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Folklife West Journal, N° 4, Dec. 2009

Willikins and his Dinah

"Two Songs to the Same Tune"

The Back-to-front Song



It is of a rich mer - chant I'm going for to tell, What had for a daugh - ter an un -
'Twas seven years comemuck - sprea - ding, I for - gets it quite well. A fair pre - tty maid in a



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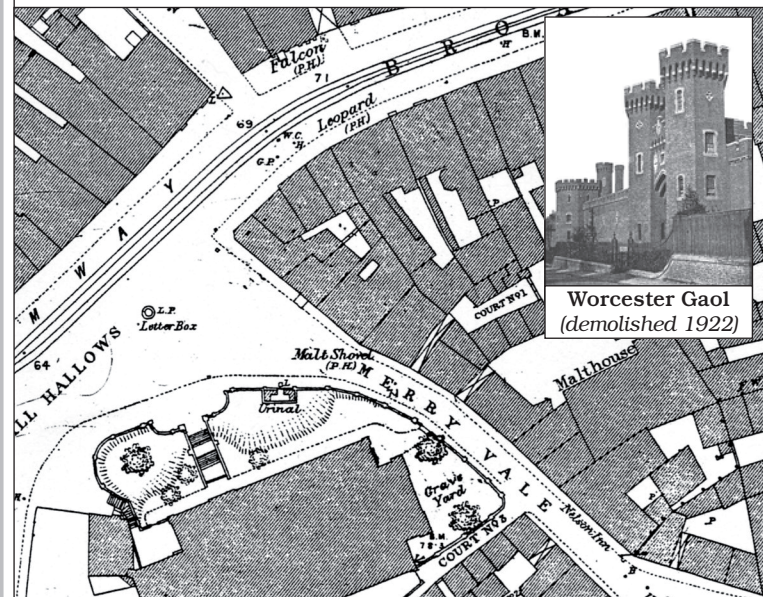
**The Roots of
Welsh Border Morris:**

Bromsberrow Heath



**The Ballad Printers of Worcester
a series of articles by Roy Palmer**

4. - R. Houghton



Worcester Gaol
(demolished 1922)

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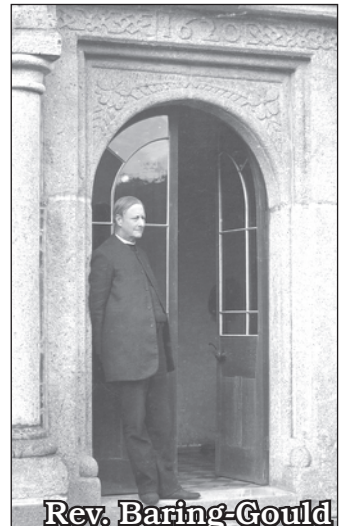
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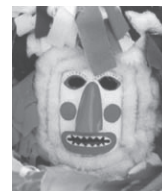
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FWJ N° 5, June 2010, deadline
 1st May 2010
 (reviews earlier, please check)

The Roots Of WELSH BORDER MORRIS



The Welsh Border Morris Dances of
 Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire

by
 DAVE JONES

The Roots of Welsh Border Morris by the late **Dave Jones**, 1988,
 revised 1995; ISBN No. 0 9526285 0 3. **£5 by post** from: Mrs. A.
 J. Jones, Millfield, Golden Valley, Bishops Cleeve, Worcs WR6 5BN
 01885 490323; email anniejones@millfield.orangehome.co.uk

Two Songs to the Same Tune



It is of a rich mer - chant I'm going for to tell, What had for a daugh - ter an un -
 'Twas seven years comemuck - sprea - ding, I for - gets it quite well. A fair pre - tty maid in a



com - mon nice young girl. Her name it was Di - nah, just six - teen years old, wi' a we - ry large
 cott - age did dwell. A - lone with her pa - rents her dwelt all se - rene, and her age was bright



for - tune in si - li - ver and gold. Sing - ing too - ra - lie oo - ra lie oo - ra - lie ay
 red and her hair was six - teen.

Willikins and his Dinah

It's of a rich merchant I'm going for to tell,
 What had for a daughter an uncommon nice young girl.
 Her name it was Dinah, just sixteen years old,
 Wi' a very large fortune in siliver and gold.
 Singing turalie ooralie ooralie ay.

Now as Dinah was a waliking in the garden one day,
 Up came her dear father and unto her did say:
 "Go dress yourself, Dinah, in gorgeous array,
 And I'll fetch you home a husiband both galliant and gay."

"Oh Father, dear Father," the maiden she said,
 "I don't feel inclined to be marri-ed.
 And all my large fortune, I'd gladly give ower,
 If I could only stay single just a year or two mower."

"Go, go boldest daughter," the parient he cried,
 "If you don't feel inclined to be this young man's bride.
 I'll give all you fortune to the nearest of kin,
 And you won't reap the benefit, not of one single pin."

Now as Willikins was a walliking the garden all round
 He came upon his Dinah lying dead upon the ground,
 With a cup of cold poison laid down by her side,
 And a billedow what said as how t'was of poison she'd died.

Then he kissed her cold corpses a thousand times ower,
 And called her his dear Dinah though she was no mower.
 Then he drank up the poison and sang a short stave,
 And he and his Dinah were laid in one grave.

Now then all you young men, don't you thus fall in love nower,
 Do that not by no means disliked by your guvnower.
 And all you young maids, mind out who you claps your eyes on,
 Remember Willikins and his Dinah and the cup of cold poison.

Now then here is the moral, the last one's not reckoned.
 So here is the first moral, though it do come second.
 You've listened to my story, it's true every word
 And it wouldn't have happened, if it hadn't have occurred.

Learnt in the mid 60's from David J Grove of Edmonton,
 North London. Shortly afterwards, David moved to Menai
 Bridge, where he still lives.

The Back-to-front Song

T'was seven years come muckspreading, I forgets it
 quite well,
 A fair pretty maid in a cottage did dwell.
 Alone with her parents her dwelt all serene,
 And her age was bright red and her hair was sixteen.
 Singing turalie ooralie ooralie ay.

Now this maid had a lover, as you might well tell,
 A hump-legged ruffian and bow-backed as well.
 Said he "Let us fly by the light of yon star,
 For you are the eye of my apple, you are."

Said the maid to her lover "pray gently be wise,
 Or my father will scratch out your nails with his eyes.
 And, if you truly love me, do not bring me to disgrace,"
 Said the maid as she buried her hands in her face.

When he heard this, the ruffian knocked down the
 maid,
 And silently drew forth the knife of his blade.
 Then he cut the throat of that maiden so fair
 And he dragged her around by the head of her hair.

Just then her poor father came in, it appears,
 And gazed on the sight there with eyes in his tears.
 He stopped and the face of his dear daughter kissed
 Then he rushed with his nose at the ruffian's fist.

With a knife then the old man an end to him put,
 And spurned with his body the murderer's foot.
 Then to commit suicide his way he did wend,
 And that is the tale of a very sad end.

I learnt this song in the early 60's from Frank Jeal
 of Harwell, Berks, who has lived in Dublin most of the
 time since then.

Frank reckoned the song had been collected from a
 gamekeeper at Aldworth on the Berkshire Downs. I
 was once in Aldworth, and wishing to investigate fur -
 ther, I sang this song in the village pub. "Does anyone
 round here sing that song," I asked. "Yes," came the
 answer, "Frank Jeal sings that."

The Roots Of WELSH BORDER MORRIS

The Welsh
Border Morris
Dances of
Herefordshire,
Worcestershire
and Shropshire

by DAVE JONES

© Annie Jones

An earlier version of this series appeared in the *Welsh Border Broadsheet* (Somers Traditional Folk Club: 1986), and then in *English Dance & Song* (English Folk Dance & Song Society).

This followed earlier material produced for the *West Midlands Folk Federation* and then for the *Morris Ring* & added to their Archives - since when there has been an increase in sides dancing some form of Border Morris.

Dave then revised the articles and published *The Roots of Welsh Border Morris* (1988, ISBN No. 0 9526285 0 3). Dave died in 1991. The book was revised in 1995, and is available for £5 by post from: **Annie Jones** (see advert page 2).

See **FWJ, N°1** for the **Introduction**, 'The Welsh Border Morris Dances of Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire': about the tradition; the form of the dance; the dress; blackened faces; the music; where the dances came from.

See **FWJ, N°2** for 'The Village Teams': Reported Sightings of Morris Sides between 1800 and 1940.

Detailed articles on individual dances:
FWJ, N°3 'The Brimfield Morris Dance'

THE BROMSBERROW HEATH MORRIS DANCE



Bromsberrow Heath is a fairly scattered community about four miles south east of Ledbury. It is actually situated just over the Gloucester-Hereford border in Gloucestershire but is naturally drawn towards Ledbury. Russell Wortley collected the dances from Stephen Baldwin of Upton Bishop in April 1947. Baldwin had played for the Bromsberrow Heath side one Christmas about 1897 and had later formed his own side at Mitcheldean. This side he ran for about three years at the turn of the century. Baldwin, born in the early 1870's, was the youngest son of Charles Baldwin of Newent who had played for the Cliffords Mesne Morrismen. Sharp collected a number of tunes from Charles in 1910.

The Bromsberrow Heath side was led by **Thomas Bishop** and several additional tunes and some information have come from his daughters **Emily and Beatrice**. The side used to dance at Christmas and would travel miles to dance in the winter months when the men were out of work.

The dress was typical of the Welsh Border sides. It consisted of rags tacked onto ordinary clothes and ribbons and bells. Some wore women's clothes although Russell Wortley was of the opinion that this only applied to the collector who dressed in a skirt and bonnet. Some blacked their faces. The king or clown wore a tall woolly hat with a silver bell on it, a bell at his waist and carried a bullock's bladder.

The dances collected from Baldwin were basically reels for six men, but previous sides had danced in a longways set for twelve men. The stick dance consisted of a reel (off), alternating with stick tapping (set), this continued several times with the music increasing in tempo all the time. The step dance was similar except stepping took the place of stick tapping with partners first facing and then with their backs to each other. The dances have been

accompanied by fiddle, accordion, concertina, mouth organ, tambourine, triangle and bones at various times. At the time Baldwin had played for them their regular musician was a concertina player. Several tunes were used including "Cock of the North" and "Flowers of Edinburgh", for the stick dance and "Jack O' Robinson" (a version of the Manchester Hornpipe) for the step dance.

Frank Hill, the grandson of Tom Bishop, told me that they also used "The Girl I left behind me" and used to sing:-

There ain't no hairs on our cat's tail,
There ain't no hairs on Tiny,
But I know where there's lots of hair
On the girl I left behind me.

He also said that around the Christmas period the team would walk for miles and sleep rough. One of the villages he mentioned was Mathon, about ten miles away.

It is worth noting that a similarly dressed side has also been reported at Redmarley D'Abitot, one and a half miles away.

THE STICK DANCE

Set

6 dancers in one line, 1 facing 2, 3 facing 4, 5 facing 6. 1-2, 3-4, 5-6.

Steps

Walk, progressing to a run. Capers for stick striking.

Sticks

Stout, about 2'6" long, carried on right shoulder when moving.

Off

Walk a complete reel, 16 bars, back to original position. Start by passing right shoulders.

Stick striking (Set)

Caper vigorously on alternate feet. (On to right foot first). Strike sticks alternately forehand and backhand (at upper ends only) on first and middle beat or the bar. Hold sticks with two hands.

NOTATION

THE STICK DANCE

Once to yourself	8 bars	A
Off	16 bars	Ax2
Set	8 bars	B

THE STEP DANCE

Set

As for stick dance.

Steps

As for the stick dance in the reel. The steps for the step dancing were not noted but step dancing is still quite common in the area, particularly amongst the travellers.

Off

Walk a complete reel as for the stick dance. Start by passing right shoulders.

Setting

Stepping done facing partner then with back to partner.

NOTATION

The Step Dance

Once to yourself	8 bars	A
Off	16 bars	Ax2
Set	16 bars	B

Both dances repeat Off and Set ad infinitum.

The Roots of Welsh Border Morris by Dave Jones:

THE BROMSBERROW HEATH MORRIS DANCE ~ from p.5



Dave Jones , 1940-1991

BROMSBERROW HEATH

The second tune is "Cock O' The North" and was used for the stick dance. The name "Three Handed Red" was applied to both dances.

(Beatrice Hill 1959)



Music

(S Baldwin, 1954)

For stick dance:

Cock of the North
(S. Baldwin 1954)
Flowers of Edinburgh
Girl I left behind me

For step dance:

Jack O'Robinson
(Manchester Hornpipe)
(Beatrice Hill)



These semiquavers were played so fast and slurred into the first beat of the next bar that they could be regarded as grace notes.

Notes on Interpretation

There is no information on the stepping used when the dance was performed without sticks except that it was done with partners facing and then with backs to each other, 16 bars in all. Similar reels have been collected by **Mrs Leather** in Herefordshire and more recently by **Gwilym Davies** from **Harry Dawe** of Hollybush Common near Ledbury (1978). There are also several step dancers still active in the area. The style is very much akin to the Welsh step dancing with emphasis on the heel toe movement.

References

Russell Wortley, *The Bromsberrow Heath Morris Dances*, *English Dance and Song*, Vol. XXIII, Sept 1959, p.94 & 95

E.C.Cawte, *The Morris Dance in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire*, *Journal E.F.D.S.S.*, Dec 1963, Vol. 9, N°4, p.206

Stephen Baldwin, *English Village Fiddler*, *Leader*, LED 2068

B.B.C. recorded programmes library N° 18695, 13th Oct, 1952

Letter to DJ from Russell Wortley and discussion with him

Discussions with various people at Bromsberrow Heath

Gwilym Davies, *Three Handed Reel*

The Step dancing of "Blackie" Smith and others

With thanks to, and copyright by, © Annie Jones, see note page 4.

Next issue

another detailed article about local dances: **The Cradley Morris Dance.**



The Ballad Printers of Worcester **a series of articles by Roy Palmer**



Under this heading in 1990-91 I published a series of five articles in what was then the **Somers Journal**. These have now been revised and re-written in the light of further information, some of which is published in my book, **The Folklore of Worcestershire** (Logaston Press, 2005).

- See FWJ N°1, 2, 3 for 1: John Butler; 2: Samuel Gamidge;
3: James and John Grundy, George and Thomas Lewis, Thomas Hayes

4: Richard Houghton

Houghton was in business from 1824 until 1835 at the General Printing office, 5 Merry Vale (see map below) now that part of Deansway which is close to All Saints' Church), where he advertised: 'Hawkers & Shopkeepers supplied on moderate terms'. Over thirty of his ballad sheets survive, most with two items. Very little of the material is topical or local. There are popular lyrics like 'Away to the Mountain's Brow' (written by George Alexander Lee, who was also widely known as a tenor singer), 'The Soldier's Tear' (tune also by Lee, to words by the society poet, T. H. Bayly) and 'Pilgrim of Love' (tune by Sir Henry Bishop, better known as the composer of 'Home, sweet home'). However, Houghton – or his customers – apparently preferred traditional material, which provides a large number of titles including 'Bonny Blue Handkerchief', 'Dame Durden', 'The Female Drummer', 'Gosport Beach' and many more (see below).

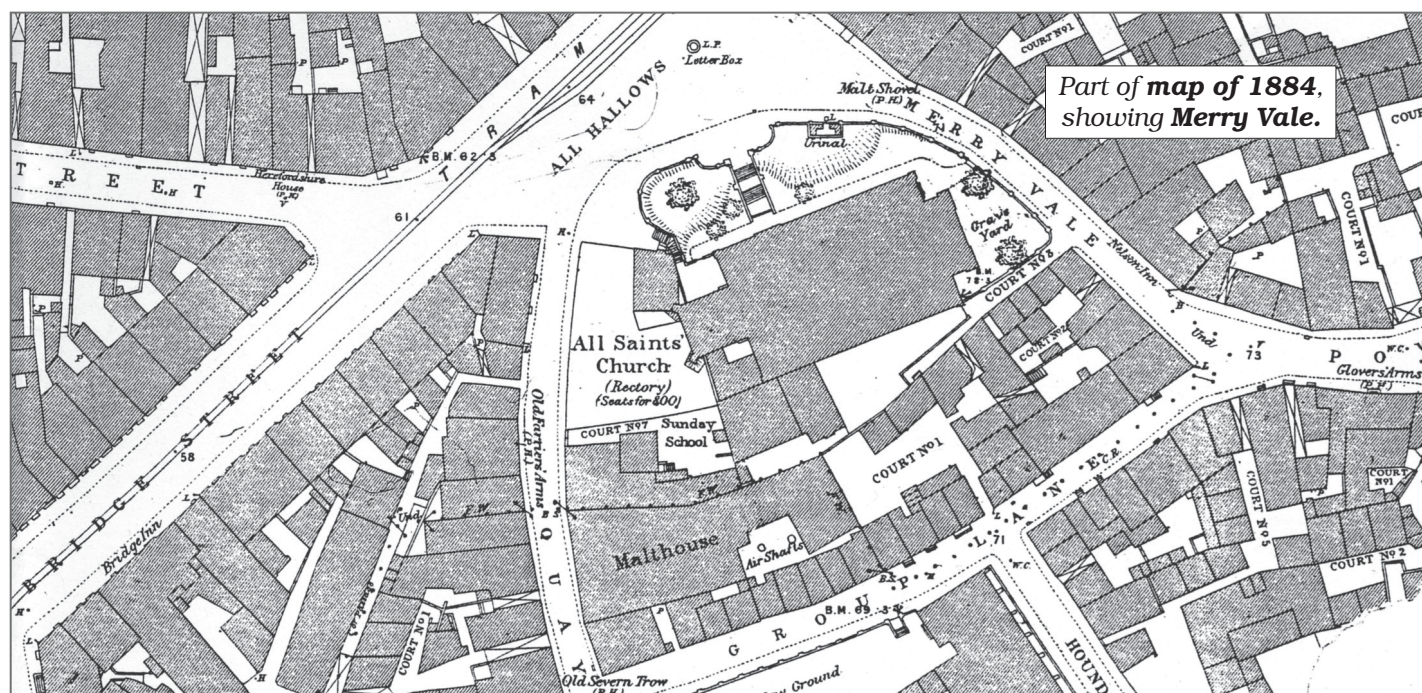
Lists

All items are in the Madden Collection at Cambridge University Library; copy in the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library at Cecil Sharp House.

Other references show additional copies: BL indicates a collection of broadsides in the British Library with the reference 1876 e 3.

Numbers in square brackets [...] refer to Steve Roud's Folk Song Index, which is available online at <http://library.ehdss.org/archives>

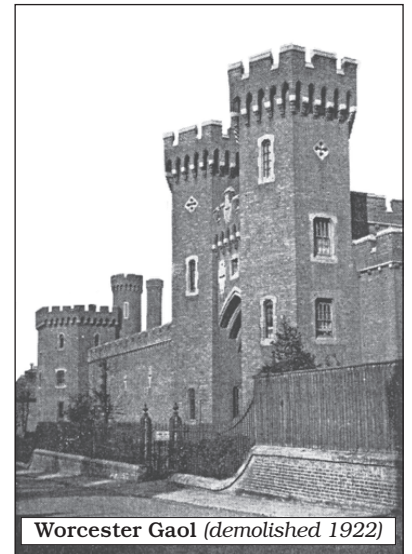
- All round my hat [567]
- Answer to the Inneskillen dragoon / Pilgrim of love
- Away to the mountain's brow / The glasses sparkle BL





The Ballad Printers of Worcester, by Roy Palmer **4: Richard Houghton continued**

- **Bonny blue handkerchief** [378] / **London town** [914]
- **By the sweet silver light bonny moon** [906] / **The rose of England**
- **Chapter of cheats / Marriage day**
- **Dame Durden** [1209] / **Hurrah for the bonnets of blue** [819] / **True lovers, or, the king's command** [1445]
- **Dandy husband / Young William of the royal waggon train** [1354]
- **Fair Phoebe and her dark-eyed sailor** [265] / **Adieu, my native land**
- **The gay old man / The Indian lass** [2326]
- **The lamentation of James & Joseph Carter** (see words, music, illustrations pp8-9) / **The blind beggar's daughter** [132]
- **The lamentation of James & Joseph Carter** / **My village fair**
- **Little Mary, the sailor's bride / Gosport beach**
- **Old Mr December / The female drummer** [226] *BL*
- **The petticoat king of the islands**
- **Philadelphia lass / Cottage beauty / He's the man to win**
- **Poor Caroline of Edinburgh town** [398] / **Blue-ey'd boy** *BL*
- **The poor little fisherman's girl / Lord Marlborough** [233]
- **A pretty little dear / The banks of doon**
- **The pretty ploughboy** [151] / **Fate of young Henry**
- **The rose of Ardee / Buy a broom**
- **The servant boy / Blue eyed maid**
- **The soldier's tear / The mariners ('Ye gentlemen of England')**
- **Thorney Moor woods** [222] / **Plato's advice**
- **[Van] Dieman's Land** [519] / **Lord Marlborough** [233]
- **The wealthy farmer's son** [1061] / **The wanderer / The miller**
- **What a shocking bad bonnet / The flowing bowl**
- **William and Dina** [271] / **My own blue bell**
- **Young Bill, the female sailor**
- **Young Edward the gallant hussar** [1146] / **Artichokes and cauliflowers** [2456]
- **The young sailor bold / The maid of Llangollen / Never marry a Charley**



One ballad, *'The Lamentation of James & Joseph Carter'*, was issued twice, presumably because it sold well, dealing as it did with a local crime. On 7 February 1833 a farmer called Jones from the village of Rock went to the market at Kidderminster and on the way home spent the evening in public houses at Bewdley. In the last of these, the Union, he was spotted by James Carter, aged 22, and his brother, Joseph, 30. When Jones left at about 10 p.m. to walk home the Carters followed. Outside the town they knocked him into a ditch and took his money, just a few shillings. He was not seriously hurt but the Carters' smock frocks (standard gear at the time for farm labourers) were spattered with blood. The brothers bought new smocks in Worcester, leaving the old with the shopkeeper, who handed them to the police a day or two later. The Carters further drew attention to themselves by booking a night's lodging and failing to turn up. They were arrested, and after a trial in Worcester found guilty of robbing Jones and also of stealing on the same day a Kidderminster £5 note. Despite previously having a good record, they were sentenced to death and hanged in front of **Worcester Gaol** (illustration above) on 22 March 1833. According to a contemporary account:

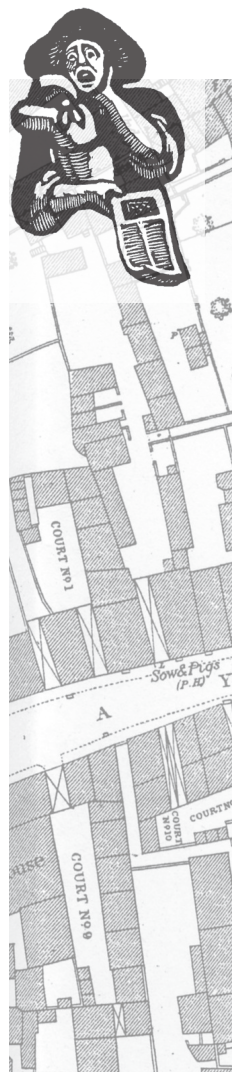
Both men met death with firmness, but without bravado; and Joseph Carter addressed the populace from the scaffolding, warning them to avoid Sabbath breaking, drunkenness, and bad women. The crowd on this occasion behaved with unusual decorum, and seem really to have been impressed with a feeling of sadness at seeing two persons hurried out of life so early.

The ballad, which repeated these conventional warnings, would no doubt have found purchasers both in the crowd and further afield. Its opening of *'Come all you wild and wicked youths'* would no doubt have suggested to those who wished to sing it a number of tunes, including that of *'Young Henry the poacher'*. The Carter brothers were buried at **Ribbesford** (illustration opposite), just down the River Severn from Bewdley. After a time the rumour began to circulate that their coffins were full of stones and that their bodies for some reason were elsewhere, having possibly been sold to a medical school for dissection. Local feeling eventually grew so strong that the rector, Rev. John Walcot (incumbent 1854-76) obtained the permission to open the graves, and found that the unhappy Carters had been duly buried.

The Lamentation of James & Joseph Carter

Printed by R. Houghton,

General Printing Office, 5, Merry Vale, Worcester



Come all you wild and wick - ed youths, wher
ev- er you may be, an ex- ample take whi- lst
you have time to shun bad com pa ny, Re-
frain from all your form - er sins, re- form and take good
ways, Then you'll be blest with sweet con- tent [to]
Chorus
live, and see hap - py days. Take ad - vice, young Men
all, and think of our down - fall.

Come all you wild and wicked youths, wherever you may be,
An example take whilst you have time to shun bad company,
Refrain from all your former sins, reform & take good ways,
Then you'll be blest with sweet content, live and see happy days.

Chorus

*Take advice young men all,
And think of our downfall.*

We was brought up near Bewdley town, all in fair Worcestershire,
Where our parents now reside in sorrow, grief, & care,
When from them last we took our leave, the tears flow'd from
their eyes,
Desiring to take good ways, we heeded not their cries.

Soon after we left our parents dear, employment we did gain,
But being prone to wretched vice, not long we did remain.
For in lewd harlots company, we spent each night and day,
And to maintain this wretched set we robbed on the highway.

In eighteen hundred & thirty three, Feb.' the 7th day.
We did attack one Mr. Jones, all on the king's highway
We robbed him of his property, and also beat him sore,
Dispersed and left him on the ground weltering in his gore.

But soon we apprehended were & unto Worcester sent,
Within strong prison walls to dwell in grief and discontent,
And at the last assizes we were guilty found and cast,
And then the awful sentence of the law was on us past.

Now with strong bars we are confin'd in a dismal cell,
And soon upon the fatal drop must bid this world farewell,
Ah young men all we little thought of this any more than you,
That we should meet our fate so soon & bid this world adieu.

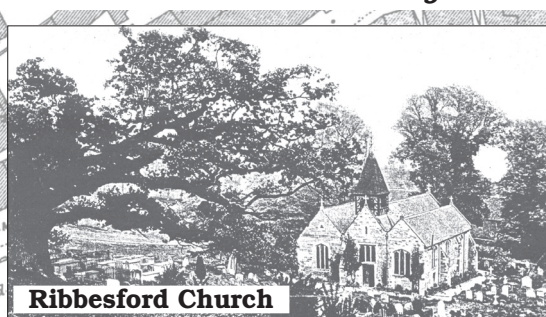
So all young men a warning take who hath sweet liberty
And for two dying sinners sake, shun harlots company.
For they will soon your pleasures blast. and prove your
overthrow,
And then like us you will get launch'd into a gulph of woe.

Ballad sheet:

Cambridge University Library, Madden Collection.

**Tune: 'Henry's Downfall', noted by Cecil Sharp in 1909 from
a Mr Gibbs of Evesham, Worcs; published in Roy Palmer
(ed.), *Songs of the Midlands* (East Ardsley, 1972), p.73.**

Roy Palmer.



Ribbesford Church

Folklife Organisations



A new “Vesta Tilley Society” to celebrate Music Hall Legend

Vesta Tilley was one of the greatest stars of Music Hall - she had a hugely successful career on both side of the Atlantic. When she retired, nearly 2 million people signed the **People's Tribute to Vesta Tilley**, including Conan Doyle, Harry Houdini and Charlie Chaplin. Vesta was born in **Worcester**, the second of thirteen children, and many people feel that we [in Worcester] do not do enough as a City to claim her as our own and to champion her as one of the biggest stars this country has ever seen.

The Vesta Tilley Society has been formed to increase the profile of Vesta Tilley and to celebrate her life. We have plans to help launch a **one-woman Vesta Tilley show**, to try to raise the money to erect a statue in Worcester, to found a **national Music Hall weekend** based around Worcester and the Swan Theatre, and much, much more.



Vesta Tilley was born **Matilda Alice Powles** in **Commandery Street** in the Blockhouse in Worcester on 13th May 1864. In her autobiography she describes Worcester as “**the poor, proud and pretty city**”. Her father gave up his trade to work as a comedy actor and performer under the stage name of **Harry Ball, Tramp Musician**, with his performing dog. He became a theatre manager and in 1867 was Chairman of the *Theatre Royal* in Gloucester where Tilley first appeared on stage aged three and a half. At first she was chaperoned by a neighbour but later his father gave up his job as manager of *St George's Hall* in Nottingham to travel with her, acting as her manager while they appeared on the same bill. The family moved to Nottingham and it was Tilley's permanent home until her marriage.

Her first appearance as a male impersonator was in 1872 at the age of 6 at *Day's Concert Hall* in Birmingham as “**The Great Little Tilley, the Pocket Sims Reeves**” in a parody of the opera singer Sims Reeves. She then became “**The Great Little Tilley**” and at the age of eleven at *Canterbury Hall* in London she first used the name she made famous, **Vesta Tilley**, adding the name of Vesta to her own nickname. In 1897 at the age of 13 she first appeared in pantomime as Robinson Crusoe at the *Royal* in Portsmouth and she continued to perform in both pantomime and music hall.

Her father acted as her manager until his death in 1889 when she was 24 and she became famous for such songs as “**Burlington Bertie**” and “**Following in Father's footsteps**”. She married the eldest son of theatre owner Henry de Frece who had once been proprietor of the Worcester *Alhambra*. Walter was a successful manager and by 1909 owned or controlled about fifteen theatres. Vesta's characters were carefully researched and costumed and she sang original songs, many of them composed by her husband, who also wrote