



On a recent visit to my mother Julie, I came across a C90 cassette containing a recording of a rehearsal for the 1972 Bampton Mummers Play. The players were:

Father Christmas..... . Don Rouse*
 Saint George Roy Hewett
 The Turkish Knight..... Arnold Woodley
 The Doctor..... Don Rouse
 Robin Hood..... Trevor Hewett
 Little John..... Ted Hunt
 Royal Aprussia KingRoy Hewett
 Slasher, The Soldier Bold.....Arnold Woodley
 Jack Finney.....Trevor Hewett
 Old Tom the Tinker.....Ted Hunt

* Standing in for Martin Hewett who played this part on Christmas Eve.

Recorded at a rehearsal in the old chapel at University Farm, Lew. 1972.

The Bampton Mummers Play

The players :

Father Christmas..... Mark Booley

St. George

Royal Aprussia King..... Ken Adams

Turkish Knight

Soldier Bold..... Matthew Green

The Doctor Don Rouse

Robin Hood

Jack Finney..... Geoff Dando

Old Tom the Tinker

Little John..... Frank Piercy.

The cast for Christmas Eve 1991.

THE BAMPTON MUMMERS PLAY

Enter Father Christmas

"In comes I old Faather Christmas, welcome, or welcome not.
I 'ope old Faather Christmas will never be forgot.
There is a time for work, there is a time for play,
A time to be melancholy and for to be gay.
A time to be thrifty, a time to be free.
And sure enough this Christmas time we all shall jovial be,
For this is the time when Christ did come, that we might happy be.
So listen all ye gentiles to what we have to say.
St. George, the Doctor and the Turk, are 'ere together tonight,
The Doctor has 'is physicks', the Knights have their swords sharp set,
One will kill the other and the doctor will raise him up.
Now all we shall happy be with each 'is Christmas cup:
And Robin Hood and Little John will pass the beer pot round,
For two nobler chaps on earth there never yet were found.
So Ladies an' Gentlemen I pray you give good cheer
T'old Faather Christmas, he comes but once a year.
Come in St. George the Knight."

Enter St. George the Knight

"In comes I St. George the Knight who with my pagans used to fight,
With my sword and spear and valiant shield
I'll make an 'ost of adversaries yield.
I'll swear t'is true although I am so pliant in battle
I'm as strong as any giant and although I am so slim
I can eat a calf and then not fill my belly. Oh no, not 'arf.
Come in the Turkish Knight."

Enter the Turkish Knight

"In come I the Turkish Knight, I come from Turkeyland to fight
With bold St. George if 'es 'ere, and if 'is 'eart doesn't quake with fear,
I'll cut it out with my shaarp sword and eat it
That I will upon my word.
Just let 'im come if he be so bowld,
If 'is blood is 'ot, I'll make it cowld."

Fighting

Gasp

"Ahhh!"

Father Christmas

"Is there a doctor in the land?"

Enter the doctor

"There is a doctor in the land, skillful both in yead and hand,
And if a man has got a cough I can cure him without cutting 'is yead off,
And if this pays me well, I'll leave the sinner to eat a bunch of thistles for
his dinner,
And if this pays me well, the secret I shall never tell.
Being the case as it was before, rise up thy yead and fight once more."

Fighting

Doctor Good

"Come in bold Robin Hood."

Enter Robin Hood

"In comes I bold Robin Hood, with bended bow of yew tree wood,
And arrows sharp for my quiver, I'll choose an alderman's fat liver.
Under the greenwood tree merrily come with me
To hunt the deer with horn and hound, we take our joyous way,
And when we've done with nut brown ale we'll cheer the hunting day.
With Little John and Friar Tuck we'll roast and eat the slaughtered buck.
Come in bold Little John."

Enter Little John

"In comes I bowld Little John, with my quarterstaff I'll play the don
I'm not the man to cheat or cozen, but knock men's brazins out by the dozen.
All I ask you in this quorum, I'll drink your honour in the jorum.
Last Christmas Eve I turned the spit, burnt me fingers, and finds ant't it.
The sparks fled over the table, the skimmer ran arter the laadle,
I said to the grid iron "Caan't you two agree,
I'm the justice, bring 'im to me.""

The Mummers Play Part 2

Enter Father Christmas

"Good master and good mistress, I 'ope you're all within,
For we've come this Merry Christmastime to greet you and your kin,
But if you are offended we'll take it as offence,
And If you do not own us, we'll quickly go you hence.
A room a room to rhyme, please give me and my brave gallant boys a room
To rhyme this Merry Christmastime, active youth, active life,
Life that's never seen or done before upon a common stage,
Stage or no stage, off St. George.
Come in the Royal Apprussia King."

Enter the Royal Apprussia King

"In comes I the Royal Apprussia King, bound to defend all nations,
Cares for no man, neither Austrian, Spannish, French, Dutch nor Turk.
An' I'm sure no man can do me any hurt.
So let all your noble voices ring,
For I'm the Royal Apprussia King.
Come in Soldier bowld."

Enter the Soldier bold

"In comes I, Soldier bowld, Slasher is my name,
With sword and sash hanging by my side, I'll swear I'll win the game.
Who is this man who wi' me stand? I'll swear I'll kill him sword in hand,
Kill 'im and cut 'im and maul 'im into smaller slices,
Send 'im to the cookshop to make mince pies,
Mince pies 'ot, Mince pies cowld,
Send 'im to the cookshop before 'es nine days old."

Royal Apprussia King

"Count myself as good a man as thee."

Soldier bold

"Same as I to thee.
Wherein the forelife I value it not,
Must give it up sooner or later or no more room for mortality."

Fighting

Knocking

Father Christmas

"Who's there?"

Doctor Good (off stage)

"Doctor."

Father Christmas

"Come in then good Doctor."

Enter Doctor Good

"In comes I Doctor Good, with my 'and I'll stop his blood
And my pills will work 'im through, cure both body and stomach too."

Father Christmas

"Where doest 'ee come from then good Doctor?"

Doctor Good

"Italy, t'Italy, Germany, France and Spain,
That's my 'ome and I shall return again."

Father Christmas

"What sort of diseases do thy pills cure then good Doctor?"

Doctor Good

"All sort of diseases, the itch, the stitch, the palsy, the gout,
Pains within, pains without, hard carns, soft carns,
Cure a magpie with the toothache."

Father Christmas

"How does'th thee do it then good Doctor?"

Doctor Good

"Cut 'is yead off and chuck 'is body in the ditch.
Also John Jenkins and his wife, I cured they, but they died.
Bring me an old woman, seventy years of age and lying in her grave,
She'll be able to raise her head and crack one of my imple pimple pills,
I'll be bound a Fifty Pound bonfire for her life
If there's another quack doctor in the land
Who can do as well as I can.
Just let 'im come here and raise this dead man.
Come in Jack Finney."

Enter Jack Finney

"In comes I as aint bin 'it. Wi' my big yead and little wit.
Meyad's so big, me wits so small, I will endeavour to please you all.
Ladies and gentlemen, my name is not Jack Finney."

Father Christmas

"What is thy name then Jack?"

Jack Finney

"Mr. Finney. A man of great pains,
Can do more than thee, or any other man."

Father Christmas

"What cans't thee do then Jack?"

Jack Finney

"Cure this man if not quite dead,
Being the case as it was before,
Rise up thy yead and fight no more.
Come in old Tom the Tinker."

Enter Tom the Tinker

"In comes I ol' Tom the Tinker. I beant no small beer drinker.
I towld the landlord to 'is face, the chimney carner was 'is place.
There us set and dried our face, Old Tom Giles and I.
Me face was black, me beard was long,
Me hat tied on with a leathern thong.
So if you please all ye ladies and gentlemen,
Will ye give me a copper or two
To get me beard cut to go to church on Sunday?
As I was walking down a wide, narrow, straight, crooked lane
I met a pig with a horse's mane, I went down a little bit faather
I come to a pig sty built with pancakes and thatched wi' apple dumplings.
Now I thought it all very well for trade,
I knocked at the maid, open fled the door,
The pig began to shake and the 'ouse began to roar.
She asked me if I could yet half a pint of ale
And drink a piece of bread and cheese.
I said "No thankee, but just if thee please."
I went down a little bit further, I came to two owld women, snipper snapping.
One cut a barley corn through a ten foot wall,
Knocked the bottom out of a caste iron pot,
And Killed a poor dead dog.
Now I had pity on this poor dead dog."

Doctor Good

"What was 'it Tom a pedigree?"

Tom the Tinker

"No a bitch.
I turn 'im inside outerds, slap bang outerds,
Set 'im at the top of Buckland Hill barking back'ards."

Final Song

"Now for the music and now for the fun,
The feast is ready and Christmas is come,
So welcome us now, and give us a cheer,
For Ol' Faather Christmas comes once in a year."

The Merrymergers
first part.

In comes I old Father Xmas
Welcome or welcome ^{not} ~~no~~

I hope old father Xmas will
never be forgot, There is a time
for work there is a time for
play, time to be Melancholy
and for to be gay, time to be
tipsy, time to be free, and
sure enough at Xmas time
we all shall jolly be, this is
a time when Christ should
come, that we might happy
be so listen all ye gentiles
note what we shall say, King
George, the Doctor, and the
Turk, are here together to night
The Doctor has his ~~physic~~
physic, knight, sword and
sharp set, one will kill the
other and the Doctor will
rise him up, now all we
shall happy be with each
his Xmas cup, from foot
and little John will pass the
beer pot round for two
nobler chaps on earth there
never yet was found so ladies
and gentlemen we pray, your
gifts good cheers to old father
Xmas, for he comes but once
a year. come King George.

2) In comes I King George
the knight whom with my
package used to fight, and
with my sword and spear
and valley and shield, I
make an oath of advergale,
I swore tis true although I
am so pliant in battle I am
as strong as any giant, though
I am so slim, I can eat a
calf and not fill my belly
O, no not half, come in
the Turkish knight.

3) In comes I the Turkish knight
I come from Turkey land
to fight and if brave King
George if ~~he~~ is here and if
his heart dont quake with
fear I will cut it out with
my sharp spear and eat it
half that I will upon my
word just let him come if
he is so bold and if his
blood is hot I'll make it
cold battle to battle is
there a Doctor in the land

4) There is a Doctor in the
land skilful of both in
head and hand, but if a
man has got a cough I

can cure him without cutting
his head off, but if this pay
me well, I will leave this
sinner to eat a bunch of
thistles for his dinner, if this
pay me well this secret I
will never tell being the
case it was before rise
up thy head and fight
once more, come in bold
Robin Hood.

5 In comes I bold Robin
Hood with bended bow
of Yew tree wood with
arrow sharp and for my
~~quiver~~ quiver I will choose
the elderly man's fat liver
under the greenwood tree
merrily come with me to
hunt the deer with horn
and hound and take
one joyous way when we
done, with nut brown hill
to cheer the hunting day
with little John and
Friars Tuck we will roast
and eat the slaughtered
buck, come in bold
little John.

6) In comes I bold little
John, with my quarter staff
I'll play the Don, I am not
the man to cheat my
cousins, but knock mens
brains out by to dozens,
all I said to please you
in chorus, I will drink
your honour in the ~~forum~~
forum, last Xmas eve I
turned a spit burnt me
finger and finds ant it,
sparks fled over the table
the skimmer went after
the ladel I said to the
grid iron cant you two
agree I am the justice
so just bring it to me.

Part 2)

1) Good Master & good Mistress
I hope you are within, I
am come this merry Xmas
to see you and your kin,
but if you are offended
we will take it as a fence
but only I will quickly go
your hence, a room a room
to rhyme please give me
and my brave gallant
lads room to rhyme this
Merry Xmas tide active

youth active life, life, life
which never seen or done
before on a common stage
or no stage off King George
come in the Royal ~~and~~ a
Prussian King.

2) I comes I the Royal ~~and~~
a prussian King bound
to defend all nations cares
for no man neither Austrian
Spanish French ~~or~~ Dutch
nor Turk I am sure no man
can do one any hurt let
all the voices use the
ring for I am the Royal a
prussian King come in Soldier
Bold.

3 I comes I Soldier bold
Slasher is my name with
sword and sash ~~hung~~^{hung} by
my side I swore I'd win
the game who is the man
that licks me stand he
swore he'd kill ^{me} sword in
hand I will cut him ^{and} ~~all~~
mall him in ~~small~~ small
pieces send him to the
cook shop to make mince
~~pie~~ pies, mince pies hot
mince pies cold send him
to the cook shop before he's

nine days old count my-
self as good ~~any~~^a man
as the same as I to ~~the~~
~~wherein~~^{and} the far life I valley
thee not give up sooner or
later or no more, room to
tallowty Battle to Battle
who's there come in then
good Doctor.

H) In comes I Doctor good
with my hand I'll stop
his blood and my pills shall
work him through and cure
both body and stomach
too where dost ~~thee~~ thee
come from good Doctor
Italy Italy Germany
France and Spain that
is my home and I will
return again what sort
of diseases do thy pills
cure then good Doctor all
sorts of diseases the itch
the stich the palsy and the
gout pain within and pains
with-out hard corns soft
corns cure a massie with
the toothache how does it
do that then good Doctor
cut his head off and throw
his body in the ditch

also John Jenkins, and his
wife I cured but she died,
bring unto me an old ^{lying}
woman 40 years of age ~~lying~~
in her grave she will be
able to rise her head and
crack one of my imple
pimple pills I will be bound
fifty pounds Confide for
her life if there is another
~~man~~ quack Doctor in the
land can do any more
than I can let him come
and rise this dead man
come in Jack finny.

5) In comes I as aint bin
it with my big head and
little witts my heads so
big my witts so small I
will endeavour to please
you all ladies and gentlemen.
My name is not Jack
Finney what is thy name
then Jack Mr. Finney a
man of great pain can
do more than thee or any
other Man what canst
thee do then Jack cure
this man who is not quite
dead bring the case it was
before rise up thy head

4

and fight no more, come in
old Tom the Tinker.

6) In comes I old Tom the Tinker
I am no small beer drinker I
told the landlord to his face the
chimney corner was his place
there we sat and dried our face
old Tom Giles and I my face was
black my beard was long my hat
tied on with leathern thong if
please all you ladies and gentlemen
give me a copper or two to get my
beard cut to go to church on
Sunday with, as I was going
down a wide strait ~~on~~ narrow
crooked lane I met a pig with a
horses main went down a bit
further come to a pig sty built
with Parcaker and thatched
with apple dumblins I thought
it was all very ^{well} ~~good~~ for trade
so I knocked at the maid open
fled the door the pigs began to
~~shake~~ shake the house began
to roar she ask me if I could
eat half a pint of ale and drink
a piece of bread and cheese I said
no thank you but just if
you please went down a bit
further come to two old
women a strip snoffing

one cut a Barley corn through
a ten foot wall knocked the
bottom out of a cast Iron Pot
killed a poor dead dog I had
pity on this poor dead dog
I turned him inside out-
ards slap bang out-ards
sent him up a top of
Buckland Barking back-ards
finish

Please ~~to~~ turn over
for Chorus to be sung
altogether at the end.
of Part Two.

Chorus.

Now for the music and
now for the fun our
speeches ready and
Xmas is come so welcome
him now and give him
a cheer for old father
Xmas comes once in
a year

The Merrymergers
first part.

In comes I old Father Xmas
Welcome or welcome ^{not} ~~no~~

I hope old father Xmas will
never be forgot, There is a time
for work there is a time for
play, time to be Melancholy
and for to be gay, time to be
tipsy, time to be free, and
sure enough at Xmas time
we all shall jolly be, this is
a time when blarney should
come, that we might happy
be so listen all ye gentiles
note what we shall say, King
George, the Doctor, and the
Turk, are here together to night
The Doctor has his ~~physic~~
physic, knight, sword and
sharp set, one will kill the
other and the Doctor will
rise him up, now all we
shall happy be with each
his Xmas cup, it is a good
and little John will pass the
beer pot round for two
nobler chaps on earth there
never yet was found so ladies
and gentlemen we pray, your
gifts good cheers to old father
Xmas, for he comes but once
a year. come King George.

2) In comes I King George
the knight whom with my
package used to fight, and
with my sword and spear
and valley and shield, I
make an oath of advergale,
I swore tis true although I
am so pliant in battle I am
as strong as any giant, though
I am so slim, I can eat a
calf and not fill my belly
O, no not half, come in
the Turkish knight.

3) In comes I the Turkish knight
I come from Turkey land
to fight and if brave King
George if ~~he~~ is here and if
his heart dont quake with
fear I will cut it out with
my sharp spear and eat it
half that I will upon my
word just let him come if
he is so bold and if his
blood is hot I'll make it
cold battle to battle is
there a Doctor in the land

4) There is a Doctor in the
land skilful of both in
head and hand, but if a
man has got a cough I

can cure him without cutting
his head off, but if this pay
me well, I will leave this
sinner to eat a bunch of
thistles for his dinner, if this
pay me well this secret I
will never tell being the
case it was before rise
up thy head and fight
once more, come in bold
Robin Hood.

5 In comes I bold Robin
Hood with bended bow
of Yew tree wood with
arrow sharp and for my
~~quiver~~ quiver I will choose
the elderly man's fat liver
under the greenwood tree
merrily come with me to
hunt the deer with horn
and hound and take
one joyous way when we
done, with nut brown hill
to cheer the hunting day
with little John and
Friars Tuck we will roast
and eat the slaughtered
buck, come in bold
little John.

6) In comes I bold little
John, with my quarter staff
I'll play the Don, I am not
the man to cheat my
cousins, but knock mens
brains out by to dozens,
all I said to please you
in chorus, I will drink
your honour in the ~~forum~~
forum, last Xmas eve I
turned a spit burnt me
finger and finds ant it,
sparks fled over the table
the skimmer went after
the ladel I said to the
grid iron cant you two
agree I am the justice
so just bring it to me.

Part 2)

1) Good Master & good Mistress
I hope you are within, I
am come this merry Xmas
to see you and your kin,
but if you are offended
we will take it as a fence
but only I will quickly go
your hence, a room a room
to rhyme please give me
and my brave gallant
lads room to rhyme this
Merry Xmas tide active

youth active life, life, life
which never seen or done
before on a common stage
or no stage off King George
come in the Royal ~~and~~ a
Prussian King.

2) I comes I the Royal ~~and~~
a prussian King bound
to defend all nations cares
for no man neither Austrian
Spanish French ~~or~~ Dutch
nor Turk I am sure no man
can do one any hurt let
all the voices use the
ring for I am the Royal a
prussian King come in Soldier
Bold.

3 I comes I Soldier bold
Slasher is my name with
sword and sash ~~hung~~^{hung} by
my side I swore I'd win
the game who is the man
that licks me stand he
swore he'd kill ^{me} sword in
hand I will cut him ^{and} ~~all~~
mall him in ~~small~~ small
pieces send him to the
cook shop to make mince
~~pie~~ pies, mince pies hot
mince pies cold send him
to the cook shop before he's

nine days old count my-
self as good ~~any~~^a man
as the same as I to ~~the~~
~~wherein~~^{and} the far life I really
thee not give up sooner or
later or no more, room to
tallowty Battle to Battle
who's there come in then
good Doctor.

H) In comes I Doctor good
with my hand I'll stop
his blood and my pills shall
work him through and cure
both body and stomach
too where dost ~~thee~~ thee
come from good Doctor
Italy Italy Germany
France and Spain that
is my home and I will
return again what sort
of diseases do thy pills
cure then good Doctor all
sorts of diseases the itch
the stich the palsy and the
gout pain within and pains
with-out hard corns soft
corns cure a massie with
the toothache how does it
do that then good Doctor
cut his head off and throw
his body in the ditch

also John Jenkins, and his
wife I cured but she died,
bring unto me an old ^{lying}
woman 40 years of age ~~lying~~
in her grave she will be
able to rise her head and
crack one of my imple
pimple pills I will be bound
fifty pounds Confide for
her life if there is another
~~man~~ quack Doctor in the
land can do any more
than I can let him come
and rise this dead man
come in Jack finny.

5) In comes I as aint bin
it with my big head and
little witts my heads so
big my witts so small I
will endeavour to please
you all ladies and gentlemen.
My name is not Jack
Finney what is thy name
then Jack Mr. Finney a
man of great pain can
do more than thee or any
other Man what canst
thee do then Jack cure
this man who is not quite
dead bring the case it was
before rise up thy head

4

and fight no more, come in
old Tom the Tinker.

6) In comes I old Tom the Tinker
I am no small beer drinker I
told the landlord to his face the
chimney corner was his place
there we sat and dried our face
old Tom Giles and I my face was
black my beard was long my hat
tied on with leathern thong if
please all you ladies and gentlemen
give me a copper or two to get my
beard cut to go to church on
Sunday with, as I was going
down a wide strait ~~or~~ narrow
crooked lane I met a pig with a
horses main went down a bit
further come to a pig sty built
with Parcaker and thatched
with apple dumblins I thought
it was all very ~~good~~ ^{well} for trade
so I knocked at the maid open
fled the door the pigs began to
~~shake~~ shake the house began
to roar she ask me if I could
eat half a pint of ale and drink
a piece of bread and cheese I said
no thank you but just if
you please went down a bit
further come to two old
women a strip snoffing

one cut a Barley corn through
a ten foot wall knocked the
bottom out of a cast Iron Pot
killed a poor dead dog I had
pity on this poor dead dog
I turned him inside out-
ards slap bang out-ards
sent him up a top of
Buckland Barking back-ards
finish

Please ~~then~~ turn over
for Chorus to be sung
altogether at the end.
of Part Two.

Chorus.

Now for the music and
now for the fun our
speeches ready and
Xmas is come so welcome
him now and give him
a cheer for old father
Xmas comes once in
a year

AN OXFORDSHIRE MUMMERS' PLAY.

[By ALFRED WILLIAMS, author of "Round About the Upper Thames," "Folk Songs of the Upper Thames," etc.]

With the approach of Christmas we begin to think of the carol singers and the mummers, who every year used to meet and practice in a shed, barn or stable before they perambulated the village and asked permission to perform at the farmhouse or cottage. Not that we hear much of either carol singers or mummers at the present time. Drastic changes have set in everywhere, and folk observances are well-nigh extinct not only here but all over the country. And yet there is more organised interest in local customs and observations than ever before. Many who would not deign to listen to a party of mummers at Christmas time would yet read an account of them with interest and pleasure. We are not indifferent to the folk inheritance; notwithstanding our finer culture, at heart we are steeped in the old spirit. After all, what is the real foundation of our present-day habits, rules, rites and ceremonies? Are they not all based on tradition? Of course! They are all a species of folk lore, or they were so before they were moulded into their present shape by what we call the evolutionary process.

Nowhere in the country was there more folk activity than in the neighbourhood of the Upper Thames between Oxford, Cirencester and Malmesbury. This applies to both banks of the river, and includes parts of the four counties of Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Berkshire. From Eynsham to Stanton Harcourt, and thence past Standlake, Aston, Bampton, Clanfield and Alvescot, taking a line roughly to the Thames head, there was a bounded music and merriment, and many popular customs. The same applies to the villages on the south bank, though there were very important differences. These differences are quite striking, and sometimes even startling. The river provides a key to the mystery. But this is not the time nor the place in which to enter upon a discussion of the subject.

There were many versions of the mummers' play in circulation, even in the Upper Thames district, but no doubt they might all be traced to a common origin. I have collected five or six different pieces between Oxford and Cirencester, but near the Thames the best known were the play of "Robin Hood" and another which bore the title of "Father Christmas." The piece called "Robin Hood" (given in full in my "Round About the Upper Thames") was popular at Standlake, Bampton and Lechlade. Near Cricklade we have another excellent copy of a mummers' play in circulation, which contains references to the Islamic Emperor of Spain. All the pieces are old in their origin, but the versions have undergone many changes and vicissitudes.

It is the fashion to complain of the crudeness of folk plays and folk music. But is it not that very crudeness which excites our interest in them? Simplicity is the distinguishing feature of all folk lore. But this does not mean that crudeness is a necessary part of it. This often came in later, owing to imperfect traditions, interpolations and poor copying. At ordinary seasons of the year certainly we are not in the mood to listen to third-rate music, songs and ballads that may be little better than doggerel and the unintelligible rhapsodies of street actors. But at Christmas time we relax and for the sake of being genial show ourselves ready and willing to submit to anything that is sanctioned by a lengthy observance.

The origin of mumming is too obscure for anyone to offer an easy and satisfactory explanation of it. No doubt it originated in a solar myth; this is to say that it bore some relation to the astronomical order and the contents of the calendar. It appears to have come to us from the East. Nowhere in the world are there more folk customs, games, shows and crude dramatic entertainments than among the Aryan populations of India, who are our historical ancestors. In the Hindu Jastras, or "Birth Tales," we find the counterpart of the English Miracle Play, only older by many centuries. In the Rig-Veda, also, is the germ of the true drama and many, if not most, of our popular rites. We have outgrown these things, but in the East their popularity is boundless, and it shows no sign of abating.

Mumming undoubtedly means "acting." The word is probably identical with the old German word "mummen," which meant "to mimic." Mumming was, therefore, understood on the Continent centuries ago. In the days of Queen Elizabeth mumming was called "disguising." Young men and women exchanged dresses and, forming a company, went from house to house singing, dancing and acting, for which they were expected to be rewarded with gifts of food and refreshment. At the New Year festival, the men dressed in women's attire and sing, creating diversions for the company. This was done here. In a mumming piece which I discovered near Faringdon one of the characters is dressed as a woman; so here we have a relic of the "disguising," as it was called. No doubt this used to be a general practice.

It is obvious that in England mumming was often confused with wassailing. Something of the kind took place in the region of the Upper Thames, because the wassailers of Cricklade dressed in fancy costumes and wore coloured ribbons, such as was usually done by mummers. But it was not the rule generally to dress in gay costumes, or to wear any but the ordinary clothes in the wassail rites.

The mummers' play given below was popular in the Bampton and Aston district.

Enter FATHER CHRISTMAS:

In come I, old Father Christmas,
Welcome or welcome not,
I hope old Father Christmas
Will never be forgot.
Last Christmas Day I turned the spit,
I burnt my fingers and feel on't yet;
The sparks went over the table,
The skimmer beat the ladle,
"Ay, ay," said the gridiron, "can't you two agree."

I am the Justice; bring them to me.
A room, a room, to sing hey-down-derry,
I am come this Christmas to make you all merry,
If there's any offence I'll go hence,
If not, make room for me
And my jolly company.

Come in the Valiant Soldier!

Enter the VALIANT SOLDIER:

I am the Valiant Soldier,
And Slasher is my name,
With my sword and buckler by my side
I hope to win the game.

FATHER CHRISTMAS:

Slasher, Slasher, pray don't be too hot,
Before thou know'st who thou'st got.

VALIANT SOLDIER:

What grows on Land's End?

FATHER CHRISTMAS:

Wheat and rye.

VALIANT SOLDIER:

Then there shall be a battle 'twixt thee and I,
To see which first on the ground shall lie;
So mind thy head, and guard thy blow,
Mind thy eyes, and face also.
Come in the Royal Russian King!

Enter the ROYAL RUSSIAN KING:

I am the Royal Russian King,
I am the Turkish Knight,
And I am come from the Turkish land,
And I am bound for to fight.
If any man thinks he can do me harm
Let his voice ring,
For I am the Royal, the Russian King.

The Valiant Soldier and the Royal Russian King fight. The Royal Russian King falls.

ROYAL RUSSIAN KING:

A doctor, a doctor; I will give five pound
If a good doctor could be found.

DOCTOR:

I will not come for five pound.

ROYAL RUSSIAN KING:

What will you come for then?

DOCTOR:

I will come for ten pound.

I am a doctor, a doctor good,
And with my hand I can stop thy blood;
I have cured in England, I have cured in Spain,
And I am come to old England to cure again.

VALIANT SOLDIER:

What can'st thou cure more than any other man?

DOCTOR:

An old magpie with the toothache.

VALIANT SOLDIER:

How dost thou do that?

DOCTOR:

First I wrist off his head,
Throw his body in the ditch,
Then chop him up as small as flies,
And send him to France to make mince-pies—
Mince-pies hot, mince-pies cold,
Mince-pies in the pot nine days old.
Come in, Jack Vinney!

Enter JACK VINNEY:

Here come I that has not been hit,
With my great head and little wit;
My head so big, and wit so small,
But I'll endeavour to please you all.
As I went up along a narrow, straight and
crooked lane, I saw a pigsty tied to an eldern
bush, built with apple dumplings and slated
with pancakes. I knocked at the maid and the
door came out. She asked me if I could eat a
pint of ale and drink a crust of bread and cheese.
I said, "No, thank you, Miss," but meant "Yes,
if you please." So she brought me out a cold leg
of nothing and no taters, and that's what gives
me my big belly. I went on a little further, and
there I saw two old women a-sifting tobacco.
One flung a piece through a cast-iron platter and
knocked the bottom out, and another flung a
piece through a ten-foot wall and injured a poor
dead dog. I had massy on that poor dead dog,
and I turned him slap-dab-inside-outerds and sent
him to Buckland Hill backwards a-barking.
Here all join hands and dance together, singing:
Green sleeves, yellow lace,
Pretty boys, dance apace,
For the fiddler is in great distress
For the want of a little money.

The Merrymergers
first part.

In comes I old Father Xmas
Welcome or welcome ^{not} ~~no~~

I hope old father Xmas will
never be forgot, There is a time
for work there is a time for
play, time to be Melancholy
and for to be gay, time to be
tipsy, time to be free, and
sure enough at Xmas time
we all shall jolly be, this is
a time when blarney should
come, that we might happy
be so listen all ye gentiles
note what we shall say, King
George, the Doctor, and the
Turk, are here together to night
The Doctor has his ~~physic~~
physic, knight, sword and
sharp set, one will kill the
other and the Doctor will
rise him up, now all we
shall happy be with each
his Xmas cup, it is a good
and little John will pass the
beer pot round for two
nobler chaps on earth there
never yet was found so ladies
and gentlemen we pray, your
gifts good cheers to old father
Xmas, for he comes but once
a year. come King George.

2) In comes I King George
the knight whom with my
package used to fight, and
with my sword and spear
and valley and shield, I
make an oath of advergale,
I swore tis true although I
am so pliant in battle I am
as strong as any giant, though
I am so slim, I can eat a
calf and not fill my belly
O, no not half, come in
the Turkish knight.

3) In comes I the Turkish knight
I come from Turkey land
to fight and if brave King
George if he is here and if
his heart dont quake with
fear I will cut it out with
my sharp spear and eat it
half that I will upon my
word just let him come if
he is so bold and if his
blood is hot I'll make it
cold battle to battle is
there a Doctor in the land

4) There is a Doctor in the
land skilful of both in
head and hand, but if a
man has got a cough I

can cure him without cutting
his head off, but if this pay
me well, I will leave this
sinner to eat a bunch of
thistles for his dinner, if this
pay me well this secret I
will never tell being the
case it was before rise
up thy head and fight
once more, come in bold
Robin Hood.

5 In comes I bold Robin
Hood with bended bow
of Yew tree wood with
arrow sharp and for my
~~quiver~~ quiver I will choose
the elderly man's fat liver
under the greenwood tree
merrily come with me to
hunt the deer with horn
and hound and take
one joyous way when we
done, with nut brown hill
to cheer the hunting day
with little John and
Friars Tuck we will roast
and eat the slaughtered
buck, come in bold
little John.

6) In comes I bold little
John, with my quarter staff
I'll play the Don, I am not
the man to cheat my
cousins, but knock mens
brains out by to dozens,
all I said to please you
in chorus, I will drink
your honour in the ~~forum~~
forum, last Xmas eve I
turned a spit burnt me
finger and finds ant it,
sparks fled over the table
the skimmer went after
the ladel I said to the
grid iron cant you two
agree I am the justice
so just bring it to me.

Part 2)

1) Good Master & good Mistress
I hope you are within, I
am come this merry Xmas
to see you and your kin,
but if you are offended
we will take it as a fence
but only I will quickly go
your hence, a room a room
to rhyme please give me
and my brave gallant
lads room to rhyme this
Merry Xmas tide active

youth active life, life, life
which never seen or done
before on a common stage
or no stage off King George
come in the Royal ~~and~~ a
Prussian King.

2) I comes I the Royal ~~and~~
a prussian King bound
to defend all nations cares
for no man neither Austrian
Spanish French ~~or~~ Dutch
nor Turk I am sure no man
can do one any hurt let
all the voices use the
ring for I am the Royal a
prussian King come in Soldier
Bold.

3 I comes I Soldier bold
Slasher is my name with
sword and sash ~~hung~~^{hung} by
my side I swore I'd win
the game who is the man
that licks me stand he
swore he'd kill ^{me} sword in
hand I will cut him ^{and} ~~all~~
mall him in ~~small~~ small
pieces send him to the
cook shop to make mince
~~pie~~ pies, mince pies hot
mince pies cold send him
to the cook shop before he's

nine days old count my-
self as good ~~any~~^a man
as the same as I to ~~the~~
~~wherein~~^{and} the far life I really
thee not give up sooner or
later or no more, room to
tallowty Battle to Battle
who's there come in then
good Doctor.

H) In comes I Doctor good
with my hand I'll stop
his blood and my pills shall
work him through and cure
both body and stomach
too where dost ~~thee~~ thee
come from good Doctor
Italy Italy Germany
France and Spain that
is my home and I will
return again what sort
of diseases do thy pills
cure then good Doctor all
sorts of diseases the itch
the stich the palsy and the
gout pain within and pains
with-out hard corns soft
corns cure a massie with
the toothache how does it
do that then good Doctor
cut his head off and throw
his body in the ditch

also John Jenkins, and his
wife I cured but she died,
bring unto me an old ^{lying}
woman 40 years of age ^{lying}
in her grave she will be
able to rise her head and
crack one of my imple
pimple pills I will be bound
fifty pounds Confide for
her life if there is another
~~man~~ quack Doctor in the
land can do any more
than I can let him come
and rise this dead man
come in Jack finny.

5) In comes I as aint bin
it with my big head and
little witts my heads so
big my witts so small I
will endeavour to please
you all ladies and gentlemen.
My name is not Jack
Finney what is thy name
then Jack Mr. Finney a
man of great pain can
do more than thee or any
other Man what canst
thee do then Jack cure
this man who is not quite
dead bring the case it was
before rise up thy head

4

and fight no more, come in
old Tom the Tinker.

6) In comes I old Tom the Tinker
I am no small beer drinker I
told the landlord to his face the
chimney corner was his place
there we sat and dried our face
old Tom Giles and I my face was
black my beard was long my hat
tied on with leathern thong if
please all you ladies and gentlemen
give me a copper or two to get my
beard cut to go to church on
Sunday with, as I was going
down a wide strait ~~or~~ narrow
crooked lane I met a pig with a
horses main went down a bit
further come to a pig sty built
with Parcaker and thatched
with apple dumblins I thought
it was all very ^{well} ~~good~~ for trade
so I knocked at the maid open
fled the door the pigs began to
~~shake~~ shake the house began
to roar she ask me if I could
eat half a pint of ale and drink
a piece of bread and cheese I said
no thank you but just if
you please went down a bit
further come to two old
women a strip snoffing

one cut a Barley corn through
a ten foot wall knocked the
bottom out of a cast Iron Pot
killed a poor dead dog I had
pity on this poor dead dog
I turned him inside out-
ards slap bang out-ards
sent him up a top of
Buckland Barking back-ards
finish

Please ~~then~~ turn over
for Chorus to be sung
altogether at the end.
of Part Two.

Chorus.

Now for the music and
now for the fun our
speeches ready and
Xmas is come so welcome
him now and give him
a cheer for old father
Xmas comes once in
a year



Bampton Mummers' Play



Enter Father Christmas

In comes I ol' Father Christmas, welcome or welcome not, I hope ol' father Christmas will never be forgot.

There is a time for work, there is a time for play, a time to be melancholy and for to be gay.

A time to be thrifty, a time to be free and sure enough this Christmas time we all shall jovial be.

For this is the time that Christ did come that we might happy be ,

So listen all ye gentiles to what I have to say

St George , the Doctor and the Turk are here together tonight,

The Doctor has his physics and the Knights have their swords sharp set,

One will kill the other and the Doctor will raise him up.

Now all we shall happy be with each his Christmas cup

When Robin Hood and Little John will pass the Beer pot round

For two nobler chaps on earth there never yet were found

So Ladies and Gentlemen I pray you give good cheer to ol' Father Christmas ,

He comes but once a year.

Come in St George the Knight.

Enter St George.

In comes I St George the Knight

Who with my pagans used to fight

With sword and spear and valiant shield

I'll make an 'ost of adversaries yeild

I'll swear tis true, although I am so pliant

In battle, I'm as strong as any giant

And although I am so slim I could yet a calf and then not fill my belly

Oh no not 'alf.

Come in the Turkish Knight.

Enter the Turkish Knight

In comes I the Turkish Knight

I come from Turkey land to fight

With bold St George if he be 'ere

And if 'is 'art don't quake with fear

I'll cut it out with my sharp sword and eat it that I will , upon my word

So just let 'm come 'ere if he be so bold

And if 'is blood is hot , I'll mak it cold.

Fighting.erupts. Turkish Knight Falls

Father C

Is there a Doctor in the land?

Enter Doctor

Bampton Mummers' Play

There is a doctor in the land skillfull both in 'ead an' 'and
Now if a man has got a cough , I can cure 'im without cutting 'is 'ead off
And if this pays me well, I'll leave the sinner to eat a bunch of thistles for his dinner
And if this pays me well, the secret I shall never tell
Being the case it was before, Rise up thy 'ead and fight once more.
(Doctor raises him from the dead)
Come in bold Robin Hood

Enter Robin Hood

In comes I bold Robin Hood, with bended bow of yew tree wood
And arrows sharp for my quiver I'll choose an aldermans fat liver
Under the greenwood tree merrily come with me
To 'unt the deer with 'orn and 'ound, we'll take our joyous way
And when weve done with nut brown ale
We'll cheer the 'unting day
When Little John and Friar Tuck will roast and eat the slaughtered Buck
Come in Bold Little John

Enter Bold Little John

In comes I bold little John, with my Quarterstaff I'll play the don
I'm not the man to cheat or cozen, but knock mens brains out by the dozen
All I ask you in this quorum, I'll drink your honour from a jurom.
Last Christmas eve I turned a spit, burnt my fingers and finds ants it
The sparks fled over the table, the skimmer ran a'ter the ladel
I said to the grid iron "Can't you two agree ,
I'm the justice, bring him to me."

PART TWO

Enter Father Christmas.

Good master and good and good Mistress, I 'ope your all within
For we've come this merry Christmas time, to greet you and your kin,
Now if you are offended we'll taken it as offence
And if you will not own us, we'll quickly go your hence.
A room, a room to rhyme,
Please give me and my brave gallant boys a room to rhyme this merry Christmastime
Active youth, active life
Life thats never seen or done before upon a common stage,
Stage or no stage. Off St George, come in the Royal Aprussia King.

Enter the Royal Aprussia King.

In comes I the Royal Apprussia King
Bound to defend all nations, cares for no man
Niether Austrian, Spanish, French, Dutch nor Turk

Bampton Mummers' Play

And I'm sure no man can do me any hurt
So let all your noble voices ring

For I am the Royal Apprussia King
Come in soldier Bold.

Enter Soldier Bold

In comes I soldier bold, Slasher is my name
With sword and sash hanging by my side I'll swear I'll win the game
Who is this man who with me stands? I'll swear I'll kill 'im sword in hand
Kill 'im, cut 'im, maul 'im into smaller slices
Send 'im to the cook shop to make mince pies
Mince pies hot, mince pies cold,
I'll send 'im to the cook shop afore he's nine days old.
I count myself as good a man as thee

Royal Apprussia King

Same as I to thee

Soldier Bold

Where in the forelife I valued it not
I must give up sooner or later or no more room for Mortality

Fighting ensues with The Royal Apprussia King falling

Knocking at door

Father Christmas

Who's there?

Doctor off stage

Doctor

Father Christmas

Come in then good Doctor

Enter Doctor Good

In comes I doctor Good
With my 'and I'll stop 'is blood
And my pills will work 'im through, cure both body and stomach to.

Father Christmas

Bampton Mummer's Play

Where doest thee come from then good Doctor?

Doctor Good

Italy, Titaly, Germany, France and Spain, that is my home and I shall return again

Father Christmas

What sort of diseases do thy pills cure then good Doctor?

Doctor Good

All sorts of diseases, the Itch, the Stitch, the Pulsie, the Gout
Pains within and pains without
'Ard carns, soft carns, cure a Magpie with the toothache.

Father Christmas

Hows do that then good Doctor?

Doctor Good

Cuts 'is yead off and chucks 'is body in the ditch
Also John Jenkins and his wife I cured they. But they died
Bring unto me an old woman, seventy years of age and lying in her grave
She'll be able to rise 'er 'ead and crack one of my Imple Pimple pills
I'll be bound a fifty pound bonfire for her life
If there is another quack doctor in the land that can do as well as I can
Just let 'im come here and raise this dead man
Come in Jack Finney

Enter Jack Finney

In comes I who aint been 'it
With my big 'ead and little wit
Me 'eads so big, my wits so small, I will edeavour to please you all
Ladies and gentlemen my name is not Jack Finney

Father Christmas

What is thy name then Jack?

Jack Finney

Mr Finney. A man of great pains, canst do more than thee or any other man

Father Christmas

What canst thee do then Jack?

Bampton Mummers' Play

Jack Finney

Cure this man if not quite dead

Raising The Royayal Apprussia King from the dead

Being the case it was before ,
Rise up thy 'ead and fight no more.
Come in old Tom the Tinker

Enter Tom the Tinker

In comes I, old Tom the Tinker, I aint no small beer drinker
I told the Landlord to his face, the chimney carener was his place
There we set and dried our face, old Tom Giles and I
Me face was black, me beard was long
Me 'at tied on with a leather an thong
So if you please ladies an' gentlemen, could you give me a copper or two
To get me beard cut to go to Church on Sunday
Now as I was walking down a wide, narrow, straight, crooked lane,
I met a pig with a 'orses main
I went down a bit farther and I comes to a pigsty,
Built with pancakes and thatched with apple dumplins
Now I thought this all very well for trade
I knocks at the maid, open fled the door
The pig began to shake an' the 'ouse began to roar
She asked me, if "I could yet a pint of ale and drink a piece of bread and cheese?"
I said "No thankee, but just if you please"
I goes down a bit farther and I comes to two old women , snipper-snapping
One cuts a Barley carn through a ten foot wall
Knocks the bottom out of a cast iron pot and kills a poor dead dog.
Now I 'as pity on this poor dead dog

Tank

Doctor Good

Why, was 'ee a pedigree?

Tom the Tinker

No, twas a Bitch. So I turned 'im inside outards, slap bang outards
An' set 'im up the top of Buckland a barking backards

Final Song

Now for the music and now for the fun
The feast is ready and Christmas has come
So welcome us now and give us a chear
For old Father Christmas comes once in a year.