Notes, p. 244

Dear Miss Madden,

Thank you very much indeed for sending me the two cuttings.

I was extremely interested in the account of the Chapel Style dances, and was pleased to see that they still perform the local dances; my only disappointment is that they men prefer the Cotswold Morris dances to their own Lakeland step-dancing.

BRENDA COLTON IN HER WEEKLY COLUMN Traditional dances which preserved in Lakeland

DRESSED in their flowered hats and white trousers, with brightly coloured sashes and bells round their legs, the Morris dancers used to provide a colourful spectacle at all the country fairs.

But sadly, country fairs and Morris dancers have been disappearing steadily from village greens, and soon such things may become no more than a memory.

However, there is one village in Lakeland that is doing its best to preserve the traditional dances, and that is Chapel Stile, not far from Great Langdale.

Here, in this little village at the foot of the Langdale Pikes, various charities, touring round the Lake District and as far

as Wednesdays evening in the old School Hall, to learn the folk dances that were once performed by their ancestors in medieval days.

THE organiser of the group is Mrs. Kathleen Bibby, grandmother of two, who lives in a charming 17th century cottage next to Langdale Church.

Mrs. Bibby, who originally comes from Liverpool, organises their dancing appointments, for often they give shows for various charities, touring round the Lake District and as far

as field as Millom, Lancaster, Buttermere and Settle.

The group, which was started at the beginning of the war, "fell through" during the war years, but made a fresh start ten years ago.

At that time there were many enthusiasts, but in more recent years numbers have been "dropping off" and at the moment the group are without a musician, for their previous one has left the district.

During the summer months, some of the members of the group dance in the streets, in full costume, the men wearing the traditional costume and

the women bright self-coloured circular skirts, white long-sleeved blouses, some trimmed with broderie anglaise and black velvet bodices.

THE group was first formed to provide entertainment, "someone knew something about folk dancing, so we just started," said Mrs. Bibby.

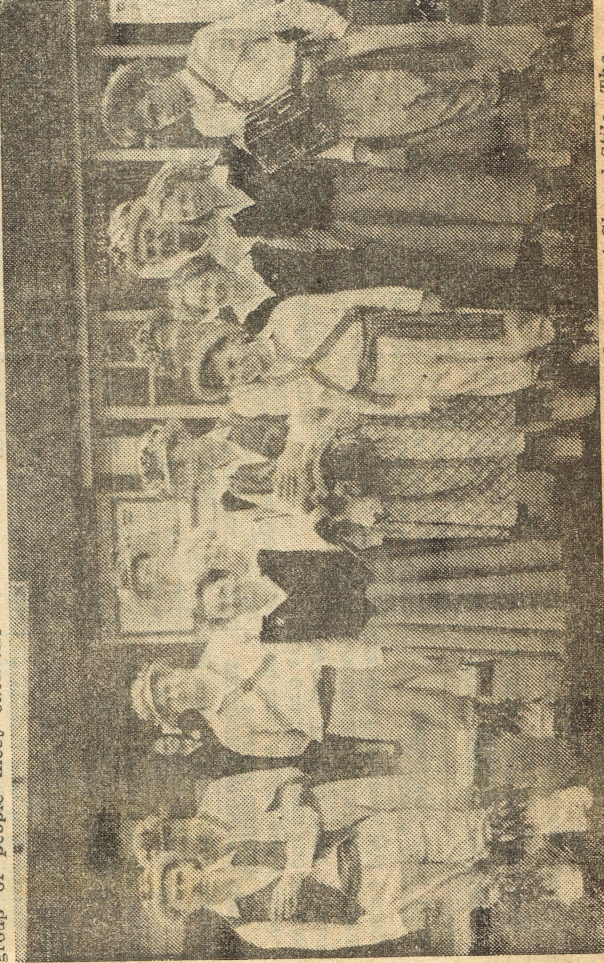
Week-end schools also provide instruction and occasionally an area organiser comes around and teaches new dances, for the group are affiliated to the English Folk Dance and Song Society.

Many times members of the group have taken part in festivals in the Royal Albert Hall, London, and quite recently they took part in one at New Brighton, where "The Spinners," who play the theme tune from "Z Cars," sang with them.

ONLY the men do the Morris dances and the sword dances, but the women take part in the "Riflemen," "Cottagers," which is a local dance: "Triumph," which is used to be danced at weddings, Cumberland square reel and the Border dances.

amophone Society programme given by Mr. N Kitchen at Wednesday's meeting of Millom Grand Old Society included Bach's side.

Mrs. J. B. Ems presided at Mrs. Davies was pianist. Mr. Neil Wilson spoke on "Mour and discipline" at 3 N. tery Club. He was thanked Ch Mr. R. Lowden, Waite, of and s one visitor. Mr. P. Heath



A group of the Morris and folk dancers, who meet every Wednesday at Chapel Stile. The photograph was taken in 1960 and since then the group have been sorry to lose one or two of their members.