

Lymm Rushbearing

George Ormerod, in the 1882 edition of his "History of the County Palatine and City of Chester", writes that the festival of Lymm Wakes featuring the Rushbearing ceremony was at use in the village in 1817, and that the cart of rushes was preceded by male and female Morris Dancers

C. E. Ardern in his 1900 edition of "An Illustrated Guide to Lymm and District" says that "Up to about 1881 a rushcart paraded the streets each Rushbearing drawn by grey horses" and that "Two troupes of Morris Dancers paraded the village each Rushbearing Saturday"



Rushbearing

"Cheap trips induce people to go abroad rather than patronise the fearful hobby horse or the giddy delights of the high swing. Even the morris dancers are reduced to one troupe, and those boys, in place of two serious parties of gaily-bedecked men. Instead of being gay with noisy organs and shows, Lymm this last weekend was in quite the normal condition, except that old Lymm Greys visited their friends and deplored the decline of their festival."

The 1907 Rushbearing was something of a revival.

The big day was the Rushbearing Saturday August 10th, "a brilliant revival of Ye Olde rush-bearing festival at Lymm".

Morris in Lymm

Before the turn of the century Lymm boasted two morris teams; one based in Lymm itself, and the other at Oughtrington.



1899 Oughtrington Morris team

Only the Oughtrington team continued to dance into the 1900's and this became the only troupe of Lymm Morris Dancers, and it was thought that even this surviving troupe had ceased to dance by the end of the first decade. No more Lymm Dance



1904: Lymm Morris

The Lymm Dance

On March 14, 1938, when Maud Karpeles came to this area in search of material, her chances of gleaning any dance notation on Lymm were slim. Fortunately, three dancers were still alive: Charles Simpson, John Robert Downward and Abraham Wilson. From Charles Simpson, Maud Karpeles noted a version of a "step up" and a "step and turn".

Geoff Bibby sent a letter to the paper - A simple statement that the Statham lads were known to have danced a traditional morris dance in the 1923 May Queen celebrations, and an appeal for any information. He put a similar advert in Statham Post Office.

This resulted in the acquiring of the following photograph.



1923 Boys Team

Through a variety of contacts and patience Geoff identified each dancer, and interviewed some surviving members, from which he was able to piece together a more complete version of the dance.

Note: The dance was danced for only a few more years after 1923 before the Lymm Dance was lost again.

The Lymm Dance – 2nd Revival

Following the research by Geoff Bibby into the old Lymm Dance, Thelwall Morris Men began to dance the "old dance" in public. It was first danced out in 1980 in Thelwall kit but without bells and one of the most prestigious appearances of the Dance, and possibly its biggest crowd, was at Dancing England in Jan 1983 in Derby.



Thelwall revived the dance at Lymm Rushbearing in 1986 wearing kit in the style of the local team from the turn of the 20th Century, adopting the classic pose of the original team.

In 1991 Thelwall Morris Men, as part of their traditional August Bank Holiday Walking Tour of Thelwall and Statham decided to tour Statham in the afternoon performing only the Lymm Dance.



Thelwall (a.m.)



Statham (p.m.)

Also, whenever possible The Lymm Dance is performed annually at the Rushbearing Ceremony in August



1998 Lymm Rushbearing

Thelwall Morris Men are decreasing in numbers and so the Lymm Dance is at risk of being lost again.

What can you do to keep this dance alive in Lymm

Thelwall Morris Men are holding two workshops to teach the Lymm Dance to interested people on:

Wed 30th April at 8.30 p.m.

and

Wed 14th May at 8.30 p.m.

at

Lymm Village Hall

Come along, learn the dance and all being well the Lymm Dance can continue to be performed throughout the Lymm area.

This information has come from
“A History of Morris Dancing in and around Lymm and Statham”
which can be found on Thelwall Morris Men’s Web Site
<http://www.thelwallmorris.org.uk>

Do you recognise any names here

Bert **Appleton**
Arnold **Appleton**
Samuel **Artinstall**
Arnold **Atherton**
Arthur **Booth**
Heywood **Brookes**
Jimmy **Brooks**
R. **Clare**
H. **Clark**
George **Ditchfield**
Esmond **Drinkwater**
Ernest **Edwards**
W. **Edwards**:
Sidney **Endale**
George **Finney**
Jack **Gilbert**
Willie **Gilbert**
G. **Gilberts**

Norman **Gilberts**
Laurence **Hannon**
Robert **Hartley**
Arthur **Higgins**
William **Higgins**:
J. **Hinton**:
Frank **Jackson**
Arthur **James**
Kenneth **Jolley**
Willie **Jolley**
Ernest **Leather**
Brian **Leigh**
H. **Leigh**
Kenneth **Lockyer**
Edward **Lockyer**
A. **Massey**
J. **Owen**
F. **Percival**

George **Percival**
Harold **Ravenscroft**
Albert **Riley**
Harry **Rosser**
T. **Rushworth**
F. **Sewell**
Tom **Smith**
Kenneth **Smith**
Douglas **Smith**:
Frank **Stirton**
Arnold **Struthers**
Harold **Struthers**
Amos **Summerfield**
Herbert **Taylor**
Willy **Watts**
Harold **White**
Ernest **Wibberley**
R. **Wibberley**

These are the names of known dancers of the “Old dance” between 1920 and 1930.

If you share the surname, perhaps you are related, if so...

- Do you have any **old photos** of morris dancing in Lymm/Statham (pre 1953)
- Do you have any **old newspaper cuttings** of morris dancing in Lymm/Statham (pre 1953)
- Do you have any **old local magazines** showing morris dancing in Lymm/Statham (pre 1953)
- Do you have **8mm film footage** of morris dancing in Lymm/Statham (pre 1953)

Thelwall Morris Men would be very interested in having copies – it is possible to digitise photographs at your home if you do not wish to lend them.

A CD-ROM enhanced version of **“A history of morris dancing in and around Lymm and Statham”** (with bigger images and a video of the 1986 Lymm Rushbearing performance of the dance), will be presented to individuals who can provide us with new material. Most of what we currently have is on the website.

Contact: Andrew White (01925 767151 or andrew.white@thelwallmorris.org.uk)

LEARN THE LYMM MORRIS DANCE



VILLAGE HALL

WED 30th APRIL +

WED 14th MAY 8.30 pm

Geoff 812725