

Clitheroe North West Processional Clog Morris Dance

Below some newspaper quotes suggest that Clitheroe first had a men's team in 1897, possibly earlier and a women's team from 1904. Children's teams became more common between the wars and just after. No mentions of the men's team can be found after 1911.



Photograph courtesy of the Morris Ring.

At Grindleton Jubilee Festival the Clitheroe Morris Men "took a prominent part," Preston Guardian July 10th 1897 (as quoted by Johnny Haslett in Morris Dancers and Rose Queens" p257)

"TO-MORROW (Saturday, May 5th), the Clitheroe Morris Dancers AND INC Borough Prize Band Will (weather permitting) Parade the Town (Both parties in Uniform). Commence at 3 prompt. Route.—Pimlico Road, Well Terrace, Chatburn Road, Waterloo, Duck Street, Shaw Bridge, Hayhurst Street, Brownlow Street, Long Row, Back to Moor Lane Chapel, Woone Lane, Eshton Terrace, Bawdlands, Parson Lane, Top of Moor LAII" and back into Market Place." Friday 4th May 1900 Clitheroe Advertiser and Times

"CLITHEROE. Morris Dancing. On Saturday the Clitheroe Borough Band and Morris Dancers paraded the town, and a collection was made along the route in aid of the band funds," reports the Burnley Express on Wed 9th May 1900.

They are mentioned in the Lancashire Daily Post of May 17th 1901 in a jocular manner which suggests they are well-known then, and in the Accrington Observer July 4th 1904

they are described as “comically.. gaily dressed and “gambolling merrily... to show their agility to admiring spectators” at Clayton Rose Queen Crowning Ceremony

Mr J Westall also led “a clever troupe of young female morris dancers “ through a a parade in Clitheroe, (Clitheroe Times, 30th Sept 1904- the first mention of a female team.

Early records show a (photoshopped) picture of Clitheroe Ladies led by Mr C Winkley in 1919



MR. WINKLEY'S CLITHEROE MORRIS DANCERS, 1919.

At Clitheroe the girls wore clogs until "two of them were hurt by falling while dancing uphill on a wet road" [Ref 10](#). Helm Collection

“Maypole and Morris dancing by bevy of prettily gowned children from West Bradford,”16.6.1933 Clitheroe Advertiser and Times

Picture courtesy of Janet Dowles and Johnny Haslett



THE CLITHEROE TEAM 1930 approx AT GRANGE OVER SANDS

Picture courtesy of Janet Dowles and Johnny Haslett.

“DANCERS ON THE LAWN Members of Clitheroe Catholic Girls’ Club present a Morris Dance on the spacious lawns of Standen Hall, and provide us with a Festival Scene of one of the best-known and most picturesque of all English country dances. This scene was photographed at a garden fete arranged by the Lancashire Association of Girls’ and Mixed Clubs, on Saturday, and it might be taken as typical of many similar scenes throughout Ribblesdale during this Festival summer. It is good to know that this flourishing Clitheroe youth club and several other organisations in the neighbourhood, are helping to ensure that the traditions of this favourite country pastime are not allowed to lapse.” Clitheroe Advertiser and Times 1.6.51

“Notable features of the festival will be folk dancing, including sword dances by men and Morris Dances by women, to the music of the newly formed Bowland Folk Dance Band accordion mandolin, piano and drum. Two Slaidburn bands are to take part. One is the well-known Silver Band and the other, the Slaidburn School band, which comprises 14 boys and one girl, 15-year-old Betty Lamb.” Slaidburn: Clitheroe Advertiser and Times 29.10.49

“Morris Dancers Following the Royal pair came the morris dancers, performing to traditional music with all the expected grace and charm.” Clitheroe Advertiser and Times 12.6.53

This is the last mention of a Clitheroe team until 1977 when both Clitheroe Morris Men and Clitheroe Ladies Country Fayre formed.

Lessons for the morris men



ONLY a few weeks after their formation the Clitheroe Morrismen have landed their first official engagement. They won't be making their debut until after Christmas, but by then they expect to be fitted out in traditional costumes and, hopefully, have a few more members. The eight men in the group have been tapping out their routines every Tuesday night at the Dog and Partridge Hotel, and thanks to two sprightly Whalley pensioners have added "The Whalley Dance" to their routine. During the 1937 and 1953 Coronation celebrations Mrs May Parkinson and Mrs Mary Maudsley led the all-girl Whalley Morris Dancing troupe at the head of the village carnival procession. When the Clitheroe group heard about this they invited the women to their rehearsals. Mrs Maudsley, of Princess Street, led the girls at the head of the 1953 procession, and has never done any Morris dancing since. "But I just remembered it again, and it didn't take long to show them our dance. They were excellent considering they've only practised together about four times," she said. Her friend, who has recently remarried and become Mrs Speakman, is presently selling her Woodfield View home to live in Coppull. She led the troupe in the 1937 carnival. One of the present Morrismen said after the rehearsal: "They were very sprightly for their age and soon taught us the Whalley dance." He said the group was now concentrating on raising funds to buy costumes. "We have no costumes or equipment at all yet, and clogs alone cost about £15," he said. On Saturday they ran a stall on Clitheroe market, and are thinking up other ways of raising money. Before their first booking they would like to have a minimum of 12 members, so anyone interested, particularly from Clitheroe itself, should go along to rehearsals.

Mrs Maudsley (left) and Mrs Speakman join the Clitheroe Morrismen during rehearsals.

Clitheroe Advertiser 25/10/1977

Picture courtesy of Johnny Haslett , Janet Dowles and Clitheroe Morris Men Archives

The teams continued until at least 1985.