

# ADDERBURY SING AND STICK

## Background

Adderbury sang old songs and other popular town songs of the day, often executing some of their stick movements whilst they sang the choruses. They did this to keep the crowd quiet while they were resting themselves. Sometimes they danced as they sang.

Janet Blunt (1859-1950) lived in Adderbury from 1892. She with the occasional help of friends, Mrs Elliot Hobbs, Miss Kennedy and Miss D C Daking, collected songs and country dances from 1907-1919, the morris only over the 1916-18 period. Several copies of her mss were made to pass to other people, such as Cecil Sharp who appears to have ignored it, which differ in details, so all have to be consulted. The Blunt collection was used by Michael Pickering for a thesis and a book "*Village Song and Culture : A study based on the Blunt Collection of Song from Adderbury, North Oxfordshire*" published in 1982 by Croom Helm, London. This puts the material fairly into its context of period and locality. Keith Chandler considers the people involved in his books.

The major informant on the morris was William "Binx" Walton (1837-1919), at least a third generation morris dancer, and, with his brother, a well known local singer. The village orchestra was disbanded in his boyhood, but he sang treble in the church choir. He had a difficult teenage as his father was convicted of two counts of theft in 1844 and died in 1848 soon afterwards, so William was in the workhouse until apprenticed to a bricklayer and builder. However he became a lifelong bell ringer from the age of 15. He married a girl from Coventry in his early 20's, when he was probably already a morris dancer, and he claimed that he was its leader from about 1860 to its end just before 1880. He had four brothers who were also morris dancers. In the 1881 census he was a builder and shopkeeper, in the later 1880's and 1890's he kept The Wheatsheaf public house in East Adderbury until 1899 with an attached shop. When Blunt first met him he was a vigorous and upright man full of dance as can be seen in the Blunt photographs. He met Sharp and Karpeles in Hampstead, London on the mornings of 25th and 19th March 1919 by Janet Blunt arranging for him to visit a married daughter. He died in that September aged 83. Sharp said he was hale and hearty, rather blind although he can hear well, walk with a firm step and sing with a strong baritone voice. At first it was difficult to get his memory back and it was only by degrees that he was able to recall the different evolutions with their many technical details, despite Blunt's success over the previous few years.

In the 1950's and 60's the Sharp and Blunt mss material was rationalised for circulation to be consistent with the existing Sharp publications. From the 1970's the various slightly different copies of the Blunt mss were treated as independent descriptions widening the interpretation possibilities. Unfortunately 1919 was in the period that Sharp appears to have pressurised informants, as at Abingdon, Brackley and Wheatley, and his interpretations can not be completely relied upon if there is alternative evidence.

## Style

The handkerchiefs, half a yard a side, had two opposite corners tied and held between thumb and forefinger. The hand movements were not very stereotyped

but varied considerably, although always within certain limits. The arms were held in front of the body, the elbows curved and held well away from the sides. The movements were "counter-twists" in rather large vertical circles or ellipses. On the first beat of a bar the movement was outwards going down and then up. Sharp elucidated that they could be a slight upward pull using mainly the wrists when the hands met dropping in front on the 3rd beat.

The sticks were held vertically in the middle with the hand at shoulder level and a little in front of the body. The tapping in choruses is normally "doubles".

o = odds strike evens, e = evens strike odds, x = clash tips.

*Hands Round* : clasp hands at waist level.

*Whole Hey* : the top two pairs pass right shoulders, turning the easy way into it.

*Shooting* : The dancers stood upright, as if firing a shotgun, which they would know all about, and never crouching, which would be dangerous to the person.

## Dances

The following is based on transcriptions of the Sharp and Blunt mss and not on previous publications such as Lionel Bacon's book..

**BLUE BELL OF SCOTLAND** - doubles stick hold

o o e e / o o e e / o e o e / x - x - // repeated.

Pattern : (1) and (4) partners; (2) and (5) middles up; (3) and (6) middles down. If they are to be done twice, it needs at least 6 figures.

**BRIGHTON CAMP** - doubles stick hold

o e o e / o e o e / o e o e / o - x - // repeated.

**(COME LANDLORD FILL THE) FLOWING BOWL** - doubles stick hold

Normally they sang the figures without dancing.

o e o e / o e x - / o e o e / o e x - / o e o e / o e x - / o / e o e o / x - x - //

Pattern : can use different striking patterns inspired eg by *Blue Bell of Scotland*.

**HAPPY MAN** - Four Part Song - doubles stick hold

Normally sang and tapped sticks. Would clash across "to close" at end of lines.

(Blunt) o e o e o e ..... x

(Bath) o o e e / o e e / o e o / e x - / e o o / e o o / e o e / x - - // repeated.

Step : 1 1 2 hop,  
2 run with heavy step on first beats,  
3 like *Jenny Jones*.

End dance with a repeat chorus performed faster.

## **LADS A BUNCHUM**

In the "High" hold the sticks in both hands, stand pointing left shoulders to each other, evens facing up, odds facing down, and raise sticks well above heads horizontally and parallel to the files. When striking the dancer makes an overhead movement pivoting right hand over left, so as to strike down with his tip on to his partner's butt.

**POSTMAN'S KNOCK** - Two Part Song - doubles stick hold

Adderbury tapped only, Wootton danced foot-up and half-gyp, foot-up with singing, stand facing an tapped without singing, ad lib.

e o e o / e o x - // four times through. Note start with an "e".

Because of the tune stretching in the last bar of the sticking to make the B music nine bars long, it is often stretched further by adding two more strong beats for a tenth bar and doing two extra taps.

End dance with a repeat chorus performed faster.

**ROAST BEEF OF OLD ENGLAND** - doubles stick hold

They only sang and tapped before the club dinner, outside they might dance. This was a typical formal song before army mess dinners.

o e o e / x - x - / o e o e / x - x - // repeated.

Collected with tapping through the A musics as well.

**(SWEET) JENNY JONES** - alternately doubles and singles stick hold

Figure order as *Washing Day*.

Sang on the last foot-up in the last chorus.

Collected both in 3/4 and apparently in 6/8 time.

in 3/4        o e o / e o e / o e o / e x - // twice

in 6/8        o e o e / o e o e / o e o e / o e x - //

Step : in 3/4 time pause on 4th step (etc) with weight on both feet.

**WASHING DAY** - alternately doubles and singles stick hold

Danced for as many as available. Figure order : foot-up; half-gip; sticks across diagonals in fours; foot-down.

o / e o e o / e o e o / e o e o / e - x // repeated.

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# SIDMOUTH WORKSHOP : ADDERBURY SING AND STICK

## BLUE BELLS OF SCOTLAND

Oh where! and oh where has your Highland Laddie gone?  
Oh where! and oh where has your Highland Laddie gone?  
He's gone to fight the foe for our Queen upon the throne,  
And it's oh in my heart! I wish him safe at Home.

Oh where! and oh where did your Highland Laddie dwell?  
Oh where! and oh where did your Highland Laddie dwell?  
He dwelt in bonnie Scotland, where blooms the sweet bluebell,  
And it's oh in my heart! I love my Laddie well.

Oh how, tell me how, is your Highland Laddie clad?  
Oh how, tell me how, is your Highland Laddie clad?  
His bonnet has a lofty plume, and on his breast a plaid,  
And its oh in my heart! that I love my Highland Lad.

Suppose! oh suppose that your Highland Lad be slain?  
Suppose! oh suppose that your Highland Lad be slain?  
Oh, my true love will be his guard and bring him safe again,  
But its oh my heart would break, if my Highland Lad were slain.

## BRIGHTON CAMP

I'm lonesome since I crossed the hills, and o'er the moor and valley,  
Such heavy thoughts my heart do fill, since parting from my Sally.  
I seek no more the fine or gay, for each does but remind me,  
How swiftly pass'd the hours away, with the girl I left behind me.

Her golden hair in ringlets fair, her eyes like diamonds shining,  
Her slender waist, with carriage chaste, may leave the swain repining.  
Kind heaven above us, hear my pray'r, for the beauty that does binds me,  
And send me safely home again, to the girl I left behind me.

The bee shall honey taste no more, the dove become a ranger,  
The falling waters cease to roar, ere I shall seek to change her.  
The vows we register'd above shall ever cheer and bind me,  
In constancy to her I love, the girl I left behind me.

My mind her image must retain, asleep or sadly waking,  
I long to see my love again, for her my heart is breaking.  
When-e'er my steps return that way, still faithful shall she find me,  
And never more again I'll stray, from the girl I left behind me.

The hour I remember well, when first she own'd she loved me,  
For what I felt there's none can tell, how constant I have proved me.  
But now I'm bound for Brighton camp, kind heaven, then pray guide me,  
And send me safely home again, to the girl I left behind me.

Oh, ne'er shall I forget the night, the stars were bright above me,  
And gently lent their silvery light, when first she vowed to love me!  
Oh let the night be ever so dark, or ever so wet or windy,  
I must return to the Brighton Camp, to the girl I left behind me.

## COME LANDLORD, FILL THE FLOWING BOWL

Come, landlord fill the flowing bowl, until it does run over,  
Come, landlord fill the flowing bowl, until it does run over,  
For tonight we'll merry, merry be, for tonight we'll merry, merry be,  
For tonight we'll merry, merry be, and tomorrow we'll be sober.

The man that drinks small beer and goes to bed quite sober,  
The man that drinks small beer and goes to bed quite sober,  
Falls as the leaves do fall, falls as the leaves do fall,  
Falls as the leaves do fall, that drop off in October.

The man that drinks strong ale at night and goes to bed quite mellow,  
The man that drinks strong ale at night and goes to bed quite mellow,  
Lives as he ought to do, lives as he ought to do,  
Lives as he ought to do, and dies a jolly good fellow.

But he who drinks just what he likes and gets half seas over,  
But he who drinks just what he likes and gets half seas over,  
Will live until he dies perhaps, will live until he dies perhaps,  
Will live until he dies perhaps, and then lies down in clover.

The man who kisses a pretty girl and goes and tells his mother,  
The man who kisses a pretty girl and goes and tells his mother,  
Ought to have his lips cut off, ought to have his lips cut off,  
Ought to have his lips cut off, and never kiss another.

## CONSTANT BILLY

Oh my Billy, my Constant Billy, When shall I see my Billy again?  
Oh my Billy, my Constant Billy, When shall I see my Billy again?

Billy again! Billy again!, Billy again! Billy again!  
Oh my Billy, my Constant Billy, when shall I see my Billy again?

## HAPPY MAN

How happy is that man, that's free from all care,  
That loves to make merry, that loves to make merry, o'er a drop of good beer.

With his pipe and his friends puffing hours away,  
Singing song after song, till he hails the new day,  
He can laugh, dance and sing, and smoke without fear,  
Be as happy as a King, till he hails the New Year.

How happy is the man that's free from all strife,  
He envies no other, he envies no other, but travels through life.

Our seamen of old, they feared not their foes,  
They threw away discord, they threw away discord, and to mirth they inclined.

## LADS A BUNCHUM

Oh dear mother what a fool I be, here are six young fellows come a courting me,  
Three are blind and the others can't see, oh dear mother what a fool I be.

**POSTMAN'S KNOCK** - words L Thornton, tune W Wrighton

What a wonderful man the Postman is! as he hastens from door to door.  
What a medley of news his hands contain, for high, low, rich and poor.  
In many a face, a joy he can trace, in as many a grief he can see,  
When the door is opened to his loud rap-tap, for his quick delivery.

Every morning as true as the clock, somebody hears the Postman's knock.  
Every morning as true as the clock, somebody hears the Postman's knock.

No. One he presents with the news of a birth, with tidings of a death, No. Four.  
At Thirteen, a bill, of terrible length, he drops through the hole in the door,  
A cheque or an order at Fifteen he leaves, and at Sixteen his presence does prove,  
While Seventeen does an acknowledgement get, and Eighteen a letter of love.

May his visits be frequent to those who expect,  
a line from the friends they hold dear,  
But rarely we hope that compelled he will be, disastrous tidings to bear.  
Far, far be the day when the envelope shows the dark border shading it o'er,  
Then long life to his Majesty's servant we say and oft may he knock at our door.

**ROAST BEEF OF OLD ENGLAND** words H Fielding, tune R Leveridge

When mighty roast beef was the Englishman's food,  
It ennobled our hearts and enrich'd our blood,  
Our soldiers were brave, and our courtiers good,  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.

Our fathers of old were robust, stout, and strong,  
And kept open house, with good cheer all day long,  
Which made their plump tenants rejoice in this song,  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.

When good Queen Elizabeth sat on the throne,  
Ere coffee, or tea, or such slipslops were known,  
The world was in terror if e'er she did frown,  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.

In those days, if fleets did venture on the main,  
They seldom or never returned back again,  
As witness the vaunting Armada of Spain.  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.  
Oh the roast beef of old England, and oh for old England's roast beef.

**SWEET JENNY JONES**

My Sweet jenny Jones is the pride of Llangollen,  
My Sweet Jenny Jones is the girl I love best.

**WASHING DAY**

Thump! Thump! Scrub! Scrub! Scrub! Scrub away!  
The devil a bit of peace I get! Upon the Washing Day.

## ADDERBURY SING AND DANCE

BEAUX OF LONDON CITY : *sung by Bessie Aris to Janet Blunt* <sup>1</sup> 1907

My father's a hedger and ditcher, my mother does nothing but spin,  
And I am a neat little stitcher and the money comes slowly in.

Oh! Dear! What shall become of me? Oh! Dear! What shall I do?  
There's nobody comes to marry me and nobody comes to woo.

Last night the dogs did bark, I went to the gate to see,  
Every lass has her spark, but there's never one for me.

Oh! Dear! What will become of me? Oh! Dear! What will I do?  
There's nobody comes to marry me and nobody comes to woo.

BLUE BELL OF SCOTLAND - *written in 1800 and made famous by Mrs Dora Jordon*<sup>2</sup>. The main text is the original. The third and fourth lines were repeated.

Oh where and oh where is your Highland Laddie gone?  
(Oh! where, tell me where, is your Highland Laddie gone?)  
Oh where and oh where is your Highland Laddie gone?  
He's gone to fight the French(foe) for King George upon the throne,  
(He's gane to fight for George our King, and left me a' alane)  
(He's gone with streaming banners where noble deeds are done)  
And it's oh! in my heart I wish him safe at Home.

Oh where and oh where did(does) your Highland Laddie dwell?  
(Oh! where, tell me where, did your Highland Laddie dwell?)  
Oh where and oh where did your Highland Laddie dwell?  
He dwelt in merry Scotland, at the sign of the Blue Bell,  
(He dwelt in bonnie Scotland, where blooms the sweet bluebell)  
(He dwells in merry Scotland, where the bluebells sweetly smell)  
And it's oh! in my heart I love my Laddie well.

In what cloaths, in what cloaths, is your Highland laddie clad?  
(Oh how, tell me how, is your Highland Laddie clad?)  
(Oh! what, tell me(lassie) what, does your Highland Laddie wear?)  
In what cloaths, in what cloaths, is your Highland laddie clad?  
His bonnet('s) of the Saxon green, and his waistcoat('s) of the plaid,  
(A bonnet with a lofty plume, and on his breast a plaid)  
(A scarlet coat and a bonnet (blue) wi' bonnie yellow hair)  
And its oh! in my heart (that) I love my Highland Lad.  
(And there's nane in the world can wi' my love compare)

[Oh what will you claim for your constancy to him?  
Oh what will you claim for your constancy to him?  
I'll claim a priest to wed us, and a clerk to ssy "Amen!"  
And I'll ne'er part again from my bonnie Highland man.]

[Oh when, and oh when will your Hieland lad come home?  
Oh when, and oh when will your Hieland lad come home?  
Whene'er the war is o'er, he'll return to me with fame,  
With the heather in his bonnet, my gallant Hielandman.]

Suppose, and(oh) suppose that your Highland Laddie should die?  
(Oh! what, tell me what, if your Highland lad be slain?)  
Suppose, oh suppose that your Highland Laddie should die?  
The bagpipes should play over(o'er) him, and I'd set(lay) me down and cry,  
(Oh, no! true love will be his guard and bring him safe again)  
And it's oh in my heart I wish he may not die.  
(But its oh! in my heart that I feel he will not die.)  
(For its oh! my heart would break, if my Highland lad were slain)

*From Ritson's "Northern Garland",*

There was a Highland laddie courted a lawland lass,  
There was a Highland laddie courted a lawland lass.  
He promis'd for to marry her, but he did not tell her when;  
And 'twas all in her heart she lov'd her Highland man.

Oh where, and oh where does your Highland laddie dwell?  
Oh where, and oh where does your Highland laddie dwell?  
He lives in merry Scotland, at the sign of the Blue Bell;  
And I vow in my heart I love my laddie well.

What cloaths, Oh what cloaths does your Highland laddie wear?  
What cloaths, Oh what cloaths does your Highland laddie wear?  
His coat is of a Saxon green, his waistcoat of the plaid;  
And it's all in my heart I love my Highland lad.

Oh where and oh where is your Highland laddie gone?  
Oh where and oh where is your Highland laddie gone?  
He's gone to fight the faithless French: whilst George is on the throne,  
And I vow in my heart I do wish him safe at home.

And if my Highland laddie should chance to come no more,  
And if my Highland laddie should chance to come no more,  
They'll call my child a love-begot, myself a common whore;  
And I vow in my heart I do wish him safe on shore.

And if my Highland laddie should chance for to dye,  
And if my Highland laddie should chance for to dye,  
The bagpipes shall play over him, I'll lay me down and cry,  
And I vow in my heart I love my Highland boy.

And if my Highland laddie should chance to come again,  
And if my Highland laddie should chance to come again,  
The parson he shall marry us, and the clerk shall say amen;  
And I vow in my heart I love my Highland man.

*or parodies such as,*

Oh where and oh where has the Highland Laddie gone,  
He's gone to fight the French with his frilly knickers on.



**COME LANDLORD, FILL THE FLOWING BOWL** : *including version given by William Walton to Janet Blunt. Words based on Beaumont and Fletcher's drinking song in "Bloody Brother"* <sup>3</sup>

Come, landlord fill the flowing bowl, until it does(doth) run over,  
Come, landlord fill the flowing bowl, until it does(doth) run over,  
For tonight we'll merry (merry) be, for tonight we'll merry (merry) be,  
For tonight we'll merry (merry) be, (and) tomorrow we'll (give over)be sober.

The man that drinketh(drinks) small beer and goes to bed (quite) sober,  
The man that drinketh(drinks) small beer and goes to bed (quite) sober,  
Fades as the leaves do fade, fades as the leaves do fade,  
Fades as the leaves do fade, that drop off in October.  
(Falls when the leaves do fall, and dies in October)

The man that drinketh strong beer and goes to bed quite(right) mellow,  
(The man that drinks strong ale at night, and goes to bed mellow)  
The man that drinketh strong beer and goes to bed quite mellow,  
Lives as he ought to live, lives as he ought to live,  
Lives as he ought to live, and dies a jolly (good) fellow.  
(Lives as he ought to do, and dies a jolly (good) fellow)

But he who drinks just what he likes and getteth half sea(s) over,  
But he who drinks just what he likes and getteth half sea(s) over,  
Will live until he die perhaps, will live until he die perhaps,  
Will live until he die perhaps, and then lie down in clover.

The man who kisses a pretty girl and goes and tells his mother,  
The man who kisses a pretty girl and goes and tells his mother,  
Ought to have his lips cut off, ought to have his lips cut off,  
Ought to have his lips cut off, and never kiss another.

*Versions from Chappell,*

Come, landlord, fill a flowing bowl, until it does run over,  
Come, landlord, fill a flowing bowl, until it does run over,  
Tonight we all will merry be, tonight we all will merry be,  
Tonight we all will merry be, tomorrow we'll get sober.

[Come, let us drink a bout, drive away all sorrow,  
Come, let us drink a bout, drive away all sorrow.  
For p'r'aps we may not, for p'r'aps we may not,  
For p'r'aps we may not meet again tomorrow.]

He that drinks strong beer, and goes to bed mellow,  
(But he that drinks all day, and goes to bed mellow)  
He that drinks strong beer, and goes to bed mellow,  
Lives as he ought to live, lives as he ought to live,  
Lives as he ought to live, and dies a hearty fellow.

Punch cures the gout, the colic, and the tistic,  
(Wine cures the gout, the cholic, and the tistic)  
Punch cures the gout, the colic, and the tistic,  
And is to all men, and is to all men,