

GENERAL MONCK, HIS MARCH AND HIS MAYPOLE IN THE STRAND

We will never know why morris men commemorated "Monk's March", but it could be, with the "29th May", one of the relics of the impact of the restoration of Charles II on English society. George Monck was born <sup>on</sup> 6.12.1608, joined Viscount Wimbledon's expedition to Cadiz in Oct 1625, became an ensign in 1628, an acting colonel in the Earl of Newport's infantry in 1638 and a full colonel in Ireland in 1642/3. He refused at first to take an oath to fight for the King and not Parliament and was sent to prison in Bristol. He met the King in Oxford and was told he could raise a regiment from troops just back from Ireland. He arrived at Nantwich the day before the battle on 25.1.1644, which was lost, and he was taken prisoner and held at Hull for 6 months and then in the Tower of London. While in the Tower in 1647 he met Anne, a sempstress who used to carry him linen. Her father John Clarges was of Flemish extraction and a farrier in the Savoy in the Strand and his forge was on the north side of the Strand, the right hand corner shop of Drury Lane. At the age of 13 Anne <sup>had</sup> married Thomas Radford, also a farrier, who lived at the Three Spanish Gipsies in the New Exchange in the Strand and sold wash balls, powder, gloves <sup>with the</sup> she taught plain work to girls.

Viscount Lisle was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1647 and he asked for the release of Monck who then took the Oath of the Covenant. He returned to England in 1649. That year Anne and her husband fell out and parted, but no certificate has ever been found to record his burial. Monck took part in the Dunbar campaign under Oliver Cromwell and was left to subdue the Scots in Dundee and Aberdeen in 1650-52. <sup>He was</sup> made a General at Sea in the first Dutch War of 1652. He married Anne, then aged 31, in the Church of St. George, Southwark on 23.1.1653, although it was said that her first husband was living at the time.

He took part in the "Three Days" sea battle against Tromp, starting at Portland Bill, 18-20.2.1653. In 1654 he was back in Scotland as the effective military governor. By August 1659 he had made up his mind to restore the King. He camped at Coldstream on 8.12.1659 and left on 2nd Jan with 4 cavalry and 6 infantry regiments. He marched through Wooler, Northumberland (3rd), Morpeth (5th), Newcastle (6th), and stayed in York for 5 days. Then through Newark, Market Harborough, Mansfield to Nottingham (21st), Barnet (2nd Feb) and <sup>he</sup> entered London on the 3rd, having taken a month, seized power and restored the Rump Parliament. Charles II reached London on his 30th birthday, the 29th May, 1660. On 7.7.1660 <sup>Monck</sup> was created Duke of Albermarle, Earl of Torrugh, Baron Monck of Potheridge, Beauchamp and Teyes, Master of the Horse, Gentleman of the Bedchamber, Lord Lieutenant of Devonshire and Middlesex, Privy Councillor, Captain General of the Army, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Chief Keeper of St James' Park. Prince James, the future James II and then Duke of York, became Lord High Admiral. To celebrate, Anne's father is said to have raised a Maypole in the Strand, nearly opposite his forge. The Strand Maypole of 1661 was erected in the opening of Little Drury Lane, opposite Somerset House, and the lane was renamed Maypole Alley. Although it is possible that Clarges Maypole was replaced within 9 months by one that lasted over 50 years the fuss over THE maypole suggests that it was the same one. How appropriate that Anne's father should pay and the Duke of York's sailors raise it.

Monck was left in charge of London during the plague of 1665. He and Prince Rupert were made Generals at Sea again in Nov 1665 and took part in the "Four Days" sea battle off Kent, 1-4 June, in the 2nd Dutch war and off Orfordness on 25-26 July 1666. He was recalled to organise the City's recovery after the Great Fire in Sept 1666 but had to fight the Dutch again when de Ruyter came up the Thames to within 20 miles of London in June 1667. He died on New Years Day 1670 and his wife on 29th Jan. He had a state funeral on 30 April and they were both buried in the Henry 7th Chapel in Westminster Abbey.

General Monck became a popular hero as did John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough and Horatio Lord Nelson in later times. The tunes that go with the dances associated with their names are known under other titles. The origins of these local allusions could be examined further. Princess Royal was called (Bold) Nelson's Praise at Blackwell (English Folk Songs by Cecil Sharp vo.2, no.38) and Ilmington. This tune was used by Shield for "The Arethusa" song in 1796 having been published by Walsh c 1730. Old Marlborough was used at Fieldtown and Ascot-under-Wychwood but at Fieldtown it was actually the White Joke tune. The Duke of Marlborough at Abingdon is a relatively recent dance but the tune was called the Marmalade polka by Jack Hyde. The 29th May was a title at Brackley and a dance at Headington but there the tune was a version of Balance the Straw, published by Rutherford c 1770, whereas the Playford tune (7th edit 1686) is that for All Things Bright and Beautiful, Hymns A&M 442 called Royal Oak. The tune called after Monck is only so used at Sherborne, Monks March, and Bledington, General Monks March. Elsewhere it is called Belle Isle's March, at Brackley, Longborough and Lower Swell and just Heel and Toe at Bidford. Quite dissimilar tunes called Monks March have been seen in printed collections. The morris tune is called Lady Petersham's March in "24 Country Dances with proper tunes and directions to each dance as they are performed at Court, Bath and all publick entertainments for 1764. Why Belle Isle? Is it named after Cornwallis's Retreat from Belle Isle on 17.6.1795 in the Bay of Biscay or was Belle Isle a name for England like Albion? How did T Lynch come to use it for "My Faith it is an Oaken Staff?"

Refs: General Monck	M Ashely	Cope 1977
The Book of Days	R Chambers	Chambers 1869
Lives	Aubrey	1680

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