

How brave the colliers are beneath the ground, beneath the ground.

We get the coal in while he goes round.

Many might be dead, many might have fled.

How brave the colliers are beneath the ground, beneath the ground.

Two came from Derby and two from Derby Town,  
The others came from Oughtybridge and they all came rolling down.

So we'll riddle and we'll fiddle and we'll make the earth go round.  
If you don't mind the trouble, we'll have to knock you down."

NOTE.—The song is sung in dialect. "Coal is pronounced "coil." Oughtybridge: a village over the hill on the Sheffield-Penistone road, recorded in Norman times. (Dialect pronunciation, "Utibrigg," is perhaps more authentic than the modern spelling.)

Mr. Fleetwood, the fiddler, writes: "It was the custom to wear an old jacket and cap, smear some coal dust on the face and carry shovels, picks and a riddle. One would carry a lantern (generally a candle in a jam jar) and, of course, a box or tin for the money."

A lot was made of the actions of picking, shovelling, poking and riddling. A poker and fire irons are also said to have been carried. The song was sung any time between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day.

The tradition is known to go back "sixty or more years ago."

J. C. AND K. M. MITCHELL.

#### A WEST COUNTRY STEP DANCE CONTEST

A contest in Devonshire step-dancing was held on February 5th at the Victory Hall, South Zeal, near Okehampton. Organised by the Society, the contest was the first held in Devonshire for nearly twenty years; I hope that it will become a regular annual function. There were prizes both for the best step-dancers and the best step-dance musicians, and the winners were invited to take part in the "Village Barn Dance" broadcast in the Light Programme from South Zeal the following evening. The winner was Leslie Rice, a champion from Chagford, and his accompanist was Jimmy Cooper, a concertina player of South Zeal. The runner-up, George Endacott, who is the postman at South Zeal, also joined in the broadcast and they sang the folk song "The Three Huntsmen."

After the contest dancers and spectators were asked to give their views about future contests. Everyone appeared to be very grateful to the E.F.D.S. for stimulating interest in a local art of which they were all very proud.

PETER KENNEDY.

#### SAM BENNETT

As we go to press the death has been announced of Sam Bennett, traditional dancer and musician of Ilmington, Warwickshire, at the age of 85. An obituary will appear in the May issue of "English Dance and Song."