

ROOMER

An occasional newsletter for researchers
in Traditional Drama. Vol 1:5 (1981)



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AMENDMENTS TO 'ENGLISH RITUAL DRAMA'

E.C.Cawte

Since the preparation of English Ritual Drama a quantity of further evidence has become available and a few errors have been found. The following is a list of alterations which require no additional references and no additional locations, only amendments to existing entries.

Unless otherwise stated, the entry in ERD is to be left as it is apart from the specified amendment, which is to replace the existing entry or blank space. The number at the left margin is the page-number in ERD.

CHESHIRE

41 Tarvin SJ 4967

CORNWALL

42 (See Roomer Vol. I No. 1 p.5)

DERBYSHIRE

42 It appears to me that all the places marked d/H, citing Shipley MS in Vauc, could reasonably be classified as H/.

43 Ironville Delete entirely. Another copy of the same MS in the Barley Collection, although it is headed 'Ironville', has a MS note by Barley that it was really from Underwood, Notts.

DORSET

44 Dorchester Delete entirely. Evidence is limited to one BBC performance, and subsequent evidence suggests the play came from West Lulworth.

44 Shillingstone Delete Christmas H/

HUNTINGDONSHIRE

48 Great Gransden Delete entirely. The source for Tebl has been found, and there is no evidence for this type of drama.

LANCASHIRE

49 Unsworth Delete entirely. Error for Radcliffe.

LEICESTERSHIRE

50 North Kilworth c.1866

LINCOLNSHIRE

50 Bicker Delete entirely. No evidence in the MS for a play and Mrs. E.H.Rudkin says the evidence is only for a title for some performance, and should not be taken to imply a play.

50 Boston Delete entirely. No evidence in Barley MS, and MWB thinks it is a misprint for Baston.

51 Digby c.1880

51 Donington Delete entirely. Same as Bicker.

51 Dunsby Amend to Dowsby TF 1129 F W/H

51 Goxhill Delete entirely. Same as Bicker.

51 Langton Delete entirely. No evidence for a performance from Langton, and much of the evidence is clearly from elsewhere.

51 Lenton d/v

52 Lusby Delete entirely. Text from Tathwell, and the performance at Lusby was short-lived, by a drama group, and modified. Reasons for deletion are made clear in the Hamer and Rudkin MSS.

52 Moulton Delete entirely. No record in the Barley MS, and MWB thinks it is an abbreviation for Moulton Seas End.

52 Scotter */H

52 Swineshead Delete entirely. Same as Bicker.

52 Thealby W/H

52 Thornton Curtis */H

52 Wellingore F W/H

52 Walton d/

52 Whitton W/H

52 Willoughton */H

52 Wispington NT

52 Woodhall Spa Delete entirely. No evidence for a resident team.

52 Wootton */H

NORTHANTS

54 Peakirk 19cty AnPA (Delete DacP)

54 Peterborough Delete DacP (These errors arose from a faulty transcription of the two sources sent to the Helm collection. The originals have now been examined).

54

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

54 Basford SK 5542
 55 Caunton Plough Monday
 55 East Bridgford c.1912
 55 East Markham c.1870
 55 Edingley New Year
 55 Jacksdale 1945 (Note Ordnance Survey spelling)
 55 Laxton */H
 55 Norwell w/H
 55 Walesby Christmas
 55 Whatton w/H
 55 Woodborough c.1900
 55 Worksop Plough Monday

RUTLAND

57 Empingham Late 19cty w/H
 57 Oakham Delete entirely. The copy in HelC is headed 'Clipsham, Oakham, Rutland' - presumably Oakham was the postal address for Clipsham. The text appears to have been copied from the Clipsham text in the Rutland Magazine (ChRM)

STAFFORDSHIRE

58 Ashley Delete Christmas d/

WARWICKSHIRE

60 Churchover Delete Christmas
 60 Leamington Hastings Delete entirely. The footnote is misleading. There is no text in OrdC, but Mrs. Eden mentions that she has the text, twice saying 'Leamington Hastings' and once 'Broadwell in the parish of Leamington Hastings'. There is another example of her confusion when she lists a text under both the village and the parish. Ordish listed this text as Broadwell in a report (unpublished in OrdC) to the Folklore Society. It is presumably this text from the Eden collection which was printed in GatL as Broadwell, but the Eden MSS seem to have been lost since that publication. There is no sound evidence for a Leamington Hastings performance, and none at all for a text.

YORKSHIRE (EAST RIDING)

62 Hutton Cranswick Amend location to Cranswick, clearly names in the original MS. Grid reference unchanged.

YORKSHIRE (NORTH RIDING)

63 Tunstall SE 2195

YORKSHIRE (WEST RIDING)

63 Anston Delete entirely. No evidence for drama of the type listed in this book.

64 Bingley (b) New Year

65 Shadwell SE 3439

65 Snaith SE 6422

65 Thorpe Salvin Delete entirely. Same as Aston

ANTRIM

68 Aughacully Note spelling

68 Ballintoy F

TYRONE

71 Dunnamanagh 1940

71 Spamount 1967

TEXTS

78 Gainford The information from Gainford has been taken from an inaccurate transcript. There are only minor errors in the text, but the initial description is a summary of seventeen pages of letters.

REFERENCES

- 95 AFLb Amend to read: R.C.Maclagan : 'Additions to The Games of Argyleshire', Folklore XVI 1905, 211.
- 100 BraP Add : Oxford Archaeological Society Report for the year 1936 No.82, 134.
- 106 DacA Delete detail after Along : Add : Dorchester (Dorset Federation of Women's Institutes 1935), 95.
- 106 DacP Delete entirely.
- 111 HacF For Staffs. read Staffordshire .
- 111 HagA For Hagan read Hagen (Proof correction not corrected).
- 125 RuFL For Play read Plays.
- 126 SeRM For Mummers' read Mummer's (Another missed correction)
- 130 WarR Author, Edwin M. Ware : Title, St. Edmunds (Northwood Hills) Review .

N.B. We hope to include further additions & corrections to English Ritual Drama, provided by Dr. Cawte, in future issues of ROOMER.

MUMMERS IN LEEDS, 1713

Thomas Pettitt

To the historian of traditional customs any reference, however slight, to such practises before say the middle of the eighteenth century is of interest. Just such a brief reference, apparently not noted in this connection before, appeared recently in A. C. Cawley's study of "Thoresby and Later Owners of the Manuscript of the York Plays (BL Additional MS 35290)", Leeds Studies in English, n.s. XI (1979), 74-89. Cawley quotes (p.76) the following entry from The Diary of Ralph Thoresby, ed. Joseph Hunter, 2 vols. (London, 1830), II, 198, for 31 December, 1713:

'Read and wrote all day, save usual attendance at church. Evening, had company of brother Thoresby's children to close up the year; was disturbed with foolish, or rather sinful mummings, and was perhaps to zealous to repress them. Lord pity and pardon!'

The date and context strongly suggest that the unfortunate mummings who disturbed the Thoresby household's pious domestic celebration of the New Year hoped to offer a folk play. Since it was probably people like Thoresby (and the Methodists who have figured in recent pages of Roomer) who contributed significantly to the decline of traditional drama in England we may hope that the celestial pity and pardon earnestly requested by the diarist was obtained at the expense of some due and appropriate penance.

SPOT THE MISTAKES

The following is a short piece, reproduced by kind permission of the editors, from the Family Circle, 17:II (Nov 1980), 133. The item contains a few mistakes and we are offering an appropriate prize for the person who, firstly, spots the most number of errors and, secondly, presents the criticism in the most original form for publication in Roomer. As a starter for ten, as it were, the item is headed by a photograph of the Antrobus Souling Gang (1979) with the caption, Great Budworth's Soul Cakers in Full Costume.

'Soul Caking Play, Cheshire'

'On All Souls' Day, November 1, groups of children in Cheshire go out 'Souling' - singing traditional songs and begging for gifts of sweets, cake or money. An old rhyme goes: If you haven't a penny, a ha'penny will do. If you haven't a ha'penny, God bless you.'

In days past men and women went souling, hoping for the charity of their rich neighbours. Alms of all kinds were handed out, including specially-made Soul Cakes. These were usually flat spicy buns or small loaves. Frumenty, a wheat-based pudding sweetened with treacle, was another popular alms gift.

A Soul Caking Play is performed near All Souls' Night in the village of Great Budworth by the local Soul Cakers, a mumming company. It is a version of the St. George Play, with a horse instead of a dragon, and has been acted since pre-Reformation times. It's played in the round in pantomime style. St. George fights and mortally wounds the Black Prince, whose mother (always played by a man) arrives and calls the Doctor. The Doctor waves a large bottle containing a vile potion and is closely followed by a horse's head mounted on a broomstick, known as the Hodening Horse. The horse prances around the audience, sitting on laps, stamping and neighing and causing great hilarity. The words of the play have remained unchanged for many years, so most of the audience know them by heart - heaven help any actor who fluffs his lines!

The Soul Caking Play is so named because the actors were given the spiced buns as they made their rounds. It is performed on the Saturday nearest November 11, which is All Souls' Day before the calendar was changed in 1582.'

This is the first part of an Interim Directory of Traditional Drama Researchers Specialist Interests. If you could like to be included in subsequent lists, or if you wish for an existing entry to be expanded, please forward details as soon as possible.

David Bathe, 257 Starkholmes Road, Matlock, Derbyshire.
Derbyshire Plays and Related Customs

Roly Brown, Ailsa Craig, Hampstead Norreys Road, Little Hungerford, Hermitage, Berks.
Berkshire Plays and Related Customs

Christine Bloxham, Oxfordshire County Museum, Fletcher's House, Woodstock, Oxford.
Oxfordshire Plays and related Customs

Duncan Broomhead, 23 Bray Close, Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire. SK8 6DQ
Plays and Related Customs from Cheshire and South Lancashire

Christopher Cawte, 51 Station Road, Ibstock, Leicester. LE6 1JL
Traditional Drama in general. Particular areas of interest are Plough Monday Traditions and Wooing Plays

Sue Harris, 86 Beech Road, Wheatley, Oxford.
Antrobus Soulers and Plays and Related Customs in Oxfordshire

Brian Haywood, 59 Beech Avenue, Bearsden, Glasgow.
Dramatic Traditions in Scotland and Gloucestershire.

Idwal Jones, 16 Wensley Road, Woodthorpe, Nottingham
Nottinghamshire Plays and Related Customs

Peter Millington, 6 The Pingle, Long Eaton, Nottingham.
Plays and Related Customs in Nottinghamshire and the surrounding Counties. Also Plough Monday Traditions and Statistical Analysis of Plays.

Tom Pettitt, Dept of English, Odense University, Campusvej 55, DK 5230 Odense M, Denmark
Traditional Drama in General. Particular interests include Dramaturgy and Traditional Drama prior to 1800

Mike Preston, 101 Hellems, Campus Box 226, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado 80309, U.S.A.

All Aspects of British and Irish Traditional Drama. Also Computer Analysis of Texts and Computer Mapping of Selected Features of Plays

Doc Rowe, c/o 2A Westfield Road, Bramley, Rotherham, Yorkshire.
Plays and Related Traditions from Cornwall, Devon and Sussex

Derek Schofield, 10 Addison Close, Wistaston, Crewe.
Plays and Related Customs in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire.

Paul Smith, 2A Westfield Road, Bramley, Rotherham, Yorkshire.
All aspects of Traditional Drama throughout the English Speaking World. Particular interests include the extant British Tradition, Chapbooks, Reevesby, Computer and Statistical Analysis of Texts and Contexts of Performance and Computer Mapping of selected features of Plays.

Steve Roud, 22 Adelaide Road, Andover, Hants.
Plays and Related Customs in the South of England, with particular reference to Berkshire, Hampshire and Wiltshire.

Carl Willetts, 7 Beckenham Drive, Allington Park, Maidstone, Kent. ME16 0TG
Plays and Related Customs in Kent

TRADITIONAL DRAMA 1981THE FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF CURRENT RESEARCH ON TRADITIONAL DRAMA

Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language, University of Sheffield.
Saturday 10th October 1981

Traditional drama has been a major focus of British folkloristic research since the late nineteenth century. However, until comparatively recently, discussion has generally concentrated on attempts to reconstruct the source of the action of the plays in the religious rituals of pre-history. Although this orientation and its conceptual basis are still often referred to, over the past ten years a growing body of criticism of origin theory as a framework for research has developed. In its place a more rational view has developed. In order to provide a forum whereby such ideas could be expressed and debated, in 1978 the first conference solely devoted to traditional drama was sponsored by the Division of Continuing Education and the Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language at the University of Sheffield. The papers presented over the past years have suggested a wide range of alternative and innovative approaches to this area of study and the 1981 meeting will again follow in this tradition. This year's conference consists of a mixture of formal papers and discussion forums. Speakers confirmed so far include Brian Haywood, Thomas Pettitt, Paul Smith and John Widdowson. In addition, the newly formed Traditional Drama Research Group will be hosting a forum chaired by Steve Roud. Two film sessions are also scheduled and an exhibition of photographs is to be mounted.

For further information regarding the conference please write to:

Traditional Drama 1981, The Centre for English Cultural Tradition and Language,
The University, Sheffield. S10 2TN

TRADITIONAL DRAMA RESEARCH GROUP

The inaugural meeting of the Traditional Drama Research Group was held in London on 27th June, 1981. Present were Doc Rowe, Peter Stevenson, Peter Millington, Derek Schofield, Paul Smith and Steve Roud. The day was spent in finalising details of the Co-operative Indexing Scheme, discussing the practicalities of founding a Central Archive of Traditional Drama materials and developing a publications policy. With regard to the latter it was decided that the Group would take over responsibility for the publication of the newsletter Roomer from the start of Vol. 2:I (1982). In addition, a series of Geographical County Indexes of Traditional Drama materials was planned and the possibility of publishing a series of short monographs was considered. The Indexing Scheme should be in operation in the near future and further Group meetings have been planned for the autumn.

For further details of the Group's work please contact the editors.

ANDOVER MUMMERS

Steve Roud

Alex Helm, in The English Mummings' Play (Folklore Society, 1981) p.43, gives a misleading impression of the head-gear worn by the Andover Mummings. Referring to the hats worn at Midgley (West Riding, Yorks. SE 0326) he writes:

"these very elaborate headdresses are reminiscent of those worn by the Andover Jolly Jacks which are equally distinctive in their own way".

Apart from the fact that the Andover gang were known as 'Johnny Jacks', my point is that it is only one of the Andover characters (King George) whose hat bears much resemblance to those from Midgley. It is this character that is shown in the photograph, taken about 1950, and given by Helm. The others in the gang, apart from Father Christmas who wore a red robe and hood, wore fairly 'standard' North Hampshire hats made of cardboard with wallpaper 'streamers', albeit rather short ones.

The Andover men referred to King George's hat as his 'crown', which is what it resembles, but whether the shape suggested the name, or the other way round, is impossible to say.



Lady's Pictorial (Dec. 27, 1895) p.1007.

PUBLICATIONS NEWS

Recent Publications

The New Christmas Rhyme Book (A facsimile of one of the J. Nicholson, Belfast editions) Available from Anne and Peter Stockham, 57 Barham Avenue, Elstree, Herts.

John C. Coldeney, 'The Records of Early English Drama in Nottinghamshire', Bulletin of Local History - East Midland Region XV (1980), 9-10.

Alex Helm, The English Mummers' Play, (D. S. Brewer: Woodbridge, 1981) 116 pp, (£17.50)

Thomas Pettitt, 'English Folk Drama in the Eighteenth Century: A Defense of the Revesby Sword Play', Comparative Drama XV (1981), 3-29.

Gerald M. Sider, Mumming in Outport Newfoundland, (New Hogtown Press: Toronto, 1977) 32 pp, (\$0.80). This is a reprint of an article which originally appeared in Past and Present 71 (May 1976), 102-125.

ROOMER: AN OCCASIONAL NEWSLETTER FOR RESEARCHERS IN TRADITIONAL DRAMA

Research in any field is, as often as not, hampered by the lack of communication between individual researchers, and Traditional Drama is no exception. We are acutely aware that there are many people doing valuable work who have little or no contact with others in this field and, consequently, no opportunity to compare notes or air their views.

ROOMER then is designed to fill this gap by providing an informal forum. It includes notes and queries, details of publications, out-of-the-way texts, information on work in progress, in fact anything that may be of interest to those working in the field of Traditional Drama. As such it relies heavily on participation by subscribers. Therefore, if you have any potential contributions we would be most grateful to receive them.

In addition, we plan to prepare a series of occasional publications dealing with various aspects of Traditional Drama research. Suggestions for suitable topics or items for inclusion in this series are most welcome.

We hope you find this issue of ROOMER useful. If you would like further details please contact the editors.

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Garland films



DERBY TUP

A film of a Christmas mumming play from Ridgeway, Derbyshire, England.

"A well-produced and sympathetic description of a little known fascinating custom."
Bill Leader, Leader Records.

"Derby Tup is one of the most important documentary films in the field of English folk custom. Genuine, scholarly, and a sensitive product of the film-maker's craft, it deserves to be widely seen and appreciated." S.F. Sanderson M.A., Director of the Institute of Dialect and Folklife Studies, Leeds University.

Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, Llewellyn Jewitt, author of Derbyshire Ballads observed that the play of the Derby Tup or Old Tup had long since died out in Derby itself, and yet in the 1970s it is very much an ongoing tradition in the north-east of the county. As to its pedigree little has been recorded, but even back in the seventh century, Archbishop Theodorus attempted to stamp out such heathen practices obviously without much success.

The idea for the film first evolved when Ian Russell, working with The Survey of Language and Folklore at Sheffield University, became acutely aware of the shortcomings of sound tape and still photographs in his research. An association with Barry Callaghan, a Sheffield film-maker, made the ideal method of recording attainable and filming went ahead over the Christmas seasons of 1971 and 1972. Most of the film is "field recording" being shot completely in context as the crew followed the boys around the local pubs.

Although the Ridgeway version is not unique in its survival, it is, in Ian Russell's opinion, the most spectacular, and his comments help to dispel some of the sentimental thinking that surrounds such traditions. The film is black and white, 16mm with optical soundtrack, and lasts for 15 minutes approximately. It comes with a set of notes which include full musical transcriptions, a selected bibliography and map. It is not only of special relevance to audiences in the educational sphere whose interests include aspects of folk life, oral tradition, popular culture, drama, local history, or folk music but it is also suitable for showing to any general audience.

Garland Films, Bridge House, Unstone, Sheffield S18 5AF.