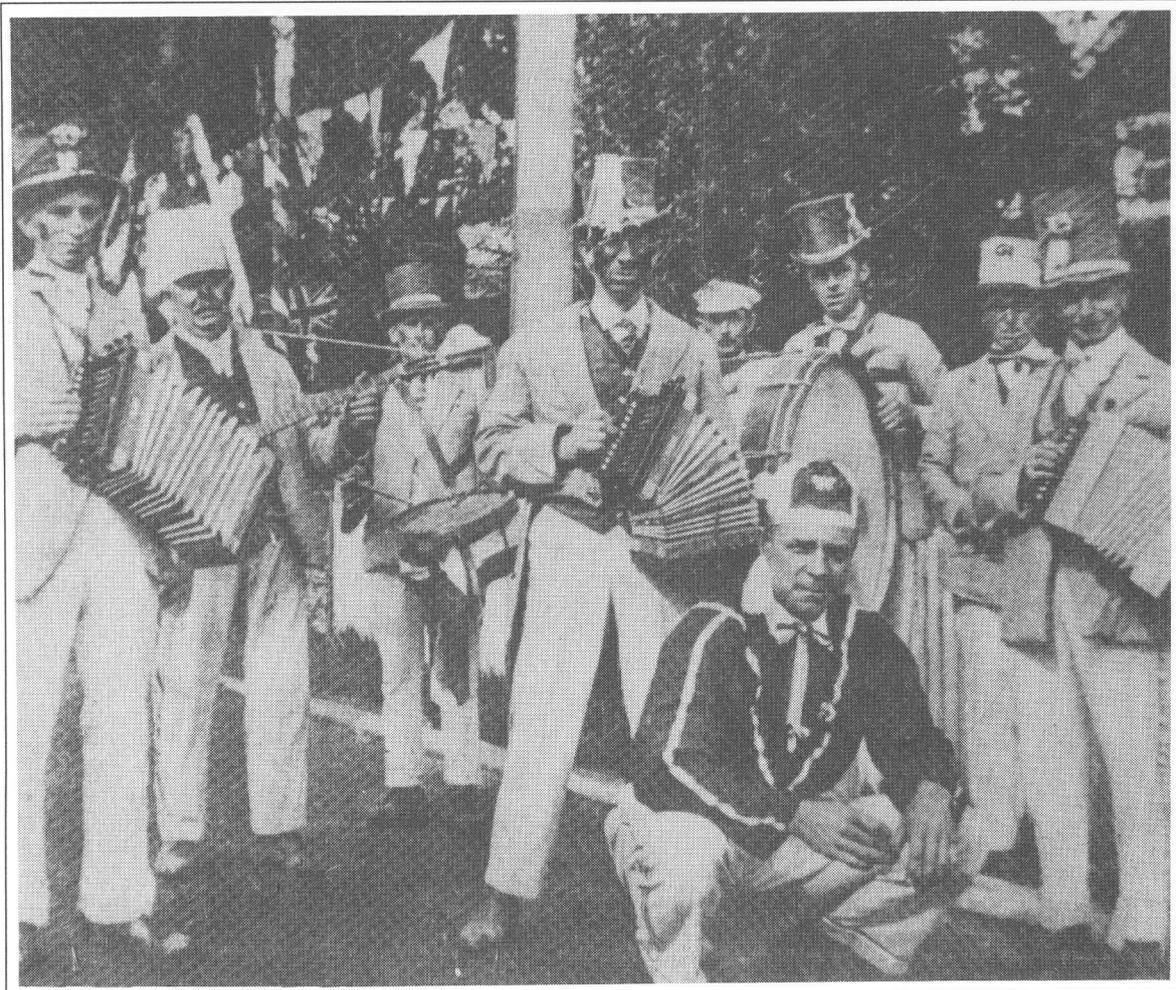
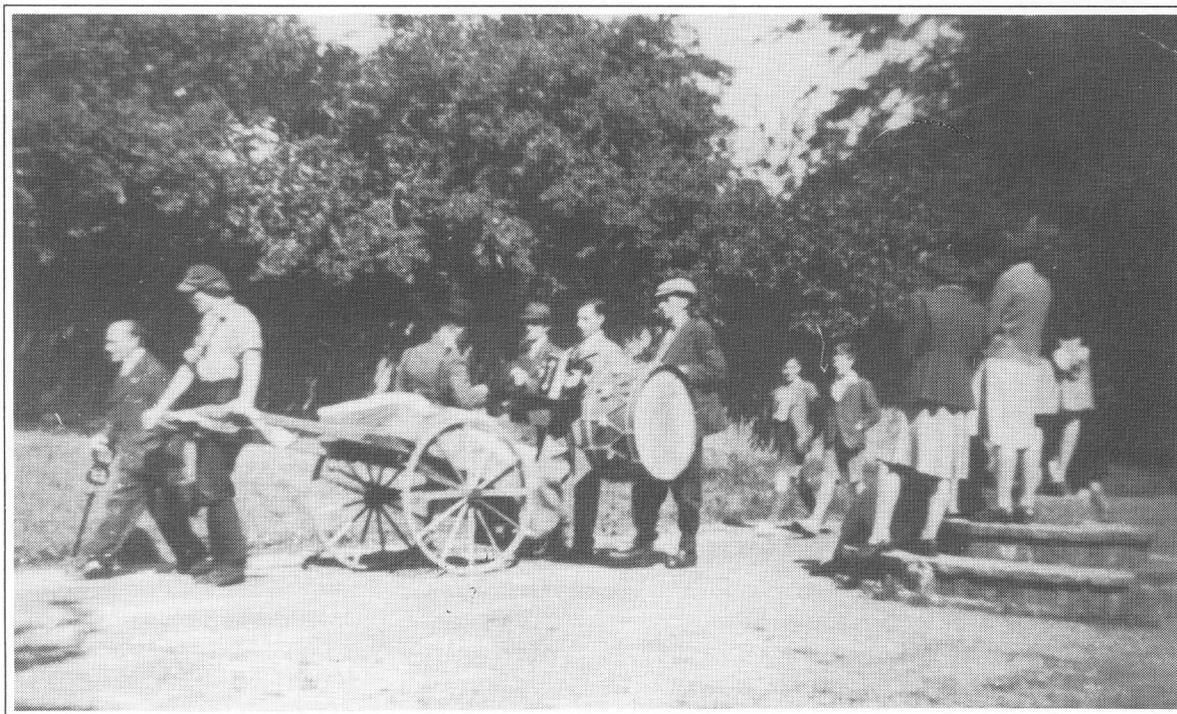

Chapter 12: Minstrels and carnival bands

Black-faced minstrels appeared in village entertainments towards the end of the nineteenth century, inspired by theatrical troupes and seaside concert parties. The professionals worked within conventions of form and content developed on the London stage during the period from the 1830s to the 1850s, but the rural amateurs were more pragmatic, working with any talent and material available to make a show. American minstrel songs and tunes - *Buffalo Girls*, for example - had circulated previously, but this was not necessarily the material included in village minstrel shows. In the troupe organised to raise funds for the hospital in Forest

Row around 1910, Spider Miles sang *To Have a Face Like my Old Woman* and *My Little Jammy Face*, titles that have the ring of the British variety theatre.¹ James Payne's spoons playing in the same show was more than likely practised in the pub on Saturday nights. Fairwarp Minstrels made their second public appearance in January 1935 and at one time there was a troupe of minstrels in Nutley.² Whether he was associated with minstrels or not, E. Morley warranted special mention in newspaper reports for his bones playing at concerts in Newick in 1905 and Buxted in 1920.³





The Coronation celebrations on the recreation ground at Cuckfield in May 1937. Jack Norris, melodeon; unidentified, bass drum; unidentified (on the cart), piano accordion. Could the man on Jack's right be Peter Gander, playing the triangle? (Courtesy Florence Norris)

Forty years afterwards, Bill Ticehurst recalled his time in the Minstrels Band, which was scratched together for the Silver Jubilee festivities in Five Ashes in 1935. Lewis Wren, one of the local handbell ringers, was the man behind it and the band practiced in the clubroom at the *Five Ashes Inn*.⁴ The *Sussex Express* reported the fancy dress torch-light procession led by the Five Ashes Silver Jubilee band, directed by Frank Hemsley.⁵ Bill Ticehurst mentioned Frank Hemsley as a piano-accordion player, who joined the Minstrel Band sometime later when they played at dances in the early war years. It appears then that the small village of Five Ashes fielded two separate carnival bands for the Silver Jubilee celebration. The organisers arranged an official comic band, while others provided a surprise turn-out from the pub.

Another example of tomfoolery took place at a function in Uckfield in 1920 where:

The piece de resistance was the performance of the 'Broomfonium Comic Band' whose fearsome instruments gave forth music as weird as their appearance. The audience laughed till they could do so no longer and the bandmaster Mr. A. Corden led his instrumentalists off.⁶

Dressing-up and acting the fool were popular then, as they can be now, on special local and national occasions. Most communities now have no pool of musicians to call upon, but here and there some carnival bands have survived.⁷

NOTES

1. Bob and Mrs Miles.
2. Fairwarp: *Sussex Express*, 8.1.1935.
Nutley: Christopher Stephens.
3. *Sussex Express*, 18.2.1905, 1.4.1905 and 1.10.1920. In the 1.10.1920 edition, he is referred to as W. Hoorley in one report and as E. Moorley in another.
4. Undated cutting, *Sussex Express*, c. 1977 (Vic and Sheila Gammon).
5. *Sussex Express*, 3.5.1935 and 10.3.1935.
6. *Sussex Express*, 6.8.1920.
7. See Ronnie Wharton and Arthur Clarke, *The Tommy Tucker Bands of the West Riding: The History and Development of a Working-Class Entertainment* (1979), and

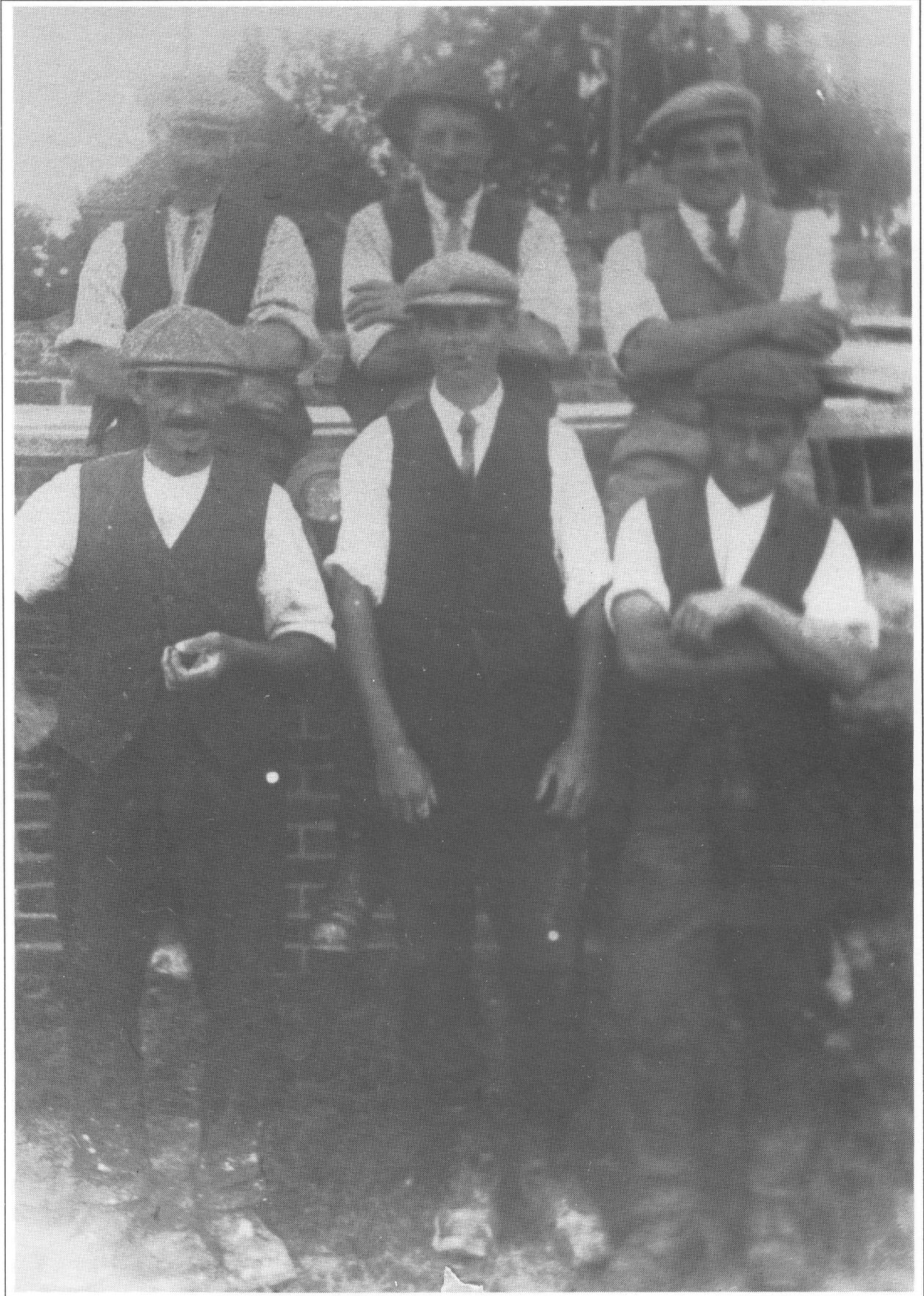
Brian Holland, *Here's to the Next Time: Carnival Jazz Bands of the Nineteen-Twenties and Thirties* (1988).

Surviving carnival bands in southern England: The Merry Makers, Padstow, Cornwall, and King's Korner Jazz Band, Pewsey, Wiltshire.

Recorded examples of carnival bands:

King's Korner Jazz Band, *March Past* (1982), HD 010 and (1987) KKJB Cassette, no number.

Widnes Star Novelty Band (Lancashire), *Medley of Marches/Great Little Army March* (1932), Zonophone 6158 (second title also on Topic 12TS318).



Chapter 13: Class and social conflict

The tensions in the social structure into which Scan was born continued in some form or another throughout his lifetime, although the Second World War was a decisive turning point in the demise of the old order. The gentry, in the view of some working people, were divided into the good and the bad, those who were decent and knew their social responsibilities, even if they were patronising, and the nouveau riche who were tight-fisted, elitist and inconsiderate to tenants and employees.

Arch Sherlock: Some of them were gentlemen. Some were real people; others were nothing but bloody gasbags. And that's what the trouble with it was. Those that came up from nothing and made theirself are the worst people there are. The people that are landed gentry are the best people there are ... Not hardly any of 'em left.

The Hardys at Danehill spent money on the community. They built the church and the reading room and provided annual treats and outings for the village children.

Bert Wood: They were jolly nice people, they were. Through the winter, they'd take soup round to the old folks.

Charlie Bates: And the kids used to go down there Christmas.

Bert Wood: I got a new pair of boots, Christmas time, and the girls, they had red riding hoods. [They] used to have a Christmas tree and everything.

The Corbetts, also at Danehill, were of the same ilk and made sure 'every kid had a present at school' and a day's outing to Brighton.¹

Opposite: Group of workers, including (top left) Philip Thompsett, husband of Scan's eldest sister, Jinny, and Scan's brothers, Fred (front left) and Will (front right); undated.

(Courtesy Daisy & Arch Sherlock)

Bert Wood: We always had a pheasant, Christmas day. The sons used to come round with a pheasant.

The newspaper report of a supper given by Mr and Mrs Stuart of Stonehurst, Ardingly, for their employees and servants spelt out some of the motivation behind such functions. It was 'a very successful affair, and doubtless will do much to strengthen the bonds of good feeling which bind together all on the estate'.² Even after the Great War, Sir Walter Scott continued the old ways with a servants' ball at Christmas time in the parish room at Horsted Keynes, with as much food and drink as they could manage and dancing to Gibson's Band from Ardingly.³

The Macmillans rebuilt Birchgrove in Horsted Keynes in the 1920s and provided several years work for local artisans and small contractors. They were not held in the same respect as the Esdailes, the Scotts and the other established families, however, and although working men were dependent on them for their living, they did not always stand for any old nonsense, particularly from Harold Macmillan's mother. Scan had a tale of how at Birchgrove he put her in her place. A heavy shower broke up a cricket match and forced spectators and players alike into the refreshment tent. Helen Macmillan fussed around, trying to send the working men home in the rain. 'Well, madam,' he said, looking straight at her, 'I think those that live nearest should go home first.' Many years later Arch Sherlock had a brush with her:

I did plumbing for Macmillan and I had my plumbing shop out in the stable yard, and she said to me, she said, 'Sherlock,' she said, 'I don't allow smoking. It might burn the place down.' I said, 'If I want to burn your place down, I could do it with my blow lamp in two minutes.' She never said no more to me... I used to walk past her, as if she wasn't there.

Some of the sense of economic injustice was assuaged informally by pilfering, which probably carried more emotional satisfaction than financial reward.

Bert Wood: When they had a shoot at Corbett's or anything, I bet a shilling [Denner Head] was carrying somebody's bag, one of the toffs... and I bet when they got home, they found they'd lost several cartridges.

But if 'everybody used to go beating' for the gentry to earn a few shillings, a good few were also regular poachers.

Arch Sherlock: They [including Scan] used to get half their meals that way when they walked [to work]. They always had a catapult in their pocket and they used to knock over the rabbits and the pheasants on the way.

Charlie Bates: He [Bert Wood] got eye for rabbits and pheasants. He'd pick up a pheasant in a tree at night.

Bert Wood: Yeah, with a catapult. I never reckoned to miss anything... I never shoot but once. I nearly always got him first go. Oh, we had to at that time of day to get something to eat.

Charlie Bates: Everybody had rabbit wire all in the woods and that.

Bert Wood: I used to do a lot of wiring. I got sixteen one night... I used to carry a gun as well. He [Corbett] wouldn't give you permission to shoot pheasants... but I used to shoot 'em!

Many of those accused of poaching appeared in Uckfield Police Court and were usually fined, although persistent offenders were sentenced to imprisonment.

Will Marten: They used to do a time in prison, you see... but they weren't bad men at all. They'd have 'em up for poaching, you see... The big estates around here kept 'em down, so they didn't get in there and shoot their pheasants.

Crime to the few and economic necessity to the majority, poaching was also covert social resistance, the working man's way of getting his own back. One particular Horsted Keynes man, well-known to be a poacher, had a reputation for more overt defiance. No member of the gentry could expect him to open a gate for them:

Arch Sherlock: Old Alf Pellin, he was one of the biggest poachers that ever walked in a pair of shoes... He had a pheasant. He put a collar round it, and at West Hoathly the police was always after him, you see ... so he says, 'I'll have the buggers!' Gee 'em up, you see. So he put a string round the pheasant's neck and led it up through the middle of West Hoathly, and they couldn't do nothing with him!

Will Marten: They said at Horsted Keynes old Pellin walked down through Horsted one Sunday morning with a rabbit on a string - live rabbit - got a collar on him - just to aggravate the toffs.

ROUGH MUSIC

Differences between villagers, usually involving an issue of morality that could be settled in no other way, had once been commonly dealt with by rough-musicking. It expressed the community's sense of outrage, which may have built up over many years but exploded over a particular incident. Rough music carried with it the legitimacy of tradition, although technically it was a breach of the peace. Since it had popular approval and was more likely to reinforce social order than weaken it, the police usually turned a blind eye. As working men and women gained access to more formal means of redressing grievances, rough-musicking tended to die out.⁴

*They all thought it a pretty trick
To play to them some rough music...
When the riot first begun
Beating kettle and the drum,
The old ship bell and the pot-lid, too,
The mortar and pestle that did go.⁵*

At Chelwood Common, just after the Great War, local feeling welled up following an unpopular trial decision, and the acquitted man took the full force of his neighbours' expression of their sense of grievance.

Bert Wood: They give him rough music.

Charlie Bates: My mother and the old women went down there - tin cans - and barracked him... miserable old so-and-so... He was never welcome in the village.

Bert Woods: Well, didn't make a bit of difference - that's his life. He was always on his own, so to speak.⁶

There was a rough-musicking in West Hoathly, probably just after the Second World War, and it seems that these two examples and those mentioned by Scan were the only ones in the district in living memory.⁷ Scan's story dates from 1893 when he was five or six:

We had a doctor live here and he had three sons - three boys - and they went to our village school with us, and the house that he lived in belonged to a man name of Field [James Field]. He was a cripple man and he was a nasty old bloke, he was. Well, I don't know what the trouble was about, but anyway this doctor had notice to get out, and so he got out, the doctor did, and he went to Lindfield... His name was Fitzmaurice, Dr. Fitzmaurice - good doctor he was - used to walk all around that time of day; he never had a horse, ride horseback like a good many did. Well, the people was so mad in the village over it, we rough-musicked him [Field].⁸ [RH]

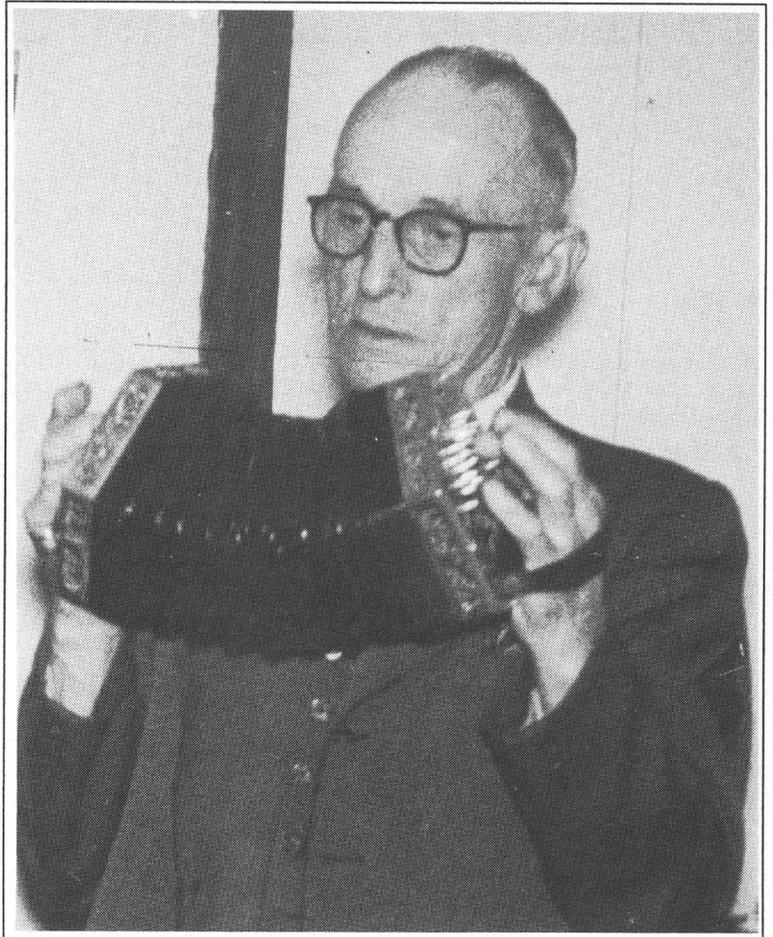
Now, I was old enough to go to that, so I do know, and I had an old, well, it wasn't exactly a bowl, it was a biggish bowl with a handle to it, and I know I

had a stick with a big roll of rag wrapped round it like a drum stick, and I held this bath up and hit it like a drum. They had all sorts of instruments; some had teapots and blowed in the spout and they had anything they could get hold of, and we done it three nights running. You didn't dare to do it no more. There was a police sergeant and two more policemen there stood outside his gate. See, we marched up and down the road; we daren't go round in his place, you see. We marched up and down in the road three times, then we had to leave off, see. Course, a lot of them knew the rules about rough-musicking, and, I'll tell you, that's a tidy row, that is. I should think nearly every workman there was in the village was there, and, I can tell you, there was a tidy gang there. These police was there to see we didn't cause no trouble. Well, that's the law. That was a law, that you daren't rough-music more than three nights. I've heard talk of another man being rough-musicked, because he turned his wife out or something. That was at Chelwood Common, but this one, it's just down the road, the top of Leighton Road, and I can see the old bloke standing there with his crutches now... He owned all that row of houses down Leighton Road. [RH]

NOTES

1. For an account of the Corbett family, see Dame Margery Corbett Ashby: *From the Feudal to the Jet Age* (1982).
2. *Sussex Express*, 7.1.1905.
3. Arch Sherlock.
Compare the report of the servants' dance given by T. G. Ashton, M.P., and Mrs. Ashton of Vinehall Place. There were 50 guests, outside catering from *John's Cross Inn*, and dancing till 2.00 a.m. to Mrs Murray's Quadrille Band from St. Leonards. The host and hostess were present at the beginning and then handed over to the butler and house keeper (*Sussex Express*, 7.1.1905).
4. This was not always the case. For example, rough musickers in Bampton, Oxfordshire, in 1900 were arrested; some cases were dismissed and some defendants bound over to keep the peace (*Witney Gazette*, 15.12.1900 and 22.12.1900) (Keith Chandler).
5. This local song, *Up Turner's Hill*, was recorded in 1957 in Cuckfield from the singing of George Tompsett (born 1876) (Mervyn Plunkett Collection).
6. To respect local sensibilities, I have not given names or dates.
7. 'Rough Music was played in West Hoathly as recently as 1952, when the victim was rather unjustly selected.' (Mervyn Plunkett, 'George Tompsett', *Folk-song Research*, V, 2/3, (1986/7) [written in 1957]).
'The last man to be rough musicked in West Hoathly was ----- who was a good friend of mine... I never liked to ask him about it but my impression was that it was just after the War, but it might have been in the late 30s.' (Letter, Mervyn Plunkett to me, 16.1.1986).
8. Dr. Fitzmaurice lived in Lindfield from at least 1889 until well into this century (*Kelly's Directory of Sussex*), but his name does not appear in the *Parliamentary Register* for Lindfield in 1893. He may have lived in Horsted Keynes briefly in 1893, but not long enough to have qualified for an entry in the *Parliamentary Register*. Horsted Keynes school records for the period are lost.

I NEVER PLAYED TO MANY POSH DANCES....



Scan in 1957.

Chapter 14: The 1920s and beyond

The pattern and pace of life in the country were transformed by the Great War. To some extent the War accelerated social changes that were already in progress; it broke down country institutions, such as village bands, and created many others, like the British Legion. If the War accelerated 'progress', Roy Dommett has suggested a process by which social change was retarded. He observes that many fathers were killed, some sons looked to their grandfathers for their values, and this could account for some of the old songs continuing long after they might have been expected to have been forgotten.¹

Fundamental changes had taken place in the character and use of pubs in 1915, when emergency wartime measures were introduced to curb drunkenness. Laws relating to public houses until then regulated little else but the quality of liquor, value for money and sale to minors, and forbade gambling and disorderly conduct; country pubs opened from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. with no restriction on children in the bar. In 1915, opening hours were reduced to about four in the middle of the day and a little longer in the evening, and children under fourteen were not to be admitted at all. The wartime regulations stayed in operation for the following seventy years or so. The pattern of public house use changed quite considerably, and, not surprisingly, the annual national average consumption of beer fell from 27.5 gallons per head in 1913-14 to 17.3 gallons in 1924-25.²

Popular music took on new characteristics after the Great War. Coon-songs, such as *Little Dolly Daydream* and *Lily of Laguna*, had already introduced syncopated melody during the late Victorian and Edwardian era. This was extended to commercial dance music by, for example, the barn-dances and schottisches published by the prolific Glasgow composer, Felix Burns, and similar pieces recorded by the duet concertina player, Alexander Prince. Irving Berlin's pseudo-ragtime song, *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, was the smash hit of 1911-12, and was followed by jazzy

post-War songs such as *I've Got My Captain Working for Me Now* and *How Ya Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm (After They've Seen Patee)*.

The new music accompanied new dances; some, like the *Turkey Trot* and the *Bunny Hug* were nine-day wonders, but the fox-trot and one-step became firmly established. On 22 November 1919, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band played at the opening night of the Hammersmith *Palais de Danse* in London. Their particular brand of New Orleans music had very little lasting effect on British popular music, but they did introduce the word 'jazz', and the opening of commercial dance-halls in towns revolutionised public dancing. What had been the preserve of the middle class at private functions and subscription balls was now accessible to shop and factory workers for the price of a ticket at the door. In the country, village halls, more spacious than the old reading rooms, were built to honour the memory of the fallen, and there was local commitment to utilise them. In the early 1920s, the *Sussex Express* reported a rash of whist drives and socials, often fund-raisers for the War memorial, and new Jazz Age village dances.³

The increased demand for dancing and the relative sophistication of the new ballroom dance music created more work for professionals and semi-professionals. Local musicians updated their style and material, taking their model from published stock arrangements. Horace Jackson's Band, from Lewes, already noted as playing in 1905, was still active in 1930; Wallace R. Chisholm described his new ensemble as his Dance Band. Other bands active in the area were the Southdown, the Sunny, the Medley and the Manor Dance Bands, Mr Martin's and the Excelsior from Crowborough, the Honolulu from Buxted and the Belgravia Orchestra from Newick.⁴ Arch Sherlock danced to a London band, Simon's Syncopators, at Maresfield, and Daisy Sherlock recalled the annual function organised by the member of Parliament for Mid Sussex as 'a dear dance at half-a-crown a head in the Horsted parish room with a

London-based band and dinner jackets'. She 'never used to go to any Conservative dances', but she used to peep in to see what was going on.

New private bus operators, utilising their wartime lorry-driving experience and driving coaches custom-built on ex-army chassis, brought mobility to village dwellers; thus Daisy and Arch were able to follow a number of local jazz bands. They were Picknell's, led by Billy Picknell, landlord of the *Greyhound Inn* at Ardingly, on piano, with violin, saxophone, Jim Dench on the drums and sometimes a trombone; The Gibsons from Haywards Heath, consisting of violin, saxophone, piano and drums, who had a regular tea-dance booking at Boots' Restaurant, Brighton, and did some of the Conservative dances at Horsted Keynes; The Finches, from Haywards Heath, which included a double bass; and The Millses, led by Ren Mills, from Wivelsfield. The Horsted Keynes young dancing crowd travelled as far afield as Ardingly, Lindfield, Cuckfield, Balcombe and Forest Row, packed on makeshift benches in Reuben Baker's coal lorry.

There were gramophone dances and various pianists played at socials and parties.⁵ A dance band was formed at Fairwarp from members of the brass band, using the band instruments. The Fairwarp Brass Jazz Band consisted of Charlie Ridley (born 1915), who had joined Fairwarp Temperance Band at the age of seven; Charlie Hemmings, a semi-professional; and Bill Horscroft, a builder at Maresfield, all on trumpets; Denner Head's son Vernon on piano; and Joe Walters on the Temperance Band's bass and side drums rigged up as a drum kit.⁶ Charlie Ridley confirms that, although they could all read, they played by ear and sounded 'a bit American'.

The pre-Great War style could still be heard. At the Freshfields' place at Wych Cross, the housekeeper organised entertainment for the servants - a whist drive on one Monday evening and a dance on the next. The house staff - two nurses, two house maids and two kitchen maids - invited the garden boys and some of the local lads, and one of the kitchen maids, Maggie Ridley (then aged 20), and her brother, Fred Gurr, played mandolins. Their best number for the one-step was not, as might have been expected, *Whispering* or *Pasadena*, but *Onward Christian Soldiers!*⁷

Young men and women, many still in their teens, took up the modern style. Vernon Head (1910-72) was perhaps representative of the children of Scan's contemporaries. He had been taught the piano by Mrs Freeland and then picked up the piano-accordion.⁸ He played in the new *William IV* and at the *Foresters*, where it was known for the piano to be wheeled out onto the green after closing time, the police being hotter on licensing hours than breaches of the peace.⁹ His cousin, Cicely, was also a pub pianist and accordion player, and other cousins, Rene and Bill Head, played the piano and drums for dancing at Piltdown in the late 1920s.

Frank Awcock (born 1897), nephew of the fiddle-playing Awcocks and brought up by their mother, led the New Crescent Dance Band in Danehill, which from 1929 consisted of Geoff Stephenson from Nutley (trumpet), Frank Awcock (piano accordion), Bert Setford from Freshfields (violin), George Avis (violin, then clarinet and alto saxophone), Ada White (piano), Tom Brunton (drums) and, on odd occasions, Mary Setford (cello) and Charlie Bennett (banjo).¹⁰ Herbert Marten, Joe Marten's son, started out as a self-taught drummer at that time and now plays the saxophone and clarinet regularly in a band called The Stompers at Nutley Club.

On the proposal of Mr. G. Gorringe seconded by Mr. C. Ridley an Honorary of £1. each was voted to the Bandmaster and Secretary.

Mr. G. Gorringe proposed and a vote of thanks to the members of the Dance Band for their help in providing the music for Socials was recorded.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman brought the meeting to a close.

Bernard Eckstein

19th August, 1940.

Extract from the
Fairwarp Band minute
book; 1940.

(Courtesy Frank &
Jean Gorringe)

George Avis (born 1912) picked up the rudiments of the fiddle from his maternal grandfather, Oliver Martin, a self-taught fiddler living between Pilt-down and Nutley. He then took formal violin lessons from Wallace Chisholm. His mother's cousin, a professional London theatre musician, advised him there would be plenty of work in London cinemas, but the trade became depressed shortly afterwards with the advent of talkies. In 1927, at the age of 15, he took his first paid job, with Wallace Chisholm. He knew Scan and remembers hearing Testers' Imperial. In 1928 he played in a trio at the *Star*, Pilt-down, with Rene and Bill Head.

He joined Frank Awcock's band in Danehill in 1929, and in 1930 he began doubling at Nutley village hall with a trio at five shillings for two hours. He bought a clarinet in 1930 and an alto saxophone soon after, as the violin was going out of fashion. He was a fan of Roy Fox and Lew Stone and went to see Jack Hylton whenever he appeared in Brighton. He played in an amateur orchestra in Nutley before the War and in another in Horsted Keynes after it. During the War he played with Vernon Head and Canadian soldiers stationed in the area. After the War he played in The Commodores from Burgess Hill and, when he had difficulty with breath control, changed to the string bass. He was a semi-pro musician throughout his working life, combining this with day work in a shop, on a farm and as a groundsman. He could read and transpose at sight, and never played by ear.

Scan's family band, Testers' Imperial, was in keeping with a general movement and existed as a response to a new demand. They took the tag 'jazz band' not simply because they knew the latest songs and played for the latest dances, but also because they had the latest novelty instrument, a set of drums.¹¹ Scan and Daisy both had a quick ear and experienced little difficulty picking up new tunes. Will, of course, was literate on the clarinet but almost certainly learned the Tester Imperial repertoire by ear.

Scan's formative years and, of course, the most important period in establishing his musical values, brought him in contact largely with diatonic tunes, and his peers played and sang almost exclusively in the major mode, but he had also been exposed to brass bands and fairground organs and all sorts of popular music by way of the gramophone and the variety theatre. The structure of much of this material was quite different from that of country music, with chromatic intervals in some melodies, some chromatic ornamentation and modulations in the harmony. Since he was essentially a melody player, harmony did not really concern him. Confronted with a popular tune where accidentals were a struc-

tural feature of the melody, like the two C sharps in *Bye Bye, Blackbird* played in C, he played them, but, in a song or dance tune where the accidentals were passing or structurally in a weak position, he followed one of three courses of action: he either played them near enough as written, or glossed over them and played the accidentals as if they were naturals, or he reconstructed the phrase altogether. The course he took in any individual case was probably dependent on the source of his material. If he learned indirectly from a written source - that is, from somebody who had the piece from notation - he was more likely to play it almost as written, but if he learned from a mediated source, a melodeon player, for example, or in a pub sing-song, he was more likely to follow the second or third course.

No doubt the band did learn all the latest tunes, but most popular music lasts a very short time and the bulk of their lasting repertoire was what the dancers would have described as 'the good old ones': *Margie*, *Missouri Waltz*, *If You Knew Susie*, etc.

Scan: I used to play a variety of choruses, see ... If I was in anywhere now, pub or anywhere, if they was dancing the waltz, I'd play all tunes what they knew, all the songs what they know, see, and the people like dancing to the tunes - and one-steps and such tunes as that.... If you go to play all night, you know, you want a tremendous lot of tunes, if you're going to play three or four tunes for one dance ... With the jazz we always played one tune through and then they had an encore, and we'd play the same tune again, see. Otherwise you'd want any amount. Of course, I knew any amount, but then, if you're going to play six hours, mind you, you got ever so many tunes to play. [MP]

Although all Tin Pan Alley dance tunes were composed with verse and chorus, it was the chorus alone that usually became popular, and many verses were not generally known (with some aesthetic justification!). Scan knew and played some verses, which satisfied his idea that tunes required a first and a second part. In the case of *Down on the Farm*, he added a strain from an Austrian march, *Old Comrades*, to the chorus to make a complete tune, and he composed his own second part for *Alexander's Ragtime Band*.¹²

The piano appears from the early post-War years as the most commonly used instrument among working people, even in country districts, and most village halls and many pubs had one. The piano styles

of Daisy Bulwer and Daisy Sherlock make an interesting contrast, as they approached band piano playing so differently, the one rock steady and the other more rhythmically fluid, but both perfect foils for their partners. Daisy Bulwer was musically literate and knew some theory of harmony, and, although this knowledge might have encouraged her to devise a more developed, even fussy style, she chose to keep her accompaniment simple and thus effective. Her usual support for Walter's fiddle was a straight vamp, an open octave with the left hand on the on-beats and chords with the right hand on the off-beats. Her time-keeping was faultless, and subtle shifts of emphasis kept her rhythmically buoyant.¹³ Daisy Sherlock, on the other hand, knew Scan's phrasing and fill-ins; she followed him rather than providing a set accompaniment. Sometimes she played the melody on equal terms with the concertina, at others the melody line resolved into a second part. The vamp, usually contained in the left hand, was sometimes divided between the two hands, when right hand off-beat chords were sometimes played staccato and at other times double tapped, giving lift and momentum. Daisy Sherlock slipped from one technique to another as the spirit took her, which ensured constant variation and interest.

Although the drum kit, the invention of black New Orleans musicians around the turn of the century, was seen on the English variety stage just before the Great War, it was first used in dance music in England after the War. There is no way of knowing how Sarah Tester devised a method of playing and constructed a style. She could have heard very little dance band drumming herself before she started the job. Very little detail would have been audible on records or the wireless, and few of the local bands would have had drummers before she started - and anyway, what would their models have been? There are three sources, apart from dance band drumming, that could have influenced her playing. The sound of tambourine beating and the triplets of the spoons and bones would certainly have rung in Scan's head, but there is no certain evidence that Sarah would have heard much of them, especially if she had not gone to pubs. She might well have been familiar with brass band drumming, rolls on the snare drum, clashes on the cymbals and the on-beat bass drum, and she probably saw some flamboyant show drumming in the theatre in Brighton. None of that adds up to 'jazz' drumming. As far as Scan was concerned, she kept good time.¹⁴

Scan: I sent away and bought a set, only a small set. I think, if I remember right, that was when I used to carry them on my back on push bikes, all the stuff

packed inside the drum, and I got rid of it in rather hurry, because I found hole in the drum. I thought to myself, 'Well, I'm going to get rid of this lot.' So I sold that lot and bought another lot. Well, then I had that lot about twelve months or two year, then I bought ... a mixed lot and that was a jolly good lot, that was, and that was alright - had a 30 inch drum... [RH]

She had a foot-pedal drum, you know, and a side-drum and cymbals and she had a clog-box and one thing and another on top of the drum like. Just the sticks. Never had no brushes, I didn't. No, I had the sticks. She used to do a good job on them. Yes, she could play. Once you started, you know you was going to keep time alright. She was a good one on time. [RH]

Professional dance bands of the 1920s used techniques that had been around for a century or more. Written arrangements involved second parts and counter melodies, solos, the lead moving from one instrument to another, variation in volume and modulations. Jazz introduced to the dance band world stylistic characteristics such as the vocal chorus, hot breaks and solos, the *clip-clip*, relentless four-four of the banjo, the sousaphone *oompah* and swinging rhythm. The members of Testers' Imperial heard all of these on the wireless and the gramophone, yet they followed the minimum of these conventions in adapting to their new repertoire and image. Musicians like George Avis followed one possible route; as professionals they entered the new musical world and absorbed its values. The Testers, on the other hand, did what many ear-playing amateurs would have done; they held to the values of their root culture and made minor modifications in adapting to new demands and fashions.

Scan's approach to commercial popular music remained constant from the 1920s until the day he died. He continued to pick up new songs, but only those that followed the conventions laid down between the wars. Late tunes like *Tulips from Amsterdam*, *You Always Hurt the One You Love*, *Cruising Down the River*, *I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas*, *The Happy Wanderer* and *Edelweiss* entered his repertoire, but *Rock Around the Clock* and *Tutti Frutti* passed him by.

NOTES

1. Roy Dommett in conversation with me.
2. A. M. Carr-Saunders, D. Caradog Jones and C. A. Moser, *A Survey of Social Conditions in England and Wales* (1958), p. 251.
3. *Kelly's Directory of Sussex* listed ten dance teachers in 1922; by 1930 the number had risen to 25.
4. There are numerous references to dance bands in the *Sussex Express* in the late 1920s.
5. Five pianists were named as having played at a British Legion social in Fletching in 1927 (*Sussex Express*, 22.4.1927).
Cecil Haddock [son of the valet at Dower House] was the pianist at a dance in Fairwarp (*Sussex Express*, 14.1.1927).
6. 'Fairwarp Dance. A dance was arranged for Wednesday evening in the Village Hall from 7.30-11 p.m., the Fairwarp Brass Jazz Band having been engaged.' (*Sussex Express*, 28.1.1927). There was a similar notice in the edition of 23.7.1927.
7. Margaret Bishop (née Ridley).
8. Miss M. W. Cottingham, music teacher, piano, and P. W. Freeland, saxophone, played at Nutley (*Sussex Express*, 29.8.1927).
Miss Cottingham, piano, Mr. [George] Avis, violin, and Mr. P. Freeland played at Nutley (*Sussex Express*, 7.2.1930).
9. Talking of Christmas in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Frank Gorrings said: 'They couldn't touch you for drinking on the Green' after hours.
10. Ada and Harry White, piano and drums, later formed another band. Daisy and Arch Sherlock took rooms in their house in 1936.
11. Years after, Scan always referred to Testers' Imperial as his 'jazz band', yet by most definitions of jazz it was no such thing. No dance band reported in the *Sussex Express* during 1927 and the first half of 1930 described itself as a jazz band, with the exception of the contingent from the Fairwarp Brass Band. Scan's use of the expression, which went out of high fashion a couple of years before he formed the band, is some indication, that he and his supporters defined 'keeping up with the latest' in their own terms.
12. *How Ya' Gonna Keep 'Em Down On the Farm (After They've Seen Paree?)* (Lewis, Young and Donaldson), published 1918 or 1919.
13. Daisy Bulwer may be heard on the following recordings:
English Country Music (Topic 12T296); *Boscastle Breakdown* (Topic 12T240); and *Scan Tester* (Topic 2-12T445/6).
I never heard Daisy Bulwer play a quickstep, fox-trot or slow waltz. She might have had a different style for 'modern' dance tunes.
14. George Avis knows of no drummer at that time who had lessons: 'They just picked it up, and some weren't too marvellous!'

I NEVER PLAYED TO MANY POSH DANCES....

