

1887 4.6.1887.

ASTON BENEFIT CLUB. (Held on Whit-Tuesday.)

...The bells rang merrily at intervals, and the morris dancers paid their annual visit.

1899 27.5.1899, p.5.

...The morris dancers amused the inhabitants, as usual, in their ancient dance during the day.

1904 28.5.1904, p.4.

...The Morris Dancers, as usual attracted great attention from the visitors and the children with their garlands were as numerous as ever.

1905 17.6.1905, p.4.

The ancient Morris Dancers, as usual, created a great deal of amusement.

1906 9.6.1906, p.5.

...the Morris Dancers in the early part of the day attracted many spectators, but for some reason before the day was over they disbanded partnership, which caused some disappointment.

1907 25.5.1907, p.4.

The morris dancers provided the chief attraction. They came out in a most respectable manner, with their new costumes; they had several new dances this year one being the sword dance, which was very interesting. Mr. F.J. Staples-Browne entertained them to dinner at mid-day and the Vicar to tea in the evening...

25.5.1907, p.4.

ASTON. (The Club Feast, held on Whit-Tuesday.)

...also a few of the "Morris Dancers" from Bampton, went over in the evening, which was another attraction for the villagers.

1908 13.6.1908, p.4.

...The Morris Dancers amused a number of the inhabitants and friends in their grotesque dances and costume; they were entertained to dinner, through the kindness of F.J. Staples-Browne, Esq., and to a meat tea at the Vicarage in the evening, through the kindness of the Vicar...

1909 5.6.1909, p.5.

ANCIENT MORRIS.

The ancient Morris Dancers, in their grotesque costumes, amused a large number of inhabitants and visitors during the morning and afternoon on Whit-Monday, and were well patronised.

1910 21.5.1910, p.5.

There was no Club Feast this year, the only amusement was the "Ancient Morris Dancers", which seemed to be as popular as ever. They gave exhibitions of their skill, at the residence of a

large number of inhabitants, and was a source of pleasure to the juveniles. A large number of strangers entered the town, there being no special attraction elsewhere.

11.6.1910, p.5.

BAMPTON MORRIS DANCERS CHALLENGE ALL COMERS.

Bampton has always been noted for its Morris Dancing, and as this old English amusement has been brought to the front lately, the Bampton Morris Dancers have taken care that their claim to be the best exponents of the art should not be overlooked. The result has been that one of their number was interviewed last week by a representative of the "Daily News", and the following account appeared in that paper on Saturday last:-

REVIVAL OF THE MORRIS.

Another claimant to the proud title of Morrisman has appeared. Bill Wells is his name - Bill Wells, fiddler, dancer, concertina and piccolo played, hawker and gardener - to enumerate only a few of the new pretender's occupations and accomplishments. Until quite recently Bill Wells had been pursuing with amazing method the somewhat uneven tenour (sic) of his way in this little rustic town, where he was born and bred. Like the rest of the twelve hundred peaceful souls who constitute the population of Bampton, he rose with the dawn and retired to rest at eight in the evening punctually as the curfew tolled at St. Mary the Virgin, the old parish church nestled among the elms, some two miles from his cottage in the Weald.

But one day he read in the papers that the village dancers of Stratford-on-Avon had been invited to appear in London as the exponents of the genuine Morris of tradition. From that fatal moment Bill Wells' peace of mind was gone. Angrily he speculated on the vagueness of fortune which favoured dancers who manifestly could not pretend to be such indisputable experts as were himself and his set of Oxford shire men.

"What!" he soliloquised, "I have been dancing the Morris for the last twenty-five years exactly in the style transmitted to me by grandfather and great grandfather; and shall it now be said that the Bampton style is not as authentic as that of the Stratfordians?"

AN IMPETUOUS (Sic) FIDDLER.

Billy Wells summoned a council of war and issued the historic proclamation, which is faithfully transcribed hereunder:

"Having read a good deal lately in "The Daily News", I feel it our duty, as we challenge to be the oldest set of morris-dancers in or out of Oxfordshire, to state that the original Morris has been kept up unbrokenly and can be traced back over three hundred years. We are old-fashioned country people, bred and born here, so have never been very far outside to see or meet with these so-called revivals of morris-dancing, but should anyone care to contradict this statement or send us a challenge we should like to meet with any other set of dancers in or out of Oxfordshire that can boast a longer or better proof of style."

In spite of its quaint phraseology the proclamation is explicit enough. I had the privilege to hear it read by the author himself, and the defiant, musketeer-like attitude with which he folded his arms on his breast, watching the effects of his declamation, further emphasised the martial spirit that burned in him.

Our meeting place, let it be duly chronicled, was a cabbage patch "down the allotments" in the Weald, where Billy Wells fills up time as he subsequently explained to me, in growing vegetables for the consumption of the good people of Bampton. The heat of

the noon-tide in the open field was oppressive. This, I take it, had some effect in arresting the flow of language in the impetuous fiddler.

A CLEVER MORRISMAN.

"Our set", he informed me, "consists altogether of ten members. There are six dancers, all farm hands, from the neighbouring villages, a sword bearer, a fool or jester, a ragman, and a fiddler. Usually the part of sword bearer is given to the older member of the company. At Bampton it is filled by my uncle, Harry Radband, who is an old age pensioner over seventy-five years of age. His duty consists in offering to the spectators a piece of cake and getting in return a piece of money. He is at once the sword-bearer and the money-box-bearer. A very difficult position to fill. You must be pretty cute, I tell you. You see, you mustn't part with the cakes before you get the money, and that takes a lot of doing!"

Billy Wells' own role for the present is that of fiddler. He has no technical knowledge of music he admits, and picked up by ear all the tunes he performs on his fiddle.

"I don't know how I do it", he told me, not without a trace of pride, "but I always manage to keep time with the dancers, I play also the piccolo and the concertina; but what most astonishes people here is the performance I give at the same time with the violin and the mouth-organ, They say it is wonderful."

One of the most important attributions, it appears, is that of clown. Not only must the actor be a man of ready wit, but he must have thoroughly mastered the whole art of morris dancing, so as to be able, if necessary, to replace any member of the company who may drop out through fatigue or accident. My informant himself acted in that capacity for several years, and to this he attributes his success as a Morris man.

"To be a good clown", Billy Wells gravely assured me, "your limbs must be as nimble as your tongue. I trained myself to pick up threepenny pieces with my eyelids, and as regards wit, it isn't for me to say. I'll leave you to judge."

25.6.1910, p.5.

REVIVAL OF MORRIS DANCING.

As so much has been written lately about Morris dancing, and as the men in Bampton claim to have the true spirit of the real "Morris Dance", which includes the stiff knee, the spring from the ankle, and the backward throw of the figure, the real distinctive characteristic of the dances, is well executed by the original "Morris Dancers" of this town, and supposed to date from somewhere about the eighteenth-century, are in danger of losing their laurels, as the youth and young girls are being taught in villages to perform the dance...

Mary Neal...in collaboration with Mr. Sharpe, by bringing Mr. Kimber - the leader of the Headington Morris men from whom the tunes of the dances had been "collected" - up to London where he taught the girls the dances...

2.7.1910, p.5.

BAMPTON.

LOCAL HISTORY OF MORRIS DANCING.

A correspondant writes giving an interesting account of morris dancing in this district. The present generation of morris dancers in Bampton, says the writer, can go back some two hundred years by means of documents and traditions handed down to father and son, showing that this district was well known for its morris dancing. One hundred years ago, he says, there were eight sets of dancers in the district, each differing in minor points, but all

performing the proper movements demanded by the Morris dance. Some sets used short sticks instead of the pocket-handkerchief, which has always been adopted by the Bampton men. In the old days, Ducklington had a very smart set, and Leafield set was considered to be one of the best; Buckland, Kencott and Filkins turned out some good Morris dancers. These sets visited the village clubs, and did much to enliven the proceedings. Oftentimes three sets would meet in competition, and if Bampton were in it they generally came out top. The old style of dancing has been kept up to the present day, with wonderful exactness, and in this no doubt lies the charm. The old tunes have also been preserved, although the words have in many cases been lost... Morris dancing, concludes this writer, is right down hard work, and in the old days when it was more common than it is now, the performers often got "More kicks than half-pence". It was not an uncommon thing for them to dance all day long, and by the time they had paid the fiddler, and the cost of ribbons and artificial flowers, to find themselves actually out of pocket. These old morris dancers danced for the love of it. The people of Bampton still support this ancient institution; and the present members of the Morris are the best to be found anywhere.

1912 1.6.1912, p.4.

On Monday, Bank Holiday, the town was very quiet, the only attractions being the ancient Morris Dancers, which, as usual, attracted a considerable amount of attention. A large number of visitors from London, Birmingham, &c, were down for the holidays.

1.6.1912, p.4.

ASTON CLUB FEAST. (Held on Whit-Tuesday.)

...A great many visitors visited the village in the evening, the attractions provided included the Band, Morris Dancers, &c.

1913 24.5.1913, p.4.

ASTON. (Club feast on Whit-Tuesday.)

...The Bampton Morris Dancers also gave a ~~sample~~^{few of} their noted dances...

1914 6.6.1914, p.4.

FORESTERS FETE.

The morris dancing was much appreciated, and many visitors came from a distance to witness it.

1919 14.6.1919, p.3.

MORRIS DANCING.

The old-fashioned custom of Morris dancing was revived here on Whit-Monday after a lapse of four years. Many strangers, who apparently had not seen the dances before, were much interested, and from the satisfactory manner in which the men danced outside many houses in the village considerable time must have been spent in practising.

1920 29.5.1920, p.3.

...Throughout the day there was a succession of performances, given by the now famous troupe of Morris-dancers, which is a pleasure to state, a profit to themselves, and a delight to the spectators. Many came from a distance to observe and take notes of the dancers, who, it is said, are the modern exponents of the original band of Morris-men, who delighted the inhabitants of this district more than five hundred years ago. It is a good

thing that the hustle of today has not entirely wiped out all the old customs.

1921 21.5.1921, p.3.

...The celebrated troupe of Morris-dancers, whose records have been traced to over four hundred years ago, again livened matters, and their takings for the day proved to be the biggest on record. Moreover, amongst those who came from a distance in cars to take notes of their performance was a party from Oxford, who extended an invitation to the Morris-men to go to Oxford and exhibit their talent before a more critical audience likely to be met with in that city...

1922 9.6.1922, p.3.

...Of course the Morris-dancers, albeit a smaller troupe than usual, performed their famous and time-honoured dances, to see which many came long distances, but, although they met with a fair measure of success, their receipts were not quite up to the usual standard. It is possible that this may be but a temporary falling off, and it would be a pity to lose all the simple old English customs...

1923 25.5.1923, p.3.

...As before a great many people came to watch the well-known troupe of Morris dancers, whose efforts this year beat all records from a financial point of view. It was considered that they have never given a better display than that of Monday, and they footed it late in the evening, after practically twelve hours of dancing, as lightly and correctly as they did at the start.

1924 13.6.1924, p.3.

...as usual the Morris-dancers attracted sight-seers from far and near to witness their widely renowned dexterity.

1925 5.6.1925, p.4.

The Morris dancers as usual on Whit-Monday gave Bampton an air of holiday-making with their old world pastime. They were in excellent form which earned hearty applause, and as a large number of strangers were attracted to watch them their receipts were worthy of their great efforts...

1926 28.5.1926, p.3.

The principal item of interest in Bampton on Whit-Monday was the famous troupe of Morris-dancers. The team, which consists of six dancers, the cake bearer, the "fool" and the fiddler, has this year been re-constructed, and for the first time in many years contains other than Bampton men. It is considered by good authorities that the Bampton morris-men hold unbroken record of four hundred years, and that during the whole of that period there has always been one at least bearing the name of Tanner. The present head, who is an old dancer and whose grandfather and father also followed the craft, has three sons and a son-in-law among the performers, and his name is Tanner. As usual, a number of sight-seers, including press men and photographers, came long distances to watch the performance. The men again made a very long day and their efforts met with a satisfactory reward. They wish to thank Miss Cobb for giving them teas as usual, and Colonel and Mrs. Bliss for providing a splendid cake. Thanks are also due to Mr. A.Clark, of Carterton, the new fiddler, to whom they

are indebted to much of their success.

1927 10.6.1927, p.3.

For perhaps the first time in the centuries during which Morris dancing has been in vogue at Whitsuntide in Bampton, two troupes this year made their appearance. This on account of an unfortunate split in the camp, the cause of which is laid to various reasons and creates but little interest generally. As a result, the late troupe deserted their veteran fiddler, Mr. Wm. Wells, who had been connected with Bampton Morris dancing for forty years and its guiding light for the greater part of that period, and imported a musician, a circumstance which decidedly spoils the parochial character of the pastime that has existed for more than four hundred years. Not to be daunted, Mr. Wells collected another band of young men, and in an incredibly short space of time turned them into an efficient troupe of dancers, whose performance was a source of wonder and delight during the whole of Whit-Monday. The Morris-dancers were a greater attraction than ever, and people came in from long distances to see them. Mr. Wells is very gratified with the reception they had on Monday, and on behalf of his troupe thanks all patrons for their generous support and hopes for similar pleasure for many years to come.

1934 25.5.1934, p.3.

There were fewer people than usual visited Bampton on Whit-Monday to watch the Morris Dancing, though many passing motorists stopped their cars to watch the unusual sight of the Morris Men in their quaint white clothes. There was only one team of dancers this year, instead of the customary two, but most parts of the town were visited sometime during the day...

1935 14.6.1935, p.3.

There was, as usual, an influx of visitors to Bampton on Whit-Monday to see the centuries old custom of Morris dancing. The stormy weather somewhat spoilt the event, but for the greater part of the day the dancers went out in the streets, and in the gardens of the larger houses. The leader of the Morris team was again Mr. William Wells who led the dancing with his violin as he has done for the last fifty years...

1939 2.6.1939, p.4.

WHIT-MONDAY MORRIS DANCING.

Mr. Wells' Grand Record.

The centuries' old custom of Whit-Monday Morris Dancing was again duly carried out at Bampton on Monday. The weather being favourable no doubt had the effect of bringing extra visitors into the town, and the market square at times presented quite a busy scene. There were again two sets of dancers, one under the leadership of Mr. S. Bennet, and the other under the leadership of the well-known William Wells.

Mr. Wells, who is now 72 years of age has now equalled the record of his family for service with the Morris Men, in that he has served 52 years as dancer or fiddler. He still hopes to carry on if he can do so next year he will have broken seven records. He is proud of the fact that he is the only one to have three generations serving in the team. He is the only Bampton fiddler who has broadcast which he has done three times; he is the only one who has played for the making of a record; he has been awarded both the bronze and golden medals

by the English Folk Dance Society; he has taken his team of dancers to the Dance Festival in London on several occasions, and once represented England in the Festival in Hyde Park. An interesting incident was the visit of a team of Morris Dancers from Bishops Stortford who came to watch the Bampton men but occasionally gave them some very practical help by dancing while the Bampton men rested...

After the judging (of the garlands) was completed, the Morris Dancers gave an exhibiton of dancing on the lawn (of Mrs. Bliss' house.)

1941 6.6.1941, p.4.

WAR FUND CONTRIBUTIONS.

In fine traditional spirit of merriment and good humour Whit-Monday spent its annual holiday to good purpose. In the early morning young children were parading with garlands. Two groups of Bampton Morris dancers were on their toes the whole day, the six dancers of each group were the source of considerable attraction to visitors, evacuees and local folk. Each group had its clown and fiddle, assisted by a supporter carrying a sword through which a cake rested. This idea is supposed to bring good luck to the person tasting and indirectly contributing to the active pleas of the collector. In both companies of dancers the clown or fool caused much merriment. Their contortions and fun compelled many a laugh. Fiddlers in each group kept their men together well. Mr. Clarke and Gingie Wells know all there sis to know in these old world dance times. Mr. Wells has fiddled for 54 years without a break, and amongst his set of dancers representatives of three generations of the Wells family were in evidence. Throughout the day the cash box was well supported, the contents going to the war effort, namely The Spitfire Fund, handed to Col. Colville, D.S.O., £17 and the Red Cross, £7 2s 5½d handed to the Rev. G. Bateman.

It is worthy of mention that the dancers, after a strenuous day's work, should have been sufficiently generous in that by their collections to the War effort they gave up the holiday for so good a cause.

1959 22.5.1959, p.6.

Morris Dances.

Early on Whit Monday crowds gathered to watch Morris Dancers as they performed traditional dances in the streets. They danced until the late evening.

Members of the senior team were Messers. F. Shergold, R. Shergold, Allam and Knight. Music was supplied by Mr. J. Newton and the cake carriers were Mr. R. Wells and Mr. E. Hunt.

1960 10.6.1960, p.10.

Morris Dancing was held throughout the day and in the evening mass dances were performed by visitors. Music was supplied by Mr. Black from Oxford and Mr. R. Hall of London.

1961 26.5.1961, p.4.

Once again large crowds gathered on Whit Monday to watch the Morris Dancing in Bampton. They danced their way through the streets and on the lawns of the big houses.

Dancers this year were Messers. P. Allam, F. Shergold, C. Knight, F. Daniels, R. Shergold, A. Wixey. The clown was Mr. F. Purslow. Music was supplied by Reg Hall (ragman) and Roy Dommett with violin and melodion. Cake carriers were Mr. R. Wells and Mr. E. Hunt.

1962 15.6.1962, p.5.

Morris dancers on Whit-Monday carried on the ancient tradition of dancing through Bampton on lawns of the big houses. Dancers were Messers. P.Allam, F.Shergold, R.Shergold, R.Knight (sic), J.Knight, A.Wixey and F.Daniels. Mr. R.Allison was cake carrier and the clown was Mr. Pursloe. Music was supplied by Mr. Reg Hall.

1963 7.6.1963, p.9.

...The Bampton Morris Dancers, under their leader Mr. Francis Shergold, danced through the day in the streets and in the gardens of big houses. In the evening teams of other dancers joined them until midnight...

1965 11.6.1965, p.7.

MORRIS MEN.

From the early morning the Bampton Morris Men danced round the village and were followed by visitors from all parts of England and overseas. The dancing continued until late evening.

1971 3.6.1971, p.2.

...While this was going on, the Morris Men were out dancing in the streets and attracting crowds of sightseers and photographers.

1977. Oxford Mail. 26.5.1977, p.8.

Morris Men are danced off their feet.

...A camera crew from Thames Television are coming down to film the Bampton Morris Dancers in action rehearsing for their traditional Whit Monday revels...

Although the camera crew will concentrate on shooting the Bampton Morris dancers in action between noon and 6 p.m. at five or six locations in the township, the programme sets out to show the different backgrounds of the nineteen members...

One is a policeman. Another is a Customs and Excise man. Another is credit sales manager of an Oxford department store. Another is a supervisor. Another is a cowman. At least three are tractor drivers...

The range in their ages from 9 year-old Patrick Fidler, who is already quite a precocious dancer, to Son Townsend, who - despite his name - is in his sixties and in his 53rd year with the dancers...

Traditionally, Arnold Woodley accompanies accordionist Frank Purslow on the fiddle. But on Sunday he will also be joining in the dancing for a stretch while he demonstrates to viewers how he teaches children - and older recruits - the dance steps...

On that day (June 6th) they will start dancing outside the old people's flats in Bampton at 9 a.m., move on down to the Morris Clown at opening time, do the rounds of the hostelrys, put in an appearance at the community fete, and wind up - still dancing - in the courtyard of the George and Dragon as darkness falls...

Though Arnold Woodley's great uncle, Dick Butler, played the fiddle for the team which danced at Queen Victoria's golden jubilee in 1887, the present squire feels it would be too much to ask his men to turn out and shake a leg after their marathon efforts the previous day.

(Photo, as in Oxford Mail. 4.1.1978. See page 17.)

HEADINGTON QUARRY. (Including references to William Kimber.)

1897. Oxford Times. 3.7.1897, p.3.

HEADINGTON QUARRY.

Jubilee Day celebrated...Dancing and singing was indulged in, accompanied by Mr. Willoughby Kimber (sic) on the concertina. Mr. P. Kerry amused the company with his comic songs and clog dancing..."

*No morris dancing is mentioned in this quite comprehensive account of the festivities, and this would seem to give more credence to 1898 as the year of the revival.

1931. Oxford Mail. 1.5.1931, p.6.
May Morning.

...the Morris dancers, for which Mr. Kimber, as usual, played his concertina...

Oxford Mail. 25.5.1931, p.5.
LARGE CROWD AT BLENHEIM.

The Headington Morris Dancers gave two exhibitions...

Oxford Mail. 26.5.1931, p.6.
THE HEADINGTON MORRIS DANCERS, who entertained a big crowd at the British Legion fete at Blenheim Park.
(Photo shows six men in whites, cross-baldricks and with bare heads; and a fool, with bladder, leaping in the air.)

See also BANPTON, 1931)

GENERAL.

1753. -- JOJ. 23.6.1753, p.3.

We hear from Burford in Oxfordshire that on Monday was held there at the George Inn, a very numerous Meeting of the New Interest Supporters...The glorious D. of M. made his entrance to the Town betwixt the Hours of one and two in the Afternoon. Before his Coach caper'd a long train consisting of Grenadiers, Sword-bearers and Morris-Dancers...

ABINGDON.

Oxford Times. 14.6.1957, p.12.

Ock Street 'Mayor' at Radley.

...Most colourful attractions at the Radley W.I. fete at Wick Hall, Radley on Monday, were the Abingdon Morris Dancers, headed by the traditional Ock Street Horns and the Mayor of Ock Street, Mr. Tom Hemmings...

BAMPTON (Cont.)

Oxford Chronicle. 29.5.1858, p.8.

...The morris dancers added to the amusement of the young...

Oxford Chronicle. 2.6.1860, p.8.

...The morris dancers cut their capers, and the holiday folks appeared to enjoy the festivities provided..

Oxford Chronicle. 25.5.1861, p.8.

...the Morrice Dancers capered, the "Squire" grimaced and exhibited his antics...

Oxford Times. 30.5.1896, p.8.

...the ancient morris dancers created a good deal of amusement, es-pecially among visitors.

R. Tanner, W. Flux, F. Hudson, B. Hunt, T. Lay; the fiddler, A. Clark; the fool, D. Edginton; the cake carrier, W. Brooks; and the rag man or clothes man, Mr. T. Tanner who is the veteran of the team, having been associated with it for more than fifty years. The dances they performed are all claimed to be the original Bampton ones; among the dances were 'The Maid of the Mill', 'Flowers of Edinburgh', 'Bride in Camp', 'Nutting Girls (sic)', 'Trunkles', 'Bobbing Around', 'Highland Mary', 'Constant Billy', 'Lumps of Plum Pudding', 'Old Holly Oxford', 'Rose Treet', 'Shepherd's Hey', 'Glory Shears', 'Green Garters', 'Green Sleeves', and 'Jogging to the Fair'.

The other team consists of the younger men, who have been most carefully trained by the fiddler, Mr. W. Wells. Their dances are the same as those of the other team, with the addition of one or two, such as 'Banbury Billy' and 'Quakers'. The members of this team are: the six dancers - Messrs. J. Buckingham, Walter Wells, Reg. Whitlock, B. Whitlock, William Dewe and William Brown; the fiddler Mr. W. Wells; the fool Mr. A. Buckingham; the cake carrier, Mr. F. Bishop; the rag man Mr. F. Pettifer.

p.6.

MORRIS DANCING.

In connection with the Morris dancing on Whit Monday (reported in another column), an incident of special interest was the arrival of a touring party of country dancers, who, to the delight of a large number of onlookers, performed several dances in the Market Square to the fiddling of Mr. Sam Bennett and Mr. Clark. These two fiddlers also played for the old Bampton team throughout the day.

[See also ASINGTON : 24.6.1974]

13.6.30

29.5.31

9.6.33

16.6.33

(Witney Express. 9.6.1870, p.8.)
...the morris dancers made their appearance in the streets, and there were a few stalls, &c.

(Witney Express. 23.5.1872, p.8.)
...The morris dancers put in an appearance, as is their wont on Whit-Monday, and they cut some fine capers when performing their grotesque dances; and "Joey" was as facetious as ever as clown, and cause much merriment with the juveniles, and also to some of the children of a mature growth.

NB: This is Joseph Akers, foot before Alfred 'Jarby' Taylor - Jingly's uncle - Akers footed about 1870 - 1880, and was found dead in a drift of snow. Taylor footed about 1881 - 1886; the following (jubilee) year Jingly took over as foot.

(Witney Express. 8.6.1876, p.8.)
...The morris dancers were busily engaged from house to house in their accutomed fashion, with leg-bells, handkerchiefs, &c...

(Witney Express. 24.5.1877, p.8.)
...the morris dancers busily tripped the "light fantastic toe" to the sound of fiddle and tambourine.

(Witney Express. 20.5.1880, p.8.)
...The morris dancers were as usual very busy during the day.

(Witney Express. 9.6.1881, p.8.)
...The morris dancers, as of yore, did their grotesque bit of jigging, to the delight of the onlookers.

(Witney Express. 1.6.1882, p.8.)
...The Morris dancers, as usual, were very busy, and as many visitors were present in the town as on similar occasions.

(Witney Express. 17.5.1883, p.5.)
The Morris dancers also made their appearance, and much amused a multitude of people.

(Oxford Times. 27.5.1893, p.8.)
The Ancient Morris Dancers also created as much interest and amusement as usual...

(Oxford Times. 27.5.1899, p.12.)
...The Morris dancers also came in for a share of attraction, as usual...

(Oxford Times. 24.5.1902, p.8.)
...The Ancient Morris Dancers also amused a great many strangers.

(Oxford Times. 13.6.1908, p.3.)
The Morris dancers were as much admired as ever, and a dinner was provided for them through the kindness of Mr.F.J.Staples Browne. In the evening the Vicar provided them with a maat tea at the Vicarage.

(Oxford Times. 20.5.1921, p.16)
...Later in the day the Morris dancers performed in good style at most of the houses in the town...

Journal
(Oxford Times. 5.6.1925, p.18.)

The Morris dancers on Monday turned out to enliven the day with their old world pastime. They were in their best form, and as many strangers came to watch them their receipts proved worthy of their efforts...

(Oxford Times. 28.5.1926, p.18.)

(Almost identical with the Witney Gazette account of the same date.)

(Oxford Times. 10.6.1927, p.6.)

(Almost identical with the Witney Gazette account of the same date. Presumably the two papers had the same correspondent.)

(Oxford Times. 17.5.1940, p.9.)

BAMPTON FOLK DANCES.

The traditional Whit-Monday folk dancing at Bampton was held as usual this year, in spite of the cancelled bank holiday. Although there were fewer ~~dancers~~ than in former years, the team of six, accompanied by the fiddler, the clown and the "cake bearer", danced from 10a.m. until evening in the streets and the gardens of the principal houses, and the 400 year-old dances were performed once more to the accompaniment of music, which, until ten years ago, was never written down, but learnt by ear and handed down from father to son.

There was only one change in the performance, Mr. William Wells, the 73 year-old fiddler, who has accompanied the dancers for 53 years, had hurt his hand and was unable to manage a fiddle; he used an accordian instead. The "cake bearer" was Mr. W.Hall, and in accordance with tradition he carried the "Totty cake" which is annually presented to the dancers by the Lord of the Manor. All who watch the dances are entitled to taste the cake, which is supposed to bring good luck during the year.

(Oxford Times. 6.6.1941, p.8.)

Evacuees and visitors were interested spectators of Bampton's traditional Whit-Monday celebration, in which two teams of Morris Dancers took part this year. One was led by Mr. Wells, who was the fiddler for the 54th year in succession, and the other by Mr. W.Clark. Three generations were represented in Mr. Wells' team. The dancers collected £17 for the Spitfire Fund and £7 2s 5d for the Red Cross.

(Oxford Times. 29.5.1942, p.8.)

WHITSUNTIDE FESTIVAL.

The dancing troupe turned out as usual on Whit Munday (sic) under Mr. Wells. The sum of £6 was collected, of which £3 10s was handed to the Red Cross...

(Oxford Times. 21.5.1948, p.8.)

The Bampton Morris Dancers were out as usual on Whit-Monday, when Mr. Sam Bennett, of Ilmington, and Mr. William Kimber, of Headington, played the fiddle and concertina for the dancing. Mr. Billy Wells, the fiddler, who has been a member of the Bampton Morris Dancers for 61 years, will be retiring this year, as he is over 80 year's old.

Handwritten notes:
- Mr. Wells
- 10/2, 10/2
- before 1870
- 1870-1880
- 1881-1882
- 1883-1884
- 1885-1886
- 1887-1888
- 1889-1890
- 1891-1892
- 1893-1894
- 1895-1896
- 1897-1898
- 1899-1900
- 1901-1902
- 1903-1904
- 1905-1906
- 1907-1908
- 1909-1910
- 1911-1912
- 1913-1914
- 1915-1916
- 1917-1918
- 1919-1920
- 1921-1922
- 1923-1924
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- 1929-1930
- 1931-1932
- 1933-1934
- 1935-1936
- 1937-1938
- 1939-1940
- 1941-1942
- 1943-1944
- 1945-1946
- 1947-1948
- 1949-1950
- 1951-1952
- 1953-1954
- 1955-1956
- 1957-1958
- 1959-1960
- 1961-1962
- 1963-1964
- 1965-1966
- 1967-1968
- 1969-1970
- 1971-1972
- 1973-1974
- 1975-1976
- 1977-1978
- 1979-1980
- 1981-1982
- 1983-1984
- 1985-1986
- 1987-1988
- 1989-1990
- 1991-1992
- 1993-1994
- 1995-1996
- 1997-1998
- 1999-2000
- 2001-2002
- 2003-2004
- 2005-2006
- 2007-2008
- 2009-2010
- 2011-2012
- 2013-2014
- 2015-2016
- 2017-2018
- 2019-2020
- 2021-2022
- 2023-2024
- 2025-2026
- 2027-2028
- 2029-2030
- 2031-2032
- 2033-2034
- 2035-2036
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- 2085-2086
- 2087-2088
- 2089-2090
- 2091-2092
- 2093-2094
- 2095-2096
- 2097-2098
- 2099-2100

(retiring)