

County Durham, the Oldest Known Sword Dance Play Text

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Introduction

A play with a sword dance from County Durham was reported by several writers in the nineteenth century. The evidence is entirely literary, and the place, or places, of performance are not recorded. The earliest available record is in Topliff's *Melodies of the Tyne and Wear*.¹ The paper of the British Museum copy is watermarked 1813, and the engraver left the printed address in 1824, which gives the widest possible range of dates.² Topliff (1793-1868) was a blind professional musician. Five of his compositions for singers survive in the U.S.A., mostly published there.³ It is reported that he returned to his native County Durham each summer to give a series of concerts. That may be so, but the only known dates are in two posters advertising concerts in 1844, the first for 21 November in Newcastle upon Tyne, the other for 4 December at Darlington. The second seems to have been amended as copy for a poster for an identical performance at Hartlepool the day before. There were sketches, songs, and music by several performers, Topliff sang, and played the piano and the glass harmonica. One performance ended with a 'melange' of local songs, the other had them at several points in the programme. He was the organist of Trinity Church Southwark according to the first poster, but Trinity Church London in the second.⁴ Judging from his harmonizations of local songs, Whittaker says 'Topliff must have been an admirable musician, for the settings are well done', and he comments on a style of variation later used by Brahms. William Gillies Whittaker is a reliable witness; he was born in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1876, directed music at Armstrong College (now part of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne) and the Newcastle Bach Choir for thirty years, and was then for eleven years Professor of Music at the University of Glasgow. He collected traditional Northumbrian songs, and his arrangements of them were published.⁵

So Topliff was that ideal combination, a good musician with an interest in traditional songs. His account of a sword dance play starts with a calling-on song of four characters with tune, a mention of a dance in which someone is killed (he does not say how), three verses which deny blame, a decision to bury the man, a mention of the doctor and his cure, and the performance ends with a four-verse song and an unspecified dance to the tune of Kitty Bo Bo. The description is enough to recognise a sword dance with play, with twelve four-line stanzas of text. It is the earliest such text in England, predating the Riccall text by about five years.⁶

Sir Cuthbert Sharp (1781-1849) had a varied life. He was born in Sunderland to a local family, educated at Greenwich, a cavalry officer in Ireland, and a prisoner-of-war in France. He seems to have had independent means, because he then, still in his twenties, retired to Hartlepool and wrote a history of the town. He was mayor there when the Prince Regent visited, and was knighted. Later he became a collector of

customs, first at Sunderland, then Newcastle upon Tyne.⁷ In 1834, while working at Sunderland, he published a collection of tales, verses, comment and reminiscence about the Palatine County of Durham. Though much of it is copied and acknowledged, he also recorded traditional lore, some of it from his own knowledge, for example he describes Thomas Percy, then Bishop of Dromore, reciting a border ballad of thirty-eight stanzas, and he collected his accounts of the Lambton Worm and the Pelton Brag orally.⁸ He describes a sword dance and play, with twenty-four stanzas, a few lines of prose, and about a page of description of the action, enough to regard it as a complete, or almost complete, play text. It includes eleven of Topliff's stanzas and repeats Topliff's tunes, acknowledged. There is no indication of a source for the rest of his text, though because he often acknowledges copying, one might assume that here he was using his own knowledge.⁹

The next available text was sent to William Kelly by Mr Clepham, editor of the *Gateshead Observer*, in 1854, but is only available as a transcription.¹⁰ Generally this source copies the *Bishoprick Garland* with a few small alterations. The writer adds two short lines to the doctor's speech, and explains the word *keelman*, which only appears in the Topliff text.¹¹

Robert Bell (1800-1867) was a journalist and author, born in Cork, educated at Trinity College, Dublin, who moved to London in 1828, and later began an edition of the English Poets. Twenty-four volumes appeared between 1854 and 1857 (D.N.B.) One of the last of these was on the poetry of the English peasantry, where he printed a sword dance play 'transcribed from Sir C. Sharp's *Bishoprick Garland*, corrected by collation with a MS. Copy recently remitted to the editor by a countryman of Durham.'¹² Of course, 'correction' can only reflect Bell's opinion, or his wish to suggest that his text was better. There is no reason to doubt Sharp's accuracy, so the interest of this text lies in the differences, ignoring alterations of a word or two, and shortened stage directions. One of Bell's characters is the Prodigal Son, with a note that 'of late years' he had been replaced by a Sailor. The skipper is given a different second verse, Bessy's verse for herself is altered a little, there are changes in the song in which the Doctor introduces himself, a detailed and credible account of how the Doctor cures the dead man is added, and Sharp's three-verse final song is replaced by six new lines.

Joseph Crawhall printed the play at least twice. He copied Sharp, edited the introduction, and added some information about where the dancers stood.¹³ The two texts are much the same, and do not contribute anything new.

John Stokoe was 'an enthusiastic amateur', with 'practical experience of collecting . . . I am inclined to doubt the accuracy of some of [his] transcriptions', and he 'had collected more than any man', says Whittaker.¹⁴ In 1887 Stokoe published an article about sword dancers using the well-known illustration, his own introduction, our usual sword dance play, and the modern Earsdon calling-on song.¹⁵ He says the dance is performed at Christmas in the towns on the Wear and Tyne, chiefly by pitmen, but it seems more likely that Stokoe was relying on the older writers. He says that 'our version is collated with Topliff's and with that in Sir Cuthbert Sharp's "Bishoprick Garland", and the music is from the "Northumbrian Minstrelsy".' Working through Stokoe's text, it becomes clear that 'our version' is Bell's, to which some of Sharp's is sometimes added where the texts differ. He changed the Sailor, or Prodigal Son, to a Soldier, who is otherwise unrecorded. He changed the Skipper to a Keelman, for which his only possible source is Topliff. For Jolly Dog he used the spelling *nowt* which he either copied from Crawhall or chose himself. The tunes were from Topliff.¹⁶

There are four more texts outside County Durham, two of them will be considered later. Turner prints a text with a very short introduction, and a description of the action, but otherwise it is copied from Bell apart from three words, and the three denial verses are attributed to particular dancers. So it is surprising that the item is headed 'Cleveland Fool Plough. Dragging a Plough at Christmas and Easter'. There seems to be no justification for this to be printed. It is less surprising that a later editor copied Turner's text with the same heading.¹⁷

Where and When?

Of the nine texts so far reviewed, Clepham and the two Crawhall sources copy Sharp. Stokoe combines Topliff, Sharp, and Bell. These and the two alleged Cleveland texts can be ignored as copies, leaving Topliff, Sharp and Bell. As to dates, there were performances before 1815. Clepham, a local man, says that there were performances in about 1854. He gives a diagram of the six swords, for which we have to rely on the accuracy of the copyist. The swords have clear, if rudimentary, handles. Five are arranged as if the dancers hold them crossed once, and a sixth sword lies across one of these crossings, as if it had been added afterwards. It is possible to imagine that the writer drew from his memory of a five-sword team, then added another sword when he realised six were required by the text. It is equally possible to imagine that the writer, or the copyist, was not good at drawing sword locks. He says that 'this device' is carried about by one of the performers, and that it is 'adjusted in this manner round the neck of one of the party doomed to die for the murder of the chaplain'. None of this is in the previous accounts so it must be his own observation. It seems more likely that the swords were really locked round the neck of the chaplain, or rector, or actor, though none of our sources says how he was killed. Of course, although Clepham seems to have seen the dance we have no evidence that he had seen the play. No writer says where the dancers came from. Whittaker observes that no one from Northumberland would write of 'Durham and Northumberland' on his title page, and concludes that Topliff came from County Durham. But Topliff also wrote 'Tyne and Wear', and the reversal of the counties may only have been a compliment to the members of the Durham County Club.¹⁸ Sharp's distinction between the use of *Puoy* on the Tyne and *Set* on the Wear, mentioned earlier, might have helped, but both words are used in the text. The first stanza of Topliff's last song mentions Cox-Green and Painshaw, and the later texts, except Bell, follow him. Cox Green (NZ3255) is a small settlement across the Wear from Washington Chemical Works. Old Penshaw, as older editions of the Ordnance Survey call it, is a mile to the south (NZ3354), and Penshaw Hill is about half way between. This is all a few miles from Sunderland, so there may have been a sword dance in that area,¹⁹ an idea which is supported by Sharp's residence at the time, and his lifelong association with the area. Both Topliff and Sharp, using different words, say the performers are pitmen who visit the larger towns, and Sharp names Sunderland and Durham. This hints at a possible area for the homes of the dancers, and will be looked at in more detail later.

Comparisons

Interesting comparisons can be made between the County Durham texts, and with texts elsewhere. The titles of the actors in these calling-on songs are:

Topliff	Sharp	Bell
Squire's Son	Squire's Son	Squire's Son
Sailor		
Tailor	Tailor	Tailor
	Sailor	Prodigal Son recently replaced by a Sailor
Keelman		
	Skipper	Skipper
	Jolly Dog	Jolly Dog
	True Blue	True Blue

It looks as if Topliff missed the last two characters, but his purpose was to entertain the Gentlemen of the Durham County Club and, no doubt, to make a profit, so space may have been limited by the printer. The sword dance information and one other song fit one page, so he had to shorten one or other if he was not to spread to the next page. And maybe the Tailor should come before the Sailor. If this is accepted, the first two and the last two titles are constant, the Sailor is reported to have replaced a Prodigal Son, and the Keelman and the Skipper are alternatives, the Skipper using all of the Keelman's four lines. Sharp and Bell have an introductory verse to the calling-on song starting 'Six actors I have brought', so with the six titles there can be no doubt that there were six dancers.

Some of the names in the calling-on song appear elsewhere, but not all are helpful. The Sailor appears at Sowerby to the south and High Spen to the north, but there is no textual resemblance. Similarly Jolly Dog, who is always drunk, has no other resemblance to Drunken Tom at Hunton. The Squire's Son is more helpful because he appears with much the same text at Bellerby, Greatham, Houghton Colliery, Hunton and Sowerby, from central County Durham to north Yorkshire. The Tailor has the same text at Earsdon in Northumberland, at Sowerby but with a different text, and at Hexham with only a scrap of text, and maybe the team was visiting. True Blue is the Clown at Greatham, and the Second Clown at Bellerby is called Love So True, both with the same text.²⁰

Topliff's calling-on song tune also appears elsewhere, sometimes used at another point in the performance. But tunes vary, and care is needed in deciding which tunes are 'the same'. Topliff's notation can be taken as reliable, and ten other song tunes have been found which resemble his in some degree, from Ampleforth, Arkengarthdale, Bellerby, Earsdon, Gainford, Greatham, Kirkby Malzeard, Sleights, Sowerby, and 'Orton'. The last is used, for the sake of a name, for a valuable account of a sword dance with play noted at Orton, in Westmorland, from the former King of a team of Yorkshire sword-dancers, but provokingly the author did not say where the man had performed. All these tunes have four beats to a bar, and if they are transposed to the same key it is easy to count where each pair of tunes has the same note at any point. Ignoring occasional passing-notes, and the last note because it is always the same, there are twenty-three notes which can be compared. No pair of tunes scores 10 or 11, so it is logical to say that more than eleven indicates 'the same' tune, which also happens to collect pairs where more than half the notes match. Using this criterion, neither Greatham nor Sleights resembles any other tune (best scores 9 and 7 respectively). Topliff and

Earsdon are 'the same' (score 14) but differ from the rest. This leaves seven tunes, all of which differ in some degree but all are 'the same' as 'Orton', and are in North Yorkshire, apart from Gainford which is just the other side of the Tees. This shows how provoking Gilchrist was when she did not bother to ask, or write, where this former King of a team of sword-dancers had performed. If one only looks at the first and third notes of a bar, which carry most of the emphasis, the first four tunes above give the same results, and of the remainder, the first halves of six of the tunes are to this extent identical, while the remaining tune, Kirkby Malzeard, is also 'the same'. While these tunes have a passing resemblance to Topliffs, their resemblance does not seem significant.

It was mentioned earlier that the performers were pitmen who visited such towns as Sunderland and Durham. A map of 1788, when Sharp was a boy, and a few years before Topliff was born, is a little early for us, but it will under, rather than over, estimate the extent of the coalfield.²¹ The distribution of pits shows that Durham and Sunderland were not then in the coalfield, but both had pits five or six miles from their centres. Gibson's cartography was not as good as that of the Ordnance Survey, nor does either show all of the other's pits, but it looks as if Biddick and Errington's Main pits, maybe some others, were within a mile, at most, of Old Penshaw, Cox Green, and Penshaw Hill, the last two of which are mentioned in our calling-on song. All are within six miles of the mouth of the Wear, so it is credible that Sharp's team, or teams, came from thereabouts. There is no means of telling where Bell's 'countryman of Durham' had seen his dancers, and Bell lived in London.

Earsdon

There are two more texts from outside County Durham, noted by Cecil James Sharp. Topliff's tune for the calling-on song, and the text for the Tailor, turn up at Earsdon, where the Captain, Tom Armstrong, told Sharp that beside the calling-on song then in use there had been an older one, and a play after the dance.²² While it is superficially similar to the County Durham one, with much the same tune, textually it shares very little, one verse for the Tailor and two-and-a-half verses after the death.²³ One line is worth comparison. Topliff gives 'Alas our actor's dead', later texts give 'Alas our Rector's dead', except Bell who changes Rector to Parson, while Armstrong gives 'An actor he is dead'. Sharp's field notes and manuscript texts end at 'We'll take him to the church yard | And bury him in the mould'. When he published he added to the text the arrival of a doctor, the usual conversation, and a cure. This might seem unprincipled, were it not for Carpenter. He visited Tom Vennar, who had danced in the same team as Tom Armstrong, and first went dancing fifty years before, say around 1883.²⁴ The new calling-on song was then in use, but about fifteen years earlier his grandmother had sung him the older version. Grandfather was also a sword dancer, at Earsdon to judge from the style of Carpenter's introductory enquiries, though both grandparents came from Blyth. This text differs from Sharp's in detail, and lacks some lines, but it supports Cecil Sharp's text very well, including the addition on publication for which the source is unknown. Carpenter also has an Actor, not a Rector. His final verse, not in Cecil Sharp's text, is the same as that recorded by Topliff and Cuthbert Sharp. The latter says this song is followed by 'a general dance'. Carpenter adds 'they start dancing'.

At least once the Earsdon dancers could have heard a reading of the Cuthbert Sharp text, and they could have memorized some details, though much of their text is not the same as Cuthbert Sharp's.²⁵ The last part of the play, 'Cecil Sharp's addition', could well owe something to the local Guizers' play, indeed Carpenter noted such a play at Earsdon from Tom Vennar, in which a few lines in the Doctor section are very close to Vennar's sword dance text.²⁶ These are only possibilities.

There is one other odd feature at Earsdon for which a digression is necessary. In the largest group of traditional plays a person is killed and revived. This group can be divided in various ways, but it seems no attention has been directed toward the method of killing. Some victims are killed in a sword fight, others are hit on the head, and a few strangled. Broadly these agree with the three main classes used in *English Ritual Drama*, but they are more precise. The 'wooing' plays, so called, sometimes have no wooing, only the characters who would be expected to woo if that text were present, or there may be no Recruiting Sergeant. This classification would raise interesting results in east Nottinghamshire, but that is not the present point. At Earsdon Sharp records, again without any support from his handwritten texts, that 'directly after [the calling-on] song is finished, two of the dancers, Nos. 1 and 2, feigning a quarrel, fight with their swords until one of them is wounded and falls to the ground'.²⁷ This sounds awkward using rappers, and also suggests a link with the Guizers' play. Carpenter says 'two of the dancers quarrel; one knocks other down with sword'. According to my classification, this is anything but a sword dance play.

In spite of some oddities, the Earsdon play seems to be genuine, and this is supported by Henderson, who reports 'there are two sets of verses used near Durham, termed the old and new styles. The old verses . . . were always used till about ten years ago'. He gives the old style calling-on song from Houghton Colliery (for five dancers) which has thirty-six lines.²⁸ Seven lines are like ones from Earsdon, seven like ones from Cuthbert Sharp, one each are like ones from Greatham and Bellerby, and both of these were also recorded at 'Orton'. This barely scratches the surface of the available textual material, but it opens the door to a comparison of all aspects of all sword dances. For the present it will be better to keep the door closed. Henderson is helpful in dating the new song, which he indicates was introduced in about 1856 (a rough date, of course). Stokoe says the new song 'is the one now commonly sung by the pitmen from Earsdon, who have for above thirty years been accustomed to visit Alnwick Castle at Christmas', suggesting they started before 1857. Sharp notes that 'the Duchess of Northumberland constantly asks them', and 'at Alnwick Castle they prefer this modern version'.²⁹ In all, it seems likely that someone at Alnwick Castle had something to do with the writing of the new song. This fits fairly well with Vennar's evidence. Having started dancing in about 1883 he did not remember a performance of the old song or play, but in around 1868 his grandmother did. Of course even though these dates seem to fit together within a year or two, each one may only be a rough approximation.

One text remains. In his field notebook, immediately after the Earsdon text, Sharp wrote another, like the County Durham ones but identical with none, and it stops at the same point as his Earsdon one.³⁰ Where texts differ, this one follows Bell and Stokoe when they agree, but where they differ Sharp follows sometimes one and sometimes the other. He wrote in haste, with abbreviations, sometimes a word omitted, and the last two verses written at right angles over some previous and unrelated text. The precise date of this text is unclear, but it seems to have been after Monday 29 August 1910, and no later than Thursday 31 August when he started the next notebook.³¹ He may have been staying in Whickham, but more probably in Jesmond, where he was close to the tram and rail services which seem necessary for the many scattered visits which he made that week. Maybe Sharp copied a text belonging to his host. This precise text has not been traced, but the evident haste with which Sharp wrote makes it unlikely that he compiled his edition from two texts. The appearance is rather that he was hastening to make a copy before he had to catch a train. This must be added to the other unanswered, and

probably never to be answered, questions about the County Durham sword dance play text.

In conclusion, a sword dance play was performed in County Durham in the early nineteenth century with six dancers, so presumably it was a sword dance, not rapper. It seems likely that at least one such team lived and worked near Cox Green or Penshaw, near Sunderland and further north than one would expect from other data, though there may have been similar teams further south, or north. The text has some similarities to the Earsdon text, but also to the teams near the Tees and in the adjoining part of Yorkshire. It is not practical to assess the importance of the temporal distribution of the data because of their small quantity and the unreliable dating for most of them. In the early twentieth century, and probably before, teams developed where men wanted them, so the details of distribution may be as significant as the distribution of football teams.

Notes

¹ A Selection of the most popular Melodies of the Tyne and the Wear Consisting of 24 Original Airs peculiar to the Counties of Durham & Northumberland. Three of which are harmonized with appropriate Words, Symphonies & Accompaniments, and the Remainder Variouslly arranged for the Piano Forte. Respectfully inscribed to the Gentlemen of the Durham County Club, with the highest Sentiments of deference & esteem by their Obliged humble serv^t. Robert Topliff (London: R. Topliff, n.d., British Library copy dated [1815?]) Sword dance information on pp. 37 and 42. This book is not noted by Margaret Dean-Smith, *A Guide to English Folk Song Collections* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1954).

² W. G. Whittaker 'The Folk-Music of North-Eastern England' in *Collected Essays* (London: Oxford University Press), pp. 1-64 (9-10). Whittaker confirms the date of the British Museum copy of Topliff.

³ *The National Union Catalog Pre-1956 Imprints*, vol. 597 (London: Mansell, 1978), p.405.

⁴ Trevor Upton and Robert Wood, 'A Lament for Robert Topliff - North-East Folk King' *The Northern Echo*, Monday 28 October 1968, p. 9 (summer visits and second poster); Robert Wood, *Victorian Delights* (London: Evans Brothers, 1967), p. 104 (first poster). If his church was in London it seems it was the church of Holy Trinity the Less, south-east of St Paul's Cathedral, or Holy Trinity Minories north of the Tower of London. Up to 1832 there was no such dedication in Middlesex, which might have caused confusion. Nor is there record of a Trinity Church in Southwark, though there was one in Newington close by. *The Phillimore Atlas and Index of Parish Registers*, ed. Cecil R. Humphery-Smith (Chichester: Phillimore, 1984), pp. 181, 184-6, map 22, and the previous three pages (London), pp. 233-4 and map 33 (Southwark).

⁵ Percy A. Scholes, *The Oxford Companion to Music*, ninth edition (London: Oxford University Press, reprinted with revisions 1965) p. 1122; W. G. Whittaker, 'Eleven Northumbrian Folk Tunes', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 4.1 (1940), 1-7, F. H[owes], 'Obituary, Dr W. G. Whittaker', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 4.5 (1944), 206.

⁶ *The Riccall Sword Dance*, 2.2 (1971), 102-114. The introduction by E. C. Cawte.

⁷ 'Sir Cuthbert Sharp, F.S.A.' [obituary]. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, new series, 32 (October 1849), pp.428-300, and D.N.B.

⁸ [Cuthbert Sharp], *The Bishoprick Garland, or, a Collection of Legends, Songs, Ballads &c. Belonging to the County of Durham* (London: Nichols, and Baldwin & Cradock, 1834), pp. 7, 22, 41-3.

⁹ Sharp (1834) pp. 58-62 and f.p. 84. This text is reprinted, with only insignificant alterations and acknowledged, by M. A. Richardson, *The Local Historian's Table Book*, Legendary Division, I (Newcastle-on-Tyne: M. A. Richardson, 1842), pp. 209-12.

¹⁰ 'Christmas, Durham, The Sword-Dance, Communicated to Mr Wm Kelly in 1854 by W. Clepham, Editor of the Gateshead Observer', London, Folklore Society Library, Ordish Papers, Durham 2, or bound photocopies II, ff. 4-9. William Kelly was perhaps the author of *Notices Illustrative of the Drama . . .* (London: John Russell Smith, 1865).

¹¹ Keels were boats of shallow draught used on the Tyne to carry goods between ships lying in deeper water and the shore. They were a mainstay of the coal trade, but by Clepham's time they were falling out of use because of more efficient methods of loading ships, and the abandonment of the 'keel' as a measure of coal. He explains 'the Keelman, with his back turned to the direction in which his keel is going, thrusts his puoy, or set, into the bed of the river, and, pressing his weight upon it, walks to the stem, thus puoying, or impelling, his vessel forward. And thus he keeps "running fore and aft"'. S. Middlebrook, *Newcastle upon Tyne: Its Growth and Achievement* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Newcastle Chronicle and Journal Ltd, 1950), pp. 42, 169, 187.

¹² Robert Bell (ed.). *Ancient Poems Ballads and Songs of the Peasantry of England* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1857), pp. 175-80. In 1870, after Bell's death, Dixon complained that in this book Bell had used or reprinted Dixon's material under his own name, but that does not apply to the sword dance play, because Bell would only find Dixon's bare reference to Sharp's book. *Ancient Poems, Ballads and Songs of the Peasantry of England*, collected and edited by James Henry Dixon (London: Percy Society vol. XVII, 1846), p. 194. James Henry Dixon, 'Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of the Peasantry of England', *Notes and Queries*, ser. 4, vol. VI, 5 November 1870, pp. 380-1.)

¹³ *Notes on the Sword Dancers*, compiled by Joseph Crawhall; read by Doctor Bruce at the Northumberland Small Pipes Competition December 7th 1880 (Newcastle upon Tyne), pp. 2-8; Joseph Crawhall, *Olde Tayles Newlye Relayed. Enryched with all ye Ancycnte Embellyshmentes* (London: Leadenhall Press, 1883), pp. 3-12.

¹⁴ Whittaker, pp. 16, 18, 29.

¹⁵ John Stokoe, 'Notes on the Sword Dancers' Song and Interlude', *The Monthly Chronicle of North-Country Lore and Legend*, I, no. 10 (December 1887), 462-5.

¹⁶ Stokoe cites Northumbrian Minstrelsy: a Collection of the Ballads, Melodies, and Small-Pipe Tunes of Northumbria, ed. J. Collingwood Bruce and John Stokoe (The Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1882), p. 137, where no specific source is cited, but Sharp's Bishoprick Garland is mentioned. Topliffs tunes are reprinted in the Garland with acknowledgement.

¹⁷ J. Horsfall Turner, *Yorkshire Anthology: Ballads & Songs - Ancient and Modem* (Idel: printed for the editor, 1901), pp. 243-5; H. L. Gee, *Folk Tales of Yorkshire* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1952 reprinted 1955), pp. 30-4.

¹⁸ Whittaker (p. 10) reports that nearly 400 subscribers were listed in the British Museum copy 'from all over the country, evidence of the local patriotism of the folk of the north'. There is no such list in the copy in Sunderland Library. (Letter from Sunderland City Library 13 May 2002.)

¹⁹ Ordnance Survey one-inch to the mile maps, sheets 78 and 85, editions of 1921 with later corrections (1947) and with magnetic north dated 1947. These sheets are used throughout this paper.

²⁰ The sources for titles and tunes discussed here are: Ampleforth (Song Air No. 3) - Cecil J. Sharp, *Sword Dances of Northern England: Songs and Dance Airs*, III (London: Novello, 1913), p.9; Bellerby - M. K. 'Some Fragments of Sword Dance Plays', *Journal of the English Folk Dance Society*, series 2, no. 2 (1928), 35-48 (pp. 36, 38-9); Arkengarthdale - M.K, *Journal of the English Folk Dance Society*, series 2, no. 2 (1928), pp. 33-4; Earsdon - Cecil J. Sharp, *The Sword Dances of Northern England*, I, 2nd edition revised by Maud Karpeles (London: Novello, 1951), p. 85; *Songs and Dance Airs*, I (1911), p. 14; Gainford - 'Sword Dancers Tune', London, Folklore Society Library, Ordish Papers, Durham 5, bound photocopies II, f. 23; Greatham (second tune) - N. Peacock, 'The Greatham Sword Dance', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 8.1 (1956), 29-39 (pp. 31-2); Hexham - T. D. Cook, 'A Northumbrian Sword Dance', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 1.2 (1933), 111-12; High Spen - Bill Cassie, 'Rapper Knots from High Spen' *Folk Music Journal*, [1.1] (1965), 6-24 (p. 23); Houghton Colliery - William Henderson, *Notes on the Folk Lore of the Northern Counties of England and the Borders* (London: Longmans, Green, 1866), p. 52; Hunton - Washington, DC, Library of Congress, James Madison Carpenter MSS, music-3109, box 1, packet 3, pp. 538, 553, 562, 579, 597, 604, 609 (Drunken Tom), 563, 580, 583, 596, 604 (Squire's Son), used the microfilm in London, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, reel 2, [frames 334, 346, 355, 368, 385, 390, 395, and 356, 369, 372, 384, 390], the MS is undated, but was within a year or two of 1933; Kirkby Malzeard (second tune) - *Songs and Dance Airs*, I, pp. 4-5. Sleights, *Songs and Dance Airs*, II (1912), p. 2; Sowerby - 'Some Fragments of Sword Dance Plays' (pp. 44-5); [Second untitled tune on page], London, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Cecil J. Sharp MSS, Field Notebooks, Tunes, 1913/1, f. 3^r; "Orton" - Anne G. Gilchrist, 'Th

Owd Lass of Coverdill', *Journal of the English Folk Dance Society*, series 2, no. 2 (1928), 31-3 (p.32). It is necessary to cite Sharp's notebook for the Sowerby tune because the Clare College fair copy is unclear in one place. It was presumably for this reason that M. K[arpeles] (1928), when quoting the latter, simply wrote 'tune almost identical with that noted at Bellerby' (p. 45).

²¹ John Gibson, *Plan of the Collieries on the Rivers Tyne and Wear: also Blyth, Bedlington and Hartley, with the Country 40 Miles round Newcastle*, (n.p., 1788).

²² Sharp MSS, Field Notebook, Words, 1910/2, ff. 4F to 43'; Cambridge, Archive of Clare College, Cecil J. Sharp MSS, ACC 1987/25, Folk Dance Notes, vol. 1, pp. 211-13; Sharp, *Sword Dance Book*, I, pp.84-6.

²³ The similarity was sufficient for Sharp to write 'The older version and tune are given in the [Monthly] Chronicle'. (Sharp MSS, Folk Dance Notes, vol. 1, p. 210.

²⁴ Carpenter MSS, box 1, packet 3, pp. 497-9, [frames 301-3].

²⁵ Crawhall (1880).

²⁶ Carpenter MSS, box 1, packet 3, pp. 495-6, [frames 299-300].

²⁷ Sharp, *Sword Dance Book*, I, p. 86.

²⁸ Henderson (1866), pp. 51-2.

²⁹ Sharp MSS, Folk Dance Notes, vol. 1, pp. 207 and 210.

³⁰ Sharp MSS, Field Notebook, Words, 1910/2, ff. 43' to 461.

³¹ Sharp arrived in Newcastle on 29 August and visited Swalwell that evening, for which the notes immediately precede those for Earsdon which include all the text he obtained. The present text then follows immediately, and ends the field notes in this book, which Sharp dated 13 May to 30 August 1910. The next notebook is dated 31 August to 26 November 1910. But the tunes for the Earsdon songs are dated 1 September 1910 so there may be a mistake in Sharp's dates. He spent 2 September at a workhouse collecting songs because of the rain. A name and address at Whickham, near Swalwell, suggests that he may have stayed there for a while, or it may only have been someone with information or an introduction, but by 2 September he was staying with his friend Parker Brewis in Jesmond. (London, Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, Cecil J. Sharp MSS, Cecil Sharp, Letter from Newcastle on Tyne to Mrs Gatty, 2 September 1910, Correspondence, Box 7, Letter 14 (at Swalwell, rain on 2 September, in Jesmond); Sharp MSS, Field Notebook, Words, 1910/2 ff. 21^v to 35^v (Swalwell), ff. 36^t to 43^t (Earsdon), ff. 43^t to 46^t (unidentified text), f. 25^t (Whickham address); Sharp MSS, Folk Tunes, vol. 12 tunes 2518-19 (Earsdon tunes).