

ROOMER

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Customary Drama: Towards a Contextual Typology Tom Pettitt

There has been a good deal of discussion of late on the meaning and value of terms such as "folk drama" and "traditional drama". I suspect that by now both terms are valid only in the study of the history of Folklore as a discipline (an activity which folklorists currently seem to find more attractive than discussing folklore itself). "Folk drama" is whatever folklorists included under this term from about 1890 to 1968; "traditional drama" is whatever the Traditional Drama Research Group has included under this heading during the period *Roomer* has been published.

If, as it seems, we have to start again with our terminology, I would suggest we acknowledge at once that the terms we apply are merely a convenient shorthand for avoiding the circumlocutions otherwise necessary in handling the complexities of reality, rather than definitions which automatically include some phenomena and exclude others. I am about to propose, for example, that what most of us are interested in most of the time is best termed "customary drama", i.e., dramatic performances which are an integral part of customs, but I do so with the explicit awareness that some activities are more customary than others, and that some more or less customary activities are more dramatic than others. There is a continuous spectrum of activities under both headings, and drawing the line between the customary and the non-customary, as between the dramatic and the non-dramatic, is an arbitrary, inevitably controversial, and ultimately unnecessary exercise. As a theatre historian and pseudo-folklorist interested in what once would have been called the place of folk drama in theatre history, I find I am actually interested in fairly dramatic activities performed under somewhat customary auspices, for which the awkward circumlocution "customary drama" is a useful abbreviation. The fact that it doesn't help me to distinguish between mummers' plays and mystery cycles is interesting rather than inconvenient (although it has delayed publication of my results).

The real problem in dealing with fairly dramatic activities performed under somewhat customary auspices is that both the activities and the customs are so many and varied, and that it is so difficult to correlate the two. It was easier when

we could assume that most customs with dramatic features, from mummers' play through morris dances to the Padstow Hoss, were all variant derivatives of the same ritual and that their value lay in revealing what that ritual was like. Now the customs have to be discussed independently of assumptions about their origins (and for their own sake rather than for what they can tell us about their origins), the picture is much more confused.

Take a fairly simple (and not very dramatic) custom like wassailing, for example. In the first place the term is applied to two quite distinct activities, the wassailing of orchards and people, respectively, i.e., the conferring of good health and fruitfulness upon apple-trees with appropriate chants and ceremonial action, and the wishing of good health and fortune upon people through a formal drinking accompanied by an appropriate toast. But then this latter activity can be undertaken under two quite distinct social auspices, that is, as a part of two distinct customs: in the purely domestic context of a Christmastide revel at which a household exchanges such wishes (over his own wassail-bowl) with his family and guests, and in the context of a house-visit custom in which local men offer the wishes (over wassail-bowl they have brought with them) to the households on which they intrude. Then finally even the visiting-wassail custom varies in the motivation of the visitors and their interaction with the households visited, the differences conveniently and practically signalled by the different functions of the wassail-bowl itself: as a container in which the visitors bring the beverage they offer to the households; as a container in which they receive beverage from the households; as a receptacle for the money they collect from the households - which they may use to buy a beverage for themselves later and somewhere else. These differences are symptomatic of a spectrum of motivations which can range from the expression of social deference through the exchange of egalitarian conviviality, to outright begging.

To handle this complexity, I suggest we need a typology and a terminology which takes into account the variety of both performances and circumstances, the drama and the customs. The procedure is not altogether unfamiliar: similar complexity is confronted by the theatre historian who must appreciate that *Hamlet* is on the one hand related to other revenge tragedies and on the other, like them could be performed in a variety of theatres - private, public, academic, court. We need likewise to appreciate that there are/were many "customary plays", and many "customary theatres" in which they might be performed. The situation for the folklorist is simply rather more complicated because the number of discernible theatres - i.e., customs with a distinctly dramatic element - is somewhat larger, and the distinctions between them less clear, and because unlike the drama historian he does not have the same excuse for making an arbitrary distinction between the dramatic and the non-dramatic.

My suggestions are set out in the following pages, but it should be emphasised that they comprise not so much a typology of customs and performances as a complex of criteria and aspects which may be usefully applied in identifying, classifying, analysing and comparing various types of customary drama, and that includes not merely the traditions of late labelled "folk", but most of what is covered in theatre histories under the heading of "medieval drama", and a lot of semi-dramatic pageantry and spectacle like royal entries and court masques which currently perch uneasily on the peripheries of both folklore and literary studies. It is also proper to note that many of the categories listed are not mutually exclusive. A sixteenth century wedding, for example, involved a series of activities in

several categories under various headings: its “theatres” (social auspices and performance context) for example included both a parade (the processions to and from the church) and a household assembly (the wedding feast), plus, under certain unfavourable circumstances, a demonstrative house-visit (rough music). Each of these theatres had its characteristic stage and auditorium (the articulation and use of the space occupied by performers and spectators), on which a variety of activities, each with its own matter and dramaturgy, some more dramatic, some less so, might be performed.

The Anatomy of Custom

Any custom will comprise a cluster or sequence of *activities* with a particular *incidence* performed by one or more sets of *participants* under identifiable social *auspices* and in certain *physical contexts*.

Activities

can be classed under the following headings:

CEREMONIES: i.e., formal actions of an other than utilitarian character, for example burning an effigy (other than producing light and heat); a parade (other than getting from one place to another); exchanging toasts (other than quenching thirst); pouring cider over a tree (other than watering).

While ceremonies are not designed to have a direct, physical effect, it is possible to distinguish between those which are purely symbolic (like destroying an effigy to demonstrate disapproval) and those “efficient” ceremonies credited with producing a desired result (like destroying an effigy to harm the person the object is an effigy of).

PASTIMES; i.e., recreational activities in which all (not incapacitated) can participate, for example sports, games, social dance, communal song.

ENTERTAINMENTS: i.e., recreational activities with a clear distinction between performers (qualified by ability, training and selection) and spectators; for example speeches, display-dance, music, song.

All of these can display more or less dramatic features, the entertainments in particular sometimes having enough by way of plot and character to qualify as “plays” in the conventional sense.

Incidence

can be *seasonal* or *occasional*.

SEASONAL CUSTOMS can be strictly calendrical, linked either to the solar calendar and occurring at fixed dates each year (Christmas, May Day, Midsummer, All Hallows’), or to the combined solar and lunar calendar

determining the date of Easter and its linked movable feasts, from Shrovetide to Whitsun and Corpus Christi;

or occur at roughly the same time each year, the exact date determined by the completion of a particular phase in an annual cycle of agricultural (agrarian or pastoral) activities (sowing; sheep-shearing; barking; hay-making; corn-harvest).

OCCASIONAL CUSTOMS are linked to predictable but non-seasonal "biographical" events in the life-cycle of an individual (birth, coming of age, wedding, death);

or are quite sporadic, prompted by events of a positive nature requiring celebration (coronation, important visit, military victory) or of a negative nature deserving condemnation (enclosure, inflation, adultery).

Participants

are the members or representatives of a group of one or more of the following types:

RESIDENTIAL GROUPS

living together in the same *household*, which might be:

a domestic household: i.e., a family and its resident servants, or an institutional household: i.e., the members of a residential institution, usually educational (school, college) or ecclesiastical (monastery, cathedral chapter);

and either of these might also be

an official household, by virtue of some office held by the householder (manorial lord, sheriff, mayor, bishop, king).

For festive purposes the permanent resident household can be augmented by guests who become temporary members of the household (to be distinguished from the customary *visitors* discussed later), selected from the householder's relations, social affinity or connections in the "official" capacity just noted.

Servants, children and other groups can for some purposes be identified as distinct sub-households.

GEOGRAPHICAL GROUPS

defined by geographical proximity as members of a *community*, which can be:

informal, comprising a purely geographical area such as a settlement, neighbourhood, or street; or corporate, having a recognised economic,

ecclesiastical or administrative status, such as a manor, parish, city or ward.

SOCIAL GROUPS

comprising the members of an *association* linked by other than residential or geographical ties (although often within geographical limitations:

an informal group of associates with social ties (children, apprentices, servants);

a corporate organisation with agreed statutes and identifiable officers, with recognised status and functions (e.g. craft guild; religious guild).

Auspices

comprise the number, identity and purposes of the participating groups, and take one of the following two major forms:

an ASSEMBLY of the members of one group

an ENCOUNTER between members or representatives of two groups, in which it is usually possible to identify:

an *active* group initiating the observance

a *reactive* group responding to this initiative.

Distinctions among Encounter customs are possible in terms of the motivations of the active group (and the implied expectations concerning the response of the others), making of encounter customs:

Exactions

in which the purposes of the active group are redistributive, i.e., to effect the transfer to them of money, food and/or drink, or provisions from the reactive group;

to the *benefit* of the individual participants (to supplement ordinary income)

as *funding* for some collective enterprise (ranging from a drinking party to repairing highways).

Interactions

in which the active group intend a verbal and/or physical interaction, which can be:

convivial (mutual participation in pastimes)

mischievous (causing minor damage, inconvenience or embarrassment with jocular intent)

punitive (causing serious damage, inconvenience or embarrassment)

with malevolent intent).

beneficent (conferring health, happiness, fertility, salvation).

Demonstrations

expressive of the attitude or relationship of the active group to the others:

deferential (to social superiors)

assertive (of rights and privileges)

condemnatory (of disapproved conduct - economic, social or domestic).

Physical Contexts

fall into the same basic types as auspices.

ASSEMBLIES can take place in

outdoor venues:

in which case they are stationary or mobile (i.e., a procession with purposes other than to encounter another group)

indoor venues:

and in both cases the venue may be *purpose-built* (permanent or temporary) or *non-purpose-built* (but possibly adapted for festive purposes).

ENCOUNTERS usually involve a mobile and a stationary group, and can therefore be distinguished in the first instance as:

Excursions, in which the mobile group goes out,

Incursions, in which the mobile group comes in, to encounter the stationary group.

Excursions take the form of:

parades, when the mobile group is also the active one in initiating the customary encounter (e.g., plough-trailing);

interceptions, when the stationary group is active in initiating the encounter (e.g. hocking; royal welcomes);

in which case the interception may be:

general (aimed at anyone who passes by),

select (aimed at a section of the community, e.g. - as in hocking - members of the opposite sex)

specific (aimed at one individual, e.g., monarch).

In both cases the movement of the mobile group can be continuous or interrupted for a more elaborated performance by the active group.

Incursions take the form of:

visits, when the mobile group is also the active one in initiating the customary encounter (e.g., mumming);

and such visits can be

general (i.e., to a large number of unspecified households)

select (i.e., to a limited number of pre-determined households)

specific (i.e., to one uniquely qualified household)

receptions, when the stationary group is active in initiating the encounter (e.g., welcome of royalty by a noble households).

In both cases the encounter between the groups can be:

external (i.e., outside the house)

liminal (i.e., at the threshold)

internal (i.e., inside the house).

While unlikely to have achieved universal applicability, this typology has certainly been useful to the present writer in discerning both the complexity of the activities currently lumped together as “mummers’ plays” and their relationships to other customary activities, dramatic and otherwise. The ritualist approach, for example, would make of them effective (beneficent) ceremonies, while most of us would now see them as dramatic entertainments. Common to most traditions is the performance, with a seasonal (calendrical) incidence, of an entertainment with a distinctly dramatic (although distinctly variable) dramatic segment, under auspices which are invariably an inter-group encounter between the mummers and their audiences. The former seem of late largely to have comprised informal associations, sometimes however reinforced by corporate (school) or household (family) affiliations. They are the “active” group in an encounter which is usually an exaction, sometimes for the individual benefit of the participants, sometimes for a collective purpose such as funding a feast or drinking at the end of the season. This element can however be compromised by both interactive and demonstrative aspects depending on both the identity of the reactive group (the audience) and the performance contexts. Interaction (convivial) is more likely at venues (like public houses) where mummers and audience are of similar social status, deference at the “great house” of the local squire. There is indeed a remarkable range of performance contexts, almost to the extent of defining distinct customs, from station-to-station performance in the street (a typically northern phenomenon?) with sometimes a money-collecting parade between stations, visits to as many households as possible (with a correspondingly short entertainment), visits to select (wealthy, generous) households, and even (as at Revesby) a single household of particular local importance. The tradition at Goathland (Yorkshire) offers a further distinct variation, with the (dramatic) play performed at the concluding “finishing-up feast”, financed by a money collecting-perambulation (parade + visits) in the course of which the performers offered only the non-dramatic part of their

entertainment (sword-dance plus display of grotesques). Similar variation is observable with regard to performance outside houses, at the threshold, or indoors, and, probably, in the degree to which the mummers penetrated to the more private regions of a residence (chamber, parlour) as opposed to the more public (hall and kitchen). Under some of these headings the mummers' plays are analogous to a wide range of house-visit begging customs, under others to the Elizabethan "gatherings" of May Day and Whitsun, under yet others to the interludes and masques of Tudor household revels.



Still MORE Additions

to the list of references to folk drama in student theses, dissertations
and papers held in the Institute of Dialect and Folk Life Studies,
University of Leeds.

C.H. Charlton

Belief and Superstition in the Area of Runcorn and Widness

BA 1973 (text of mummers' play originally performed on All Souls Eve, p. 58).

Annie E. Langrick

The Phonology of the Dialect of Bubwith (Yorkshire East Riding)

BA 1948 (Plough Stott play, pp. 107-110).

D. McKelvie

Some Aspects of Oral and Material Tradition in an Industrial Urban Area

PhD 1963 (Pace-egging play, pp. 181-185; mumming, pp. 193-195).

PUBLICATION NEWS

- James STOKES, "The Rector Versus the Dancer: New Evidence of a 17th Century Hobby Horse Entertainment in West Somerset", *ENGLISH DANCE AND SONG* 50:3 (1988 Oct-Nov), pp. 2-3.
- Derek SCHOFIELD, "The Mummings", *MUSIC AND MUSICIANS INTERNATIONAL* 38:4 (December 1989), pp. 13-15.
- FOLKLORE 100:1 (1989):
 Gareth MORGAN, "Mummings and Momoeri", pp. 84-87.
 Michael HEANEY, "Kingston to Kenilworth: Early Plebeian Morris", pp. 88-104.
- FOLKLORE 100:2 (1989):
 Craig FEES, "Mummings and Momoeri: A Response", pp. 240-247.
 W.M.S. RUSSELL, "Precursors of Mummings in Ancient Sparta?" [Note], pp. 247-248.
 Michael HEANEY, "Hawthorns and May Games, Mummings and Morris" [Note], pp. 248-249.
- N.F. BLAKE, "An Early Reference to Morris Dancing", *LORE AND LANGUAGE* 7:2 (1988 Jul), pp. 91-92.
- TRADITIONAL DRAMA STUDIES 2 (1988):
 Peter HARROP, "The Ripon Plough Stots", pp. 1-18.
 Emily B. LYLE, "Some Recently Collected Reminiscences of Scottish Traditional Drama", pp. 19-29.
 Peter T. MILLINGTON, "The Problems of Analysing Folk Play Cast Lists Using Numerical Methods", pp. 30-44.
 Thomas PETTITT, "Ritual and Vaudeville: The Dramaturgy of the English Folk Plays", pp. 45-68.
- Norman ROGERS, "The Shrewton Mummings' Play", *WILTSHIRE FOLKLIFE* 18 (1989), pp. 3-9.
- Marianne G. BRISCOE/ John C. COLDEWEY, Contexts for Early English Drama (Indiana U Press, 1989) 320pp., ISBN 0 253 31413 5, Hbk, \$27.50.
- Margaret Louise SWITTEN, Music and Literature in the Middle Ages: An Annotated Bibliography [Garland Medieval Bibliographies Vol. 4] (Garland, 1990), 350pp., ISBN 0 8240 4797 4, Hbk, c\$40
- Sidney E. BERGER, Medieval English Drama: A Bibliography of Recent Criticism (Garland, 1989), 200pp., ISBN 0 8240 5790 2, Hbk, \$27.
- Sylvia Stoler WAGONHEIM, The Annals of English Drama, 975-1700 (3rd edn.) (Routledge, 1989), 352 pp., ISBN 0 415 01099 3, Hbk., £50.
- T.M. PEARCE, "The New Mexican Shepherd's Play", pp. 17-32 in Juan R. GARCIA/ Ignacio GARCIA (eds.), Perspectives in Mexican-American Studies No. 1 (Univ Arizona Press, 1989), 145 pp., Pbk, \$15 [Reprint from *Western Folklore* 15 (1956)].
- Frank GALGAY/ Michael McCARTHY, A Christmas Box (Dorset St., St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada A1B 1W8: Harry Cuff Pubns. Ltd.), ISBN 0 921191 29 4, Pbk. [Includes numerous references to mummings in Newfoundland]
- Janet Brody ESSER, ed., Behind the Mask in Mexico (Museum of New Mexico Press, 1988):
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| Charlene CERNY | Foreword |
| Maria Teresa POMAR | Metaphor and Message: On Exhibiting Mexican Masks |
| Marsha C. BOL | Preface |
| Janet Brody ESSER | Behind the Mask in Mexico: Meanings and Motivations |
| Cecilia F. KLEIN | Tlaloc Masks as Insignia of Office in the Mexica-Aztec Hierarchy |
| Maria Teresa POMAR | Mexican Masks and Ceremonial Dances |
| Marsha C. BOL | Mexican Masked Festivals at the Turn of the Century, as Witnessed by Frederick Starr |
| James GRIFFITH | Holy Week in Los Patos, Sinaloa |
| N. Ross CRUMRINE | Ritual Mediation of the Life-Death Opposition: The Meaning of Map Parrisero Lenten Masks |
| Janet Brody ESSER | Those Who Are Not From Here: Blackman Dances of Michoacán |
| Ruth LACHUGA | Carnielin Tlaxcala |
| James GRIFFITH | Sierra Jumi Carnival Dances |
| Ted. J. TAYENAAR | Dances of the Nahuas and Otomies of Sierra Norte de Puebla |
| Ruth LACHUGA | Mask Making in Guerrero |
| Betty BROWN | Mixtel Masking Traditions: Juxtlahuaca, Oaxaca |
| | Catalogue |
| | Winter Ceremonial Season at San Lorenzo, Michoacán |
| | Carnival at Papalotla, Tlaxcala |
| | Lent in Rio Fuerte Region, Sinaloa |
| | Festival of the Holy Cross at Zitlala, Guerrero |
| | Corpus Christi at Suchiapa, Chiapas |
| | Days of the Dead at Acatlán, Puebla |

BBC and Mumming No.3: An Initial List

Craig Fees

1. Introduction

The material held by the BBC Written Archives Centre at Caversham Park near Reading includes the files of those who have contributed to BBC programmes over the years - speakers, writers, performers; files concerning individual programmes; scripts; broadcast logbooks, known as Programmes-as-Broadcast or PasB; press cuttings; BBC publications; and miscellaneous material.

The Written Archives Centre was established in 1970, before which written material was scattered among different departments and registries. Over the years some of it was lost, and some of it was destroyed, so that documentation can be irregular, particularly for the Regions during the 1920s and 1930s. Most of what remains, apart from PasBs and published material, is available only up to 1962 for reasons of copyright and confidentiality; and individual files must be vetted and confidential material removed before being released to the researcher.

My starting point for this list has been the Archive's Programme Index, which includes the topic heading "mumming". This is a main title index, however, and by its nature does not reference mumming or mumming-related material embedded in other broadcast programmes; nor can it indicate the existence of relevant files, references within correspondence, nor articles about mumming which appear in the various BBC publications. The list below goes somewhat beyond the Programme Index, but should nevertheless be regarded as only an initial indication of the great quantity of material still buried in the Archive. An organised and concerted search through the files of each of the Regions, and a sweep through the Radio Times and the PasBs of programmes such as "The Microphone at Large", which appear to have sought out representative local customs, is an obvious next step, and one which would lend itself to a coordinated effort.

2. The System of the List

a. Broadcast Locators

For the purposes of this list the primary datum is the actual broadcast. Each listing therefore begins with the date, time and regional service of the broadcast, followed by the title of the programme. This will enable any researcher to go immediately to the PasB, which generally indicates the producer, author, programme structure, cast, and sometimes ancillary information, such as the amount a particular performer or group was paid (primarily early PasBs; for this information later one must consult performer, contributor or programme files). Further material can be sought on the basis of this locator information.

b. Scripts

To quote the Archive's information sheet:

The Centre holds copies of the Script Library microfilms (radio talks) and some Play Library microfilms (radio features and drama, including poetry). Television scripts, and some overseas and regional material, are held; some originals have also been retained.

Original scripts, which can carry cast lists and other useful information along with the text, are sometimes found in individual files, often under the name of a specific contributor. Where an original script exists and has been located in a file the reference is given.

Scripts held on microfilm are generally filed either under author or programme (there are exceptions), and where these have been located the particular reel and file-heading are given.

The Archive treats all scripts as unpublished, which means that scripts or materials taken from scripts can not be copied without the permission of the writers or their heirs/assigns.

c. Files

The Archive holds :

100,000 files relating to speakers, writers, artists, composers, and entertainers engaged by the BBC..Most files contain contracts (giving details of the programmes in which they participated) and correspondence with the contributor on matters relating to the programme.

The Archive also holds programme files:

For all types of programme - talks, music, news, light entertainment, outside broadcasts, etc; well-known and less well-known, radio and television up to 1954 and in some cases 1962. There are also files relating to the External Services and an increasing amount of regional material.

The Archive emphasises that the BBC holds copyright only for material written by BBC staff, and that letters and other contributions by non-staff members remain the copyright of the author or his/her heirs and/or assigns, and can not be published without their permission.

d. PasB

An X in this column will indicate that the Programme-as-Broadcast has been located and a copy made and available through the Traditional Drama Research Group.

e. Press Cuttings

The Archive holds :

An unrivalled, indexed collection on broadcasting topics and personalities 1922-1962, and a smaller collection of post-1962 cuttings.

These cuttings are taken mainly from the better known national papers, such as The Times and the Daily Mail, and are indexed by subject or personality, or by broadcast section - e.g., Education or Outside Broadcasts. These can provide considerable external information on broadcasts and the public reaction to them. An X in this column means that clippings have been located and copies made for the TDRG files; an O means that there are no clippings.

f. Publications

The Archive holds copies of the Radio Times from 1923 to the present; The Listener (bound and indexed) from 1929 to the present; World Radio, London Calling, and BBC Year Book, all to the present. It also has a virtually complete set of other BBC publications, including schools broadcast pamphlets.

g. Miscellaneous

The Archive holds a range of other materials which may be of interest to the researcher, although little of this has been tapped for the purposes of this initial list. Such material includes scripts of news bulletins, Audience Research Reports, and private collections of broadcasting material held by the Archive.

h. Place/Type

Although for the purposes of this list the primary datum is an actual broadcast, other researchers may be interested in specific customs or locales, and in particular types of information (e.g., mumming texts as opposed to talks about mumming).

The location of a custom used or referred to in a broadcast can sometimes be rather vague or general, or indeed fictional. Where the place is known to be fictional it is put in brackets.

The type of the material broadcast is indicated by letters:

P: If a particular traditional custom has been broadcast; i.e., if a particular Performance gone out over the air.

I: If an Interview with a mummer or group of mummers has been broadcast.

E: If an amateur or other theatrical group has broadcast a mumming play version - Entertainment, Education, Emeteur (in early BBC pronunciation), etc.

T: If a Talk about mumming as such or a particular mumming has been broadcast.

The order in which a group of letters comes will indicate in a rough way which type of material predominates. For example, "PT" means that a performance of a mummers' play is accompanied by a talk, perhaps a brief introduction.

If one of the letters is in lower case it means that that type of material is significantly less important to the broadcast than the other. "Tp", for example, will indicate that a talk is illustrated by a very brief snippet from a mumming performance.

3. Other Signs/Abbreviations

The purpose of the list is to enable researchers to quickly and easily locate material of interest to them, while simultaneously indicating information gaps which they can help fill. Consequently, unless a certain type of file or material is positively indicated either by a reference number or by an X or an O it can be taken that the material has not been searched for. A reference number or X means that the material has been found; and while we do not want to discourage others from going over the same ground, an O indicates that a type of source has been queried and found empty of relevant material.

The following abbreviations used in the list are BBC conventions:

Broadcast Regions:	Service or Department:
N National	HS Home Service
LR London Region	LP Light Programme
MR Midland Region	OB Outside Broadcast
NR North Region	GOS General Overseas Services
WR West Region	
SR Scottish Region	
B Belfast	
NI Northern Ireland	

I have designated Radios 1, 2, 3 and 4 by R1, R2 etc.

The abbreviations used here for BBC publications are:

RT <u>Radio Times</u>
L <u>The Listener</u>
WoR <u>World Radio</u>
LC <u>London Calling</u>
YB <u>BBC Year Book</u>
PS <u>Publications for Schools</u>

ERD Signifies English Ritual Drama by E.C. Cawte, Alex Helm and N. Peacock (The Folk-Lore Society, London, 1967).

4. The List

This is meant to be a start-up list, and really only scratches the surface. In looking through the December 1937 Radio Times recently to check a reference found by Duncan Broomhead, for example, both his and another broadcast turned up and were added to the list. In Valerie Calvert's dissertation, The Pasche Egg (B.A., University of Leeds, 1962), she says on p. 41 that the Midgley play was "broadcast on the radio in 1931, 1932" and includes a newspaper clipping on p. 36 the original caption of which reads "The Midgley Players Who Broadcast in 1934". The English Ritual Drama source-list includes six BBC recordings not represented in the following list, though they were almost certainly recorded in order to be broadcast. English Dance and Song 18:2 (1953), p. 45, reports on the Midland Region programme "Children's Country Dance Party": "we have interludes of folk songs, mummers' plays...we used the Tollerton Mummers' Play...". And so on, indications of a wealth of material not represented in the list below. It won't take much work by people interested in 20th century British traditional drama to add considerably to it, and to compile in a relatively short time a comprehensive list of BBC material and broadcasts related to the mumming play.

DATE	24.12.1927
TIME	18.56-19.19
SERVICE	N
PROGRAMME	Denis Freeman and His Sussex Players: A Mummers' Play
SCRIPTS	
FILES	
PasB	X
PRESS CUTTINGS	
PUBLICATIONS	
MISCELLANEOUS	
PLACE	SUSSEX
TYPE	E

DATE	22.12.1931
TIME	
SERVICE	
PROGRAMME	Heigh Ho, The Holly
SCRIPTS	
FILES	
PasB	
PRESS CUTTINGS	See G.S.G., NQ 162 (1932), p.64,157.
PUBLICATIONS	
MISCELLANEOUS	
PLACE	E. SUSSEX, Crowhurst
TYPE	E (from P)

DATE	17.10.1934
TIME	20.00-
SERVICE	MR
PROGRAMME	The Microphone At Large
SCRIPTS	O
FILES	O
PasB	X
PRESS CUTTINGS	X
PUBLICATIONS	
MISCELLANEOUS	
PLACE	GLOUCESTERSHIRE, Chipping Campd
TYPE	P

DATE	31.10.1934
TIME	19.45-20.28
SERVICE	NR
PROGRAMME	'Nutcrack Night', or Hallowe'en in the No
SCRIPTS	
FILES	See N18/288 Artist:Boyd, A.W.
PasB	X
PRESS CUTTINGS	
PUBLICATIONS	RT 26.10.1934, 318; photo
MISCELLANEOUS	
PLACE	CHESHIRE, Comberbach
TYPE	PT

DATE 24.12.1935
 TIME 19.30-
 SERVICE
 PROGRAMME St. George and the Champions
 - A Traditional Christmas Mumming Play
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS RT 20.12.1935
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE SHROPSHIRE, Worthen
 TYPE E

DATE 1.11.1936
 TIME 17.43-18.00
 SERVICE NR
 PROGRAMME The Comberbach Mummers
 SCRIPTS
 FILES See N18/288 Artist:Boyd, A.W.
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE CHESHIRE, Comberbach
 TYPE PT

DATE 19.12.1936
 TIME 18.30-18.44
 SERVICE N
 PROGRAMME The Radio Gazette: A Recorded Review of
 Events at Home and Abroad
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE CORNWALL
 TYPE Tp

DATE 23.12.1936
 TIME 19.30-20.00
 SERVICE N
 PROGRAMME The World Goes By: The Mummers Come
 to Our Village (by Freddie Grisewood)
 Films 665/666, The World Goes By
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS see Freddie Grisewood, Our Bill
 (London, 1950), pp. 124-128
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE
 TYPE

DATE 4.1.1937
 TIME 20.10-20.50
 SERVICE WR
 PROGRAMME West Country Calendar - Twelfthtide.
 A Scrapbook of Old Christmas Customs
 in the West Country
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE CORNWALL, Madron (Guise Dance
 GLOUCESTERSHIRE, Marshfield
 (Paper Boys)
 DORSET, Dorchester (Mummers)
 DORSET, Evershot (Mummers)
 TYPE P

DATE 10.12.1937
 TIME 14.55
 SERVICE N
 PROGRAMME Junior English: A Mummers' Play (Sc
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE SUSSEX, Aldingbourne Council Sch
 TYPE E

DATE 21.12.1937
 TIME 20.00-20.30
 SERVICE MR
 PROGRAMME St. Thomas' Day: A Programme
 Specially Devised
 M27/32
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS The Worthen Players
 PLACE SHROPSHIRE? (see 24.12.1935)
 TYPE ET

DATE 24.12.1937
 TIME 21.10-
 SERVICE NR
 PROGRAMME Christian Men Rejoice!
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS RT 17.12.1937, p. 68 (Listing)
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE CHESHIRE, Alderley Park
 TYPE P?

DATE 30.12.1937
 TIME 20.30
 SERVICE Regional
 PROGRAMME A Grand Christmas Concert
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS RT 17.12.1937, 51
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE CORNWALL, Madron
 TYPE P

DATE 10.2.1938
 TIME 20.00-20.30
 SERVICE MR
 PROGRAMME Microphone At Large: A Visit to Uttoxeter
 SCRIPTS
 FILES OB Uttoxeter General File I, 1937-1946
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS RT 4.2.1938 (no mention of mummers)
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE STAFFORDSHIRE, Uttoxeter
 TYPE PT

DATE 30.10.1946
 TIME 18.25-18.30
 SERVICE NR
 PROGRAMME Topical Talk: On Soulcakers Custom
 SCRIPTS See Publications
 FILES N18/288 Artist: Boyd, A.W.
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS LC no. 377, 28.11.1946,3
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE CHESHIRE, Comberbach and Antrobus
 TYPE T

DATE 24.12.1946
 TIME 20.30-21.00
 SERVICE MR
 PROGRAMME St. George and the Dragon
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS RT 20.12.1946
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE STAFFORDSHIRE, Uttoxeter
 WORCESTERSHIRE, Malvern
 GLOUCESTERSHIRE, Chipping
 Campden
 TYPE PT

DATE 2.1.1955
 TIME 15.00
 SERVICE LP
 PROGRAMME Dear Sir: What's Happened
 to the Mummers?
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE
 TYPE

DATE 31.10.1957
 TIME 13.10-13.25
 SERVICE NR
 PROGRAMME The Week Ahead
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE CHESHIRE, Antrobus
 TYPE Tp

DATE 12.1.1958
 TIME 17.37-
 SERVICE TV
 PROGRAMME All Your Own
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE SUFFOLK, Stanstead (children)
 TYPE E

DATE 2.1.1959
 TIME 22.53-
 SERVICE MRTV
 PROGRAMME The Midlander No. 4
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE COTSWOLD
 TYPE E

DATE	24.12.1961	DATE	28.12.1962
TIME	13.10-	TIME	
SERVICE	HS (R4)	SERVICE	WR
PROGRAMME	The Countryside at Christmas	PROGRAMME	Round Up
SCRIPTS		SCRIPTS	
FILES		FILES	
PasB	X	PasB	
PRESS CUTTINGS		PRESS CUTTINGS	
PUBLICATIONS		PUBLICATIONS	
MISCELLANEOUS	Pre-recorded 15.12.1961, CT BS 9764	MISCELLANEOUS	
PLACE	WESSEX	PLACE	GLOUCESTERSHIRE, Marshfield
TYPE	T?	TYPE	I
<hr/>			
DATE	27.12.1961	DATE	24.12.1963
TIME	17.31-	TIME	16.30-
SERVICE	LP	SERVICE	HS
PROGRAMME	Roundabout	PROGRAMME	"Brought Up in the Cotswolds" [Freddie Grisewood]
SCRIPTS		SCRIPTS	
FILES		FILES	
PasB	X	PasB	
PRESS CUTTINGS		PRESS CUTTINGS	
PUBLICATIONS		PUBLICATIONS	
MISCELLANEOUS	Pre-recorded 18.12.1961, TLO 73776	MISCELLANEOUS	ERD (GBBC)
PLACE	SUSSEX	PLACE	Cotswold
TYPE	T	TYPE	
<hr/>			
DATE	22.3.1962	DATE	22.4.1964
TIME	21.30-	TIME	21.00-
SERVICE	NR	SERVICE	HS
PROGRAMME	The Northcountryman	PROGRAMME	"One Man's Way", Michael J. Murphy
SCRIPTS		SCRIPTS	
FILES		FILES	
PasB	X	PasB	
PRESS CUTTINGS		PRESS CUTTINGS	
PUBLICATIONS		PUBLICATIONS	
MISCELLANEOUS		MISCELLANEOUS	ERD (MBBC)
PLACE		PLACE	IRELAND, Drumintree
TYPE	TE	TYPE	T
<hr/>			
DATE	19.12.1962	DATE	24.12.1964
TIME	07.15	TIME	16.30-17.25
SERVICE	NR	SERVICE	HS
PROGRAMME	Today in the North	PROGRAMME	Home This Afternoon
SCRIPTS		SCRIPTS	Film 218
FILES		FILES	
PasB	X	PasB	X
PRESS CUTTINGS		PRESS CUTTINGS	
PUBLICATIONS		PUBLICATIONS	
MISCELLANEOUS	Pre-recorded 18.12.1962, TLS 60693	MISCELLANEOUS	Rebroadcast of 23.12.1936, R.P. Ref. No TLO 54413
PLACE		PLACE	Cotswold
TYPE	T	TYPE	

DATE 9.4.1965
 TIME 16.45
 SERVICE NRHS
 PROGRAMME Home This Afternoon
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS Pre-recorded 2.3.1965, TMR 38521
 PLACE
 TYPE T

DATE 23.12.1965
 TIME 16.45-
 SERVICE HS
 PROGRAMME Home This Afternoon
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS Pre-recorded 7.12.1965, TLS 62961
 TMR 42230
 PLACE
 TYPE

DATE 27.12.1965
 TIME 19.00-
 SERVICE LP
 PROGRAMME News and Radio Newsreel
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS Edgar Lewis rec. 27.12.1965,
 YHN 3761, NT 25476
 PLACE GLOUCESTERSHIRE, Marshfield
 TYPE I

DATE 29.12.1965
 TIME 18.32-
 SERVICE NR
 PROGRAMME Reporter at Large
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS Pre-recorded 28.12.1965, YMC 40603
 PLACE
 TYPE

DATE 15.9.1967
 TIME 17.55-18.14
 SERVICE TV
 PROGRAMME Look North
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE DURHAM, Darlington (at
 Richmondshire Festival of Folklore)
 TYPE TI

DATE 27.12.1967
 TIME
 SERVICE TV
 PROGRAMME Points West
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE GLOUCESTERSHIRE, Marshfield
 TYPE

DATE 18.11.1968
 TIME 14.00-14.17
 SERVICE R4 Schools
 PROGRAMME Springboard - Mummies' Play No. 1
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE
 TYPE TE

DATE 25.11.1968
 TIME 14.00-14.19
 SERVICE R4 Schools
 PROGRAMME Springboard - Mummies' Play No. 2
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE
 TYPE TE

DATE 29.11.1968
 TIME 09.55-
 SERVICE NIHS (Schools)
 PROGRAMME Today and Yesterday - Mummers
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS Rec. No. TBE 44/UE096U "Mummers"
 PLACE
 TYPE TE

DATE 21.12.1970
 TIME 09.05-
 SERVICE R4
 PROGRAMME Start the Week With Richard Baker
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS F Grisewood - rec. 5.11.1963,
 LP 28297
 PLACE COTSWOLD
 TYPE TE

DATE 16.6.1972
 TIME 11.40-
 SERVICE R4
 PROGRAMME A Sense of Place
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE
 TYPE T

DATE 21.12.1972
 TIME 07.00
 SERVICE R4
 PROGRAMME Today
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE COTSWOLD (Waterley Bottom)
 TYPE PI

DATE(S) 16.1.1974/ 23.1.1974/ 30.1.1974/
 6.2.1974
 TIME 14.00-14.20
 SERVICE R4 Schools
 PROGRAMME Series: Movement, Mime
 and Music Stage I:
 Broadcast 11: "Preparation for a
 Mummers' Play"
 Broadcast 12: "Mummers' Play
 Continued"
 Broadcast 13: "Mummers' Play
 Continued"
 Broadcast 14: "Mummers' Play
 Practice Followed by Performan
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS Teacher's Notes: Movement, Mime
 and Music Stage I,
 Spring 1974, p. 6-15
 MISCELLANEOUS Repeat of 1971-72 series
 PLACE
 TYPE E

DATE 11.9.1976
 TIME 13.00-
 SERVICE R3
 PROGRAMME Heritage
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB X
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS
 MISCELLANEOUS First broadcast 4.1.1937,
 BBC MT 14288
 PLACE DORSET, Dorchester
 TYPE P

DATE 24.12.1986
 TIME 21.00
 SERVICE R2
 PROGRAMME A Good Ol' Dorset Christmas
 SCRIPTS
 FILES
 PasB
 PRESS CUTTINGS
 PUBLICATIONS RT 20.12.1986 (listing)
 MISCELLANEOUS
 PLACE DORSET, Symondsburly
 TYPE P

— end BITS and Pieces —

Contributed by George Frampton:

From Edwin Harris, "Recollections of Rochester: No. 8 - Further Reminiscences of the Old Stone Pump - Customs and Changes in Eastgate", Chatham and Rochester Observer 22.4.1932 [As told to a policeman by a redundant public water pump] :

I always looked forward to Christmastide, but now THE OLD CUSTOMS are dying out, amongst them "The Seven Champions of Christendom." These "champions" used to make a tour of the publichouses and I always saw them perform in the Queen Charlotte opposite. They were young men dressed up to represent St. George for England, St. Andrew for Scotland, St. Patrick for Ireland, St. David for Wales, St. Denis for France, St. James for Spain, St. Anthony for Italy; also there was another representing a doctor. Their performance consisted in each reciting some doggerel, winding up with a sword fight. Some of the champions are wounded and the doctor, coming to their aid, performs a short and wonderful cure, whereon a collection is made and the Seven Champions move on to the next licensed house and repeat the performance.

Another Christmas sight was "Old Father Christmas," who was usually a young child dressed and bearded to represent the character; he was carried shoulder high by two bigger boys. This young Old Father Christmas was seated in a bower of evergreens and made a very attractive little show and the party, being all children, came in for a very liberal share of Christmas coppers.

[*Shades of Thomassing, "penny for the guy", May Day and Jack in the Green all rolled into one! The article includes further notes on handbell ringers and Christmas waits. - ed.*]

From Plaxtol - A Kentish Village (Plaxtol W.I., 1957), p. 56:

The Mummers

70 years ago, the mummers used to go round the village during the twelve days of Christmas. Some dressed as soldiers and would fight with swords, and others dressed as doctors who would attend the wounded, reciting:

"I can cure your pain within or without,
And also I can give you some pills for the gout."

After the entertainment, the actors were given home-made wine, cakes and sweetmeats.

From Frank Chapman, Yesterday's Town - Tonbridge (Barracuda, 1982), p. 94:

Early this century, Tonbridge had a colourful group of mummers called the Seven Champions. Two weeks before Christmas, the group, Father Chris, the Turkish Knight, George III, the Bull Slasher and others did the rounds of the great houses, led by Ernie Chandler who threw open the door declaring "Here I come old Father Chris. Am I welcome or am I not". Of course he was welcome - and expected - and the play would go on until the King's son was struck down in a fight with the Turkish Knight and restored by the Doctor (the smallest member of the group). Every evening the mummers tramped round singing carols to a mouth organ, and enjoying generous hospitality. Their favourite call was Fairlawne, Shipbourne, where the Cazalet family provided a hot meal. The costumes and words of the play handed down in families were lost as the young men moved away, ending a Tonbridge tradition of more than a hundred years. In 1904 the collection from the big houses, and the pubs where the mummers also played, was £4 11s each, a good sum in those days.

Contributed by Steve Roud:

From Ida Gandy, A Wiltshire Childhood [Bishop Cannings], first published by Allen and Unwin in 1929, republished by Alan Sutton in collaboration with Wiltshire County Council Library and Museum Service, 1988; pp. 192-193 [The author is staying with an old native lady] :

When we had all breakfasted she took us into the garden to show us her flowers, and particularly a strange plant with yellow blossoms called ellercampane, which, according to her, was a famous remedy for indigestion. She told us that every autumn she dried a piece of the root, and then, when the pain came, she would grind up "as much as would lay on a sixpence", and soon she would be well again. Though the ellercampane was evidently the apple of her eye, she generously dug up a root for us to take home against the day when we should ourselves be seized by indigestion.

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