

The Alderley Mummers' Play: A Story of Survival and Revival

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The Alderley Mummer's Play was performed almost exclusively at Alderley Park, in east Cheshire, the family seat of the Stanley family.¹ In common with other plays from the county, it is a Hero Combat Play and the cast list includes a real horses head. It does, however, differ from the large family of plays that are centred around mid Cheshire both textually and in its time of appearance. The Alderley play being one of the few from the county to be performed during the Christmas / New year period rather than the more usual time of late October early November, or as it was known locally as, 'Souling time'.

The story of the Alderley Mummers is very much the story of two families: - the Barber family who were the performers and the Stanley family who were the patrons, two families from opposite ends of the social spectrum.

It was the proud boast of the Barber family that only men bearing their family name had ever acted in the play. They were a large and well established farming family in the district and Brynlow Farm, on the Alderley Park Estate, was the family farm for over 300 years. While the many family members were farmers, others were employed on the Alderley Park Estate.

The second family in the story is the Stanleys, owners of the four and a half thousand acre Alderley Park Estate and patrons of the Alderley Mummers Play. This family moved in the country's highest political and social circles, a family with the patriarchal outlook of the period towards their tenants and staff.

Due to this unique two family combination, it is possible to take you through entire the life history of the Mumming Play, a time span of about 150 years that covers the period of the first six Lord Stanleys of Alderley, and four generations of the Barber family. The mixed fortunes of the Mummer's Play depended very much on the whims and fancies of the successive heirs to the title.

Pre 1850 - (1st Lord Stanley)

Barber family history credits Samuel Barber, [photograph 1] his brother William and some of their cousins with reviving the play. Although the actual date of this revival is uncertain, a conservative estimate puts it at around 1820. This was during the lifetime of John Thomas Stanley, the 1st Lord Stanley of Alderley, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a keen local historian. During the late 1790's, Lord Stanley collected and published material on a wide variety of local customs and pastimes yet significantly, he makes no mention of mumming being performed during this period of collecting.

It is uncertain where Samuel and William obtained their play text, and family oral history is rather vague on this point. There is a suggestion that they learnt their version from the last of a previous generation of local Mummers, but this is far from certain.² Intriguingly there is a play from Cheshire, in the Douce Collection, at the Bodleian Library, with a performance date given as 'prior to 1788'.³

Textual analysis of this manuscript shows striking similarities to the Alderley Mummer's Play, and is closer to that text than to any other known play text from the county. I will stop short of saying that it was the source of the Alderley text, but its similarities should not be ignored. It is of course, quite feasible that the Barbers did learn their play from someone in their neighbourhood or even another family member. It is also possible that the 1st Lord Stanley, through his antiquarian contacts, may have been aware of the existence of the Douce text, and brought that version, to the attention of the Barbers.

The first written evidence we have of Mumming or similar activities at Alderley Park is contained in newspaper reports from January 1824. Lord and Lady Stanley were celebrating the coming of age of their twin sons Edward John and William Owen Stanley, and held a series of celebrations, dances and dinners every day, for a full week.⁴

The Chester Chronicle,⁵ reporting on these festivities, gives only the briefest of references, reporting that "the usual Christmas gambols of the horse's head and mummers, with various other pastimes." took place. The Manchester Mercury,⁶ also reporting on the celebrations wrote, "The company received much pleasure from various amusements, such as the hermit, (the character of which admirably supported, the wild man, old hob, &.&"). It is uncertain what the roles of the wild man and the hermit were but Old Hob was a recognised name for a horse's head custom in the immediate vicinity⁷ and elsewhere in Cheshire.⁸ It is also unclear from the way the two newspaper reports were written, if there were two different Horse's Head customs on separate nights or if it was just the one event reported differently.

1850 to 1869 - (2nd Lord Stanley)

The next report of Mumming at Alderley Park is 35 years later. The old Lord has died and the eldest of the twins, Edward John Stanley, a Member of Parliament, a strong Liberal and a member of Palmerston's Cabinet, has become the 2nd Lord Stanley.⁹

In 1859, his 15 year old daughter Kate Stanley wrote two letters about a gang of Soulers who had recently visited the servants' quarters at Alderley Park. To her brother Lyulph, she wrote:

We had some men here the other day who go about beautifully got up and with a regular Mummers Horse: they go and act at the Farms, that is to say sing, for there is no acting, only a prancing about on the part of the horse. I wish we could get them something short and easy to act; of course they could not invent it themselves and they are the only idea the people have of the Mummers, as the Barbers never act but here. Philip Potts, ex footman was at the head of them.¹⁰

In the other letter, this time to her mother, Kate said that she had heard singing and guessed it was the Soulers. Later in the letter she complains that the Soulers were not allowed near the stone stairs where the chamber maids were, and that father thought it very slow because there was no chase after the maids. She concludes "it is to be hoped we shall have one this Christmas".

The kind of Souling custom she refers to, a singing custom with a horse's skull but no play was quite widespread throughout south and east of Cheshire. Neither was the district of Alderley unique in having the two separate customs of Souling and Mumming recorded in the same location.¹¹

The letter shows that Kate was familiar with both customs and it can be seen that the Barbers were by then an established part of the Christmas celebrations at Alderley Park, with the Stanleys considering the Alderley Mummers as 'their own'. For some reason Kate seemed rather dismissive of the Souler's perceived inability to "invent" a play of their own. Perhaps this is another indication that the Stanley's might have provided the text for Samuel and William Barber.

When she grew up, Kate married Lord Amberley, and was the mother of the philosopher and anti nuclear campaigner, Bertrand Russell.¹²

1869 to 1903 - (3rd Lord Stanley)

The 3rd Lord Stanley of Alderley, Henry Edward succeeded to the title in 1869, until his death in 1903. He was a Diplomat with a passion for Africa and the East. The 3rd Lord became a Moslem. Showing an independence of belief within the family, his younger brother was an Agnostic; another became a Roman Catholic Bishop while two others were Anglicans. The 3rd Lord had three marriage ceremonies to a Spanish lady called Fabia, but none of them were valid because she was a bigamist, still having a husband in Spain. After her death, her name was subsequently struck out of Debretts by the 4th Lord Stanley.¹³

It was during the life of the 3rd Lord Stanley, that Mumming went into decline and finally stopped. Initially it stopped at the Hall and the Mummers changed to visiting the large houses and farms in the Nether Alderley district instead. This only carried on for a few years before Mumming finished altogether. Alec Barber recalls his mother telling him about such a visit to her parents' smithy in neighbouring Birtles, during the mid 1880's. She was a young girl but remembered them busting in through the door and striking the stone flag stone floor with their swords, making sparks fly up.¹⁴

There is a suggestion that during this period the time of performance also changed to All Souls.¹⁵ If this was the case, it may be no coincidence that Philip Potts, the Souler from 1859, was by then a neighbour of the Barber family¹⁶ and probably worked with John Barber,¹⁷ both men being gamekeepers.

1903 to 1925 - (4th Lord Stanley)

In 1903 the 4th Lord Stanley of Alderley, Edward Lyulph, the Agnostic, the recipient of Kate Stanley's letter about Souling, succeeded to the title.¹⁸ He soon expressed a desire that the Mummers should be revived and by 1907 they were again a regular feature of the Christmas festivities.¹⁹

The next three decades proved to be a golden age for the Alderley Mummers. The Christmas festivities at Alderley Park went on for several days; the Hall was decorated and would be full of guests, who enjoyed different entertainments on successive nights. One of these entertainments was a large scale party for the house guests, the local schoolchildren and the elderly of the estate. This took place in the Tenants Hall, the children and the elderly were given Christmas gifts by the Stanley's and it was on that evening that the Mummers would perform.

The association between the two families started to develop beyond just Mumming Plays and when, in 1912, Venetia Stanley produced the pantomime 'Aladdin.' some of

the Barber family took part. While her family and friends took the leading roles, members of the Barber family took on some of minor roles. George Barber who played St George in the Mummer's Play, took the part of the Emperor Ching Chang Chi, and according to the local newspaper he "showed all the dignity that befitted the role".²⁰

Other recruits into the pantomime were his nephews Clement Barber, aged 12, who played 'Asbestos - the Spirit of the Lamp.' and Alec Barber aged 8, who played one of the soldiers. These productions were on quite a lavish scale, with performances on two successive nights and costumes specially brought in from London and Manchester. Both Clement and Alec Barber would later become leading members of Alderley Mummies.

The following year, the sixty year old Prime Minister Mr. Asquith, visited Alderley Park and saw the Mummies and as part of the Christmas entertainments Venetia Stanley, a childhood friend of the Premier's daughter, produced a "Variety Evening".²¹ It is said, that despite being nearly three times her age, Asquith fell in love with Kate and was besotted with her. She was a colourful character, described as a "beguiling mistress of beauty, candour and seductiveness - a free spirit with a sense of sin". Later, when she unexpectedly married a close friend of Asquith, it left him a shattered man, with no heart for Parliamentary struggles. This episode is credited, with being the start of the demise, of the Liberal Party.²²

The visit of Asquith at Alderley Park created press interest in the Mummies and it is from then that we have our first photograph of the Mummies. [photograph 2] Although it is very grainy, it shows St George standing over the kneeling Prince Paradise. The newspapers also reported that "Lord Stanley knows 'the book' thoroughly and is the mummies' keenest critic. He insists on a strict adherence to the original version". Performances continued every year with the date and time of appearance chosen to suit the Stanley's social calendar. This meant some years it could be as early 23rd December and others, as late as New Years Day.

One photograph [photograph 3] shows all the Mummies standing side by side and clearly shows all the performers and their costumes in detail. All the men in the photograph are either Grandchildren or Great-Grandchildren of Samuel Barber who originally revived the play. It is interesting to compare their costumes with those of other Mummies / Soulers in Cheshire at a similar period. By comparison, the Alderley costumes are very ornate.

Illustrated, are the Helsby Soul Cakers from the 1920's, [photograph 4] the Comberbach Soul-Cakers, [photograph 5] and the Antrobus Soul-Cakers, [photograph 6] from the 1930's. While all the actors are dressed in character, their costumes are not as elaborate as those of the Alderley Mummer's. The Enter In or his equivalent is dressed as a toff, the combatants are dressed in old military uniforms, the Doctor wears a top hat, and Beelzebub is portrayed as a tramp and all three plays include a man /woman character, as was usual for that part of Cheshire. All four of the plays incorporate a Horse's head character, made from a real horse's skull, a regular feature of the Cheshire plays.

The Alderley costumes are clearly more sumptuous and complicated. This was due in part to the influence of the Stanley family, who provided some of them.²³ Additionally, the costumes were handed down within the family and added to over subsequent generations rather than having to be made from scratch every few years as was the case with other Mummings sides.

A striking feature of the Alderley kit is the highly decorated bicorn hats worn by both Enterer In and St George, who are the first two characters to enter the room during the play. The shape, style and construction of this ornate headgear is unique in Cheshire. The hats were made from cardboard, silver paper, Christmas decorations and had a cows tail for a plume.²⁴ While their design resembles that shown in illustrations of Mummers from the mid 19th, century,²⁵ to which the Stanley's might have had access, however, I think that the answer for their choice of design lies nearer home.

I am of the opinion that they were made to resemble those worn by the local branch of the Oddfellows. At Christmas members of the local 'Stanley Lodge' dressed in their finest regalia and went out accompanied by Father Christmas on horseback. [photograph 7] They were all local men, and the style of their uniform would have been familiar to the members' audience.

Colonel Slasher's uniform is a modified uniform of a major in the Grenadier Guards of the late Victorian period, a regiment to which the Stanley's were closely connected. His shako is of an earlier period, and can be dated at around 1830 to 1844, and is of the 1st Foot Royal Scots Regiment. As there is no record of any of the Barber family having being involved in the military, it is probable that this was also supplied by the Stanley's. The Doctor can be seen wearing a tall "Welsh Hat" that also could have come via the Stanley's, who had large estates in Anglesey. I have seen a very similar hat worn by a wizard character in one of their pantomimes.²⁶

Unlike other Cheshire sides, Beelzebub is not depicted as a tramp, his costume could have come straight from the dressing up box. Prince Paradise, was played by Alec Barber, he had just taken over that role and was thought to look too young for the part, so rather than have him "black up" as Ernest, his predecessor had done, he was given black cloth mask to wear, to hide his youthful looks.²⁷

Obadiah Barber, who played the part of the horse, was beginning to become a bit of a problem. In 1920 he failed to turn up in time for a performance and the play was performed without the Horse and Groom. The incident was reported in the local paper who politely said that he had "missed the bus".²⁸ In 1924 [photograph 8] we see 74 year old Henry, as Colonel Slasher, his age had led to the incongruous situation of young Clem looking down at the mortally wounded Slasher and lamenting, "Oh George, Oh George, what hast thou done? thou's robbed me of my only son".²⁹ His "son", being clearly 50 years his senior. This photograph also gives a good indication of the size, style and construction of the horses head character.

1925 to 1931 - (5th Lord Stanley)

1925 was sad with the deaths of two of the Mummers and that of the 4th Lord Stanley. His eldest son Arthur Lyulph succeeded as the 5th Lord Stanley. Due to the deaths of Henry and George, the Barbers had for the first time, to go outside their immediate family to find a replacement. They chose Fred Barber, who was at best, an extremely distant relative but he had the right surname and was pressed into action as Enterer In. There was some changing of roles within the play, one of these was that Alec took over as Colonel Slasher, a part he revelled in. He would ham up the part unmercifully, and in the death scene writhe around the floor moaning and groaning, taking an absolute age to die.

A collection was taken at the end of the play by the Horse and Groom. Obadiah, as the horse, would reach through the open jaws and collect the cash. Clem's wife recalled that the first time she saw the Mummers was soon after she married. When she arrived

at the Hall she was greeted by Lord Stanley who gave her money from his own pocket to ensure she had enough to give to the horse when it came round. On one occasion Obadiah ran off with the collection. He fled across the fields and was not seen again for days, until he had drunk all the takings. After that they kept a very close eye on him.³⁰

There are many colourful stories about Obadiah. A tall man, at well over six feet tall, he used to be of a very smart appearance and worked as a footman for the Spanish Lady Stanley, travelling around the country with the family. He was a practical joker and a bit of a rascal. On one occasion when a young man arrived in a horse and trap, to do a bit of courting with his next door neighbour, Obadiah waited until the couple had gone indoors and took his opportunity to re-arrange the harness, ending up with the horse on one side of a five bar gate and the trap, re-hitched, on the other.³¹

The most commonly told story about him is that he used to dress in an old bed sheet and hang from the trees in Alderley Churchyard pretending to be the ghost of the Grey Lady of the Hall. Sadly, his behaviour became more and more unconventional; he became a kind of a bogey man figure with the local children. By his sixties he was reduced to living in an makeshift hut in the woods, getting by on handouts. Eventually there was concern for his well being and he was taken to a place of safety. His final joke was that no one actually knows what happened to him after that.³² A search for a record of his death has even proved negative.³³

He was replaced in the play by Fred Barber Jnr, a gardener on the estate, and son of Fred the Enterer In. This was the final line up and remained unchanged for the next ten years. It was during this period that it was reported that Sir James Barrie, author of Peter Pan, had shown such an interest in the Mummers, that he requested a copy of the text.³⁴

1931 to 1938 - (6th Lord Stanley)

In 1931, the 6th Lord Stanley, Edward John succeeded to the title, and the Christmas celebrations continued for a few more years. Finally pressure on the estate to pay out two lots of death duties meant that radical changes had to be made. In 1933 most of the manor house, but not the Tenants Hall, was demolished. By 1936, Lord Stanley, now divorced, had moved away from Alderley Park altogether.³⁵

At 9.10 pm on 24th December 1937, the Alderley Mummers gave their final performance. This was for a radio broadcast for the B.B.C. North Region, a programme called 'Christian Men Rejoice!', celebrating "A Christmas Journey Through Four Centuries". The Mummers, billed as Lord Stanley's Mummers, represented the year 1737.³⁶ They broadcast from an empty Tenants Hall, devoid of all its usual hustle and bustle and Christmas trappings. Yet ironically they played to their largest audience ever. The broadcast went well, but unfortunately, a copy was not kept.

The following year the entire four and a half thousand acre estate, including 77 farms, was broken up and sold off. The Stanley's home for over 500 years was sold for half a million pounds, about the price you would expect to pay for a modest semi-detached house in Nether Alderley today.

From its first revival by Samuel and his brother William, the Alderley Mummers have relied almost entirely on the patronage of the Stanley family for their continued existence. It is certain that they would not have survived into the 20th Century without the intervention of the 4th Lord Stanley who had remembered the Mummers, with affection, from his youth half a century earlier.

Although some collectors have since incorrectly located the play as being from the nearby the Alderley Edge, the Mummings never performed there. They were always known as the Alderley Mummings, a name they were rightly proud of. The Stanleys in turn, were proud to have their very own Mummings, a situation that suited generations of both families who in other circumstances would not have enjoyed such a close relationship.

Painting

The painting [photograph 9] by Cyril Walter Hodges³⁷ shows a Mummer's Play being performed in the Tenants Hall at Alderley Park. Hodges appears to have used a degree of artistic licence in his painting, combining the interior of the Tenants Hall with characters from a different Cheshire Mummer's Play,

Amongst them is a man/woman character, found in the plays centred around Northwich in mid Cheshire. Following the demise of the Alderley Mummings, there were only two gangs still performing in Cheshire, Antrobus and Comberbach, and to the best of my knowledge, neither of them ever performed at Alderley Park. It is quite possible that Hodges obtained the information for the mummings costume from published sources rather than first hand observation.

Publication and Revival

The legacy of the Alderley Mummings remains to this day, thanks in the main to the work of Alex Helm, who published Alec Barber's version of the text three times.³⁸ The play text, which had been jealously guarded by the family for four generations, was now in the public domain, Alec felt uncomfortable with this at first, thinking that he had betrayed a family trust.³⁹

Publication of the text brought about the formation of 'revival' mummings sides including at least five sides that sprang out of the Folk scene. Two of these are now defunct. They were the Cod End Mummings from Fleetwood who included the play as part of a larger repertoire, and the Monk Coppenhall Mummings, from near Crewe. A third side, the Bollin River Soulers, performed the play for 3 or 4 years in the late 1970's. They were based around the Bollin Morris from Altrincham, but subsequently decided to change plays and revive the Warburton Souling Play instead. Although the Morris side is no longer in existence, they have continued to perform the play every year, calling themselves the Warburton Soulers.

Of the two remaining 'revival' sides, one is based in Chester, and the other is the mummings' gang that I am associated with. These two sides make interesting comparisons, if only to illustrate what can happen to a play once it has been collected, published and then revived, outside its original context. How, given the same information, you end up with two quite different interpretations of the play. Both sides are from Cheshire, have been in existence for about 25 years, have links to Morris sides, perform mainly in Public Houses, started off with little more than the text as published by Helm and had a desire to revive something local. After that the sides took different routes to reach their goal and both, as far as I know, are happy with what they have achieved.

The Chester based side is the oldest of the two, they were initially formed out of the Jones' Ale Folk Club, but had a close association with the Chester City Morris Men. They have always taken the play out around All Souls and have kept to Helm's published text. They call themselves the Jones' Ale Soul Cakers when performing in Chester, or the Chester Soul Cakers, when performing outside the city. None of the

original members of the side are still performing, having handed the play over to their sons and their sons' friends. As a result, the average age of their cast is the youngest of the eight Cheshire gangs active today. As was customary in Cheshire, the actors dress in character, but their kit shows echoes of the style taken by a lot of 'revival' sides from the 70's, a fusion of many periods, from medieval to modern day. St George wears a white tabard with a red St Georges cross, Beelzebub has a red face and horns that light up. Other characters seem to have costumes fashioned out of old curtains, tablecloths or velvet and some characters wear tights. [Photograph 10]

Even though much of their original kit from the 70's has been replaced, the overall look remains the same. It is of course, what the present gang knows as 'Souling kit', because that was what they saw their fathers wear. The biggest innovation that they have made is with their interpretation of the horse. While still using a real horse's skull, it is of a style and construction that I have not seen elsewhere in Cheshire. [Photograph 11] Rather than using the more usual three legged, mast horse construction, of a man covered in a blanket, crouching behind the skull and operating the jaw, they have chosen to mount their skull on a long pole with the man standing underneath. Although at the moment, members of this side are still influenced in their approach by what they saw their fathers perform, it will be interesting to see what the future brings. A couple of the men are now involved in collecting information on local plays, spurred on by the discovery that the grandfather of one, was an old time Souler from nearby Frodsham.

The other side that is still in existence is the one that I'm associated with. Through a series of chance meetings and lucky coincidences we have ended up taking a quite different approach to our interpretation of the Alderley Mummers Play. In 1977 Adlington Morris Men decided that they wanted to revive a local Mummers Play and a chance comment by a friend of a friend, set us on our way. They had bought some old clothes at a farm auction, that they thought was Adlington, and as they were leaving someone said "that should not have been sold, that was the old mummers kit".

Thinking we were on the trail of a previously unknown play we set about tracking down the site of the auction. This turned out to be Brynlow Farm, in neighbouring Nether Alderley, the home of the Barber family. Alec Barber was retiring from farming and selling up. I made contact with him and interviewed him on a number of occasions. I always found him to be a thoroughly charming old gentleman and a tremendous fount of knowledge about the play that had been a source of much pride and enjoyment during his life. He maintained his enthusiasm for the play and his face would light up when he spoke of it. He in turn put me in contact with his niece Mary Houseman, daughter of Clem Barber. As a keen family historian, she proved to be an invaluable contact, filling in many of the gaps in my knowledge.

The clothes from the auction turned out not to have been the old Mummers, kit. What did remain of them was already in Mrs Houseman's safe keeping. Mary was a keen folk dancer and a member of the local W.I. and a founder of the Adlington Folk Dance Club, who had in turn, started our Morris side. Too many coincidences. We were locked in and really keen to revive the Alderley Play, Alec and Mary were very supportive of the idea as indeed was Fred Barber Jnr who I had also interviewed by then.

We base our kit on the 1920's photographs [photograph 12] and initially used the text as published by Helm. Alec Barber came down to our early rehearsals and took us through the action as he remembered it. We gave our first public performance in December 1978. In 1988 we were invited to perform for Mary Houseman's son's 21st

Birthday Party for the family. Not unexpectedly, it had a Mumming theme, with memorabilia and photographs displayed around the walls. It was there that we were given a copy of the play text that her father, Clem, had written out in 1938 just months after the final performance and nearly 20 years before Alec was recorded. This version contained an extra twelve lines of text which we immediately incorporated into our version of the play.

Although we usually act in pubs, we have also performed the play at the Tenants Hall in Alderley Park. The hall has changed little and is now a conference centre for AstraZeneca. We have also performed inside St Mary's Church Nether Alderley. The whole event felt a bit extraordinary, knowing that the church graveyard contained the bodies of many generations of Alderley Mummings.

Over the years a great many of the Barber family have come to see us, and thankfully they have all been very encouraging about our efforts. Out of respect for the family we do not call ourselves the Alderley Mummings preferring instead, to say that we are performing the Alderley Mummings Play.

Addendum

Two photographs of the Alderley Mummings, previously unknown to me, have been brought to my attention since I wrote this paper. The first, [photograph 13] was kindly brought to my attention by Dr Chris Cawte. It is a newspaper cutting from 1931 and is only the second photograph that I know of showing all eight characters together.

The second, [photograph 14] was sent to me by Andrew Barber, the 4 X Great Grandson of Samuel Barber. It dates from about 1910 and is the earliest known photograph of the Alderley Mummings. Andrew contacted me after reading about my interest in the Alderley Mummings on the Adlington Morris Men s Web site. Colonel Slasher can be seen wearing a military tunic from an earlier period, perhaps more contemporary with the date of the shako, rather than the Guards tunic that he wears in later photographs. Other characters display only minor variations in their kit.

Notes

¹ Ordnance Survey map ref SJ 84 78.

² D Broomhead Collection: Alec Barber recorded by Duncan Broomhead 1981.

³ MS Douce d.44 pp. 1-7 (Dept. of Western Manuscripts Bodleian Library).

⁴ The Tenants Hall was also built as part of the coming of age celebration.

⁵ Courtesy of Alderley Edge Archive 1, The Alderley Edge Landscape Project. The Manchester Museum and the National Trust. Louisa Stanley, Alderley Gaieties, 1824.

⁶ *Manchester Mercury* 20th January 1824 p.2 col.e.

⁷ "Old Hob" E.H. Advertiser Notes & Queries, pub Stockport 1882, Query No. 18 February 12.

⁸ *The History of the County Palatine and City of Chester*, by George Ormerod, pub London 1819. p LII.

⁹ *The House Of Stanley* by Peter Edmund Stanley pub Dunham 1998, pp.396- 409.

¹⁰ *The Amberley Papers*, Ed B Russell, Hogarth Press, 1937, pp.64-5.

¹¹ D Broomhead collection:

¹² See footnote 9.

¹³ See footnote 9.

¹⁴ AELP Project, Manchester Museum: Alec Barber recorded by David Watkins 1983.

¹⁵ Alex Helm Collection: Vol. 4 :103-5.

¹⁶ 1881 Census: Nether Alderley.

¹⁷ Mary Houseman Private Collection:

¹⁸ See footnote 9.

¹⁹ *The Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser*, 27th December 1907, p.5, col. c.

²⁰ *The Advertiser*, 3rd January 1913, p.6, col. d.

²¹ *The Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser*, 2 January 1914, p. 12.

²² See footnote 9.

²³ See footnote 15.

²⁴ D Broomhead Collection: Fred Barber recorded by Duncan Broomhead, 1982.

²⁵ *Illustrated London News*, 21 December 1861.

²⁶ See footnote 17.

²⁷ See footnote 11.

²⁸ *The Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser*, 31 December 1920, p. 6, col. c.

²⁹ *The Alderley & Wilmslow Advertiser*, 2nd January 1925, p.7. col. c.

³⁰ See footnote 11.

³¹ *Mummers* by Richard Bourne, 'Folk Buzz', Winter 1983.

³² *The Alderley Mummers And The Barber Family*, by Mary Houseman, pub. The North Cheshire Family Historian, February 1998.

³³ See footnote 17.

³⁴ Unidentified newspaper cutting with hand written date of Xmas 1929. See footnote 17.

³⁵ See footnote 9.

³⁶ Unidentified Newspaper cutting, possibly Radio Times, handwritten date of Xmas 1937, marked The Folklore Society, Via Hammersmith.

³⁷ Born 1909. Author, painter & illustrator.

³⁸ Collected from Alec Barber by Alex S. Richardson in 1954, published by Alex Helm.

The English Folk Play: part 3. Manchester, English Folk Dance & Song Society, 1955.

Cheshire Folk Drama, Istock, Guizer Press, 1966.

Eight Mummers' Plays, London, Ginn, 1977.

In the Helm Collection, see footnote 15, the MS carries the caveat "Not to be reproduced without permission and NOT to be performed by anyone but the Barber Family."

³⁹ See footnote 17.



Photograph 1

Samuel Barber

*Photograph courtesy of Mary Houseman
Private Collection*



Photograph 2

St George - George Barber & Prince
Paradise - Ernest Barber

The Advertiser, 2nd January 1914



Photograph 3 - The Alderley Mummers. 1920

L to R: Enterer In - Clement Barber, Doctor - Thomas Barber, Prince Paradise –
Alec Barber, St George - George Barber, Beelzebub - Ernest Barber, Colonel Slasher –
Henry Barber, Young Ball (horse) - Obadiah Barber, Groom - Albert Barber.

Photograph courtesy of Mary Houseman, Private Collection



Photograph 4

Helsby Soul-Cakers. circa 1920

Photograph courtesy of Will Riding, Private Collection



Photograph 5

Antrobus Soul-Cakers. 1930's

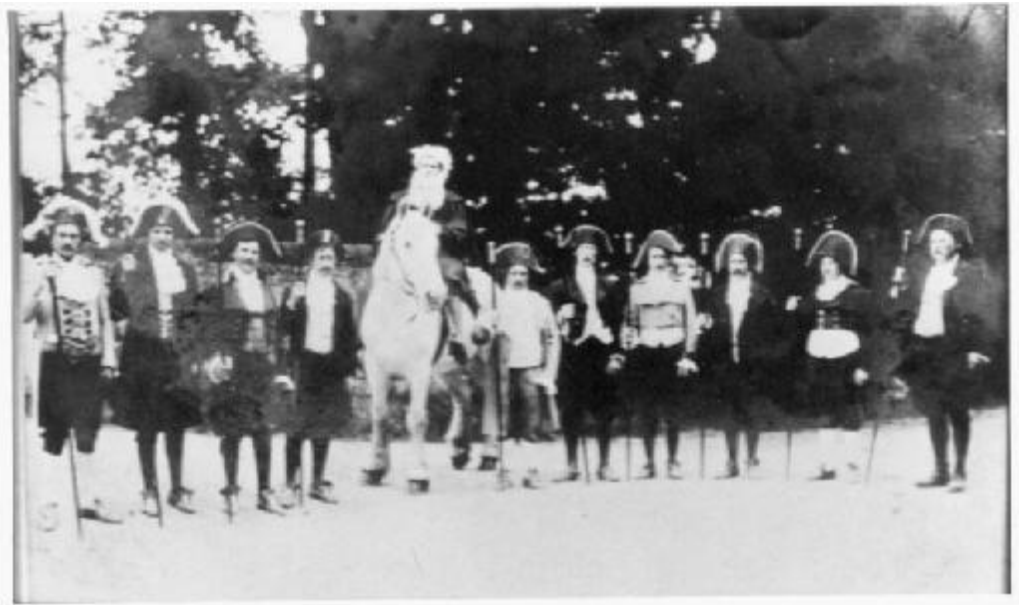
A.W.Boyd Collection, Chester.



Photograph 6

Comberbach Soul-Cakers. circa 1934

A.W.Boyd Collection, Chester



Photograph 7

The Stanley Lodge of the Oddfellows

Photograph supplied by Anne Cohen



Photograph 8

The Alderley Mummers

The Advertiser, 2nd January 1925



Photograph 9

Detail from a painting of mummers at Alderley Park, by Cyril Walter Hodges

Park Life, December 2001



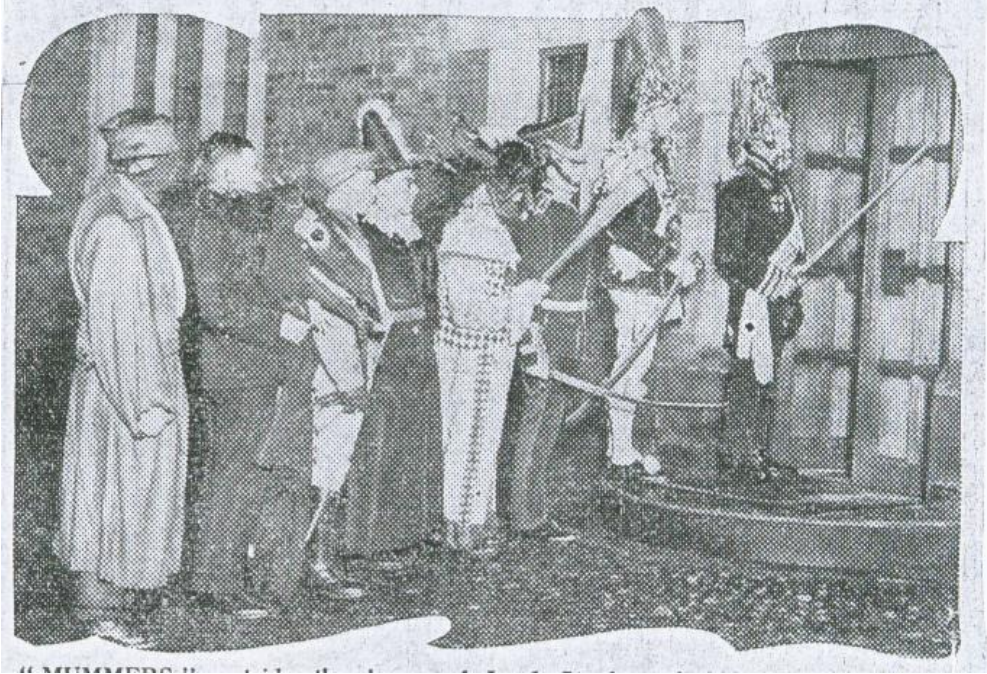
Photograph 10
Jones' Ale Soul Cakers
Duncan Broomhead Collection



Photograph 11
Jones' Ale Soul Cakers
Duncan Broomhead Collection



Photograph 12
The Alderley Mummings Play, performed by Adlington Morris Men 2002.
L to R. St George - Roger Jackson. Groom - Dave Cook, Young Ball (horse) - Phil Raynes, Beelzebub - John Portlock, Colonel Slasher - Brian Harker, Prince Paradise - Tony Lepp, Doctor - Tim Shaw, Enterer In - Dave Houghton.
Duncan Broomhead Collection



Photograph 13

L to R: Sam Barber, Fred Barber (Jnr), Herbert Barber, George H Barber, Ernest Barber, Alec Barber, Clement Barber, Fred Barber (Snr)

The Daily Express, 1st January 1931



Photograph 14 - The Alderley Mummers, circa 1910

L to R: St George - William Barber, Colonel Slasher - Henry Barber, Doctor - Thomas Barber, Horse - Obadiah Barber, (jockey - possibly Clement Barber), Enterer In - William Barber.

Photograph courtesy of Andrew Barber, Private Collection